

Delgado Community College  
Physical Therapist Assistant Program  
**Technical Standards/Essential Functions**

Students are expected to meet the Technical Standards for the PTA to be enrolled in the Delgado PTA Program. These technical standards must be met with or without accommodations.

The college complies with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Qualified persons with a disability who can meet these technical standards/essential functions with reasonable accommodations will not be denied admission to the program. If you have a disability please contact the Office of Disabilities Services (<http://www.dcc.edu/student-services/advising/disability-services/default.aspx>) to determine reasonable accommodations needed to be successful in the Delgado PTA program. These needs will be determined on an individual basis.

PTA students must be able to apply the knowledge and skills necessary to function in a variety of clinical situations while providing the spectrum of physical therapy interventions. PTA students must have the ability to demonstrate clinical judgment and immediately respond to the physiological and psychological needs of the patient when providing physical therapy under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist.

The following standards reflect reasonable expectations of PTA students for common physical therapy functions in the clinical setting. Each student must possess the following abilities and be able to perform the following skills.

1. Cognitive Requirements:
  - Utilize appropriate verbal, non verbal, printed and written communication with patients, families and all members of the health care team;
  - Understand and interpret the verbal, non-verbal, and written communications of others and respond in an appropriate and professional manner;
  - Read, speak, write and understand English at a minimum of the 11th grade level;
  - Comprehend and integrate information from coursework into clinical experiences;
  - Function without causing harm to self or others if under the influence of prescription or over-the-counter medications;
  - Perform basic computer skills for navigating the internet, email communication, and creating documents.
2. Critical Thinking Requirements:
  - Possess the intellectual ability to gather, analyze, and draw conclusions from data to problem-solve and use critical thinking to make decisions in patient care;
  - Possess the ability to prioritize multiple tasks and make sound decisions.
3. Physical Requirements:
  - Perform CPR and emergency first aid;
  - Apply standard precautions;
  - Manipulate and operate physical therapy equipment and monitoring devices and have the manual dexterity needed to perform tasks such as sterile gloving and gowning;
  - Safely, reliably, and efficiently perform physical therapy treatment procedures;

- Stand for a minimum of two (2) hours and walk for a minimum of six (6) hours (not necessarily consecutively);
  - Possess sufficient endurance to maintain a full-time 40-hour consecutive-day week during clinical experiences;
  - Perform sustained or repeated bending, stooping, kneeling, reaching overhead, sitting and standing while assuring the student's and patient's safety;
  - Meet the physical demands of physical therapist assistants who are typically classified as *medium work*. Medium work is defined as "lifting or carrying 21-50 pounds occasionally, 11-25 pounds frequently and greater than negligible up to 10 pounds frequently" by the Department of Labor.
4. Sensory Requirements:
- Possess the visual ability to observe and respond to a patient;
  - Possess the auditory ability to hear and respond to soft voices, equipment timers, and alarms, as well as blood pressure cuffs and breath sounds;
  - Use auditory, tactile, and visual senses to assess the physiological status of a patient;
  - Determine hotness/coldness, wetness/dryness, hardness/softness through touch.
5. Personal Affective Requirements:
- Practice in a safe, ethical and legal manner;
  - Demonstrate respect and engage in non-judgmental interactions with individuals regardless of lifestyle, culture, race, socioeconomic class and abilities;
  - Work effectively in a group.

References:

American Physical Therapy Association. Minimum Required Skills of Physical Therapist Assistant Graduates at Entry Level. G11-08-09-18

AASIG Technical Standards, Essential Functions Document. Section on Education, September 1998.

Ingram, D. (1997). Opinions of Physical Therapy Program Directors on Essential Functions, *Physical Therapy*, 77(1).

United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2016). Occupational Requirements Survey. Retrieved from: <https://www.bls.gov/ors/>

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