

**ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF A PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT  
PROGRAM TECHNICAL STANDARDS FORM - 2023**

A physical therapist assistant is a health care professional whose primary responsibility is to work under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist and perform duties in a clinical setting. In addition to the duties of the profession, the physical therapist assistant must always be aware of the patient's condition and needs and be able to interact appropriately by performing these essential functions.

TECHNICAL STANDARD	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES OF NECESSARY ACTIVITIES (Not All Inclusive)
<b>Cognitive Qualifications</b>	Sufficient Reading, Language and Math Skills; Ability to collect and integrate information to make a decision for patient care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to comprehend and interpret written material</li> <li>• Follow and deliver written and oral direction</li> <li>• Able to comprehend &amp; apply new knowledge within scope of work</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment; synthesize information from written material and apply knowledge to clinical situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify cause-effect relationships in clinical situations</li> <li>• Read and comprehend relevant information in textbooks, medical records and professional literature</li> <li>• Make rapid decisions under pressure</li> <li>• Handle multiple priorities in stressful situations</li> <li>• Assist with problem solving</li> </ul>
<b>Interpersonal</b>	Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, educational, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish rapport with individuals</li> <li>• Cope effectively with stress</li> <li>• Can exchange ideas in a group (work effectively as part of a team)</li> <li>• Cope with confrontation</li> <li>• Demonstrate a high degree of patience</li> <li>• Graciously admit mistakes and accept constructive criticism</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	Communication abilities sufficient for interaction with others in verbal and non-verbal form (speech, reading, and writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain treatment procedures</li> <li>• Give effective instructions to patients and families</li> <li>• Demonstrate active listening skills. Recognize, interpret and respond to non-verbal behavior of self and others</li> <li>• Keep accurate, ethical logs and records of treatment and charges with correct spelling and grammar</li> </ul>
<b>Mobility</b>	Physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room, to maneuver in small spaces and to perform procedures necessary for emergency intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain positions including sitting, standing, squatting, kneeling, reaching (above shoulder level), walking, stair climbing, and movement of trunk and neck in all directions for an extended amount of time. (up to 4 hours)</li> <li>• Able to push, pull, and/or lift a minimum of 50-70 lbs., and push/ pull, or move such weight a minimum of 50 feet.</li> <li>• Safely and effectively transfer a 200-300lb patient with assistance</li> <li>• Able to lift up to 10 lbs. above head</li> <li>• Able to endure and successfully complete a 40-hour work week during clinical education courses, while wearing appropriate PPE (mask, gloves, gowns) when applicable.</li> </ul>
<b>Motor Skills</b>	Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective patient care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handle and use equipment</li> <li>• Position patients</li> <li>• Perform repetitive tasks</li> <li>• Able to grip</li> </ul>
<b>Hearing</b>	Normal, corrected or aided - Auditory ability sufficient to interpret verbal communication from patients and health care team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hear monitor alarms, emergency signals, and cries for help</li> <li>• Hear telephone interactions</li> </ul>
<b>Visual</b>	Normal or corrected - Visual acuity sufficient for observation and assessment necessary for patient assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe patient responses</li> <li>• Identify and distinguish colors</li> </ul>
<b>Tactile</b>	Tactile ability sufficient for gross and fine motor coordination necessary for manual assessment of tissues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform palpation, functions of physical examination and/or those related to therapeutic intervention</li> <li>• Tactile abilities needed to palpate pulses, detect changes in texture, body contour, muscle tone, and joint movement</li> </ul>
<b>Professionalism</b>	Ability to demonstrate professional behaviors and a strong work ethic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate respect, moral and ethical behaviors in all academic and professional settings</li> <li>• Demonstrate time management skills that promote punctual attendance to class, lab and clinical settings</li> <li>• Recognize personal limitations and request assistance as appropriate</li> <li>• Present professional appearance and maintain personal hygiene</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental</b>	Ability to tolerate environmental stressors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with chemicals and detergents</li> <li>• Tolerate exposure to fumes and odors</li> <li>• Work in areas that are close and crowded</li> <li>• Tolerate shift work (up to 12 hours) while wearing personal protective equipment (mask, gloves, gown, goggles) as indicated.</li> </ul>