

## Division of Physician Assistant Studies

### Technical Standards

The Division of Physician Assistant Studies at West Virginia University has adopted minimal technical standards for the assessment of all applicants to the physician assistant studies program. A candidate for the Masters in Health Sciences (MHS) degree in the Division of Physician Assistant Studies at West Virginia University must be capable of acquiring and demonstrating all program objectives across the six core competencies, which include Medical Knowledge, Interpersonal and Communication Skills, Clinical and Technical Skills, Professional Behaviors, Practice-Based Learning and Improvement, and Clinical Reasoning and Problem-Solving Skills. Because the MHS degree signifies that the holder is a physician assistant prepared for entry into the practice of medicine, it follows that graduates must have the attitudes, knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care.

A candidate for the MHS degree in Physician Assistant Studies must have abilities and skills including observation; communication; motor; conceptual, integrative and quantitative; and behavioral and social as outlined below. Technological compensation and reasonable accommodations may be required by otherwise-qualified individual candidates to meet the functional technical standards below, but a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. Requests for university provided accommodations will be granted if the requests are reasonable, do not cause a fundamental alteration of the physician assistant studies program or its graduation requirements, are consistent with the standards of the physician assistant profession, and are recommended by the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS).

### Observation

The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations in the basic sciences, including anatomic structures in the gross anatomy lab. A candidate must also be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and somatic sensation. It is enhanced by the functional use of the sense of smell. In addition, a candidate must be able to:

- Observe a patient accurately and acquire relevant health and medical information, including written documents, images from the medical literature, slides and/or video.
- Interpret radiographic, ultrasound and other graphic images, and digital or analog representations of physiologic data (e.g. EKGs).

In any case where a candidate's ability to observe or acquire information through these sensory modalities is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to acquire essential observational information.

### Communication

A candidate should be able to speak, to hear, and to observe patients in order to elicit information, and perceive nonverbal communications. Candidates must possess the ability to speak and write English sufficiently to communicate with patients. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients. Communication includes not only speech but reading and writing. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the health care team. In any case where a candidate's ability to communicate

is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate alternative means and/or abilities to communicate with patients and teams.

## **Motor**

Candidates should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. A candidate should be able to perform basic laboratory tests, carry out diagnostic procedures (lumbar puncture, joint aspiration, etc.), and read EKG's and x-rays. A candidate should be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of physician assistants are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, and the suturing of simple wounds. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of touch and vision.

## **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities**

These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem solving, the creative skills demanded of physician assistants, requires all of these intellectual abilities. In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures. Effective participation in learning activities such as individual, small group, and lecture formats, in both the classroom and the clinical setting, will be required. A candidate must be able to effectively learn, participate, collaborate and contribute as a part of a team. A candidate will need to synthesize information effectively both in person and via remote technology. A candidate must be able to interpret causal connections, and make accurate, fact-based conclusions based on available data and information. A candidate must be able to formulate a hypothesis, investigate the potential answers and outcomes and formulate appropriate and accurate conclusions.

## **Behavioral and Social Attributes**

A candidate must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his/her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that should be assessed during the admissions and education processes. A candidate must readily be willing and able to examine any patient regardless of the patient's age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status or political beliefs.

## **Summary**

When an applicant or enrolled student is not able to meet a standard as defined above, Student Services and/or the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) will determine whether reasonable accommodations can be provided, which do not cause a fundamental alteration of the physician assistant studies program, are consistent with the standards of the physician assistant profession, and are recommended by the OAS office. They will (a) review requests for accommodations for matriculating and enrolled physician assistant students; (b) review, modify and approve recommendations for these accommodations; and (c) coordinate the implementation of approved accommodations within the physician assistant studies

curriculum. If it is determined that in the professional judgment of Student Services or OAS that accommodations may not be made to satisfy the physician assistant studies program objectives, such opinion will be documented in the minutes of the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards (CAPS) as they review student performance.

## **Applicable ARC-PA Standard**

Fourth Edition (through August 31, 2020)

A3.15 The program must define, publish and make readily available to prospective students admission related information to include:

e) any required technical standards for enrollment.

Fifth Edition (effective September 1, 2020)

A3.13 The program must define, publish, consistently apply and make readily available to prospective students, policies and procedures to include:

e) any required technical standards for enrollment

Approved: September 2019

Next Review: September 2020



## Division of Physician Assistant Studies

### Technical Standards Attestation

I acknowledge that as a part of my offer of a position in the physician assistant education program at West Virginia University, I have been provided a copy of the current technical standards.

I have read these standards, and my signature below signifies that I can meet all these standards, having the abilities and skills of the five varieties outlined including observation, communication, motor, conceptual, integrative/quantitative, and behavioral/social. I understand that while technological compensation can be made for some disabilities in certain of these areas, that I should be able to perform the expected tasks in a reasonably independent manner.

( ) Without accommodations

( ) With accommodations.

The accommodations I am requesting will be submitted to Student Services at least one month prior to matriculation along with the necessary supporting documentation to justify these accommodations. I understand that the Division of Physician Assistant Studies may work with the Office of Accessibility Services to determine if these accommodations can be granted and are reasonable for someone pursuing the MHS degree in physician assistant studies.

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Signature

Date

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Printed Name

**This form is to be uploaded to CastleBranch by the deadline specified in the offer of admission.**

For questions please contact:

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