

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (PA) TECHNICAL SKILLS AND STANDARDS

Introduction

The Physician Assistant (PA) Program is dedicated to the education of students who will develop into exceptional practitioners, strive to become competent and caring providers, and demonstrate the ability to learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize information and data. The physician assistant student will be in possession of the knowledge and skills required to adapt to an ever-changing professional environment. The physician assistant student must have the capabilities to perform in a variety of clinical settings while providing a wide spectrum of patient care. A candidate for the PA degree must have aptitude, abilities, and skills in the following areas: communication; Observation; motor/tactile function; Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities; and professionalism.

These technical standards **are required** for admission and **must be maintained** during a student's progress through the PA Program. Successful participation in and completion of the PA Program requires students to have certain mental and physical abilities, with or without reasonable accommodations. SJBSM complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and state and local requirements regarding applicants and students with disabilities. Detailed information about the Act can be found in the Executive Order 2006-03 (<https://www.sanjuanbautista.edu/images/pdf/ExecutiveOrders/2006-03.pdf>).

PAs deliver health care in a variety of settings to diverse patient populations. The role of the PA demands intelligence, sound judgment, appropriate interpersonal skills, and the capacity to react to emergencies in a calm and reasoned manner. PAs and PA students must be able to collect and analyze data, integrate results of diagnostic studies with current treatment standards and solve problems all in the course of providing patient care.

Required mental and physical abilities fall into five major categories: sensory, communication, motor, intellectual, and behavioral/social.

Technical Standards

1. Sensory

PA students must have enough visual and auditory ability to observe in lecture-learner, laboratory, and patient care settings. Sensory skills required in the performance of complete physical examinations utilizing inspection, percussion, palpation, and auscultation include adequate vision, hearing, smell, and tactile sensation. All senses must be enough to observe a patient's condition and elicit information through history and physical examination.

2. Motor

Enough physical stamina is required to complete the rigorous didactic and clinical portions of the program. The didactic phase of the program requires extended sitting, in contrast to the clinical phase which requires extended standing and moving about various clinical facilities. PA students must be able, with or without accommodation, to elicit information from patients and perform a physical examination. In addition, they must be able to perform therapeutic and diagnostic procedures in addition to negotiating various health care environments, such as outpatient facilities, laboratories, and hospitals. Students must have enough motor function to execute movement's essential to provide general and emergency care to patients. Some examples of emergency care reasonably required of physician assistants is cardiopulmonary resuscitation, administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, the suturing of simple wounds, the handling of surgical instruments and the performance of basic obstetrical maneuvers. Additionally, the ability to use the electronic medical record as well as take the national physician assistant certification examination which does not offer paper testing necessitate that students are able, with or without reasonable accommodations, to use computer and other electronic devices.

3. Communication

PA students must be able to read, understand, write, and speak English for effective and efficient classroom and laboratory communication. PA students must be able to record and communicate information in a timely, effective, and sensitive manner to patients and other members of the health care team. Effective communication needs to be clear and unambiguous. Communication includes face to face contact, reading, legible writing and completion of electronic medical records in a timely manner. While eliciting information from patients, the student must be able to identify and describe changes in mood, activity and posture and perceive nonverbal communication.

4. Intellectual

PA students must be able to sustain attention, calculate, reason, analyze, assimilate, and recall technically detailed and complex information. Correlating information and problem solving to arrive at a reasonable clinical conclusion in a timely fashion is a basic tenet of clinical practice. Students must be able to learn through a variety of teaching modalities including classroom instruction, small group, and collaborative activities, simulated and clinical environments. With rapidly expanding avenues of clinical information, the ability to extract valid, useful, and relevant information from the medical literature is also required to formulate accurate diagnoses and treatment plans. In addition, students should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures.

5. Behavioral and Social Attributes

PA students must be able to relate and perform professionally in all aspects of PA training and in the clinical environment with patients and other members of the health care team. Students must possess emotional health and maturity for full utilization of intellectual abilities. They need to exercise good judgement, empathy, integrity, and honesty in all academic settings and possess enough interpersonal skills to develop mature, effective, compassionate, and respectful relationships with peers, patients, patient families and caregivers and all member of the health care team. Students must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads, changing environments and rotating schedules. They must display flexibility and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the practice of medicine. Students should take responsibility for their own learning and recognize insufficiencies in knowledge or skills and seek assistance as they strive for excellence. Students are expected to accept suggestions and criticisms and respond by appropriate modification of behavior.

EFFECTIVENESS

The disposition contained in the Executive Order will be effective immediately.



Yocasta Brugal, M.D.
President/Dean

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