Technical Standards of Performance

These standards apply to all students training for the Physician Assistant profession through the Cuyahoga Community College/Cleveland State University program. All students must meet the following essential technical standards and should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. Reasonable accommodations may be made on a case-by-case basis for individuals with documented disabilities. Determination of appropriate accommodations is an individualized process, if you have any questions regarding these standards please contact the Cuyahoga Community College Physician Assistant Program directly. The Physician Assistant Program at Cuyahoga Community College is committed to providing equal opportunities to access education and does not discriminate against students on the basis of disability. No otherwise qualified applicant with a disability will be excluded from admission. Any person who wishes to report discrimination should contact the College’s Office of Inclusion, Diversity & Equal Opportunity Compliance by phone at 216.987.4772 or 216.987.4773 or by mail at Cuyahoga Community College 700 Carnegie Avenue Cleveland, Ohio 44115.

1. Visual (Observation)

Students must be able to demonstrate sufficient attention and accuracy in observation skills in the classroom, laboratory, at the patient’s bedside or in an outpatient setting. Functional use of vision and somatic sensation is necessary. Consistent with the ability to assess asymmetry, range of motion and visual patient inspection during examination, it is necessary for students to have adequate visual capabilities for proper evaluation and treatment integration. Required indicators for the observation skills technical standard include, but are not limited to these examples:

- Accurate observations of physiologic and pharmacological demonstrations and microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissues
- Accurate observation of a patient (near and at a distance), recognizing non-verbal cues
- Accurate visualization and discrimination of texts, numbers, patterns, to interpret x-rays and other graphic images, and digital or analog representations of physiologic phenomena, such as EKGs, with or without the use of assistive devices
- Accurate identification of changes in color of fluids, skin, and culture media

2. Oral-Auditory (Communication)

Students must be able to demonstrate that they are able to communicate effectively and objectively in both the academic setting and in routine and emergency situations in the clinical health care setting. Throughout the program, the students must show evidence of effective written and verbal English communication skills. Communication includes not only speech, but also reading and writing. Students must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients, of all ages and genders, with varying degrees and types of infirmities, of varying cultures, ethnicities, and personalities. Students must also be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with other members of the health care team. In emergency situations, students must be able to understand and convey information essential for the safe and effective care of patients in a clear, unambiguous and rapid fashion. In addition, students must have the ability to relate information to and receive information from patients in a caring, articulate, and confidential manner. Required indicators for the oral-auditory (communication) skills technical standard include, but are not limited to these examples:
- Clear, efficient and intelligible articulation of verbal English language
- Legible, efficient and intelligible written English language
- Accurate and efficient English language reading skills
- Accurate and efficient expressive and receptive communication skills
- Ability to prepare and communicate concise oral and written summaries of patient encounters
- Ability to accurately follow oral and written direction
- Ability to accurately discern and evaluate various components of the spoken voice (pitch, intensity, timbre), percussive notes and auscultatory findings

3. Motor

The students should possess enough physical stamina to sufficiently complete the rigorous course of didactic and clinical study and is required. Students need to possess coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and integrated use of the senses of touch and vision. Required indicators for motor skills technical standard include, but are not limited to these examples:

- Functional and sufficient sensory capacity to adequately perform a physical examination and must possess the motor skills necessary to perform palpation, percussion, and auscultation
- Execution of motor movements that allows the provision of general and emergency medical care such as airway management, placement of intravenous catheters, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, wound closure, and application of pressure to control bleeding
- Physical stamina sufficient to complete long periods of sitting, standing, lifting or moving are required in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings
- Demonstration of strength and mobility as needed to assist in surgery, emergency situations, and activities associated with daily practice as a PA student
- Execution of motor movements to assess patient conditions, provide patient care, and participate in basic diagnostic and therapeutic maneuvers and procedures
- Properly use clinical instruments and devices for the therapeutic intervention including, but not limited to tuning forks, stethoscopes, sphygmomanometers, doppler devices, catheters, tubes, etc.


In order to effectively problem solve in the clinical setting, and based upon the critical thinking skills demanded of physician assistants, student must be able to demonstrate cognitive skills including, but not limited to intellectual, conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities. Required indicators for the cognitive skills technical standard include, but are not limited to these examples:

- Demonstrate ability to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize in a timely fashion
- Demonstrate the ability to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures
- Demonstrate the ability to acquire, retain, and apply new and learned information

5. Behavioral/Social

Students must possess the emotional health and stability required for the full utilization of their intellectual abilities, for the exercise of good judgment, for the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and for the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients. Required indicators include, but are not limited to these examples:
- Demonstrate ability to tolerate physically taxing workloads and function effectively under stress
- Demonstrate the ability to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, compassion, integrity, motivation, interpersonal skills, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients
- Uphold appropriate standards of professionalism and ethics