



Essential Functions for the PTA

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Rowan-Cabarrus Community College is an intensive course of study. Successful completion of the PTA Program requires the student to participate in laboratory classes in which real physical therapy interventions are practiced and administered to classmates and staff, and to satisfy the clinical training component of the program in which physical therapy interventions are administered by the student to real patients.

Students are required to attend three different clinical training experiences designed to expose the student to the depth and breadth of contemporary physical therapy practice.

The student must be able to apply the knowledge and skills required to function in a wide variety of clinical settings and situations while providing the spectrum of physical therapy interventions.

Patients have a right to safe and quality healthcare from PTA students and graduates. Classmates and staff have a right to safe practices while in the classroom and laboratory. Because of these rights, the following essential skills have been adopted. These essential skills represent reasonable expectations of the PTA student for the performance of common physical therapy functions.

Each student must be able to perform each of the Essential Skills:

Physical

1. Safely, reliably and effectively assess status of an individual by visual, tactile and auditory methods.
 - a. Visual ability, corrected as necessary, to recognize and interpret facial expressions and body language, identify normal and abnormal movement patterns, discriminate color changes, interpret access to the environment, and gather information from medical records and professional literature.
 - b. Tactile ability to palpate pulses, detect changes or abnormalities in skin texture, skin temperature, body segment contour, muscle tone and joint movement.
 - c. Auditory ability, corrected as necessary, to recognize and respond to soft voices and to effectively use devices for measurement of blood pressure and breath sounds.
2. Operate and monitor various types of electrical and mechanical therapeutic equipment and apply these safely, reliably and effectively.
 - a. Visual ability, corrected as necessary, to read and interpret indicators, gauges, dials, etc. on physical therapy equipment.
 - b. Auditory ability, corrected as necessary, to recognize and respond to auditory timers, call bells, equipment alarms, etc.
 - c. Ability and dexterity to manipulate and operate various types of physical therapy equipment and devices which involves adjusting gauges, dials, small nuts and bolts, settings, small tools, goniometers, tape measures, etc.

3. Regularly lift and move moderate weight (25 – 60 pounds) and exert enough pushing and pulling force as may be required to position or move patients and equipment assist or resist a patient with exercise applications.
4. Frequently lift and move heavier weights (up to 200 pounds) as may be required for safe transfers and support of patients with assistance.
5. Spend prolonged periods of time (up to 90 minutes) without rest; walking, standing, sitting, bending as well as crawling, reaching, pushing and pulling.
6. Possess the coordination, speed, agility necessary to assist and safely guard (protect) a patient who is walking, exercising, or performing other rehabilitation activities, and appropriate body mechanics to react safely and appropriately to sudden or unexpected movements of patients and/or classmates.
7. Ability to endure a 40-hour workweek during clinical education courses which typically involves working 8-10 hours per day, 4-5 days per week.
8. Ability to administer CPR and emergency First Aid safely, reliably and competently without assistance.
9. Communicate in both written and verbal formats essential information about patients, treatments, and status to physicians, co-workers, patients and their families, instructors, and clinical staff.
 - a. Ability to effectively interpret and express both verbally and in writing in English.
 - b. Ability to recognize, interpret and respond appropriately to nonverbal communications from patients, staff and others.
 - c. Ability to effectively use a computer and operate software programs for documentation, research, and other clinical and classroom functions.
 - d. Ability to use a telephone.

Cognitive

1. Demonstrate the organizational and time management skills necessary to carry out multiple treatment plans on a daily basis and within the established productivity requirements and time constraints.
 - a. Ability to work with multiple patients, families, and colleagues all at the same time.
 - b. Ability to prioritize multiple tasks.
2. Make decisions and then act on the decisions based on assessment of a particular patient or situation including emergency situations while adhering to time constraints.
 - a. Ability to recognize potentially unsafe situations and react in an appropriate timely manner.
 - b. Communicate rationale or reasoning to justify decisions made.
 - c. Read and make adjustments as necessary of various meters, scales, and measuring devices.
3. Follow job related logical thought processes.
 - a. Apply knowledge of principles, indications, contraindications, and precautions for the full spectrum of physical therapy interventions utilized in contemporary physical therapy practice.

- b. Apply principles of logical or scientific thinking to define problems, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions.
- c. Participate in the process of scientific inquiry and procure evidence-based information and apply it to the practice of physical therapy.
4. Take initiative and work independently yet recognize self-limitations.
 - a. Comprehend scope of practice for PTA.
 - b. Adhere to regulatory requirements including standard precautions and infection control policies.
 - c. Display ability to initiate patient care or other appropriate clinical activities without requiring explicit instruction to do so.
 - d. Demonstrate ability to make productive use of classroom, laboratory, and clinical time.
 - e. Adheres to program and facility preventative health requirements including but not limited to vaccinations screenings and treatments for latent or active diseases.
5. Organize, supervise, delegate, and manage resources, including human resources.

Affective

1. Demonstrate the interpersonal skills necessary to regularly interact effectively with patients and their families, physicians, clinical instructors and staff, faculty, and classmates.
 - a. Engage in respectful, non-judgmental interactions with individuals from various lifestyles, cultures, beliefs, races, ages, socioeconomic classes, and abilities based on mutual trust.
 - b. Develop and maintain effective respectful working relationships with colleagues, peers, patients and their families, instructors and faculty, and the general public.
 - c. Work effectively as part of an interdisciplinary team.
 - d. Demonstrate the ability to delegate or direct others and function effectively as part of a health care team.
 - e. Practice professional and respectful physical touch across genders.
 - f. Maintain professional demeanor and consistently display professional behaviors in all clinical interactions.
2. Effectively attend to people, information and tasks in a complex, highly stimulating environment.
3. Cope, in a professional manner to common patient, clinical, or school related stressful situations.
 - a. Cope with heavy workloads, including class work, patient demands, physician or other staff demands, and changes in schedules.
 - b. Work effectively with challenging and terminally ill patients.
 - c. Treat patients regardless of health condition or infectious status of patients.
 - d. Work with patients, instructors, and other clinical staff, faculty and classmates during stressful situations including but not limited to medically or emotionally unstable individuals, providing CPR or other emergency situations.
4. Regularly accept guidance and supervision from superiors, instructors and faculty.
5. Take responsibility for mistakes, and errors in judgment and decision-making. Accept constructive criticism and adjust behavior accordingly.

6. Encourage cooperation and collegial relationships with classmates, instructors, other healthcare providers, patients and their families.
 - a. Ability to motivate and positively influence patients and others.
 - b. Ability to collaborate with others.
 - c. Ability to consult with others to clarify and problem solve.
7. Maintain confidentiality of patients, classmates, clinical business issues, records, and exams.

In accordance with applicable state and federal laws regarding people who have disabilities and our program's philosophy, we are committed to making reasonable accommodations for students who have disabilities to enable them to successfully perform the essential functions as delineated below. In the event that a student determines he or she cannot meet an essential function due to a disability, either upon admission to the program or at any point thereafter, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the Program Director of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program and the Office of Accessibility of that determination and to request a reasonable accommodation. The Office of Accessibility is located on North campus in building 100 and at South campus in building 1000 with Student Advocacy Services. A reasonable accommodation is a strategy, agreed upon by the student and the College, which enables the student to meet a technical standard. The faculty and student will work together, within the context of the agreed upon strategy, to provide the student with the opportunity to meet the technical standard. The presence of a disability will not exempt students from completing required tasks and a reasonable accommodation will not guarantee that students will be successful in meeting the requirements of any one course. Should a student be unable to meet a technical standard or course requirement after a reasonable accommodation has been made, the offer of admission or status in the program will be withdrawn.

The above statements were derived in part from job descriptions and work expectations from various physical therapy facilities and behavioral and academic expectations from the physical therapy educational community.

Each student's right to participation in the clinical portion of the curriculum is also contingent upon compliance with the rules of the clinical facility. The clinical facility has the sole discretion to determine when its rules have been violated.

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation or marital status.