

COLLEGE OF SAINT MARY
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The College of Saint Mary Physician Assistant Program is dedicated to the education of students who strive to become competent and caring providers of primary health care services under the supervision of a licensed physician. The student must be able to achieve certain technical standards of knowledge and skill in order to successfully complete the Program. The technical standards stated in this document apply to satisfactory performance in all academic and clinical course work, as well as fulfillment of "non-academic" essential functions of the curriculum involving physical, cognitive, and behavior factors that are essential to a professional clinical practitioner.

The College of Saint Mary shall provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities otherwise qualified to complete the essential functions of the curriculum. However, such essential functions must be completed by the student in a reasonably independent fashion. The safety and welfare of a patient shall never be put in jeopardy as a result of an effort to reasonably accommodate a disability.

More specifically, a student in the Physician Assistant Program must have adequate abilities and skills in the following five areas: 1) Observation; 2) Communication; 3) Sensory and Motor Function; 4) Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Ability; and, 5) Behavioral and Social Attributes.

Observation: The student must be able to observe demonstrations and conduct experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to chemical, biological, anatomic and physiologic sciences, microbiologic cultures, and microscopic studies of microorganisms. A student must 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 other sensory modalities. A student must be able to integrate all information visually and through the other senses.

Communication: A student must be able to communicate effectively, sensitively, and rapidly in English with patients and members of the health care team. A student must be able to elicit information from patients, perceive nonverbal communications, and describe changes in mood, activity and posture. Communication includes not only speech, but writing, reading, interpreting tables, figures, graphs and computer literacy.

Sensory and Motor Function: The student must have sufficient sensory and motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. The student will be required to coordinate both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of hearing, touch and vision.

More specifically, the student must be able to exercise such fine motor skills as to adequately perform laboratory tests, including but not limited to, wet mount, urinalysis and gram stain. The student must exercise such level of dexterity, sensation and visual acuity as to accurately complete such processes as administering intravenous medication, making fine measurements of angles and size, measuring blood pressure, respiration and pulse, performing physical examinations, and performing therapeutic procedures such as suturing and casting.

The student must be able to hear sufficiently to accurately differentiate percussive notes and auscultory findings, including but not limited to, heart, lung, and abdominal sounds, as well as discern normal and

abnormal findings using instruments such as tuning forks, stethoscopes, sphygmomanometers, and Doppler devices.

A student must be able to transport himself or herself in a manner which provides timely response in both general and emergency care situations. Moving patients and engaging in some procedures such as CPR will require a necessary level of strength.

Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities: A student must have the intellect necessary to quickly analyze and resolve problems. These intellectual abilities include numerical recognition, measurement, calculations, reasoning, analysis judgment and synthesis. The student must be able to identify significant findings from the patient's history, the physical examination and laboratory data, provide a reasoned explanation for likely diagnoses, and choose appropriate medications and therapy.

The ability to incorporate new information from many sources in formulating diagnoses and plans is essential. Good judgment in patient assessment, diagnostic and therapeutic planning is primary. When appropriate, students must be able to identify and communicate the limits of their knowledge to others.

Behavioral and Social Attributes: A student must possess the emotional health required for full use of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment and the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients. The development of mature, sensitive effective and professional relationships with patients and members of the health care team is essential. Students 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 learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that are desired in a health professional and assessed during the admissions and education processes.