



## **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES**

### **TECHNICAL STANDARDS**

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. All students must meet the minimum technical standards necessary to achieve the knowledge, skills, and competencies required of an entry-level physician assistant. 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. All candidates who are offered a seat in the program will be required to sign a statement attesting to their ability to meet these technical standards.

Each student is expected to perform the following, with or without reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation is defined as any change in the environment or in the way things are usually done that enables an individual with a disability to participate as fully as possible in the academic program. If an accommodation is requested, the program may require additional documentation and information and will follow up with the student to discuss the specifics of the request and the appropriate plan of action. 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. Students must not pose a threat to the safety or wellbeing of patients, other students, staff, or themselves.

A student in the Physician Assistant Studies program must have adequate abilities and skills in the following five areas: 1) Observation; 2) Communication; 3) Sensory and Motor Coordination and 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, hearing, 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, speak intelligibly, hear sufficiently, and describe changes in mood, activity and posture. Communication includes not only speech, but writing, reading, interpreting tables, figures, graphs and computer literacy. Students must have the ability to interact with patients, the health care team, and the general public in a manner which is professionally appropriate for the environment and situation. Students must be able to recognize environments in which professional behavior is expected and must be able to discriminate between professional environments with differing behavioral expectations (i.e. seeing a patient vs. assisting a preceptor in surgery).

***Sensory and Motor Coordination and Function:***

The student must have sufficient sensory and motor coordination and function to elicit information from patients by inspection, 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 auditory 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 react and perform in a prompt manner when a timely response is required for both general and emergent 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. Students must be able to recall and retain information in an efficient and timely manner.

***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. Students must be able to use supervision appropriately and act independently, when indicated. 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.