ESSENTIAL SKILLS EXPECTED OF A PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

The essential, technical standards as outlined below are necessary for the student to successfully complete this program, to obtain certification/licensure, and gain employment as a PTA. It is the student’s responsibility to disclose any limitations that may interfere with his/her ability to meet these standards. The student must meet the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the program with or without reasonable accommodation.

Certain skills are essential to being successful in the clinical courses, as well as the lab component of various PTA courses within the curriculum. The clinical education component consists of three full time clinical rotations, and observation requirements within PTA courses.

The student may be expected to perform satisfactorily in the following domains:

PHYSICAL
- Assess patient/client status by visual, tactile and auditory methods.
- Operate and monitor various types of electrical and mechanical therapeutic equipment and apply these safely and effectively to the patient/client.
- Regularly lift and move moderate weight, frequently lift and move heavier weights (in excess of fifty (50) pounds) as may be required for safe transfers of the patient/client.
- Regularly spend prolonged periods of time walking, standing, sitting, bending as well as frequently crawling, reaching, pushing and pulling.
- Regularly communicate in both written and verbal formats essential information about patients, treatments, and status to physicians, co-workers, patients and families. This includes the ability to hear patient/client speech, ability to read written orders with comprehension, the ability to effectively vocalize assessments of patient status and other information and the ability to utilize an electronic medical record.

COGNITIVE
- Demonstrate the interpersonal skills necessary to regularly interact effectively with patients, families, physicians, co-workers and other facility personnel.
- Regularly demonstrate the organizational and time management skills necessary to carry out multiple treatment plans on a daily basis.
- Regularly make decisions and then act on the decisions based on assessment of a particular patient or situation, including emergency situations.
- Regularly take initiative and work independently yet recognize self-limitations. Regularly accept guidance and supervision from superiors.
- Regularly read and make adjustments as necessary of various meters, scales and measuring devices.
- Regularly follow job related logical thought processes.

EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL
- Regularly cope in an appropriate manner to common patient/clinically related stressful situations.
- Regularly exhibit flexibility in schedule in response to typical clinical/patient changes.

The above statements were derived in part form job descriptions and work expectations from various physical therapy facilities/departments.

Each student’s right to participate 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.