

The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences
Physician Assistant Program

Technical Standards

The George Washington University Physician Assistant Program consider it essential for all physician assistant graduates to have the knowledge and skill to function in a variety of clinical situations and to provide a wide spectrum of patient care as required by the curriculum. Therefore, every physician assistant student must master a common body of basic science knowledge and master the principles, knowledge, and procedures of the major required clinical specialty clerkships, including internal medicine, surgery, emergency medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry, and primary (ambulatory) care medicine. This requires that every student have sufficient capacities and abilities in:

Communication
Observation
Motor/tactile function
Emotions/Intellect

Completion of this program requires that each student independently demonstrate these capabilities. Surrogates cannot be used to accomplish the essential requirements. Students may not have undue dependence on technology or trained intermediaries.

Communication includes the ability to speak, hear, read, and write sufficiently to achieve adequate exchange of information with other healthcare professionals and patients and their support network.

Observation includes the ability to perceive, using senses and mental abilities, the presentation of information through lectures, small groups and one-to-one interactions, and written and audiovisual materials. Students must be able to directly observe a patient's medical condition. Other examples of use of perceptual abilities include, but are not limited to: gross and microscopic studies of organisms, cadaver dissections, and various diagnostic studies (including, but not limited to: interpreting electrocardiograms, chest x rays, mental status examinations, and auscultatory findings.)

Motor function includes the ability to perform physical examinations, basic laboratory, diagnostic, and therapeutic procedures. These procedures include, but are not limited to: urinalysis, airway management, insertion of nasogastric tubes and urinary catheters, pelvic and rectal examinations, obstetrical maneuvers, suturing, venipuncture, and arterial blood draws.

Emotional and higher level-intellectual abilities must be demonstrated. These include aptitude for rapid problem solving; rational thought; visual-spatial comprehension; understanding, synthesizing and recalling materials; interpreting results of patient interactions, examinations and procedures; and ability to formulate diagnostic and treatment plans. Students must have the ability for sound judgment and be able to function under physically taxing and stressful situations such as overnight call and lengthy working hours.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for applicants with disabilities who can meet the requirements noted above. These accommodations must be accomplished without altering the essential requirements of our medical education.