

SOUTH COLLEGE ASHEVILLE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

5.A Technical Standards

The granting of a Master of Health Science (MHS) degree and completion of the program signifies that the student is prepared for employment as a physician assistant. In such a professional role, the physician assistant can provide medical services with the supervision of a Doctor of Medicine or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine in accordance with applicable laws of medical practice. The services must, for the safety and welfare of the patient, be of the same professional quality that would be rendered by the supervising physician.

The physician assistant must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. Candidates for the physician assistant profession must have somatic sensation and the functional use of the senses of vision and hearing. A candidate's diagnostic skills will also be lessened without the functional use of the senses of equilibrium, smell, and taste. Additionally, they must have sufficient exteroceptive sense (touch, pain, and temperature), and sufficient motor function to permit them to carry out the activities described in the sections that follow.

Candidates must be able to integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) employed, consistently, quickly, and accurately, and they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data. A candidate for the physician assistant profession must have abilities and skills of six varieties including observation, communication, motor, conceptual, integrative, and quantitative, and behavioral and social. Technological compensation can be made for some handicaps in certain of these areas, but such a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner.

5.A.1 General Abilities

The candidate is expected to possess functional use of the senses of vision, touch, hearing, taste, and smell. All data received by the senses must be integrated, analyzed, and synthesized in a consistent and accurate manner. In addition, the individual is expected to possess the ability to perceive pain, pressure, temperature, position, equilibrium, and movement. Furthermore, the individual must have the physical and emotional stamina and capacity to function in a competent manner, and consistent with these standards, in the classroom as well clinical and laboratory settings including settings that may involve heavy full-time workloads, long hours, and stressful situations.

5.A.2 Observational Ability

The candidate is expected to observe the patient accurately at a distance and close at hand and accurately assess health/illness alteration. Inherent in this observation process is the use of the senses and sufficient motor capability to carry out the necessary assessment activities.

5.A.3 Communication Ability

The candidate is expected to be able to effectively communicate verbally and non-verbally and to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity, and postures and to

perceive nonverbal communications. This requires the ability to read, write, and effectively utilize the English language. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively with patients and other professionals both orally and in written form.

5.A.4 Motor Ability

The candidate is expected to be able to perform gross and fine motor movements required to perform a complete physical examination (including genital examination). The candidate is expected to have the psychomotor skills necessary to perform or assist with procedures, treatments, administration of medication, managing of equipment, and emergency intervention. The candidate is expected to be able to maintain consciousness and equilibrium, and stamina to perform satisfactorily in clinical experiences.

The candidate should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. The candidate must be able to perform laboratory tests, work with scientific and other instruments and machinery, and perform essential skills and emergent treatment to patients. This includes, but is not limited to, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, the suturing of simple wounds, and simple obstetrical maneuvers. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of touch, vision, and hearing.

5.A.5 Critical Thinking Ability

The candidate is expected to have the ability to develop and refine problem-solving skills. This includes the ability to measure, calculate, analyze, and synthesize objective as well as subjective data and make decisions that reflect consistent and thoughtful deliberation and clinical judgment. In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures.

5.A.6 Interpersonal Abilities

The candidate is expected to have the emotional stability required to exercise sound judgment and complete assessment and intervention activities. The candidate is expected to establish rapport and maintain sensitive, interpersonal relationships with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds. The candidate is expected to have the flexibility to function effectively under stress. Concern for others, integrity, accountability, interest, and motivation are necessary personal qualities.

5.A.7 Behavioral and Social Attributes

A candidate must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients including but not limited to maintaining privacy in accordance with HIPAA regulations. The candidate must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. The candidate must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility and to learn to function in the face of the uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that will be

assessed during the admission and education process.

In addition to the abilities and skills set forth above, the candidate must possess the general physical health necessary for performing the duties of a physician assistant student without endangering the lives of patients and/or colleagues with whom the student might have contact. Candidates whose performance is impaired by abuse of alcohol or other substances are not suitable for admission, continuation, promotion, or graduation.