



**PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM  
Wilmington Campus**

*Student Essential Functions*

The following physical, cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors are encountered by students in training.  
These standards may vary depending on the specific area of practice.

<b><i>PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS</i></b>	<b><i>YES</i></b>	<b><i>NO</i></b>
<b><i>MOBILITY</i></b>		
Ability to exert 20-50 pounds of force when lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling		
Ability to bend, twist, stoop, and balance		
Ability to safely transfer a 150 pound patient from the bed to the wheelchair with maximal assist		
Ability to safely walk with patients and provide gait training with and without assistive devices		
Ability to use proper body mechanics for all skills related to physical therapy		
Ability to provide for the patient's safety in all physical therapy activities		
Ability to endure a 40 hour work week during their clinical education courses		
Ability to perform manual therapy techniques , manipulate goniometers and other physical therapy equipment		
<b><i>HEARING</i></b>		
Ability to hear normal conversation		
Ability to use a telephone		
Ability to use a stethoscope		
<b><i>SIGHT</i></b>		
Ability to observe a patient's response to treatment		
Ability to read and set parameters on physical therapy equipment		
Ability to observe and assess the environment for safety considerations		
Ability to gather information from medical records and professional literature		
<b><i>COGNITIVE/MENTAL FACTORS</i></b>	<b><i>YES</i></b>	<b><i>NO</i></b>
<b><i>PROBLEM-SOLVING / CRITICAL THINKING</i></b>		
Ability to recognize and solve problems		
Ability to communicate rationale or reasoning to justify decisions made		
Ability to consult with others to clarify and solve problems		
Ability to make appropriate judgments regarding patient care in a timely manner		
Ability to recognize potentially unsafe situations and react in an appropriate manner		
Ability to educate PTA students, aides, volunteers, patients, families, and caregivers		
<b><i>ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS</i></b>	<b><i>YES</i></b>	<b><i>NO</i></b>
<b><i>EXPOSURE TO BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS</i></b>		
Willingness to treat patients regardless of health condition or infectious state		
Ability to adhere to Standard Precautions		
<b><i>PSYCHOSOCIAL / BEHAVIORAL FACTORS</i></b>	<b><i>YES</i></b>	<b><i>NO</i></b>
<b><i>BEHAVIORAL SKILLS</i></b>		
Ability to recognize and respond appropriately to potentially dangerous situations		
Ability to uphold the American Physical Therapy Code of Ethics		
Ability to maintain patient confidentiality		
Ability to demonstrate the emotional health and stability required to fully utilize intellectual capabilities, demonstrate good judgment, and render physical therapy treatment		
Ability to practice professional, respectful physical touch across genders		
Ability to practice professional, respectful interaction with a patient who is partially disabled		

<b><i>PSYCHOSOCIAL / BEHAVIORAL FACTORS cont'd</i></b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b><i>INTERPERSONAL SKILLS</i></b>		
Ability to maintain professional demeanor in all clinical interactions		
Ability to communicate with others in a respectful and confident manner		
Ability to interact appropriately with individuals of all ages, genders, races, socio-economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds		
Ability to influence people and motivate others to achieve		
Ability to establish trust with patients, patient families, coworkers, and physicians		
Ability to work effectively with challenging and terminally ill patients		
Ability to respond effectively to unexpected experiences / situations		
Ability to delegate to others as needed		
Ability to be able to receive direction from supervisors		
<b><i>COMMUNICATION SKILLS</i></b>		
Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing in English		
Ability to modify communication (verbal and written) to meet the needs of different audiences such as patients, patient families, co-workers, and physicians		
Ability to recognize impact of non-verbal communication and modify accordingly		
Ability to report orally at team conferences		
Ability to prepare physician letters, summaries, reports, and medical documentation using prescribed format and conforming to all rules of English punctuation, grammar, diction, and style.		
Able to effectively use a computer to enhance communication, document using word processing, and operate other potential software programs for billing or scheduling		
<b><i>EFFECTIVE USE OF TIME AND RESOURCES</i></b>		
Ability to set priorities and reorganize when needed		
Ability to perform multiple tasks simultaneously		
Ability to cope with heavy workloads, patient demands, and changes in schedule		

If you have any questions or wish to discuss further the essential functions required of the PTA Program, please call Doug Huisenga, (302) 888-5292.

The Federal American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) bans discrimination of persons with disabilities. In keeping with this law, DTCC, Wilmington campus makes every effort to ensure quality education for all students. However, we feel obligated to inform students of the essential functions demanded by our program. If reasonable accommodations are necessary, it is the responsibility of the student to notify his/her counselor and the PTA program.

I have read and understand the Student Essential Functions of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

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**Student Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

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**Printed Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student ID #**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Counselor Signature)**  
**(recommended only if actively working with a counselor)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**REFERENCES:**

APTA Normative Model of PTA Education Version 99. Alexandria, VA: American Physical Therapy Association; 1999:3.

Christiana Care Health System Physical Demands Checklist for the Physical Therapy Department

Dictionary of Occupational Titles. Physical Therapist Assistant. Available from <http://www.occupationalinfo.org>. Accessed 02/17/05.

Ingram, D. Opinions of physical therapy education program directors on essential functions. Physical Therapy. 1997 Jan; 77(1):37-45.

May WW, Morgan BJ, Lemke JC, et al. Model for ability-based assessment in physical therapy education. J Phys Ther Educ. 1995;9(1):3-6.

SUNY Orange Physical Therapist Assistant Department Essential Functions. Available from <http://orange.cc.ny.us/pta/Essential.shtml>. Accessed 02/17/05.