



**PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM (PTA)  
George and Owens Campuses**

# Technical Standards

The Technical Standards identified are for students in the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program at the George and Owens campuses of Delaware Technical Community College. Prospective students should read and evaluate their personal capabilities to meet these standards. As a PTA student, you will be required to perform specific tasks as identified by the PTA Program's accrediting body, CAPTE (Commission for American Physical Therapy Educators) and physical therapy professional organization, APTA (American Physical Therapy Association).

The following physical, cognitive, behavioral, and environmental technical standards are encountered by PTA students in training and mirror the Essential Functions required of employees in the physical therapy profession. For students to be successful in the PTA Program, they must be able to perform the following standards with or without reasonable accommodations:

- Academic ability to earn a grade of C (70% mastery learning) or higher in all PTA courses
- Ability to achieve competency level performance, in all physical therapy procedures which include, but are not limited to, the technical standards listed below

The goal of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program is to reflect the skills and competencies a program graduate will be expected to demonstrate proficiency on the job in their chosen career as a Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA). It is in your best interest, as a potential PTA student to read each standard and respond with a check mark indicating that you understand the standard.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss further the Technical Standards required of PTA program students, please contact the PTA Program Coordinator at Owens (302) 259-6676 or George (302) 657-5131. If reasonable accommodations are necessary, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the DTCC campus ADA coordinator at Owens/Georgetown (302) 259-6049 and Wilmington/George (302) 434-5553.

**Please understand that a career as a physical therapist assistant can be physically challenging, stressful, and at times very strenuous. Therefore, understanding the Technical Standards you will be required to perform is critically important to your student success in the PTA Program.**

**Program Graduate Competencies (PGC):  
(The competencies every graduate will develop specific to his/her major.)**

1. Work under the supervision of a physical therapist in an ethical, legal, safe and effective manner.
2. Implement PT interventions within the plan of care.
3. Perform specific data collection techniques related to the plan of care.
4. Demonstrate effective communication in the physical therapy environment.
5. Formulate appropriate judgments and modification to the program within the patient's plan of care.
6. Demonstrate effective interactions and professional behaviors.
7. Participate in career development activities.
8. Exhibit a commitment to the physical therapy profession, physical therapy patients, and the community.

## PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

<b>MOBILITY</b>	<b>Read &amp; Understand Standard</b>
Ability to exert a minimum 35 pounds of force when lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling	
Ability to bend, twist, stoop, balance, and maneuver in limited space	
Ability to safely transfer a patient from multiple surfaces with maximal assist (student PTA assists 75 percent or more of the transfer)	
Ability to walk long distance, to stand for prolonged periods of time, and safely walk with patients and provide gait training and fall prevention 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 perform CPR and provide routine emergency care	
Ability to physically and emotionally endure a 40 hour work week during their assigned clinical education courses/affiliations	
Ability to have manual dexterity to perform manual therapy techniques, manipulate goniometers and other physical therapy equipment	
<b>HEARING</b>	<b>Read &amp; Understand Standard</b>
Ability to hear normal conversation without viewing a speaker's face and to hear and monitor alarms, emergency signals, cues from automated external defibrillator (AED) with auditory aids	
Ability to use a telephone with auditory aids for orders	
Ability to use a stethoscope to hear blood pressure, heart, lung and abdominal sounds with auditory aids	
<b>SIGHT</b>	<b>Read &amp; Understand Standard</b>
Ability to observe a patient's response to treatment with visual acuity with corrective lenses to identify color changes in skin, respiratory movement in clients	
Ability to read, monitor and set parameters on physical therapy equipment and modalities	
Ability to observe and assess the environment for safety considerations	
Ability to gather information from medical records, hand written physician orders and professional literature	
<b>TACTILE</b>	<b>Read &amp; Understand Standard</b>
Ability to feel differences in skin temperature, to perform physical assessment (i.e., palpation of bony landmarks and soft tissue, and pulse points) and technical skills such as massage, percussion, vibration and CPR	
<b>COGNITIVE/MENTAL FACTORS</b>	
<b>PROBLEM-SOLVING / CRITICAL THINKING</b>	<b>Read &amp; Understand Standard</b>
Ability to recognize and solve problems by critically thinking in order to make decisions which includes measuring, calculating, reasoning, analyzing, prioritizing, and synthesizing data	
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	

## ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

### EXPOSURE TO BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

Read &  
Understand  
Standard

Willingness to treat patients regardless of health condition or infectious state

Ability to adhere to Universal Standard Precautions and wear protective equipment (safety glasses, face mask/shield, ear plugs, protective clothing and gloves)

## PSYCHOSOCIAL / BEHAVIORAL FACTORS

### BEHAVIORAL SKILLS

Read &  
Understand  
Standard

Ability to recognize and respond appropriately to potentially dangerous situations

Ability to uphold the American Physical Therapy Code of Ethical Conduct for the PTA  
[http://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/About\\_Us/Policies/Ethics/StandardsEthicalConductPTA.pdf?navID=10737423626](http://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/About_Us/Policies/Ethics/StandardsEthicalConductPTA.pdf?navID=10737423626)

Ability to maintain patient confidentiality (HIPPA)  
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/index.html>

Ability to demonstrate emotional stability in a dynamic and stressful classroom, lab, and clinical environment with heavy workloads, productivity requirements, and challenging patients

Ability to apply appropriate professional hands on physical therapy interventions, to individuals of all ages, genders, and races, and from all socio-economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.

Ability to practice professional draping and respectful interaction to maintain patient modesty

### INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Read &  
Understand  
Standard

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 and follow direction from supervisors

### COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Read &  
Understand  
Standard

Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in written form in English through interaction with clients, family, and healthcare members

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 medical documentation, billing and/or scheduling

Ability to write clearly and correctly on client's record for legal documentation

### EFFECTIVE USE OF TIME AND RESOURCES

Read &  
Understand  
Standard

Ability to set priorities and reorganize when needed in dynamic situations and clinical settings

Ability to perform multiple tasks simultaneously

Ability to cope with heavy workloads, patient demands, and changes in schedule

The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) bans discrimination of persons with disabilities. In keeping with this law, Delaware Tech makes every effort to ensure quality education for all students. However, we feel obligated to inform students of the technical standards/essential functions demanded by the physical therapy profession.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss further the Technical Standards required of PTA program students, please contact the PTA Program Coordinator at Owens (302) 259-6676 or George (302) 657-5131.

If reasonable accommodations are necessary, it is the responsibility of the student to notify and meet with the ADA coordinator at the appropriate campus

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>George Campus</b> Stephanie Spadaccini (302) 434-5553 <a href="mailto:stephanie.spadaccini@dtcc.edu">stephanie.spadaccini@dtcc.edu</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Owens Campus</b> Shannon Wright (302) 259-6049 <a href="mailto:swright1@dtcc.edu">swright1@dtcc.edu</a></p>
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Delaware Technical Community College is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution and complies with all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**REFERENCES:**

APTA Normative Model of PTA Education Version 2007.

Employer Obligations under the ADA, American Physical Therapy Association; 3/26/2011. Retrieved from:

<http://www.apta.org/Payment/VA/ADA/EmployerObligations/>

Summary Report for with clinical Physical Therapist Assistant. Retrieved from <http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/31-2021.00#Abilities>

Christiana Care Health System, "PEEPS Principles". Retrieved from: <https://vnct.christianacare.org/Peeps/DanaInfo=inet+PEEPS%20Principles-FINAL.htm>



**George/Owens Campuses**

**Technical Standards**

**Physical Therapist Assistant Program**

# Student Agreement Form

I understand and acknowledge these same Technical Standards are applicable to all individuals enrolled in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program of Delaware Technical Community College.

My signature below indicates I have read and understand the Technical Standards required for individuals who enroll in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program of Delaware Technical Community College.

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Student's Signature

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Date

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Student's Printed Name

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Student's ID Number