

Essential Functions of the Physical Therapist Assistant

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ensures the opportunity to pursue programmatic admission at public institutions for qualified applicants with a disability. To determine whether an individual is a qualified applicant for programs or services, the ADA states that applicants must meet essential eligibility requirements.

Graduates of the PTA program are expected to be qualified to enter the profession of physical therapy. It is the responsibility of each student with a disability to disclose his/her disability and to request those accommodations he/she feels are reasonable and are needed to execute the essential requirements described. The procedure for disclosure and for requesting accommodation is located on the Chatt Tech website and in the Student Support Services section of this handbook.

Upon the approved request of persons with disabilities, Chatt Tech will provide reasonable accommodations. Such reasonable accommodations should be designed to help the student meet learning outcomes without eliminating essential program elements. Chatt Tech is unable to make accommodations that impose an undue burden, present a threat to the health or safety of the individual or others, or fundamentally alter the nature of the curriculum including didactic component, laboratory sessions, and clinical experiences.

The following performance standards are set forth so that all program students will understand the essential job requirements of the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA). All students will be held to the same standards to perform the essential functions of their positions with or without reasonable accommodations. The following performance standards were developed utilizing actual Job Descriptions from employers which are representative of the typical PTA workplace.

The Physical Therapist Assistant Essential Functions include:

OBSERVATION

- Independently observe a patient accurately.

COMMUNICATION

- Utilize appropriate and culturally competent verbal, non-verbal, and written communication with classmates, physical therapists, patients, family, and all healthcare team members.
- Communicate effectively and rapidly in emergency situations.
- Recognize and promptly respond to emotional communications such as sadness, worry, agitation, pain, and comprehension of therapist communication.
- Use therapeutic communication such as attending, clarifying, coaching, facilitating, verbal cueing, tactile cueing, and touching.

- Utilize electronic and computerized communication including reading and comprehending written information on the computer, and entering written information into the computer (such as an Electronic Medical Record system).
- Utilize electronic communication for documentation in a medical record, administrative tasks, billing and coding, and communication with other health care providers.
- Ability to read and review written communication and images including electronic, paper, or other means, and identify critical information necessary for job function.

SENSORIMOTOR

- Perform a variety of gross and fine motor skills required to perform the job of a physical therapist assistant in a wide variety of clinical settings including:
 - Physical ability to maintain and assume a variety of positions including sitting for up to 2 hours continuously, frequent standing, walking, bending, squatting, kneeling, stair climbing, reaching forward, reaching overhead, turning and movement of the trunk and neck in all directions
 - Have sufficient endurance to continue performing a variety of exertional activities for up to 8-12 hours with occasional rest breaks.
 - Perform manual material handling and manipulation of various sizes and weights including lifting and transferring patients, guarding patients during gait training on level surfaces/uneven surfaces/ramps/stairs, pushing and pulling to provide resistance and/or to assist in maneuvering patients.
 - Strength, balance, and endurance to safely, reliably and efficiently perform physical therapy interventions such as manual therapy, exercise instruction, or providing physical assistance.
 - Tactile ability to apply appropriate gradient of physical force and feedback during interventions to meet the patient's needs or goals. This includes (but is not limited to) palpation, manual muscle testing, manual resistance, massage, tactile cueing, and providing physical support.
 - Exhibit speed, strength, coordination, and endurance for safe handling of self, classmates and patients, such as during gait training, transfers, or manual interventions.
 - Respond quickly to emergency situations by lifting/pushing/pulling patients, such as applying force to perform CPR, preventing a patient fall, or performing emergency transfers.
 - Visual and auditory acuity to be able to observe and assess patient status and patient response to interventions.
 - Accurate physical manipulation and reading of dials, sensors, switches, and alerts on all therapeutic equipment.

INTELLECTUAL/CONCEPTUAL

- Rapidly problem solve, learn and reason, and respond to unexpected situations.
- Rapidly collect, interpret, and integrate patient data from a variety of sources including (but not limited to) written, verbal, and observation.
- Identify patient response to treatment and modify treatment promptly and appropriately, in response to both expected and unexpected outcomes. This includes (but is not limited to) response to pain, fatigue, unsteadiness, patient feedback, or change in medical status.
- Demonstrate responsibility for lifelong professional growth and development.
- Perform interventions in a manner appropriate to the patient's status and desired goals.
- Complete interventions and other job tasks (such as documentation or chart review) efficiently and within time allotted. This includes meeting typical productivity requirements.

JUDGMENT

- Recall, retain, and apply patient or clinical information necessary or provide safe and effective care, such as patient medical or physical restrictions or conditions.
- Practice in a safe, ethical and legal manner.
- Respond appropriately in emergency situations.
- Demonstrate management skills, including organizing, supervising, delegating, and working as a member of a multidisciplinary team.

BEHAVIOR/SOCIAL

- Demonstrate timely and prompt completion of all responsibilities. This includes arriving on time and completing scheduled assignments and/or clinical duties on time.
- Exhibit compassion, caring, empathy, integrity and respect for all individuals.
- Adapt to change, display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainty and stress.
- Emotional health required for the full use of their intellectual abilities.
- Maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, students, faculty, staff and other professionals in academic and clinical environments including highly stressful situations.
- Maintain a therapeutic environment which promotes patient confidence, maintains privacy, and facilitates therapeutic interventions.
- Maintain good hygiene of self and work environment.

Essential Functions of the Physical Therapist Assistant

I have read and reviewed the *Essential Functions for the Physical Therapist Assistant*, found in the PTA Program Handbook, and I declare that I understand that these are the essential job functions of a Physical Therapist Assistant. I understand that graduates of the PTA program are expected to be qualified to enter the profession of physical therapy.

I further state that I understand that if I wish to receive accommodations, it is my responsibility to disclose a need for said accommodations directly to Disability Services as described above. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the essential functions.

Student Name (Print):

Student Signature:

Date:
