

The candidate for the Clarkson College Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program should consider the following essential requirements. The PTA is a paraprofessional in physical therapy, providing physical therapy interventions after a physical therapist has evaluated the patient and established a treatment plan. The following standards reflect reasonable expectations of the PTA student for the performance of common physical therapy functions. These standards do not reflect what may be required for employment of the graduate PTA. The PTA curriculum provides the general, technical and clinical education required to enable the student to independently deliver entry-level clinical services in an array of health settings. All students must meet the minimum criteria established by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education and the PTA program at Clarkson College without regard to student preference or choice for specialty care delivery in the future.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ensures qualified applicants to public institutions the ability to pursue program admission, however, the applicant must meet essential requirements. All students admitted to the PTA program will be held to the same standards with or without reasonable accommodations.

In adopting these standards, the Clarkson College PTA program is mindful of the patient's right to safe and quality health care by our students and graduates. The PTA student must be able to apply the knowledge and skills necessary to function in a broad variety of clinical situations while providing the spectrum of physical therapy treatments. The following functions are considered essential requirements for admission, retention and graduation in the Clarkson College PTA program. The purpose of these functions is to ensure PTA students provide safe, competent and timely care to patients receiving physical therapy services. Each candidate in this program must have the ability to learn and perform the following requirements:

**MOTOR SKILLS**

Candidate must have sufficient motor capabilities and strength to execute the movements and skills required to provide safe and effective physical therapy interventions. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Coordination, speed and agility to assist and safely guard (protect) patients who are walking exercising or performing other rehabilitation activities.
2. Ability to move or position patients and equipment, which involves lifting, carrying and pulling.
3. Ability to guide, resist and assist patients, or to provide emergency care, which involves any combination of bending, standing, kneeling, sitting, walking or crawling for 90 minutes without rest.
4. Ability to perform—with safe and proper body mechanics—the transfer and gait training techniques used during physical therapy interventions with patients.
5. Ability and dexterity to manipulate devices and treat patients in physical therapy, which may involve adjusting gauges, dials, small nuts/bolts, equipment settings, etc.
6. Ability to administer CPR.

Student initials \_\_\_\_\_

**SENSORY SKILLS**

Candidate must possess the ability to observe and participate in demonstrations and in physical measures applied to patients. This includes the ability to obtain information in classroom, laboratory or clinical settings through observation, auscultation, palpation and other measures, including but not limited to:

1. Visual ability (corrected as necessary) to recognize patients physiological status and interpret facial expressions and body language, identify normal and abnormal patterns of movement, to read or set parameters on physical therapy equipment, to discriminate color changes and assess the environment.

2. Auditory ability (corrected as necessary) to recognize voice sounds, voices under protective garb, equipment signals, calls for assistance up to 10 feet away, measurement of vital signs in various clinical settings.
3. Tactile ability to palpate a pulse and to detect changes or abnormalities of surface texture, skin temperature, body segment contour, muscle tone and joint movement.
4. Sufficient position, movement and balance sensations to assist and safely guard (protect) patients who are walking, exercising or performing other rehabilitation activities.

Student initials \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Candidate must be able to utilize effective and efficient communications in the English language with peers, faculty, patients and their families, and other health care providers. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Ability to read at a competency level that allows one to safely carry out the essential functions of an assignment (examples: handwritten chart data, printed equipment operations manuals, etc.).
2. Ability to effectively communicate (interpret and express) information regarding the status, safety and rehabilitation of patients.
3. Ability to effectively communicate (verbally and document) with patients/families, health care professionals, community members and with reimbursement payers.
4. Ability to communicate and document effectively via computer.
5. Ability to recognize, interpret and respond to nonverbal behavior of self and others.

Student initials \_\_\_\_\_

### BEHAVIOR SKILLS

Candidate must be capable of exercising good judgment, developing empathetic and therapeutic relationships with patients and others, and tolerating close and direct physical contact with a broad and very diverse population of laboratory colleagues and patients. This will include people of all ages, races, socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, as well as individuals with weight disorders, physical disfigurement and medical or mental health problems. This also includes, but is not limited to:

1. Demonstrate appropriate interpersonal skills and foster cooperative and collegial relationships with classmates, colleagues, instructors, other health care providers, and multiple patients and their families at the same time.
2. Ability to work effectively with lab partners, patients, families and others under stressful conditions, including but not limited to medically or emotionally unstable individuals, situations requiring rapid adaptations, the provision of CPR or other emergency interventions.
3. Manage physically taxing workloads and emotional stress.
4. Ability to prioritize multiple tasks, integrate information and make decisions in rapidly changing situations/environments without warning. Show flexibility and coping skills to function in fast-paced clinical situations with multiple psychosocial issues presenting.

Student initials \_\_\_\_\_

### COGNITIVE SKILLS

Candidate must possess sufficient abilities in the areas of calculation, critical problem solving, reasoning, and judgment to be able to comprehend and process information within the time frame of a session of physical therapy interventions. Candidate must be able to prioritize, organize and attend to tasks and responsibilities efficiently. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Ability to collect, interpret and analyze written, verbal and observed data about patients.
2. Ability to prioritize multiple tasks, integrate information and make decisions.
3. Ability to observe, measure and interpret normal and abnormal patient responses to physical therapy interventions and appropriately modify treatment procedures.
4. Ability to act safely and ethically in the physical therapy lab and clinic.

Student initials \_\_\_\_\_

## CLINICAL REQUIREMENTS

This educational program includes clinical rotations with the candidate providing physical therapy interventions in clinic settings under the supervision of physical therapists. The candidate must have the capacity to complete eight-hour days, and 40-hour weeks of participation in clinical education experiences. The clinical education experience provides for a truly integrative measure of the candidate's capabilities and requires that the candidate consistently demonstrate entry-level performance of the abilities of the physical therapist assistant.

**Note: These requirements do not reflect (1) the ability of the graduate to pass state licensing examinations, nor (2) functions which may be required for employment of the graduate. Students seeking admission to the PTA program must initial and sign showing they are capable of meeting the essential functions described with or without reasonable accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student with disabilities to request reasonable accommodations necessary to meet the essential requirements. If accommodation is requested, the student must provide documentation of his/her disability and specify his/her request for accommodation.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, attest that I have read and understand the essential requirements  
STUDENT FULL NAME, PRINTED For admission into the Physical Therapist Assistant program at  
Clarkson College. I believe to the best of my knowledge that I have the ability to learn and perform the mentioned requirements.

### CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Without reasonable accommodations
- With reasonable accommodations (further documentation is attached)

\_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICANT SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**Return application materials to:  
Clarkson College Admissions Office  
101 South 42 Street Omaha, NE 68131-2739**

Compiled from Technical Standards and Essential Requirements documents from the following academic institutions:  
Capital Community College; Connecticut Community Technical College; East Carolina University, Greenville, NC; Fayetteville Technical Community College; Greenville Technical College; Guilford Technical Community College; Manchester Community College; Nash Community College; Naugatuck Valley Community College; Northwestern Community-Technical College; Tunxis Community-Technical College; and Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC.

Additional resources:

Ingram D. "Essential Functions Required of Physical Therapist Assistant and Physical Therapy Students." *Journal of Physical Therapy Education*. 1994; 8:57-59.  
Ingram D. "Opinions of Physical Therapy Education Program Directors on Essential Functions." *Physical Therapy*. 1997; 77:37-46.