

Technical Standards & Essential Functions for Physician Assistant Students

Mississippi State University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and has determined that certain technical standards must be met by prospective candidates and students. A candidate for the MPAS degree must possess aptitude, abilities, and skills in the five areas discussed below. Reasonable accommodation will be made for otherwise qualified persons with disabilities. All individuals must be able to perform these functions independently; therefore, third parties cannot be used to assist students in accomplishing curricular requirements in the five skill areas specified below.

The physician assistant master of health science degree (MPAS) signifies that the holder is prepared for entry into the practice of medicine. It follows that the graduate must have the knowledge, skills and abilities to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. It is essential for good patient care to require minimum standards for the education of the physician assistant.

In the education of physician assistant students, the University must judge not only the scholastic accomplishments but also considers the student's current physical and emotional status, cumulative and progressive disability and drug-induced impairments that may pose obstacles to the safe application of the student's knowledge and skills or prevent effective interaction with patients.

Physician assistant students are reviewed individually and on a case-by-case basis, using the factors listed below. In accordance with University policy and as delineated by federal and state law, the University does not discriminate in admissions, educational programs or employment against any individual on the basis of that individual's disability and will make good faith efforts at providing reasonable accommodation as required.

Physician assistant students must possess the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze and synthesize data. They must have functional use of the senses of vision, hearing, equilibrium, and taste. Their exteroceptor (touch, pain and temperature) and proprioceptor (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis, and vibratory) senses must be sufficiently intact to enable them to carry out all the activities required to complete the activities described below. PA students must have sufficient motor function capabilities to meet the demands of the PA program and the demands of the total patient care.

Students in the Mississippi State University Physician Assistant Program must possess ability, aptitude and skills in these areas: observation, communication, motor, intellectual, behavioral/social and physical demands.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

This description defines the capabilities that are necessary for an individual to successfully complete the Mississippi State University physician assistant curricula.

Observation and Sensation

The PA student must possess sufficient visual, auditory, and tactile sensation to receive appropriate information in the classroom, laboratory, and other educational and clinical settings. Sensation must be satisfactory to receive verbal and nonverbal communications from patients and others, and to perform inspection, auscultation, and palpation techniques during the physical examination.

Communication

The PA student must be able to speak, hear, and observe patients, family members, and other clinicians. This includes expressive and receptive modes of verbal, nonverbal, and written communication. The student must have the ability to accurately assess receptive communication in order to make appropriate and timely responses. The student must be able to communicate attentively, effectively, and sensitively to others.

Motor Functions

Students must have sufficient strength and coordination to perform the activities required of a physician assistant. These include but are not limited to performing a physical examination utilizing diagnostic instruments and techniques in palpation and percussion. Students must have sufficient stamina to sit, stand, and move within classroom, laboratory, examination rooms, treatment rooms, and operating rooms for long periods of time. The student must have sufficient coordination to move about patient care environments, and sufficient dexterity to use common medical instruments. Students must be able to arrange for transportation between educational and clinical settings.

Intellectual Capability

Clinical problem solving and reasoning requires these intellectual abilities and encompass those to accurately measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, learn, and retain information and make decisions in a timely manner. Students must be able to comprehend two and three-dimensional structures, and must be able to understand diagnostic testing and treatment regimens.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

Individuals must possess the emotional health required for the appropriate use of their intellectual and mental abilities, including logical thinking, good judgment, impulse control, empathy, interest, and motivation. These abilities should be sufficient to assure the development and maintenance of therapeutic relationships with patients and those who care for them. Individuals must be able to maintain emotional health despite stress, uncertainty, and physically taxing workloads and to adapt to changing situations while handling the responsibilities associated with medical education and patient care.

Mississippi State University will consider for admission, progression, and graduation individuals who demonstrate the knowledge and the ability to perform or learn to perform the skills described in this document. Individuals will be assessed not only on their scholastic accomplishments, but also on their physical and emotional capacities to meet the requirements of the school's curriculum and to graduate as skilled and effective practitioners of medicine. Therefore, the following technical requirements apply.

1. The ability to observe and participate in experiments in the basic sciences
2. The ability to analyze, synthesize, extrapolate, solve problems, and reach diagnostic and therapeutic judgments in a timely manner
3. The sufficient use of the senses of vision, hearing, and the somatic sensation necessary to perform a physical examination
4. The ability to establish and maintain professional relationships with patients, faculty, and peers

5. The ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with patients, and colleagues
6. The ability to perform routine laboratory tests and diagnostic procedures
7. The ability to perform appropriately in emergency situations
8. The ability to display good judgment in the assessment and treatment of patients