

# San Diego Mesa College

## PTA Essential Functions

### Background:

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 list of Essential Functions reflects reasonable expectations of the PTA student for the performance of common physical therapy functions in a safe and competent manner.

### Policy:

A student must be capable of performing the following list of essential functions in a timely manner while enrolled in the Physical Therapist Assistant program, with or without reasonable accommodations. The PTA program fully supports the provision of reasonable accommodations to students with special needs in order to achieve program objectives. All adaptive equipment and associated cost is the responsibility of the student.

### Motor Skills

A student must be able to:

- Sit or stand in class or clinic for up to 10 hours per day.
- Move or position patients and equipment, which involves lifting, carrying, pulling, and guiding weights up to and including 100 pounds.
- Demonstrate proper postures, body mechanics, ergonomics, and lifting techniques.
- Comfortably touch or be touched by another person in an appropriate and professional way.
- Palpate anatomical structures and handle injured body parts without causing injury to the patient.
- Give manual resistance to a patient's arm, leg, or trunk during exercise.
- Move with adequate agility and speed to ensure patient safety.
- Walk and balance well enough to help patients walk and transfer with or without equipment, while preventing injury to patient and self.
- Safely grasp and manipulate small objects and set dials on electrical equipment.
- Use equipment that emits electrical, ultrasonic, and thermal energy in the safe and competent treatment of patients.

- Competently perform and supervise cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillation (AED) using guidelines issued by the American Heart Association.

## **Observational and Sensory Skills**

A student must be able to:

- Demonstrate appropriate observations skills that will enable the student to discern normal from abnormal in order to determine a safe and appropriate course of action.
- Observe demonstrations, equipment, and patients at a distance and up close for the purpose of quick, appropriate assessment and treatment.
- Use visual, auditory, and tactile senses to observe patients and collect and interpret data.
- Read and interpret equipment dials, patient charts, professional literature, and notes from patients, physicians, and other health professionals.
- Respond to warning sounds, machine alarms, and calls for help.
- Have the ability to identify and respond immediately to patients' non-verbal cues (facial expressions and grimaces) by taking quick, decisive action.

## **Communication Skills**

A student must be able to:

- Demonstrate excellent communication skills in English in verbal and written (including electronic) formats with faculty, peers, patients, families, and other health professionals.
- Recognize and respond to verbal communication, auditory timers and equipment alarms immediately and appropriately in an environment with a moderate level of background noise.
- Initiate conversations, stay on topic and on task with patient treatment in a clinical setting with a moderate level of distraction.
- Record thoughts legibly and clearly for written assignments and tests.
- Legibly record/document patient care notes and communications in standard medical charts (including electronic medical records) in hospital/clinical settings in a timely manner and consistent with the acceptable norms of clinical settings.

## **Intellectual and Conceptual Skills**

A student must be able to:

- Measure, calculate, reason, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize complex information.
- Demonstrate good cognitive, memory, and problem solving skills in the classroom and clinical settings in an efficient and timely manner.
- Comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures.
- Meet class standards for successful course completion.
- Collect, interpret, prioritize, and integrate data about patients.
- Stay focused on a specific task for a minimum of one hour.
- Think abstractly.
- Have the ability to generalize information from one task to another and apply it appropriately.

## **Behavioral and Social Attitudes**

A student must be able to:

- Recognize and respond appropriately to individuals of all ages, genders, and races, and from all socio-economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.
- Effectively cope with the stress of heavy workloads, demanding patients, and life-threatening clinical situations.
- Exercise sound, professional judgment and flexibility to meet the demands of changing educational and clinical environments.
- Utilize common sense, compassion, integrity, honesty, sincere concern and respect for others, interpersonal skills, and self-motivation.
- Must possess coping skills to accept constructive criticism, talk in front of groups of varying sizes, and use effective time management strategies.
- Recognize and respond appropriately to potentially hazardous situations.
- Demonstrate the physical and emotional capacity to work a 40-hour week while on clinical affiliations.
- Behave in an ethically sound, competent, compassionate, and professional manner in the classroom and in the clinic as outlined in the Standards of Ethical Conduct of the American Physical Therapy Association.

**Procedure:**

The Essential Functions Policy is posted on the PTA program website and located in the *PTA Policy Manual*. Students will be given the Essential Functions for PTA Students form as part of their documentation upon acceptance into the program and will sign the associated acknowledgement form.

Students who have concerns about the ability to perform any of the essential functions should contact the PTA program director and Disables Students Programs and Services (DSPS).

Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. (See Allied Health Policy Manual, Section K) Students who cannot meet the essential functions with reasonable accommodations will receive career counseling.

By signing below I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree that I am capable of performing all of the Essential Functions indicated above.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_