

Essential Functions Mirror for Potential PTA Students

The field of Physical Therapy is demanding. Physical Therapist Assistant students are required to fulfill all program requirements. HCCC Physical Therapist Assistant Program has identified the following listed skills as essential to functioning as a PTA student and graduate PTA. Essential Functions are defined as skills that you need to bring into the program in order to be successful as a PTA student and after graduation employable as a PTA. These skills are different from those that you acquire through your learning objectives during your course of studies at HCCC. An inability to perform any of the functions listed below (with or without accommodation) indicates that you do not have the prerequisite skills to be successful in this profession and that Physical Therapist Assistant should not be your field of choice.

You will be asked to examine yourself in five significant areas. This list is not all-inclusive and may not reflect all that is required to work as a graduate PTA. A brief summary of each area follows:

Sensory/Observation Skills: you need to have the ability to see, hear and touch in order to perform program expectations

Communication Skills: you need to have the ability to communicate in English both orally and in writing in order to perform program expectations. You must have sufficient communication skills (nonverbal, speech, reading and writing) to interact with individuals and communicate their needs promptly and effectively.

Motor Skills: you must have motor control to allow you to lift, carry, adjust and use equipment, obtain and maintain CPR & First Aid certification, motor control to provide for patients safety, and the physical endurance to work a 40-hour work week

Intellectual Conceptual Skills: you must have the ability to pass courses in a rigorous program, be able to attain a grade of C+ (75%) or better in all of your PTA classes and C (70%) or better in all of your science classes and to be able to manage your time, attend to classes and functions for 60 minutes, the ability to concentrate with distractions, demonstrate critical thinking skills and problem solving skills, prioritize, collect, analyze and assess data, perform complex tasks or follow complex instructions

Behavioral Social Skills: you must interact appropriately with all individuals regardless of age, sex, race, socioeconomic, religious, cultural backgrounds or body odors and you must demonstrate good judgment, maturity, maintain confidentiality and possess the emotional health and stability and recognize and project appropriate body language.

Now take a look in “your mirror” and honestly answer the following questions before considering this profession. Think about the activities listed below. Make sure you are able to do the activities listed with or without accommodation. If you know that you will need an accommodation be prepared during your initial weeks in the PTA program to identify the accommodations that you require in order to be successful performing each task.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS REQUIRED FOR INCOMING HCCC PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT STUDENTS

Sensory /Observation Skills	Yes	No	I can do this if I have this accommodation
Visual acuity: Student must possess the visual ability to observe a patient’s response to treatment, read or set parameters on equipment, observe and assess the environment, gather information from medical records or professional literature			
Hearing acuity: Student must possess the auditory ability to hear normal conversation, hear telephone conversation, hear sounds with stethoscope, and hear equipment timers or alarms.			
Tactile ability: Student must be comfortable with tactile contact, discriminate objects/textures by touch, palpate surface anatomy, palpate pulses, and detect skin temperature			
Student must be comfortable with tactile contact			
<p>Examples of Use in program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment: student must be able to use equipment to take a blood pressure, pulse rate and breathe sounds; must be able to adjust equipment, read goniometer. • Touch: Student must touch and be touched e.g. palpation, massage by other students, patients, therapists 			
Function: Communication	Yes	No	I can do this if I have this accommodation
Student must speak English			
Student must read English			
Student must write in English (good knowledge of grammar, spelling)			
Student must be able to observe and recognize body language			
<p>Examples of Use in program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must complete extensive reading assignments, write reports, document treatments, interact with peers, faculty, clinical faculty • Students must react to body language and demonstrate awareness of their own body language 			

Function: Motor Skills	Yes	No	I can do this if I have this accommodation
student must stand (with good balance)			
student must walk (with good balance)			
student must sit (with good balance)			
student must carry 25+ lbs			
student must push/pull 100+ lbs			
student must bend (with good balance)			
student must crouch(with good balance)			
student must kneel(with good balance)			
student must crawl(with good balance)			
student must be able to floor sit(with good balance)			
student must be able to grasp: firm/strong and lightly			
student must possess finger dexterity to adjust equipment knobs, adjust wheel chairs			
student must be able to reach forward			
student must be able to reach overhead			
Student must have coordination of hand, wrist and fingers; eye-hand coordination; eye-foot coordination.			
<p>Examples of Use in program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student must have the motor control necessary to safely transfer a 150 lb. Patient from bed to chair with maximum assist • Student must have the motor control to safely walk with patients and provide gait training; protect patient at all times • Student must be able to obtain and maintain CPR and first aid certification • Student must be able to use good body mechanics for all Physical Therapy Skills • Student needs the physical endurance to work a 40-hour week on clinical affiliations. • Student must be able to apply manual resistance to manually muscle test strength 			
Function: Intellectual Conceptual Skills	Yes	No	I can do this if I have this accommodation
Reasoning – Student must deal with abstract and concrete variables, define problems, collect data, establish facts, draw valid conclusions			
Student must interpret instructions provided orally, written or schedule format			
Student must use problem solving skills to solve/deal with unexpected situations			
Student must carry out written or oral one to two step instructions and carry out tasks over time			
Student must be able to generalize instructions from one situation to another			

Student must be able to perform simple mathematic techniques: add, subtract, multiply and divided whole numbers and fractions, calculate time, make simple measurements			
Student must comprehend manuals, instructions for equipment maintenance, safety rules and procedures, medical and educational charts, technical literature and articles, and textbook reading assignments			
Student must be able to proof read words and numbers and make observations of differences in copy			
Student must prepare reports using prescribed format and make entry in medical and educational charts			
Student must conform to all rules of punctuation, spelling and grammar			
Student must demonstrate the ability to maintain a work pace appropriate to a given workload			
<p>Examples of Use in program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must attain 75% or a “C+” or better in all PTA core classes • Must attain 70% or a “C” or better in all science classes • Must maintain a 3.0 average in the program to go out on your final clinical rotation • Prioritize tasks, integrate information, make decisions • Collect, interpret , assesses data about patients 			
Function: Behavioral Social Skills	Yes	No	I can do this if I have this accommodation
Student must demonstrate social skills: ability to engage in face to face conversation, making eye contact and using appropriate body language			
Student must demonstrate dependability, manage time effectively, follow through with commitments and responsibilities			
Student must have a professional presentation (dress, body language, verbal style) that is accepted by peers, faculty, clients, and employers			
Student must demonstrate initiative: be a self starter with projects and tasks, communication and in searching out resources			
Student must demonstrate empathy i.e. being sensitive and responding to the feelings and behaviors of others			
Student must demonstrate cooperation and be able to work effectively with others			
Student must demonstrate organization skills: prioritize needs, tasks, responsibilities and working space			

Student must accept supervision and have the ability to give and receive constructive feedback and modify behavior accordingly			
<p>Examples of Use in program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working effectively in groups, group projects, assignments, activities • Working with others in a culturally diverse society • Complete all assignments in a timely fashion • Recognize and respond to potentially dangerous situations • Maintain patient confidentiality • Possess and demonstrate emotional health and stability to fully use intellectual capabilities, use good judgment • Adhere to the HCCC program expectations in class and clinical settings as described in the orientation handbook and fieldwork manual 			