

**PHYSICAL THERAPY  
TECHNICAL STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE FOR APPLICANTS**

**NOTE:** This information should be reviewed and retained by the applicant.

The granting of a masters degree to a physical therapy student signifies that the holder is an individual prepared for employment as a PT. In such a professional role the physical therapist can provide medical services in accordance with the applicable laws of practice. The physical therapist must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care.

Candidates for the physical therapy profession must have somatic sensation and the functional use of the senses of vision and hearing. Candidates' diagnostic skills will also be lessened without the functional use of the senses of equilibrium, smell and taste. Additionally, they must have sufficient exteroceptive sense (touch, pain, and temperature), sufficient proprioceptive sense (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis, and vibratory) and sufficient motor function to permit them to carry out the activities described in the sections that follow. They must be able to integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) employed, consistently, quickly, and accurately, and they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze and synthesize data.

A candidate for the physical therapy profession must have abilities and skills of five varieties including observation, communication, motor, conceptual, integrative and quantitative, and social. Technological compensation can be made for some handicaps in certain of these areas, but such a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner.

I. **Observation:** The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences. A candidate must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and somatic sensation. It is enhanced by the functional use of the sense of smell.

II. **Communication:** A candidate should be able to speak, to hear, and to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive nonverbal communications. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients. Communication includes not only speech, but reading and writing. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the health care team.

III. **Motor:** Candidates should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, and other diagnostic maneuvers. A candidate should be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment of patients. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch and vision.

IV. **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities:** These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis and synthesis. Problem solving, the critical skill demanded of physical therapists, requires all of these intellectual abilities. In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures.

V. **Behavioral and Social Attributes:** A candidate must possess the emotional health and stability required for full utilization of his intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that are assessed during the admissions and education processes.