

Essential Requirements of Physical Therapy Education: Admission, Retention & Graduation Standards:

Students enrolled in the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program at CCCTI must demonstrate competence in various intellectual, physical and social aspects, which represent the fundamentals of professional Physical Therapy practice upon graduation. 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 of Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education and the PTA Program at CCCTI.

The American 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.

The following functions are considered essential requirements for admission, retention and graduation in CCCTI's PTA Program. The purpose of these functions is to ensure PTA students provide safe, competent and timely care to patients receiving physical therapy services.

Mobility/Motor Skills: Sufficient motor ability (balance, coordination, speed and agility) and strength to move independently throughout a clinical setting, to move equipment/patients, and to ensure safe and effective treatment interventions. Examples (Not Inclusive):

- Assist and safely guard patients during mobility tasks (walking, transferring, exercising, and other Physical Therapy treatment procedures).
- Independently transition in and out of postures, including bending, kneeling, sitting, crawling, standing and walking for a minimum of 90 minutes without rest.
- Manipulate equipment and patients involving squatting to the floor, reaching above head, pulling/lifting or guiding weight in excess of 100 lbs.
- Demonstrate the dexterity required to manipulate devices/equipment commonly utilized in Physical Therapy interventions, including gauges, dials, small nuts/bolts/screws, and other equipment components.

Sensory Abilities: Sufficient auditory, visual and tactile ability to monitor and assess health needs of patients. *Examples* (Not Inclusive):

- Auditory (corrected or not): recognize soft voices/sounds, voices under protective garb, equipment signals, calls for assistance up to 10 ft. away, measurement of vital signs and breath sounds in often active/loud environments.
- Visual (corrected or not): recognize non-verbal responses including facial expressions and body language; observe and measure color changes, movement patterns, equipment settings; assess environmental situation up to 20 feet away.
- Tactile: palpation of musculoskeletal landmarks, pulse; identify skin temperature/texture changes, muscle tone and joint movement. Provide competent interventions including massage/soft tissue mobilization techniques, manual contact/resistance during functional and exercise training.

Communication Skills: Sufficient communication abilities in English for written (printed and typed), verbal (direct and telecommunications) and non-verbal communication with patients, families and other health care providers in the clinical environment. Examples (Not Inclusive):

- Speak, hear and observe individuals/groups in order to elicit information and communicate effectively in verbal and non-verbal formats.
- Attain, comprehend and utilize information presented in written and verbal format and produce appropriate written documentation, including treatment logs, medical records and billing. Use appropriate medical terminology and correct spelling/grammar.
- Communicate appropriately/professionally to individuals from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds (employ culture competence). This includes explaining and teaching physical therapy procedures and answering questions posed by others.

Behavioral/Social Interpersonal Skills: Sufficient behavior and social abilities to interact and work collaboratively with individuals, groups, and families. Examples (Not Inclusive):

- Ability to establish rapport and participate effectively as a team member in patient care delivery, including the ability to ascertain and honor the chain of command native to healthcare settings.
- Manage physically-taxing workloads and emotional stress.
- Demonstrate the ability to adapt to rapidly changing situations/environments without warning. Show flexibility and coping skills to function in fast paced clinical situations with multiple psychosocial issues presenting.
- Ability to define and navigate appropriate interpersonal boundaries between patient and caregiver, including sensitivity to the inherent power differential and patient vulnerability.

Intellectual/Problem-Solving Skills: Sufficient ability to collect, interpret and integrate information for sound clinical decision making. Must be able to understand 3 dimensional and spatial relationships of structures, and discern complex information for good clinical judgments.

- Observation and measurements of patient responses to physical therapy interventions. Ability to recognize normal and abnormal responses and appropriately decide modifications to treatment procedures.
- Respond to emergency situations, including first aid and CPR.
- Recognizing treatment effectiveness, relate treatment rationale to patients and others, consult with Physical Therapist or other health team members as indicated.
- Read and comprehend relevant information in textbooks, medical records, and professional publications.

Please Note: Meeting these requirements does not assure (1) the ability of the graduate to pass state licensing examinations, nor (2) functions which may be required for employment of the graduate.

Compiled from Technical Standards and Essential Requirements documents from the following academic institutions:

Fayetteville Technical Community College, Fayetteville, NC - Physical Therapist Assistant Program
Greenville Technical College, Greenville, SC - Physical Therapist Assistant Program
Guilford Technical Community College, Jamestown, NC - Physical Therapist Assistant Program
East Carolina University, Greenville, NC - Department of Physical Therapy
Nash Community College, Rocky Mount, NC - PTA Program
Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC - Department of Physical Therapy

Other 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.

Legal Limitations of Licensure

PTA applicants should be aware that the application for licensure at the completion of the program might be denied or restricted by the North Carolina Board of Physical Therapy Examiners for the following reasons:

- The student practiced fraud or deceit in attempting to procure a physical therapist assistant license.
- The student has been convicted of a misdemeanor/felony (excluding minor traffic violations).
- The student is mentally or physically incompetent or uses any drug that interferes with ability to assist with the practice of physical therapy.
- The student engages in conduct which endangers the public health.

If the student has questions with regard to the NCBPTE requirements, they should contact the board at (919) 490-6393. More details can be found at <http://www.ncptboard.org/documents/InformationBrochure.pdf>

Caldwell Campus Disability Services
Telephone: 828-726-2746

Watauga Campus Disability Services
Telephone: 828-297-3811 ext. 5263