

Technical Standards/Essential Functions

I. Introduction

USF SPTRS, complies with Section 504 of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, in providing opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities. At the same time, prospective candidates and current **DPT students/interns** must be capable of meeting certain technical standards. The following technical standards specify those attributes the faculty considers to be essential in successfully completing clinical education internships, didactic and practical training and in practicing physical therapy safely and responsibly. These standards describe the essential functions that **DPT students/interns** must demonstrate in the requirements of professional education, and thus, are pre-requisites to entrance, continuation, and completion of training in the School of **Physical Therapy**. Requests for reasonable accommodation are evaluated on an individual basis, as per COM USF SPTRS Student and Clinical Education Handbook <http://health.usf.edu/medicine/dpt/index.htm> .

II. Technical Standards

The **DPT student/intern** must possess abilities and skills in five areas:

- a. **Observation.** The **DPT student/intern** must be able to:
 - i. Observe a patient/client accurately at a distance and close at hand, noting non-verbal as well as verbal signals
 - ii. Visualize and discriminate findings on imaging and other studies
 - iii. Interpret digital or analog representations of physiologic phenomena, such as EKG's
 - iv. Acquire information from written documents, films, slides, videos, or other media
 - v. Observe and differentiate changes in body movement
 - vi. Observe anatomic structures, skin integrity including skin color, texture, odors, bony landmarks, anatomical/pathological structures
 - vii. Efficiently read written and illustrated materials
 - viii. Observe and detect the various signs and symptoms of the disease processes and movement dysfunction
 - ix. Obtain and effectively gather auscultation and auditory data, such as heart and breath sounds, pulses, joint noises, blood pressure, gait, and prosthetic sounds
 - x. Discriminate numbers and findings associated with diagnostic instruments and tests and measures

- b. **Communication.** The **DPT student/intern** must be able to:
 - i. Communicate in a culturally competent manner with patient/clients
 - ii. Communicate effectively and efficiently with all members of the health care team in oral and written English

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- iii. Communicate clearly with and observe patient/clients and families in order to elicit information including a thorough history from patient/clients, families, caregivers, and other sources
 - iv. Accurately describe changes in mood, activity, posture, and biomechanics
 - v. Perceive verbal as well as non-verbal communications, and promptly respond to emotional communications (sadness, worry, agitation, confusion)
 - vi. Communicate complex findings in appropriate and understandable terms to patient/clients and their families, and caregivers
 - vii. Adjust form and content of communications to the patient/client's functional level or mental state
 - viii. Engage in a collaborative relationship with patient/clients and families/caregivers
 - ix. Record observations and plans legibly, efficiently, and accurately
 - x. Prepare and communicate precise but complete summaries of individual encounters
 - xi. Possess sufficient hearing for required diagnostic functions (e.g., use of stethoscope to assess breath sounds, heart sounds, etc.)
 - xii. Complete documentation forms according to directions, in a timely manner, including manual, electronic, and other recording methods
 - xiii. Demonstrate effective communication skills to provide patient/client/client education and with families/caregivers and support personnel
 - xiv. Receive, write, and interpret verbal and non-verbal communication in both academic and clinical settings
 - xv. Demonstrate appropriate interpersonal skills as needed for productive classroom discussion, respectful interaction with classmates and faculty and development of appropriate therapist to patient/client relationships
 - xvi. Demonstrate appropriate therapeutic interpersonal communications such as attending, clarifying, motivating, coaching, facilitating, and touching
 - xvii. In emergency and potentially unsafe situations, understand and convey information for the safe and effective care of patient/clients in a clear, unambiguous, and rapid fashion, including receiving and understanding input from multiple sources simultaneously or in rapid-fire sequence
- c. **Motor.** The **DPT student/intern** must be able to:
- i. Stand and walk independently while providing care in practice and internship settings; frequently lift 10 pounds, occasionally lift 10-50 pounds, and more than 50 pounds; with frequent twisting, squatting, and reaching, pushing/pulling, grasping and crawling
 - ii. Climb stairs and negotiate uneven surfaces including varying terrains/ramps
 - iii. Perform palpation, percussion, auscultation, and other diagnostic maneuvers while manipulating devices, e.g. goniometer, reflex hammer, IV poles, catheter bags, walkers, crutches, et al
 - iv. Provide general care and emergency medical care such as airway management, handling of catheters, perform cardiopulmonary

- resuscitation, and application of pressure to control bleeding, maintaining appropriate infection control procedures
- v. Respond promptly to medical emergencies within the training facility and within the DPT scope of practice
- vi. Not hinder the ability of co-workers to provide prompt care
- vii. Perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures (e.g. APTA Guide to PT Practice Tests and Measures and Interventions.)
- d. Cognitive. The **DPT student/intern** must be able to:
 - i. Demonstrate clinical reasoning and problem solving
 - ii. Identify significant findings from history, physical exam, and laboratory data, test and measures, and other sources
 - iii. Perceive subtle cognitive and behavioral findings and perform a mental status evaluation
 - iv. Determine appropriate and reasonable tests and measures
 - v. Provide a reasoned explanation for likely diagnoses
 - vi. Construct an appropriate plan of care
 - vii. Prescribe appropriate therapeutic interventions
 - viii. Recall and retain information
 - ix. Deal with several tasks or problems simultaneously
 - x. Identify and communicate the limits of knowledge to others
 - xi. Incorporate new information from peers, teachers, and the peer-reviewed medical literature in formulating diagnoses and plans
 - xii. Show good judgment in patient/client assessment, diagnostic, and therapeutic planning
- e. Social and Behavioral. The **DPT student/intern** must be able to:
 - i. Maintain a professional demeanor
 - ii. Maintain appropriate professional and ethical conduct (e.g. APTA Code of Ethics)
 - iii. Be able to function at a high level in the face of long hours and a high stress environment
 - iv. Develop empathic relationships with patient/clients and families while establishing professional boundaries
 - v. Provide comfort and reassurance where appropriate
 - vi. Protect patient/client confidentiality and the confidentiality of written and electronic records
 - vii. Possess adequate endurance to tolerate physically taxing workloads
 - viii. Flexibly adapt to changing environments
 - ix. Function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patient/clients
 - x. Accept appropriate suggestions and criticisms and modify behavior
 - xi. Give and accept criticism appropriately and without prejudice
 - xii. Work effectively under stress and as a part of an interdisciplinary team
 - xiii. Delegate responsibility appropriately
 - xiv. Develop and maintain respectful working relationships with peers, faculty, professional colleagues, patients/clients, family members and the general public.