

*Physician Assistant Program Technical Standards*

The Plaza College Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program is committed to the admission and matriculation of candidates who possess the necessary capabilities and skills to meet the demands of physician assistant education, as well as those required to practice medicine in a broad range of clinical situations, rendering a wide spectrum of patient care. Candidates must also possess the stamina, both physical and emotional, to function competently in educational and practice settings that potentially involve stressful situations and physically demanding workloads.

These standards reflect what has been determined as reasonable expectations for physician assistant (PA) students and graduate PAs in performing common and essential functions, taking into account the safety and welfare of patients. All candidate and students must meet, in order to matriculate, and must continuously meet throughout their time as a PA student, the following technical standards to successfully complete the program; any change in the ability of an applicant or student to meet these standards will be evaluated and if it is determined that a candidate or a student does not meet any of the standards may be denied matriculation or dismissed from the program.

All applicants and physician assistant students must possess the following abilities and skills:

1. **Observation**— A candidate must possess:

- Vision, hearing, and touch, or the functional equivalent.
- The ability to perceive pain, pressure, temperature, position, vibration, equilibrium, and movement
- The ability to observe demonstrations, exercises, and patients accurately at a distance and close at hand
- The ability to note verbal and non-verbal signals

2. **Communication** – A candidate must be able to:

- Communicate effectively in a professional manner with patients, families, caregivers, faculty, and colleagues
- Elicit and transmit patient information in oral and written English to all members of the healthcare team
- Accurately describe changes in mood, activity, and posture sufficiently to complete curricular requirements and provide clinical care for patients

- Write or type appropriate medical documents according to protocol in a thorough and timely manner
- Sharing and receiving patient information in written and oral English

3. **Motor Function** – A candidate must be able to:

- Perform the basic and advanced clinical procedures that are required of the PA program curriculum
- Execute motor movements required to provide and/or direct the provision of general care and emergency treatment of patients, including but not limited to obtaining vital signs, performing physician examinations, and performing diagnostic maneuvers
- Carry out treatment maneuvers, which may include lifting, transferring of patients, and assisting during ambulation while assuring their own safety as well as the safety of the patient
- Coordinate the use of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and prolonged standing or sitting
- Elicit information from patients while conducting diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, including but not limited to palpation, auscultation, percussion, and movement of limbs

4. **Critical Thinking Ability** – A candidate must be able to:

- Calculate, reason, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data in a consistent and accurate manner
- Independently access and interpret medical histories or files
- Identify significant findings from history, physical examinations, and laboratory data to provide a reasonable explanation for likely diagnoses, prescribed medications, and therapy
- Recall and retain information in an efficient and timely manner and be able to ascertain the relationship between this retained information and its application in clinical practice
- Incorporate new information from peers, teachers, and the medical literature in formulating diagnoses and plans

5. **Behavioral and Social Skills** – A candidate must be able to:

- Demonstrate the maturity and emotional stability required for full use of their intellectual abilities

- Exercise good judgment and professionalism in both the educational and clinical settings
- Be honest, self-assess, and reflect on one's own mistakes, respond constructively to feedback, and assume responsibility for maintaining professional behavior
- Promptly complete responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients under potentially stressful circumstances, emergency situations, and extended hours
- Develop empathic, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, families, caregivers, faculty, and colleagues
- Adapt to changing environments and to learn in the face of uncertainties inherent in the practice of medicine, including managing unforeseen clinical challenges
- Respond to supervision appropriately and act within the scope of practice, when indicated

**6. Additional Requirements:**

- Candidates must meet the skills required for certification in American Heart Association Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS).
- Candidates must be able to perform a head-to-toe, comprehensive examination:
  - On a patient of any gender.
  - Including genital-urinary and rectal examination.
  - Within the allotted time without accommodation.
- In-person participation and assessment are required; remote coursework or clinical instruction is *not permitted*.

**ADA COMPLIANCE STATEMENT:**

Regarding disabled individuals, the college will not discriminate against such individuals who are otherwise qualified but will expect that minimum technical standards be met by all applicants and students as set forth herein.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended in 2008, defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. More information about Plaza College's policies and procedures for students with disabilities can be found at <https://plazacollege.edu/about/consumer-information/>