



**DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES
POLICY**

POLICY NAME:	TECHNICAL STANDARDS
RESPONSIBILITY For Development/Review:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University Admin <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dept. Chair/ Program Director <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic Director <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clinical Director <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medical Director <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administrative Secretary
APPROVED BY:	Faculty
DATE CREATED:	5/17/2013
DATE REVISED:	2/26/2025
REVIEWED: Annually	2/26/2025
SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTS:	<i>DPAS Student and Policy Handbooks</i>
OCCURANCE:	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yearly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> As Needed
PURPOSE:	To define the abilities, aptitude and skills the candidate/enrolled student must have in the areas: observation, communication, motor, intellectual conceptual, integrative and quantitative, behavioral/social and physical demands.
POLICY:	<p>The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) requires all Physician Assistant (PA) programs to publish technical standards for program admissions. The American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) assembled an Executive Council in 1979 to examine the Department of Health, Education and Welfare regulations relating to Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Executive Council recommended institutional guidelines addressing technical standards for the medical school admissions process. Technical Standards that are defined in Section 504 of this Act and refer to all nonacademic admissions criteria, these guidelines have been used to address technical standards in physician assistant education essential to participation in the program.</p> <p>PA students must have the intellectual, ethical, physical and emotional capabilities required to undertake the entire curriculum and be able to achieve the levels of competence required by the faculty. The standards describe essential functions that the student must demonstrate to meet the requirements of PA education; these standards are prerequisites for matriculation, continuation and graduation from the PA program. Furthermore, the use of an intermediary, a person trained to perform essential skills on behalf of the student, is not permitted.</p> <p>Mercyhurst University physician assistant students must possess the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze and synthesize data. They must have functional use of the senses of vision, hearing, equilibrium and taste. Exteroceptor (touch, pain and temperature) and proprioceptor (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis and vibratory) senses must be sufficiently intact to permit them to complete the activities described below. PA students must have sufficient motor function capabilities to meet the demands of the PA program and the ability to care for patients.</p>

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The following technical standards are adapted from the AAMC guidelines. Mercyhurst University physician assistant students must have the ability, aptitude and skills in these areas: observation, communication, motor, intellectual conceptual, integrative and quantitative, behavioral/social and physical demands.

1. Observation

The candidate/enrolled student must be able to observe required demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to anatomic dissection, microscopic studies, and patient demonstrations. A candidate/enrolled student must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation requires the functional use of the sense of vision, hearing and somatic sensation.

2. Communication

The candidate/enrolled student must be able to speak, to hear and to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive non-verbal communication. A candidate/enrolled student must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients. Communication includes not only speech, but also reading and writing in English. The candidate/enrolled student must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written forms with the various disciplines in health care.

3. Motor Abilities

The candidate/enrolled student must have sufficient motor function to carry out basic laboratory techniques and to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion and other diagnostic maneuvers, perform dissection of a human cadaver and have sufficient motor ability to use a microscope. The candidate/enrolled student should be able to perform a complete physical examination (including pelvic and rectal examination); diagnostic procedures (e.g. venipuncture and basic laboratory tests (e.g. urinalysis)). The candidate/enrolled student must be able to perform motor movements required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients, such examples of treatment reasonably required of physician assistant students may include cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the suturing of simple wounds, assisting in surgical operations and the performance of simple, general obstetrical and gynecological procedures. These actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch, vision and hearing.

4. Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative

Problem solving is a critical skill required of physician assistants, this requires that a candidate/enrolled student has the ability to learn, retrieve, analyze, sequence, organize, synthesize and integrate information efficiently and reason effectively. In addition the candidate/enrolled student should possess the ability to measure and calculate accurately, to perceive three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures.

5. Behavioral and Social Attributes

The candidate/enrolled student must have the emotional health required for full

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utilization of intellectual abilities, the ability to exercise good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities connected to the diagnosis and care of patients and the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients and family members and health care providers. Candidate/enrolled student must be able to work effectively as a member of the health-care team. Candidate/enrolled student must also 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 realm of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, collegiality, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that are assessed during the admission and education processes.

Physician assistant candidates/students are reviewed individually and on a case basis at time of deposit, orientation, during PA 620 Thesis Guidance course, and as needed using the standards above. Inability to meet the above standards may result in inability to matriculate. Mercyhurst University abides by federal, state and local law in admissions, and all services/programs provided. Mercyhurst University complies with federal, state and local legislation and regulations regarding nondiscrimination. Mercyhurst University does not discriminate in the admissions process or educational program against anyone on the basis of the individual's age, race, color, religion, sex, creed, citizenship status, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, familial status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, military or veteran status or any other legally protected characteristic or because of any individual's legally protected activities.

ADA

Mercyhurst University values inclusion and is committed to the goal of providing equal opportunities for all. It is our policy and practice to create accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

Students who are currently eligible should verify as instructed and contact me to discuss how their accommodations will be implemented in this class. Students who have not been determined eligible, but have a temporary limitation (e.g., broken leg) or permanent medical, physical, sensory, learning, cognitive, or mental health disability issue that requires accommodations, should contact the ADA Coordinator to make a request. Requests for accommodations can be made at any time throughout the calendar year and at any point in a student's enrollment.

Please refer to the Hub <https://lakersmercyhurst.sharepoint.com/sites/StudentsHub> and select the Services tab, then Accessibility Services & Accommodations from the dropdown or contact Susan Reddinger, ADA Coordinator, at ADA@mercyhurst.edu, 814-824-2362, or in Old Main 300.

Students with questions about Academic Support, please refer to the Hub <https://lakersmercyhurst.sharepoint.com/sites/StudentsHub> and select the Academic Resources tab, then Academic Support for more information.

Students are advised to request accommodations at the time of acceptance or prior to the start of the semester. Students may request accommodations at any time throughout the program, however accommodations are not retroactive.

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OTHER NOTES:	
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