

# Essential Functions

In addition to meeting the academic standards required for this Program, a student must be able to perform the essential functions listed below with or without reasonable accommodations. Requested accommodations may not always be guaranteed if they eliminate essential program elements or alter the DPT curriculum. These essential functions encompass cognitive, psychosocial, and physical skills and abilities that are required for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the Program curriculum as well as for the development of appropriate professional skills and attributes consistent with physical therapy practice.

## Cognitive

### **Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities:**

Problem solving is a critical skill required of physical therapists. To develop this skill, the student must be able to memorize, measure, calculate, analyze and synthesize relevant content in basic science and clinical courses; this includes the ability to discern and comprehend multi-dimensional and spatial relationships of structures. The student must be able to obtain and use relevant patient information in order to recognize and define problems, analyze data, develop and implement solutions, and evaluate outcomes. The student must also demonstrate the ability to self-assess, self-correct, and self-initiate within the learning process. Significant or long-term disruption of cognitive function jeopardizes a student's acceptability.

## Psychosocial

### **Communication:**

The student must be able to speak, read, write, hear, see and observe in order to: (1) obtain information from patients, caregivers, and medical records; (2) recognize the significance of nonverbal communications; and (3) direct timely and accurate verbal and written communication concerning a patient's status to appropriate sources. The student must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients, caregivers, family, physicians, and other members of the health care team, including the ability to receive and input information electronically. He/she must be capable of responsive and empathetic listening to establish a rapport that promotes openness on issues of concern and sensitivity to potential cultural differences.

### **Psychological and Social Attributes:**

The student must possess emotional stability which consistently allows maximum use of intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the timely completion of all responsibilities, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, peers, and supervisors. The student must be able to function effectively under

physical and mental stress and adapt to changing and unpredictable environments. The student must be able to comprehend the basis and content of ethical physical therapy practice. He/she must demonstrate the ability to appropriately seek supervision and consultation. The student must possess attributes which provide a foundation for professionalism: compassion, empathy, personal integrity, tolerance for differences, personal accountability, self-direction, and openness to feedback.

## Physical Skills

### **Observation and Sensation:**

The student must possess functional use of sight, hearing, and touch in order to perform such tasks as: accurately observing a patient both near and far, assessing a patient's skin color, listening with a stethoscope, palpating and differentiating normal and abnormal body structures, and observing demonstrations and experiments in the basic science laboratory.

### **Motor Skills:**

The student must be able to execute both fine and gross physical movements required for the performance of basic clinical tests and diagnostic procedures used to examine patients. He/she must possess the physical capability to perform manual procedures such as massage, palpation, and assisting a patient to exercise paralyzed limbs. The student must be able to safely assist patients with common mobility tasks, such as walking, rising from a chair, or climbing stairs. The student must be able to ensure the physical safety of him/herself and the safety of the patient at all times. Physical demands such as lifting, pushing and pulling patients or equipment are frequently encountered in the curriculum or clinical environments that can be moderate or heavy loads.