The George Washington University Physician Assistant Program considers it essential for all physician assistant students to have the knowledge and skill to function in a variety of clinical settings and to provide a wide spectrum of patient care as required by the curriculum. Therefore, every physician assistant student must master a common body of basic science knowledge and master the principles, knowledge, and procedures of the clinical clerkships. This requires that every student have sufficient capacities and abilities in: Communication, Observation, Motor/Tactile Function, Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities, and Behavioral and Social Attributes.

Completion of this program requires that each student independently demonstrate these capabilities continuously throughout enrollment. Surrogates cannot be used to accomplish the essential functions as outlined below. Students may not have undue dependence on technology or trained intermediaries to meet these standards.

**Communication** includes the ability to speak, hear, read, and write sufficiently to achieve adequate exchange of information with other healthcare professionals, patients, and their support network.

- The student must have the ability to receive and process auditory information and speak and write clearly for all communications with patients, their families, and other healthcare professionals.
- The student must communicate effectively through written and electronic media.
- The student must be able to communicate sensitively with patients and their families.
- The student must be able to read sufficiently to comprehend complex medical literature and convey this information in easy to understand terms.
- The student must be able to perceive forms of non-verbal interpersonal communications including facial expressions, body language, and affect.

**Observation** includes the ability to perceive, using senses and mental abilities, information presented in both educational and clinical settings. Educational information will be presented through lectures, team-based learning, laboratory sessions, interprofessional sessions, small groups and one-on-one interactions, as well as written and audiovisual materials.

- The student must possess sufficient sensory (visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory) and mental abilities to accurately perceive information provided in the educational settings. This includes written and audiovisual materials, laboratories, diagnostic images, microscopic and physical examination.
- The student must be able to accurately observe (using visual, auditory, tactile, and/or olfactory senses) a patient’s medical condition, including patient affect, up close and at a distance, with and without medical instrumentation. This includes but is not limited to radiography, electrocardiograms, sonograms, monitors, and other graphic images.

**Motor/Tactile Function**

- A student must have sufficient motor function to directly perform palpation, percussion, auscultation, and other diagnostic and therapeutic maneuvers.
- A student must be able to reasonably execute movements required to provide general and emergency medical care to patients. These skills require coordination offine and gross
motor skills, equilibrium, and functional sensation.

- A student must adhere to universal precaution measures and meet safety standards applicable to inpatient and outpatient settings and other clinical activities.
- A student must have the capability to manipulate equipment and instruments for the performance of basic laboratory tests and procedures.
- A student must have the ability to move her/himself from one setting to another and negotiate the patient care environment in a timely fashion.
- A student must have sufficient physical stamina to perform the rigorous course of didactic and clinical study. This includes long periods of sitting, standing, and moving which are required for classroom, laboratory, and clinical experiences.

**Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities**

- A student must be able to demonstrate cognitive and problem-solving skills in an efficient and timely manner in order to meet the Program Competencies. Problem solving is one of the critical skills demanded of physician assistants. It requires all of these intellectual abilities:
  - Comprehending visual-spatial relationships.
  - Reading and understanding the medical literature and the patient's chart.
  - Learning, measuring, calculating, retrieving, prioritizing, analyzing, organizing, assimilating, integrating, and synthesizing technically detailed and complex information and applying this information appropriately.
  - Comprehending three-dimensional relationships, the spatial and functional relationships of structures, and analyzing and applying this information for problem solving and decision making.
  - Effectively participating in educational activities online and in person as an individual and in groups in all learning environments and activities.

**Behavioral and Social Attributes**

- The student must possess emotional stability for full utilization of her/his intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to both didactic studies and patient care.
- The student must be able to develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and their family members, staff and colleagues.
- The student must be able to work collaboratively and effectively as a small group member as well as a health team member.
- The student must have sufficient interpersonal skills to relate positively with people across society, including all ethnic backgrounds, economic levels, gender, gender identification, sexual orientations, disabilities and belief systems.
- The student must possess compassion and concern for others; interest in and motivation for service and integrity.
- The student must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under mentally and emotionally stressful situations.
- The student must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients.
- The student must behave in an ethical and moral manner that is consistent with professional values.
• The student must be able to accept constructive criticism and appropriately respond through modification of her/his behavior.

Assessing Compliance and Technical Standards and Essential Functions
Applicants are required to attest at the time they apply and accept an offer to matriculate that they satisfy these technical standards and requirements and thereafter must attest on an ongoing basis that they continue to meet these standards with or without reasonable accommodations. At a minimum, PA students are required to acknowledge that they meet these technical standards prior to entry into the Program and prior to beginning the clinical phase. The student must notify the PA Program Director if there is any change in his/her/their ability to meet the Technical Standards. Further detail regarding Assessing Compliance with Technical Standard and Essential Functions can be found in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences Bulletin.