

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

Technical Standards for Admissions, Continuation, and Graduation

The Keck Graduate Institute (KGI) School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (SPHS) is committed to providing a physician assistant degree without regard to disability while assuring that academic and technical standards are met. Technical standards represent the essential non-academic requirements that a student must demonstrate to successfully participate in the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPA) program and meet the professional competency requirements. These standards include physical, cognitive, and behavioral abilities required for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum and for entry into the physician assistant (PA) profession. Thus, the standards are prerequisites for admission, continuation, and graduation from the SPHS.

The SPHS will consider for admission any applicant who demonstrates the ability to perform, or to learn to perform, the skills listed in this document. All applicants are held to the same academic and technical standards of admission and training with reasonable accommodations as needed for students with disabilities. The SPHS reserves the right not to admit any applicant who cannot meet the Technical Standards set forth below with reasonable accommodations. Applicants are not required to disclose the nature of their disability(ies), if any, to the Admissions Committee.

To matriculate into the MSPA program, the applicant must sign the Technical Standards Certification Form documenting their ability to meet the standards. This form is provided prior to interviewing for the program. However, if a student cannot demonstrate the following skills and abilities, it is the responsibility of the student to request an appropriate accommodation. Any applicant with questions about these Technical Standards is strongly encouraged to discuss the issue with the Director of Admissions prior to the interview process. If appropriate, and upon the request of the applicant/student, the school will consider technological and other facilitating mechanisms needed in order to train and function effectively as a physician assistant.

Candidates for the MSPA degree must be able to perform the essential functions in each of the following categories:

1. Observation
2. Communication
3. Motor
4. Cognitive (conceptualization, integration, and quantitative evaluation)
5. Behavioral and social attributes.

These are described in detail below.

Observation (Vision and Other Sensory Modalities)

- Ability to observe demonstrations and experiments in the medical sciences.
- Ability to use visual (near and distance), auditory, tactile, and olfactory cues to accurately observe and assess a patient's physical condition.
- Ability to receive visual information from a clinical environment, as well as discriminate numbers and patterns associated with diagnostic and monitoring instruments.
- Ability to distinguish shapes, colors, markings, and other characteristics of small objects (e.g., medication and other labels).
- Ability to discriminate changes in monitoring devices and alarms using visual and auditory senses.
- Ability to learn from all of the following educational methods: auditory instruction, written materials, visual aids, hands-on learning and demonstrations, microscopic and diagnostic images, and physical examination.

Communication

- Ability to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and other health care professionals.
- Ability to communicate accurately through oral, electronic, and written communications in English to fulfill the routine duties and tasks of a physician assistant.
- Ability to receive and interpret written communications in a timely manner in both the academic and clinical settings, including information presented on computer screens.
- Ability to communicate verbally during life threatening situations within the acceptable norms of clinical settings.
- Ability to interpret non-verbal cues of patients (e.g., posture and body language) in order to diagnose conditions and foster healthy patient-provider interactions.

Motor

- Ability to coordinate the gross and fine muscular movements required to complete the PA curriculum and for patient care. These tasks include but are not limited to: utilization of medical equipment, use of instrumentation to perform clinical procedures, and operation of computer and other electronic devices using the hands and fingers.
- Ability to maneuver in the patient care setting including the ability to maintain balance, orientation, mobility, and stamina while walking with a person in need of support or using a mobility device.
- Ability to use motor function sufficient for conducting a physical exam, including palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers.
- Ability to assist with patient movements and transfers.

Cognitive (Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Evaluation)

- Ability to retain, measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize pertinent information to solve problems in a timely manner.
- Ability to understand basic scientific principles and methods for the cognitive application of information.
- Ability to comprehend spatial relationships and three-dimensional models.
- Ability to learn through a variety of modalities including, but not limited to, classroom instruction, small group activities, individual study, preparation and presentation of reports, and use of computer technology.
- Ability to concentrate in the presence of distracting conditions and for prolonged periods of time.

- Ability to synthesize significant information from the medical history, physical exam, and diagnostic testing to formulate accurate diagnoses and care plans.
- Ability to think critically and use reasoning to complete tasks.
- Ability to analyze, implement, assess, and reassess patient information and care plans.

Behavioral/Social Attributes

- Ability to demonstrate honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior by abiding by the policies, procedures, laws, and standards of the PA program and the PA profession.
- Possess the emotional health, maturity, and self-discipline to exercise sound judgment.
- Ability to interact with patients and other health care professionals in a compassionate, tactful, and professional manner.
- Ability to accept feedback and respond with appropriate behavior or modification of behavior.
- Ability to use flexibility to adapt to changing environments.
- Ability to demonstrate sensitivity, empathy, and respect to people regardless of culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, educational level, and/or disabilities.
- Possess the physical and emotional stamina to function competently in settings that may involve heavy workloads and stressful situations. Individuals who would constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of others or who are currently impaired by alcohol or substance abuse are not considered suitable candidates for admission.
- Ability to recognize one's own personal and professional limitations and seek assistance when needed.