

## Western Michigan University Physician Assistant Program

Policy Name: Technical Standards  
Policy Number: PA-007

### Policy Statement:

The Western Michigan University (WMU) Physician Assistant Program's mission is to prepare students to practice medicine. Medical education requires that the accumulation of medical knowledge be accompanied by the acquisition of skills and professional attitudes and behavior. In all phases of the medical education the student's ability to utilize his/her intellectual ability and maintain emotional stability, particularly when under stress and within time limitations inherent in the medical setting, is vital to the successful completion of the Program.

The Physician Assistant Program, as part of Western Michigan University, is committed to the principle of equal opportunity. The WMU PA Program does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, or disability. When requested, the University will provide reasonable accommodation to otherwise qualified students with disabilities.

Applicants may not be accepted for admission that have the following:

1. Health problems of a recurring and unpredictable nature or other diseases that are poorly controlled, transmittable, or incurable by present standards.
2. Diseases that may be treatable but where the treatment itself is known to produce a serious impairment of cognitive, psychological, or physical functions.
3. Diseases affecting neuromuscular coordination, tactile sensitivity, and general or specific paralysis of the upper extremity.

All students should have these:

1. Sufficient posture control, neuromuscular control and eye-hand coordination to use effectively an ophthalmoscope, stethoscope, otoscope, and similar instruments required to conduct physical examinations and evaluations and to accomplish such tasks as interpreting x-rays and electrocardiograms.
2. Sufficient visual and auditory perception and the mental capacity to assimilate large volumes of detailed and complex information presented in formal lectures, small group discussions, and individual teaching settings.
3. Sufficient communication skills to:
  - Elicit all components of the medical history from patients with a wide range of literacy.
  - Perform the history-taking task at a pace that would not pose a potential danger to the patient.

Technical Standards continued...

- Transmit these findings quickly and effectively as may be necessary.
- Initiate emergency measures on a verbal basis.
- Effectively interact in two-way communication with patients to provide and clarify information, reduce apprehension, and provide counseling.

To work effectively in a clinical situation, the student is expected to perform adequately a number of technical functions required of the practicing Physician Assistant. Such functions include, but are not limited to, those of the special senses that allow for examination of the patient. Those persons deprived of their special senses to the point they cannot recognize normal versus abnormal could not acquire sufficient factual material to assess accurately a patient's health status. This capability to differentiate is crucial for the practicing Physician Assistant. Students must also have sufficient motor skills to respond promptly in an emergency.

Physician Assistant students are expected to meet all the standards outlined here. Prior to admission, the Admissions Committee will carefully review the applicant abilities. The Admissions Committee will recommend students for admission to the Program that meet the guidelines specified by the technical standards. Students who develop conditions while in the Program, which may impair their ability to meet the technical standards, will be reevaluated. If the student's abilities appear to be compromised, the Program Director may request a physician assessment of the student's cognitive, psychological, or physical abilities. After review of available information, the Chair/Program Director may terminate a student's enrollment if the student does not meet the technical standards.

In summary, every precaution is taken to ensure that students with substantially impaired intellectual, physical, or emotional functions place neither the educational process nor the patient in jeopardy. All students awarded a degree from the Western Michigan University PA Program must meet the basic standards for practice.

Date Reviewed: 8/30/06  
Be Reviewed: 8/30/08

---

Program Director