

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES UTMB – ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND  
TECHNICAL STANDARDS  
Updated 04/10/13**

This description defines the capabilities that are necessary for an individual to successfully complete the UTMB physician assistant curricula.

Observation and Sensation: The PA student must possess sufficient visual, auditory, and tactile sensation to receive appropriate information in the classroom, laboratory, and other educational and clinical settings. Sensation must be satisfactory to receive verbal and nonverbal communications from patients and others, and to perform inspection, auscultation and palpation techniques during the physical examination.

Communication: The PA student must be able to speak, hear, and observe patients, family members, and other clinicians. This includes expressive and receptive modes of verbal, nonverbal, and written communication. The student must have the ability to accurately assess receptive communication in order to make appropriate and timely responses. The student must be able to communicate attentively, effectively, and sensitively to others.

Motor Functions: Students must have sufficient strength and coordination to perform the activities required of a physician assistant. These include but are not limited to performing a physical examination utilizing diagnostic instruments and techniques in palpation and percussion. Students must have sufficient stamina to sit, stand, and move within classroom, laboratory, examination rooms, treatment rooms, and operating rooms for long periods of time. The student must have sufficient coordination to move about patient care environments, and sufficient dexterity to use common medical instruments.

Intellectual Capability: Clinical problem solving and reasoning requires these intellectual abilities and encompass those to accurately measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, learn, and retain information and make decisions in a timely manner. Students must be able to comprehend two and three-dimensional structures, and must be able to understand diagnostic testing and treatment regimens.

Behavioral and Social Proficiency: Students must possess the ability to establish and maintain appropriate professional relationships. This includes the ability to prioritize competing demands, to function in stressful circumstances, to exercise good clinical judgment, to act ethically, to be compassionate, empathetic, responsible, and tolerant toward patients and others.

American Disability Act Opportunities:

The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) at Galveston complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and state and local requirements regarding students with disabilities. Under these laws, no otherwise qualified and competitive individual with a disability shall be denied access to our participation in services, programs, and activities of UTMB solely on the basis of the disability. UTMB is committed to equal opportunity for students with disabilities. Once accepted into the School of Health Professions, Department of Physician Assistant Studies, any student who believes he or she requires an accommodation as the result of a disability is encouraged to contact the SHP Office of Academic and Student Affairs. For detailed information on establishing a disability and requesting accommodations, please visit the following website: <http://www.utmb.edu/student-services/disabilities.asp>

## **PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS - UTMB PA STUDENT**

The following outlines some examples of the demands and performance requirements required of the UTMB PA student.

### Typical Mental Demands

The UTMB PA student must possess the ability to:

- Process, retain, comprehend, integrate, analyze, synthesize, and apply a large volume of data related to the art and science of medicine, including legal, ethical, and moral concepts
- Be present during long hours in the following settings: classrooms, laboratories, clinicals, and self-directed study situations and environments
- Respond appropriately and in a timely manner to constructive faculty feedback
- Effectively communicate through written and verbal communication skills
- Participate in educational activities that include tests, examinations, demonstrations, simulations, presentations, written communication skills, frequent and exacting evaluations
- Demonstrate the ability to gather patient data and report, perform the physical examination, conduct patient assessment and evaluation, formulate a treatment plan, and perform patient education

### Typical Physical Demands

The UTMB PA student must possess:

- Full range of body motion including assisting patient movement, manual and finger dexterity, and eye-hand coordination
- Normal visual and hearing acuity
- Physical capacity to stand and walk for extended hospital and clinic visits, and during frequent and prolonged patient and professional interactions
- Physical capacity to sit for long periods during classroom and laboratory experiences
- Capability to work in physically and mentally stressful situations with long and irregular hours and with exposures to communicable diseases and body fluids

### Typical Working Conditions

The UTMB PA student must be able to:

- Work in clinical and classroom environments with exposure to communicable diseases, toxic substances, ionizing radiation, medicinal preparations, hostile individuals, and other such conditions common to the medical and surgical environments
- Interact with a diverse patient population of all ages with a range of acute and chronic medical and surgical conditions

### Student Performance Requirements

The UTMB PA student will be required to perform in the following situations:

- Medical, surgical, pediatric, obstetric/gynecologic, and other primary care medicine settings (inpatient and out-patient) at both campus and off-campus locations
- Didactic and clinical education and training
- Invasive and non-invasive procedures
- Pre-, intra-, and post-operative activities
- Emergency care

The UTMB PA Student will be required to:

- Demonstrate a professional ethical demeanor and understanding of medical ethics and medical-legal concepts
- Display an ability to perform for long hours (physical and mental stamina)
- Complete demanding didactic and clinical evaluations, examinations, etc.
- Perform at the level determined and required by the faculty
- Participate in community and/or professional service activities
- Complete other responsibilities and tasks as assigned or required

**TASKS, FUNCTIONS, COMPETENCIES, AND TECHNICAL PROCEDURES FOR**  
**THE UTMB PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT TRAINING PROGRAM**  
**FOR THE UTMB PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDENT**

This is a summary of major tasks, skills, competencies, and technical procedures offered during the UTMB physician assistant training program. This listing includes major concepts and techniques but is not limited to all experiences and opportunities presented during matriculation at the UTMB physician assistant program.

**Subjective Data Gathering and Utilization**

The UTMB physician assistant graduate should be able to:

- Take a complete medical history
- Perform a comprehensive physical exam
- Order and interpret complete basic laboratory work (CBC, urinalysis, gram stain, etc.)
- Obtain a history, gather patient data, and perform a physical examination in a reasonable period of time
- Identify data from the history and physical examination which is relevant to the patient's illness
- Synthesize all abnormal data collected in the data base into a separate problem or a collection of problems
- Develop a list of problems and properly separate them into active and inactive groups in a reasonable period of time
- Refine problems to the maximum extent possible with consistent accuracy and state clearly the overall goal for each problem
- Develop accurate therapeutic plans for each problem that are relevant to the resolution of the patient's problems
- Write thorough progress notes that include subjective and objective information as well as an assessment and plan
- Write and record accurate progress notes within a reasonable period of time
- Possess a general knowledge of pathophysiology of common diseases and disposition of patients

**Objective Data Collection**

The UTMB physician assistant graduate should be able to perform, order, and interpret:

- Routine and special radiographs (chest, abdomen, skull, skeletal, and barium) studies
- Chemistry studies and fluid and electrolyte balance
- Hematology studies
- Culture results
- Electrocardiographic interpretations
- Abnormal laboratory/diagnostic data

**Counseling and Patient Education**

The UTMB physician assistant graduate should be able to:

- Provide counseling and patient education for problems and procedures, methods of treatment in a manner consistent with the understanding of the patient population and medical practice
- Assist individuals and families in identifying strengths to resolve their problems
- Inform individuals and families about available community resources
- Counsel parents and families on child rearing
- Counsel individuals and families about addictions and methods to cope with addictions

- Provide sex education
- Provide proper information and assistance to terminally ill patients
- Counsel and assist patients who are suffering from stress, depressions or losses
- Provide information about common medical problems and explain laboratory, x-ray, and surgical procedures
- Provide information on preventative measures for communicable diseases
- Provide information on healthy lifestyles and intervention/modification for at-risk behaviors.

### Technical Skills

The physician assistant graduate should be able to perform the following technical skills:

- Venipuncture
- Arterial punctures
- IV catheterization
- Urinary catheterization
- Nasogastric intubation
- Bronchial suctioning
- Aseptic techniques
- Wound care and closure of lacerations
- Immunizations (children and adult)
- IV medication administration
- Collection of various cultures (blood, sputum, urine) and performance of routine laboratory procedures (CBC, differential, urinalysis, gram stain)
- Vision screening
- Splint and cast applications
- KOH prep
- Explanation of procedures to patient, parent, and family
- Instruction about prescribed medication and other therapies
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Advanced cardiac life support (ACLS)
- Emergency response to adverse reactions following administration of parenteral or any medication
- Mini-mental status examination
- Administration of local anesthesia
- Control of external hemorrhage
- Removal of superficial foreign bodies of the skin, ear and eye
- Feeding tube insertion
- Venous cutdown paracentesis (optional)
- Thoracentesis (optional)
- Glucose tolerance test (optional)
- Glucometer readings (optional)
- Proctosigmoidoscopy (optional)
- Tissue biopsy (optional)

### Other Skills: Assist in surgery

- Identify and use appropriate surgical instruments
- Demonstrate appropriate operating room conduct
- Suture/Staple
- Dress wounds

Other Skills: Management of emergency situations

- Cardiac arrest
- Respiratory distress
- Burns
- Hemorrhage and hemodynamic shock
- Trauma
- Anaphylaxis
- Ingestion of toxic substances
- Myocardial infarction
- Acute abdomen
- Septic joint
- Urinary tract infection
- Wound infection

Other Skills: Critical evaluation

- Locate and retrieve medical literature
- Discuss practice implications
- Apply ethical decision-making skills
- Apply the Physician Assistant Ethical Code of Ethics
- Read medical literature on an on-going basis
- Discuss current and controversial medical knowledge with colleagues and physicians
- Critically evaluate new medical knowledge