Our Lady of the Lake College  
School of Arts, Sciences and Health Professions  
Physician Assistant Program  
Technical Standards

Physician Assistants must have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to render a wide spectrum of patient care in a broad variety of clinical situations. Consequently, it is essential that in its admission process, the Physician Assistant program assess an applicant’s physical and emotional capabilities as well as his/her scholastic accomplishments and academic potential in order to assure that the applicant might meet the full demands of the program’s curriculum and graduate as a skilled and effective healthcare provider. In making this assessment, the program must consider the applicant’s current physical and emotional status, any cumulative or progressive disability, and any drug-induced impairments that may pose obstacles to the safe application of his/her knowledge and skills to the provision of quality care or prevent effective interaction with patients. Applicants will be reviewed individually in this regard on a case-by-case basis. No otherwise qualified individual with a handicap will be automatically excluded from admission.

An OLOL College PA program student must have five varieties of abilities and skills: observation, communication, motor, intellectual, and behavioral/social.

I. Observation: Students must have sufficient sensory capacity to observe in the lecture hall, the laboratory, the outpatient setting, and at the patient’s bedside. Sensory skills necessary to perform a physical examination are required including functional vision, hearing, smell, and tactile sensation. All these senses must be adequate to observe a patient’s condition and to elicit information through procedures regularly required in a physical examination such as inspection, auscultation and palpation.

II. Communication: Students must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients, their families and clinicians in both academic and healthcare settings. They must be able to speak and hear clearly as well as show evidence of effective written and verbal communication skills including the ability to read. They must be able to describe changes in a patient’s mood, activity and posture, and perceive non-verbal communications.

III. Motor: Students must have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. They must be able to execute movements reasonably required to provide general and emergency care to patients, including but not limited to cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, the suturing of wounds, and the performance of obstetrical maneuvers. They must be able to negotiate patient care environments and to move between settings, such as clinic, classroom building, and hospital.
Physical stamina sufficient to complete the rigorous course of didactic and clinical study is also required as long periods of sitting, standing, or moving are essential to classroom, laboratory, and clinical experience.

IV. **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities:** Students must be able to consistently, quickly, and accurately integrate all information received by whatever sense is employed and they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze and synthesize data. Problem solving, one of the critical skills demanded of physician assistants, requires that they be able to measure, calculate, and reason. In addition they must be able to comprehend three dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures. They must be able to read and understand medical literature. In order to complete the Physician Assistant Program, students must be able to demonstrate mastery of these skills and the ability to use them together in a timely fashion in medical problem-solving and patient care.

V. **Behavioral/Social Attributes:** PA students must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the completion of all academic and patient care responsibilities. The development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients and other members of the health care team is essential. The ability to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in clinical practice, adaptability to changing environments, flexibility, compassion, integrity, motivation, interpersonal skills, and concern for others are all characteristics demanded of the PA.