

Samuel Merritt College
Master of Physician Assistant Program
ADA Guidelines

Definitions

Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act provides comprehensive civil right protections for “qualified individuals with disabilities.” An “individual with a disability” is a person who:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a “major life activity,” or
- has a record of such an impairment, or
- is regarded as having such an impairment.

The ADA Handbook published by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Department of Justice states: “examples of physical or mental impairments include, but are not limited to, such contagious and noncontagious diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech, and hearing impairments; cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, specific learning disabilities, HIV disease (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic), tuberculosis, drug addiction, and alcoholism. Homosexuality and bisexuality are not physical or mental impairments under the ADA.”

“Major life activities” include functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. Individuals who currently engage in the illegal use of drugs are not protected by the ADA when an action is taken on the basis of their current illegal use of drugs.

“Qualified” individuals are defined as follows:

- A “qualified” individual with a disability is one who meets the essential eligibility requirements for the program or activity offered.
- The “essential eligibility requirements” will depend on the type of service or activity involved.

The stated mission of the physician assistant program at Samuel Merritt College is to train entry-level physician assistants who have the comprehensive clinical and didactic training necessary to provide highly skilled, competent health care in a wide variety of medical and surgical settings. Potential physician assistants are expected to complete all academic and clinical requirements of the professional MPA program before they can sit for the certification examination and practice. The purpose of this document is to delineate the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills deemed essential to the completion of this program and to perform as a competent medical provider.

If a student cannot demonstrate the following skills and abilities it is the responsibility of the student to request an appropriate accommodation. The College will provide reasonable accommodation as long as it does not fundamentally alter the nature of the program offered and does not impose an undue hardship such as those that cause a significant expense, difficulty or are unduly disruptive to the educational process.

Cognitive Learning Skills

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

1. Receive, interpret, remember, reproduce, and use information in the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains of learning to solve problems, evaluate work, generate new ways of processing or categorizing similar information.
2. Evaluate patient status and make responsible decisions regarding appropriate courses of action/treatment within given time constraints.
3. Effectively synthesize data from the patient, charts, verbal reports, medical history and observation for the purpose of recommending or maintaining treatment.

4. Solve practical problems and deal with a variety of variables in situations where only limited standardization exists.
5. Differentiate multiple patient situations simultaneously.
6. Interpret and implement a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form.
7. Apply critical reasoning and independent decision making skills.
8. Apply quantitative methods of measurement, including calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Comprehend three-dimensional relationships and spatial relationships of structures.

Psychomotor Skills

The student must demonstrate the ability to:

1. Sitting: Maintain upright posture.
2. Standing: Maintain upright posture.
3. Locomotion: Ability to:
 - a. Get to lecture, lab and clinical locations, and move within rooms as needed for changing groups, partners and work stations, and perform assigned clinical tasks;
 - b. Physically maneuver in required clinical settings, to accomplish assigned tasks.
4. Manual tasks:
 - a. Maneuver or move an individual's body parts or clinical equipment to effectively perform evaluation and treatment techniques, including palpation, percussion, auscultation, and other diagnostic maneuvers.
 - b. Maintain an object in a constant position for an extended period.
 - c. Competently perform advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) using guidelines issued by the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross.
 - d. Pushing/Pulling ability to exert force against a small or large object to move it closer or further away.
 - e. Coordination of both gross and fine motor movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the special senses sufficient to provide general care and emergency treatment for patients.
5. Small motor/hand skills:
 - a. Legibly record/document history and physical examinations, patient care notes, consultations, etc., in standard medical charts in hospital/clinical settings in a timely manner and consistent with the acceptable norms of clinical settings.
 - b. Legibly record thoughts for written assignments and tests within reasonable time expectations.
 - c. Apply a firm grasp.
 - d. Operate a push-button telephone.
 - e. Perform precision movements (i.e., venipuncture, catheterization, IV regulation, dressing changes, instrument usage) which may further include invasive procedures into the central circulation or highly specific body cavities/spaces.
 - f. Sense through palpation changes in an individual's muscle tone, soft tissues, skin quality, and temperature and sense responses to environmental changes and treatment.
 - g. Manipulate a blood pressure cuff, stethoscope, thermometer (digital, tympanic, glass); insert catheters, IVs, NG tubes; perform injections and adjust IV drips or other equipment as required.
6. Visual acuity to:
 - a. Legibly record/document evaluations, patient care notes, referrals, etc., in standard medical charts in hospital/clinical settings in a timely manner and consistent with the acceptable norms of clinical settings.
 - b. Perform precision movements.
 - c. Identify tiny markings and inscriptions (i.e., on syringes, thermometers, IV bags, etc.).
 - d. Identify color changes and codings.

7. Exteroceptor and proprioceptor senses sufficiently intact to:
 - a. Evaluate changes in patients' body temperature, muscle tone, turgor, position, etc.
8. Hearing or ability to receive and:
 - a. Effectively respond to verbal requests from patients and team members.
 - b. Interpret the language used to communicate lectures, instructions, concepts, narratives, questions and answers.
 - c. Auscultate and percuss for internal body sounds, e.g.. heart, bowel, lungs.
9. Communication Ability:
 - a. Effectively communicate to other students, teachers, patients, peers, other staff and personnel to ask questions, explain conditions and procedures, and teach home programs in a timely manner and within the acceptable norms of academic and clinical settings.
 - b. Receive and interpret written information in both academic and clinical settings in a timely manner.
 - c. Receive and send verbal communication in a timely manner within the acceptable norms of clinical settings.
 - d. Receive and interpret nonverbal communication such as mood changes, activity and posture.
10. Self Care:
 - a. Maintain general good health and self care in order to not jeopardize the health and safety of self and individuals with whom one interacts in the academic and clinical settings.

Affective learning skills

The student must be able to:

1. Demonstrate appropriate affective behaviors and mental attitudes in order not to jeopardize the emotional, physical, mental and behavioral safety of other individuals in the academic and clinical setting.
2. Sustain the mental and emotional rigors of a demanding educational program which includes academic and clinical components that occur within set time constraints, and often concurrently and under stressful conditions.
3. Acknowledge and respect individual values and opinions in order to foster harmonious working relationships with colleagues, peers, and patients/clients.
4. Demonstrate the emotional health required for full utilization of intellectual resources, the exercise of good judgement, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature sensitive and effective relationships with patients, colleagues, and the public.
5. Adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function with the ambiguities inherent in the clinical problems of patients.