

Technical Standards

A student must possess the capability, with or without reasonable accommodations, to complete the entire physical therapy curriculum. The program requires each student to possess the minimal skills listed below in order to participate in coursework, demonstrate proficiency of essential skills, and progress through the Program of Study. It is essential that each student meet the technical standard listed, which are necessary for safe and effective progression through the Program of Study. A student with a disability requiring accommodation in order to meet the listed technical standards must contact Disability Resources (<http://nau.edu/Disability-Resources/>) prior to matriculation in the program or as soon as possible.

Observation skills are necessary for acquisition of required knowledge and skills in classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings. A student must possess capacity to perceive, assimilate, and integrate information from a variety of sources (e.g. oral presentation, printed material, visual media, live demonstrations, and active participation). Specifically, a student must be able to:

- Understand lectures and classroom instruction.
- Monitor heart and lung function.
- Effectively respond to emergency notifications.
- Integrate and apply information from textbook and professional publications, medical records, classroom and laboratory demonstrations, and patient movements.
- Actively participate in cadaver dissections, palpation of peripheral pulses and anatomic structures, and implementation, assessment and documentation of tests and measures essential for physical therapy practice (e.g. vital sign assessment, goniometry, manual muscle testing, and instrument readings).

Communication Skills are critical for a student to build/sustain relationships with faculty, advisors, colleagues, patients/clients and their families, explain evaluation findings and treatment procedures, and read and/or inform others of medical precautions or potential contraindications. A student must be able to:

- Gather, comprehend, utilize, and disseminate verbal and written information using the English language effectively, efficiently, and according to professional standards.
- Communicate at a level consistent with competent professional practice.
- Use grammar and vocabulary proficiently.
- Read and evaluate professional literature.

- Reciprocally communicate with other health care providers via medical records (electronic or hand-written) while maintaining patient confidentiality.
- Communicate effectively and sensitively with patients/clients and colleagues with varying cultural and social backgrounds.
- Observe, recognize, and understand non-verbal communication, including body language, demonstrated by others as well as themselves.

Intellectual/conceptual abilities are necessary for the synthesis and application of specific knowledge and skills in academic, laboratory, and fieldwork settings. A student must be able to:

- Retain facts.
- Synthesize information.
- Reason logically.
- Measure and analyze clinical data.
- Apply relevant knowledge, concepts, and data to the practice of physical therapy.
- Develop and exhibit a sense of professional standards, medical ethics, and pertinent law.

Motor skills are essential for the manipulation of instruments or tools and for safely and effectively assisting or teaching patients/clients. A student must have the physical strength and coordination to efficiently and effectively:

- Participate in laboratory activities.
- Perform CPR procedures.
- Lift and assist patients/clients.
- Perform specific clinical procedures (e.g. examination, manual interventions).

Behavioral and Social Skills are necessary for the development and maintenance of mature and effective interpersonal relationships with other students, faculty, colleagues, and patients. A student must be able to:

- Tolerate physically and emotionally stressful workloads.
- Function effectively under pressure.
- Adapt to changing environments.
- Remain flexible and function in the face of the uncertainties inherent in the clinical setting.
- Provide physical therapy services to individuals of diverse cultures, age groups, socioeconomic groups, and challenges without bias.