

# Essential Functions & Professional Standards

## Shenandoah University Division of Physical Therapy

To graduate and practice as a Physical Therapist, students must demonstrate specific scholastic, physical, and emotional capabilities. These "Essential Functions" are required for admission, continuation, and graduation.

### 1. Clinical & Physical Requirements

Students must be able to perform these tasks independently, with or without reasonable accommodations:

- **Sensory Skills:** You must be able to observe patients accurately, both up close and at a distance. This includes the assessment of non-verbal cues and physical signs of illness.
- **Motor Skills:** You must be able to maneuver yourself and patients safely. This includes, but is not limited to, performing CPR, assisting patients with movement, and handling physically demanding workloads.
- **Safety:** You must ensure patient safety at all times. Any behavior that interferes with patient care or safety may lead to dismissal from the program.

### 2. Communication & Intellectual Skills

- **Communication:** You must be able to communicate effectively in English. You must be able to articulate sensitive information with patients, families, and healthcare teams, processing information accurately and on time.
- **Critical Thinking:** You must be able to calculate, reason, and analyze complex information. This includes, but is not limited to, understanding 3D spatial relationships of the human body and applying classroom knowledge to real-world clinical settings.
  - Extended-time accommodations may not be applicable for certain practical examinations, such as timed skills tests, because these assessments are specifically designed to measure the efficiency of clinical skills.

### 3. Behavioral & Social Standards

Physical therapy requires high emotional stability and maturity. Students are expected to:

- Maintain professional composure and focus on patient care even during high-stress situations or personal difficulty.
  - Show empathy, integrity, and cultural competence.
  - Accept and apply constructive feedback to improve behavior or performance.
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## Core Professional Behaviors

All students are evaluated on these 10 key areas:

1. **Critical Thinking:** Logical questioning and evaluating scientific evidence.
  2. **Communication:** Effective verbal and non-verbal skills for all audiences.
  3. **Problem Solving:** Recognizing issues and implementing solutions.
  4. **Interpersonal Skills:** Interacting professionally with diverse groups.
  5. **Responsibility:** Taking ownership of your actions and commitments.
  6. **Professionalism:** Representing the PT profession with integrity.
  7. **Feedback:** Seeking, reflecting on, and providing helpful critiques.
  8. **Time Management:** Using resources and time efficiently.
  9. **Stress Management:** Developing healthy coping mechanisms for self and patients.
  10. **Commitment to Learning:** Actively seeking new knowledge and skills.
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## Disabilities & Accommodations

Shenandoah University provides reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities.

- **Disclosure:** You are not required to disclose a disability during the admissions process.
- **Requests:** If you need accommodations, you must initiate the process through **Student Support Services (540-665-4928)**.
- **Limitations:** Accommodations cannot be made if they fundamentally alter the program requirements or place an "undue burden" on the university. For example, a personal assistant may not be allowed in certain clinical phases where independence is required.

## Graduation Requirements

To graduate, you must pass all coursework, comprehensive written and oral exams, and clinical education experiences.

*I certify, by my signature below, that I have read and understand the Essential Functions of Shenandoah University Division of Physical Therapy as listed above.*

- *I believe, to the best of my knowledge, that I meet each of these standards with or without reasonable accommodation.*
- *If reasonable accommodations are needed, it is my responsibility to contact the Office of Learning Resources and Services.*
- *I understand there are some accommodations that are not considered reasonable and would preclude me from completing program requirements.*

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*Signature of Applicant*

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*Date*