

2019-2020 Technical Standards
Department of PA Studies
Wake Forest School of Medicine

Applicants to the Wake Forest School of Medicine are selected on the basis of their academic, personal, and extracurricular attributes. Applicants must also have the intellectual, physical, and emotional capabilities to meet the requirements of their program's curriculum and of a successful career in medicine.

These standards specify the attributes and behaviors considered essential for successfully completing PA training and enabling each graduate to enter clinical practice. Because these standards describe the essential functions that students must demonstrate to meet the requirements of PA training within a generalist education model, they are prerequisites for admission, continuation, and graduation.

Wake Forest School of Medicine will consider for admission any applicant who meets its academic and nonacademic criteria and who demonstrates the ability to perform skills listed in this document, with or without reasonable accommodations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act. Our institution does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or physical or mental disability. It is the policy of the PA Program that all students must possess the intellectual, physical, and emotional capabilities necessary to undertake the required curriculum in a reasonably independent manner and that all students must be able to achieve the levels of competence required by the faculty. All candidates for admission, those both with and without disabilities, are expected to be competitive with others in the applicant pool across defined cognitive and non-cognitive factors. The institutional policy is to make admissions decisions on a case-by-case basis and on the basis of each applicant's qualifications to contribute to Wake Forest School of Medicine's educational mission. For purposes of this document and unless otherwise defined, the term "applicant" or "candidate" means an applicant for admission to the PA program as well as an enrolled PA student who is a candidate for promotion and graduation.

Technical standards for PA Program admission, continuation, and graduation

A candidate for the Master of Medical Science (MMS) degree must have abilities and skills in the six functional areas described below and must be able physically and emotionally to function in a competent manner and, consistent with these standards, in the classroom and in clinical and laboratory settings,

1. Observation: The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to anatomic, physiologic, and pharmacologic demonstrations, microbiologic cultures, and microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. A candidate must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation requires adequate vision, hearing, and somatic sensation.

2. **Communication:** Candidates must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with classmates, faculty, patients, their families, and members of the health care team. They must be able to obtain a medical history in a timely fashion, interpret non-verbal aspects of communication, and establish therapeutic relationships with patients. Candidates must be able to record information accurately and clearly, and communicate effectively in English with others in academic and a variety of patient settings.
3. **Motor:** Candidates must have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers that comprise a complete physical examination. A candidate must be able to perform the basic and advanced clinical procedures that are requirements of the PA Program curriculum. A candidate must be able to execute motor movements required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Examples of emergency treatment required of PAs are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, the suturing of simple wounds, and the performance of simple obstetrical and surgical maneuvers. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, prolonged standing, and functional use of the senses of touch, vision and hearing.
4. **Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities:** These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem-solving, the critical skill demanded of PAs, requires that a candidate be able to learn, retrieve, analyze, sequence, organize, synthesize, and integrate information efficiently, and to reason effectively. In addition, the candidate should be able to measure and calculate accurately and to understand the spatial relationships of structures.
5. **Behavioral and social attributes:** Candidates must demonstrate the maturity and emotional stability required for full use of their intellectual abilities. They must accept responsibility for learning, exercise good judgment, and promptly complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients. Candidates must be able to work effectively, respectfully, and professionally as part of the healthcare team, and to interact with patients, their families, and health care personnel in a courteous, professional, and respectful manner. They must be able to tolerate taxing workloads and long work hours, function effectively under stress, display flexibility, and adapt to changing environments. They must demonstrate regular, reliable, and punctual attendance for academic and clinical activities. Candidates must be able to contribute to collaborative, constructive learning environments; accept constructive feedback from others; and take personal responsibility for making appropriate positive changes.
6. **Ethical and Legal Standards:** Candidates must understand the legal and ethical aspects of the practice of medicine and function within both the law and ethical standards of the medical profession. They must meet the legal standards to be licensed to practice

medicine. As such, candidates for admission must acknowledge and provide written explanation of any felony offense or disciplinary action taken against them prior to matriculation. In addition, students convicted of any felony offense while in PA school should immediately notify the Director of Student Services as to the nature of the conviction. Failure to disclose prior or new offenses can lead to disciplinary action that may include dismissal.

Technological accommodation can be made in certain of these areas, but a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. The use of an intermediary trained to perform essential skills on behalf of the candidate is not permitted. Nor is it permitted to use an intermediary whose powers of selection and observation mediate the candidate's judgment.

In addition to the abilities and skills set forth above, candidates must possess the general physical health necessary for performing the duties of a PA student without endangering the lives of patients or colleagues. Candidates whose performance is impaired by use of alcohol or other substances are not suitable for admission, continuation, promotion, or graduation.

Process for assessing the applicant's compliance with the technical standards

Applicants are required to attest at the time they apply and accept an offer to matriculate that they meet these technical standards with or without accommodations. Once admitted to the program, students must continue to meet these standards until program completion. These standards are not intended to deter any student who might be able to complete the requirements of the curriculum with reasonable accommodations. An accommodation is not reasonable if it threatens the health or safety of the student or others, if making it requires a substantial modification in an essential element of the curriculum, if it lowers academic standards, or if it poses an undue administrative or financial burden.

Disability Services

Requests from applicants for reasonable accommodations in meeting the technical standards will be reviewed and considered by an officer outside the PA Program and appointed by the School to evaluate student requests for accommodations. To evaluate a request for accommodations, the officer will at a minimum require the following information (which must be provided at the applicant's expense):

- Documentation of the disability from a licensed professional
- The diagnosis of the disability using standard nomenclature
- A description of the student's functional limitations due to the disability
- Copies of the evaluation report(s) on or accompanied by a letter on the evaluating professional's letterhead
- A description of the requested accommodation

For additional information about the School's process for assessing an applicant's compliance with the technical standards, please contact the Director of Student Services in the Department of PA Studies.