

**Arizona School of Health Sciences
Department of Physician Assistant Studies**

Student Technical Standards

Physician assistants are academically and clinically prepared to provide health care services with the direction and responsible supervision of a doctor of medicine or osteopathy. The physician-PA team relationship is fundamental to the PA profession and enhances the delivery of high quality health care. Within the physician-PA relationship, PAs make clinical decisions and provide a broad range of diagnostic, therapeutic, preventive and health maintenance services. The clinical role of PAs includes primary and specialty care in medical and surgical practice settings. PA practice is centered on patient care and may include educational, research and administrative activities.

Functions performed by physician assistants include (as a minimum) the following general categories of services:

- Evaluation
- Monitoring
- Therapeutic
- Patient Education
- Referral

To provide the services listed above in a compassionate, competent and efficient manner, students in the PA Program will need to be capable of performing the following techniques on their own or with reasonable adaptations:

<u>General Characteristics:</u>	The role of the physician assistant demands intelligence, sound judgement. Intellectual honesty, appropriate interpersonal skills and the capacity to react to emergencies in a calm and reasoned manner.
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The student needs to:

- have an attitude of respect for self and others, adherence to the concepts of privilege and confidentiality in communicating with patients, and a commitment to the patient's welfare
- have the mental capacity and physical abilities to assimilate large amounts of complex information and apply that information in an interpreted fashion to solve clinical problems and formulate therapeutic and diagnostic plans in an accurate and efficient manner
- remain calm and reasoned in a high stress environment and respond quickly and appropriately in emergencies

History Taking

Initially approaching a patient of any age group in any setting to elicit an accurate, detailed history (appropriate to the situation) and record that data in an acceptable fashion.

The student needs to:

- be able to speak fluent English to relate to most patient situations
- have the ability to adjust his/her level of communication to the patient's level of understanding
- demonstrate interactive verbal and written communication skills

Physical Examination

Perform a complete or partial physical examination of a patient of any age, sex or condition in any setting.

The student needs to possess:

- adequate auditory acuity to accurately use a stethoscope, tuning forks, etc.
- adequate visual acuity for inspection techniques and the use of an ophthalmoscope
- adequate depth perception for surgical/technical procedures, and the accurate use of an oto-ophthalmoscope and microscope
- keen tactile sensation for palpation techniques

Diagnostic Skills

Identify, perform, order, and/or interpret at least to the point of recognizing deviations from the norm, common laboratory, radiologic, cardiographic, and other routine diagnostic procedures used to identify pathophysiologic processes.

The student needs to possess:

- accurate visual and auditory acuity for the interpretation of diagnostic procedures

- the ability to reason a patient's problem in an orderly fashion
- competency in the integration of didactic skills, as demonstrated by written and practical examinations
- ability to record diagnostic and other findings accurately, efficiently and clearly

Therapeutic Skills

Performing routine procedures such as injections, immunizations, suturing and wound care, managing simple conditions produced by infection or trauma, assisting in the management of more complex illness and injury, and taking initiative in performing evaluation and therapeutic procedures in response to life-threatening situations.

The student needs to demonstrate:

- flexibility, dexterity and strength of his/her extremities for use in surgical/technical procedures
- degree of coordination in motor skills is needed to respond to emergency situations quickly and appropriately

Competencies

Services performed by physician assistants while practicing medicine with responsible physician supervision include, but are not limited to, the following:

Evaluation: Elicit a detailed and accurate history, perform an appropriate physical examination, order, perform, and interpret diagnostic studies, delineate problems, develop management plans, and record and present data.

Monitoring: Implement patient management plans, record progress notes, and participate in the provision of continuity of health care.

Therapeutic: Perform therapeutic procedures and manage or assist in the management of medical and surgical conditions, which may include assisting surgeons and performing evaluation and therapeutic procedures in response to life-threatening situations.

Patient Education: Counsel patients regarding health care management to include compliance with prescribed therapeutic regimens, normal growth and development, family planning, and emotional problems.

Referral: Facilitate the referral of patients to appropriate health care providers or agencies. To provide services in a compassionate, competent and efficient manner, graduates from the ASHS Department of PA Studies will achieve the following competencies:

1. **Medical Knowledge:** ASHS PA graduates will possess medical knowledge in biomedical sciences, health promotion and disease intervention necessary to competently and compassionately care for the patients and perform the other competencies in this document.
2. **History Taking:** ASHS PA graduates will approach a patient of any age group in any setting and elicit an accurate, detailed patient history (appropriate to the situation) and record that data in an acceptable fashion.
3. **Physical Examination:** ASHS PA graduates will perform a complete or focused physical examination of a patient of any age, sex or condition in any setting.
4. **Diagnostic Skills:** ASHS PA graduates will identify, perform, order, and appropriately interpret common laboratory, radiologic, cardiographic, and other routine diagnostic procedures used to identify pathophysiologic processes
5. **Differential Diagnosis/Diagnostic Impression:** ASHS PA graduates will develop a differential diagnosis and diagnostic impression considering the database.
6. **Therapeutic Skills:** ASHS PA graduates will perform routine procedures such as injections, immunizations, suturing and wound care. They will be able to manage conditions produced by infection or trauma, assist in the management of complex illness and injury, and take initiative in performing evaluation and therapeutic procedures in response to life-threatening situations.
7. **Emergency Skills:** ASHS PA graduates will recognize and manage life threatening or harmful situations under any circumstance or setting. They will work alone or as a team member in a medical emergency.
8. **Communication:** ASHS PA graduates will communicate in a professional manner orally and in writing to health professionals and lay individuals
9. **Attitude:** ASHS PA graduates will appreciate the health problems of individual patients as well as those of population groups and approach such with an attitude of professional concern.
10. **Professionalism:** ASHS PA graduates will possess the skills, attributes and behaviors necessary to function as a physician assistant and as a member of the professional medical community.

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