Technical Standards

Candidates for the Master of Health Science in Physician Assistant Studies degree conferred by Commonwealth University must have technical abilities and skills of five varieties:

1. **Observation Skills:** The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to physiologic and pharmacological demonstrations, microbiological cultures, and microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. A candidate must be able to observe and inspect a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and somatic sensation. It is enhanced by the functional use of the sense of smell.

2. **Communication Skills:** The candidate should be able to speak, to hear, and to observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity, and posture, and perceive nonverbal communications. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients. Communication includes not only speech but also reading and writing. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the health care team.

3. **Motor Skills:** The candidate should have sufficient motor functions to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. A candidate should be able to do basic laboratory tests (urinalysis, CBC, etc.), carry out diagnostic procedures (proctoscopy, paracentesis, etc.), and read EKGs and x-rays. A candidate should be able to reasonably execute motor movements required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of physician assistants are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, and suturing of simple wounds, and the performance of simple obstetrical maneuvers. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of touch and vision.

4. **Intellectual-conceptual, integrative and quantitative:** These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem solving, the critical skill demanded of physician assistants, requires all of these intellectual abilities. In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures.

5. **Behavioral and Social Skills:** The candidate must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his/her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, 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. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that are assessed during the admissions and education processes.