The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) requires all Physician Assistant (PA) programs to publish technical standards for admission, defined as “physical, cognitive and behavioral abilities required for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum and for entry into the profession.”

The technical standards for admission establish the expectations and abilities considered essential for students admitted to the EVMS PA Program in order to achieve the level of competency required for graduation and the practice of medicine. Applicants to the program must possess independent ability, aptitude, and skills in the following areas – observation, communication, critical reasoning, motor & sensory functions, and behavioral & social attributes – as outlined below. It is expected in this technology age that students also have sufficient computer skills and are comfortable with electronic communication and media to successfully and professionally function as a student physician assistant.

Observation Skills Technical Standard

Demonstrate sufficient attention and accuracy in observation skills (visual, auditory, and tactile) in the lecture hall, laboratory, patient’s bedside, and outpatient settings.

Indicators include but are not limited to the following examples:

1. Accurate observation and participation in the lecture hall, laboratory, and clinic with patients at a distance and close at hand including non-verbal and verbal signals.

2. Accurate identification of changes in color of fluids, skin, and diagnostic media examinations.

3. Accurate visualization and discrimination of text, numbers, patterns, graphic illustrations, and findings on X-ray and other imaging tests.

Communication Skills Technical Standard

Demonstrate effective verbal & non-verbal communication skills with other students, faculty, patients, and healthcare providers from different social & cultural backgrounds, varying degrees and types of infirmities, and varying cultures, and personalities.

Indicators include but are not limited to the following examples:

1. Clear, efficient, and intelligible articulation of English language.
2. Legible, efficient and intelligible written English language.

3. Ability to prepare and communicate concise oral and written summaries of patient encounters.

4. Ability to provide appropriate patient counseling and instruction to patients.

5. Record examination and diagnostic results clearly, accurately, and efficiently.

**Critical Reasoning Skills Technical Standard**

Demonstrate critical reasoning skills required to undertake the full curriculum, achieve the level of competency required by the faculty, and meet the demands of total patient care. These skills include, but are not limited to, intellectual, conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities.

Indicators include, but are not limited to, these examples:

1. Accurate and efficient reading skills (English language).

2. Demonstrate ability to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize information.

3. Comprehend the spatial relationships of structures (e.g. three-dimensional relationships)

4. Demonstrate ability to acquire, retain, assimilate and apply large amounts of complex, technical and detailed information.

5. Demonstrate ability to synthesize and apply concepts and information from various disciplines in order to formulate diagnostic and therapeutic plans.

6. Demonstrate appropriate judgment in patient assessment, diagnosis, monitoring, evaluation and intervention, including planning, time management and use of resources.

**Motor and Sensory Function Technical Standard**

Demonstrate sufficient motor and sensory function to perform typical functions of physician assistants, including, but not limited to, physical examinations, treatment interventions, and general care of patients.

Indicators include but are not limited to the following examples:

1. Functional and sufficient sensory capacity (visual, auditory, and tactile) to adequately perform a complete physical examination and elicit information gained from proper use of examination tools and maneuvers (inspection, palpation, percussion, and auscultation).

2. Execute fine and gross motor movements with sufficient coordination, postural control, equilibrium and hand-eye coordination to safely participate in laboratory sessions, use standard medical/surgical instruments, assess patients, provide patient care, and participate in basic diagnostic and therapeutic maneuvers and procedures.
3. Execute motor movements that demonstrate safety and efficiency in the various learning settings (i.e., classroom, laboratories, and clinical settings, including appropriate negotiation of self and patients in various patient care environments).

4. Accurately discern and evaluate various components of the spoken voice (pitch, intensity, and timbre), percussive notes, and auscultatory findings.

5. Physical stamina sufficient to complete the rigorous course of didactic and clinical study, which may include prolonged periods of sitting, standing, and/or rapid ambulation.

6. Coordination of motor skills necessary to respond to emergency situations quickly and appropriately.

**Behavioral and Social Attributes Technical Standard**

Demonstrate the behavioral and social attributes vital to participation in a professional program and service as a practicing professional physician assistant.

Indicators include but are not limited to the following examples:

1. Possess personal qualities that facilitate effective therapeutic interactions (e.g., compassion, empathy, integrity, honesty, benevolence, confidentiality).

2. Possess the emotional health required for full utilization of mental faculties (including judgment, orientation, affect and cognition).

3. Ability to establish rapport and develop mature and effective professional relationships with faculty, patients, the public, and other members of the health care team.

4. Demonstrate impartial motives, attitudes and values in roles, functions, and relationships. Communicate and care for, in a non-judgmental way, persons who differ from oneself and one’s beliefs in a variety of ways, including but not limited to gender, age, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, culture, creed, military status, sexual orientation and identity, and religious or spiritual beliefs.

5. Ability to monitor and react appropriately to one’s own emotional needs and responses.

6. Display appropriate flexibility, adaptability, composure, and emotional stability during periods of high stress or uncertainty associated with didactic and clinical encounters and environments.

7. Ability to accurately follow oral and written directions with prompt completion of all responsibilities in the classroom and clinical setting.

8. Compliance with standards, policies and practices set forth in the program Handbook.
These standards will serve as pre-requisites for entrance, continuation, promotion, and graduation from the PA program and students must be prepared to indicate their ability to meet these standards as a condition of acceptance and during registration for each semester.

Note that the use of an intermediary (a person trained to perform essential skills on behalf of the student) is not permitted.

EVMS must maintain the integrity of the curriculum and preserve those elements deemed essential to the education of a physician assistant and cannot compromise the health and safety of other students or patients. Physician Assistant applicants must be prepared to meet the technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, in order to complete the program and indicate possession of such ability prior to their matriculation into the program and during registration for each semester.

Inquiry by the program faculty and staff regarding disability is strictly prohibited. The PA program, in accordance with EVMS policy and as delineated by federal and Virginia law, does not discriminate in admissions, educational programs or employment against any individual on the basis of that individual’s disability, and will make good faith efforts at providing reasonable accommodation as required. However the program reserves the right not to admit or register students who cannot meet the technical standards or who would constitute a direct threat to the health and safety or others.

The PA program applicants or students who may have questions regarding these technical standards or who believe they may need to request reasonable accommodation in order to meet the standards are encouraged to contact the EVMS Disability Officer (Michael Solhaug, MD | 757.446.5638 | solhaumj@evms.edu).

Revealing a disability is voluntary; however, such disclosure is necessary before any accommodations may be made in the learning environment or in the program’s procedures. Information regarding disabilities is handled in a confidential manner.