



## **MEDEX Northwest Physician Assistant Program University of Washington School of Medicine**

### **Technical Standards and Essential Functions of Medical Education in the MEDEX Northwest Physician Assistant Program. Admission, Retention and Graduation Requirements**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Physician assistant training is recognized as a broad-based process that requires the acquisition of general knowledge in all fields of medicine and of the basic skills required for the practice of medicine, regardless of specialty. The education of a PA requires assimilation of knowledge, acquisition of skills, and development of judgment through patient care experience in preparation for semi-autonomous and appropriate decisions required in medical practice. The current practice of medicine emphasizes collaboration among physicians; other allied health care professionals, and the patient.

#### **POLICY**

The MEDEX Northwest Physician Assistant Training Program endeavors to select applicants who have the ability to become highly competent PAs. As an accredited PA program, MEDEX Northwest adheres to the guidelines promulgated by the Technical Standards and Essential Functions set forward in this document. Within these guidelines, MEDEX Northwest has the freedom and ultimate responsibility for the selection of students, the design, implementation, evaluation of its curriculum, evaluation of students, and the determination of who should be awarded a certificate. Admission and retention decisions are based not only on prior satisfactory academic achievement, but also on non-academic factors that ensure the candidate can complete the essential functions of the academic program required for graduation.

The program has the responsibility to the public to assure that its graduates can become fully competent PAs capable of fulfilling the Hippocratic duty “to benefit and do no harm”. Thus, it is important that persons admitted possess the intelligence, integrity, compassion, humanitarian concern, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice medicine.

The PA Program, as part of the University of Washington School of Medicine, is committed to the principle of equal opportunity. MEDEX Northwest does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, and disabled veteran or Viet Nam era veteran status. The University of Washington is committed to providing access, equal opportunity, and reasonable accommodation in its services, programs, activities, and employment for individuals with disabilities. To request disability accommodation in the admission and application process, contact the Disability Services Office (DSO) at 206-543- 6540 (voice) 206-543-6452 (TTY), 206-685-7264 (fax) or [dso.u.washington.edu](http://dso.u.washington.edu). More information about DSO can be found at <http://www.washington.edu/admin/dso/>.

#### **PROGRAM**

Technical standards, as distinguished from academic standards, refer to those physical, cognitive, and behavioral abilities required for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum, and the

development of professional attributes required by the faculty of all students at graduation. The essential abilities required by the curriculum are in the following areas: motor, sensory, communication, intellectual (conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities for problem solving and diagnosis), and the behavioral and social aspects of the performance of a PA.

The MEDEX Northwest curriculum requires essential abilities in information acquisition. The student must have the ability to master the course work presented in the form of lectures, written material and projected images.

The student must have the cognitive abilities necessary to master relevant content in basic science and clinical courses at a level deemed appropriate by the faculty. These skills may be described as the ability to comprehend, memorize, analyze, and synthesize material. The student must be able to discern and comprehend dimensional and spatial relationships of structures and to develop reasoning and decision-making skills appropriate to the practice of medicine.

The student must have the ability to take a medical history and perform a physical examination. Such tasks require the ability to communicate with the patient. The student must also be capable of perceiving the signs of disease as manifested through the physical examination. Such information is derived from images of the body surfaces, palpable changes in various organs, and auditory information (patient voice, heart tones, bowel, and lung sounds).

The student must have the ability to discern skin, subcutaneous masses, muscles, joints, lymph nodes, and intra- abdominal organs, e.g., liver and spleen. The students must be able to perceive the presence or absence of densities in the chest and masses in the abdomen.

The student must be able to communicate effectively with patients and family, physicians, and other members of the health care team. These communication skills require the ability to assess all information, including the recognition of the significance of non-verbal responses and immediate assessment of information provided to allow for appropriate, well-focused follow-up inquiry. The student must be capable of responsive, empathetic listening to establish rapport in a way that promotes openness on issues of concern and sensitivity to potential cultural differences.

The student must be able to process and communicate information regarding the patient's status accurately and in timely manner to the physician supervisors and other members of the health care team. This information then needs to be communicated in a succinct, yet comprehensive manner, in a settings in which time available is limited. Written or dictated patient assessments, prescriptions, and etc., must be complete and accurate. Appropriate communication may also rely on the student's ability to make a correct judgment in seeking supervision and consultation in a timely manner.

The student must be able to understand the basis and content of medical ethics. The student must possess attributes that include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, responsibility, and tolerance. The student must have the emotional stability to function effectively under stress and to adapt to an environment that may change rapidly, without warning, and/or in unpredictable ways.

These technical standards and essential functions of medical education identify the requirements for admission, retention, and graduation of applicants and students, respectively, at the MEDEX Northwest Physician Assistant Training Program. Graduates are expected to be qualified to enter a field of PA practice of their choice.