

Memorandum

TO: Applicants for Radiation Therapy Technology Program

FROM: Adam Kempa, Interim Program Director

SUBJECT: **Technical Standards Required of Professional Students**

DATE: January 2006

Selecting a career is probably one of the more important decisions you have had to make as an adult. To assist you in making an informed decision; the program faculty have prepared a very important informational document which outlines the technical standards required of professional students in the radiation therapy technology program. We want you to be well informed about what skills and abilities are required of professional students.

Please carefully read this entire document. If you have any questions or concerns, please notify program personnel.

Please sign the *Statement of Understanding* on **page six** and return it to the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences Office of Student Affairs. If, at a later date, you have any questions or concerns about the role of the radiation therapist, please call (313) 577-1137 and ask to speak to Mr. Adam Kempa or Mr. Kurt Frederick. **The Department faculty members are committed to complete disclosure of career information and will assist and clarify as needed.** Keep in mind that modifications can be made for some tasks *once the faculty and clinical instructors are apprised of any limitations you may have.* Therefore, promptly communicate any concerns you may have about whether you will be able to meet these practice requirements.

We know that academic success is important to you and we hope this document assists you making the career decision that will result in job satisfaction and personal fulfillment. Don't hesitate to call upon us as needed.

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
RADIATION THERAPY TECHNOLOGY

Statement of Technical Standards Required of Professional Students

Purpose of This Document

Radiation Therapists are highly skilled and knowledgeable allied health professionals who provide technical and supportive care to cancer patients. The nature of their work and responsibilities requires that they possess many physical, intellectual, social, and emotional skills and abilities.

During your clinical visits, you have had the opportunity to observe the activities radiation therapists are expected to perform on a daily basis. Additionally, the Program wishes to clarify what expectations will be placed on a professional student in this program. This document outlines in some detail the skills and abilities which will be required of students throughout the professional program. This list is intended to describe what generally would be expected of a graduate radiation therapist employed by a hospital or clinic.

Please carefully read this document to determine if you may encounter professional requirements which may be difficult or impossible to fulfill.

IMPORTANT NOTE

This document is intended as a guide for the student considering radiation therapy technology as a career choice. As such a student, you must recognize that it is impossible to outline every conceivable requirement that a therapist may encounter. If you have any questions or concerns about the required abilities/skills, you are urged to discuss the matter with a program official after your interview for additional clarification. You may also wish to consult a physician, academic advisor, or other professional in the process of confirming your career choice.

Any student APPLYING to the professional program who believes a current or potential disability MAY restrict his/her ability to meet the professional obligations of a radiation therapist, MUST notify program officials. This requirement is intended to protect the student's educational rights while safeguarding his/her interests by ensuring that the student is accurately informed of professional role expectations. Professional assessment of the student's capabilities and/or limitations may be required. Program faculty are fully supportive of task modification when possible, provided the modification does not substantially change the effectiveness, accuracy or speed required for the activity, outcome or behavior.

The **Technical Standards** for the Radiation Therapy Technology program at Wayne University are divided into the following groups:

- I. Sensory Functions**
- II. Motor Functions**
- III. Communication Skills**
- IV. Psychosocial Skills**
- V. Cognitive Abilities**

I. SENSORY FUNCTIONS

A. Vision

Radiation Therapy students must be able to:

1. Focus and see at distances in the range of 6 inches to 25 feet;
2. Discriminate details (lines, dots, numbers, etc.) to an accuracy of ± 2 millimeters under conditions of dim light;
3. Accommodate abrupt changes in light intensity;
4. Demonstrate sufficient depth perception to safely and accurately manipulate mechanical equipment physically close to patients and other objects;
5. Read gauges, control panels and other digital equipment at a viewing range of 6 inches to 10 feet;
6. Confirm patient identification by using photographs and/or ID bracelet; and
7. Observe patients undergoing treatment or other care through direct visualization or on a TV monitor; and
8. Discriminate between different colors (i.e. patient marking, colored illuminations).

B. Hearing

Radiation Therapy students must be able to hear and discriminate:

1. Audible changes in equipment operation; and
2. Auditory communication (i.e. sounds, words) with patients and personnel through direct or electronic means.

II. MOTOR FUNCTIONS

A. **Gross Motor Functions**

Radiation Therapy students must have the strength and flexibility to accomplish the following tasks safely, yet with reasonable speed:

1. Stand for approximately 40% of the work day;
2. Walk for at least 50% of the work day;
3. Sit for approximately 10% of the work day;
4. Lift, reach and extend upper body to accomplish patient transfer from wheelchair or cart to treatment table;
5. Maneuver patients on table to accomplish accurate treatment positioning (i.e. pull, push, adjust); and
6. Lift, reach and extend upper body above patients to:
 - a. safely manipulate treatment apparatus,
 - b. insert metal shielding devices having a weight of 20-50 pounds, and
 - c. accommodate for different heights.

B. **Fine Motor Skills**

Radiation Therapy students must have the physical dexterity to:

1. Manipulate equipment controls (i.e. turning and pushing buttons, knobs, keys, and typing on computer keyboards); and
2. Coordinate use of both hands to simultaneously operate equipment and accurately align patient.

C. **Endurance**

Radiation Therapy students must have the **endurance** to accomplish the above tasks on a repetitive basis throughout the work day.

III. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Student radiation therapists must demonstrate competency with the following communication skills:

- A. Receive and comprehend written, oral and nonverbal messages;
- B. Send verbal and nonverbal messages/communications to patients, families and co-workers, such as explanations about treatment procedures;
- C. Confirm patient identification by using photographs and/or ID bracelet;
- D. Obtain and utilize various types of information in order to provide accurate and compassionate patient care, such treatment data and information about the patient's condition and needs; and
- E. Accurately communicate with co-workers and other personnel regarding treatment procedures, such as writing technical notes and treatment instructions.

IV. PSYCHOSOCIAL SKILLS

Student radiation therapists must demonstrate:

- A. Positive interaction with patients and personnel on a one-on-one basis;
- B. Small group interactive skills, such as cooperation, compromise and teamwork;
- C. Concern and respect for patients and personnel;
- D. Coping skills to manage physical and mental stressors, emergencies, changing environments; and
- E. Mature and responsible conduct when interacting with patients and personnel.

V. COGNITIVE ABILITIES

Student radiation therapists must demonstrate the following abilities under conditions of moderate auditory noise and reasonable time limitations:

- A. Concentrate attention and efforts to the task at hand; and
- B. Interpret multiple factors about a situation and understand their impact (i.e. simultaneously operate equipment and observe patients);

V. **COGNITIVE ABILITIES** (Cont.)

C. Perform activities in a logical sequence; and

D. Apply previous classroom learning and clinical instruction to patient-related procedures.

SUMMARY

As previously stated, this document is intended as a guide for you, the prospective student, to consider the various abilities that will be required of you as a professional student and eventually as a graduate radiation therapist. The intent of this document has been to inform you of the working conditions and requirements that can be expected so you can determine if this career seems right for you.

The Radiation Therapy Technology program intends, through this document and other means, to be as complete, honest and forthright as possible in communicating career and program information to you. Therefore, in some instances, the requirements may be described in maximum or extreme terms rather than typical conditions. In return, we expect you to consult us on issues concerning your ability to perform according to the requirements presented in this document.

We recognize that YOUR CAREER CHOICE IS IMPORTANT and we pledge to assist you in making an informed decision. Remember, we share the same goal....we want you to be SUCCESSFUL in your chosen career!

PLEASE RETAIN THIS DOCUMENT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.