



Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Program Technical Standards

(Adopted 12/24 by University of Charleston DPT Core Faculty)

I. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to delineate cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills, abilities, and behaviors deemed essential for successful matriculation within the program. The following examples included are illustrative for program technical standards and may not represent an all-encompassing listing of essential job functions to become a future physical therapist.

The intent of the professional program at the University of Charleston (UC) is to educate competent generalist physical therapists who can provide examination, evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis, and intervention. Treatment interventions for the general population typically occur in acute, sub-acute, rehabilitation, or outpatient centers in the current health care system. Enrolled students are required to complete the academic and clinical components of the professional physical therapy program, as defined in the UC Catalog, Program Handbooks, and the various course syllabi.

It is during the rigorous 32-month curriculum that the student develops the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to practice in the physical therapy profession. To evaluate competence, the program employs periodic examination, both written and practical, as an essential component of the curriculum. Successful completion of these examinations is required of all students as a condition of matriculation through the curriculum. Reasonable accommodation will be made based on receipt of approved accommodation by the Offices of Student Solutions. Students must be able to integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) is/are employed in a consistent, efficient, and effective manner and must have the ability to remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create data as well as perform prescribed skills in a safe and effective manner.

The process of evaluation of the clinical performance of the student is an integral and essential component of the curriculum. Although reasonable accommodation may be made, participation in clinical experiences away from campus and the evaluation of the student's participation is required with or without accommodations. Students, to be successfully placed in a clinical experience must not only meet the technical standards of the UC DPT program but may also need to meet whatever essential function standards may be in place by the matched clinical facility.

II. Reasonable Accommodation

It is the policy of the UC DPT Program in cooperation with the disability resource professionals at the University to develop accommodations to maximize access for qualified students with disabilities. Prospective students, who can complete these established standards and activities with or without reasonable accommodation, are not required to disclose potential specifics of an accommodations request prior to an admission decision. All students, prior to the start of classes, must indicate that technical standards can be met with or without reasonable accommodation.

III. Technical Standards

Candidates for the physical therapy degree must be able to meet these technical standards and follow legal and ethical standards as set forth by the APTA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. The potential student must be able to perform the skills throughout their matriculation in the program, with or without reasonable accommodation, for successful completion of degree requirements. Technology or intermediaries may be considered on an individual basis.

A. Intellectual-Cognitive

These abilities or attributes include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, judgment, numerical recognition, synthesis, and evaluation.

Technical Standard: Students should have the capacity to interpret, assimilate, and understand complex curricular information presented both in person and remote via technology. Students are expected to possess the ability to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, hypothesize, and transmit information.

Examples: Identify significant findings from history, physical examination, and laboratory data; provide a reasoned explanation for likely therapy, recalling and retaining information in an efficient and timely manner; incorporate new information from peers, faculty, and professional literature; demonstrate sound judgment in patient assessment, diagnostic and therapeutic planning; communicate the limits of one's knowledge and abilities to others when appropriate; interpret graphs describing biologic relationships and manage other similar modes of data.

B. Behavioral-Social

These abilities or attributes include recognition of the biopsychosocial impact of impairments, limitations, and participation restrictions, as well as the integration of the needs of the patient, family and/or caregiver into the plan of care.

Technical Standard: Students should possess the psychological capacity for the exercise of sound judgment, the completion for all responsibilities inherent to the diagnosis and care of patients, and for the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, colleagues, educators, and other health care providers.

Examples: Tolerate physically and mentally taxing workloads; function effectively under stress; adapt to a changing healthcare environment; display flexibility when learning to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical environment.

C. Communication

These abilities or attributes include efficient and effective communication.

Technical Standard: Students should possess the capacity to explain treatment procedures, obtain essential information from the patient and others, educate patients, and document according to practice guidelines.

Examples: Communicate with faculty, clinical instructor, staff, clients, and patients to elicit information regarding expectations, behavior, mood, and activities both verbally and non-verbal; communicate effectively and efficiently with other members of the health care community to

convey information essential for safe and effective care; communicate with individuals in a culturally sensitive and respectful way; read, write, speak, and understand English at a level consistent with successful course completion.

D. Observation and Awareness

These abilities or attributes involve the use or functional equivalent of vision, hearing, smell, and somatic sensations.

Technical Standard: Students should possess the capacity to collect and accurately interpret information from the classroom and clinical settings whether delivered in-person or remotely.

Examples: Observe a patient accurately; observe digital and waveform readings and other graphic images; palpate peripheral pulses, bony prominences and neuromusculoskeletal structures; evaluate and/or assess (both visual and tactile) areas of inflammation and/or edema, gait analysis, radiographic images; visual and olfactory assessment of wounds; auscultation of heart/breath/abdominal sounds.

E. Motor

These abilities or attributes involve the motor skills required for the coordination of both gross and fine muscular movement, equilibrium, and the integrated use of touch, vision, and smell.

Technical Standard: Students should possess sufficient motor function to elicit information from the patient examination and provide safe therapeutic interventions.

Examples: Execute movements required to provide general and therapeutic interventions; position large or immobile patients; provide balance and safety support during movement tasks; gait training using therapeutic aids and orthotics/prosthetics; perform manual mobilization techniques; perform non-surgical wound debridement.

F. Professional Attributes

These abilities or attributes involve adherence to ethical and legal standards and abiding by facility policies and procedures while projecting a professional image.

Technical Standard: Students should possess the capacity to maintain and display ethical behavior commensurate with the professional role of a physical therapist in all interactions with patients, faculty, clinical instructors, staff, students, colleagues, and the public.

Examples: Understand the legal and ethical aspects of physical therapy; function within the legal, ethical standards, and core values of the physical therapy profession; abide by established policies during clinical education placements.