

PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM

## MINIMUM TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION AND CONTINUATION

**Read this information sheet carefully and retain for your records**

### Introduction

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act require that no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University's services, programs or activities or be subjected to discrimination by SUNY Downstate. The term "qualified individual with a disability" means an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or for participation in programs or activities. The Committee on Admissions and Academic Standing will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities. Students must be able to perform the essential functions of the program in order to meet certain minimum academic and technical standards. In carrying out their functions, the Committee will be guided by the technical standards set forth in this proposal as standards necessary for admissions, continuance and successful completion of the program. This information is used in conjunction with the policies and procedures as delineated in the *Program in Physical Therapy Program Information and Policies Manual*.

### Technical Standards

The goal of the Physical Therapy Program at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University is to educate a competent entry-level physical therapist who can examine, evaluate, and provide a diagnosis, prognosis, plan of care and appropriate intervention for the general population of acute and rehabilitation patients/clients in current health care settings. Students will be guided to develop critical thinking and clinical decision-making skills based upon evidence-based practice and the ethical standards set for the American Physical Therapy Association. Students are required to successfully complete both the academic and clinical requirements of the program to receive the BS/DPT degree in Health Sciences and Physical Therapy. In order to carry out the activities described below, candidates for the BS/DPT degree in Health Sciences and Physical Therapy must be able to consistently, quickly, and accurately learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data. The activities described below are the technical standards necessary to complete the BS/DPT degree in Health Sciences and Physical Therapy and to perform as a competent entry-level physical therapist consistent with *A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 2004* (APTA, 2004).

A candidate for the BS/DPT degree in Health Sciences and Physical Therapy must have abilities, attributes, and skills in five major areas:

- Observation,
- Communication,
- Motor Coordination,
- Intellectual, including conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities, and
- Behavioral and Social.

Performing in a reasonably independent manner is an essential function of the program and profession. The use of a trained intermediary means that the student's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation, and as such is unacceptable.

## **1. Observation**

Students must have sufficient vision to be able to observe demonstrations, experiments, and laboratory exercises in the basic sciences. They must be able to observe a patient accurately at close range and at a distance, be able to obtain an appropriate medical history directly from the patient or guardian, and observe digital and waveform readings and other graphic images to determine a patient's condition. Such observation necessitates the functional use of vision, hearing and other sensory modalities.

## **2. Communication**

Students should be able to communicate, understand and observe patients in order to elicit information, examine patients, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive nonverbal communications. They must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients. Communication includes not only speech but also reading and writing. They must also be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the health care team to convey information for safe and effective care. Students must also be able to do oral presentations to faculty and student groups and in-service presentations to clinical staff.

## **3. Motor Coordination and Strength**

Students should be sufficiently mobile to execute movements required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Students should be able to do basic screening and examination (physiological measures such as heart rate and respiration), diagnostic procedures (palpation, manual muscle testing, goniometry, sensory evaluation, gait analysis, balance assessment), and evaluate EKGs and X-rays. They should be sufficiently mobile, and possess the eye-hand coordination and motor strength, to execute movements required to provide general treatment of patients (including transfers), and provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of physical therapists are cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the application of pressure to stop bleeding. Additionally, students must be able to perform sharp debridement of wounds and other physical assessment maneuvers, where such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscle movements, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch and vision.

## **4. Intellectual—conceptual, integrative and quantitative abilities**

These abilities include measurement, calculation, memorization, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem solving, the critical skill demanded of PTs, requires all of these intellectual abilities. In addition, students should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures.

## **5. Behavioral and Social**

Students must be able to fully utilize their intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, promptly complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and develop mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients. Students must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others from all levels of society, respect for human diversity, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that are assessed during the admissions and educational process. Students must demonstrate sufficient emotional health to be able to fully utilize their intellectual abilities and exercise appropriate judgment in a variety of settings with teachers, fellow students, clients, families and colleagues. Students must demonstrate the ability to use professional touch in interactions with students, faculty and clients of both genders. This must be demonstrated in coursework and fieldwork. Several laboratory classes require that students practice evaluation or intervention techniques with classmates. It is expected that students will wear specified clothing and/or manually interact with fellow students and teachers of both genders when participating in these practical learning experiences.

## Conclusion

The SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University Physical Therapy Program and its sponsoring institution will attempt to develop creative ways of opening the Program to competitive, qualified individuals with disabilities. In doing so, however, the Program and sponsoring institution must maintain the integrity of the curriculum and preserve those elements deemed essential to the education of a Physical Therapist. The Program and sponsoring institution cannot compromise the health and safety of patients. An applicant or student who is unable to meet the minimum academic and technical standards is not qualified for the practice of the profession.

## Signature

I have read, understand and agree to the technical standards as published above.

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Signature

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Date