

# **PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINICAL EDUCATION POLICIES**

## **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY STUDENTS**

Physical therapy students must be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodations, each of these essential functions in order to fully participate in our program and successfully complete the requirements for a doctorate degree in physical therapy.

### **Cognitive Functions**

1. Comprehend, retain, recall and apply complex information learned in required prerequisite courses from the liberal arts, basic sciences, mathematics, and psychological and clinical sciences to the program's professional course work.
2. Comprehend, synthesize, integrate and apply information from written materials, demonstration, lectures, class discussions, laboratory practice sessions, and real and simulated patients.
3. Apply information obtained from classroom, laboratory, and written materials to the examination, evaluation and intervention of real and simulated patients.
4. Critically analyze information taken from lectures, class discussion, written materials, research literature, laboratory, and patient demonstrations to develop and support the rationale for appropriate patient examinations, evaluations, and interventions.
5. Determine the physical therapy needs of any patient with potential movement dysfunction.
6. Develop and document a physical therapy plan of care for any patient with movement dysfunction.
7. Demonstrate management skills including planning, organizing, supervising, and delegating.
8. Develop and apply programs of prevention and health promotion in a variety of client and patient populations.
9. Participate in the process of scientific inquiry.

### **Affective and Communication Functions**

1. Establish professional, empathic relationships with individuals from a variety of backgrounds, ages, and needs, based on mutual trust.
2. Recognize the impact and influence of lifestyle, family or peer support, socioeconomic class, culture, beliefs, race, and abilities on patients and colleagues.
3. Engage in respectful, non-judgmental interactions with individuals from various lifestyles, cultures, beliefs, races, socioeconomic classes, and abilities.
4. Develop and maintain effective, respectful working relationships with professional colleagues, peers, patients, families, and the general public.
5. Work effectively as part of an interdisciplinary team.
6. Utilize appropriate professional verbal, nonverbal and written communication with patients, families, and colleagues.
7. Recognize the psychosocial impact of movement dysfunction and disability on the client and family; integrate these needs into the evaluation and plan of care.
8. Apply teaching and learning theories and methods in the healthcare and community environments.

9. Meet both internal and externally imposed deadlines and time requirements.
10. Effectively and consistently manage personal stress and the stress of others.
11. Effectively attend to people, information, and tasks in a complex, highly stimulating environment during an entire workday.
12. Practice in a safe, ethical, and legal manner, following guidelines for standard practice as established by federal, state, and local law, the University, clinical facilities, the APTA, and related professional organizations.
13. Demonstrate responsibility for self-assessment and the development of a life-long plan for professional growth and development.
14. Accept responsibility for all actions, reactions, and inactions.
15. Respond to medical crisis and emergencies in a calm, safe, and professional manner.
16. Speak and write effectively in English to convey information to other individuals and groups.
17. Understand and interpret the verbal, non-verbal, and written communications of others and respond in an appropriate, professional manner.

### **Psychomotor Functions**

1. Safely, reliably, and efficiently perform required physical therapy procedures to examine and where applicable, physically assess the functional skills and gross motor system of patients across the lifespan. These include but are not limited to:
  - Cognitive, mental, emotional status
  - Strength
  - Skin integrity
  - Sensation
  - Endurance
  - Joint mobility
  - Joint motion and play
  - Muscle tone and reflexes
  - Movement patterns
  - Coordination
  - Balance
  - Development skills
  - Pain
  - Posture
  - Gait
  - Functional abilities
  - Assistive technology
  - Cardiopulmonary status
  - Segmental length, girth, and volume
2. Demonstrate the ability to observe and practice universal precautions for patient, family and peer safety.
3. Demonstrate the ability to perform CPR and emergency first aid.
4. Safely, reliably, and efficiently physically interact with patients while manually performing treatment procedures for patients across the lifespan, using procedures that are appropriate for the patient's status and plan of care. These include, but are not limited to:
  - Therapeutic exercises to improve strength, ROM, or endurance

- Developmental activities
  - Gait activities
  - Prosthetic and orthotic training
  - Wound care
  - Wheelchair training
  - Neurosensory techniques
  - Thermal agents and electrotherapy
  - Balance and coordination training
  - Positioning techniques
  - Cardiopulmonary rehabilitation
  - Joint mobilization and soft tissue procedures
  - Functional activities, bed mobility, transfers
5. Safely and reliably read meters, dials, printouts, and goniometers.
  6. Safely, reliably, and efficiently perform functional skills assessments and/or perform treatment procedures for multiple patients at the same time while meeting and maintaining all necessary standards of care.
  7. Demonstrate the ability to manipulate and operate physical therapy equipment and monitoring devices.
  8. Demonstrate appropriate body mechanics and react safely and appropriately to sudden or unexpected movements of patients/classmates.
  9. Demonstrate the ability to work in an environment that requires significant physical activity and mobility throughout the workday in a way that does not compromise patient or therapist safety.

Sources:

AASIG Technical Standards, Essential Functions Document. Section on Education, September, 1998.

Ingram, D. (1997). Opinions of Physical Therapy Program Directors on Essential Functions, *Physical Therapy*, 77(1).

Simmons College Essential Functions, Boston, MA.

University of Rhode Island Essential Functions, Kingston, RI.

\*Approved by UNF's PT Faculty 05/01/2008