



Technical Standards

STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION, ACADEMIC PROGRESSION, AND GRADUATION

Essential Abilities

Physical therapy education requires that the accumulation of scientific knowledge be accompanied by the simultaneous acquisition of skills, professional attitudes and appropriate behavior. As such, admission, promotion and graduation decisions will be based not only on candidates' scholastic accomplishments, but also on their physical and emotional capacities to meet the full requirements of the curriculum and to graduate as skilled and effective practitioners. The Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree awarded by the Augusta University certifies that the individual has acquired a broad base of knowledge, skills and attitudes requisite for the practice of physical therapy.

In order to acquire the knowledge and skills to function independently in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care, candidates for the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree must have abilities and skills in five areas: observation; communication; motor; conceptual (integrative and quantitative); and behavioral/social.

● Observation

The candidate must be able to observe lectures, demonstrations and experiments in basic and applied sciences including, but not limited to human anatomy and physiology, neuroscience, as well as in didactic courses in physical therapy theory and practice. In addition, the student must be able to sit quietly during class without distracting the instructor or other students. A candidate must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation requires the functional use of the senses of vision, hearing, and palpation and is enhanced by the functional use of the sense of smell.

● Communication

The candidate must be able to speak, to hear, and to observe subjects in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive and accurately report nonverbal communications. The student must be able to read technical English rapidly and with comprehension, communicate with instructors, peers and other members of the health care team by means of both spoken and written English using reasonable grammar and syntax in both immediate and recorded modes.

● Motor

Candidates should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from subjects by palpation, auscultation, percussion, manual positioning of body segments and other evaluative procedures. A candidate should be able to do basic screening and examination (physiological measures such as vital signs), diagnostic procedures (palpation, manual muscle testing, goniometry, sensory evaluation, gait analysis, balance assessment), and evaluate electrocardiograms and radiographic studies. A candidate should be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of physical therapists are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and application of pressure to stop bleeding. Additionally, candidates must be able to perform debridement of wounds and other physical therapy



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intervention maneuvers, where such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the proprioceptive senses.

- **Conceptual (Integrative and Quantitative)**

These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, synthesis, and retention of complex information. Problem solving, the critical skill demanded of physical therapist practitioners, requires all of these intellectual abilities. In addition, the candidate should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures.

- **Behavioral/Social**

Candidates must possess the emotional health required for full use of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the physical therapy evaluation, diagnosis and intervention, as well as the development of mature, sensitive and effective therapeutic relationships. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the educational process as well as the clinical care of patients. Accountability, altruism, compassion, excellence, integrity, professional duty, and social responsibility are all personal qualities that are assessed during the admissions and education processes.

The department faculty will consider for admission, promotion and graduation candidates who demonstrate the ability to perform the essential abilities listed in this document. It is the responsibility of the individual to request those accommodations that the candidate feels are reasonable and are needed to execute the requirements described. Technological compensation can be made for some disabilities in certain of these areas, but a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. The use of a trained intermediary means that a candidate's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation, and as such is unacceptable.