MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY
Physical Therapy Department
April 1, 2025

Minimum Technical Standards for the Student Physical Therapist Admission and Matriculation

Misericordia University is committed to creating an environment where all are welcome. In the spirit of hospitality and justice, we comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, and as applicable. The Misericordia Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its program and encourages all qualified individuals to apply for admission to the DPT Program.

The DPT degree is a broad degree in which the graduate is prepared and upon licensure is allowed to practice in all areas of the physical therapy profession. This requires that the students in the curriculum acquire didactic knowledge as well as competent skills and attitudes essential for the practice of physical therapy. The students require both cognitive and technical skills to negotiate this curriculum, including classroom, laboratory, simulated clinical experiences and clinical education assignments.

These technical standards are the activities that a student physical therapist should be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodations. These standards should not serve as a deterrent to any candidate with disabilities who desires to pursue education to become a Doctor of Physical Therapy. Candidates with disabilities bring unique perspectives that contribute to the diversity of the candidate population and will create a diverse health care workforce of culturally competent practitioners who can meet the needs of their patients and clients. With this in mind, the student should be able to meet the technical standards in the following domains in the classroom and clinical setting.

The technical standards are not intended to deter any candidate for whom reasonable accommodations will allow the fulfillment of the complete curriculum. However, not all accommodations may be able to be honored in all educational settings. By way of example only, if the requested accommodation is unreasonable and/or would cause the University to fundamentally alter the program, then it cannot be honored. Students seeking accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aides can be confidentially reviewed by the Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) by contacting Kristen Ricardo at kricardo@misericordia.edu or 570-674-6205. The OSD is located in the Student Success Center (SSC) in the lower level of Alumnae Hall.

Motor

General: Physical therapy students should have sufficient motor functions such that they are able to effectively manage the patient from patient examination through intervention. Candidates must be able to provide general and therapeutic care that is safe for the patient, any caregivers, and themselves.

Specific: Motor functions include, but are not limited to, the performance, description or direction of others to safely lift, transfer, guard, and position patients. In addition, many therapy interventions require advanced hands-on skills to safely perform patient care, including manual therapy, wound debridement, and treatments that use accessory devices.

Observation/Sensory Abilities

General: A student should be able to perceive all information necessary for effective patient/client management inclusive of functional use of visual, hearing and tactile sensation.

Specific: This includes, but is not limited to:

- Visual observation of:
  - Audiovisual presentations and written materials in lecture
  - Laboratory demonstrations and procedures
  - Patient/clients (at a distance and close at hand)
  - Treatment equipment, inclusive of textual and graphic readouts, and environment (at a distance and close at hand)

- Auditory ability for:
  - Effective auscultation/auditory evaluation inclusive of but not limited to: lungs, heart, apical pulse, blood pressure, joint noises, and prostheses.
  - Environmental cues inclusive of phones, overhead paging systems, equipment safety alarm signals, and verbal communication in a setting with competing ambient noise.

- Tactile ability for:
  - Appropriate feedback related to safe application of gradient pressures during examination and intervention, including palpation, manual muscle testing, joint mobilization, percussion, massage.
  - Appropriate feedback for manipulation of dials, sensors, switches on all examination and therapeutic equipment.

Cognitive Processing

General: A student should be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize in order to effectively problem solve and clinically reason.

Specific: Students must understand, assimilate, and interpret complex curricular information, including but not limited to, the ability to comprehend 3-dimensional relationships, understand the spatial relationships of structures; synthesize information both in person and remote via technology; interpret data to make conclusions; hypothesize. A student should be able to perform these problem-solving skills in a timely fashion for effective patient treatment.

Maintain Safety

Physical therapy students should possess sufficient intellectual-conceptual ability to maintain a safe environment for students, faculty, patients, and colleagues. Students should be able to:

- Recognize and respond appropriately and in a timely manner to a medical emergency.
- Recognize and react in a timely manner to changes in the environment that may result in injury or harm to students, faculty, patients, and colleagues.
- Recognize and react in a timely manner to changes in a patient's status that may result in injury or harm to students, faculty, patients, and colleagues.
- Recognize and react in a timely manner to personal limitations that may result in injury or harm to students, faculty, patients, and colleagues.

Communication

General: Students should be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and all members of the health care team.

Specific: Students should be able to communicate with patients in order to elicit information, to detect changes in mood, activity, and to establish a therapeutic relationship. Students should have sufficient facility with English to retrieve information from literature, computerized databases and lectures to communicate concepts on course exams and patient charts; elicit patient backgrounds; describe patient changes and coordinate patient care with all members of the health care team.

Behavioral/Social

A student should possess the psychological ability required for the full utilization of their intellectual abilities, for the exercise of good judgment, for the completion of all responsibilities inherent to diagnosis and care of patients, and for the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, colleagues, and other health care providers. Students must be able to tolerate physically and mentally taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. They should be able to adapt to a changing environment, display flexibility and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients.

Professionalism/Ethics

A student should maintain and display ethical behaviors commensurate with the role of a physical therapist in all interactions with patients, faculty, staff, students, clinical colleagues, and the public. The student is expected to understand the legal and ethical aspects of the scope of physical therapy and function within the legal, ethical standards, and core values of the Sisters of Mercy and the physical therapy profession.

Physical therapy students must possess the emotional health required for the full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, practice in a professional and ethical manner, and the prompt and safe completion of all responsibilities needed for effective diagnoses and care of patients and families. Students must be able to:

- Work with multiple patients/families/colleagues at the same time
- Work with lab partners, patients, families, and others under stressful conditions, including but not limited to medically or emotionally unstable individuals, situations requiring rapid adaptations, the provision of CPR, or other emergency interventions.
- Recognize and respectfully respond appropriately to individuals of all ages, genders, races, socio-economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.
- Maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, students, faculty, staff and other professionals in academic and clinical environments including highly stressful situations.
- Understand that their values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and experiences affect their perceptions and relationships with others.
- Demonstrate the ability to be self-reflective.
- Possess adequate endurance to tolerate physically, emotionally, and mentally taxing workloads and to function effectively under time constraints, proactively making use of available resources to help maintain both physical and mental health.
- Accept suggestions and criticisms and, if appropriate, to respond by modifying their behavior.
- Demonstrate appropriate assertiveness, delegate responsibilities, and function as a part of a physical therapy team.
- Display moral, ethical, and professional behaviors consistent with the APTA Core Values of Professionalism.
- Understand and adhere to all federal and state statutes/regulations relevant to the practice of physical therapy.