

## **DeSales University Doctor of Physical Therapy Program**

### **Technical Standards and Essential Functions of Physical Therapy Practice:**

Participation in and successful completion of the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program at DeSales University requires that all candidates and any enrolled students possess the ability to acquire academic knowledge, perform essential physical functions, and demonstrate professional attitudes and behaviors involved in physical therapy practice. The clinical doctorate degree awarded at the completion of the student's educational process certifies to the public that each individual has acquired this broad foundation of knowledge and skills requisite for safe, effective and efficient care to the community being served.

The following technical standards and essential functions represent minimum skill sets ensuring the successful completion of the degree requirements and future success in the provision of physical therapy services. These standards and functions are described and defined by both (1) category and (2) examples. **The examples are for clarification and do not represent an exhaustive list of all possible activities.**

Every applicant and student in the DeSales DPT program must be able to demonstrate the ability to perform these essential functions, with or without reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations may be offered to a student upon request in accordance with the provisions outlined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, and DeSales University policy for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations may not: (1) fundamentally alter the nature of the didactic or clinical education curriculum, (2) compromise the essential elements of the program, (3) cause an undue financial or administrative burden for the University, or (4) endanger the safety of patients, self or others. It should also be noted that completion of all clinical education courses is a graduation requirement, and some facilities with which the program affiliates may not be able to meet the same accommodations as those offered to the student by the University during the didactic portion of the curriculum.

While certain technological compensations can be made for some disabilities on a case-by-case basis, a candidate/student should be able to perform in all of the standard areas in a reasonably independent and timely manner. The use of a trained intermediary means that a candidate/student's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation and as such is unacceptable.

The DPT Program at DeSales University is committed to the principle of equal opportunity, and as such does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, or disability. When requested, the University will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to reveal the need for reasonable accommodations and provide the diagnostic data to substantiate this request. Requests for accommodations are made through the University's Academic Resource Center (ARC) by contacting the Director of Disability Services at 610.282.1100, ext. 1453 or visiting [www.desales.edu/disability](http://www.desales.edu/disability) for additional information.

Applicants to the DPT program do not need to disclose information about reasonable accommodation needs prior to an admission decision. An offer for admission can be withdrawn and/or a student already in the DPT program may be withdrawn if it becomes apparent that the applicant/student is unable to perform any of the essential functions or meet any of the technical standards.

## Technical Standards and Essential Functions of Physical Therapy Practice:

	<b>Categories of Technical Standards / Essential Functions</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples of Technical Standards/Essential Functions</b>
1	Communication Abilities	Ability to communicate effectively and sensitively in English using verbal, non-verbal, and written modes with faculty, other students, patients, family members, caregivers, and members of the healthcare team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrate appropriate interpersonal skills as needed for productive and respectful discussions with classmates, faculty, clinical instructors, and in varied therapist-patient situations</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate empathetic, active listening skills</li> <li>▪ Recognize, accurately interpret, clearly report, and appropriately respond to non-verbal communication of self and others</li> <li>▪ Elicit and transmit information on the patient's status such as mood/affect, alertness, activity tolerance, changes in posture or vital signs</li> <li>▪ Describe, explain, and teach physical therapy procedures in both oral and written formats</li> <li>▪ Document and interpret physical therapist actions and patient responses clearly and legibly in the medical record</li> <li>▪ Receive and send verbal communications in emergency situations in a timely manner within the acceptable norms of various clinical settings</li> <li>▪ Answer questions to the satisfaction of faculty, clinical instructors, patients, co-workers and other members of the healthcare team</li> </ul>
2	Observation / Sensory Abilities	Ability to utilize one's common sense as well as the functional use of the visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile senses to perceive all information necessary for safe and effective patient/client management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Perceive the presentation of information in lecture, lab, and clinical education settings through demonstration, audiovisual presentation, and other experiential learning activities</li> <li>▪ Participate in cadaver dissection</li> <li>▪ Visualize and interpret images presented in text and on slides, films, videos, radiographs</li> <li>▪ Accurately observe and monitor a patient's movement patterns, gait, and transfers from a distance and close at hand</li> <li>▪ Discern changes or abnormalities in skin integrity, muscle, bone, joint, lymph nodes, and intra-abdominal organs (heart tones, lung sounds) through visualization, auscultation, or palpation</li> <li>▪ Perceive environmental safety cues such as phones, alarms, overhead paging systems, and verbal communication</li> <li>▪ Visual ability to read, auditory ability to hear, and tactile ability to manipulate dials, sensors, and switches on all examination and therapeutic equipment</li> <li>▪ Read medical records, lab/radiology reports, and notes from other members of healthcare team</li> </ul>

## Technical Standards and Essential Functions of Physical Therapy Practice (Continued):

	<b>Categories of Technical Standards / Essential Functions</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples of Technical Standards/Essential Functions</b>
3	Conceptual / Intellectual / Analytical Abilities	Ability to clinically reason and make decisions in a timely manner using the skills of measurement, calculation, analysis and integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assimilate, learn, and apply large volumes of complex, technically detailed information</li> <li>▪ Comprehend three-dimensional and spatial relationships between structures</li> <li>▪ Recognize cause and effect relationships in the significant findings from history, examination and laboratory data               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effectively and efficiently formulate evaluative and therapeutic judgments based on the ability to collect, process, prioritize and correctly interpret information from multiple sources</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Respond calmly to emergency situations</li> <li>▪ Self-evaluate and acknowledge limitations in knowledge and/or skills, including the need to refer the patient to another healthcare professional to assure safe, effective care</li> <li>▪ Participate in the process of scientific inquiry</li> <li>▪ Recognize the psychosocial impact of dysfunction and disability and integrate the needs of the patient/family into the plan of care</li> </ul>
4	Motor Abilities	Adequate strength and endurance along with fine and gross motor function to execute the movement and skills required for safe and effective physical therapy treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access transportation to the academic setting and to clinical education sites</li> <li>▪ Participate in classroom, laboratory and clinical education activities for the entire defined work period (40+ hours per week)</li> <li>▪ Assume and maintain a variety of positions including sitting for up to 2-4 hours continuously, frequent standing, walking, bending, squatting, kneeling, stair climbing, reaching forward or overhead, twisting, quick directional changes</li> <li>▪ Lift, carry, and push patients in bed or wheelchairs (manage weights of 50+ lbs. independently and/or 200+ lbs. with assistance), manage/carry heavy equipment</li> <li>▪ Have sufficient endurance to sustain performance of a variety of exertional activities for up to 8-12 hours with occasional rest breaks</li> <li>▪ Accurately and efficiently perform diagnostic procedures without violation of the testing protocol</li> <li>▪ Ability to safely move oneself and a patient in three-dimensional space in the performance of motor function tests, transfers, and physical therapy interventions</li> </ul>

## Technical Standards and Essential Functions of Physical Therapy Practice (Continued):

	<b>Categories of Technical Standards / Essential Functions</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples of Technical Standards/Essential Functions</b>
4	Motor Abilities (continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fine motor ability and eye-hand coordination to accurately manipulate commonly used instruments and equipment (exercise and testing equipment, physical agents, durable medical equipment, assistive and adaptive devices)</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate adequate coordination, balance, speed, and agility to ensure patient safety at all times including the ability to assist with and provide physical support during ambulatory activities on level (diverse floor surfaces – tile, carpet, concrete) and unlevel surfaces (stairs, ramps, grass, curbs)</li> <li>▪ Provide emergency care in a timely manner including performance of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, use of an automated external defibrillator, and applying pressure to stop bleeding</li> </ul>
5	Affective Abilities	Ability to respond in a professional manner and to work harmoniously with individuals from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds often under complex and potentially stressful circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Display maturity, good judgment, sensitivity, and emotional stability in all academic and professional settings</li> <li>▪ Effectively cope with and prioritize heavy academic schedules and deadlines</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate time management skills and a work ethic that promotes punctual attendance and full participation in all classroom, laboratory, community, and clinical education experiences</li> <li>▪ Take initiative, be creative, prepared, flexible, enthusiastic, cooperative, tolerant, respectful of authority, and industrious in all academic, clinical and professional settings</li> <li>▪ Possess the ability to develop respectful, empathetic, compassionate, yet effective relationships with fellow students, faculty members, clinical instructors, patients, family members/caregivers, and other members of the healthcare team</li> <li>▪ Exercise good judgment and prompt, safe completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients and families</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate the emotional stability to function effectively under stress and to adapt to an environment that is likely to change rapidly, without warning and/or in unpredictable ways</li> <li>▪ Accept suggestions and feedback, and adapt one's behavior as appropriate</li> </ul>

## Technical Standards and Essential Functions of Physical Therapy Practice (Continued):

	<b>Categories of Technical Standards / Essential Functions</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples of Technical Standards/Essential Functions</b>
5	Affective Abilities (continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Demonstrate the willingness to learn and abide by ethical, legal and professional principles and standards of physical therapy practice</li><li>▪ Demonstrate the ability to be self-reflective with respect to one's commitment to learning and professional development</li><li>▪ Recognize personal limitations and request assistance as appropriate</li><li>▪ Present a professional appearance and maintain good general health/personal hygiene</li><li>▪ Be able to maintain confidentiality</li></ul>

References used to create this document include:

American Physical Therapy Association. Minimum Required Skills of Physical Therapist Graduates at Entry Level. BOD G11-05-20-449 accessed on February 21, 2013 at <http://www.apta.org>

DeSales University Academic Resource Center Webpage

Ingram, D. (1997). Opinions of Physical Therapy Directors on Essential Functions. *PHYS THER*; 77: 37-45

Online information from PT/PTA Programs including: Campbell University, Gannon University, Greenville Technical College, Lynchburg College, Marshall University, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, North Texas State University, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Rosalind Franklin University, University of Missouri, University of North Dakota, University of the Sciences, University of Washington

## **Technical Standards and Essential Functions of Physical Therapy Practice:**

After reviewing the Technical Standards and Essential Functions document all applicants and current students must indicate understanding of and willingness to comply with them as noted by completion of the signature page below:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*please print your full name*)  
have read and understand the purpose and guidelines of the Technical Standards and Essential Functions for admittance into and continuation in the DeSales University Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program.

I understand that successful completion of the DPT program is contingent upon my ability to perform all the skills, with or without accommodations, listed in the document.

I understand that if an accommodation needs to be requested, I must assume the responsibility to contact the Director of Disability Services in the Academic Resource Center at DeSales University prior to the initiation of any academic and/or clinical setting experiences.

I understand that reasonable accommodations in the academic setting and reasonable accommodations in the clinical setting may differ.

Once admitted and enrolled at DeSales University, I understand that an academic advisor will be appointed for me. If I have any questions following enrollment, I may contact my advisor or the Director of the Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_