

## **MU DPT Essential Functions Policy**

Success in the physical therapy curriculum requires a student to demonstrate the cognitive skills, psychomotor skills, communication skills, self-care abilities, and affective behaviors expected of an entry-level physical therapist. Entry-level physical therapists are competent clinicians who evaluate and provide care to the general population of rehabilitation clients in various healthcare settings. The purpose of this document is to delineate the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors deemed essential for completing the physical therapy program and entering professional practice.

The following list is illustrative and does not represent an all-inclusive listing of physical therapist functions. Throughout the DPT program, students are assessed not only on their scholastic accomplishments but also on their physical and emotional capacities to meet the full requirements of the DPT program's curricula and to graduate as skilled and effective practitioners.

If a student cannot demonstrate the following skills and abilities, the student must request appropriate accommodation. The DPT Program provides reasonable accommodation if it does not fundamentally alter the nature of the program offered and does not impose an undue hardship, such as significant expense or difficulty or unduly disruptive to the educational process.

### *Cognitive Skills*

The student must demonstrate the following Intellectual-conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities:

1. Receive, interpret, remember, reproduce, and use information in the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains of learning to solve problems, evaluate work, and generate new ways of processing or categorizing similar information as listed in course objectives.
  - . Measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, and synthesize information in a timely fashion. For example, the student must synthesize knowledge and integrate the relevant aspects of a patient's history and examination findings to develop an effective treatment program.
  - . Comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand spatial relationships of anatomical structures.
2. Perform a physical therapy evaluation of a patient's posture and movement, including analysis of physiological, biomechanical, behavioral, and environmental factors in a timely manner that is consistent with the acceptable norms of clinical settings.
3. Use evaluation data to formulate and execute a plan of physical therapy management in a timely manner that is appropriate to the problems identified and consistent with the acceptable norms of clinical settings.

4. Reassess and revise plans as needed to effectively and efficiently manage physical therapy problems in a timely manner and in accordance with the acceptable norms of clinical settings.

### *Psychomotor Skills*

The student must demonstrate the following skills:

1. Gross Motor skills
  - . Sitting and standing, maintain an upright posture.
  - . Locomotion ability to:
    - i. Get to lectures, laboratory, and clinical locations, and move within rooms as needed for changing groups, partners, and workstations.
    - ii. Physically maneuver in required clinical settings to accomplish assigned tasks.
  - . Manual tasks:
    - . Maneuver another person's body parts to perform examination techniques effectively.
    - . Manipulate common tools used for screening tests of the cranial nerves, sensation, range of motion, and blood pressure (e.g., cotton balls, safety pins, goniometers, aesthesiometer, sphygmomanometer, etc.).
  - . Safely and effectively guide, facilitate, inhibit, and resist movement and motor patterns through physical facilitation and inhibition techniques (including the ability to give time-sensitive urgent verbal feedback).
  - . Manipulate another person's body in transfers, gait, positioning, therapeutic exercises, and mobilization techniques.
  - . Manipulate evaluation and intervention equipment and safely and accurately apply it to patients/clients.
  - . Manipulate bolsters, pillows, plinths, mats, gait assistive devices, and other supports or chairs to aid in positioning, moving, or treating a patient effectively.
  - . Competently perform and supervise cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) using the American Heart Association guidelines.
2. Small motor/hand skills:
  - . Legibly record/document evaluations, patient care notes, referrals, etc., in standard medical charts in hospital /clinical settings in a timely manner and consistent with the acceptable norms of clinical settings.
  - . Legibly record thoughts for written assignments and tests.
  - . Sense changes in an individual's muscle tone, skin quality, joint play, kinesthesia, and temperature to gather accurate, objective evaluative

information in a timely manner and sense that individual's response to environmental changes and treatment.

- . Safely apply and adjust Biophysical Agents.
  - . Safely and effectively position hands and apply mobilization techniques.
  - . Use a telephone, computer, and other instructional technology.
3. Visual acuity to:
- . Observe lectures, laboratory dissection of cadavers, and lecture/laboratory demonstrations. The student must be able to observe a patient accurately.
  - . Receive visual information from clients, e.g., movement, posture, body mechanics, and gait necessary for comparison to normal standard areas of inflammation, presence, and degree of edema to evaluate movement dysfunctions.
  - . Receive visual information from the treatment environment, e.g., dials on modalities and monitors, digital and waveform readings, and other graphic images to determine a patient's condition, assistive devices, furniture, flooring, structures, etc.
4. Hearing acuity to:
- . Receive audible information from clients, e.g., patient responses from the history and physical part of the examination and patient verbal responses to treatment interventions.
  - . Receive audible information from the treatment environment, e.g., audible alarms related to therapeutic and diagnostic modalities, audible alarms related to patient and therapist safety (fire alarm), etc.

### *Communication Skills*

Communication includes speech, language, reading, writing, and computer literacy. The student must demonstrate the following skills:

1. Effectively and sensitively communicate with patients to elicit information regarding mood and activities and perceive nonverbal communications.
2. Effectively and efficiently communicate with other members of the healthcare community (i.e., students, teachers, patients, peers, staff, and personnel) to convey information essential for safe and effective care, e.g., to ask questions, explain conditions and procedures, teach home programs, and for safety in a timely manner and within the acceptable norms of academic and clinical settings.
3. Receive and interpret written communications in both academic and clinical settings in a timely manner.
4. Receive and send verbal communication in life-threatening situations in a timely manner within the acceptable norms of clinical settings.

### *Self-care Abilities*

The student must demonstrate the following:

1. Maintain good health, hygiene, and self-care so as not to jeopardize the health and safety of oneself and the individuals with whom one interacts in academic and clinical settings.
2. Arrange transportation and living accommodations for/during off-campus clinical assignments to foster timely reporting to the classroom and clinical center.

### *Affective Behavior*

The student must be able to:

1. Possess the psychological ability required to fully utilize their intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, prompt completion of all responsibilities inherent to the diagnosis and care of patients, and develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients.
2. Demonstrate appropriate affective behaviors and mental attitudes that do not jeopardize the emotional, physical, mental, and behavioral safety of clients and other individuals with whom one interacts in academic and clinical settings.
3. Acknowledge and respect individual values and opinions to foster harmonious working relationships with colleagues, peers, and patients/clients.
4. Tolerate physically and mentally taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. They must adapt to a changing environment, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in patients' clinical problems.
5. Sustain the mental and emotional rigors of a demanding educational program in physical therapy. This includes academic and clinical components that occur within set time constraints.
6. Comply with the ethical standards of the APTA.

Physical therapy education requires the simultaneous acquisition of skills and professional behaviors to accompany the accumulation of scientific knowledge. The DPT degree awarded by Methodist University certifies that the individual has acquired foundational knowledge, skills, and behaviors requisite for the practice of physical therapy. To graduate, the student must successfully complete each required course, comprehensive examination, and clinical educational experiences. Reasonable accommodations are considered to allow the student to successfully meet essential functions as outlined in this document.

NOTE: The need for a trained intermediary means that a candidate's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation. This strategy is not compatible with independent professional practice and is not an acceptable accommodation.

Certain chronic or recurrent illnesses and problems that interfere with patient care or safety may be incompatible with training as a healthcare professional or interfere with the ability to manage modern clinical practice. Other illnesses may lead to a high likelihood of student absenteeism

and should be carefully considered. Deficiencies in knowledge, judgment, integrity, character, or professional attitude or demeanor that may jeopardize patient care may be grounds for course failure and dismissal from the program.