



Essential Functions for Physical Therapy Practice

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) has not adopted any policies or positions regarding essential skills, functions or technical standards necessary to perform as a physical therapist. Therefore, individual programs have created their own set of “essential functions” and technical standards needed to complete the physical therapy curricula in order to competently perform physical therapy duties post-graduation.

Admission to Dominican College’s Doctoral Physical Therapy Program is open to all academically qualified students without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, marital or military status, or veteran status (including Vietnam era veterans) or genetic disposition.

One of the purposes of Dominican College’s Doctoral Physical Therapy Program is to provide its students with a broad foundation of knowledge and skill that will prepare them for professional physical therapy practice. Because of this, accepted students of Dominican College’s Doctoral Physical Therapy program must meet all physical, behavioral and cognitive abilities needed for both the curriculum and professional physical therapy practice. These expectations are carried throughout a physical therapist’s career by employers, consumers and other health care providers in order to perform specific roles in a safe and competent manner.

All academic knowledge and hands-on skills that are part of the physical therapy curriculum must be achieved for completion of the program. These skills must be demonstrated both in the classroom simulations and during clinical rotations.

The faculty of Dominican College’s Doctoral Physical Therapy Program have developed a set of “essential functions” that provide performance guidelines needed to master the knowledge and skills required to meet all physical therapy curriculum objectives under the rules and regulations appointed by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). These are set in place to ensure the safety of both the student and those that fall under his or her care.

“Essential function” refers to all nonacademic criteria used for admission and participation in a program. Essential functions are applied to all students and evolves with physical therapy practice. They are created so that students and practitioners can

perform their job responsibilities in a safe and effective manner at a high standard. They are not established to discriminate a person with a disability. The ability of a student to perform these essential functions, therefore, is a factor that will affect his or her acceptance to, progression in, and successful completion of Dominican College's Doctoral of Physical Therapy Program.

The essential functions listed below must be performed safely, consistently and efficiently in order to enter the program, continue studies and graduate. A student who discloses a properly certified disability in a timely manner and follows the written procedures of Dominican College's Office of Special Services will receive reasonable accommodation.

The skills and abilities listed under Dominican College's Doctoral Physical Therapy Program essential function requirements include, but are not limited to:

Sensory Ability

Functional use of the senses of vision, touch, hearing and smell are all required of the students. Data received by these senses must be integrated, analyzed and synthesized accurately and consistently. The student should be able to distinguish colors, perceive pain, pressure, temperature, position, equilibrium and movement. This is required so that a student can observe an individual accurately and assess any changes in functional abilities. These observational skills should be performed accurately at both a distance and up close. Following the observational process is the functional use of the senses with sufficient motor capability to carry out the appropriate assessment activities, such as auscultation, percussion and palpation.

Communication Ability

Verbal and nonverbal communication is an essential function in order to administer care effectively and sensitively. The student is expected to be able to communicate using the ability to see, speak, hear, utilize technology, read and write appropriately in English. These expectations are performed with fellow students, faculty and members of the health care team.

Motor Ability

All students are expected to be able to perform gross and fine motor movements bilaterally which are needed for effective care. Care expected by the student in the school or clinic include, but is not limited to: lifting, turning, transferring, transporting and ambulating individuals. The student is expected to have the necessary manual dexterity and/or psychomotor skills needed to perform and/or assist with various procedures, treatments, and interventions in a variety of settings with individuals of varying ages. The student must be able to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) independently. The student must be able to perform motor functions including, but not limited to palpation, auscultation, percussion and other diagnostic maneuvers to properly acquire information to be synthesized. Physical therapy requires a great deal of strength and endurance. The

student is expected to maintain physical strength and stamina to perform within the curricula and during clinical physical therapy experiences on multiple days during each week of the session. Dominican College's Doctor of Physical Therapy Program requires all students to participate and complete four clinical affiliations which involves a minimum of 8 weeks of full time patient care.

Intellectual-Conceptual Ability

As an evidence based practitioner, the student is expected to have the ability to develop problem-solving skills, establish plans of care, and set priorities in various situations. These tasks include the ability to measure, calculate, analyze and synthesize subjective/objective data in order to quickly and efficiently make decisions consistently and appropriately. The student must at all times be aware of potential risks and hazards in the work environment such as blood- borne pathogens and environmental allergens in order to take proper precautions and prevent harmful incidents.

Behavioral/Social/ Professional Attributes

Physical therapy can be stressful, and all students are expected to maintain emotional stability in order to utilize their intellectual abilities, perform sound judgment at all times, and complete evaluation and interventions. This will allow the student to develop sensitive interpersonal relationships with patients, families and other health care professionals. All abilities are expected to be mastered under stress, and the student is expected to exhibit the professional values of responsibility, accountability, human dignity, integrity and social justice that are expected of a doctor of physical therapy.

Students of Dominican College's Doctoral Physical Therapy Program may be subject to additional requirements/functions depending on their clinical placement. These tasks will be agreed upon prior to the start of the clinical rotation.

(Approved Faculty Meeting 10/06/2015)

Adapted from "American Physical Therapy Association Technical Standards", "Student handbook" DPT program, Quinnipiac University, "Student Handbook" DPT Program, Columbia University)

I have read the above and understand the essential functions for physical therapy practice

Student Signature: _____