

## **GRADUATE PROGRAM IN PHYSICAL THERAPY**

### ***ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS***

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Graduate Program in Physical Therapy at Central Michigan University is a difficult and intense program which places specific demands on a student enrolled in the program. The demands placed on the students during their academic preparation correspond closely to the intellectual and physical demands which a graduate will encounter as a practicing physical therapist.

The program at Central Michigan University has been designed to prepare students to enter the profession as a generalist with the skills, knowledge, and ability to successfully perform all the required functions associated with the role of an entry-level physical therapist.

The purpose of this document is to delineate the essential functions associated with the role of the physical therapy student and the physical therapist, and to identify the technical abilities or standards needed to perform those functions.

In keeping with applicable federal and state laws regarding disabilities and our program philosophy, we are committed to making reasonable accommodations for all individuals with disabilities to enable them to successfully complete their education and to perform the skills necessary to the role of physical therapist. If a student feels they have a disability which may require special accommodation to perform any of the tasks identified below, it is the student's responsibility to register with the Office of Student Disability Services.

Please read carefully the documents titled "Essential Functions" and "Technical Standards" to determine whether you are able to perform the required tasks.

## **GRADUATE PROGRAM IN PHYSICAL THERAPY**

### ***ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS***

To perform the role of a physical therapist and be successful in the physical therapy program the student must be able to:

1. Utilize appropriate and effective spoken, written and non-verbal communication with faculty, students, staff, administrators, patients, families and others. Students must be able to use and understand the English language at a level consistent with competent professional practice.
2. Perform appropriate physical therapy (PT) examination and intervention procedures in a safe, reliable, ethical, legal and efficient manner.
3. Appropriately identify and determine the PT diagnosis, prognosis and needs of any patient whose condition falls within the scope of practice of PT.
4. Demonstrate the ability to consistently adhere to and apply universal precautions in appropriate situations.
5. Develop and document a plan of care appropriate for patients' status and desired goals.
6. Recognize the psychosocial impact of dysfunction and disability and integrate the needs of the patient and family into the plan of care.
7. Demonstrate management skills for PT practice which would include supervision, delegation, and working as a member of the health care team.
8. Develop and implement programs for prevention, education, and health promotion which appropriately utilize theories of teaching and learning in both health care and community environments.
9. Comprehend, integrate, and synthesize information from the clinical, natural, and social sciences.

## **GRADUATE PROGRAM IN PHYSICAL THERAPY**

### ***TECHNICAL STANDARDS***

To perform the essential functions of the role of physical therapist and be successful in this physical therapy educational curriculum, an individual must possess specific skills and abilities. These abilities can be divided into 4 categories:

1. Observation skills
2. Psychomotor skills
3. Cognitive skills
4. Affective/behavioral skills

These technical skills are outlined below for each of the four categories.

To accomplish the essential function of the role of the physical therapist the student must be able to:

#### 1. Observation skills

- Accurately observe the patient's activity and behavior during examinations and interventions.
- Appropriately take a patient history.
- Observe changes in patient status which may require modification of activity or intervention such as: color of skin, breathing regularity, heart rate, temperature of skin, muscle tone, and facial expressions.
- Read and interpret information from diagnostic tests, equipment, and patient charts such as EKG and radiographs.
- Accurately monitor dials, displays, and equipment used in treatment of patients including exercise equipment and electrical modalities.

#### 2. Psychomotor skills

##### A. Mobility

- Attend lecture and laboratory classes and access laboratories, classrooms, and work stations.
- Attend clinical internships in assigned locations.
- Accomplish required tasks in clinical and academic settings.
- Perform emergency procedures such as CPR in a clinical setting.

## B. Strength tasks

- Safely lift and transfer patients.
- Safely assist and guard patients during gait training.
- Safely and effectively administer exercise and examination procedures which require resistance or facilitation.
- Manually adjust exercise equipment and assistive devices.

## C. Fine motor and coordination skills

- Use palpation and touch to accurately assess changes in muscle tone, tissue temperature, joint position, and joint play.
- Accurately set equipment dials and apply modalities.
- Complete and accurately assess vital signs (e.g., BP, pulse ... and other examination procedures).
- Legibly complete documentation activities.

## 3. Cognitive skills

- Comprehend, integrate, and synthesize a large body of knowledge in a short period of time.
- Utilize knowledge of natural, clinical, and social sciences to develop appropriate interventions in a clinical setting.
- Use appropriate written and verbal formats for communication of patient information and classroom assignments.
- Understand theory, research literature, and principles that apply to physical therapy practice.
- Analyze and solve complex patient problems.
- Reflect on performance accurately to self-assess.

## 4. Affective/behavioral skills

- Demonstrate appreciation and respect for individual, social, and cultural differences in fellow students, professional colleagues, patients and caregivers.
- Demonstrate appropriate behaviors and attitudes to protect the safety and well being of patients and classmates.
- Demonstrate ability to appropriately handle situations which may be physically and emotionally or intellectually stressful including situations which must be handled swiftly and calmly.
- Demonstrate flexibility and the ability to adjust to changing situations and uncertainty in an academic or clinical environment.