

Physical Therapy Department Essential Functions

Standards for Admissions, Retention, and Graduation

Performing successfully as a student physical therapist involves completing intellectual, social, and physical tasks. Upon graduation, students from this program are expected to deliver entry-level clinical services in a safe, competent, and ethical manner.

Successful entry-level practice requires a broad array of basic knowledge, skills, and behaviors, including abilities in areas of judgment, integrity, character, professional attitude, and demeanor.

In addition, the education of a healthcare professional requires assimilation of knowledge, acquisition of skills, and development of judgment through patient care experiences in preparation for making appropriate decisions required in all healthcare settings. Unique combinations of cognitive, affective, psychomotor, physical, and social abilities are required to satisfactorily perform these functions to ensure the health and safety of patients, fellow

candidates, faculty, and other healthcare providers. The Department has a responsibility to the public to ensure that graduates are fully competent and caring professionals, capable of doing benefit and not harm. Therefore, it is critical that persons admitted to the DPT program possess compassion, integrity, intelligence, humanitarian concern, and the physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice physical therapy.

This document delineates the essential abilities required by the program including: academic integrity, motor, sensory, communication, intellectual (quantitative, integrative, and conceptual abilities for problem solving and integration of information from patient assessment), behavioral/emotional (emotional maturity and intelligence), and professional conduct of the performance of a physical therapist.

Successful students in this curriculum will demonstrate/possess the following:

Academic Integrity

The Physical Therapy Program at Nazareth promotes academic honesty at all times. Honesty is an integral part of being a professional. As per the Nazareth Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook, “academic dishonesty” is understood as any act of deceit bearing on one’s own or another’s academic work, where “academic work” is understood to mean any activity pertaining to the educational mission of Nazareth. Such acts include, but are not limited to, plagiarism in any form and the use during an exam of information or materials not authorized by the instructor for such use.

The program expectation includes reading and abiding by the policy titled “Academic Integrity” as published in the Nazareth Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook available at naz.edu/student-handbook.

In addition, the student must seek assistance from faculty if there is any doubt regarding a behavior/action and whether it constitutes academic integrity as well as uphold the standards of academic integrity in all academic and clinical situations.

Motor Skills

The ability to have sufficient motor function to execute movements required to perform safe and effective examinations including all tests and measures, evaluations, and interventions for patients in all health care settings. [For example: For the safety and protection of the patients, the ability to perform basic life support, including CPR, and function in an emergency situation. The ability, within reasonable limits, to safely assist a patient in moving, for example, from a chair to a bed, examination table, or from a wheelchair to another location.]

Sensory/Observation

The ability to acquire the information presented through demonstrations and experiences in the basic and profession’s sciences. The student must be able to observe a patient accurately, at a distance and close at hand, and observe and appreciate non-verbal communications when performing an examination and intervention.

Communication

The ability to communicate effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, patients, families, physicians, and other members of the health care team. The student must recognize the significance of non-verbal communication from the patient and possess openness, concern, and sensitivity to potential cultural differences. The student must express their ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to give and receive feedback.

The student must be able to: convey or exchange information at a level allowing development of a health history; identify problems presented; explain alternative solutions; and give directions during and post-treatment. The student must make a correct judgment in seeking supervision and consultation in a timely manner as well as communicate effectively in oral and written forms in English.

Cognitive

The ability to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize information to develop an accurate diagnosis, prognosis and plan of care. The student must also be able to evaluate and apply information and engage in critical thinking in the classroom and clinical setting.

Behavioral/Emotional

The ability to display emotional control and maturity during times of stress including, but not limited to, classroom and laboratory activities, written examinations, laboratory examinations, professional meetings, and informal and formal clinical assignments.

The student must have the emotional stability to function effectively under stress and the ability to adapt to an environment, which may change rapidly without warning and/or in unpredictable ways. In addition, the student must know that their values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and experiences affect their perceptions and relationships with others and be able and willing to examine and change their behavior when it interferes with productive individual or team relationships.

Professional Conduct

Candidates must possess the ability to reason morally and practice in an ethical manner following the APTA Code of Ethics for the Physical Therapist (go.naz.edu/pt-ethics) and the Nazareth Student Code of Conduct (naz.edu/student-handbook).

The student must possess attributes that include compassion, altruism, integrity, professional duty, accountability, social responsibility and excellence.

Professional conduct is expected at all times and includes, but is not limited to, carrying out all academic endeavors with full academic honesty, timely completion of assignments and readings, attending all class/lab/clinic, arriving on time to class, avoiding text-messaging or participating in social networking during class. In addition, respect for one another in the virtual and face-to-face classroom is expected. It is expected faculty and students will work together to create a professional environment. Professional conduct is also expected in both the academic and personal arenas.

Reasonable Accommodation for Disabilities

Students are expected to complete the tasks articulated in this document independently either with or without reasonable accommodation. The program can assist students who have disabilities to accomplish the essential tasks necessary to complete this educational program through reasonable accommodation. For example, with appropriate documentation, the program can provide extra time to complete an examination. Providing reasonable accommodation does not imply that a student will be exempt from performing any tasks essential to completion of the program.

When a student desires reasonable accommodation to assist in completing the essential task of this program, the student must request this assistance from the Student Accessibility Services. This office in consultation with the program director and other physical therapy faculty members, will decide whether the student will be able to perform the essential tasks with reasonable accommodation. If the student does not self-identify the need for accommodation, the program faculty assume that the student can complete all of the above tasks.