



## **Doctor of Physical Therapy Program Abilities and Attributes**

The Doctor of Physical Therapy is an intense program which places specific physical and intellectual demands on students enrolled in the program. These abilities and skills are integral to the successful completion of didactic and clinical components of physical therapist education. These abilities and skills, which candidates and students must possess in order to successfully complete their professional training associated, are referred to as the “Abilities and Attributes.”

The five categorical areas listed below represent the essential qualities that are considered necessary for students to achieve the knowledge, skills, and levels of competency stipulated for graduation by the faculty and expected by the physical therapy profession.

These technical standards are provided for your review and careful consideration.

### **I. Observation**

- ✓ Accurately and in entirety observe patients during examination, evaluation, and interventions.
- ✓ Ability to visually observe materials presented in the classroom and laboratory environment including audiovisual presentations, written documents, tissues and gross organs, and diagnostic images.

### **II. Communication**

- ✓ Effectively speak, hear, and observe patients in order to elicit information, perceive nonverbal communication, and describe changes in mood, activity, and posture.
- ✓ Communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and their families through oral and written language.
- ✓ Communicate accurately and efficiently in oral, written, and electronic form with members of the healthcare team.

### **III. Psychomotor**

- ✓ Elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation and percussion, and clinical diagnostic testing.
- ✓ Execute movements required for patient/client examination, evaluation, and interventions. Such skills require coordination of gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, strength, and sensation.
- ✓ Safely lift and transfer patients/clients.
- ✓ Possess physical stamina sufficient to complete the rigorous course of didactic and clinical study, which may include prolonged periods of sitting and/or standing, twisting, bending, reaching, lifting, and continuous use of hands with firm grasp and manual dexterity.

#### **IV. Cognitive/Critical Reasoning Skills**

- ✓ Demonstrate the ability to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize information.
- ✓ Demonstrate the ability to acquire, retain, and apply new and learned information.
- ✓ Demonstrate appropriate judgment in patient examination, evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis, interventions, and outcomes including planning, time management and use of resources.
- ✓ Comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures.
- ✓ Reflect on, assess, and report on performance of self and others.

#### **V. Behavioral and Social Attributes**

- ✓ Possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his/her intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, and promptly complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients.
- ✓ Demonstrate mature, receptive, and effective relationships with faculty, patients, fellow students, and members of the health care team.
- ✓ Possess qualities of flexibility and the adaptability in functioning in an environment of uncertainty inherent in the clinical problems of many patients.
- ✓ Demonstrate the capacity to tolerate taxing workloads and function effectively under stress.
- ✓ Display the personal qualities of compassion, integrity, commitment, motivation, and genuine concern for others that are intrinsic to the medical profession, and will be assessed during the admissions and educational process.

#### **Concluding Comments**

Candidates for admission to the Physical Therapy Program will be asked to verify that they understand and meet these technical standards. Admission decisions are made on the supposition that each candidate believes that he or she meets the technical standards with or without a reasonable accommodation.

Candidates are encouraged to ask questions about the Program's technical standards for clarification and to determine if they meet the standards with or without reasonable accommodation. The Physical Therapy Program acknowledges Section 504 of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and asserts that the ability to meet certain essential technical standards with or without reasonable accommodation must be present in the prospective candidate. Disclosure of a disability is voluntary; however, admitted students who wish to request accommodations should contact the Mercer University Disability Services Office located on the Atlanta Cecil B. Day Campus.

During enrollment, the Program's Advancement and Progression Committee will monitor students for continuing compliance with the technical standards. The faculty of the Physical Therapy Program recognizes and embraces the responsibility of presenting candidates for graduation who have the education and skills to function in a wide variety of clinical situations and to provide competent patient-centered care to a diverse population of patients/clients.