

# EVALUATIVE CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR THE PREPARATION OF PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANTS

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## INTRODUCTION

The Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) is the only recognized agency in the United States for accrediting education programs for the preparation of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. The Commission strives to assure that accredited programs prepare graduates who will be effective in their roles as physical therapists and as assistants to physical therapists in the contemporary practice of physical therapy.

The Commission acknowledges the critical role of the profession in defining the nature of contemporary practice and for determining practice expectations and demands that are placed on graduates of accredited programs. The Commission expects that the institutional environments in which physical therapist assistant education programs exist provide the opportunity for the physical therapy education program to thrive as both an academic and professional discipline in addressing the expectations of the profession. The Commission also acknowledges that an accredited program has the right to establish objectives, in addition to the objectives in these *Evaluative Criteria*, which are in keeping with the mission and resources of the institution, as well as the mission of the program.

### A. THE PROFESSION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY AND THE ROLE OF THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

Physical therapy, as a profession, dates from the beginning of the century, when the advances in health care made possible the survival of people affected by poliomyelitis and war injuries. Physical therapy has continued to evolve and to respond to the needs of society, with physical therapists now practicing in a variety of clinical settings with unprecedented levels of professional responsibility. Physical therapists are integral members of the primary care team and are involved in prevention of disability and promotion of positive health, as well as acting as consultants in restorative care. Physical therapy practice today is based on a well-developed body of scientific and clinical knowledge that draws from the basic, behavioral, and social sciences.

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) House of Delegates first authorized the training of physical therapist assistants at the 1967 Annual Conference by adopting *The Policy Statement on Training and Utilization of the Physical Therapist Assistant*. Standards for educational programs for the physical therapist assistant were developed and approval procedures were established. After discussion with representatives from the National Commission on Accreditation, the US Office of Education, and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, the APTA Board of Directors adopted the *Statement of Interpretations* and implemented the Interim Approval Program for Educational Programs for the Physical Therapist Assistant. The first interim approval decisions were granted by APTA in 1971 with effective dates that retroactively included the graduates of the first class from each approved program.

In 1977, the Commission on Accreditation in Education (CAE), the precursor to CAPTE, was established and recognized by the US Department of Education and by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. The activities of the CAE included accreditation of programs for the physical therapist assistant.

The physical therapist assistant is specifically defined as "... a technically educated health care provider who assists the physical therapist in the provision of physical therapy." In the contemporary provision of physical therapy services, the physical therapist is considered the professional practitioner of physical therapy, while the physical therapist assistant, educated at the technical level, is considered the

paraprofessional. *Adopted by the American Physical Therapy Association House of Delegates in June 1996 (HOD 06-96-39) and in June 2000 (HOD 06-00-16-27).*

## **B. HISTORY OF ACCREDITATION IN PHYSICAL THERAPY**

Education programs for the preparation of physical therapists have been recognized in some manner since 1928 when the American Physical Therapy Association first published a list of approved programs in the June 1928 "Review." In 1936, at the request of the APTA, the American Medical Association (AMA) agreed to become involved in accreditation and recognition of programs in physical therapy. From 1936 to 1956 the AMA was solely responsible for accreditation activities. From 1957 to 1963, the AMA and the APTA shared an informal arrangement and, from 1964 to 1976, a formal collaborative arrangement existed for accreditation of physical therapy programs. In 1977, after APTA's withdrawal from the formal collaborative arrangement, the Commission on Accreditation in Education (CAE) was recognized as an independent accrediting body by the US Department of Education and by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. Today, CAPTE, the current name for CAE, is recognized by the US Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as the sole agency in the United States for accrediting education programs for the preparation of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants.

The Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education makes autonomous decisions concerning the accreditation status of education programs for the preparation of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. In 1989 the APTA House of Delegates voted to change the purpose and function of the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education to include the formulation, adoption, and timely revision of the evaluative criteria for accreditation of all professional and paraprofessional education programs in physical therapy. Previously, responsibility for those functions had been shared with the APTA House of Delegates and the APTA Board of Directors. Currently, the members of the Commission represent the communities of interest, including physical therapy educators, clinicians, consumers, employers, representatives of institutions of higher education, physicians, and the public.

Accreditation standards are periodically reviewed to assure their responsiveness to the changing and expanding nature of physical therapy. The development and promulgation of the *Evaluative Criteria* involve participation of the constituencies affected by the process. This most recent revision was adopted by the Commission in November 2000, with an effective date of January 1, 2002. The revision that appears in this document pertains **only** to the *Evaluative Criteria* used in the accreditation of technical education programs that prepare **physical therapist assistants**. Those *Evaluative Criteria* utilized in accreditation decisions for education programs that prepare **physical therapists** may be found in the document entitled *Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation of Education Programs for the Preparation of Physical Therapists*.

## **C. SPECIALIZED ACCREDITATION**

Accreditation is essentially a voluntary process used to assess the quality of education programs. Ordinarily, institutions voluntarily seek accreditation to demonstrate to various constituencies that the specialized programs meet accepted standards and have a certain level of quality. Accreditation in physical therapy is linked to a required credentialing process of licensure, certification or registration. All states in the United States require licensure for practice as a physical therapist, and the majority of states require licensure, certification or registration for individuals to work as physical therapist assistants. In states in which licensure, certification or registration is granted to physical therapist assistants graduation from an accredited program is a requirement for this credential. Institutions seeking to initiate or maintain a physical therapist assistant program, therefore, also seek accreditation because they wish to have their graduates become eligible for licensure, certification or registration.

The purposes of accreditation in physical therapy education, as defined by the scope of responsibility required of a recognized specialized accrediting agency, are to assure the quality of and to improve education programs for the preparation of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. CAPTE,

the recognized specialized accrediting agency in physical therapy education, is responsible for fulfilling these purposes that directly serve the interests of the students and the public. The institutions of higher education that house physical therapy education programs benefit from self-evaluation and self-directed improvements which are stimulated by the accreditation process and by the counsel and advice from on-site visitors and the Commission. Through accreditation, professional education programs for the preparation of physical therapists and technical education programs for the preparation of physical therapist assistants are publicly recognized because they demonstrate levels of performance, integrity, and quality that entitle them to the confidence of the profession, the communities they serve, and the general public.

The Commission attempts to assure that accreditation criteria for judging education programs reflect the preparation necessary for graduates to be effective as contemporary practitioners. The accreditation process recognizes the role of innovation in identifying improved patterns of effectiveness in education and innovative approaches to patient care, as well as advancing the unique mission and goals of the institutions and programs.

#### **D. DEFINITIONS**

Documents, such as this one, are used by numerous constituencies, and each constituency may have their own interpretation of the terminology being utilized. While the Commission recognizes that individual institutions may have definitions and faculty classifications that differ from those identified below, for the purposes of this document and related accreditation activities, the following definitions are to be used.

##### **Definitions Related to the Faculty**

###### **Core Faculty:**

those physical therapists (PT) and physical therapist assistants (PTA) who are employed by the institution and appointed to the PTA program. The Core Faculty is comprised of the Program Director, the ACCE, and other appointed faculty members (PT/PTA) within the program. Members of the Core Faculty typically have full-time appointments, although part-time faculty members may be included among the Core Faculty. The Core Faculty may hold tenured, tenure track, or non-tenure track positions. The primary responsibilities of the Core Faculty in the program are development, implementation, and evaluation of the technical and clinical education components of the PTA curriculum.

###### **Program Director:**

the **Core Faculty** member who is designated as and has responsibility for the management of the PTA program. The program director is employed full-time by the institution that houses the PTA program and usually has a faculty appointment. May also be designated as the program coordinator or program head.

###### **Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education:**

the **Core Faculty** member who has responsibility in the program for coordinating the clinical education portion of the curriculum.

###### **Adjunct Faculty:**

those individuals who have classroom and/or laboratory teaching responsibilities in the program and who are not employed by the institution, though they may receive honoraria or other forms of compensation. The adjunct faculty may or may not hold faculty appointments. The adjunct faculty may include, but are not limited to, guest lecturers, contract faculty, instructors of course modules, laboratory instructors, teaching assistants, and tutors.

**Supporting Faculty:**

those individuals with faculty appointments in other units within the institution who teach courses in the **Technical Education** portion of the curriculum. Supporting Faculty are generally not physical therapists or physical therapist assistants.

**Academic Faculty:**

those faculty members whose primary teaching responsibilities are in the didactic (classroom and laboratory) portion of the curriculum. The Academic Faculty is comprised of the **Core Faculty**, **Adjunct Faculty**, and **Supporting Faculty**.

**Clinical Education Faculty:**

those individuals who provide the clinical instruction and supervision of students when students are engaged in the clinical education portion of the curriculum. Clinical Education Faculty are generally comprised of the Center Coordinators of Clinical Education (CCCEs) and Clinical Instructors (CIs). While these individuals are not usually employed by the institution that houses the PTA program, they do agree to certain standards of behavior through contractual arrangements for their services.

**Program Faculty:**

all faculty involved with the PTA program, including the **Program Director**, **Core Faculty**, **Adjunct Faculty**, **Clinical Education Faculty**, and **Supporting Faculty**.

**Faculty [unmodified]:**

when used without a modifier (academic, adjunct, core, clinical education, program, or supporting), the term faculty can be interpreted generically. The Commission has modified the term in those cases when a specific faculty group is being addressed.

### **Definitions Related to the Curriculum**

**General Education:**

courses or curricular content that are a part of the associate degree curriculum plan and structured as prerequisites or co-requisites to the courses in the **Technical Education** portion of the curriculum. General Education typically includes such courses as English, Psychology, Sociology, Biology, Math and Physics. General Education courses are typically open and available to the entire student body, and are generally not considered to be part of the **Technical Education** portion of the curriculum.

**Technical Education:**

courses or curricular content that are required in the degree plan of the PTA program curriculum. The courses in the Technical Education portion of the curriculum are generally open to and taken only by students who have been accepted into the PTA program. These courses generally have a prefix or a designation that reflects the major, (e.g., PT 201, PTA 242, or PTAP 123). The expected content for the Technical Education portion of a PTA curriculum is outlined in Evaluative Criterion 3.3.2. (3.3.2.1. through 3.3.2.28.).

**Interventions:**

selected technical skills taught in the **Technical Education** portion of the curriculum to prepare program graduates to carry out a plan of care as directed by a physical therapist. The selected components of interventions for the **Technical Education** portion of a PTA curriculum are outlined in Evaluative Criterion 3.3.2.7.

**Data Collection:**

components of tests and measures taught in the **Technical Education** portion of the curriculum to prepare program graduates to carry out a plan of care as directed by a physical therapist. The data collection skills for the **Technical Education** portion of a PTA curriculum are outlined in Evaluative Criterion 3.3.2.8.

## **E. FORMAT AND UTILIZATION OF THE EVALUATIVE CRITERIA**

The Evaluative Criteria that follow are organized into four sections, with each section containing a Preamble, the individual *Evaluative Criteria*, and the Evidence of Compliance. The Preamble provides an overview of the criteria included in the section and the rationale for their inclusion. In preparation of accreditation documents, programs are welcome to respond to the section preambles though the Commission does not expect that they do so.

Within each section, specific criteria elucidate the Commission's requirements in order for a program to be accredited. The Commission expects that programs will be in satisfactory compliance with the intent of each of the *Evaluative Criteria*. The Commission recognizes, however, that programs can be out of compliance with some criteria and still be accredited. In concert with the US Department of Education requirements, the Commission expects that programs will come into satisfactory compliance with all criteria within two years of being determined to be out of compliance.

## SECTION 1: ORGANIZATION

### Preamble

**Physical therapist assistant education occurs in an institutional environment that supports humanistic principles, inquiry, and dedication to the service of society. The physical therapist assistant education program must be integral to institutional missions and be a logical extension of its education and service programs. The institution, through support for program faculty and policies of the education program, encourages its graduates to practice within the legal, social, and ethical context of their careers as physical therapist assistants.**

### 1.1. Institution

**1.1.1. The sponsoring institution is authorized under applicable law or other acceptable authority to provide a program of postsecondary education. In addition, the institution has been approved by appropriate authorities to provide the physical therapist assistant education program.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- State the agency from which the institution has authority to operate as an institution of higher education.
- State the agency from which the institution has authority to offer the physical therapist assistant program and to award degree, if different from above.
- If institution is in a collaborative arrangement with another institution to award degree, provide the above for the degree granting institution.

On Site:

- Provide verification of authority for institution to operate as institution of higher education (e.g., copy of letter from agency granting authority).
- Provide verification that institution has authority to offer the physical therapist assistant program and to award degree (e.g., copy of letter from agency granting authority).
- If institution is in a collaborative arrangement with another institution to award degree, provide verification of collaborative arrangement and of the institution's authority to award degree.

**1.1.2. The education program for the physical therapist assistant is provided by an institution accredited by an agency or association recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- State the agency that accredits the institution.
- Provide the date that the current accreditation status was granted.
- If the institution has an accreditation status other than full accreditation, explain the reasons for the accreditation status and the impact of the accreditation status on the PTA program.
- If in a collaborative arrangement, provide the above for the degree-granting institution.

On Site:

- Provide verification of institutional accreditation status (e.g., most recent letter from institutional accreditor that reaffirmed accreditation status).

**1.1.3. The institution awards the associate degree upon satisfactory completion of the physical therapist assistant education program or assures the associate degree is awarded by an affiliating college at the satisfactory completion of the physical therapist assistant education program.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- State the degree awarded by the institution to graduates of the PTA program.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) that contain verification of the degree awarded to graduates of the PTA program (e.g., college catalog, program student handbook, printed copy of page from college website).

**1.1.4. Institutional policies, procedures and practices are based on appropriate and equitable criteria and applicable law. The policies, procedures and practices assure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity to persons involved with the program.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Provide (quote) the institution's nondiscrimination statement.
- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where documentation of the nondiscrimination statement and policy exists.
- Describe how the nondiscrimination statement and policy are made available to those associated with the PTA program (e.g., students, faculty, clinical education faculty).

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) listed in the Narrative that contain the institutional nondiscrimination statement and policy.

**1.1.5. The institution recognizes and supports the academic and technical education aspects of the physical therapist assistant program.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the institution's history, since the last re-accreditation activity, of hiring and retaining qualified PTA program faculty who meet CAPTE criteria.
- Describe how the institution supports the professional judgment of the faculty to develop and implement academic regulations and expectations for professional behavior of students in the PTA program that include policies, procedures, and practices to ensure safe, legal, and ethical performance of students in the areas of academic honesty, clinical education performance, and progression through the program.

Appendices:

- Provide an organizational chart that includes the location of the program within the organizational structure of the institution.

**1.1.6. Policies and procedures exist to protect the rights and privileges of persons associated with the education program. Policies and procedures are in place and practices are described for:**

**1.1.6.1. privacy and confidentiality**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where policies and procedures exist that address privacy and confidentiality for the following:
  - Students**
    - communication with and about students regarding academic and clinical performance and other protected information
    - maintenance of and access to student records, including any medical records
    - protection of student privacy in the identity verification processes for distance education purposes
  - Faculty**
    - confidentiality of personnel records and other protected information
  - Others** (including patients and human subjects used in demonstrations and practice for educational purposes)
    - use of protected health information and use of information other than protected health information that is obtained from patients, subjects, or the clinical site (e.g., patient care protocols, administrative information)
- Describe how these policies and procedures are made available to those associated with the PTA program (e.g., students, faculty, clinical education faculty).

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) listed in the Narrative that contain policies and procedures that ensure privacy and confidentiality of those associated with the program.

**1.1.6.2. informed consent**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where policies and procedures exist that describe the process of informed consent for those associated with the program that include, but are not limited to:
  - expectations and role of students or non-students when participating as subjects or as patient-simulators during laboratory and clinical experiences
  - videotaping, audiotaping, photographing, or imaging of individuals for instructional purposes
  - informing students of requirements of clinical facilities that may include drug testing and background investigation
  - mechanisms used by the program to ensure patients are informed when students are involved in patient care
  - the risk-free right of patients to refuse to participate in clinical education
- Describe how these policies and procedures are made available to those associated with the PTA program (e.g., students, faculty, clinical education faculty).

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) listed in the Narrative that contain policies and procedures that address informed consent for those associated with the program.

### **1.1.6.3. due process**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where policies and procedures exist that address due process for students and faculty.
- Describe how policies and procedures about due process are made available to students and faculty.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) listed in the Narrative that contain due process policies and procedures for students and faculty.

### **1.1.6.4. complaints**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where policies and procedures exist that address complaints that fall outside due process that include, but are not limited to, complaints from:
  - clinical education sites
  - employers of graduates
  - the general public
- Describe how the records of complaints are, or would be, maintained by the program.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) listed in the Narrative that contain the policies and procedures that address complaints that fall outside due process.

## **1.1.7. Policies and procedures exist to ensure the safety of persons associated with the program. Policies and procedures are in place and practices are described for:**

### **1.1.7.1. on-campus educational experiences**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where policies and procedures exist that address safety of persons involved in on-campus educational experiences that include, but are not limited to:
  - campus safety and emergency procedures
  - safety in dealing with body substances and hazardous materials
  - safety regulations regarding use of equipment in the program laboratory
  - safety in student interactions in the classroom and laboratory settings
  - safety of students when in the role of subjects or patient-simulators
  - ensuring equipment used in the program laboratory is in safe working order and is appropriately maintained and calibrated
- Describe how these policies and procedures are made available to those associated with the program.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) listed in the Narrative that contain the policies and procedures that address safety of persons involved in on-campus educational experiences.

### **1.1.7.2. off-campus educational experiences**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where policies and procedures exist that address the safety of persons involved in off-campus educational experiences. These policies and procedures ensure that safety in off-campus experiences is comparable to that in on-campus experiences for activities that include, but are not limited to:
  - scheduled off-campus laboratories
  - observation experiences or “field-trips”
  - off-campus clinical experiences
- Describe how these policies and procedures are made available to those associated with the program.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) listed in the Narrative that contain the policies and procedures that address safety of persons associated with the program in off-campus educational experiences.

### **1.1.7.3. student competence prior to clinical assignment**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where policies and procedures exist that address student competence prior to the clinical assignment.
- Describe the programmatic mechanisms used to ensure students are competent to perform data collection and intervention skills prior to the clinical assignment.
- Describe how these policies and procedures are made available to those associated with the program.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) listed in the Narrative that contain the policies and procedures that ensure student competence prior to the clinical assignment.

### **1.1.8. Written agreements exist for the provision of off-campus clinical experiences.**

#### **1.1.8.1. Written agreements between the institution and clinical centers are current and delineate the responsibilities of both agencies.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Identify in the written agreement where the following are found:
  - delineation of the rights and responsibilities of the institution and the clinical facility
  - delineation of responsibility for patient care
  - responsibility for evaluation and supervision of students

Appendices:

- Provide a sample written agreement that contains, at a minimum, the elements identified in the Narrative.

On Site:

- Provide a current (unexpired) written agreement for all active clinical sites. (Active clinical sites are those sites the program expects to use for students currently enrolled in the program. Active clinical sites for programs with an integrated two-year curriculum include sites for first and second year students. Active clinical sites for programs with a one-plus-one curriculum include sites for all students enrolled in the program.)

**1.1.8.2. A process exists to ensure that students are assigned to only those facilities in which a properly executed and unexpired written agreement is in place.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the process for ensuring that students are assigned only to those facilities in which unexpired written agreements signed by appropriate officials or representatives from each facility are in place.

**1.1.8.3. A process exists for the ongoing review of the written agreements.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the process used by the institution and program to ensure that the written agreements (contracts) are current (unexpired), accurate, and are adequate for the needs of the program and clinical facility.

On Site:

- Provide documentation that the written agreement has been reviewed (e.g., documentation from assessment process, minutes from meetings where the written agreement was reviewed).

**1.1.9. The institution provides a process for the participation of core faculty in the governance and in short and long term planning of the program and the institution.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the opportunities for the participation of core faculty in the governance and in short and long term planning of the program and the institution.
- State how the institution ensures that opportunities for faculty participation in governance activities are commensurate with other similar faculty in the institution.

On Site:

- Provide documentation that the program faculty have opportunities to participate in governance and planning (e.g., faculty handbook, faculty contract).
- Provide documentation that faculty have participated in governance and in planning of the program and institution (e.g., lists of institution committee membership, applicable meeting minutes).

**1.1.10. Policies and procedures exist which support practices by the institution to facilitate compliance with accreditation policies and procedures. The written policies and procedures delineate the responsibilities for accreditation activities and are described for:**

**1.1.10.1. submission of required fees and documentation, including reports of graduation rates, performance on state licensing or certification examinations and employment rates**

**1.1.10.2. notification of expected or unexpected substantive change(s) within the program, and of any change in institutional accreditation status or legal authority to provide postsecondary education**

**1.1.10.3. coming into compliance with accreditation criteria within two years or the length of the program, whichever is shorter**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where policies and procedures exist that address the program's compliance with accreditation requirements.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) identified in the Narrative that contain the policies and procedures that ensure the program's compliance with accreditation requirements.

## **1.2. Program**

**1.2.1. The mission and philosophy of the program are consistent with the mission and philosophy of the institution.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where the mission and philosophy statements of the institution and program exist.
- Describe how the mission and philosophy of the program are congruent with the mission and philosophy of the institution.
- Describe how the program mission and philosophy are made available to those associated with the program.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) identified in the Narrative that contain the mission and philosophy statements of the institution and the program.

**1.2.2. The goals and objectives of the physical therapist assistant program support the program's mission and philosophy and are consistent with the mission and philosophy of the institution.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where the goals and objectives of the program exist.
- Describe how the program goals and objectives are congruent with the mission and philosophy of the program and the institution.
- Describe how the program goals and objectives are made available to those associated with the program.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) identified in the Narrative that contain the goals and objectives of the program.

**1.2.3. Program policies and procedures are consistent with those of the institution.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the program-specific policies and procedures that differ from those of the institution (e.g., admissions procedures, grading policies, policies for progression through the program, policies related to clinical education).
- For program policies and procedures that differ from those of the institution, describe how the policies and procedures differ and why.
- Describe how institutional approval is obtained for program policies and procedures that differ from those of the institution.

On Site:

- Provide documentation of institutional approval for program policies and procedures listed in the Narrative that differ from those of the institution.

**1.2.4. Mechanisms are in place for the coordination of efforts of all people and departments directly involved with the program. Ongoing and effective communication occurs among all program faculty and others directly involved with the program.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the mechanisms utilized by the program to communicate with individuals and departments involved with the program (e.g., general education faculty, admissions office personnel, student services personnel, library personnel).
- Identify the individual(s) responsible for this communication.
- Provide an analysis of the effectiveness of communication with other departments involved with the program and describe any actions taken to correct any deficiencies identified.
- Describe the mechanisms utilized by the program for communication with individuals involved with the clinical education portion of the curriculum (e.g., center coordinators of clinical education, clinical instructors, students).
- Identify the individual(s) responsible for this communication.

- Provide an analysis of the effectiveness of communication related to the clinical education program and describe any actions taken to correct any deficiencies identified.

On Site:

- Provide documentation related to communication by the program with individuals and departments involved with the program.
- Provide documentation related to communication by the program with individuals involved with the clinical education portion of the curriculum (e.g., copies of letters from the program to clinical sites, clinical education handbook, course syllabi for clinical education courses).

### **1.3. Faculty Policies and Procedures**

#### **1.3.1. The rights and privileges of the academic faculty are commensurate with those of other faculty in the institution.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where the rights and privileges of the academic faculty exist.
- If any of the rights and privileges of the academic faculty differ from other similar faculty in the institution, describe and provide the rationale for the differences.
- Describe how information about rights and privileges is made available to the academic faculty.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) identified in the Narrative that contain the rights and privileges of the academic faculty.

#### **1.3.2. The rights and privileges of the clinical education faculty are commensurate with those with similar appointments within the institution. These rights and privileges are communicated to the clinical education faculty.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where the rights and privileges of the clinical education faculty exist, if the institution and/or the program extend rights and privileges to the clinical education faculty.
- If any of the rights and privileges of the clinical education faculty for the PTA program differ from other similar faculty in the institution, describe and provide the rationale for the differences.
- Describe how information about rights and privileges is made available to the clinical education faculty.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) identified in the Narrative that contain the rights and privileges of the clinical education faculty.

**1.3.3. Policies and procedures exist which support the practice of ongoing planned program faculty development activities directed toward improving program faculty effectiveness. Program faculty development activities are based on program faculty and program needs identified in evaluative processes and are described for:**

**1.3.3.1. academic faculty**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where policies and procedures exist that address the participation of academic faculty in ongoing development activities. Ensure that the policies and procedures address the following:
  - faculty development activities are designed to improve faculty effectiveness
  - faculty development activities are based on needs of the faculty and needs of the program
  - faculty development activities are based on needs identified in the evaluation processes

Appendices:

- Provide copies of development plans for the academic faculty that include measurable and attainable development goals, methods for achieving the goals, and a timetable for accomplishing the goals.
- Ensure that the development activities included in the development plans are based on the needs of the faculty identified in the evaluation processes.
- Ensure that the development activities included in the development plans are based on the needs of the program identified in the evaluation processes.
- Ensure that the development activities included in the development plans improve program faculty effectiveness.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) identified in the Narrative that contain the policies and procedures that address ongoing development activities for the academic faculty.

**1.3.3.2. clinical education faculty**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where policies and procedures exist that ensure that the program provides ongoing development activities for the clinical education faculty. Ensure that the policies and procedures address the following:
  - clinical education faculty development activities are designed to improve the effectiveness of the clinical education faculty
  - clinical education faculty development activities are based on needs of the clinical education faculty identified in the evaluation of the clinical education faculty
  - clinical education faculty development activities are based on needs of the clinical education faculty identified in the evaluation of the clinical education program
  - clinical education faculty development activities are designed to improve the effectiveness of the clinical education faculty
  - clinical education faculty development activities are designed to meet the needs of the program

Appendices:

- Provide evidence of development activities provided to clinical education faculty based on the needs of the clinical education faculty identified in the evaluation of the clinical education faculty.

- Ensure that the clinical education faculty development activities are designed to improve the effectiveness of the clinical education faculty.
- Ensure that the clinical education faculty development activities are designed to meet the needs of the program.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) identified in the Narrative that contain the policies and procedures that address ongoing development activities for the clinical education faculty.

#### 1.4. Student Policies and Procedures

##### 1.4.1. Student recruitment and admission procedures and practices are based upon appropriate and equitable criteria and applicable law. Recruitment and admission policies, procedures and practices assure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity to all students.

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the process used to recruit students into the PTA program.
- Describe the process used to admit students into the PTA program.
- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where the admissions process and the admissions criteria for the program exist.
- Describe how the program ensures that the admissions procedures are applied equitably to program applicants.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) identified in the Narrative that contain the admissions process and the admissions criteria.

##### 1.4.2. Students are provided with the current policies, procedures, and relevant information about the institution and program.

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where the following information exists:
  - accreditation status of the institution and the program
  - acceptance and matriculation rates
  - graduation rates
  - career opportunities
  - employment rates
  - pass rates of program graduates on licensing examinations
  - costs of the program (including tuition, fees and refund policies)
  - travel expectations to clinical sites
  - financial aid
  - health services
  - health and professional liability insurance requirements
  - grading policies
  - progression through the program
  - withdrawal and dismissal procedures
  - other academic policies and procedures

- due process
  - clinical sites
  - clinical education policies and procedures
  - access to and responsibility for the cost of emergency services in off-campus educational experiences
  - any additional fees associated with verification of identity for distance education purposes
- Describe how the program makes this information available to prospective and enrolled students.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) identified in the Narrative that contain the information available to prospective and enrolled students.

**1.4.3. The program has in place policies, procedures and practices related to student retention. These policies, procedures and practices are consistent with institutional policy and are made available to students.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where the policies and procedures exist that address student retention and progression through the program.
- Describe how the program makes this information available to students.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) identified in the Narrative that contain the policies and procedures regarding student retention and progression through the program.

## SECTION 2: RESOURCES

### Preamble

**Resources are available in sufficient quantity and quality to enable the education program to accomplish its objectives and to ensure the program's stability and continued viability. These resources include students, program faculty, staff, student services, finances, library, capital equipment, supplies, and academic and clinical facilities.**

### 2.1. Students

**The program admits and graduates students consistent with the missions of the institution, the program, and with societal needs for physical therapy.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Provide the demographic characteristics of the enrolled students, including age, gender, race and other characteristics that reflect diversity of the students.
- Describe how the admissions criteria lead to attainment of programs goals.
- Describe how the enrolled students reflect the program's mission and goals.
- Provide the program's three-year graduation rate and provide evidence of a graduation rate, averaged over the most recent three years, that is not lower than one standard deviation below the mean when compared to programs nationally.

### 2.2. Program Faculty

**2.2.1. The institution provides for sufficient program faculty resources to accomplish the mission and goals of the program. The program employs two full-time core faculty members. One of the full-time core faculty members is a physical therapist.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) and page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) that address the institution's process for determining the number of faculty needed for the program, including how the faculty to student ratio for lecture and laboratory courses in the program is determined.
- Describe the faculty resources for the program that include:
  - the program employs a minimum of two faculty members
  - two of the core faculty are full time according to institutional definitions of full time
  - one of the full time core faculty members is a physical therapist
- If the determination of faculty needs for the PTA program is different from that of the institution, describe the differences and why.
- Describe how the faculty teaching and work loads for the program faculty are adequate to meet the program needs with regard to:
  - teaching
  - program administration
  - administration of the clinical education program
  - institutional and program committee and governance activities
  - student advising
  - any expectations related to student recruitment and admissions process
  - other institutional and program responsibilities

Appendices:

- Core Faculty Workload Distribution Form

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) identified in the Narrative that address how the faculty workload and need for faculty for the program is determined.

**2.2.2. Each academic faculty member is qualified by education and experience to fulfill the assigned responsibilities. She/he holds appropriate credentials where applicable, including licensure, certification or registration. Each academic faculty member maintains activities within the profession consistent with the philosophy of the program and institution.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- For each academic faculty member, state how the faculty member meets qualifications in the following areas:
  - teaching experience (classroom, clinical, in-service and/or presentation of continuing education courses)
  - experience in the area(s) of the curriculum in which the faculty member has teaching responsibility
  - licensure (if a physical therapist), or licensure, certification, or registration in states where applicable (if a physical therapist assistant)
  - the ability of the faculty to identify performance deficits and unsafe practices of students
  - the ability of the faculty to determine student readiness to engage in clinical education
  - the ability of the faculty to monitor and facilitate ethical and clinically appropriate behaviors in students

Appendices:

- Curriculum vitae for each academic faculty member that substantiates the qualifications outlined in the Narrative.\*/\*\*
- Curriculum vitae should include the course(s) or content in the curriculum in which the faculty member has teaching responsibility.
- \* See also 2.2.2.1. for additional qualifications to be substantiated in the curriculum vitae for the program director.
- \*\* See also 2.2.2.2. for additional qualifications to be substantiated in curriculum vitae for core faculty member designated as the ACCE.

**2.2.2.1. The program director of the physical therapist assistant education program is a physical therapist or a physical therapist assistant. The program director demonstrates the academic and professional qualifications and relevant experience in education requisite for providing effective leadership for the program, the program faculty, and the students. These qualifications include all of the following: a minimum of a master's degree; licensure (if a physical therapist), or licensure, certification, or registration in states where applicable (if a physical therapist assistant); experience in clinical practice; didactic and/or clinical teaching experience; experience in administration; experience in educational theory and methodology (curricular design, development, implementation and evaluation); experience in instructional design and methodology; and experience in student evaluation and outcomes assessment.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program director meets the following qualifications:
  - a minimum of a master's degree
  - licensure (if a physical therapist), or licensure, certification, or registration in states where applicable (if a physical therapist assistant)
  - a minimum of five years clinical experience that includes experience in the PT/PTA relationship
  - experience in a variety of areas of teaching (academic, clinical, continuing education, in-service)
  - experience in educational theory and methodology (curricular design, development, implementation and evaluation)
  - experience in instructional design and methodology
  - experience in student evaluation and outcomes assessment
  - currency in contemporary physical therapy practice
  - knowledge of contemporary curricular content for the education of the physical therapist assistant
  - experience in administration
  - experience in academic governance
  - experience in fiscal management
  - experience in human resource management
  - service on behalf of physical therapy education, the community, and/or the profession

Appendices:

- Curriculum vitae for the program director that substantiates the qualifications outlined in the Narrative.

**2.2.2.2. The core faculty includes a member designated as the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE).**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Identify the core faculty member who is designated as the ACCE.
- Describe how the ACCE meets the following qualifications:
  - a minimum of two years of experience as a center coordinator of clinical education (CCCE) and/or clinical instructor (CI), or experience in teaching, curriculum development, and administration in a physical therapist assistant or physical therapist program
  - clinical or educational administration experience
  - experience in human resource management
  - experience in a variety of areas of teaching (academic, clinical, continuing education, in-service)

Appendices:

- Curriculum vitae for the ACCE that substantiates the qualifications outlined in the Narrative.

**2.2.3. The academic faculty as a unit have the qualifications and experience necessary to achieve the program goals. Collectively, the academic faculty have evidence of and demonstrate expertise in basic educational theory and methodology (curricular design, development, implementation and evaluation), instructional design and methodology, student evaluation and outcomes assessment.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the adequacy of the blend of core faculty to ensure the achievement of all program activities including:
  - basic educational theory and methodology (curricular design, development, implementation and evaluation)
  - instructional design and methodology
  - student evaluation and outcomes assessment
- Describe how the faculty collectively have the expertise and experience to cover all content areas in the curriculum.

**2.2.4. The clinical education faculty demonstrate clinical expertise in their area of practice and the capacity to perform as effective clinical teachers.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the program's expectations for the qualifications of the clinical education faculty to serve as clinical instructors for the program students.
- Describe how the program ensures that the clinical education faculty demonstrate clinical competence in the area of practice in which they are providing clinical instruction.
- Describe how the program ensures the clinical education faculty demonstrate the ability to be effective clinical teachers, including the ability to assess and document student performance, including deficits and unsafe practices.

On Site:

- Summary of data collected about the qualifications of the clinical education faculty (e.g., years of experience, specialist certification, or other characteristics expected by the program) for the clinical education faculty in the active clinical education sites.

**2.3. Student Services**

**2.3.1. Information concerning financial aid through the institution and program is available to all students.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with the page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where information about financial aid exists.
- Describe how current information is made available to students regarding financial aid.
- If the program is offered by distance education, describe how information and services are made available to students taking courses by distance education.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) listed in the Narrative that contain the information about student access to financial aid.

### **2.3.2. Students have access to counseling and testing services.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with the page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where information about counseling and testing services exists.
- Describe how current information is made available to students regarding counseling and testing services.
- If the program is offered by distance education, describe how information and services are made available to students taking courses by distance education.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) listed in the Narrative that contain the information about student access to counseling and testing services.

### **2.3.3. Students are provided with formative and summative reports of their academic and clinical performance and progress.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the mechanisms by which students receive regular reports of academic performance and progress.
- Describe the mechanisms by which students receive regular reports of their clinical performance and progress, including the minimal expectations of the program for frequency of these reports.

On Site:

- Provide examples of the mechanisms used by the program to provide students with formative and summative evaluations of their academic and clinical performance and progress.

## **2.4. Finances**

**The program has adequate financial support to achieve its stated mission. Core faculty determine program needs and, with appropriate institutional officials, are involved in budget planning and management.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the process used by the program to determine the fiscal resources needed for the operation of the program.
- Describe the involvement of the program faculty in the budget process.

Appendices:

- Program Income and Expenses Form

## **2.5. Administrative and Technical Support Services**

**Adequate administrative and technical support staff and services exist to support the activities of the program.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the administrative and technical support staff services available to the program and how these services meet the needs of the program.

## **2.6. Learning and Instructional Resources**

**2.6.1. The resources of the institutional library system and related learning resource centers are adequate to support the needs and meet the goals of the program.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the library resources, including the technological resources, available to the program faculty and students.
- Describe the accessibility of library resources to program faculty and students.
- If the educational program has its own facility for books, periodicals, instructional, and audiovisual materials, describe how the facility and materials are in an environment that is conducive to their intended purpose and accessible to students and academic faculty when needed.

**2.6.2. Technology for instructional purposes is easily accessible and is of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of the program.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program uses technology for instructional purposes.
- Describe the technology available to the program and how the technology is adequate to meet the needs of the program.

## **2.7. Facilities**

**2.7.1. The program has classrooms and laboratories of sufficient quality and quantity to provide an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the classroom and laboratory facilities available to the PTA program, including any off-campus facilities used for scheduled laboratories.
- Describe the space available to the program for equipment storage and for storage of student records.
- Describe how the classroom, laboratory and storage space is adequate to meet the program needs.

On Site:

- Copy of agreement for use of off-campus facilities (if off-campus facilities are used for scheduled laboratories).

**2.7.2. The program has sufficient offices and space for academic faculty and staff.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the office space available to academic faculty.
- Describe how the office space meets the needs of the program.

**2.7.3. Clinical education experiences are of sufficient quality, quantity and variety to prepare students for their responsibilities as physical therapist assistants.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the process used by the program for determining that the clinical education sites offer experiences for the students consistent with the goals of the clinical education portion of the curriculum and with the objectives of the individual clinical education courses in curriculum.
- Describe how the program ensures a sufficient number and variety of clinical education sites to support the goals of the clinical education portion of the curriculum and to meet the objectives of the individual clinical education courses in the curriculum.

**2.8. Equipment and Supplies**

**The program has adequate access to sufficient operable equipment and adequate supplies. Opportunities are provided for academic faculty and students to use equipment and supplies reflective of current practice in physical therapy.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program ensures the equipment and supplies are adequate to meet the needs of the program, including equipment and supplies loaned by vendors or by facilities other than the institution.

Appendices:

- Equipment inventory for equipment that requires inspection and maintenance.

On Site:

- Copy of agreement for use of equipment and supplies provided by vendors or by facilities other than the institution if loaned equipment is used by the program.
- The agreement ensures uninterrupted use of the equipment and supplies, ensures equipment and supplies are properly maintained, and ensures equipment and supplies are available and accessible for student practice and remediation.

## SECTION 3: CURRICULUM

### Preamble

A curriculum is a plan for learning, designed by the faculty in consultation with practitioners and members of the communities of interest, to achieve stated educational goals and objectives. The curriculum sets forth the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed by the graduate to achieve these goals. The curriculum is founded on sound educational principles, current learning theories, and values of the institution and the faculty.

The curriculum for the preparation of the physical therapist assistant culminates in an associate degree and is designed and implemented to prepare graduates to work under the direction and supervision of the physical therapist. Depending upon the curricular model utilized, the physical therapist assistant degree program includes a general education component or elements of general education in concert with the physical therapy technical education course work.

### 3.1. Core faculty assume primary responsibility for the development of the curriculum plan with input from all appropriate communities of interest.

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the responsibility of the core faculty in the development, review, and revision of the curriculum plan.
- Describe the process used to obtain input into the development of the curriculum plan from communities of interest that include, but are not limited to:
  - adjunct and support faculty
  - clinical education faculty
  - employers of graduates
  - advisory committee members
  - students

On Site:

- Provide evidence of implementation of the curriculum development, review, and revision process that includes, but is not limited to, meeting minutes and completed curriculum assessment tools, such as those used in 4.1.6.

### 3.2. The curriculum plan is documented, is comprehensive, incorporates the philosophy, mission, and goals of the program, and prepares students for their role as physical therapist assistants to work under the direction and supervision of physical therapists.

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the curriculum plan is grounded in the mission, philosophy, goals, objectives, and expected student outcomes of the program.
- Provide examples of how the curriculum plan is grounded in the mission, philosophy, goals, objectives, and expected student outcomes of the program.
- Describe how the curriculum plan is based on sound educational theory and principles and the nature of contemporary physical therapy practice.
- Provide examples of how the curriculum plan is based on sound educational theory and principles and the nature of contemporary physical therapy practice.
- Describe how the curriculum plan is reflective of recognized standards of practice of the profession, including the APTA *Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant*.

- Provide examples of how the curriculum plan is reflective of recognized standards of practice of the profession, including the APTA *Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant*.
- Describe how the curriculum is designed to prepare graduates to work under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist who directs and supervises the physical therapist assistant to perform selected interventions and the data collection techniques to carry out selected interventions appropriate for the entry-level graduate.
- Provide examples of how the curriculum prepares graduates to work under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist who directs and supervises the physical therapist assistant to perform selected interventions and the data collection techniques to carry out selected interventions.
- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where documentation of the curriculum plan is found.

Appendices:

- Provide a copy of the curriculum plan.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) listed in the Narrative that contain the curriculum plan.

**3.2.1. The curriculum plan includes a series of organized, sequential and integrated learning experiences.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List, in chronological order and organized sequentially by term, all general education courses and all technical education courses in the PTA program curriculum required for the associate degree.
- Describe how the curriculum for the PTA program, including all general education and all technical education courses required for the degree, can be completed in not more than 5 semesters of full time study or equivalent. [CAPTE defines “or equivalent” as “not exceeding 80 academic weeks, irrespective of term length, for completion of all program requirements, including (1) all required general education courses and any pre-requisites for them, (2) courses pre-requisite for program admission, and (3) all technical education courses, both didactic and clinical.” Developmental and remedial courses are not included.]
- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where documentation of the courses in the PTA program curriculum, including all general education courses and all technical education courses organized in chronological order and sequentially by term, can be found.

Appendices:

- For each general education course and each technical education course in the curriculum for the PTA program (all general education and technical education courses required for students to receive the associate degree), provide the following:
  - course name
  - course number
  - credit hours
  - contact (clock) hours
- Curriculum Summary Form

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) listed in the Narrative that contain the curriculum for the PTA program.

**3.2.2. The curriculum plan includes well defined statements of the expected student outcomes. The program has effective mechanisms for communicating these expected outcomes to students, prospective employers, and other communities of interest.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where the statements of expected student outcomes can be found.
- Describe how the program communicates the expected student outcomes to communities of interest including students, clinical instructors, and employers of graduates.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) listed in the Narrative that contain the statements of expected student outcomes.

**3.2.3. The curriculum plan includes courses with instructional objectives stated in behavioral terms that describe the depth and breadth of content, and the level of expected student performance.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program ensures, in courses in the technical education portion of the curriculum, the inclusion of instructional objectives written in behavioral (measurable and observable) terms that describe the depth and breadth of curricular content needed to meet expected student performance outcomes.

Appendices:

- Provide course syllabi for the technical education courses in the program curriculum. Organize syllabi in chronological order with tabs that identify the course.
- Each course syllabus must include the following:
  - title and number
  - description
  - instructor
  - credit hours
  - clock hours (lecture and laboratory)
  - course prerequisites
  - course objectives
  - outline of content
  - schedule of when content is taught in course
  - description of teaching methods and learning experiences
  - methods of student evaluation/grading
  - required and recommended readings

On Site:

- Provide additional course materials that contain instructional objectives not contained in syllabi.

### **3.2.4. The implemented curriculum plan utilizes appropriate instructional methodology.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the variety of instructional methods and learning experiences used in the curriculum to facilitate students' achievement of the objectives.
- Describe the rationale for the selection of instructional methods and learning experiences used in the curriculum.
- If courses are offered by distance education mechanisms, describe how the program establishes that the student who registers for the course(s) is the same student who participates in and completes the course(s) and receives the academic credit. Acceptable mechanisms include, but are not limited to, (1) secure login and pass code and (2) other technologies or practices that are effective for verifying student identification while at the same time protecting student privacy

On Site:

- Provide examples of student work that reflect the different types of instructional methodology and the different learning experiences used in the curriculum to facilitate students' achievement of the objectives.

### **3.2.5. The program faculty utilize a variety of effective methods to measure students' achievement of the objectives.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the variety of evaluation mechanisms, including formative and summative, used by the program to measure students' achievement of objectives.
- Describe the timing of student evaluation across the curriculum, in didactic, laboratory, and clinical education courses.
- Describe how the program ensures that evaluations used by the program to evaluate student performance are appropriate for the instructional content and for the expected level of student performance.
- Describe how the program ensures that students have achieved the objectives stated for each clinical education experience.
- If testing occurs by distance mechanisms, describe how the program verifies the individual taking the test and describe how the program ensures the integrity of the test by the student being evaluated. Acceptable mechanisms include, but are not limited to, (1) secure login and pass code, (2) proctored examinations, and (3) other technologies or practices that are effective for verifying student identification while at the same time protecting student privacy.

Appendices:

- Provide examples from each technical education course of tests, skills checks forms, practical exam forms, clinical evaluation forms, and other mechanisms used by the program to measure students' achievement of objectives.

On Site:

- Provide all tests, skills checks forms, practical exam forms, clinical evaluation forms, and other mechanisms used by the program to measure students' achievement of objectives.

**3.2.6. The program faculty determines that students are competent and safe to progress through the curriculum, including the clinical education component.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program determines in which skills students are expected to be competent and safe.
- Describe the processes used by the program to determine students are competent and safe in the skills identified by the program.
- Describe how the program ensures that critical safety elements are identified in the competency testing process.
- Describe how grading procedures for the competency testing process ensure students are not placed in the clinical setting without being determined to be competent and safe.
- Describe the mechanisms used by the program to communicate to students the skills in which students must be competent and safe.
- Describe the mechanisms used by the program to communicate to clinical education faculty the skills in which students must be competent and safe.
- Describe the criteria upon which the determination is made that each student is ready to engage in clinical education.
- Describe how the program determines that the tool used for the evaluation of student performance in the clinical setting has been completed correctly.
- Describe how and by whom the determination of the grade for the clinical education courses is made.
- List the document(s) with page number(s) and/or specific URL reference(s) where the list of skills in which students are expected to be competent and safe is found.

Appendices:

- Provide the list of the skills in which students are expected to be competent and safe and in which the program performs skills checks and/or practical exams to determine competence and safety. The skills on the list should include the identification of critical safety elements.

On Site:

- Provide a copy of the document(s) identified in the Narrative that contain the list of skills in which students must be determined to be competent and safe.

**3.3. Comprehensive Curriculum**

**3.3.1. The physical therapist assistant curriculum includes, or its prerequisites include, elements of general education, including basic sciences that include biological, physical, physiological, and anatomical principles, and applied physical therapy science. The course work is designed to prepare the student to think independently, to clarify values, to understand fundamental theory, and to develop critical thinking and communication skills.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the rationale for the inclusion of the specific general education courses in the curriculum, including the knowledge and skills that students are expected to possess prior to enrollment in the technical education courses.
- Describe how the general education coursework is integrated and sequenced logically within the curriculum.

- Describe how the program ensures that the general education portion of the curriculum leads to the attainment of general education skills that enhance the student's ability to integrate the general education components with the technical education components of the curriculum.

**3.3.2. The technical education component of the curriculum includes learning experiences to prepare the entry-level physical therapist assistant to work under the direction and supervision of the physical therapist. Courses within the curriculum include content designed to prepare program graduates to meet the described performance expectations.**

**Communication**

**3.3.2.1. Communicates verbally and non-verbally with the patient, the physical therapist, health care delivery personnel, and others in an effective, appropriate, and capable manner.**

**Individual and Cultural Differences**

**3.3.2.2. Recognizes individual and cultural differences and responds appropriately in all aspects of physical therapy services.**

**Behavior and Conduct**

**3.3.2.3. Exhibits conduct that reflects a commitment to meet the expectations of members of society receiving health care services.**

**3.3.2.4. Exhibits conduct that reflects a commitment to meet the expectations of members of the profession of physical therapy.**

**3.3.2.5. Exhibits conduct that reflects practice standards that are legal, ethical and safe.**

**Plan of Care**

**3.3.2.6. Communicates an understanding of the plan of care developed by the physical therapist to achieve short and long term goals and intended outcomes.**

**3.3.2.7. Demonstrates competence in implementing selected components of interventions identified in the plan of care established by the physical therapist.**

**Functional Training**

- 1. activities of daily living**
- 2. assistive / adaptive devices**
- 3. body mechanics**
- 4. developmental activities**
- 5. gait and locomotion training**
- 6. prosthetics and orthotics**
- 7. wheelchair management skills**

**Infection Control Procedures**

- 8. isolation techniques**
- 9. sterile technique**

**Manual Therapy Techniques**

- 10. passive range of motion**
- 11. therapeutic massage**

**Physical Agents and Mechanical Agents**

- 12. athermal agents**

13. biofeedback
14. compression therapies
15. cryotherapy
16. electrotherapeutic agents
17. hydrotherapy
18. superficial and deep thermal agents
19. traction

#### **Therapeutic Exercise**

20. aerobic conditioning
21. balance and coordination training
22. breathing exercises and coughing techniques
23. conditioning and reconditioning
24. posture awareness training
25. range of motion exercises
26. stretching exercises
27. strengthening exercises

#### **Wound Management**

28. application and removal of dressing or agents
29. identification of precautions for dressing removal

- 3.3.2.8. Demonstrates competency in performing components of data collection skills essential for carrying out the plan of care.

#### **Aerobic Capacity and Endurance**

1. measures standard vital signs
2. recognizes and monitors responses to positional changes and activities
3. observes and monitors thoracoabdominal movements and breathing patterns with activity

#### **Anthropometrical Characteristics**

4. measures height, weight, length and girth

#### **Arousal, Mentation and Cognition**

5. recognizes changes in the direction and magnitude of patient's state of arousal, mentation and cognition

#### **Assistive, Adaptive, Orthotic, Protective, Supportive, and Prosthetic Devices**

6. identifies the individual's and caregiver's ability to care for the device
7. recognizes changes in skin condition while using devices and equipment
8. recognizes safety factors while using the device

#### **Gait, Locomotion, and Balance**

9. describes the safety, status, and progression of patients while engaged in gait, locomotion, balance, wheelchair management and mobility

#### **Integumentary Integrity**

10. recognizes absent or altered sensation
11. recognizes normal and abnormal integumentary changes
12. recognizes activities, positioning, and postures that aggravate or relieve pain or altered sensations, or that can produce associated skin trauma
13. recognizes viable versus nonviable tissue

#### **Joint Integrity and Mobility**

14. recognizes normal and abnormal joint movement

**Muscle Performance**

15. measures muscle strength by manual muscle testing
16. observes the presence or absence of muscle mass
17. recognizes normal and abnormal muscle length
18. recognizes changes in muscle tone

**Neuromotor Development**

19. recognizes gross motor milestones
20. recognizes fine motor milestones
21. recognizes righting and equilibrium reactions

**Pain**

22. administers standardized questionnaires, graphs, behavioral scales, or visual analog scales for pain
23. recognizes activities, positioning, and postures that aggravate or relieve pain or altered sensations

**Posture**

24. Describes resting posture in any position
25. Recognizes alignment of trunk and extremities at rest and during activities

**Range of Motion**

26. measures functional range of motion
27. measures range of motion using a goniometer

**Self-care and Home Management and Community or Work Reintegration**

28. inspects the physical environment and measures physical space
29. recognizes safety and barriers in home, community and work environments
30. recognizes level of functional status
31. administers standardized questionnaires to patients and others

**Ventilation, Respiration and Circulation Examination**

32. recognizes cyanosis
33. recognizes activities that aggravate or relieve edema, pain, dyspnea, or other symptoms
34. describes chest wall expansion and excursion
35. describes cough and sputum characteristics

3.3.2.9. Adjusts interventions within the plan of care established by the physical therapist in response to patient clinical indications and reports this to the supervising physical therapist.

3.3.2.10. Recognizes when intervention should not be provided due to changes in the patient's status and reports this to the supervising physical therapist.

3.3.2.11. Reports any changes in the patient's status to the supervising physical therapist.

3.3.2.12. Recognizes when the direction to perform an intervention is beyond that which is appropriate for a physical therapist assistant and initiates clarification with the physical therapist.

- 3.3.2.13. Participates in educating patients and caregivers as directed by the supervising physical therapist.**
- 3.3.2.14. Provides patient-related instruction to patients, family members, and caregivers to achieve patient outcomes based on the plan of care established by the physical therapist.**
- 3.3.2.15. Takes appropriate action in an emergency situation.**
- 3.3.2.16. Completes thorough, accurate, logical, concise, timely, and legible documentation that follows guidelines and specific documentation formats required by state practice acts, the practice setting, and other regulatory agencies.**
- 3.3.2.17. Participates in discharge planning and follow-up as directed by the supervising physical therapist.**
- 3.3.2.18. Reads and understands the health care literature.**

#### **Education**

- 3.3.2.19. Under the direction and supervision of the physical therapist, instructs other members of the health care team using established techniques, programs, and instructional materials commensurate with the learning characteristics of the audience.**
- 3.3.2.20. Educates others about the role of the physical therapist assistant.**

#### **Administration**

- 3.3.2.21. Interacts with other members of the health care team in patient-care and non-patient care activities.**
- 3.3.2.22. Provides accurate and timely information for billing and reimbursement purposes.**
- 3.3.2.23. Describes aspects of organizational planning and operation of the physical therapy service.**
- 3.3.2.24. Participates in performance improvement activities (quality assurance).**

#### **Social Responsibility**

- 3.3.2.25. Demonstrates a commitment to meeting the needs of the patients and consumers.**
- 3.3.2.26. Demonstrates an awareness of social responsibility, citizenship, and advocacy, including participation in community and service organizations and activities.**

#### **Career Development**

- 3.3.2.27. Identifies career development and lifelong learning opportunities.**
- 3.3.2.28. Recognizes the role of the physical therapist assistant in the clinical education of physical therapist assistant students.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- For each of the content areas 3.3.2.1.-3.3.2.28., describe how the content is integrated, progressed, and reinforced throughout the didactic and clinical components of the curriculum.

Appendices:

- Course Objectives and Outcomes Form

### **3.3.3. Clinical Education**

#### **3.3.3.1. The clinical education component of the comprehensive curriculum includes organized and sequential experiences coordinated with the didactic component of the curriculum. Clinical education includes integrated experiences and full-time terminal experiences.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the rationale for the design of the clinical education portion of the curriculum.
- Describe how the curriculum provides both integrated and full time terminal clinical experiences.
- Describe the goals and expected student outcomes for each clinical education course in the curriculum.
- Describe the clinical education experiences the program requires each student to have.
- Describe how the program monitors that each student has the required experiences.
- Describe how the coordination and sequencing of the clinical education experiences achieves the expected outcomes of the clinical education portion of the curriculum.
- Provide a rationale for the number of contact hours for clinical education if less than 520 or more than 720.

#### **3.3.3.2. Clinical experiences selected by the program provide students with appropriate role modeling and an opportunity to interact with individuals with impairments common to the clinical setting.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program ensures the clinical education experiences provide the opportunity for students to develop competency in the provision of selected components of intervention and in components of data collection techniques as directed in the plan of care developed by the physical therapist.
- Describe how the program ensures that students:
  - receive appropriate supervision during the clinical experiences
  - have the variety of experiences necessary for the program's goals and objectives of clinical education to be met and to achieve the expected complexity of clinical problem solving
  - have opportunities for direct patient care and teaching
  - have opportunities to observe and participate in aspects of clinical practice other than patient care
- If the clinical site employs both PTs and PTAs, describe how the program ensures that students are provided with appropriate role-modeling of the PT/PTA relationship.
- If the clinical instructor is a PTA, describe how the program ensures the supervision of the student includes appropriate interaction with the supervising PT.

## **SECTION 4: PROGRAM ASSESSMENT**

### **Preamble**

The physical therapist assistant education program is responsible and accountable for formative and summative assessment of educational outcomes. The program is responsible for developing and implementing a process for continuous improvement in all aspects of the program.

The Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education will seek evidence that the program is involved in an ongoing effort to determine the effectiveness of the program. The ongoing process of assessment includes collection of information on a regular basis with input from multiple sources and uses a variety of methods to gather data.

The information collected should include data on the performance of program graduates related to the expectations of the curriculum as well as evidence that supports the relevance of the program philosophy and the attainment of the program's mission, goals and objectives. The information collected should be used to support future changes in all aspects of the program.

The Commission recognizes that the complexity and variety of physical therapy practices where physical therapist assistants are utilized is such that program graduates may engage in activities to varying degrees. The Commission expects that the program will determine the extent to which this variety in graduate performance or involvement warrants changes in the program, particularly in light of the need to prepare graduates for employment in a variety of practice settings and locations.

- 4.1. Assessment is part of a systematic and formal approach to continuous improvement. The program has in place an ongoing process to determine the effectiveness of the program that includes, but is not limited to, the following:**
  - 4.1.1. institutional policies and procedures**
  - 4.1.2. program policies and procedures**
  - 4.1.3. resources**
  - 4.1.4. mission, philosophy, goals and objectives**
  - 4.1.5. curriculum**
  - 4.1.6. clinical education program**
  - 4.1.7. performance of recent graduates**
  - 4.1.8. admissions process, criteria, and prerequisites**
  - 4.1.9. program enrollment**
  - 4.1.10. core faculty**
  - 4.1.11. adjunct and supporting faculty**
  - 4.1.12. clinical education faculty**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe the program's formal, ongoing, assessment process. At a minimum, the process should include the assessment of the all the areas identified in this criterion. For each of the areas assessed, the program should:
  - provide a measurable goal or outcome statement (threshold).
  - identify persons responsible for carrying out the assessment process.
  - provide a timeline for carrying out and completing the assessment process.
  - describe the data collection methods and source(s) of information used in data collection.
  - describe the results and actions (if threshold isn't met) taken as a result of completing the assessment process.

Appendices:

- Assessment Process Documentation Grid
- Copies of tools used to collect data in the assessment process (e.g., surveys, questionnaires).

#### **4.1.1. institutional policies and procedures**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program regularly reviews the impact of the institutional policies and procedures on the program's ability to achieve its mission, goals and objectives.

#### **4.1.2. program policies and procedures**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program regularly reviews the impact of the program policies and procedures on the program's ability to achieve its mission, goals and objectives.

#### **4.1.3. resources**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program determines the adequacy of the program's resources that include, but are not limited to
  - academic faculty
  - student services
  - program budget
  - library and learning resources
  - administrative and technical support
  - classrooms, laboratories and faculty office space
  - equipment, supplies, technology for instructional purposes.

#### **4.1.4. mission, philosophy, goals, and objectives**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program determines that the program mission, philosophy, goals, and objectives are congruent with the mission of the institution and with the mission of the program and how the program has achieved its goals and objectives.

#### **4.1.5. curriculum**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program determines the effectiveness of the program curriculum. The assessment should include an analysis based on the following:
  - the curriculum incorporates the philosophy, mission, and goals of the program to prepare students to work under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist
  - the curriculum includes a series of organized, sequential, and integrated learning experiences
  - the curriculum includes well-defined statements of expected student outcomes
  - the curriculum includes instructional objectives stated in behavioral terms that describe the depth and breadth of content and the level of expected student performance
  - the curriculum includes appropriate instructional methodology
  - the curriculum includes a variety of effective methods to measure students' achievement of the objectives
  - the curriculum includes effective mechanisms to determine that students are competent and safe to progress through the curriculum

#### **4.1.6. clinical education program**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program determines the effectiveness of the clinical education program. The assessment should include an analysis based on the following:
  - the clinical education courses are sequenced appropriately in the curriculum to meet the goals and objectives of the clinical education program
  - the clinical education courses are of appropriate duration and length to meet the goals and objectives of the clinical education program
  - the number and variety of clinical education sites is sufficient to meet the goals and objectives of the clinical education courses in the curriculum
  - communication with the clinical education sites is sufficient and effective

#### **4.1.7. performance of recent graduates**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program assesses the performance of the program graduates. The assessment should include an analysis based on the following:

- expected thresholds for licensure examination pass rate and employment rate that reflect, at a minimum, a licensure examination pass rate, averaged over the most recent three years, of at least 80% and an employment rate, averaged over the most recent three years, that is consistent with the mission, goals and objectives of the program and institution, as well as national trends as determined by annual reporting mechanisms
- areas in which the program assesses the performance of graduates in addition to licensure examination pass rate and employment rate

#### **4.1.8. admissions process, criteria, and prerequisites**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program assesses the admissions process.
- Describe how the program determines the effectiveness of the admissions process to ensure the program admits and graduates students consistent with the program mission, goals, and objectives.

#### **4.1.9. program enrollment**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program determines and assesses program enrollment.

#### **4.1.10. core faculty**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program assesses the adequacy and effectiveness of the core faculty. The assessment should include an analysis of the effectiveness of the faculty development activities.

#### **4.1.11. adjunct and supporting faculty**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program assesses the effectiveness of the adjunct and supporting faculty. The assessment should include an analysis of the effectiveness of the faculty development activities, if applicable.

#### **4.1.12. clinical education faculty**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Describe how the program assesses the effectiveness of the clinical education faculty. The assessment should include an analysis based on the following:
  - degree to which the clinical education faculty meet the qualifications determined by the program

- effectiveness of the supervision provided by the clinical education faculty
- effectiveness of the development activities for clinical education faculty provided by the program

**4.2. The program provides evidence of the implementation of the assessment process, provides examples of how collected data stimulate changes in the education program, provides examples of changes that are made, and provides evidence that changes made result in program enhancement.**

Evidence of Compliance:

Narrative:

- Provide a summary of the results of the assessment processes for each of the criteria in 4.1.
- Describe any change(s) resulting from the assessment process within the last 3-5 years.
- Describe the rationale for the changes and the effect of the changes on the program.

On Site:

- Provide evidence of data collected and analyzed to identify program strengths and weaknesses and to determine necessary program changes.
- Provide evidence that the program has implemented changes based on the results of the evaluation process and that the effectiveness of these changes has been assessed.