



# Physical Therapist Assistant Program Student Handbook

2024

## **Institutional History**

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College has spent more than 50 years serving Rowan and Cabarrus counties, ultimately educating nearly 650,000 individuals. Over time, the College has progressively evolved in response to our community's workforce and economic development needs, annually serving more than 20,000 individuals on our seven campuses and sites across our two counties.

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College is accredited to award associate degrees, diplomas and certificates by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

## **PTA Program Accreditation Statement**

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Rowan-Cabarrus Community College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085; telephone: 703-706-3245; email: [accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org); website: <http://www.capteonline.org>. If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call 704-216-7180 or email Anna Marie Prado, PTA Program Director at [annamarie.prado@rccc.edu](mailto:annamarie.prado@rccc.edu).

## **Welcome to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at RCCC**

We would like to welcome you to the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program at Rowan Cabarrus Community College (RCCC). You have been accepted into the academic program that will prepare you to work as a PTA in the field of Physical Therapy. Completion of the PTA Program will qualify you for an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant.

Licensure is required in North Carolina in order to practice as a PTA. Eligibility to take the PTA licensing examination (National Physical Therapy Examination) is reached upon successful completion of the RCCC PTA Program once accreditation is achieved.

The PTA Program is very demanding. It involves five semesters of general education, technical/theory courses, laboratory instruction, and clinical education. You will face many challenges as you gain knowledge and learn skills in a health field that requires advanced knowledge and techniques. You will interact with a wide variety of classroom and laboratory instructors and a wide variety of clinical instructors in several different Physical Therapy settings, all allowing you to complete a program of study that will provide you the broad scope of experience and knowledge required to practice under the supervision of a licensed Physical Therapist (PT). Through your experiences, you will be given increasing levels of responsibility, including independent problem solving, critical thinking, and ethical decision-making.

This PTA Student Handbook lists all policies, procedures, and standards. Be aware that policies or procedures in this handbook may change. It will also be helpful to familiarize yourself with RCCC Student Handbook, which can be found on the RCCC website. The PTA faculty will notify students if any changes occur.

We encourage you to contact us if you have any questions, concerns, or difficulties that are interfering with your performance in the program. We will also be looking to you for feedback as we continually work to develop and improve the program

We hope that you enjoy a successful and rewarding experience in the PTA Program.

Good luck and best wishes,

**The PTA Faculty**

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## **Rowan-Cabarrus Non-Discrimination Statement**

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College does not discriminate; exclude participation in programs or activities, or limit employment or application opportunities based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation, disability, military or veteran status, or age. Rowan-Cabarrus Community College is an equal opportunity institution and employer.

Any student may request a review of any College decision or action alleged to be discriminatory or have a negative effect on the student's enrollment status at Rowan-Cabarrus Community College.

A grievance must be presented, in writing, within 30 days after the action or decision in question. Processing at each step cannot exceed 20 working days; however, the time may be extended by agreement of both parties or by extenuating circumstances as decided by the administrator to whom the grievance is presented. If administrator at each step does not meet processing time limitations, the grievant may then request higher administrative assistance in obtaining requested relief. If the grievant does not meet the stated time limitations, the process will be terminated and such grievance cannot be resubmitted.

# **Physical Therapist Assistant Program Mission Statements, PTA Program Philosophy, PTA Program Goals and Outcomes for PTA Students/Graduates**

## **Rowan-Cabarrus Community College (RCCC) Mission**

Rowan-Cabarrus improves lives and builds community through public higher education and workforce development.

## **Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Mission**

The RCCC PTA Program is committed to improving the quality of life for our graduates by developing them into educated, ethical, competent and caring professionals who will serve the community and its needs by providing quality, evidence-based care under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist.

## **PTA Vision**

The RCCC PTA Program will be recognized in the region, state, and nation as a quality PTA educational program with superlative faculty members, staff, and students dedicated to *“Transforming society by optimizing movement to improve the human experience.”*

## **PTA Program Philosophy**

The RCCC PTA Program is a student-centered program with an open academic environment that inspires students to obtain a solid foundation in the skills and abilities to use critical thinking to become competent PTAs.

The PTA Program integrates a variety of instructional methods to advance students from basic knowledge and skills in the classroom and laboratory to comprehensive, evidence-based care in the community.

The PTA Program cultivates commitment in our students to continue to grow professionally as well as personally through self-assessment, continued learning, and involvement in professional associations.

The PTA Program strives to develop professionals who recognize and understand the various factors that influence the delivery of physical therapy and possess the ability to adapt and modify patient care and therapeutic intervention to succeed in the various physical therapy settings.



## **PTA Program Goals and Outcomes**

The goals of the RCCC PTA Program are to:

1. Graduate competent, ethical, and professional entry-level physical therapist assistants able to work under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist.
2. Provide a comprehensive, evidence-based curriculum blending didactic and clinical education that is reflective of contemporary physical therapy practice.
3. Promote the importance of lifelong learning and involvement with the professional organization in order to support the profession of physical therapy.
4. Function as an integral part of the College through faculty participation in committee assignments, professional development, and recruitment activities.

## **Physical Therapist Assistant Program Objectives:**

Graduates of the RCCC PTA Program will be able to:

1. Work under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist in a legal, ethical, and competent manner as a PTA.
2. Demonstrate the professional and value-based behaviors of an entry-level PTA.
3. Demonstrate a commitment to professional development and life-long learning.
4. Demonstrate effective communication skills in a culturally competent manner with patients and their families/caregivers, other healthcare providers, and the public.

## Program Curriculum Plan of Study

	Prefix and #	Course Title	Class Hrs	Lab Hrs	Clinical Hrs	Contact Hrs	Credit Hrs
<b>SPRING 1</b>							
	BIO 168	Anatomy and Physiology I	3	3	0	6	4
	ENG 111	Writing & Inquiry	3	0	0	3	3
	PTA 110	Intro to PT	2	3	0	5	3
	PTA 130	PT Procedures I	1	6	0	7	3
	PTA 170	Pathophysiology	3	0	0	3	3
	MED 120	Medical Terminology	2	0	0	2	2
		TOTAL CREDITS					18
<b>FALL 1</b>							
	BIO 169	Anatomy and Physiology II	3	3	0	6	4
	PTA 222	Professional Interactions	2	0	0	2	2
	PTA 150	PT Procedures II	1	6	0	7	3
	PTA 120	Functional Anatomy	1	6	0	7	3
	PTA 140	Therapeutic Exercise	2	6	0	8	4
		TOTAL CREDITS					16
<b>SPRING 2</b>							
	MAT 143	Quantitative Literacy	3	0	0	3	3
	PTA 160	PT Procedures III (1 <sup>st</sup> 8 weeks)	2	3	0	5	3
	HUM 115	Critical Thinking	3	0	0	3	3
	PTA 212	Health Care/Resources (2 <sup>nd</sup> 8 weeks)	2	0	0	2	2
	PTA 240	PT Procedures IV	3	6	0	9	5
		TOTAL CREDITS					16
<b>SUMMER 2</b>							
	PTA 180	PTA Clinical Ed Intro (1 <sup>st</sup> 4 weeks)	0	0	9	9	3
	PTA 252	Geriatrics for the PTA (2 <sup>nd</sup> 4 weeks)	2	0	0	2	2
	COM 120 or COM 231	Intro to Interpersonal Comm or Public Speaking	3	0	0	3	3
	PTA 254	Pediatrics for the PTA (2 <sup>nd</sup> 4 weeks)	0	3	0	3	1
		TOTAL CREDITS					9
<b>FALL 2</b>							
	PTA 260	Advanced Clinical Education	0	0	30	30	10
	PTA 270	PTA Topics	1	0	0	1	1
	PSY 150	General Psychology	3	0	0	3	3
	PTA 280	PTA Issues I	1	0	0	1	1
		TOTAL CREDITS					15

**TOTAL PROGRAM CREDITS    74**

## **PTA Course Descriptions**

### **PTA 110 Intro to Physical Therapy**

This course introduces the field of physical therapy including the history and standards of practice for the physical therapist assistant and basic treatment techniques. Emphasis is placed on ethical and legal considerations, universal precautions, vital signs, documentation, basic patient preparation and treatment skills, and architectural barrier screening. Upon completion, students should be able to explain the role of the physical therapist assistant and demonstrate competence in basic techniques of patient care.

### **PTA 120 Functional Anatomy**

This course provides an organized study of anatomy and kinesiology. Emphasis is placed on the integration of structure and function of the skeletal, articular, muscular, nervous, and circulatory systems to include gait analysis. Upon completion, students should be able to describe the components and demonstrate function of these systems as applied to physical therapy.

Corequisite: PTA 140

### **PTA 130 Physical Therapy Procedures I**

This course includes concepts of injury and repair and documentation methods. Emphasis is placed on physiological effects, indications, contraindications, and skilled applications of selected therapeutic modalities. Upon completion, students should be able to safely, correctly, and effectively apply the emphasized techniques and procedures with understanding of correct documentation.

Corequisite: PTA 110

### **PTA140 Therapeutic Exercise**

This course covers muscle physiology, exercise concepts, testing, and applications to the spine and extremities. Topics include strength, endurance, flexibility, and exercise protocols and progressions. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate skill in applying therapeutic exercise principles for non-neurological conditions in a safe and appropriate manner.

Corequisite: PTA 120

#### PTA 150 Physical Therapy Procedures II

This course is designed to include the theory and practice of additional therapeutic interventions. Topics include but are not limited to electrotherapy, burn and wound care, biofeedback, and selected data collection methods. Upon completion, students should be able to apply these modalities and treatment techniques effectively and safely and demonstrate knowledge of physiological principles involved.

Prerequisite: PTA 130

#### PTA 160 Physical Therapy Procedures III

This course introduces treatment and measurement techniques and discusses treatment programs for selected neuromusculoskeletal dysfunction and injuries. Topics include soft tissue and joint dysfunction, selected assessment techniques, and various exercise programs. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate the application of selected data collection methods and functional interventions.

Prerequisite: PTA 150

#### PTA 170 Pathophysiology

This course is a survey of basic pathology with emphasis on conditions most frequently observed and treated in physical therapy. Topics include etiology, pathology, manifestation, treatment, and prognosis. Upon completion, students should be able to explain repair processes, categorize diseases, define pathology, identify organ/body systems involved, and discuss treatment and prognosis.

#### PTA 180 PTA Clinical Ed Intro

This course introduces the physical therapy clinic in planned learning experiences and practice under supervision. Emphasis is placed on reinforcement of learned skills in direct patient care and communication. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate satisfactory performance in learned patient care skills, communication activities, and professional behaviors.

#### PTA 212 Health Care/Resources

This course provides an overview of various aspects of health care delivery systems and the interrelationships of health care team members. Topics include health agencies and their functions, health care team member roles, management, and other health care issues. Upon completion, students should be able to discuss the functions of health organizations and team members and aspects of health care affecting physical therapy delivery.

#### PTA 222 Professional Interactions

This course is designed to assist in the development of effective interpersonal skills in the physical therapist assistant setting. Topics include reactions to disability, the grieving process, methods of communication, motivation, health promotion, disease prevention, and aging. Upon completion, students should be able to discuss and demonstrate methods for achieving effective interaction with patients, families, the public, and other health care providers.

#### PTA 240 Physical Therapy Procedures IV

This course covers normal development, adult and pediatric/CNS dysfunction, spinal cord injuries, amputee rehabilitation techniques, and cardiopulmonary rehabilitation. Topics include neurology review, selected rehabilitation techniques, ADL and functional training, prosthetic and orthotic training, and environmental access. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate safe and correct application of selected rehabilitation techniques for neurological dysfunction, cardiopulmonary conditions, and amputations.

#### PTA 252 Geriatrics for the PTA

This course is designed to provide more in-depth knowledge of physical therapy care for the geriatric individual. Topics include health promotion, wellness programs, and medical problems specific to the elderly. Upon completion, students should be able to discuss and describe special problems and programs for the elderly.

#### PTA 254 Pediatrics for the PTA

This course provides an in-depth study of pediatric dysfunction and rehabilitation techniques. Topics include severe and profound attention deficit disorder, sensory integration, and rehabilitation in the school setting. Upon completion, students should be

able to discuss selected pediatric dysfunctions and demonstrate specialized rehabilitation techniques.

#### PTA 260 Advanced PTA Clinical Ed.

This course provides full-time clinical affiliations for planned learning experiences and practice under supervision. Emphasis is placed on reinforcement of learned skills in direct patient care, communications, and professional behaviors. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate satisfactory performance as an entry-level physical therapist assistant and as a member of the physical therapy team.

Prerequisite: PTA 180

#### PTA 270 PTA Topics

This course covers the physical therapist assistant profession in preparation for the state licensure exam. Topics include developing time management skills and practicing for the competence examinations. Upon completion, students should be able to identify individual academic strengths and weaknesses and utilize this information to continue self-study for the licensure exam.

#### PTA 280 PTA Issues I

This course consists of reports, discussions, and guest lectures on the latest physical therapy techniques, equipment, and health sciences specialties. Topics include reports on extra-departmental experiences, case studies, and literature reviews. Upon completion, students should be able to discuss specialized physical therapy equipment and/or related fields and display competent writing skills.

## **PTA Program Policies**

The following information is a supplement to the Rowan-Cabarrus Community College (RCCC) student policies. The following is the link to the RCCC Student Handbook: <https://www.rccc.edu/catalog/student-handbook/>

All students are responsible for becoming aware of the RCCC policies and procedures, as well as other important information found in the RCCC Student Handbook. In instances in which program policies differ from general RCCC policies, such as admissions criteria, grading policies, or behavior policies, the RCCC administration supports the PTA Program policies. Any questions regarding RCCC or PTA Program policies may be directed toward the PTA faculty members or the Dean of the Health and Education Department, Wendy Barnhardt, EdD, at [wendy.barnhardt@rccc.edu](mailto:wendy.barnhardt@rccc.edu) or (704) 216-3700.

Students are expected to have a thorough understanding of the content of the RCCC PTA Student Handbook, which is provided annually at the start of the spring semester. After reviewing the policy and procedure manual, students will sign and date the “Student Handbook Agreement,” which is an agreement in which the student states he/she understands the content of the handbook and agrees to abide by the policies and procedures set forth during clinical education experiences as a PTA student.

## **Academic Information and Standards**

### **Course Grading**

The PTA Program is rigorous and demanding. Academic success within the PTA Program demands both high-level performance and consistency. Limitations in either could potentially impair a student’s ability to successfully complete the program. Upon successful completion of the PTA Program, graduates will sit for a licensing examination, the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE). A graduate must pass this exam in order to be eligible for licensure to practice in any of the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. The NPTE is a comprehensive exam covering content from the entire PTA Program curriculum. If a student does not have a strong command of the information learned throughout the PTA program and/or does not prepare for the exam, the chances of successfully passing the NPTE are diminished.

The RCCC PTA Program strives to assist students in successfully passing the NPTE. To achieve this goal, the program has set high academic standards. The PTA Program grading scale is based on an 80% as the minimum passing score. A grade of a “B” or better in all technical courses within the PTA Program Curriculum is required. Students who score less than 80% in any of the required PTA Program courses will not be permitted to progress and will be

dismissed from the PTA program. There will be no rounding up for final grades in the PTA technical courses. For example, if a student scores an 89.7% on the final grade, the final grade will be a “B”. The grading scale that will be used in the PTA Technical Program is as follows:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Quality Points per Semester Hour</b>
A	90 – 100%	Excellent	4
B	80 – 89%	Good	3
C	70 – 79%	Average	2
D	60 – 69%	Below Average	1
F	Less Than 60%	Failing	0
I	—	Incomplete	0

For each PTA technical course, students must average a minimum of 80% for all written examinations in a given course in order to progress in the PTA Program, regardless of the student’s overall course grade.

For the clinical education courses within the program curriculum, “A” (Satisfactory) or “F” (Unsatisfactory) grades are given. Please refer to the Clinical Education Handbook regarding grading for these courses.

All PTA Program non-technical courses must be completed with a grade of “C” or higher. If students do not obtain a minimum grade of “C” in any non-technical course within the PTA Program curriculum, the student is not eligible for graduation from the PTA Program. In addition, the program must be completed, including all technical and non-technical courses, within three years of initial start date of the program.

Students are not permitted to begin any PTA clinical education course until all required non-technical courses in which the student has been enrolled and completed are successfully completed with a “C” or better. All required technical (PTA) courses must be successfully completed with a grade of “B” or better in order to begin any PTA clinical education course. This includes passing required competency skills check-offs and practical examinations within the PTA Program, as well as earning a minimum average of 80% on written exams in all PTA courses. If a student has an Incomplete (“I”) in a technical course, the student is not permitted to begin any clinical education course until the student completes the technical course. Once a student successfully satisfies the requirements to remove the Incomplete grade for the technical course with a grade of “B” or better, the clinical education experience will begin according to the PTA Program schedule. As a result, the student may experience a delay in continuing in the PTA program until that clinical education course is offered again.



All course assignments must be turned in on time and must be college-level work. Faculty have the right to not accept late assignments, and/or deduct points for late or unacceptable work per course syllabi.

### **Written Examinations**

Students are required to take all written examinations as scheduled on the course outlines and syllabi. The instructors will provide accommodations for students who have documented individual needs, but all written examinations must be taken on the scheduled date and time. The PTA faculty members recognize that unexpected health, transportation, or personal issues may arise, so a student may take a written examination outside of the scheduled time, but only under extreme circumstances. The faculty member may individually determine what constitutes an extreme circumstance. Insufficient studying or preparation is not considered an extreme circumstance. The instructor **MUST** be notified prior to the examination or as soon as reasonably possible, and the student must receive permission from the instructor to miss an examination. The make-up examination may or may not be identical to the original examination. The make-up examination must be taken as soon as reasonably possible. If a student does not contact the instructor and receive permission to be late or absent during the regular examination time, the student will receive a “zero” grade for the examination and will automatically fail the course and be dismissed from the PTA Program. All make-up examinations are considered in the 80% average requirement on all written examinations in a PTA course in order to progress in the PTA program.

### **Remediation**

The PTA Program faculty has developed a remediation process for students who fail any examination, for the purpose of assisting students in mastering the content that was missed on the exam. It is required that a student meet with the instructor following the failure of a written and/or lab examination to review the examination in detail, to determine the factors involved in the poor grade, and to determine an action plan to minimize the risk of subsequent failures. The Individual Student Test Item Analysis Form is designed to assist students in analyzing the reasons for poor performance on a written and/or lab examination, therefore completion of this form is required during the remediation process. Following identification of content areas needing further review and other factors that led to the poor grade, the student will complete a remediation plan determined by the instructor for the sole purpose of determining mastery of the content. The original score earned on the exam will be the student’s final exam grade. If the student does not earn a passing score of 80% on the remedial plan, the student will be referred to RCCC tutoring services for additional academic support.

If a student fails a practical examination, remediation and retaking the exam are required. After a personalized remediation plan is established by the PTA Program faculty and completed by the student, the student will retake the practical examination. On a practical exam retake, a student can earn a maximum of an 80%. If a student does not successfully pass the first retake, the student is permitted one additional retake for a total of three exam attempts. Please see the Remediation Plan in the Appendix for specific details.

### **Competency Skills Check-offs and Worksheets**

A Competency Skills Check-off (CSC) is an assessment of a student's ability to demonstrate competence in a PTA skill. Three CSCs will be completed as follows for each skill: Two peer CSCs must first be completed. The results of these two peer CSCs must be documented on the CSC Form for that skill. Students will then have the opportunity to work on any problem areas prior to being tested by a course instructor. The CSCs performed by an instructor will be scheduled with the instructor and performed during open lab times or during scheduled course labs, as time allows. If the CSC is not passed, it must be retaken until successfully completing the skill. There are no limits to the number of times a student can attempt an instructor CSC.

Competency Skills Check-offs contain Critical Safety Elements and Critical Procedures for PTA skills that must be completed in order to pass. Critical Safety Elements are mandatory for the safety of the patient, as well as the PTA. The Critical Procedures are required to ensure that the appropriate treatment/intervention is being delivered. If a student fails any critical safety element or critical procedure, they automatically fail the CSC and must retake it. The critical safety elements are marked with a \* on the CSC Form and the critical procedures are marked with a \*\*.

Students must successfully pass the Competency Skills Check-offs prior to taking the practical exam, which contains the CSC content area. It is the student's responsibility to make sure all CSCs have been completed prior to practical exams. If a student does not have all of the related CSCs completed at the time of the practical exam, the student will receive a failing grade on their first attempt at the practical exam. Students must successfully complete all CSCs within a course to obtain a passing grade in the course.

### **Practical Examinations**

For PTA courses that involve both laboratory and lecture components, both practical examinations and written examinations will be administered. Successful completion of practical examinations is necessary in order to verify that the theory, skill, and application have been learned, and that lecture and laboratory components are appropriately synthesized by the student. Practical examinations ensure that the student is able to competently perform the skills required as a PTA.

Students are required to take all practical examinations as scheduled on the course outlines. The examinations will simulate patient scenarios and interactions as accurately as possible. The instructor will provide clear expectations to the students prior to the practical examination regarding its content and the criteria for successful completion. Criteria for failure include one or more of the following: safety violations, legal or ethical violations, poor skill performance, lack of knowledge, poor communication, or requiring excessive time or cueing. All practical exam expectations and grading criteria will be identified in the exam rubric.

All practical examinations must be taken on the scheduled dates and times. A student may take a practical examination outside of the schedule time but only under extreme circumstances. The instructor MUST be notified prior to the examination or as soon as reasonably possible, and the student must receive permission from the instructor to miss an examination. The make-up examination may or may not be identical to the original examination. The make-up examination must be taken as soon as reasonably possible. If a student does not contact the instructor and receive permission to be late or absent during the regular examination time, the student will receive a “zero” grade for the examination.

A student must “PASS” all Critical Safety Elements (marked with a \*) and Critical Procedures (marked with a \*\*). A minimum score of 80% is required for successful completion of the practical exam. A “FAIL” on any of the Critical Safety Elements or Critical Procedures will result in failure of the practical exam regardless of the total points earned. A student will be allowed only ONE cue from the instructor on a Critical Safety Element or Critical Procedure. If a cue is provided, 5% will be deducted from the overall grade on the practical exam. More than ONE cue will result in failure of the practical exam. Failure to achieve a minimum score of 80% will be considered a failing grade.

Students will have three attempts to pass a practical examination. If a student fails a practical examination on the first attempt, a meeting with the instructor and remediation are required. If a student fails a practical examination on the second attempt, the student will have the opportunity for a third attempt to pass. The maximum grade that can be earned for any practical exam retake is 80%, regardless of the total points earned. If the student fails on the third attempt, the student will receive a “0” for the practical examination, will fail the course, and will not be able to progress in the PTA Program

All practical examinations must be taken and passed to pass each course and for students to be able to progress in the PTA Program. It is imperative that students make all efforts to achieve success on the first attempt. If the course includes additional practical examinations, students will not be permitted to take successive practical reexaminations until the failed examination has been successfully completed. If the practical examination coincides with the completion of the course, a student may receive an “Incomplete” grade and may not begin

successive coursework until the incomplete grade has been resolved. If a clinical education course immediately follows the course, the student will not be permitted to begin the clinical education course until the incomplete grade has been resolved.

### Lab Examinations

For some PTA courses that involve both laboratory and lecture components, lab examinations and written examinations will be administered. Lab examinations ensure that the student is able to competently recall content and perform skills required by a PTA.

Students are required to take all lab examinations as scheduled on the scheduled dates and times. A student may take a lab examination outside of the scheduled time but only under extreme circumstances. The instructor MUST be notified prior to the examination or as soon as reasonably possible, and the student must receive permission from the instructor to miss an examination. The make-up examination may or may not be identical to the original examination. The make-up examination must be taken as soon as reasonably possible. If a student does not contact the instructor and receive permission to be late or absent during the regular examination time, the student will receive a “zero” grade for the examination.

The RCCC Grading Policies: <https://www.rccc.edu/recordsregistration/grading/>

### PTA Program Costs

The table below outlines the primary fees associated with the RCCC PTA Program. Please refer to the RCCC PTA Program Clinical Education Handbook for details on fees that may be associated with clinical education experiences. Students are responsible for any additional fees associated with the PTA Program.

Expenses	Estimated Cost
Textbooks	\$2,070.00 per program
Tuition	\$5,624.00 (\$76.00 per credit)
Lab Fee (including NPTE test prep course fees, liability insurance, NPTE fees, PTA polo shirts, Clinical Management System, APTA membership dues, Castle Branch fees, etc.)	\$310.00 per semester (\$1,550 total)
Admissions Testing – TEAS ATI	\$120.00
Student Activity Fee	\$151.00
Technology Fee	\$180.00
Campus Access Fee	\$100.00
Graduation Fee	\$50.00

**Estimated Total Cost for Program \$9,845.00**

## **Advising and Counseling**

Due to the number of program faculty and clinical education sites, it is necessary to limit the number of students accepted annually into the program to 20. Once accepted into the PTA Program, students will be assigned a PTA faculty member as an advisor. Prior to each semester, the PTA advisors will provide all advising and registration information and materials. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all courses are complete as per the PTA Curriculum Planner. The PTA faculty members are available as needed for any other academic advising. If a PTA student is having any difficulty academically, they are encouraged to talk to the PTA Program faculty to seek guidance and assistance as soon as difficulty arises. Services for tutoring as well as academic and personal counseling are available on campus. The PTA Program faculty want all students to succeed and are more than willing to help. The PTA faculty members provide as much assistance as possible academically, which can include review or answering questions outside of regular classroom or laboratory sessions and providing recommendations for studying and test taking. Dependent on the individual needs of the students, the PTA faculty members may refer students to tutoring services if a student's needs appear to be beyond the expertise or availability of the PTA faculty members.

## **PTA Code of Honor**

Violation of the Code of Honor will not be tolerated by the PTA Program. Please review the Physical Therapist Assistant Code of Honor in the Appendix for details.

All students admitted into the PTA Program are required to read and sign the PTA Code of Honor to participate in the program. Any violation of the Code of Honor will result in disciplinary action and may lead to probation or dismissal.

## **Disciplinary Procedure for Behavioral Violations**

The following procedure outlines the progression of disciplinary action as a result of a behavioral violation. Please note that there are behavioral violations of different severities, and each violation will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Some violations will begin with a written warning, others will warrant immediate probation, and others will warrant immediate dismissal. (See next section, Criteria for Program Probation and Dismissal, for additional details).

For minor behavioral violations, the disciplinary process will proceed as follows:

1. Upon determination of a student's inappropriate conduct, the PTA faculty member who observed or was notified of the conduct will meet with the student to discuss the matter

and inform the student of the specific conduct that is deemed inappropriate. A written warning concerning the inappropriate behavior will be given to the student and a record of the behavior will be placed in the student's program file. In order to prevent further disciplinary action, this inappropriate behavior must not be displayed again throughout the remainder of the PTA program and the student must reach target levels for all areas of the Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool by the end of the semester in which the behavior violation occurred.

2. If the student's inappropriate conduct is repeated at any time during the PTA Program OR the student does not meet the target levels for any area of the Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool at the end of the semester of the initial violation, the student will be placed on formal program probation. Documentation of probation will be provided to the student, placed in the student's file, and sent to the Dean of Health and Education Department and the Vice President of Academic Programs.

At that time, a Probation Plan will be developed by the PTA Program faculty with target dates for elimination of problem behaviors and presence of professional behaviors. The student is required to meet these targets in order to have the probation lifted. It is the student's responsibility to be proactive and seek assistance if needed to meet the expectations of the Probation Plan. If the expectations of the Probation Plan are met by the target dates, probation will be lifted at the end of that semester and upon successful completion of the Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool.

3. Failure to meet the expectations of the Probation Plan by the target date will result in dismissal from the PTA Program.

A student is allowed to be on PTA program probation a maximum of two times while enrolled in the PTA program. A student will be dismissed from the program if he/she is placed on PTA program probation a third time.

### **Criteria for PTA Program Probation and Dismissal**

A student enrolled in the PTA Program will be placed on program probation and subject to dismissal at the discretion of the PTA Program Director in consultation with the PTA Program faculty members in reference to the following violations:

1. Attendance that does not meet the program attendance policy outlined in PTA Student Handbook.
2. Failure to follow the APTA's Core Values for the PT and PTA, and Standards of Ethical Conduct for the PTA, as found in the PTA Student Handbook.
3. Failure to follow the Codes and Policies as found in the PTA Clinical Education Manual.

4. Possession of or use of alcohol or any mood-altering chemical on the premises of RCCC or clinical education sites. This includes attending class, clinical education experiences, or other RCCC-sponsored/related event while intoxicated.
5. Grossly unethical or unprofessional behavior.
6. Gross carelessness in regard to safety of patients or colleagues.
7. Dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism, or theft.
8. Release of confidential information regarding patients, and/or clinical education site personnel or activities.
9. Unauthorized use or removal of supplies, equipment, materials, or related property from RCCC or affiliated sites.

The Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool is one tool used by PTA Program Faculty to measure student behavior and professionalism. Because the Professional Behaviors reflect behaviors necessary for success as a PTA in the clinical environment, failure to demonstrate progress in the Professional Behaviors, or failure to meet specific behavior levels by the defined target dates may result in program probation or dismissal.

The PTA faculty members, as well as the Dean of Health and Education and the Vice President of Academic Programs, as necessary, will address incidents of unprofessional behavior. Incidents will be handled on a case-by-case basis, some of which may result in immediate dismissal (such as academic dishonesty, breaches of confidentiality, and patient abuse).

### **Student Grievances**

It is the policy of the RCCC PTA Program to work with students in finding a fair and just solution to problems that may arise, including grievances, questions, misunderstandings, or discrimination.

If a student has a concern with a course or course instructor, the student is urged to first take their concerns to the instructor of the course in which the problem occurred. If the student and instructor are unable to come to an agreement, the student can then take the concern to the PTA Program Director. If the student and PTA Program Director are unable to come to an agreement, the student may then follow the RCCC procedure for student grievances, which is as follows:

Any student may request a review of any College decision or action alleged to be discriminatory or have a negative effect on the student's enrollment status at Rowan-Cabarrus Community College.

A grievance must be presented, in writing, within 30 days after the action or decision in question. Processing at each step cannot exceed 20 working days; however, the time may be extended by agreement of both parties or by extenuating circumstances as decided by the administrator to whom the grievance is presented. If administrator at each step does not

meet processing time limitations, the grievant may then request higher administrative assistance in obtaining requested relief. If the grievant does not meet the stated time limitations, the process will be terminated and such grievance cannot be resubmitted.

## **Procedure**

1. The student shall first informally discuss the matter in question with the College employee most directly involved unless the issue is a claim of discriminatory harassment. In that case, the student may move directly to the employee's immediate administrator or the Director of Student Conduct.
2. If the student is unable to resolve the matter in question through discussion with the College employee directly involved, the student may file a formal grievance form with the employee's immediate administrator or the Director of Student Conduct. All such grievances shall be in writing and state the basic facts in the case.
3. If the matter is not resolved, the formal appeal may be processed through the employee's supervising administrators in succession until a satisfactory resolution is obtained or until the appeal reaches the appropriate vice president. The vice president or chief officer's decision will be final except in the case of expulsion from the college which requires a final ruling by the president.
4. A student may at any stage of the process consult with the Director of Student Conduct to obtain advice regarding the grievance procedure.

## **Grievance Procedure for Students with Disabilities**

Students who experience a problem and/or feel unfairly treated should attempt to resolve the problem informally with the Counselor of Disability Services. Concerns regarding a specific accommodation will be resolved with the involvement of the student and the appropriate instructor, Program Head, Academic Dean, Academic Vice President, and Chief Operation Officer of Student Success. If a concern cannot be resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student should utilize the Student Grievance process.

## **Request Form**

Please contact Jonathan "JJ" Rowe, Executive Director of Student Success South Campus & Office of Civility/Title IX ([jonathan.rowe@rccc.edu](mailto:jonathan.rowe@rccc.edu), 704-216-3723) for additional information or with any questions.

[Student Grievance and Complaint Form](#)



Student complaints regarding the program should be first addressed to the PTA Program Director. Unresolved complaints or complaints about the PTA Program Director should be directed to the Dean of Health & Education. All complaints will be documented, including the projected outcome, and kept on file at the program facility. No retaliation will occur from the program or college due to a complaint being filed. Complaints regarding Accreditation of this program should be addressed to the Commission for Accreditation for Physical Therapy Education. This Commission is located at 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia, 22305-3085.

## **Student Formal Complaints**

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College defines a formal complaint as a written expression of dissatisfaction with the performance of a college employee, a specific college experience, and/or a college procedure.

Consistent with rules established by the U.S. Department of Education and Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges, Rowan-Cabarrus provides all enrolled and prospective students with contact information for submitting complaints directly to the college.

Rowan-Cabarrus has established specific procedures for certain specific complaints. For example, formal complaints regarding grades are subject to the Grade Appeal Procedure; complaints regarding discrimination are subject to the Student Grievance policy. Students will be expected to initiate their concerns or express their concern in accordance with those specific policies. Specific formal procedures are listed below:

- [Grade Appeal procedure](#)
  - [Grade Appeal form](#)
- [Student Grievance \(including Discrimination\) procedure](#)
  - [Student Grievance \(including Discrimination\) form](#)
- [Financial Aid Appeal – Satisfactory Academic Progress procedure](#)
  - [Financial Aid Appeal – Satisfactory Academic Progress form](#)
- [Financial Aid Appeal – Maximum Time Frame procedure](#)
  - [Financial Aid Appeal – Maximum Time Frame form](#)
- [Campus Code of Conduct Violation \(including Harassment\) procedure](#)
  - [Campus Code of Conduct Violation \(including Harassment\) form](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct \(Title IX\) procedure](#)
  - [Sexual Misconduct \(Title IX\) form](#)

The college expects that most issues (such as those related service, classroom, technology or facilities) will be resolved informally through a discussion between the student and the appropriate faculty or staff member. Should a resolution not be reached, the student must submit a formal written complaint through our online [Student Complaint Form](#).

Generally, students should submit a formal complaint within 30 days after the action that gives rise to the complaint. The time frame may be suspended under exceptional circumstances. The College will work with students toward a satisfactory resolution within established policies, procedures and administrative rules. At a minimum, the College will include written formal complaints as part of a continuous improvement process.

## **Due Process**

Due process procedures are established to guarantee the right of hearing, a presentation of charges and evidence for charges. The procedures are published in the Campus Code of Conduct viewable on the college website and in the online catalog.

If a student perceives a college decision or action to be discriminatory or in violation of their student rights, a grievance may be filed.

## **Outside of Due Process**

Any complaint outside of due process will be presented to the PTA Program Director within one week of occurrence. (Anna Marie Prado, PTA Program Director ([annamarie.prado@rccc.edu](mailto:annamarie.prado@rccc.edu) or (704)-216-7180). An investigation will be conducted by the PTA Program Director and appropriate action will be taken if deemed necessary. Unresolved complaints or complaints about the Program Director should be directed to Dr. Wendy Barnhardt, Dean of Health and Education ([wendy.barnhardt@rccc.edu](mailto:wendy.barnhardt@rccc.edu) or (704) 216-3700). If the complaint involves the PTA Program Director, the Dean of the Health and Education Department will be notified. Investigation and appropriate action will be taken if deemed necessary.

It is recognized that from time to time a patient, healthcare worker, or other party may have a complaint about a PTA student. The complaint should be arbitrated as best as possible among the complainant, student, and clinical education site staff. If a complaint is lodged about a PTA student that is more serious in nature and/or that cannot be successfully resolved, the following process should be followed:

1. The CI notifies the student and the SCCE of the complaint.

2. The SCCE contacts the DCE to inform her of the complaint.
3. The DCE discusses the complaint with the SCCE, CI, student, and complainant as needed to fully understand circumstances of the complaint.
4. The DCE, along with the student, CI, SCCE, and complainant, as needed, resolve the issue.
5. In the event the above parties are unable to resolve the issue and the DCE deems it necessary, the DCE will notify the PTA Program Director.
6. Within one week of notification of the complaint, the PTA Program Director will speak with the individuals involved and attempt to reach resolution on an informal basis.
7. Documentation of the complaint, the ensuing discussion, and resolution will be kept in a locked file in the program office.

No retaliation will occur by either the PTA Program or the college due to a complaint being filed.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal complaint procedure, he or she may appeal to Dr. Wendy Barnhardt, Dean of Health and Education ([wendy.barnhardt@rccc.edu](mailto:wendy.barnhardt@rccc.edu), (704) 216-3700). For this appeal, the complaint should be written. The PTA Program Director will also submit a written statement, detailing the events of the informal procedure, and his or her response to the complaint. These materials should be submitted within two weeks following the informal procedure. After review of the written materials and conferences with each of the involved parties, the Dean of the Health and Education Department will render a decision on the matter within two weeks of receipt of these materials. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint procedure, he or she may appeal, within one week, to the Vice President of Academic Programs who will make a determination within one week of the request for appeal. The complainant may also choose to file a written complaint with Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085.

## **Code of Conduct**

### **Behavior Standards**

The College reserves the right to maintain a safe and orderly educational environment for students and staff. Therefore, when in the judgment of college officials, a student's/patron's conduct disrupts or threatens to disrupt the College Community, appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken to restore and protect the well-being of the College Community. Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with generally accepted standards of scholarship and morality. Community Patrons are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the accepted standards of good citizenship in the state of

North Carolina. The purpose of this Code is not to restrict Student or Patrons Rights, but to protect the rights of individuals in their academic pursuits on the campus.

## 1. Academic Dishonesty

### 1a. Academic Integrity

The College prohibits taking or acquiring possession of any academic material (test information, research papers, notes, etc.) from a member of the College staff or another Student without permission; receiving or giving help during tests; submitting papers or reports presented as the student's original work that are not entirely the student's own; not giving credit for others' work.

### 1b. Network Files

RCCC Network files are provided to students for academic work. These files are not private and are subject to review for compliance with the College's acceptable use policy for technology, the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998, and general copyright law.

## 2. Behavior

### 2a. Indecent Conduct

The College prohibits disorderly, lewd, or indecent conduct, including public physical or verbal action; language commonly considered offensive (not limited to, but including profanity); or distribution of obscene or libelous written or electronic material.

### 2b. Violence

The College prohibits mental, psychological or physical abuse of any person (including sex offenses) on college premises or at college-sponsored or college-supervised functions, including verbal or physical actions that threaten or endanger the health or safety of any such persons or which promote hatred or prejudice. This includes fighting and or other disruptive behaviors, which includes any action or threat of action which endangers the peace, safety or orderly function of the College, its facilities or persons engaged in the business of the College.

### 2c. Harassment

The College prohibits any act, comment, behavior, or clothing which is of a sexually suggestive, harassing, offensive, or intimidating nature. The college prohibits stalking, or behavior which in any way interferes with another Student's rights or an employee's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. (This includes the display of or navigation to pornography or other inappropriate websites and materials.)

## 2d. Disruption

The College prohibits intentional obstruction or interruption of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings or other College activities, including public service functions, and other duly authorized activities on College Premises or at college-sponsored activity sites.

If, in the opinion of College Officials, clothing or behaviors (including gang colors, signs or symbols) are threatening, intimidating or offensive in nature, sanctions may be imposed immediately.

## 2e. Failure to Comply

Refusal to adapt one's behavior to instructions of College Officials is prohibited.

## 3. Use of College Property

### 3a. Purposeful Use of Campus Facilities

The College prohibits loitering without educational purpose or goal; therefore, individuals must be engaged in purposeful acts on campus which meet educational goals or in appropriate recreational and extracurricular activities.

### 3b. Use by Unattended Minors

The College prohibits minors under the age of sixteen (16) from being on the campus unattended. Minors are not allowed in classrooms, labs, shops, learning resource center or other instructional areas without college authorization. Parents and guardians whether enrolled in college or as a community patron, must remain with the minor child at all times. Violators will be asked to leave the premises. Early College students are exempt from this requirement.

### 3c. Theft and Damage

The College prohibits theft of, misuse of, or harm to College Property, or theft of or damage to property of a member of the college Community or a campus visitor on College Premises or at a college function.

### 3d. Occupation and Seizure

The College prohibits occupation or seizure in any manner of College Property, a College facility, or any portion thereof for a use inconsistent with prescribed, customary or authorized use.

### 3e. Presence on College Premises

The College prohibits unauthorized entry upon the College Premises; unauthorized entry into a College facility or a portion thereof which has been restricted in use; unauthorized presence in a college facility after closing hours; or furnishing false information to gain entry on the College Premises or into a College facility.

### 3f. Assembly

The College prohibits participation in or conducting an informal or formal unauthorized gathering in a manner that threatens or causes injury to persons or property or that interferes with free access to, ingress or egress of college facilities, that is harmful, obstructive, or disruptive to the educational process or institutional functions of the College; or remaining at the scene of such an assembly after being asked to leave by a College Official.

### 3g. Fire Alarms

The College prohibits setting off a fire alarm or using or tampering with any fire safety equipment on College Premises or at college-sponsored activity sites, except with reasonable belief in the need for such alarm or equipment. In the event of a fire alarm sounding, Students MUST evacuate the building unless otherwise directed by the College Official.

### 3h. Emergency Phones

The College prohibits the misuse of the Emergency Phones in college hallways in making false reports of emergencies, disturbances, physical injury or illness of students, employees or college visitors requiring attention of campus security or off-campus emergency personnel. Students activating the emergency phone are required to give their full-name, nature of the emergency, exact location of the emergency and stay “on the line” with the College Official until released. Exception: If the individual activating the Emergency Phone believes they are in imminent danger from another person, they should provide as much information as possible before leaving the phone in the connected position.

## 4. Drugs, Alcohol and Other Substances

### 4a. Drugs and Alcohol

Substances referred to under this policy include all illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, and misused legal drugs (both prescription and over the counter). The College prohibits possession or use of alcoholic beverages on College Premises or at college-sponsored or supervised functions (including off-campus functions) unless otherwise permitted by a College Administrator. The College prohibits being in a state of intoxication on college

premises or at College-sponsored or supervised functions (including off-campus functions) or in a College – owned vehicle. The college prohibits possession, use, sale or distribution of any controlled substance, illegal drugs, or drug paraphernalia except as expressly permitted by law. Any influence which may be attributed to the use of drugs or of alcoholic beverages shall not be in any way limit the responsibility of the individual for the conduct or consequences of his/her actions.

#### 4b. Tobacco and Food

The College prohibits eating and/or drinking in classrooms, shops, and labs or other unauthorized areas, unless otherwise permitted by College Officials.

Use of tobacco is prohibited by students, staff, faculty and visitors. For the purposes of this procedure, tobacco is defined as any type of tobacco product including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, pipes, hookahs, smokeless or spit tobacco or snuff. Electronic devices that simulate smoking and that emit a vapor, including electronic cigarettes, cigars, and pipes are prohibited. The College prohibits use of tobacco products on campus in college owned vehicles or in properties rented for the purpose of college use.

The sale or free distribution of tobacco products, including merchandise, on campus or at college-sponsored events is prohibited. The College prohibits use of tobacco products on campus in college owned vehicles or in properties rented for the purpose of college use.

#### 5. Weapons

The College prohibits possession, storage, use or threat of use of firearms, weapons, ammunition, incendiary devices or explosives on College Premises or in personal vehicles parked on College Premises or at college-sponsored activity sites. This also includes unauthorized use of any instrument capable of inflicting serious bodily injury to any person. Possession or use of firearms or other weapons on college premises for instructional purposes must have the prior approval of the Vice President of Academic Programs. North Carolina General Statute 14-269.22 makes it unlawful for any person to possess or carry, whether openly or concealed, any gun, rifle, pistol or any other weapon of like kind as defined by the statute. That statute overrides the North Carolina concealed weapons act. Violation of this regulation will result in immediate and permanent expulsion, exclusion from College Premises and arrest.

#### 6. Use of Technology

##### 6a. Damage and Destruction

Destruction of or harm to equipment, software, or data belonging to the College or to others is considered unacceptable usage and is subject to disciplinary action. This may include altering, downloading, or installing software on college computers, tampering with computer

hardware or software configuration, improper access to the College's network, and disconnection of College computers or devices. Refer to the College Internet and Network Services Policy.

#### 6b. Electronic Devices

Unless otherwise permitted by College Officials, the College prohibits use of electronic devices in classrooms, labs and other instructional, event, or support facilities. Such devices include, but are not limited to cell phones, texting devices, beepers, walkie talkies, cameras, iPod, MP3 players or other electronic devices which may cause unnecessary disruption to the teaching/learning process. All electronic devices must be turned off in the classroom, labs or other instructional support areas. Cameras, camera phones or other visual recording devices may not be used in restrooms, locker rooms, changing facilities or other areas where personal privacy is a reasonable expectation.

#### 7. Gambling and Gaming

The College prohibits gambling in any format on the campus. Rowan-Cabarrus also prohibits competitive, unstructured competitive gaming which fosters disruptive behavior. This includes participating on College Premises or at college-sponsored activity sites in an activity where making a set wager or playing for money or material is involved.

#### 8. Forgery

The College prohibits forgery, alteration, duplication, or misuse of college documents, records, computers or instruments of identification with intent to deceive.

#### 9. Financial Irresponsibility

The College prohibits failure to pay College-levied charges, fees or fines, failure to repay College-funded loans, the passing of worthless checks to College Officials or any fraudulent action when transacting business with the College or third-party agent contracted by the college to provide services for students (i.e. bookstore, food service, e-cashiering).

#### 10. Disciplinary Probation

The College prohibits violation of the terms of disciplinary probation during the period of probation. Additional violations of any College regulation during the probationary period will result in immediate review for additional sanctions.

#### 11. Violation of RCCC Policy, Rule or Regulation



The College prohibits violation of any Rowan-Cabarrus policy, rule or regulation published in hard copy or available electronically on the Rowan-Cabarrus website.

## 12. Violation of Law

The College prohibits violation of any federal, state or local law.

### **Disciplinary Actions & Sanctions**

Violation of the Campus Code of Conduct, or of RCCC policies, or of North Carolina and federal laws while on campus or while off campus when participating in activities sponsored by Rowan-Cabarrus, subjects violators to appropriate sanctions. Charges that a student has violated behavior standards will be investigated by the Executive Director of the Office of Civility (or designee) to determine whether the charges are significant or whether they may be dropped or informally resolved. Charges that a student has violated an academic standard will be investigated by the appropriate Academic Dean to determine if the charges are significant, whether the charges will be dropped or informally resolved. Charges that a community patron has violated the Campus Code of Conduct will be investigated by the Executive Director of the Office of Civility; the Chief Officer, College Environment; or the Director of Campus and Public Safety to determine if the charges are significant, inform the patron and appropriate administrative unit of any restrictions imposed and notify campus security of any additional action to be taken.

### **Procedures for Disciplinary Actions**

This section describes the College disciplinary procedures in response to violations of the Campus Code of Conduct. The Executive Director of the Office of Civility (or designee) responsible for implementing student disciplinary procedures under the Chief Officer, College Environment.

**A. Disposition of Disciplinary Cases:** The following section outlines the procedure for handling student disciplinary cases in accordance with due process and justice.

**1. Charges:** Any member of the College community may file charges with the Executive Director of the Office of Civility (or Dean) in the case of Academic Integrity) against any student for violation of the College regulations. The individual(s) making the charge must complete a charge form stating:

1. The name(s) of the student(s) involved
2. The alleged provision of the Campus Code of Conduct, college regulation, state or federal law that has been violated.
3. The date, time and location of the incident
4. The names of students or staff directly involved or who witnessed the infractions, and

5. The actions taken by the complainant related to the incident.
6. The desired solution(s).

The completed charge form (written or electronic) with the printed name and signature of the person filing the charge should be forwarded directly to the Executive Director of the Office of Civility (or Dean)

**2. Investigation and Decision:** Within five (5) business days after the charge is filed, the Executive Director of the Office of Civility (or Dean) shall complete a preliminary investigation of the charge, and the schedule a meeting with the student(s) alleged to be in violation. After meeting with the student(s) to review the alleged infraction(s) one of the following actions will be taken:

1. Drop the charge(s)
2. Impose a sanction consistent with those listed below
3. Refer the student(s) to a College Office or community agency for services

**3. Notifications:** The decision of the Executive Director of the Office of Civility (or Dean) shall be presented to the student in writing or mailed within five (5) business days. In instances where the student cannot be reached to schedule an appointment or where the student refuses to cooperate, the Executive Director of the Office of Civility (or Dean) shall send a certified letter to the student's last known address providing the student with a list of charges, the decision, and instructions governing the appeals process.

**B. Immediate Interim Suspension** is a procedure which can be invoked by any College Official for any student who has been involved in conduct that threatens the health or well-being of any member of the College community or disrupts the function or good order of the College or College Premises. The College Official must advise the student that failure to cease and desist will result in immediate interim suspension. If the student fails to cease and desist, the College Official may invoke the interim suspension until disciplinary proceedings are completed. College Officials may contact College security officers to have the student removed from campus.

Once interim suspension has been invoked by a College Official, a written report must be filed with the Executive Director of the Office of Civility. The report must detail the individual(s) involved and the nature of the infraction with supporting information including other students or employees who observed the incident. The report must be filed immediately, but not more than two (2) working days after the incident. Incidents in the classroom should be reported to the program head and dean of the division by the instructor involved.

The Executive Director of the Office of Civility will notify the student in writing of the interim suspension and the reasons for the suspension. The notice will include a description of disciplinary procedures including the time, date, and location of any subsequent hearing. The

procedural timeline outlined in a subsequent section will be followed by the College to resolve the pending matter.

Interim suspension may result in continued exclusion (beyond the incident date) from class and or other privileges including presence on College Property or College sponsored activities until a final decision has been made concerning the alleged conduct violation.

### **Disciplinary Sanctions**

1. **Verbal Warning** (reprimand): A verbal communication given to the student/patron by a College Agent to cease a behavior or action deemed inappropriate or possibly a violation of the Campus Code of Conduct. The issuing College Official should document the issuing of a verbal warning, including the incident and the student/patron name.
2. **Written Warning** (reprimand): A written communication which gives official notice to the student/patron regarding the offense noted and that any subsequent offense of the Campus Code of Conduct will carry heavier penalties because of the prior infraction.
3. **Interim Suspension**: Exclusion from class or other privileges or activities as set forth in the notice, until a final decision has been made concerning the alleged violation.
4. **General Probation**: A minor disciplinary offense may result in this penalty which allows the student to show the willingness and capacity to observe the Campus Code of Conduct without further penalty. IF a second penalty occurs during the probationary period further action can be taken. The probationary period can be in effect for no more than 2 academic terms.
5. **Restrictive Probation**: A major disciplinary offense or series of violations may result in a loss of good standing and a matter of official record (transcript notation) denoted by this sanction. Restrictive probation limits the student's/patron's activity on the campus and within the college community. The student cannot be initiated into any local or national organization, receive any college award or recognitions, occupy a position of leadership or travel with any college student organization. Further, the College may restrict the student's/patron's access to campus or use of campus services and facilities. Restrictive probation is for a period of not less than 2 academic terms. Any violation of Restrictive Probation orders may result in immediate suspension.
6. **Restitution**: Paying for damage, misuse, destruction, or loss of property belonging to the College, College personnel, student, or contract agent for the college.
7. **Loss of Academic Credit or Grade**: Imposed as result of academic dishonesty.
8. **Withholding grade reports**, diplomas, right to register or participate in graduation ceremonies: Imposed when financial obligations are not met.
9. **Suspension**: Exclusion from class(es) or all other privileges or activities of the College for a specified period of time. Reserved for offenses which warrant discipline more severe than probation or for repeated misconduct. Students receive this sanction

must get specific written permission from the Director of Student Conduct, or Chief Officer, College Environment, before returning to campus. Notification of suspension may be recorded on the student's official transcript of suspension period.

10. **Expulsion:** Dismissing a student/patron from campus for an indefinite period. Loss of student/patron status means that the individual will not be permitted on the College property, may not register for any course (basic skills, curriculum, continuing education, occupational or corporate) and may not participate as a citizen in any college sponsored event. The individual may be readmitted to the College only with the approval of the Chief Officer, College Environment, Vice President of Academic Programs, or the College President. Notification of expulsion may be recorded on the student's official transcript for the expulsion period.

### **Appeal of Disciplinary Sanctions**

The disciplinary decision of the Executive Director of the Office of Civility, or Academic Dean must be presented to the student in writing within five (5) working days after the charge is investigated. If a disciplinary sanction is imposed, the student may appeal the decision as follows:

1. The student must submit the appeal in writing within five (5) working days to the Executive Director of the Office of Civility. The appeal must include the student's reason for appeal, mitigating circumstances or evidence which needs to be considered. The Chief Officer, College Environment (or designee) and respective Dean will render a decision and will notify the student of the decision within five (5) working days of receipt of the appeal.
2. Further appeals of disciplinary sanctions must be made in writing within five (5) working days of receipt of the Executive Director's decision. Appeals are made to the Student Appeals Committee through the Director of Student Advocacy Services. The Student Appeals Committee consists of 2 faculty, 2 staff and 1 student who render a decision based on the written appeal submitted.
3. The decision of the Student Appeals Committee will be submitted in writing to the student within five (5) days. The decision of the Student Appeals Committee is final except in the case of expulsion.
4. Final appeal regarding expulsion may be issued to the President within five (5) working days of receipt of the Student Appeals Committee decision to support the disciplinary sanction of expulsion. The President may solicit evidence and information regarding the student case, appeal proceedings, recommendations of the Student Appeals Committee and take any other steps deemed appropriate before rendering a decision as soon as possible but not more than ten (10) days from the date received. In the event that a suspension or expulsion is issued, campus security will be notified.

## **Appeal of Financial Obligations to the College**

Students who want to appeal disciplinary action related to violation of financial indebtedness to the college must do so through the Associate Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Business Services until the matter is submitted to local and state legal authorities.

## Conditions for Readmission or Re-entry to the PTA Program

The following outlines the specific conditions that must be met for a student to be readmitted to the program or for a student to re-enter the program. A student is eligible for readmission or re-entry into the PTA program one time only.

**Reapply** – completing the MAR and Point System Scorecard to compete for a seat in the PTA Program

**Readmission** – Earning a seat in the PTA Program based on the Point System Scorecard

**Re-entry** – returning to the PTA Program to join original or future cohort without having to reapply and compete for a seat

1. The student must meet all college and program admission requirements.
2. When reapplying to a new cohort, the student must follow all current procedures.
3. The PTA Program Committee will determine the appropriateness for readmission or re-entry on a case- by-case basis. Factors such as the student's status at the time of exit from the program, reason for program withdrawal or dismissal, justification for readmission or re-entry, adequacy of program space, and staffing levels will be considered.
4. The student must follow the policies and procedures of the program, which are consistent with the academic year he/she has readmitted or re-entered.
5. All courses in the PTA curriculum must be completed within a three-year period from the original date of entry into the program for all students, including those who re-enter the PTA Program. If a student reapplies and is admitted, the student's three-year maximum starts over.
6. A student is eligible for readmission or re-entry into the PTA program one time only.
7. The student is responsible for maintaining the ability to satisfactorily perform all previously learned PTA skills and satisfactorily retain all previously learned PTA content from the time of original program admission. Demonstration of satisfactory skill performance and satisfactory information recall will be required prior to re-entry into the program. This is demonstrated by the student passing a Comprehensive Written Exam and Comprehensive Practical Exam representing all skills and content learned in the PTA courses the student had passed prior to re-entry.\*
8. If the content of any course is different from when the student initially took the course, the student will be required to retake the course in full.
9. In the event of a significant change in the PTA Program Plan of Study that affects a readmitted or re-entered student's ability to complete all PTA courses within the three-year requirement, the PTA Program Committee will evaluate this case

individually and determine the appropriateness for readmission/re-entry and an appropriate course of study for that student.

Students are not permitted readmission or re-entry into the PTA Program in the following conditions:

1. If a student has been dismissed due to a confirmed violation of the college's academic integrity policy, readmission or re-entry into the program is not allowed.
2. No student will be readmitted or allowed to re-enter who receives a "D" in a didactic PTA course or science course while in the PTA Program.

\* If a student wishes to re-enter into the PTA Program according to the guidelines outlined above, there are decisions the student will need to make prior to re-entry.

### **Waiving the Comprehensive Exams**

Per the policy above, the student is required to pass a comprehensive written and comprehensive practical exam that covers all PTA course content from the courses the student had passed prior to re-entry. The requirement to take these exams can be waived if the student completes one of the two options listed below.

The PTA Program faculty **strongly recommends** that the student choose one of the two options below to allow the student to relearn and adequately recall the course content learned many months prior when the student was dismissed from the program. In addition, these options allow the student to reintegrate into the new cohort and benefit from the support provided by being a full participant in the new class of students/activities.

The two options that can allow the student to waive **all or part** of the comprehensive written and practical exam requirements are:

1. The student can register for, pay for, and retake any or all of the PTA Program courses he/she passed up to the time of dismissal. In order to waive the comprehensive written and practical exam requirement, the student must successfully pass any and all aspects of the course(s) he/she is retaking per the current syllabus and current program guidelines. If the student chooses to retake some but not all of the previously passed courses, he/she is still required to successfully pass a comprehensive written and practical exam (if both are applicable) from the courses he/she chose not to retake in order to re-entering into the program.
2. The student can pay for and audit any or all of the PTA Program courses he/she passed up to the time of dismissal. In order to waive the comprehensive written and practical exam

requirement, the student must successfully pass any and all aspects of the course(s) he/she is auditing per the current syllabus and current program guidelines. If the student chooses to audit some but not all of the previously passed courses, he/she is still required to successfully pass a comprehensive written and practical exam (if both are applicable) from the courses he/she chose not to audit in order to re-enter into the program.

## **Readmission/Re-entry Policy**

At any point during progression through the five semesters of the PTA Program, a student may be unable to progress due to unsatisfactory academic performance.

The options available to a student who wants to return to the program vary based on the semester in which the student was dismissed from the program/what course was unsatisfactory. The following options are available to a student who wishes to return to the PTA Program after unsatisfactory academic performance in PTA course.

### **First Semester\***

*Option 1:* The student can take a comprehensive written and practical exam covering material from all PTA courses the student previously passed. The comprehensive exams would be given the January following the student's original entry into the program, just prior to the start of spring semester courses.

- A. If the student passes both the comprehensive written and practical exam with a minimum score of 80%, then the student will retake only the unsuccessful course. The student would become a member of the new cohort of students that starts that spring semester.
- B. If the student does not pass either the comprehensive written or practical exam with a minimum score of 80%, the student has the option to join the next January cohort and take all PTA courses. The student does not have to compete for a seat in the new cohort. The student pays for all courses.

*Option 2:* The student can return to the PTA Program the next January and take all PTA courses, including those previously passed, without taking the comprehensive exams. The student would become a member of the next new cohort of students. The student pays for all courses, including any that the student previously passed. This option applies to the next January start of the PTA Program.



## **Second Semester\***

*Option 1:* The student can take a comprehensive written and practical exam covering material from all PTA courses the student passed. The comprehensive exams would be given the January following the student's original entry into the program, just prior to the start of spring semester courses.

- A. If the student passes both the comprehensive written and practical exam with a minimum score of 80%, then the student will retake only the failed course. The student would become a member of the new cohort of students that starts that spring semester.
- B. If the student does not pass either the comprehensive written and practical exam with a minimum score of 80%, the student has the option to join the next January cohort and take all PTA courses. The student does not have to compete for a seat in the new cohort. The student pays for all courses.

*Option 2:* The student can choose to take the comprehensive written and practical exams the April following the unsuccessful course.

- A. If the student passes both the comprehensive written and practical exam with a minimum score of 80%, then the student will retake only the failed course the following fall semester. The student would become a member of the new cohort of students.
- B. If the student does not pass either the comprehensive written or practical exam with a minimum score of 80%, The student can choose to reapply to the PTA Program. The student would be required to compete for a seat into a future cohort and must submit a point system score card for ranking. The student must pay for all PTA courses, including any that the student previously passed.

*Option 3:* The student can choose to reapply to the PTA Program during the next application cycle (or any future application cycle). The student would be required to compete for a seat and must submit a point system score card for ranking. The student must pay for all PTA courses, including any that the student previously passed.

## **Third or Fourth Semester\***

*Option 1:* The student can choose to take the comprehensive written and practical exams prior to the semester they would re-enter.

- A. If the student passes both the comprehensive written and practical exam with a minimum score of 80%, then the student will retake only the failed course(s).

- B. If the student does not pass either the comprehensive written or practical exam with a minimum score of 80%, the student can choose to reapply to the PTA Program. The student would be required to compete for a seat into a future cohort and must submit a point system score card for ranking. The student must pay for all PTA courses, including any that the student previously passed.

*Option 2:* The student can choose to reapply to the PTA Program during the next application cycle, or any future application cycle. The student would be required to compete for a seat and must submit a point system score card for ranking. The student must pay for all PTA courses, including any that the student previously passed.

### **Clinical Education**

A student may also be unable to progress due to unsatisfactory performance in a clinical course.

The options available to a student who wants to continue in the program vary based on the which clinical course was unsuccessful. The following options are available to a student who wishes to return/continue in the PTA Program after unsatisfactory academic performance in a clinical course.

#### **First Clinical (PTA 180)**

If a student does not successfully complete the first 4-week clinical, there are three primary steps the student must take to re-enter the PTA Program:

1. Remediation
2. Retake PTA 180
3. Comprehensive written and practical exam

#### **Remediation**

The student will work with the DCE, Program Director, and the Clinical Instructor to identify a remediation plan for the unsuccessful clinical course. This may or may not include extending the clinical experience at the same site.

The student must successfully complete all aspects of the remediation plan to be eligible to retake PTA 180 and progress in the program.

If the student successfully completes the remediation plan, the DCE will pursue a site for the student to retake the course. The timing and location of the retake are at the DCE's discretion.

If the student does not successfully complete the remediation plan, the student is dismissed from the program with the option to reapply during any future application

cycle. The student would be required to compete for a seat in the program and submit a point score card for ranking.

### **Retake PTA 180**

If the student successfully completes the clinical course retake, the student will take a comprehensive written and practical exam to demonstrate mastery of content from all didactic courses.

If the student does not successfully complete the retake of the clinical course, the student is dismissed from the program with the option to reapply during any future application cycle. The student would be required to compete for a seat in the program and submit a point score card for ranking.

### **Comprehensive Written & Practical Exam**

If the student passes the comprehensive written and practical exam with a minimum score of 80%, the student will re-enter the PTA Program in the next summer semester to continue with the remaining didactic and clinical courses required for graduation.

If the student does not pass the comprehensive written or practical exam with a minimum score of 80%, the student is dismissed from the program with the option to reapply during any future application cycle. The student would be required to compete for a seat in the program and submit a point score card for ranking.

### **Final Clinicals (PTA 260A and 260B)**

Remediation of a final clinical course: The student will work with the DCE, Program Director, and the Clinical Instructor to identify a remediation plan for the unsuccessful clinical course. This may or may not include extending the clinical experience at the same site.

The student must successfully complete all aspects of the remediation plan to be eligible to retake PTA 260 A or B.

While completing the remediation plan, the student is permitted to take PTA 270 and PTA 280 along with their original cohort. These courses would be offered asynchronously and online. The student would be responsible for successful completion of both courses to progress in the program.

If the student successfully completes the remediation plan, the DCE will pursue a site for the student to retake the course. The timing and location of the retake are at the DCE's discretion.

If the student does not successfully complete the remediation plan, the student is dismissed from the program with the option to reapply during any future application

cycle. The student would be required to compete for a seat in the program and submit a point score card for ranking.

If the student successfully completes the clinical course retake, the student will continue with the next clinical course or progress to graduation in the case of PTA 260B.

If the student does not successfully complete the retake of the clinical course, the student is dismissed from the program with the option to reapply during any future application cycle. The student would be required to compete for a seat in the program and submit a point score card for ranking.

\*Special situations may arise that affects a student's progress in the PTA Program and the re-admittance to the PTA Program. The PTA Program Committee reserves the right to evaluate these cases individually and determine the appropriateness for readmission and an appropriate course of study for that student.

\*\*Not progressing due to non-academic performance: please refer to the Criteria for PTA Program Probation and Dismissal and Conditions for Readmission to the PTA Program.

## **Field Trips and Off-campus Laboratory Sessions**

At times within the PTA Program, students and faculty may travel off campus for department-related field trips and off-campus laboratory sessions. The following procedures apply for off-campus experiences:

1. All students must complete the "Rowan-Cabarrus Community College Student Acknowledgment of Behavior Standards for Field Trips and Other Off-Campus College-Sponsored Activities" form prior to attending the field trip or off-campus session.
2. Prior to the off-campus activities, all students must complete forms that will include emergency contact information, relevant medical conditions and medications, and a waiver absolving RCCC of responsibility for any adverse event occurring during the course of a field trip or off-campus event. The forms and medical information will be maintained by the PTA Program adhering to applicable privacy and confidentiality policies.
3. All RCCC and PTA Program Policies and Procedures are applicable during the field trip or off-campus event.
4. PTA Program faculty will accompany and supervise students participating in all group off-campus program experiences, except for part-time and full-time clinical experiences and when students are fulfilling requirements for community service and their service-learning projects.

## **Transfer into RCCC PTA Program**

The RCCC PTA Program does not accept transfer students.

## **Transfer from RCCC PTA Program**

Students considering transferring to a different program either before the PTA Program is completed or after its completion are encouraged to meet with the PTA Program Director. No specific agreements exist between the RCCC PTA Program and other programs, but the Program Director may be able to provide general information or contact information for other programs.

## **Withdrawal**

Students considering withdrawal from the program should discuss the matter with the PTA Program Director and/or their academic advisor. Students need to follow RCCC policies and procedures regarding program and course withdrawal, which can be found in the RCCC Student Handbook.

## **Career Placement**

PTA job openings will be posted in the PTA Laboratory for student review.

A job placement service is available for Rowan-Cabarrus Community College students and alumni in the student services office at both campuses. The director of job placement and faculty keep in touch with area businesses and industries so that they will be aware of job opportunities in the various fields taught at the college.

The purpose of the job placement service is to help students establish contact with prospective employers and present qualifications for employment. Job-seeking skills, resume writing and interviewing skills are offered in an individual and small group setting. The responsibility for getting the job rests entirely with the individual. Companies and other organizations that wish to consider graduates of Rowan-Cabarrus are invited to call or write the Student Services Office. Interviews with prospective graduates are generally arranged on the campus during the Spring Semester and Summer Term.

A job fair is held each spring in March. The fair features employers from Rowan County, Cabarrus County and surrounding counties. Whether students are seeking a job or just looking for information about jobs and careers, students are encouraged to attend.

The R3 Center visits both workforce solutions sites on Wednesdays.

- The Rowan County NCWorks Career Center is located at 1904 South Main Street, Salisbury, NC 704-637-7529
- The Cabarrus County NCWorks Career Center is located at 2275 Kannapolis Hwy., Concord, NC 704-786-3183

For more information on job seeking resources visit the [NCWorks website](#).

## **Facilities and Services**

### **Standard Precautions and Potential Health Risks**

It is of primary concern to RCCC and the PTA Program to keep students as safe as possible. Safety regarding appropriate PTA skills and activities are covered in depth in the first semester of the PTA Program, and again in the individual courses throughout the curriculum. Physical therapist assistant students will work in a variety of healthcare settings during clinical education experiences. Students will be handling patients who may place them at risk for disease. To limit the potential health risks to both the student and the patient, students are required to follow the Standard Precautions and all safety standards as discussed in the courses. Failure to follow guidelines set forth by RCCC and the PTA Program can result in disciplinary action, and/or dismissal from the PTA Program.

### **PTA Laboratory and Study Areas**

Much time will be needed outside of scheduled class and laboratory sessions for studying and completing assignments in order to successfully complete the PTA Program. Students are always permitted to study either individually or in groups in the library study areas, cafeteria, or other common usage campus locations. Group study rooms are located in the library and may be reserved by students. Please contact the library for details. The PTA laboratory may be utilized for study when there are no other scheduled activities in the room. The PTA Lab can be used for practicing PTA skills, peer competencies check-offs, and for skill practice with faculty. An open lab schedule, stating when the lab will be available for students with and without faculty present, will be posted in the laboratory and emailed to students at the beginning of each semester. When students are practicing skills and activities either individually or in groups, only those skills and activities in which there has been formal instruction may be practiced. Therapeutic modalities excluding superficial heat and cold may not be practiced unless a PTA faculty member is present onsite. Models or equipment may be removed from the laboratory for practice in a classroom only with permission of the PTA faculty members. Models and equipment may not be borrowed overnight and may not be removed from campus. The PTA Program considers use of modalities, equipment, and models a privilege and not a right, and reserves the right to withhold the usage of modalities, equipment, or models if they are removed without permission, stolen, damaged, or misused. It is expected that the lab will be maintained in a safe and orderly fashion. Everyone must replace equipment in its proper location and maintain neatness and cleanliness at all times.

## **Food and Drink in Laboratory and Study Areas**

No food or drinks are allowed in the laboratories and study areas except for bottled drinks or containers with spill-proof lids.

## **Tutoring Center**

The Tutoring Center is located in the library on North Campus. It serves as a resource for students who want to improve their academic performance. The Tutoring Center provides a variety of student services including individual and group tutoring, assistance with improving study and communication skills.

## **Library**

The RCCC library has a variety of holdings appropriate for the PTA Program. Online access to many physical therapy and other medical journals is available. The library also has subscriptions of several physical therapy journals for student review.

## **Computer Needs**

Access to a reliable, up-to-date computer is required for the completion of the PTA Program. If a student is purchasing a personal computer for use in the program, the following specifications are strongly encouraged: Computer and processor: 1 gigahertz (GHz) or faster x86-bit or x64-bit processor with SSE2; Memory: 2 GB RAM; Hard disk: 3 GB available disk space, and Windows 10. RCCC provides students with access to purchase computers at an affordable price and that can be covered by financial aid dollars. Also available to students through RCCC is a free download of Microsoft Office products.

RCCC utilizes Blackboard as its course management system. PTA course syllabi are available on Blackboard as well as posting grades, course materials and announcements. Computer access is available in the library and in other computer labs throughout the college. If you have concerns, please discuss your concerns with the PTA faculty members.

## **Student Records and Examination Copies**

The PTA Program maintains files on all PTA students, which include department/student forms, consent forms, waivers of liability, contracts, and correspondence. These files are



stored in locked file cabinets in the PTA Program Director's office. Students may review the contents of their file during the PTA Program Director's posted office hours. Information will be maintained for one year after graduation to assist faculty in providing employment references for students. After one year the files will be destroyed.

Copies of completed midterm and final exams will be kept in locked file cabinets in faculty offices. Students will not be allowed to keep copies of completed midterm or final exams. Prior to final exams, faculty will schedule a review session for students during which student test files will be available for review. This review will be proctored by a faculty member and students will not be allowed to leave the room with their test file.

## **Disabilities – Office of Accessibility**

### **Policies**

The Office of Accessibility at Rowan-Cabarrus is offered to assist students with disabilities in achieving their educational and vocational goals and to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The college's goal is to make RCCC accessible for all students. In order to minimize the effects of a student's disability on his/her classroom performance, a reasonable accommodation or adjustment is provided as long as an accommodation or adjustment does not alter a published course competency or course standard. Services are provided based on documentation provided by the student and the individual's particular needs and circumstances.

### **Mission**

It is the mission of the Office of Accessibility for students with disabilities to have equal access to learning at Rowan-Cabarrus Community College. Believing that students with disabilities can better advocate for their own needs with greater success, we strive to empower students at every step.

### **Disability Services Counselors**

For additional information about the Office of Accessibility, feel free to email us ([oa@rccc.edu](mailto:oa@rccc.edu)) and someone will be in touch with you.

North Campus  
Candra Stallings

### **Instructor Notification of Accessible Services**

Instructor notification is not automatic and must be initiated by the student. Following class registration, the student must request an accommodation notification form through disability services. The student will then deliver the Accommodation Notification to each course instructor. The student must obtain the instructor's signature, provide a copy for the instructor, and return the completed form to the Office of Accessibility. Accommodation will not be in effect until the completed form is returned.

### **Equipment**

Students are often given assignments that require the use of equipment or computers without direct faculty supervision. This use may occur in the PTA lab, the library, or in another location at RCCC. Care of this equipment is essential and students are requested to leave the equipment in good repair. If problems arise during the use of equipment, it should be reported immediately to a PTA Program faculty member. Students may not remove equipment from RCCC under any circumstances.

All electrical equipment owned and used by the PTA Program will be annually inspected and labeled by qualified biomedical personnel.

A qualified biomedical engineer will be scheduled to visit annually. The following will be performed at that time: equipment testing and calibration, labeling that verifies testing and calibration, documentation of testing results, repair as needed.

Non-electrical equipment (treatment tables, wheelchairs, crutches, etc.) will be inspected annually by the PTA Program Faculty prior to the start of the Spring Semester. Repairs will be made or arranged by the program as needed.

Any real or potential equipment safety concerns discovered by faculty or students will be labeled and taken out of use until repaired or replaced.

## **Program Policies and Procedures**

### **Professional Behaviors**

Although much time and effort within the PTA Program is dedicated to knowledge and skill acquisition, it is equally necessary for success to develop appropriate professionalism. Professional behavior by students is expected at all times. Students are expected to follow professional standards when in the classroom, laboratory and clinical settings. The guidelines for these standards are listed here and are also available in the Appendix.

#### **1. APTA Core Values for the Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant**

The core values guide the behaviors of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants to provide the highest quality of physical therapist services. These values imbue the scope of physical therapist and physical therapist assistant activities. The core values retain the physical therapist as the person ultimately responsible for providing safe, accessible, cost-effective, and evidence-based services; and the physical therapist assistant as the only individual who assists the physical therapist in practice, working under the direction and supervision of the physical therapist.

#### **2. Values-based Behaviors for the PTA Self-Assessment Tool**

This self-assessment tool is intended to: 1) increase awareness about the values-based behaviors; and 2) provide a format for documenting the frequency with which he or she demonstrates the eight values-based behaviors on sample indicators (behaviors not intended to be an exhaustive list).

#### **3. American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant**

The Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant (Standards of Ethical Conduct) delineate the ethical obligations of all physical therapist assistants as determined by the House of Delegates of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). The Standards of Ethical Conduct provide a foundation for conduct to which all physical therapist assistants shall adhere.

#### **4. APTA Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant**

This Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant (Guide) is intended to serve physical therapist assistants in interpreting the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant (Standards) of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA).

## 5. Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool

The intent of the Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool is to identify and describe the repertoire of professional behaviors deemed necessary for success in the practice of physical therapy. This Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool is intended to represent and be applied to student growth and development in the classroom and the clinic.

“Professional Behaviors” are assessed throughout the PTA Program curriculum. PTA Program faculty will assess the Professional Behaviors listed below once per semester, with students also performing a self-assessment once per semester.

### **Expected Professional Behavior levels are:**

- a. End of Semester I: All Professional Behaviors at least beginning level
- b. End of Semester II: A minimum of 50% of Professional Behaviors at intermediate level or higher
- c. End of Semester III: All Professional Behaviors at least intermediate level
- d. End of Semester IV: All Professional Behaviors at entry level

Faculty will provide both oral and written feedback regarding professional behaviors each semester. Copies of this feedback will be placed in the student’s file. Students are expected to change unsatisfactory behaviors after receiving feedback from faculty. If a student is not demonstrating professional behaviors at an appropriate level, a plan for improvement may be developed by faculty with participation and input from the student. Identified deficits in professional behavior with no improvement may result in program academic probation or dismissal.

The PTA Program also believes that professionalism involves classroom and laboratory attendance and engagement. It is not enough to only be present for classroom, laboratory, or clinical sessions. Students who portray an attitude of disinterest, disengagement, or disrespect often have difficulty meeting classroom, laboratory, and/or clinical objectives and could potentially have difficulty attaining or maintaining employment.

The PTA faculty members, as well as the Dean of the Health and Education Department as necessary, will address incidents of unprofessional behavior. Incidents will be handled on a case-by-case basis, some of which may result in immediate dismissal (such as academic dishonesty, breaches of confidentiality, or patient abuse). Others may require an action plan or remediation as determined by the instructor. Students with multiple incidents of unprofessional behavior will be dismissed from the PTA Program.

## **Unprofessional Conduct Observed Policy (UCO Policy)**

The PTA Program faculty holds professionalism as a critical skill and necessary component of successful completion of the PTA Program, as well as becoming a competent and employable PTA. The Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool, the Core Values for the Physical Therapist and the Physical Therapist Assistant Assistant, the APTA Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant, and the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant are all excellent resources used by CAPTE and the PTA Program to guide the expectations of students as they enter, progress, and graduate from the program.

While these resources identify behaviors that must be demonstrated by students, there are behaviors that must not be demonstrated by students in order to develop and maintain the levels of professionalism required by the profession. This policy outlines examples and categories of unprofessional behavior and details the program response to each demonstration of unprofessional behavior by a PTA student. This policy is in effect for each student from the time of original enrollment in the program through graduation. Each observation of an unprofessional behavior is documented as a violation (see below) and each violation is maintained in the student's record throughout his/her time in the program.

The following list identifies examples and categories of behaviors that must not be demonstrated at any time during the PTA Program. This list provides representative examples of behaviors; however, it is not intended to be an exhaustive and all-inclusive list of all possible behaviors that must not be demonstrated by students and physical therapy professionals. This list is not a way to allow other unprofessional behaviors that are not listed here. The guidelines for application of this list are described below.

### **Behaviors that must not be demonstrated by students at any time during the PTA Program:**

A student being absent from a class/field trip/scheduled meeting/other PTA Program-related activity without notifying all of the faculty\*

A student arriving late to class/field trip/scheduled meeting/other PTA Program-related activity (any number of minutes late)\*

Not notifying all of the faculty that a student will be late to class/field trip/scheduled meeting/other PTA Program-related activity

Use of phone or smart watch during class for any reason not previously approved by instructor

Use of tablet during class for any non-class related reasons or any reason not previously approved by instructor

Use of a laptop during class for any non-class related reasons or any reason not previously approved by instructor

Rude/disruptive behavior as determined by attention drawn to the student that interrupts the learning, attention, or focus of any student or instructor

Sleeping during class in any physical position

Doing homework or other work related to any PTA course or non-PTA course while an instructor is conducting class

Inappropriate comments or cursing to other students, instructors, staff, guest speakers, or off-site field trip employees

Any disrespectful interaction with other students, instructors, staff, guest speakers, or off-site field trip employees

Sending emails during any class, PTA program activity, or off-site field trip. Instructors should not receive emails from any student while any PTA course, activity, or field trip is in session.

Checking grades in any course (including the current course) while the instructor is conducting class.

Checking email in any course (including emails related to the current course) while the instructor is conducting class.

Preparing or eating food while the instructor is conducting class. Small snacks that do not require warming and do not require the use of utensils are permitted during class if not disruptive to other students or interfering with the student fully participating in class discussions, learning, or activities. Food is to be prepared and eaten during breaks or before/after class only.

Audibly belching during classes, program activities, field trips.

Vaping on RCCC campus or on the property of a clinical education site.

\*If a student knows he/she will be late to class and notifies all the PTA faculty, this is not an immediate UCO violation. A UCO will be issued *on the third instance of a student notifying all the faculty that he/she will be late.*

\*If a student knows he/she will be absent from a class and notifies all the faculty, this is not an immediate UCO violation. A UCO will be issued *on the third separate instance of a student being absent.*

The above behaviors, as well as any other behaviors that interfere with any student learning or participating in class, are violations of this policy. The above list is to be used as a guide for any PTA Program faculty member, RCCC staff member, RCCC non-PTA faculty member, guest speaker, or off-site field trip employee to determine if a student's behavior constitutes a violation of this policy. Therefore, the above list is not exhaustive, but is to be used as examples of behaviors. Similar behaviors to those listed above or any behavior that has a similar result to the behaviors above can be deemed a violation by any of the roles listed here.

**In the event of a violation, the following procedure will be followed:**

1<sup>st</sup> violation – Violation slip with a description of the behavior, date, observer's signature, and student's signature will be written and kept on file with the PTA Program Director.

2<sup>nd</sup> violation - Violation slip with a description of the behavior, date, observer's signature, and student's signature will be written and kept on file with the PTA Program Director.

3<sup>rd</sup> violation - Violation slip with a description of the behavior, date, observer's signature, and student's signature will be written and kept on file with the PTA Program Director. In addition:

3 Violation Slips will result in the first official write-up of unprofessional conduct that will be placed in the student's PTA Program file for documentation of progressive unprofessional conduct. This write-up can and will be used by the PTA Program Director and Dean of Health and Education Programs as evidence of progressive misconduct if the unprofessional behavior continues.

A written remediation plan will be established by the PTA Program Director and the student in order to prevent future violations of this policy and prevent the progression to a more serious intervention. If the written remediation plan is not followed by the student as

determined by the PTA Program Committee, the student will progress to the 6<sup>th</sup> violation slip, with the next steps detailed below.

4<sup>th</sup> violation – Violation slip with a description of the behavior, date, observer’s signature, and student’s signature will be written and kept on file with the PTA Program Director.

5<sup>th</sup> violation - Violation slip with a description of the behavior, date, observer’s signature, and student’s signature will be written and kept on file with the PTA Program Director.

6<sup>th</sup> violation - Violation slip with a description of the behavior, date, observer’s signature, and student’s signature will be written and kept on file with the PTA Program Director. In addition:

6<sup>th</sup> Violation Slips will result in the second official write-up of unprofessional conduct that will be placed in the student’s PTA Program file for documentation of progressive unprofessional conduct. This write-up will trigger a review of all previous documentation of violations by the Dean of Health and Education Programs, as well as an in-person meeting between the Dean and the student. A formal action plan will be established by the PTA Program Committee prior to this meeting, reviewed in the meeting, and approved by the Dean following this meeting in order to remediate previous unprofessional behavior and prevent future unprofessional behavior.

The action plan will include, but is not limited to, the student completing APTA learning modules related to professional behavior. If the student fails to meet with the Dean, the Dean deems the student’s behavior unsatisfactory during the meeting, or the student does not complete all steps in the action plan, the student will progress to the 9<sup>th</sup> violation slip and will be dismissed from the PTA Program.

7<sup>th</sup> violation – Violation slip with a description of the behavior, date, observer’s signature, and student’s signature will be written and kept on file with the PTA Program Director.

8<sup>th</sup> violation - Violation slip with a description of the behavior, date, observer’s signature, and student’s signature will be written and kept on file with the PTA Program Director.

At the time of an 8<sup>th</sup> violation slip, the PTA Program faculty, PTA Program Director, and the Dean of Health and Education will notify the student in writing that any additional demonstration of unprofessional conduct as observed by any of the above roles will result in dismissal from the PTA Program. The student will meet with the PTA Program Director and Dean for a verbal explanation of this written notification and to sign that he/she acknowledges and understands the consequences of any additional unprofessional behavior.



9<sup>th</sup> violation - Violation slip with a description of the behavior, date, observer's signature, and student's signature will be written and kept on file with the PTA Program Director. In addition:

9 Violation Slips will result in dismissal from the PTA Program. Given the steps outlined above, if a student is unable or unwilling to improve his/her behavior in the areas identified by the PTA Program Committee, the PTA Program Director, and the Dean of Health and Education Programs, the PTA Program faculty believes the most appropriate next step is dismissal of the student from the program for failure to meet the detailed and documented expectations of a PTA student.

Upon dismissal from the PTA Program due to a 9<sup>th</sup> violation slip, the student must follow all readmission procedures if he/she chooses to reapply to the PTA Program.

### **The Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool and The Unprofessional Conduct Observed Policy:**

The Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool is used each semester to measure PTA students' achievement of levels of professionalism. There are specific guidelines that must be met each semester on the Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool in order for each student to be successful in the PTA Program. This tool is used by the student's PTA Program Faculty Advisor to evaluate the student's professionalism. Input from all faculty members, as well as any roles mentioned in the UCO Policy, is used to make the overall assessment of a student's level of professionalism.

If a student is demonstrating unprofessional behaviors that are not captured by the UCO Policy but are recognized through the use of the Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool, documentation from the observer of these unprofessional behaviors is required.

The faculty advisor will use the documentation of unprofessional behavior to inform the evaluation each semester. If at any time during the PTA Program, a student is not meeting that semester's required levels of professional behavior according to the Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool, the student will be given notification of two violation slips per the UCO Policy. Therefore, demonstrating any of the unprofessional behaviors from the UCO Policy or not demonstrating the required professional behaviors from the Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool will both result in the accumulation of violation slips and progression through the UCO Policy that can ultimately lead to dismissal from the PTA Program.

## **Volunteering and Service-Learning Project**

The RCCC PTA Program emphasizes the importance of the APTA's Core Values for the PT and PTA by requiring community volunteering and a service-learning project to be completed by all students in the PTA Program. These hours of service are used as a teaching method, which combines community service and academic instruction in the classroom, with a focus on critical thinking, reflection, and civic responsibility. The goal is to improve self-confidence, enhance problem solving, and increase an understanding of social issues for all who participate. Community service will also help to promote and reinforce the Value-Based Behaviors of the professional organization, such as altruism, caring and compassion, social responsibility in the community, and advocating for physical therapy consumers.

During the first and second semester of the PTA program, students will select a community/human services organization or activity for which to volunteer a minimum of five hours. The target population of the volunteer hours may include, but is not limited to, the disadvantaged, under served, disabled, or cross-cultural populations.

During the third semester, students will develop a service-learning project. When it comes time to choose a location for their service-learning project, students have the opportunity to follow their passions and interests to create a project that is unique to them, but also helps the community. This project will require at least 12 hours of service to be completed during the third and/or fourth semester.

The service-learning project will be presented the last semester of the program in PTA 280. Specifics will be provided in PTA 212 and in PTA 280 for the presentation.

Completion of the Volunteering and Service-Learning Project is required as delineated above. Failure to complete the requirements for each semester will result in failure to progress in the PTA program.

## **Essential Functions**

Students should refer to the Essential Functions section in the Appendix for a detailed description of activities and abilities that would be expected as a Physical Therapist Assistant. Any questions regarding physical, cognitive, emotional, or behavioral limitations should be addressed as soon as possible with the course instructor and the PTA Program Director. The Essential Functions Verification Form must be completed and submitted to the Program Director at the beginning of the program.

## Professional Appearance and Dress Code

In the interest of safety and professionalism, students are expected to be dressed appropriately at all times. Attire that is not permitted by the PTA Program includes items that are overly revealing or containing print or graphics that are overtly sexual, violent, graphic, or otherwise offensive. For laboratory sessions that involve physical activity, use of physical modalities or devices, or observation or physical contact with other students, the instructors may designate required laboratory dress. Lab attire must be worn for lab classes. If lab attire does not need to be worn on a specific day, PTA faculty members will let students know in advance. Appropriate lab attire consists of loose-fitting shorts and shirts for men; loose-fitting shorts and swimsuits (open back), sports bras, or open back halter-top under shirts for women. Warmer clothes (sweat suits to wear over lab clothes) are also appropriate. Patient gowns will be available to students if they forget their lab clothes.

During lab sessions, students will role-play either patients or PTAs during practice sessions. STUDENTS SHOULD BE PREPARED TO EXPOSE THE ENTIRE TREATMENT AREA. Privacy will be respected and modesty will be maintained as appropriate using draping methods. Changing areas are the Men's/Women's locker rooms located near the PTA Program Lab. All lab sessions will begin promptly at the scheduled start time. Students should be changed into lab attire before class starts. Students will be given time at the end of class to change out of lab attire.

It may be required as well to remove jewelry or to pull back hair as needed. If students do not comply with the appropriate laboratory attire, the instructor may interpret the lack of appropriate attire as an attendance occurrence or example of unprofessional behavior.

Students need to recognize that although certain clothing types or styles, hair colors or styles, piercings, and tattoos may be culturally popular, they may not be considered clinically appropriate or acceptable. In general, the following are not appropriate or acceptable:

- Jeans
- Short skirts or dresses
- Clothing with excessive material that could inhibit normal movement
- Tops or bottoms that reveal the midriff, cleavage, or undergarments during normal movement
- Excessively worn, stained, odorous, or discolored items
- Hats
- Sandals, flip-flops, open-toe shoes, or high heels
- Long hair that is not pulled back
- Hair that is dyed an unnatural color
- Facial hair that is not short and neatly trimmed
- Garish or excessive makeup
- Excessively long or dirty fingernails

- Excessive jewelry
- Visible body piercings, including nose piercings (a single ear piercing in each ear is acceptable)
- Visible tattoos

The PTA Program does not have a specific dress code applicable to all clinical education sites, instead deferring the dress code to the individual clinical site. Clinical dress code information is addressed as well in the Clinical Education Manual.

Exceptions to the PTA dress code may be made for religious, cultural, or medical reasons.

Students will be required to get their student ID badge from the Navigation Station during the first semester. The Student ID is to be worn at all times while on campus, at off-campus activities, and during clinical education experiences. Student will also be required to purchase at least one PTA polo shirt. The polo shirt may be required to be worn for off-campus activities and for special events. Notification of the required dress attire will be given by the Program Director and/or faculty.

## **Attendance**

Students are responsible for meeting the attendance requirements for each course in which they are enrolled. Should a student deem it necessary to [withdraw from a course](#), the student is responsible for initiating the withdrawal and completing the process as established by the College.

Faculty are responsible for informing students of attendance requirements, as stated in the course syllabus at the beginning of the academic term. Faculty should submit accurate attendance records. Faculty are expected to utilize available communication and support tools to alert students and appropriate College staff of attendance and academic performance concerns.

Students are expected to attend each credit course in which they are registered by the 10% (census) date of the course. Distance Education students registered in fully online courses must complete the required entry assignment by the 10% date to remain enrolled. Distance Education students registered in partially-online courses must attend a scheduled, on-campus class session or complete the required entry assignment to maintain enrollment. If a student does not attend a course as required, the faculty member will report the student as a “No Show”, as mandated by the North Carolina Community College System. In such cases, the student will be dropped from the course and will be issued a refund for the cost of the course. Students receiving financial aid should consult with Financial Aid staff to determine the impact on financial aid eligibility and obligations.

An instructor will withdraw the student if the student has not attended courses for two consecutive weeks (or 12.5% of consecutive course duration).

Regular class attendance is a student responsibility and essential to receiving maximum benefit from the educational experience. Students are expected to attend and be on time for all classes and lab, shop, and/or clinic sessions.

Some programs may have outside regulatory bodies that require a minimum of course attendance hours. The attendance requirements will be stated within the course syllabus. Students are responsible for course content when absent, including tests and assignments, and for coming prepared to the class following the absence.

## **Program Safety and Security**

1. All classroom and lab equipment is property of RCCC and is not for personal use. Students are expected to exercise safety and good judgment when using all college equipment.
2. Unsafe performance in any course, practical examination, or on any competencies skill check-off may result in a failing grade in a course even if adequate points for passing the course, practical exam, or competency skill check-off were earned.
3. The use of program electrical equipment or the practice of skills involving electrical equipment can only be performed with faculty supervision. Electrical equipment can be used, but not plugged in, during unsupervised lab practice if the student has passed his/her faculty competencies skill check-off with that piece of equipment.
4. All lab equipment and supplies must be returned to their proper place of storage after use. No equipment may leave the lab without faculty approval.
5. Students will follow college policies in the event of an emergency and/or building evacuation. These policies can be found in the RCCC Emergency Instructions located in each room on the RCCC campus or at <https://www.rccc.edu/safety/emergency-response-evacuation-procedures/>
6. PTA Program students are expected to notify academic faculty (and clinical faculty when participating in clinical education experiences) of any medical condition(s) and/or medication(s) taken that could potentially impair or alter the student's safe and effective performance or function of all program educational experiences. Students contracting an infectious disease during the time they are enrolled in the PTA Program must report that fact to program faculty and follow appropriate medical guidelines to minimize the risk of transmission.
7. Cost and liability of travel to and from off-campus clinical experiences, including, but not limited to field trips, off-campus lab sessions, clinical education experiences, and service-learning projects, are the responsibility of the student.
8. Equipment user manuals are kept in the PTA Program lab.

9. First aid kits are located in the PTA labs.
10. An AED is located adjacent to the side hall entrance to Room 137, Dean Wendy Barnhardt's office.

## **Confidentiality and Privacy**

In the academic setting, RCCC follows the rules of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), which provides safeguards regarding the confidentiality of, and access to, student records. FERPA policies and local definitions of directory information are described in more detail in the online catalog under Records and Registration and on the college website. All student files are kept under lock within the Health and Education Department. Students have the right to inspect their records with the PTA Program Director and/or Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education.

The PTA Program will maintain privacy/confidentiality in the following manner:

1. Grades will be posted using the online Blackboard system, which requires students to sign in using an individual password.
2. All exams, quizzes, and assignments will be returned in a manner that does not expose the grade.
3. Feedback is provided after Competency Skills Check-offs and practical exams with only the student and instructor(s) present. When necessary or helpful, instructors will obtain permission if they would like to provide feedback in front of other students.
4. Clinical faculty must follow the data privacy policies of RCCC and the PTA Program.
5. Requests for student information from any government agency will be referred to the Registrar's Office.

In the clinical setting, healthcare practitioners follow the Health Care Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Under HIPAA guidelines, all patient-related information is to be kept strictly confidential and not shared with anyone other than healthcare team members directly involved in that patient's care. HIPAA guidelines apply not only to patients seen during clinical education experiences, but also to patients seen in other observational or field-trip experiences, or to those used for demonstration purposes in the classroom. These policies will be covered in detail in class and will be strictly enforced throughout the entire PTA curriculum.

## **OSHA Regulations**

A listing of all hazardous substances found in the PTA lab at RCCC can be found on the SDS forms for all hazardous substances, which are kept in a clearly marked binder in the lab. All

hazardous materials should be kept in the appropriate storage location as indicated by the PTA faculty.

## **Lab Infection Control**

To ensure a clean laboratory environment and to facilitate infection control, the following policies will be in effect:

1. Plinths, mats, and other treatment surfaces will be cleaned using a bactericidal agent at least once a week and whenever visibly soiled.
2. Soiled linen will be placed in the linen hamper located in the back of the lab.
3. The hydrocollator will be cleaned a minimum of every six months, per the hydrocollator cleaning procedure located in the Lab Policy and Procedure Manual located in the PTA lab.
4. PTA faculty members are responsible for assuring the infection control policies are enforced in the labs.

## **Electronic Devices**

All pagers, cell phones, tablets, computers, and other electronic devices that may disrupt the classroom must be turned off. If a student has a situation that requires personal communication during class hours (for example, a family member in the hospital or responsible for the care of a child), the student is required to notify the instructor prior to the start of the class and establish an agreement with the instructor for use of a communication device during lecture and lab time, as well as any off-campus field trips or program-related activities. Students will have opportunities to check phone messages during scheduled breaks or between classes. Calculators may be allowed for specific quizzes, and/or exams. Internet, data, recording, or messaging devices of any kind are not allowed during testing. Audio, video, or dictation recording of lectures, laboratory sessions, etc. may only be performed with the expressed permission of the instructor. Any recordings are permitted for personal use only. If the instructor becomes aware of any unauthorized or misuse of recordings (example – intentional misuse of equipment or activities, inappropriate joking or comments or emotional display, or posting for wider audiences such as YouTube or Facebook), the student may be subject to disciplinary action as found in the Professional Behavior section.

## **Informed Consent Human Subjects and Waiver of Liability**

Students within the PTA program are expected to perform a variety of physical therapy procedures on each other in the classroom and laboratory for educational purposes. This use of human subjects is very important to the learning process. Students must sign a consent form and a General Waiver of Liability prior to practicing laboratory skills. Students will sign a consent form at the start of the program that will remain in effect during the student's tenure in the PTA Program. Consent forms will be kept on file in the PTA Program Director's office. General Waivers will be kept on file in Health and Education Department.

## **Photography/Videotaping**

PTA students, on occasion in classroom and laboratory settings, will be simulating a work environment and will practice skills on one another. During this time, students may be videotaped or have digital pictures taken, both of which will be used only for educational purposes. Students will be asked to sign a permission form to allow videotaping and digital photography at the start of the first semester of the PTA Program. This form is contained in the Appendix. This form will remain in effect for the duration of the student's tenure in the PTA Program. If a student wishes to photograph or videotape a patient for educational purposes, they must follow the policies and procedures of the clinical education site for confidentiality and for obtaining consent.



## **APPENDIX**

## **Practical Examination Instructions**

Please select one of the Folders. You will have five minutes to review the Practical Examination information that you have selected. Please gather all necessary equipment and prepare your treatment area. Please let the instructor know when you are ready to begin the Practical Examination if prior to the five minutes allotted.

Upon completion of the hands-on portion of the practical exam, you will be required to document your treatment session. You will be given paper and pen for your documentation. No other materials are permitted to be used during the documentation portion of the exam. Please give the completed SOAP note to the instructor when finished.

Students are not to discuss the Practical Examination with other students who have not taken the Practical Examination. It is important that all students have the same experience when entering the room for the examination.

A student must “PASS” all Critical Safety Elements and Critical Procedures and achieve a minimum score of 80% for successful passing of the practical exam. A “FAIL” on any of the Critical Safety Elements or Critical Procedures will result in failure of the practical exam regardless of the overall points earned. A student will be allowed only ONE cue from the instructor on a Critical Safety Element or Critical Procedure. If a cue is provided, a 5% will be deducted from the overall grade on the practical. More than ONE cue will result in failure of the practical exam. Failure to achieve a minimum score of 80% will be considered a failing grade.

Students will have three attempts to pass a practical examination. If a student fails a practical examination on the first attempt, a meeting with the instructor and remediation are required. A remediation plan will be developed by the instructor and student based on a comprehensive review of areas of concern observed in the practical exam. If a student fails a practical examination on the second attempt, the student must meet with the instructor and remediation is student-driven. The student will develop a remediation plan based on where he/she believes assistance is needed. The student will then have the opportunity for a third attempt to pass the practical examination.

The maximum grade for any practical exam retake is 80%. If the student fails on the third attempt, the student will receive a “0” for the practical examination, will fail the course, and will not be able to progress in the PTA Program

## **Essential Functions for the PTA**

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Rowan-Cabarrus Community College is an intensive course of study. Successful completion of the PTA Program requires the student to participate in laboratory classes in which real physical therapy interventions are practiced and administered to classmates and staff, and to satisfy the clinical education component of the program in which physical therapy interventions are administered by students to actual patients and clients.

Students are required to attend three different clinical education experiences designed to expose the student to the depth and breadth of contemporary physical therapy practice.

Students must be able to apply the knowledge and skills required to function in a wide variety of clinical settings and situations. This includes providing the wide range of physical therapy interventions covered in the PTA Program curriculum.

Patients have a right to safe and quality healthcare from PTA students and graduates. Classmates and staff have a right to safe practices while in the classroom and laboratory. Because of these rights, the following essential functions have been adopted. These essential functions represent reasonable expectations of the PTA student for the performance of common physical therapy functions.

Each student must be able to perform each of the Essential Skills:

### **PHYSICAL**

1. Safely, reliably and effectively assess status of an individual by visual, tactile and auditory methods.
  - a. Visual ability, corrected as necessary, to recognize and interpret facial expressions and body language, identify normal and abnormal movement patterns, discriminate color changes, interpret access to the environment, and gather information from medical records and professional literature.
  - b. Tactile ability to palpate pulses, detect changes or abnormalities in skin texture, skin temperature, body segment contour, muscle tone and joint movement
  - c. Auditory ability, corrected as necessary, to recognize and respond to soft voices and to effectively use devices for measurement of blood pressure and breath sounds.
2. Operate and monitor various types of electrical and mechanical therapeutic equipment and apply these safely, reliably and effectively.
  - a. Visual ability, corrected as necessary, to read and interpret indicators, gauges, dials, etc. on physical therapy equipment.

- b. Auditory ability, corrected as necessary, to recognize and respond to auditory timers, call bells, equipment alarms, etc.
  - c. Ability and dexterity to manipulate and operate various types of physical therapy equipment and devices which involves adjusting gauges, dials, small nuts and bolts, settings, small tools, goniometers, tape measures, etc.
3. Regularly lift and move moderate weight (25 – 60 pounds) and exert enough pushing and pulling force as may be required to position or move patients and equipment assist or resist a patient with exercise applications.
  4. Frequently lift and move heavier weights (up to 200 pounds) as may be required for safe transfers and support of patients with assistance.
  5. Spend prolonged periods of time (up to 90 minutes) without rest; walking, standing, sitting, bending as well as crawling, reaching, pushing and pulling.
  6. Possess the coordination, speed, agility necessary to assist and safely guard (protect) a patient who is walking, exercising, or performing other rehabilitation activities, and appropriate body mechanics to react safely and appropriately to sudden or unexpected movements of patients and/or classmates.
  7. Ability to endure a 40-hour workweek during clinical education courses which typically involves working 8-10 hours per day, 4-5 days per week.
  8. Ability to administer CPR and emergency First Aid safely, reliably and competently without assistance.
  9. Communicate in both written and verbal formats essential information about patients, treatments, and status to physicians, co-workers, patients and their families, instructors, and clinical staff.
    - a. Ability to effectively interpret and express both verbally and in writing in English.
    - b. Ability to recognize, interpret and respond appropriately to nonverbal communications from patients, staff and others.
    - c. Ability to effectively use a computer and operate software programs for documentation, research, and other clinical and classroom functions.
    - d. Ability to use a telephone.

## COGNITIVE

1. Demonstrate the organizational and time management skills necessary to carry out multiple treatment plans on a daily basis and within the established productivity requirements and time constraints.
  - a. Ability to work with multiple patients, families, and colleagues all at the same time.
  - b. Ability to prioritize multiple tasks.
2. Make decisions and then act on the decisions based on assessment of a particular patient or situation including emergency situations while adhering to time constraints.
  - a. Ability to recognize potentially unsafe situations and react in an appropriate timely manner.
  - b. Communicate rationale or reasoning to justify decisions made.
  - c. Read and make adjustments as necessary of various meters, scales, and measuring devices.
3. Follow job related logical thought processes.
  - a. Apply knowledge of principles, indications, contraindications, and precautions for the full spectrum of physical therapy interventions utilized in contemporary physical therapy practice.
  - b. Apply principles of logical or scientific thinking to define problems, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions.
  - c. Participate in the process of scientific inquiry and procure evidence-based information and apply it to the practice of physical therapy.
4. Take initiative and work independently yet recognize self-limitations.
  - a. Comprehend scope of practice for PTA.
  - b. Adhere to regulatory requirements including standard precautions and infection control policies.
  - c. Display ability to initiate patient care or other appropriate clinical activities without requiring explicit instruction to do so.
  - d. Demonstrate ability to make productive use of classroom, laboratory, and clinical time.
  - e. Adheres to program and facility preventative health requirements including but not limited to vaccinations screenings and treatments for latent or active diseases.
5. Organize, supervise, delegate, and manage resources, including human resources.

## **AFFECTIVE**

1. Demonstrate the interpersonal skills necessary to regularly interact effectively with patients and their families, physicians, clinical instructors and staff, faculty, and classmates.
  - a. Engage in respectful, non-judgmental interactions with individuals from various lifestyles, cultures, beliefs, races, ages, socioeconomic classes, and abilities based on mutual trust.
  - b. Develop and maintain effective respectful working relationships with colleagues, peers, patients and their families, instructors and faculty, and the general public.
  - c. Work effectively as part of an interdisciplinary team.
  - d. Demonstrate the ability to delegate or direct others and function effectively as part of a health care team.
  - e. Practice professional and respectful physical touch across genders.
  - f. Maintain professional demeanor and consistently display professional behaviors in all clinical interactions.
2. Effectively attend to people, information and tasks in a complex, highly stimulating environment.
3. Cope, in a professional manner to common patient, clinical, or school related stressful situations.
  - a. Cope with heavy workloads, including class work, patient demands, physician or other staff demands, and changes in schedules.
  - b. Work effectively with challenging and terminally ill patients.
  - c. Treat patients regardless of health condition or infectious status of patients.
  - d. Work with patients, instructors, and other clinical staff, faculty and classmates during stressful situations including but not limited to medically or emotionally unstable individuals, providing CPR or other emergency situations.
4. Regularly accept guidance and supervision from superiors, instructors and faculty.
5. Take responsibility for mistakes, and errors in judgment and decision-making. Accept constructive criticism and adjust behavior accordingly.
6. Encourage cooperation and collegial relationships with classmates, instructors, other healthcare providers, patients and their families.
  - a. Ability to motivate and positively influence patients and others.
  - b. Ability to collaborate with others.
  - c. Ability to consult with others to clarify and problem solve.

7. Maintain confidentiality of patients, classmates, clinical business issues, records, and exams.

In accordance with applicable state and federal laws regarding people who have disabilities and our program's philosophy, we are committed to making reasonable accommodations for students who have disabilities to enable them to successfully perform the essential functions as delineated below. In the event that a student determines he or she cannot meet an essential function due to a disability, either upon admission to the program or at any point thereafter, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the Program Director of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program and the Office of Accessibility of that determination and to request a reasonable accommodation. The Office of Accessibility is located on North campus in building 100 and at South campus in building 1000 with Student Advocacy Services. A reasonable accommodation is a strategy, agreed upon by the student and the College, which enables the student to meet a technical standard. The faculty and student will work together, within the context of the agreed upon strategy, to provide the student with the opportunity to meet the technical standard. The presence of a disability will not exempt students from completing required tasks and a reasonable accommodation will not guarantee that students will be successful in meeting the requirements of any one course. Should a student be unable to meet a technical standard or course requirement after a reasonable accommodation has been made, the offer of admission or status in the program will be withdrawn.

The above statements were derived in part from job descriptions and work expectations from various physical therapy facilities and behavioral and academic expectations from the physical therapy educational community.

Each student's right to participation in the clinical portion of the curriculum is also contingent upon compliance with the rules of the clinical facility. The clinical facility has the sole discretion to determine when its rules have been violated.

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation or marital status.

Students who have concern about the ability to perform any of these functions should contact the PTA Program Director at (704) 216-7180. Individuals with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations or information by calling the Office of Accessibility. Please see the Disabilities-Office of Accessibility section of this manual for details.

Students must complete the following Essential Functions Verification form and return it to the Program Director upon acceptance into the PTA program.

## **Rowan-Cabarrus Non-Discrimination Statement**

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College does not discriminate; exclude participation in programs or activities, or limit employment or application opportunities based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation, disability, military or veteran status, or age. Rowan-Cabarrus Community College is an equal opportunity institution and employer.

Any student may request a review of any College decision or action alleged to be discriminatory or have a negative effect on the student's enrollment status at Rowan-Cabarrus Community College.

A grievance must be presented, in writing, within 30 days after the action or decision in question. Processing at each step cannot exceed 20 working days; however, the time may be extended by agreement of both parties or by extenuating circumstances as decided by the administrator to whom the grievance is presented. If administrator at each step does not meet processing time limitations, the grievant may then request higher administrative assistance in obtaining requested relief. If the grievant does not meet the stated time limitations, the process will be terminated and such grievance cannot be resubmitted.



## Essential Functions Verification Form

### Rowan-Cabarrus Community College Physical Therapist Assistant Program Essential Functions Verification Form

Essential Functions Verification Form must be completed upon program entry.

Please circle the appropriate response:

Yes / No                      I have read and I understand the Essential Functions relative to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

Yes / No                      I am able to meet the Physical Requirements of the PTA Program as specified and do not require any reasonable accommodation to meet these requirements at this time.

\_\_\_\_\_ I require the following reasonable accommodation(s) to meet the Physical Requirement standards as specified\*

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\*These accommodations must be approved through the Office of Accessibility. Please see the section in this handbook for details.

**By signing this document, you are acknowledging and agreeing that RCCC and the PTA Program can disclose any of the issues about the Essential Functions and physical disabilities to perform certain tasks to the clinical sites for the Clinical Education courses.**

Printed Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Physical Therapist Assistant Code of Honor

Each student admitted to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program is charged with the responsibility of honorable conduct. A student is assumed honorable until his/her actions prove otherwise. An honor offense is defined as an intentional act of lying, cheating, or stealing. Formal procedures exist for violations of the honor code. Violation of the Honor Code will subject a student to disciplinary action, up to and including administrative dismissal.

As a student in the PTA program, it is fundamental that you act in an honorable and virtuous way so that a community of trust is established among members of the college and your clients. Honor is a practiced ideal that will positively impact your relationship with fellow students, faculty, administrators, patients and other members of the community. As you live an honorable life, you will find that you cannot live without it. All students in this program are bound by the Honor Code and all are needed to make it work. The atmosphere of trust and integrity that is created by an honor system enables the student to know his/her word will be taken as true, to compete fairly in the classroom and to keep what is rightfully his/hers. The system functions best when all members of the program not only take responsibility for their own actions, but hold their peers to the same standards. As a student admitted to the PTA program, you must agree to live by and support the basic principles of honesty – no lying, cheating or stealing; be accountable for your actions; and share information about honor offenses. Violation is defined as commission of any of the following:

- Falsification or withholding of any records or documents essential for progression in the PTA program.
- Academic dishonesty
- Cheating on any course assignment, test or examination which may include, but is not limited to, referring to unauthorized materials, having another person take an exam for you, changing answers after test papers or answer sheet have been given to the instructor, or sharing of test questions with other classmates.
- Plagiarizing, which includes the submission of others' ideas or papers (whether purchased borrowed, or otherwise obtained) as one's own.
- Collaborating with others in work to be presented if contrary to stated rules of the course.
- Communicating false information about care given to clients.
- Knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above actions.

If you are not prepared to accept these responsibilities, you should select a different program. **I have read the explanation of the PTA Code of Honor. I understand that as an admitted student in the program, I have accepted the pledge of honesty and will be expected to meet the standards as set forward.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Written and/or Lab Examination Remediation Plan

**Rowan-Cabarrus Community College  
Physical Therapist Assistant Program  
Written and/or Lab Examination Remediation Plan**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Directions

1. The instructor informs the student of problem or concern.
2. The student and instructor discuss potential causes of the problem or concern.
3. The student completes the Individual Student Test Item Analysis for problems with written and/or lab examinations.
4. The student and instructor develop an action plan to address the problem or concern.
5. The instructor reviews the plan with the Program Director and, if necessary, makes recommended changes.
6. The student and instructor sign the form.
7. The form is placed in the student's file.

### To be Complete by Instructor

1. Problem or concern identified by instructor (ex. Attendance, participation, behavioral concern, test/quiz performance, study habits, time management, etc.)

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2. Potential causes discussed with student

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3. Action plan developed by student and instructor (state goal, time frame, referrals, and specific actions to remediate)

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4. Recommendations by Program Director if necessary

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Instructor's Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Individual Student Test Item Analysis Form

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Course: \_\_\_\_\_

	Question Missed	Misread Question	Did not understand subject matter	Did not study the subject matter	Did not understand question	Guessed Wrong	Changed Answer	Marked Scantron Incorrectly	Did not read all responses carefully
#	Content Area								

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant

HOD S06-09-20-18 [Amended HOD S06-00-13-24; HOD 06-91-06-07; Initial HOD 06-82-04-08] [Standard]

## Preamble

The Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant (Standards of Ethical Conduct) delineate the ethical obligations of all physical therapist assistants as determined by the House of Delegates of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). The Standards of Ethical Conduct provide a foundation for conduct to which all physical therapist assistants shall adhere. Fundamental to the Standards of Ethical Conduct is the special obligation of physical therapist assistants to enable patients/clients to achieve greater independence, health and wellness, and enhanced quality of life.

No document that delineates ethical standards can address every situation. Physical therapist assistants are encouraged to seek additional advice or consultation in instances where the guidance of the Standards of Ethical Conduct may not be definitive. The APTA Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant and Core Values for the Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant provide additional guidance.

## Standards

**Standard #1:** Physical therapist assistants shall respect the inherent dignity, and rights, of all individuals.

(Core Values: Compassion and Caring, Integrity)

- 1A Physical therapist assistants shall act in a respectful manner toward each person regardless of age, gender, race, nationality, religion, ethnicity, social or economic status, sexual orientation, health condition, or disability.
- 1B Physical therapist assistants shall recognize their personal biases and shall not discriminate against others in the provision of physical therapy services

**Standard #2:** Physical therapist assistants shall be trustworthy and compassionate in addressing the rights and needs of patients/clients.

(Core Values: Altruism, Collaboration, Compassion and Caring, Duty)

- 2A Physical therapist assistants shall act in the best interests of patients/clients over the interests of the physical therapist assistant.
- 2B Physical therapist assistants shall provide physical therapy interventions with compassionate and caring behaviors that incorporate the individual and cultural differences of patients/clients.
- 2C Physical therapist assistants shall provide patients/clients with information regarding the interventions they provide.

- 2D Physical therapist assistants shall protect confidential patient/client information and, in collaboration with the physical therapist, may disclose confidential information to appropriate authorities only when allowed or as required by law.

**Standard #3:** Physical therapist assistants shall make sound decisions in collaboration with the physical therapist and within the boundaries established by laws and regulations.

(Core Values: Collaboration, Duty, Excellence, Integrity)

- 3A. Physical therapist assistants shall make objective decisions in the patient's/client's best interest in all practice settings.
- 3B. Physical therapist assistants shall be guided by information about best practice regarding physical therapy interventions.
- 3C. Physical therapist assistants shall make decisions based upon their level of competence and consistent with patient/client values.
- 3D. Physical therapist assistants shall not engage in conflicts of interest that interfere with making sound decisions.
- 3E. Physical therapist assistants shall provide physical therapy services under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist and shall communicate with the physical therapist when patient/client status requires modifications to the established plan of care.

**Standard #4:** Physical therapist assistants shall demonstrate integrity in their relationships with patients/clients, families, colleagues, students, research participants, other health care providers, employers, payers, and the public.

(Core Values: Integrity)

- 4A. Physical therapist assistants shall provide truthful, accurate, and relevant information and shall not make misleading representations.
- 4B. Physical therapist assistants shall not exploit persons over whom they have supervisory, evaluative or other authority (eg, patients and clients, students, supervisees, research participants, or employees).
- 4C. Physical therapist assistants shall not engage in any sexual relationship with any of their patients and clients, supervisees, or students.
- 4D. Physical therapist assistants shall not harass anyone verbally, physically, emotionally, or sexually.
- 4E. Physical therapist assistants shall discourage misconduct by physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and other health care professionals and, when appropriate, report illegal or unethical acts, including verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual harassment, to an appropriate authority with jurisdiction over the conduct.
- 4F. Physical therapist assistants shall report suspected cases of abuse involving children or vulnerable adults to the appropriate authority, subject to law.

**Standard #5:** Physical therapist assistants shall fulfill their legal and ethical obligations.

(Core Values: Accountability, Duty, Social Responsibility)

- 5A. Physical therapist assistants shall comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
- 5B. Physical therapist assistants shall support the supervisory role of the physical therapist to ensure quality care and promote patient/client safety.
- 5C. Physical therapist assistants involved in research shall abide by accepted standards governing protection of research participants.
- 5D. Physical therapist assistants shall encourage colleagues with physical, psychological, or substance-related impairments that may adversely impact their professional responsibilities to seek assistance or counsel.
- 5E. Physical therapist assistants who have knowledge that a colleague is unable to perform their professional responsibilities with reasonable skill and safety shall report this information to the appropriate authority.

**Standard #6:** Physical therapist assistants shall enhance their competence through the lifelong acquisition and refinement of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

(Core Value: Excellence)

- 6A. Physical therapist assistants shall achieve and maintain clinical competence.
- 6B. Physical therapist assistants shall engage in lifelong learning consistent with changes in their roles and responsibilities and advances in the practice of physical therapy.
- 6C. Physical therapist assistants shall support practice environments that support career development and lifelong learning.

**Standard #7:** Physical therapist assistants shall support organizational behaviors and business practices that benefit patients/clients and society.

(Core Values: Integrity, Accountability)

- 7A. Physical therapist assistants shall promote work environments that support ethical and accountable decision-making.
- 7B. Physical therapist assistants shall not accept gifts or other considerations that influence or give an appearance of influencing their decisions.
- 7C. Physical therapist assistants shall fully disclose any financial interest they have in products or services that they recommend to patients/clients.
- 7D. Physical therapist assistants shall ensure that documentation for their interventions accurately reflects the nature and extent of the services provided.
- 7E. Physical therapist assistants shall refrain from employment arrangements, or other arrangements, that prevent physical therapist assistants from fulfilling ethical obligations to patients/clients

**Standard #8:** Physical therapist assistants shall participate in efforts to meet the health needs of people locally, nationally, or globally.

(Core Value: social Responsibility)

- 8A. Physical therapist assistants shall support organizations that meet the health needs of people who are economically disadvantaged, uninsured, and underinsured.
- 8B. Physical therapist assistants shall advocate for people with impairments, activity limitations, participation restrictions, and disabilities in order to promote their participation in community and society.
- 8C. Physical therapist assistants shall be responsible stewards of health care resources by collaborating with physical therapists in order to avoid overutilization or underutilization of physical therapy services.
- 8D. Physical therapist assistants shall educate members of the public about the benefits of physical therapy.





## **Core Values for the Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant**

**HOD P09-21-21-09** [Amended: HOD P06-19-48-55; HOD P06-18-25-33; Initial HOD P05-07-19-19] [Previously Titled: Core Values: for the Physical Therapist] [Position]

The core values guide the behaviors of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants to provide the highest quality of physical therapist services. These values imbue the scope of physical therapist and physical therapist assistant activities. The core values retain the physical therapist as the person ultimately responsible for providing safe, accessible, cost-effective, and evidence-based services; and the physical therapist assistant as the only individual who assists the physical therapist in practice, working under the direction and supervision of the physical therapist. The core values are defined as follows:

- **Accountability**

Accountability is active acceptance of the responsibility for the diverse roles, obligations, and actions of the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant including self-regulation and other behaviors that positively influence patient and client outcomes, the profession, and the health needs of society.

- **Altruism**

Altruism is the primary regard for or devotion to the interest of patients and clients, thus assuming the responsibility of placing the needs of patients and clients ahead of the physical therapist's or physical therapist assistant's self-interest.

- **Collaboration**

Collaboration is working together with patients and clients, families, communities, and professionals in health and other fields to achieve shared goals. Collaboration within the physical therapist-physical therapist assistant team is working together, within each partner's respective role, to achieve optimal physical therapist services and outcomes for patients and clients.

- **Compassion and Caring**

Compassion is the desire to identify with or sense something of another's experience, a precursor of caring. Caring is the concern, empathy, and consideration for the needs and values of others.

- **Duty**

Duty is the commitment to meeting one's obligations to provide effective physical therapist services to patients and clients, to serve the profession, and to positively influence the health of society.

- **Excellence**

Excellence in the provision of physical therapist services occurs when the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant consistently use current knowledge and skills while understanding personal limits, integrate the patient or client perspective, embrace advancement, and challenge mediocrity.

- **Inclusion**

Inclusion occurs when the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant create a welcoming and equitable environment for all. Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants are inclusive when they commit to providing a safe space, elevating diverse and minority voices, acknowledging personal biases that may impact patient care, and taking a position of anti-discrimination.

- **Integrity**

Integrity is steadfast adherence to high ethical principles or standards, being truthful, ensuring fairness, following through on commitments, and verbalizing to others the rationale for actions.

- **Social Responsibility**

Social responsibility is the promotion of a mutual trust between the profession and the larger public that necessitates responding to societal needs for health and wellness.

**Explanation of Reference Numbers:**

HOD P00-00-00-00 stands for House of Delegates/month/year/page/vote in the House of Delegates minutes; the "P" indicates that it is a position (see below). For example, HOD P06-17-05-04 means that this position can be found in the June 2017 House of Delegates minutes on Page 5 and that it was Vote 4.

P: Position | S: Standard | G: Guideline | Y: Policy | R: Procedure

**Last Updated:** 12/14/2021

**Contact:** [governancehouse@apta.org](mailto:governancehouse@apta.org)



## **Values-Based Behaviors for the Physical Therapist Assistant Self-Assessment Tool**

The Values-Based Behaviors is a concise document that describes those values that most significantly influence PTAs providing patient/client care as a member of the physical therapy team. The Values-Based Behaviors were developed in 2010 by the Advisory Panel of PTAs, reviewed and adapted by numerous stakeholder groups, and approved by APTA's Board of Directors in January 2011. A complete history on the development and approval of this document is included in the introduction section of the Values-Based Behaviors document.

This self-assessment tool accompanies the Values-Based Behaviors and is intended to increase the physical therapist assistant's (PTA's) *awareness* of the Values-Based Behaviors for the PTA and to *self-assess* the frequency with which he or she demonstrates the eight values listed and defined in the first column. The second column provides sample indicators or examples of actions that a PTA who has adopted the Values-Based Behaviors would choose to take in a variety of situations. And the third column is for scoring the frequency with which one chooses to demonstrate the described behavior or action.

### **Complete the Self-Assessment**

Review each sample indicator and rate the frequency with which you display that behavior on a daily basis. It is not expected that one will rate himself or herself as 5 (always) or 1 (never) on every item. Be candid in your response as this is a self-assessment process with an opportunity for identification of areas of strength and opportunities for growth.

### **Analyze the Completed Self-Assessment**

Once you have completed the Self-Assessment, you may want to reflect as an individual or group on the following questions:

- On what sample indicators did you or the group consistently score yourself/themselves on the scale at the 4 (frequent) or 5 (always) levels?
- Why did you or the group rate yourself/themselves higher in frequency for demonstrating these sample behaviors?
- On what sample indicators did you or the group score yourself/themselves on the scale at level 3 or below?

- Why did you or the group rate yourself/themselves lower in frequency for demonstrating these sample behaviors?
- Identify, develop, and implement approaches to strengthening the integration of the values-based behaviors within your clinical environment. Seek out mentoring in this area from your supervising physical therapist or other experienced clinicians.
- Establish personal goals for increasing the frequency with which you demonstrate specific sample behaviors with specific values-based behaviors.
- Conduct periodic re-assessment of your values-based behaviors to determine the degree to which your performance has changed in your growth personally and as a PTA.

Questions about the self-assessment tool or the Values-Based Behaviors should be directed to APTA's PTA Services Department at [pta@apta.org](mailto:pta@apta.org).



## Values-Based Behaviors for the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)

For each values-based behavior listed, a definition is provided and a set of sample indicators that describe what one would see if the PTA were demonstrating that behavior in his/her daily work. For each of the sample indicators listed, check the box that best represents the frequency with which you demonstrate the behavior where:

**1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Occasionally; 4 = Frequently; and 5 = Always.**

Values-Based Behavior with Definition	Sample Indicators	Self-Assessment Rating				
		1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Occasionally	4 Frequently	5 Always
<b>Altruism</b>  Altruism is the primary regard for or devotion to the interest of patients/clients, thus assuming the fiduciary responsibility of placing the needs of the patient/client ahead of the PTA's self interest.	1. Providing patient/client-centered interventions.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Readily offering to assist the physical therapist in providing patient/client interventions.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Generously providing the necessary time and effort to meet patient/client needs.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Placing the patient/client's needs ahead of one's own, as evidenced by willingness to alter one's schedule, delay other projects or tasks, etc.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Contributing, as able, to the provision of physical therapy services to underserved and underrepresented populations.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Caring and Compassion</b>  Compassion is the desire to identify with or sense something of another's experience; a precursor of caring.	1. Actively listening to the patient/client and considering the patient/client's needs and preferences.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Exhibiting compassion, caring, and empathy in providing services to patients/clients.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Demonstrating respect for others and considering others as unique and of value.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Considering social, emotional, cultural, psychological, environmental, and economic influences of the patient/client (eg, learning styles, language abilities, cognitive abilities and adapting approach accordingly).	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Values-Based Behavior with Definition	Sample Indicators	Self-Assessment Rating				
		1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Occasionally	4 Frequently	5 Always
Caring is the concern, empathy, and consideration for the needs and values of others.	5. Recognizing and refraining from acting on one's social, cultural, gender, and sexual biases; i.e. demonstrate a nonjudgmental attitude.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Continuing Competence</b>  Continuing competence is the lifelong process of maintaining and documenting competence through ongoing self-assessment, development, and implementation of a personal learning plan, and subsequent reassessment.	1. Identifying strengths and limitations in knowledge, skills, and behaviors through self-assessment and feedback from physical therapists and others, and developing and implementing strategies to address the limitations.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Maintaining continuing competence using a variety of lifelong learning strategies (eg, continuing education, reflective journals, journal clubs, and working with a mentor).	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Seeking further education in the use and delivery of interventions based on new evidence as it becomes available.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Developing and implementing a career advancement plan based on interests, opportunities, and career aspirations.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Duty</b>  Duty is the commitment to meeting one's obligations to provide effective physical therapy services to individual patients/clients, to serve the profession, and to positively influence the health of society.	1. Demonstrating behaviors, conduct, actions, attitudes, and values consistent with the roles, responsibilities, and tasks of the PTA.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Facilitating each patient/client's achievement of goals for function, health, and wellness, as directed in the plan of care.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Preserving the safety, security, and confidentiality of individuals in all patient/client contexts.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Participating in quality assurance/quality improvement activities in physical therapy care.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Promoting the profession of physical therapy.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Providing student instruction and mentoring other PTAs.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Values-Based Behavior with Definition	Sample Indicators	Self-Assessment Rating				
		1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Occasionally	4 Frequently	5 Always
<b>Integrity</b>	1. Adhering to applicable laws regarding scope of work, payment policies and guidelines, institutional policies and procedures, and APTA policies, positions, and guidelines to ensure optimal patient/client care and fiscal management.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Adhering to the highest standards of the profession for the PTA, including the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant, Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant, state practice acts, and payment requirements.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Demonstrating the ideals of the values-based behaviors of the PTA.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Demonstrating honesty and trustworthiness in all interactions and relationships.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Choosing employment situations that are congruent with ethical principles and work standards.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Identifying ethical and legal concerns and initiating actions to address the concern, when appropriate.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PT/PTA Collaboration</b> The PT/PTA team works together, within each partner's respective role, to achieve optimal patient/client care and to enhance the overall delivery of physical therapy services.	1. Educating the PT as needed about the roles, responsibilities, and appropriate utilization of the PTA in the PT/PTA team using available resources (e.g., state licensure/practice rules and regulations, PTA clinical problem-solving algorithm, PTA direction and supervision algorithms, Minimum Required Skills of Physical Therapist Assistant Graduates at Entry-Level).	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Promoting a positive working relationship within the PT/PTA team.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Demonstrating respect for the roles and contributions of both the PT and PTA in achieving optimal patient/client care, including the PT's responsibility for the PTA's performance in patient/client interventions.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Seeking out opportunities to collaborate with the PT to improve outcomes in patient/client care.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Working with the PT in educating consumers and other health care providers about physical therapy.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Values-Based Behavior with Definition	Sample Indicators	Self-Assessment Rating				
		1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Occasionally	4 Frequently	5 Always
<b>Responsibility</b>  Responsibility is the active acceptance of the roles, obligations, and actions of the PTA, including behaviors that positively influence patient/client outcomes, the profession, and the health needs of society.	1. Identifying strengths and limitations in knowledge and skill, and working within limitations of personal ability.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Completing patient/client care and other tasks in a timely and efficient manner.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Identifying, acknowledging, and accepting responsibility for actions and, when errors occur, following error reporting processes.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Communicating in a timely manner with others (e.g., PTs, patients/clients, and others).	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Social Responsibility</b>  Social responsibility is the promotion of a mutual trust between the PTA, as a member of the profession, and the larger public that necessitates responding to societal needs for health and wellness.	1. Advocating for patient/client needs in the clinical setting.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Demonstrating behaviors that positively represent the profession to the public.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Promoting a healthy lifestyle, wellness, and injury prevention strategies in the community.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Serving the profession and the community, including activities occurring in conjunction with work or outside of work (eg, community health fairs, National Physical Therapy Month events, APTA service).	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Advocating for changes in laws, regulations, standards, and guidelines that positively affect physical therapy and patient/client services.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



# APTA Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant



## Purpose

The APTA Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant (Guide) is intended to serve physical therapist assistants in interpreting the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant (Standards of Ethical Conduct) of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). The APTA House of Delegates in June of 2009 adopted the revised Standards of Ethical Conduct, which became effective July 1, 2010.

The Guide provides a framework by which physical therapist assistants may determine the propriety of their conduct. It also is intended to guide the development of physical therapist assistant students. The Standards of Ethical Conduct and the Guide apply to all physical therapist assistants. These guidelines are subject to change as the dynamics of the profession change and as new patterns of health care delivery are developed and accepted by the professional community and the public.

## Interpreting the Standards of Ethical Conduct

The interpretations expressed in this Guide reflect the opinions, decisions, and advice of the Ethics and Judicial Committee (EJC). The interpretations are set forth according to topic. These interpretations are intended to assist a physical therapist assistant in applying general ethical standards to specific situations. They address some but not all topics addressed in the Standards of Ethical Conduct and should not be considered inclusive of all situations that could evolve.

This Guide is subject to change, and the Ethics and Judicial Committee will monitor and revise the Guide to address additional topics and standards when and as needed.

## Preamble to the Standards of Ethical Conduct

### The Preamble states as follows:

The Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant (Standards of Ethical Conduct) delineate the ethical obligations of all physical therapist assistants as determined by the House of Delegates of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). The Standards of Ethical Conduct provide a foundation for conduct to which all physical therapist assistants shall adhere. Fundamental to the Standards of Ethical Conduct is the special obligation of physical therapist assistants to enable patients/clients to achieve greater independence, health and wellness, and enhanced quality of life. No document that delineates ethical standards can address every situation. Physical therapist assistants are encouraged to seek advice or consultation in instances where the guidance of the Standards of Ethical Conduct may not be definitive.

**Interpretation:** Upon the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant being amended effective July 1, 2010, all the lettered standards contain the word “shall” and are mandatory ethical obligations. The language contained in the Standards of Ethical Conduct is intended to better explain and further clarify

existing ethical obligations. These ethical obligations predate the revised Standards of Ethical Conduct. Although various words have changed, many of the obligations are the same. Consequently, the addition of the word “shall” serves to reinforce and clarify existing ethical obligations. A significant reason that the Standards of Ethical Conduct were revised was to provide physical therapist assistants with a document that was clear enough to be read on its own without the need to seek extensive additional interpretation.

The Preamble states that “[no document that delineates ethical standards can address every situation.” The Preamble also states that physical therapist assistants “are encouraged to seek additional advice or consultation in instances where the guidance of the Standards of Ethical Conduct may not be definitive.” Potential sources for advice or counsel include third parties and the myriad resources available on the APTA website. Inherent in a physical therapist assistant’s ethical decision-making process is the examination of his or her unique set of facts relative to the Standards of Ethical Conduct.

## Topics

### Respect

#### Standard 1A states as follows:

1A. Physical therapist assistants shall act in a respectful manner toward each person regardless of age, gender, race, nationality, religion, ethnicity, social or economic status, sexual orientation, health condition, or disability.

**Interpretation:** Standard 1A addresses the display of respect toward others. Unfortunately, there is no universal consensus about what respect looks like in every situation. For example, direct eye contact is viewed as respectful and courteous in some cultures and inappropriate in others. It is up to the individual to assess the appropriateness of behavior in various situations.

### Altruism

#### Standard 2A states as follows:

2A. Physical therapist assistants shall act in the best interests of patients/clients over the interests of the physical therapist assistant.

**Interpretation:** Standard 2A addresses acting in the best interest of patients and clients over the interests of the physical therapist assistant. Often this is done without thought, but, sometimes, especially at the end of the day when the clinician is fatigued and ready to go home, it is a conscious decision. For example, the physical therapist assistant may need to make a decision between leaving on time and staying at work longer to see a patient who was 15 minutes late for an appointment.

### Sound Decisions

#### Standard 3C states as follows:

3C. Physical therapist assistants shall make decisions based upon their level of competence and consistent with patient/client values.

**Interpretation:** To fulfill 3C, the physical therapist assistant must be knowledgeable about his or her legal scope of work as well as level of competence. As a physical therapist assistant gains experience and additional knowledge, there may be areas of physical therapy interventions in which he or she displays

advanced skills. At the same time, other previously gained knowledge and skill may be lost due to lack of use. To make sound decisions, the physical therapist assistant must be able to self-reflect on his or her current level of competence.

## Supervision

### Standard 3E states as follows:

3E. Physical therapist assistants shall provide physical therapy services under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist and shall communicate with the physical therapist when patient/client status requires modifications to the established plan of care.

**Interpretation:** Standard 3E goes beyond simply stating that the physical therapist assistant operates under the supervision of the physical therapist. Although a physical therapist retains responsibility for the patient or client throughout the episode of care, this standard requires the physical therapist assistant to take action by communicating with the supervising physical therapist when changes in the individual's status indicate that modifications to the plan of care may be needed. Further information on supervision via APTA policies and resources is available on the APTA website.

## Integrity in Relationships

### Standard 4 states as follows:

4. Physical therapist assistants shall demonstrate integrity in their relationships with patients/clients, families, colleagues, students, other health care providers, employers, payers, and the public.

**Interpretation:** Standard 4 addresses the need for integrity in relationships. This is not limited to relationships with patients and clients but includes everyone physical therapist assistants come into contact with in the normal provision of physical therapist services. For example, demonstrating integrity could encompass working collaboratively with the health care team and taking responsibility for one's role as a member of that team.

## Reporting

### Standard 4C states as follows:

4C. Physical therapist assistants shall discourage misconduct by health care professionals and report illegal or unethical acts to the relevant authority, when appropriate.

**Interpretation:** Physical therapist assistants shall seek to discourage misconduct by health care professionals. Discouraging misconduct can be accomplished through a number of mechanisms. The following is not an exhaustive list:

- Do not engage in misconduct; instead, set a good example for health care professionals and others working in their immediate environment.
- Encourage or recommend to the appropriate individuals that health care and other professionals, such as legal counsel, conduct regular (such as annual) training that addresses federal and state law requirements, such as billing, best practices, harassment, and security and privacy; as such training can educate health care professionals on what to do and not to do.
- Encourage or recommend to the appropriate individuals other types of training that are not law based, such as bystander training.
- Assist in creating a culture that is positive and civil to all.

- If in a management position, consider how promotion and hiring decisions can impact the organization.
- Access professional association resources when considering best practices.
- Revisit policies and procedures each year to remain current.
- 

Many other mechanisms may exist to discourage misconduct. The physical therapist assistant should be creative, open-minded, fair, and impartial in considering how to best meet this ethical obligation. Doing so can actively foster an environment in which misconduct does not occur. The main focus when thinking about misconduct is creating an action plan on prevention. Consider that reporting may never make the alleged victim whole or undo the misconduct.

If misconduct has not been prevented, then reporting issues must be considered. This ethical obligation states that the physical therapist assistant reports to the “relevant authority, when appropriate.” Before examining the meaning of these words it is important to note that reporting intersects with corporate policies and legal obligations. It is beyond the scope of this interpretation to provide legal advice regarding laws and policies; however, an analysis of reporting cannot end with understanding one’s ethical obligations. One may need to seek advice of legal counsel who will take into consideration laws and policies and seek to discover the facts and circumstances.

With respect to ethical obligations, the term “when appropriate” is a fact-based decision and will be impacted by requirements of the law. If a law requires the physical therapist assistant to take an action, then, of course, it is appropriate to do so. If there is no legal requirement and no corporate policy, then the physical therapist assistant must consider what is appropriate given the facts and situation. It may not be appropriate if the physical therapist does not know what occurred, or because there is no legal requirement to act and the physical therapist assistant does not want to assume legal responsibility, or because the matter is being resolved internally. There are many different reasons that something may or may not be appropriate.

If the physical therapist assistant has determined that it is appropriate to report, the ethical obligation requires him or her to consider what entity or person is the “relevant authority.” Relevant authority can be a supervisor, human resources, an attorney, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, the licensing board, the Better Business Bureau, Office of the Insurance Commissioner, the Medicare hotline, the Office of the Inspector General hotline, the US Department of Health and Human Services, an institution using their internal grievance procedures, the Office of Civil Rights, or another federal, state, city, or local agency, or a state or federal court, among others.

Once the physical therapist assistant has decided to report, he or she must be mindful that reporting does not end his or her involvement, which can include office, regulatory, and/or legal proceedings. In this context, the physical therapist assistant may be asked to be a witness, to testify, or to provide written information.

## **Sexual Harassment**

### **Standard 4F states as follows:**

4F. Physical therapist assistants shall not harass anyone verbally, physically, emotionally, or sexually.

**Interpretation:** As noted in the House of Delegates policy titled “Sexual Harassment,” “[m]embers of the association have an obligation to comply with applicable legal prohibitions against sexual harassment....” This statement is in line with Standard 4F that prohibits physical therapist assistants from harassing anyone verbally, physically, emotionally, or sexually. While the standard is clear, it is important for APTA to restate this point, namely that physical therapist assistants shall not harass anyone, period. The association has zero tolerance for any form of harassment, specifically including sexual harassment.

## Exploitation

### Standard 4E states as follows:

4E. Physical therapist assistants shall not engage in any sexual relationship with any of their patients/clients, supervisees, or students.

**Interpretation:** The statement is clear—sexual relationships with their patients or clients, supervisees, or students are prohibited. This component of Standard 4 is consistent with Standard 4B, which states:

4B. Physical therapist assistants shall not exploit persons over whom they have supervisory, evaluative, or other authority (eg, patients and clients, students, supervisees, research participants, or employees).

Consider this excerpt from the EJC Opinion titled Topic: Sexual Relationships With Patients or Former Patients (modified for physical therapist assistants):

A physical therapist [assistant] stands in a relationship of trust to each patient and has an ethical obligation to act in the patient's best interest and to avoid any exploitation or abuse of the patient. Thus, if a physical therapist [assistant] has natural feelings of attraction toward a patient, he or she must sublimate those feelings in order to avoid sexual exploitation of the patient.

One's ethical decision making process should focus on whether the patient or client, supervisee, or student is being exploited. In this context, questions have been asked about whether one can have a sexual relationship once the patient or client relationship ends. To this question, the EJC has opined as follows:

The Committee does not believe it feasible to establish any bright-line rule for when, if ever, initiation of a romantic/sexual relationship with a former patient would be ethically permissible.

The Committee imagines that in some cases a romantic/sexual relationship would not offend ... if initiated with a former patient soon after the termination of treatment, while in others such a relationship might never be appropriate.

## Colleague Impairment

### Standard 5D and 5E state as follows:

5D. Physical therapist assistants shall encourage colleagues with physical, psychological, or substance-related impairments that may adversely impact their professional responsibilities to seek assistance or counsel.

5E. Physical therapist assistants who have knowledge that a colleague is unable to perform their professional responsibilities with reasonable skill and safety shall report this information to the appropriate authority.

**Interpretation:** The central tenet of Standard 5D and 5E is that inaction is not an option for a physical therapist assistant when faced with the circumstances described. Standard 5D states that a physical therapist assistant shall encourage colleagues to seek assistance or counsel while Standard 5E addresses reporting information to the appropriate authority.

5D and 5E both require a factual determination on the physical therapist assistant's part. This may be challenging in the sense that the physical therapist assistant might not know or easily be able to determine whether someone in fact has a physical, psychological, or substance-related impairment. In addition, it might be difficult to determine whether such impairment may be adversely affecting someone's work responsibilities.

Moreover, once the physical therapist assistant does make these determinations, the obligation under 5D centers not on reporting, but on encouraging the colleague to seek assistance, while the obligation under 5E does focus on reporting. But note that 5E discusses reporting when a colleague is unable to perform; whereas, 5D discusses encouraging colleagues to seek assistance when the impairment may adversely affect their professional responsibilities. So, 5D discusses something that may be affecting performance, whereas 5E addresses a situation in which someone clearly is unable to perform. The 2 situations are distinct. In addition, it is important to note that 5E does not mandate to whom the physical therapist assistant reports; it provides discretion to determine the appropriate authority.

The EJC Opinion titled Topic: Topic: Preserving Confidences; Physical Therapist's Reporting Obligation With Respect to Unethical, Incompetent, or Illegal Acts provides further information on the complexities of reporting.

## Clinical Competence

### Standard 6A states as follows:

6A. Physical therapist assistants shall achieve and maintain clinical competence.

**Interpretation:** 6A should cause physical therapist assistants to reflect on their current level of clinical competence, to identify and address gaps in clinical competence, and to commit to the maintenance of clinical competence throughout their career. The supervising physical therapist can be a valuable partner in identifying areas of knowledge and skill that the physical therapist assistant needs for clinical competence and to meet the needs of the individual physical therapist, which may vary according to areas of interest and expertise. Further, the physical therapist assistant may request that the physical therapist serve as a mentor to assist him or her in acquiring the needed knowledge and skills. Additional resources on Continuing Competence are available on the APTA website.

## Lifelong Learning

### Standard 6C states as follows:

6C. Physical therapist assistants shall support practice environments that support career development and lifelong learning.

**Interpretation:** 6C points out the physical therapist assistant's obligation to support an environment conducive to career development and learning. The essential idea here is that the physical therapist assistant encourages and contributes to his or her career development and lifelong learning, whether or not the employer provides support.

## Organizational and Business Practices

### Standard 7 states as follows:

7. Physical therapist assistants shall support organizational behaviors and business practices that benefit patients/clients and society.

**Interpretation:** Standard 7 reflects a shift in the Standards of Ethical Conduct. One criticism of the former version was that it addressed primarily face-to-face clinical practice settings. Accordingly, Standard 7 addresses ethical obligations in organizational and business practices on both patient and client and societal levels.

**Documenting Interventions Standard 7D states as follows:**

7D. Physical therapist assistants shall ensure that documentation for their interventions accurately reflects the nature and extent of the services provided.

**Interpretation:** 7D addresses the need for physical therapist assistants to make sure that they thoroughly and accurately document the interventions they provide to patients and clients and document related data collected from the patient or client. The focus of this Standard is on ensuring documentation of the services rendered, including the nature and extent of such services.

**Support - Health Needs Standard 8A states as follows:**

8A. Physical therapist assistants shall support organizations that meet the health needs of people who are economically disadvantaged, uninsured, and underinsured.

**Interpretation:** 8A addresses the issue of support for those least likely to be able to afford physical therapist services. The standard does not specify the type of support that is required. Physical therapist assistants may express support through volunteerism, financial contributions, advocacy, education, or simply promoting their work in conversations with colleagues. When providing such services, including pro bono services, physical therapist assistants must comply with applicable laws, and as such work under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist. Additional resources on pro bono services are available on the APTA website.

Issued by the Ethics and Judicial Committee  
American Physical Therapy Association October 1981

**Last Amended:** March 2019

**Contact:** [ejc@apta.org](mailto:ejc@apta.org)

## Direction and Supervision of the Physical Therapist Assistant



Last Updated: 08/30/18  
Contact: nationalgovernance@apta.org

**HOD P06-18-28-35** [Amended: HOD P06-05-18-26; HOD 06-00-16-27; HOD 06-99-07-11; HOD 06-96-30-42; HOD 06-95-11-06; HOD 06-93-08-09; HOD 06-85-20-41; Initial: HOD 06-84-16-72/HOD 06-78-22-61/HOD 06-77-19-37] [Position]

Physical therapist practice and the practice of physical therapy are synonymous. Both phrases are inclusive of patient and client management, and direction and supervision. Direction and supervision apply to the physical therapist assistant, who is the only individual who assists a physical therapist in practice. The utilization of other support personnel, whether in the performance of tasks or clerical activities, relates to the efficient operation of the physical therapy service.

Physical therapists are responsible for providing safe, accessible, cost-effective, and evidence-based services. Services are rendered directly by the physical therapist and with responsible utilization of physical therapist assistants. The physical therapist's practice responsibility for patient and client management includes examination, evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis, intervention, and outcomes. Physical therapist assistants may be appropriately utilized in components of intervention and in collection of selected examination and outcomes data.

Direction and supervision are essential in the provision of quality physical therapist services. The degree of direction and supervision necessary for ensuring quality physical therapist services is dependent upon many factors, including the education, experiences, and responsibilities of the parties involved, as well as the organizational structure where physical therapist services are provided.

Regardless of the setting in which the physical therapist service is provided, the following responsibilities must be borne solely by the physical therapist:

1. Interpretation of referrals when available
2. Evaluation, diagnosis, and prognosis
3. Development or modification of a plan of care, which is based on the initial examination or reexamination and includes the physical therapy goals and outcomes



4. Determination of when the expertise and decision-making capability of the physical therapist requires the physical therapist to personally render services and when it may be appropriate to utilize the physical therapist assistant
5. Revision of the plan of care when indicated
6. Conclusion of an episode of care
7. Responsibility for any “hand off” communication
8. Oversight of all documentation for services rendered to each patient or client

Only the physical therapist performs the initial examination and reexamination of the patient and may utilize the physical therapist assistant in collection of selected examination and outcomes data.

The physical therapist is responsible for services provided when the physical therapist’s plan of care involves the physical therapist assistant. Regardless of the setting in which the service is provided, the determination to utilize physical therapist assistants requires the education, expertise, and professional judgment of a physical therapist as described by the *Standards of Practice for Physical Therapy*, the *Code of Ethics for the Physical Therapist*, and the *APTA Guide for Professional Conduct*.

In determining the appropriate extent of assistance from the physical therapist assistant, the physical therapist considers:

- The physical therapist assistant’s education, training, experience, and skill level
- Patient or client criticality, acuity, stability, and complexity
- The predictability of the consequences
- The setting in which the care is being delivered
- Federal and state statutes
- Liability and risk management concerns
- The mission of physical therapist services for the setting
- The needed frequency of reexamination

## Physical Therapist Assistant

### Definition

The physical therapist assistant assists the physical therapist in the provision of physical therapy. The physical therapist assistant is a graduate of a physical therapist assistant program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.

### Utilization

The physical therapist is directly responsible for the actions of the physical therapist assistant in all practice settings. The physical therapist assistant may provide services under the direction and at least general supervision of the physical therapist. In general supervision, the

physical therapist is not required to be on site for direction and supervision but must be available at least by telecommunication. The ability of the physical therapist assistant to provide services shall be assessed on an ongoing basis by the supervising physical therapist. Services provided by the physical therapist assistant must be consistent with safe and legal physical therapist practice and shall be predicated on the following factors: complexity and acuity of the patient's or client's needs; proximity and accessibility to the physical therapist; supervision available in the event of emergencies or critical events; and type of setting in which the service is provided. The physical therapist assistant makes modifications to elements of the intervention either to progress the patient or client as directed by the physical therapist or to ensure patient or client safety and comfort.

When supervising the physical therapist assistant in any offsite setting, the following requirements must be observed:

1. A physical therapist must be accessible by telecommunication to the physical therapist assistant at all times while the physical therapist assistant is providing services to patients and clients.
2. There must be regularly scheduled and documented conferences with the physical therapist assistant regarding patients and clients, the frequency of which is determined by the needs of the patient or client and the needs of the physical therapist assistant.
3. In situations in which a physical therapist assistant is involved in the care of a patient or client, a supervisory visit by the physical therapist:
  - a. Shall be made upon the physical therapist assistant's request for a reexamination, when a change in the plan of care is needed, prior to any planned conclusion of the episode of care, and in response to a change in the patient's or client's medical status
  - b. Shall be made at least once a month, or at a higher frequency when established by the physical therapist, in accordance with the needs of the patient or client
  - c. Shall include:
    - i. An onsite reexamination of the patient or client
    - ii. Onsite review of the plan of care with appropriate revision or termination
    - iii. Evaluation of need and recommendation for utilization of outside resources

**Explanation of Reference Numbers:**

HOD P00-00-00-00 stands for House of Delegates/month/year/page/vote in the House of Delegates minutes; the "P" indicates that it is a position (see below). For example, HOD P06-17-05-04 means that this position can be found in the June 2017 House of Delegates minutes on Page 5 and that it was Vote 4.

P: Position | S: Standard | G: Guideline | Y: Policy | R: Procedure

## **Videotape/Photograph Consent Form**

### **Rowan-Cabarrus Community College Physical Therapist Assistant Program Videotape/Photograph Consent**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ give Rowan-Cabarrus Community College PTA Program consent to videotape/photograph/audiotape me during classroom, lab or off campus education experiences for educational purposes. This consent form will remain in effect for my tenure in the RCCC PTA Program.

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Student Name Printed

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Student Signature

Date

## **Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk**

### **Rowan-Cabarrus Community College Physical Therapist Assistant Program Written Authorization for Use as Human Subject**

Research or other activities conducted under the jurisdiction of Rowan-Cabarrus Community College shall not expose persons who participate as subjects or respondents to unreasonable risks to their health, general wellbeing, or privacy. All activities or projects involving human subjects are subject to review to ensure the protection of the rights and welfare of the individuals who participate as subjects. All responses will be confidential and only the department chair and research personnel will have access to these data. After the data are used for purposes described, they will be destroyed. The information from all the participants will be grouped together to provide general information about the program.

As a component of the educational experience of some instructional programs, students and faculty may be required to practice procedures and perform measurements on individuals within the program, the college, or the community as indicated by the curriculum. Students and faculty may be required to participate in activities and/or simulations will sign a written authorization for use as a human subject. To ensure the safety of all persons involved, the authorization form will require disclosure of any limitations, which might affect participation in such activities and/or simulations.

Procedures and techniques learned in instructional programs may only be used to treat patients in a clinical setting under the direction of a licensed/certified practitioner. Except for legally authorized practitioners, students and faculty members may not diagnose or treat medical/dental conditions of fellow students, faculty members, or others. Students learning procedures and techniques in the academic setting may practice these skills during assigned classroom/laboratory/clinical hours and during supervised open laboratory/clinical sessions.

Students or faculty members who fail to comply with this policy will be subject to disciplinary action that may include suspension from the program or dismissal from employment.

**Written authorization for use as a human subject:**

**I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in activities and/or simulations in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program that may involve the performance of medical procedures and measurements on me by fellow students and/or faculty.**

**I have the following limitations that might affect participation in such activities or simulations:**

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Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Verification of Receipt and Declaration of Intent to Comply with the Physical Therapist Assistant Student Handbook

I, the undersigned, have received a copy of the *PTA Program Student Handbook*. My signature acknowledges that the information contained within has been explained to me and that I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the content. I understand that I will be held accountable for the expectations of students delineated within this handbook and the *College Student Handbook* as stated or implied. I agree to comply with the policies and procedures. Furthermore, I understand that from time to time changes may be made to the handbook and that if this occurs I will receive a written addendum and may be asked to sign to acknowledge receipt, understanding, and compliance if warranted.

My signature below confirms that I:

- Did receive a copy of the *Rowan-Cabarrus Community College Physical Therapist Assistant Student Handbook*.
- Understand that I am expected to comply with the policies and regulations in this handbook
- Understand that I am expected to comply with policies and regulations in *Rowan-Cabarrus Community College General Catalog and Student Handbook*
- Understand that if I fail to comply with the policies and regulations the result could be my withdrawal (dismissal) from the program
- Understand that if I have questions about any policy or regulation, I should seek advice from the Physical Therapist Assistant Program Director or Student Services staff.
- Understand that I may be asked to submit to drug and alcohol testing.

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_