

University of Wisconsin – La Crosse

Physical Therapy Program

Policies Manual

Department of Health Professions

Approved by Program Faculty:
Approved by College Dean:

October 21, 2022
November 30, 2017

1. ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION

A. Vision Statement

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Physical Therapy Program will be a recognized leader in evidence-based, clinically integrated, physical therapy education through collaboration among uniquely specialized professionals and institutions, serving a variety of student and community populations and the physical therapy profession.

B. Mission Statement

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Physical Therapy Program will graduate Doctors of Physical Therapy who become licensed physical therapists competent in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of movement dysfunction, and who enhance the health and functional well-being of the communities they serve in the State of Wisconsin and beyond.

C. Philosophy

The faculty believes physical therapy education is complex, involving the student, faculty, academic institution, and professional community. The faculty further believes that the learning environment must be learner-centered to maximize the student's performance based on their wide array of desires, past experiences, and learning capabilities. Therefore, the program promotes teaching styles that encourage active learning and student ownership of their success.

Professionalism is central to the educational process and will be modeled for and developed in physical therapy students as an integral part of their academic and clinical education. Therefore, the program promotes inclusion of professional behaviors into the curriculum as a required component for all academic and clinical courses.

Physical therapists are direct-access clinicians providing specialized care to optimize movement and improve the human experience. Therefore, the program uses a model where curricular content centered on strong foundational sciences is integrated with evidence-based clinical practice to promote clinician development based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health for patient management.

D. Program Goals

In order to execute the mission statement that is consistent with the faculty philosophy on physical therapy education, the following goals have been established:

1. Recruit applicants from a variety of academic and geographic backgrounds.
2. Matriculate highly qualified applicants who demonstrate outstanding potential for success in academic, clinical and other professional environments.
3. Engage proficient students to completion of the program.
4. Develop contemporary practitioners who possess knowledge and skills necessary for entry-level practice of physical therapy.

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5. Develop Physical Therapists who display the core values of professionalism and professional behaviors consistent with expectations of a doctoring professional.
6. Faculty will possess a variety of educational credentials and specializations who demonstrate effective teaching and serve as professional role models.
7. Faculty will contribute to evidence-based practice through faculty and student scholarly activity.
8. Faculty will facilitate lifelong learning within the physical therapy community.

Student Learning Outcomes:

The DPT graduates will:

1. practice professionalism as observed through their ethical, moral and legal actions.
2. display cultural competence through their words and actions.
3. examine patients of all ages by obtaining a history, performing a systems review, and administering selected tests and measures.
4. evaluate data from the examination in order to render evidence based clinical decisions and determine a diagnosis that guides patient/client management.
5. prepare a patient plan of care that is safe, effective, considers available resources, and client centered.
6. perform physical therapy interventions and monitor patient outcomes.
7. promote prevention, health and wellness at the individual, community, and societal level.
8. display ability to utilize information technology to access scientific literature to support clinical decisions.

E. Policies Adoption

The policies in this document were adopted by the members of the physical therapy program and are consistent with the Department of Health Professions Bylaws, University of Wisconsin System and University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Faculty and Academic Staff Personnel Rules. This manual will be reviewed on an annual basis to facilitate maintenance of current policies that support strategic plans of the Program.

1. **Policy Amendments:** Changes to these policies may be adopted if supported by two-thirds majority of the program voting membership (as defined in Section 1. H.). The vote will occur after two readings of the amendment(s) at two different program meetings. Both meetings must be announced at least five (5) days in advance of the meetings.
2. **Informational Updates:** The Policies and Procedures Committee of the Physical Therapy Program (See Section 2. E. 1. c.) is empowered to make corrective updates to informational items within the Policies Manual; such as: corrections to spelling and grammatical errors, new webpage addresses and re-titled referenced governing documents; without consultation or approval of the program faculty. However, to become effective, these changes must be announced at a regular program faculty meeting and documented within the minutes of that meeting. Objection by one of the

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voting membership (as defined in Section 1. H.) to this announcement will require that the proposed change be subjected to the regular amendment process (Section 1. E. 1.).

F. Procedures Manual

Procedures on how to follow the policies outlined within this Policies Manual are described with the **Physical Therapy Program: Procedures Manual**, which exists as a separate document.

1. **Amendment to the Procedures Manual:** Proposed changes to the Procedures Manual must be announced at least five (5) days prior to their consideration at a regular meeting of the program faculty. After appropriate discussion, amendments to the Procedures Manual will be approved by majority vote (50%+1) of the voting members present.
2. **Informational Updates:** The Policies and Procedures Committee of the Physical Therapy Program (See Section 2. D. 1. B.) is empowered to make corrective updates to informational items within the Procedures Manual; such as: corrections to spelling and grammatical errors, new webpage addresses and re-titled referenced governing documents; without consultation or approval of the program faculty. However, to become effective, these changes must be announced at a regular program faculty meeting and documented within the minutes of that meeting. Objection by one of the voting membership (as defined in Section 1. H.) to this announcement will require that the proposed change be subjected to the regular amendment process (Section 1. F. 1.).

G. Faculty

1. **Definition of Faculty:** The physical therapy program utilizes both tenure-track faculty and instructional academic staff for instructional roles. The distinction for individuals within these categories is based on the position description used in hiring the individual filling that position.

Faculty and Instructional Academic Staff will have identical rights and privileges within the Physical Therapy Program, unless those rights and privileges are specifically limited by higher university authority.

Within this document, and all other official governing documents of the UW-L Physical Therapy Program, the term “faculty” will be used as a designation for all faculty and instructional academic staff with voting privileges within the program membership unless specifically stated otherwise.

2. **Associated Faculty:** Associated faculty (as defined by the *Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education* [CAPTE] <https://www.capteonline.org/globalassets/capte-docs/2024-capte-pt-standards-required-elements.pdf>) and clinical peers who serve other supportive roles are utilized to enhance the curriculum and supplement the faculty workload. These persons are not expected to participate at those meetings or to serve as program committee members. These persons are not normally included within the definition of “faculty” as provide above (Section 1. G. 1.). The

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faculty privileges of these individuals may also be enhanced or restricted on a case-by-case basis as determined by the program leadership based upon the availability of resources.

- 3. Clinical Instructors/Educators:** These persons provide direct supervision of students during the clinical learning experience. These persons do not participate in program governance, and therefore are not included within the definition of “faculty” as provided above (Section 1. G. 1.). Other specific privileges and responsibilities are described within individual clinical affiliate contractual agreements with the university, which are informed by APTA guidelines.

H. Physical Therapy Program Membership and Voting Privileges

Voting members of the program shall include all program faculty who have 50% or more Full Time Equivalent (FTE) program appointments as defined by the Health Professions Department and the College of Science and Health. Other faculty appointed in the program are welcome to participate in program meetings and discussions but are not voting members of the program.

Associated faculty, clinical peers who serve other supportive roles and clinical instructors/educators will not have voting privileges within the program. They may, however, be called upon to serve in an advisory capacity during program discussion as needed.

2. PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

A. Faculty Members

Individual faculty have the ultimate decision on developing a grading scale that is appropriate for their courses. These expectations will be made clear in the syllabi in each class. Nonetheless, faculty are expected to follow the expectations of the Department of Health Professions Bylaws in concert with the expectations put forth by Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). CAPTE Standards and Required Elements for Accreditation of Physical Therapist Education Programs; 4A-F for core faculty. <https://www.capteonline.org/globalassets/capte-docs/2024-capte-pt-standards-required-elements.pdf>

Faculty are required to develop and maintain an active program of scholarship. Scholarship exemplifies one fundamental tenet in the health professions – evidence-based practice. It also is an indicator of professional competency and enables faculty to be perceived as role models for their students.

B. Program Leadership

The physical therapy faculty will offer recommendations when leadership vacancies exist or when a change in leadership or leadership model is considered to benefit the program. Based upon consultation with the program faculty, the College Dean appoints the Program Director and any other program leadership positions as may be deemed prudent. The duties and qualifications of the program leadership must be consistent with requirements described in the CAPTE Standards and Required Elements for Accreditation of Physical Therapist Education Programs; (4G,H) for Program Director and

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(4I,J) for Director of Clinical Education. <https://www.capteonline.org/globalassets/capte-docs/2024-capte-pt-standards-required-elements.pdf>

C. Evaluation

1. **Faculty and the program leadership:** will be evaluated annually consistent with the Health Professions Department bylaws (Section 4.0 Annual Evaluation and Merit Review) and CAPTE.
2. **Associated faculty, lab instructors, unit instructors or other supportive roles:** will have a regular evaluation to address identified needs. The program director/s (or designee) will provide feedback to the associated faculty member upon the conclusion of the course as needed to be used in their professional development.
3. **Program Assessment:** The program engages in an ongoing formal assessment consistent with evaluative standards/elements received from CAPTE Standards and Required Elements for Accreditation of Physical Therapist Education Programs; (2A,B) <https://www.capteonline.org/globalassets/capte-docs/2024-capte-pt-standards-required-elements.pdf> and from the College of Science and Health <https://www.uwlax.edu/csh/resources-for-facultystaff/assessment/> .
4. **Strategic Planning:** Physical Therapy program strategic planning will take place annually to evaluate goals related to 1) teaching and learning, 2) scholarship, 3) service and 4) program infrastructure. The strategic plan will be informed by the curricular review, program outcomes assessment, institutional priorities and needs of the program, faculty and students. CAPTE Standards and Required Elements for Accreditation of Physical Therapist Education Programs; (2D) <https://www.capteonline.org/globalassets/capte-docs/2024-capte-pt-standards-required-elements.pdf>

D. Complaints Concerning the Program

Procedures for filing a formal complaint against the program will be made easily available to the public.

E. Program Committees

The program will establish standing committees. Task forces may be established for specific short term charges. Charges will be given to each standing committee/ task force by the program leadership or by faculty consensus. A charge will contain specific program goal(s) and the expected date for completion. Committee/ task force updates will occur regularly within faculty meetings. The program leadership will solicit and collect a report that summarizes the business of each standing committee at the end of each academic year.

1. The Standing Physical Therapy Program Committees are:

a. Curriculum Review Committee

Purpose: To assess proposals for new courses or changes in existing courses and evaluate the outcomes of those changes. The committee will also facilitate course reviews by faculty and maintain the curriculum grid/matrix.

Function: The committee will meet as often as needed to accomplish the goals established. Committee updates will be provided periodically within program faculty meetings and comments will be solicited from individual members of the program faculty as needed.

b. Assessment and Outcomes Committee

Purpose: To provide a systematic ongoing assessment of the UW-L Physical Therapy program (curriculum, program and strategic planning), to make recommendations based on the findings, and evaluate the outcomes of those changes. The committee will annually organize and conduct a comprehensive Curriculum Review, Programmatic outcomes, complete accreditation reports and university assessments (APR and Taskstream).

Function: The committee will meet as often as needed to accomplish the goals established. Committee updates will be provided periodically within the program faculty meetings and comments will be solicited from individual members of the program faculty as needed. Additionally, the committee will implement recommendations and monitor outcomes based on the program faculty review.

Members: Standing members will consist of the Program Director and Director of Clinical Education.

c. Policies and Procedures Committee

Purpose: to be responsible for periodic review of all governing documents with the aim of ensuring consistency and clarity. The committee will provide recommendations to remedy inconsistencies when they are found.

Function: Perform a regular annual review of the Policies Manual, Procedures Manual and Student Handbook to maintain updated and effective manuals with respect to program governance.

d. Admissions Committee

Purpose: to be responsible for all matters related to the creation and implementation of criteria for the selection of students into the professional program. In addition, the committee will coordinate with the University offices that maintain primary responsibility for recruiting students.

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Function: Review student files and perform an annual review to maintain updated and effective policies and procedures regarding the admission and recruitment processes. The Admissions Committee will have the sole responsibility in selecting students for admission into the Physical Therapy Program based upon admission standards outlined in the Procedures Manual and the requirements described in the CAPTE Standards and Required Elements for Accreditation of Physical Therapist Education Programs. Section 2D.

<https://www.capteonline.org/globalassets/capte-docs/2024-capte-pt-standards-required-elements.pdf>

e. Scholarship Committee

Purpose: to fairly and objectively award PT Program/UW-L Foundation scholarships consistent with donors' wishes and UW-L Foundation procedures.

Functions: Maintain and manage scholarships to:

- i. Further the purposes and objectives of the program,
- ii. Collaborate with the Alumni Relations and Development Committee and UW-L Foundation to develop additional funding for scholarships for students,
- iii. Provide oversight in the awarding of scholarships and the distribution of monies.

f. Alumni Relations and Development Committee

Purpose: to develop and maintain interactive communication/relationships between the UW-L Physical Therapy Program and the graduates of the program and clinical community. To promote fundraising and encourage other professional contributions.

Functions:

- i. Assist in the maintenance of an accurate alumni database,
- ii. Foster regular communication with alumni through printed materials or electronic / social media,
- iii. Serve as a communication extension of the External Education Committee
- iv. Collaborate with the UW-L Foundation to identify sources of additional financial and professional resources needed to benefit the PT Program and students.

g. External Education Committee

Purpose: To coordinate and lead opportunities for students, faculty, alumni, and other members of the profession to engage in educational events external to the PT program core curriculum. The primary focus of the committee will include traditional continuing education offerings, domestic and international service-learning opportunities, and domestic and international collaboration and exchange programs.

Functions:

- i. Collaborate with campus stakeholders to organize and coordinate continuing education activities,

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- ii. Collaborate with the office of International Education to develop and maintain international partners and experiences,
- iii. Establish and maintain a recurring service-learning opportunity within the field of physical therapy,
- iv. Work with program leadership to develop funding for service-learning.

2. Committee Membership: At the end of each academic year, the program leadership will have final responsibility to determine committee assignments. These determinations will be completed with input from all members of the faculty. No faculty can be required to remain on one committee for longer than a term of two years; however, faculty preference and program needs would allow a committee member to remain on a standing committee for longer than a period of two years. It is recommended that committee assignments be changed periodically to insure that all program faculty members gain awareness of committee roles and responsibilities and provide active input in the development of committee recommendations over time.

3. Responsibilities of Committee Members: The Committee Chair will determine meeting dates and times, set agenda for meetings, generate minutes of meeting, and post minutes for program faculty access. Additional committee members will participate actively in the committee activities and will contribute substantively to achieve progress toward development of committee recommendations.

3. STUDENT RELATED POLICIES

A. Admission and Retention

It is the policy of University of Wisconsin Physical Therapy Program that every person is given equal opportunity and that all decisions that impact a student's relationship to the program will be made without regard to age, sex, sexual orientation, race, national origin, color, creed, religion, or marital status in a manner that is consistent with University Policies and required elements outlined within the CAPTE Standards and Required Elements for Accreditation of Physical Therapist Education Programs. Section 5A. <https://www.capteonline.org/globalassets/capte-docs/2024-capte-pt-standards-required-elements.pdf>

University of Wisconsin Physical Therapy Program will consider for admission all persons who have a bachelor's degree or higher. The program may also consider for admission those students enrolled in an approved UW-La Crosse dual degree program (see UW-L Graduate Catalog). Details on the collection and use of additional admission criteria and evaluation standards will be outlined within the Physical Therapy Program Procedures Manual.

It is the policy of the Physical Therapy Program that all applicants and enrolled students must meet and adhere to a set of Technical Standards of Practice (Physical Therapy Program Procedures Manual, Appendix C) to ensure the safe and effective practice of the skills of a student physical therapist in training.

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The policy of the Admissions Committee is to not exceed 45 students who receive an offer for admission to the program. The Admissions Committee will adjust the number of students offered admission if extenuating circumstances are present.

B. Grading System for Coursework

The individual program faculty have the ultimate decision on developing a grading scale that is appropriate for their courses. These expectations will be made clear in the syllabi in each class.

C. Student Progression and/or Dismissal

1. **Student Progression:** Faculty will, as a group, periodically monitor and assess student progression within the Physical Therapy program with respect to academic performance and development of professional behaviors.
 - a. **Student Dismissal:** A student may be dismissed from program for poor academic performance, lack of progress toward degree, or failure to meet Graduate School or program requirements <http://catalog.uwlax.edu/graduate/academicpolicies/academiceligibility/#probation-retention>
Recommendation for dismissal may be initiated for students who fail to demonstrate expected levels professional behaviors, as regularly assessed by program faculty.
2. **Student Readmission:** Students who have been dismissed or have withdrawn from the program for personal or medical reasons, may petition for readmission. Readmission must follow guidelines set forth within the Graduate School Catalog <http://catalog.uwlax.edu/graduate/academicpolicies/academiceligibility/#readmission-after-dismissal>

Readmission may be made conditional upon student fulfilling specific conditions relevant to the student's circumstances. Upon considering the petition, the student's readmission may be granted by a majority vote of the faculty present.

A student will not be reinstated if they have been out of the program for more than three full semesters or one calendar year. If a student remains out of the program for more than one calendar year, the student will have to apply to the program as a new student. If accepted, the student would be required to repeat all professional course work previously taken or show evidence that the student is competent in any academic or clinical course.

D. Potential Health Risks

In the course of Physical Therapy education, the potential for health risks may exist. All faculty will inform students of the risk for potential harm which may come to them within the context of their courses.

4. GOVERNING PRIORITIES

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The conduct and responsibilities of the faculty in the Physical Therapy program are governed at multiple levels within the university organization. Each level can be associated with its own governing document. These documents are frequently updated on differing schedules and so contradictions between governing documents may occur. When those contradictions are encountered, the following order of precedence will apply:

A. Order of Precedence

1. University Governance, to include the governing documents of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Faculty Senate, specifically the Articles of Faculty Organization, Faculty Senate By-Laws, and the Faculty Senate Policies (<https://www.uwlax.edu/faculty-senate/articles-bylaws-and-policies/>)
2. The Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education Standards and Required Elements for Accreditation of Physical Therapist Education Programs.
<https://www.capteonline.org/globalassets/capte-docs/2024-capte-pt-standards-required-elements.pdf>
3. College Governance, to include the [Articles of Faculty Organization College of Science and Health](#)
4. Department Governance, as outlined within the [By-Laws of the Health Professions Department](#)
5. Program Governance, as described within this document – Physical Therapy Program Policies Manual.
6. Program Governance as described with the Physical Therapy Program Procedures Manual.
7. Student Governance, as described within the Physical Therapy Program Student Handbook and Clinical Education Manual

B. Hyperlinks

All hyperlinks and webpage references contained within this document are for informational purposes only and have no official standing within this document. Instead, the most recent version of the mentioned document should be consulted, which may not be the document found at the provided web address.