



**FRANCISCAN MISSIONARIES OF OUR LADY UNIVERSITY**  
**Physical Therapist Assistant Program**  
**Core Performance Standards for Admission and Progression**

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!**

Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University's (FranU) Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program has a responsibility to prepare highly skilled professionals and integrated thinkers to become future physical therapist assistants. All graduates of the program must have knowledge, skills and attitudes required to function in a wide variety of clinical situations and provide care to diverse patient populations. These Core Performance Standards are designed to ensure the graduation of capable and ethical servant leaders who are valued contributors to the health professions and to the community.

The PTA Program complies with the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, Section 504, and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In doing so, the PTA Program acknowledges that a number of individuals with disability are qualified to study and practice physical therapy skills given reasonable accommodations. To be qualified for the study of physical therapy, those individuals must be able to meet the Program's academic and core performance standards with or without reasonable accommodations. Accommodations assist students with disabilities to meet standards by providing them equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of each course or clinical experience.

Each student is responsible for assessing his or her ability to meet these standards prior to enrollment in and throughout progression within the PTA curriculum. Students may be required to consult a physician (at his/her own expense) if there is any risk to the safety of the student or the patients treated by the student. The student must obtain an official accommodations report from the Department of Student Services prior to each semester enrolled within the PTA program. It is the responsibility of the student and it is in the student's best interest to report **ANY** circumstance in which accommodations or special considerations are needed to the course faculty or program director as soon as possible.

**Description of Core Performance Standards**

The following skills apply to all candidates applying for admission into the PTA Program. The PTA program must ensure that patients are not placed in jeopardy by students with impaired intellectual, physical or emotional functions. Students seeking admission into the PTA program will be evaluated based on their academic record and their physical and emotional capabilities to meet the full requirements of the PTA curricula and to graduate and practice according to the skills and capacities expected of a physical therapist assistant. The Program must preserve the integrity of the curriculum by preserving the standards deemed essential to the education of a student seeking a physical therapist assistant degree.

The following descriptions of the core performance standards for the PTA program are not intended to be all inclusive, but rather represent a basic understanding of each standard. These standards should be read and carefully considered. It is the responsibility of the student to seek further clarification of each standard if needed or to seek additional guidance if they suspect any of the Core Performance Standards may be challenging to meet at the required level.



### Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

***Critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgement; sufficient powers of intellect to acquire, assimilate, integrate, and apply information to solve problems.***

- Assess patient readiness for physical therapy interventions
- Implement therapeutic interventions to a patient/client autonomously based on the therapist's plan of care, patient's goals, fitness level, desired outcomes, and previous level of function
- Assess patient response to physical therapy interventions
- Identify changes in patient response to physical therapy over time and make modifications as needed within the physical therapist's plan of care
- Respond instantly, appropriately and responsibly to emergency situations
- Practice within the guidelines directing physical therapist assistant behaviors in response to legal, ethical or moral dilemmas
- Recognize patients who require medical attention outside of the scope of physical therapist practice

### Cognitive Skills

***Sufficient memory to retain information of previously learned materials for future application. Adequate comprehension and follow through when provided with instruction through written, verbal or gesture format. The ability to apply previous educational experiences in new and concrete situations, leading to improved organization and synthesis of facts and concepts.***

- Comprehend, integrate and synthesize a large body of knowledge in a short period of time
- Utilize knowledge of natural, clinical and social sciences to provide appropriate interventions in a clinical setting
- Gather appropriate information during patient intervention in order to make clinical decisions appropriate within the scope of practice of a PTA
- Appraise information and determine appropriate measurements to be taken during an episode of care
- Assess the information gleaned from patient/client performance measurements in order to progress interventions appropriately within the written plan of care
- Acknowledge limitation of knowledge and/or performance in order to provide safe, effective patient/client care
- Prescribe therapeutic home programs as indicated by the results of the physical therapist's examination, utilizing a variety of instructional methods for patients, clients, family members or caregivers
- Self-reflect on performance to accurately assess own professional strengths and weaknesses
- Develop a plan to address professional areas of weakness



## Communication

**Abilities sufficient for non-offending interactions with others in verbal, non-verbal and written form.**

- Express ideas and feelings clearly
- Demonstrate willingness and ability to give and receive feedback
- Listen actively in order to receive and interpret oral communication
- Communicate effectively and sensitively in English with other students, faculty, patients, patient's family or other professionals
- Demonstrate interpersonal skills as needed for productive classroom discussion, respectful interaction with classmates and faculty, and development of appropriate patient-therapist relationships
- Communicate clearly and audibly during interactions with classmates, professors, patients, patient's family, and other members of the health care team
- Elicit appropriate information from patients or caregivers
- Communicate complex findings in appropriate terms to patients, caregivers and other members of the health care team
- Receive, write and interpret written communication in both the academic and clinical setting in a timely manner
- Read and record observations and plans legibly, efficiently and accurately in documents such as the patient's written or electronic medical record
- Complete written assignments
- Establish rapport with client, patients, caregivers and colleagues
- Observe patients for the purpose of eliciting information, accurately describing changes in facial expression, mood, posture and other non-verbal communication
- Use appropriate therapeutic communication, such as attending, clarifying, coaching, facilitating and touching

## Behavioral and Social

***Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, cultural, intellectual or religious backgrounds. Possession and exhibition of sufficient psychological equilibrium, motivation, and flexibility to function in new and stressful environments. Begin each one with an action verb!***

- Responds appropriately to direction and supervision from the physical therapist and function as an effective team member
- Demonstrates appreciation and respect for individual, social and cultural differences in fellow students, professional colleagues, patients, and caregivers



- Demonstrates appreciation that his or her values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and experiences affect his or her perceptions and relationships with others
- Demonstrates appropriate behaviors and attitudes to protect the safety, confidentiality and well-being of patients, self and classmates
- Demonstrates the ability to appropriately handle situations which may be physically, emotional or intellectually stressful, including situations which must be handled swiftly and calmly
- Demonstrates the ability to adjust to changing situations and uncertainty in an academic or clinical environment
- Demonstrates the attributes of accountability, altruism, compassion, caring, excellence, integrity, professional duty, social responsibility, flexibility, empathy and motivation
- Responds appropriately to constructive feedback and modify behaviors as necessary
- Demonstrates the ability to maintain mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients, students, faculty, staff and other professionals in the academic and clinic environments
- Demonstrates the ability to reason morally and practice physical therapy in an ethical manner
- Exhibits the willingness to learn and abide by the professional standards of practice
- Exhibits the ability to be self-reflective
- Exhibits the ability to be assertive and takes initiative when appropriate
- Demonstrates the ability to delegate or direct others and function effectively as part of a health care team

### **Gross and Fine Motor Skills**

***Physical ability sufficient to move from room to room, maneuver in small places, and physical endurance needed to carry out physical therapy interventions and procedures. Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective patient care.***

- Assume and maintain a variety of positions, including but not limited to sitting and standing, squatting, kneeling, reaching, walking, stair climbing and movement of the trunk and neck in all directions
- Perform material handling and manipulation of objects of various sizes and weights including lifting and transferring patient/clients, guarding patients/clients during gait training on level and unlevel surfaces (ramps, stairs), pushing and pulling to provide resistance and assisting and maneuvering patients/clients
  - Safely lift up to 50 pounds independently
  - Safely lift up to 200 pounds with assistance
  - Safely push or pull up to 200 pounds occasionally
- Utilize strong bilateral grip during joint mobilizations or manually resisted exercise



- Utilize bilateral fine motor control to manipulate testing instruments, equipment, writing instruments, or computers
- Balance self and provide support to patients/clients on a variety of surfaces in a variety of positions (standing, sitting, kneeling, etc.) while moving your head or neck as needed
- Manually palpate various body structures during measurement and intervention procedures
- Perform a variety of endurance activities for up to 8-12 hours with occasional rest breaks. These include the ability to:
  - Sit for 2-10 hours daily, stand for 1-2 hours daily and walk or travel for 2 hours daily
  - Frequently lift 10 pounds and occasionally lift weights between 1-50 pounds
  - Occasionally carry up to 25 pounds while walking up to 50 feet
  - Frequently exert up to 75 pounds of push/pull forces for up to 50 feet, and occasionally exert 200 pounds for this distance
  - Frequently turn, bend, stoop or squat
  - Occasionally crawl, reach above shoulder level and kneel
  - Frequently change position and location at speeds that permit safe handling of patients/clients
  - Frequently stand and walk while providing support to a patient/client with a disability
  - Continuously use both hands repetitively with a firm grasp and manual dexterity skills
  - Frequently coordinate verbal and manual activities with gross motor activities
- Respond quickly to emergency situations by lifting/pushing /pulling patients/clients and applying sufficient force through your hands to apply CPR or assist with transporting patients/clients

#### **Visual Integration (Observation Skills)**

***Sufficient visual acuity, attention span and observation of events occurring in or outside of your immediate field of focus; to identify actions requiring appropriate response to ensure patient/client or staff safety.***

- Observe audiovisual presentations, written materials, laboratory demonstrations and procedures
- Accurately observe a patient's or client's activity or behaviors during an intervention
- Observe changes in patient or client status, which may require modification of activity or intervention such as, but not limited to: skin color, breathing quality or regularity, heart rate, skin temperature, muscle tone, and facial expressions
- Accurately monitor dials, displays and equipment used in the treatment of patients including exercise equipment and electrical modalities
- Gather information from equipment and patient charts such as ECG and radiographs



**Sensation**

***Sufficient use of the senses of hearing, touch and smell to observe and effectively assess those patients/clients close at hand, or at a distance in all physical therapy classroom and clinical settings.***

- Effectively perform auscultation/auditory evaluation inclusive of, but not limited to lung, heart, apical pulse, blood pressure and joint or prosthetic noises
- Respond appropriately to environmental cues such as phones, paging systems, monitors and verbal communication in a setting with competing ambient noises
- Accurately collect a patient's or client's subjective information
- Utilize appropriate tactile feedback related to safe and accurate application of procedures such as palpation, massage, soft tissue mobilization and manual muscle testing

***By signing the Core Performance Standards for Admission and Progression, I acknowledge that I have read, understand and sufficiently meet each of the Core Performance Standards for Admission and Progression within the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.***

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Printed Name

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Date

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Signature

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Witness Signature