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Policy on Student Compliance with Technical Standards

The Doctor of Physical Therapy education program in the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions at Creighton University prepares physical therapists to serve as primary providers of physical therapy care. In order to function as a clinical physical therapist, an individual must be able to meet certain physical, emotional, intellectual and communication expectations for performance. Physical therapy education requires the accumulation of scientific knowledge as well as the simultaneous acquisition and demonstration of psychomotor skills and professional attitudes and behaviors. The faculty is committed to an educational environment where students may “identify, define and grow to fulfill the responsibilities of a professional within society” (Program Philosophy).

The purpose of technical standards is to delineate the psychomotor, cognitive and affective skills and abilities deemed essential for matriculation into, continuation in and completion of the educational program. Technical standards are necessary to create specific expectations for student performance in the classroom, laboratory and clinical education environments. Technical standards must be met with or without reasonable accommodations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Psychomotor Skills/ Observation

The student must possess sufficient sensory and motor function to independently perform a physical therapy examination and intervention utilizing procedures including observation, palpation, auscultation, percussion, manual assistance and manual resistance. In general, this requires functional use of vision, hearing and somatic sensation including the ability to perceive position, pressure, movement, weight and vibration. Examples of specific observation skills include examination of non-verbal patient communication, skin integrity, radiographic findings, graphic representations of data, changes in body position/movement and gauges on equipment. A student must be able to respond to occurrences such as a patient calling, warning calls from anyone and machine alarms. In the classroom, a student must be able to independently observe and participate in laboratory dissection of cadavers, the microscopic analysis of tissues, and lecture and laboratory demonstrations in all courses.

A student must be able to perform motor movements required to provide general and emergency care to all patients. These skills necessitate coordination of gross and fine movement of the trunk and limbs, equilibrium, strength and the integrated use of touch and vision/hearing. Examples of specific motor abilities include writing or use of a keyboard, performance of gait training using therapeutic aids and orthoses, manual mobilization techniques, non-surgical wound debridement, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and lifting/moving a patient on a bed/mat or during an assisted transfer between surfaces. A student must be able to possess a level of physical endurance to function under

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physically challenging workloads or in stressful environments.

Communication

A student must be able to understand and effectively communicate in English with patients, their families and other healthcare professionals. A student must be able to understand and communicate in both written and spoken forms and demonstrate the ability to use therapeutic communication to attend, clarify, coach, facilitate and touch during the patient-provider encounter.

Conceptual/ Integrative Abilities

To effectively solve problems, a student must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize information in a timely manner. For example, a student must be able to synthesize knowledge and integrate relevant aspects of the patient history and examination findings in order to develop an accurate physical therapy diagnosis and determine the appropriate intervention within reasonable time constraints imposed by the needs of the patient, the facility and the standards of care.

Behavior, Social Skills and Professionalism

Empathy, integrity, honesty, concern for others, good interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all required personal qualities. A student must possess the emotional health necessary for the full use of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment (including the maintenance of patient confidentiality), prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to course assignments and the development of mature, sensitive and effective patient relationships. This requires the ability of the student to be aware of and appropriately react to one's own immediate emotional responses. A student is expected to be able to accept and reflect upon appropriate suggestions and criticisms and, if necessary, respond by modifying personal behaviors. Students should also conduct themselves at all times in a manner consistent with the American Physical Therapy Association Code of Ethics and Guide for Professional Conduct.

Approved by Physical Therapy Faculty on 12/7/10