

NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE



A.S. PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025 - 2026

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For NWFSC's Title IX procedure, [click here](#).

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Northwest Florida State College. This is a rigorous and rewarding program that requires a high level of dedication, discipline, and personal responsibility. While our faculty and staff are here to support you every step of the way, from your first class through graduation and preparation for the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE), your success ultimately depends on your commitment and effort. Please note that graduation from the program does not guarantee passage of the NPTE or employment as a Physical Therapist Assistant.

The PTA Program curriculum is intentionally structured to build your knowledge and skills progressively, starting with foundational general education courses and advancing to complex clinical concepts and technical skills. As you move through the program, you will be expected to synthesize information from multiple courses and apply it to real-world clinical scenarios. Success in this field requires more than memorization, it demands critical thinking, sound clinical judgment, and the ability to deliver safe, effective, and compassionate care.

This handbook is designed to help you understand the policies, procedures, and expectations that will guide you throughout the program. You are responsible for reading and familiarizing yourself with its contents. A signed Handbook Acknowledgement Form confirming your understanding and agreement to abide by these guidelines must be submitted and will be kept on file for the duration of your enrollment. Please note that this handbook serves as a supplement to, not a replacement for, official College policies, including the Board Policy Manual, College Catalog, and Student Handbook. We look forward to supporting you as you grow into a knowledgeable, skilled, and professional member of the physical therapy community.

Sincerely,



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INTRODUCTION

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program is a structured sequence of courses designed to prepare students for employment as physical therapist assistants working under the supervision of licensed physical therapists in a variety of healthcare settings. The program provides learning experiences that foster the development of academic, technical, and professional skills essential for job entry, retention, and career advancement. Emphasis is placed on a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on clinical education to ensure students are well-prepared for both graduation and the workforce.

Clinical experiences are conducted across a diverse range of affiliated sites representing multiple treatment settings. The ongoing support of clinical administrators and staff is vital to the program's ability to deliver high-quality education and training.

Upon successful completion of the program, graduates earn an Associate of Science in Physical Therapist Assistant degree, possess the competencies of an entry-level PTA, and are eligible to apply for the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE) for Physical Therapist Assistants, administered by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT).

Please note that the information contained in this handbook is subject to change. Students will be notified of any updates as they occur.

ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Northwest Florida State 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; website: <http://www.capteonline.org>. If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call (850)863-6511 or email pta@nwfsc.edu.

PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS

Mission

The mission of the Northwest Florida State College Physical Therapist Assistant Program is to deliver accessible, high-quality education that prepares students to become licensed physical therapist assistants who provide effective, patient-centered care to meet the rehabilitation needs of the regional community.

Vision

The vision of the Northwest Florida State College Physical Therapist Assistant Program is to be a regional leader in physical therapy education by empowering students to become competent, compassionate, and ethical professionals. We foster academic excellence, ensure access to affordable education, and promote a culture of support and belonging. By integrating evidence-based practices, cultural responsiveness, and effective communication into our curriculum, we prepare graduates to thrive in a dynamic healthcare landscape and make meaningful contributions to patient care and the physical therapy profession.

Goals

1. Graduates will demonstrate professional and effective patient care.
2. Graduates will positively impact the regional* community by filling open positions throughout the region.
3. Program faculty will provide a curriculum consistent with contemporary physical therapy education and practice.
4. Program faculty will provide a positive and supportive learning environment.
5. The Program will successfully prepare graduates for the NPTE with results that meet/exceed CAPTE standards for physical therapist assistant education.

* Regional community defined as the following counties: Florida (Bay, Escambia, Holmes, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton, and Washington) and Alabama (Baldwin, Coffee, Conecuh, Covington, Dale, Escambia, Geneva, Houston, Mobile and Monroe)

Student Achievement Measures

1. Graduation rates are at least 60% averaged over two years.
2. Ultimate licensure pass rates are at least 85%, averaged over two years.
3. Employment rates are at least 90%, averaged over two years.

Program Level Student Learning Outcomes

1. Develop communication strategies (verbally, nonverbally, and in written form) that are effective, respectful, and timely in ways that are congruent with situational needs.
2. Think independently and critically, using foundational physical therapy knowledge and evidence-based practice, to provide safe, effective, and efficient treatments.
3. Perform competent data collection, implementation, safe progression, and documentation of physical therapy interventions guided by patients' status and consistent with the goals and plan of care, under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist.
4. Exhibit entry-level professional behaviors demonstrated by adherence to the standards of professional practice delineated by the APTA, interprofessional teamwork and collaboration, fulfillment of administrative responsibilities, and practice within legal, ethical, and regulatory frameworks.

PTA JOB QUALIFICATIONS AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS/EXPECTATIONS

A. Competency in the NWFSC PTA Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Each student is expected to demonstrate competency in the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) established by the NWFSC Physical Therapist Assistant Program throughout their progression in the curriculum. These outcomes encompass essential physical therapy knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors, and are assessed using a variety of methods appropriate to each specific outcome. Assessments are standardized across the program and are conducted by both PTA faculty and clinical instructors to ensure consistency and accuracy in evaluating student performance.

B. Essential Functions of a PTA Student

Students enrolled in the Northwest Florida State College Physical Therapist Assistant Program must be able to meet the program's minimum technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, to successfully complete all program requirements. These standards are distinct from the academic criteria used for admission. A detailed description of the technical standards can be found in the appendix.

C. Disability Policy

Northwest Florida State College is committed to providing equal access and opportunities for educational success to all students with disabilities as guided by the American Disabilities Act and other disability-related laws. Northwest Florida State College does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in any of our programs, services, or activities based on Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Support is provided through the Accommodation Resource Center (ARC). The Accommodation Resource Center (ARC) helps navigate accessibility for students with disabilities by removing educational barriers and partnering with the campus community for inclusion and support. More information can be found by visiting the [ARC website](#).

D. Clinical Facility Requirements

Northwest Florida State College maintains contractual agreements with affiliated clinical agencies, which require that PTA students comply with all site-specific policies and procedures while providing patient care. As a result, students must complete an orientation for each clinical site to which they are assigned. Clinical agencies may require students to fulfill additional site-specific requirements, such as signing confidentiality agreements, completing bloodborne pathogen training, providing documentation of required immunizations, and undergoing drug screening and/or criminal background checks prior to the start of clinical rotations.

Students are also required to wear their program name tag clearly identifying them as students while participating in clinical education. Clinical sites reserve the right to deny student access based on the results of background checks or drug screenings. Failure to meet a site's requirements or gain access to clinical placements may result in the inability to complete the clinical education component of the curriculum, which will prevent the student from progressing in the program. For additional details, please refer to the Clinical Education Handbook.

E. Licensure Requirements to Work as a PTA

After successful graduation of the PTA Program at NWFSC, students will be eligible to take the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE) for PTAs. Per the Florida Board of Physical Therapy, applicants for licensure must have received a degree as a Physical Therapist Assistant from an institution that has been approved for the training of Physical Therapist Assistants by the Commission on Accreditation for Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). If applicants have any affirmation answers in the Criminal, Personal, or

Disciplinary sections of the application, submission of the personal statement and supporting documentation must be sent to the board. After completing the Florida licensure application, students may be eligible to sit for the National Physical Therapist Assistant Examination and Florida Laws and Rules Exam at a Prometric testing center. This national licensure exam entitles individuals to apply for licensure in a single state or in multiple states, if desired. Requirements for jurisprudence exams and continuing education requirements vary from state to state and should be researched for that state in which the graduate elects to apply for licensure. Requirements for licensure application and continuing education can be found through the [Florida Board of Physical Therapy website](#).

F. Professional Membership

Students are required to maintain membership in the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) while enrolled in the program. Membership fees are included in annual course fees. APTA resources are integrated throughout the program. Student membership provides access to the APTA magazine, journal, free and discounted courses, access to literature, and a discount on membership for the first four years of their career. Students are encouraged to become involved and active in their profession. APTA/FPTA Student Membership dues are \$92 annually (based on 2025 APTA National and FL Chapter dues). For more information visit the [APTA website](#).

G. Community Service

Students are required to perform 10 hours of community service during the technical portion of the program. Volunteer hours can be gained through service to the college (open house, career fair, etc.) or community activity/organization that are health care related. Proof of service will be turned into the student's program advisor and must be completed prior to graduation.

H. Occupational Exposure

Students must initial a statement acknowledging that exposure to various communicable/transferable diseases may occur during a clinical experience, and that the protection against these conditions (e.g., following safe health practices and becoming immunized) is the student's responsibility. The Handbook Acknowledgement form is in the appendix. Students receive coursework regarding the use of universal precautions during the second semester of the technical portion of the program and continuing throughout their PTA coursework. They must demonstrate an understanding of these concepts through written examinations and through utilization of universal precautions in all lab and clinical activities including but not limited to:

- Blood and airborne pathogens
- COVID-19
- Hepatitis B immunization
- Mechanism of pathogen transmission
- Appropriate disposal, labeling, and housekeeping measures
- Prevention of exposure to blood and airborne pathogens
- Exposure control, including determinations of exposure and post-exposure reporting and action

I. Malpractice Insurance

All PTA students are covered by professional malpractice insurance through the Florida College System Risk Management Consortium. Fees are assessed annually. Students must report any incidents to their clinical instructor and the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education. Students should follow the guidelines established at the clinical site and provide any documentation received to the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education and College's Risk Management Office.

J. CPR Requirement

All PTA students are required to maintain CPR certification throughout the duration of the PTA Program. Certification course must be through the American Heart Association at the Healthcare Provider level. This must be completed prior to Physical Therapy Clinical Practice I.

BASIC PROGRAM INFORMATION

A. Program Length and Degree Awarded

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program is a two-year program with the first semester dedicated to general education/non-technical courses that need to be completed prior to full acceptance into the program. The technical phase covers four semesters including the remaining general education courses and 51 credit hours of PTA procedural and clinical education courses. Northwest Florida State College will award an Associate of Science degree in Physical Therapist Assistant to all students who successfully complete the academic and clinical requirements of the program.

B. Program Sequence and Plan of Study

Associate in Science in Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Curriculum (2023-24)

Semester	Course ID and Name	Credits
First Year		
Fall Semester	BSC 1085C - Anatomy and Physiology I	4
	ENC 1101 - English Composition I	3
	MGF 1130 - Mathematical Thinking in Context (substitutions accepted)	3
	Humanities Core	3
	<i>Civic Literacy Requirement:</i> AMH 2010 – American History I, AMH 2020 - American History II, OR POS 1041 - American Government (Note: An assessment is required in addition to the course)	3
	Total	16
Spring Semester	BSC 1086C - Anatomy and Physiology II	4
	DEP 2004 - Human Growth and Development	3
	PHT 1128 - Functional Anatomy and Kinesiology	3
	PHT 1128L - Functional Anatomy and Kinesiology Lab	2
	PHT 1007 - Topics in Physical Therapy	3
	Total	15
Second Year		
Fall Semester	PHT 1931 - PTA Seminar	1
	PHT 1224 - Therapeutic Techniques & Disabilities	3
	PHT 1224L - Therapeutic Techniques & Disabilities Lab	2
	PHT 1200 - Basic Patient Care	2
	PHT 1200L - Basic Patient Care Lab	2
	PHT 2301 - Pathological Conditions in PT	3
	PHT 1800L - Physical Therapy Clinical Practice I (3 weeks)	3
	Total	16
Spring Semester	PHT 1211 - Physical Therapy Principles and Procedures	2
	PHT 1211L - Physical Therapy Principles and Procedures Lab	2
	PHT 2252 - Orthopedic Disabilities & Treatment	2

	PHT 2252L - Orthopedic Disabilities & Treatment Lab	1
	PHT 2162 - Neurological Disabilities & Treatment	2
	PHT 2162L - Neurological Disabilities & Treatment Lab	2
	PHT 2810L - Physical Therapy Clinical Practice II (4 weeks)	4
	Total	15
Summer Semester	PHT 2704 - Advanced Rehab Concepts in PT	1
	PHT 2704L - Advanced Rehab Concepts in PT Lab	1
	PHT 2930 - Trends in Physical Therapy	2
	PHT 2820L - Physical Therapy Clinical Practice III (8 weeks)	8
	Total	12
	Total Hours	74

General Education/Non-Technical Requirements: 23 credit hours

Technical Course Requirements: 51 credit hours

Total Credit Hours: 74

Total Off-Campus Clinical Hours: 600 clock hours

C. Program Technical Course Descriptions

PHT 1007 Topics in Physical Therapy

This course provides an introduction of the physical therapy profession, to include the history, ethics, settings, trends, medical terminology, and professional issues. Delineation of the roles of the health care team, physical therapy personnel, and communication skills required as a healthcare provider. Various regulatory agencies, practice rules and regulations are also included. The student will also explore the psychological and sociological effects of disabilities, including the impact of culture and economics on the patient and family.

PHT 1128 Functional Anatomy & Kinesiology

This course provides an in-depth study of the structure and function of the musculoskeletal system, with emphasis on the biomechanical principles of human motion, to include the organization and function of the nervous system and how it interacts with the musculoskeletal system for control and balanced mobility of the human body. Foundations of functional motions will be covered, such as biomechanics of muscle action, levers and torques in relation to human body, and basic physics concepts that applies to physical therapy.

PHT 1128L Functional Anatomy & Kinesiology Lab

In this course, the student will have the opportunity to practice and refine the concepts taught in PHT 1128. Students will develop basic physical therapy skills in palpation of bony landmarks, goniometry, gross manual muscle testing, and analysis of muscle function as it relates to the biomechanical principles of human motion.

PHT 1200 Basic Patient Care Lecture

This course introduces students to basic patient care skills, patient positioning and draping, treatment area preparation, transfers, wheelchair management, and data collection skills. Wound care principles are introduced including types of wounds/burns and other integumentary issues, stages of healing, treatment/dressings, and care/prevention of pressure ulcers. This course is intended to provide an in-depth exposure to the basic skills necessary in the clinic setting and appropriate professional behaviors.

PHT 1200L Basic Patient Care Lab

This lab course allows the practice and refinement of the concepts learned in PHT 1200 lecture on simulated patients. Use of equipment commonly found in physical therapy settings, proper body mechanics in moving, lifting, and transferring patients, wheelchair management, aseptic techniques, and principles of wound care.

PHT 1224 Therapeutic Techniques & Disabilities Lecture

An overview of principles and techniques of basic physical therapy interventions, with emphasis on physiological changes and effects in commonly seen disorders across the lifespan. Will include therapeutic exercises, gait training with assistive devices, manual therapy, postural analysis, aerobic conditioning, and airway clearance techniques.

PHT 1224L Therapeutic Techniques & Disabilities Lab

This lab course allows the practice and refinement of the concepts learned In PHT 1224 on simulated patients. Students will receive hands-on experience with a variety of exercise equipment and practice in performing, assisting, and teaching of therapeutic exercises. Selected tests and measures will be introduced in this course.

PHT 1931 PTA Seminar

An orientation to the physical therapy clinic environment. The course covers professional clinical expectations, treatment preparation, risk management, the medical record, and medical documentation.

PHT 2301 Pathological Conditions in PT

This course introduces the pathophysiology of selected disease processes. Disease signs, symptoms, complications, as well as clinical, typical pharmacologic agents and laboratory findings are reviewed by body system. Emphasis will be placed on conditions typically encountered in the physical therapy setting.

PHT 1800L Physical Therapy Clinical Practice I

A supervised clinical experience, 3 concurrent weeks of full-time clinical education exposure for an introductory experience. Students observe and implement physical therapy services under the close supervision of a clinical instructor. Students must pass all previous didactic coursework listed in the plan of study to participate in this clinical.

PHT 1211 Physical Therapy Principles & Procedures Lecture

This course instructs the student in the theory, physiology and application of biophysical agents used for therapeutic treatment of tissue. Knowledge of the physical principles, physiological effects, medical physics, indications, and contraindications of heat, cold, light, traction, compression, electricity, and hydrotherapy. Selected tests and measures are taught related to the safe application of these agents.

PHT 1211L Physical Therapy Principles & Procedures Lab

This lab course allows the practice and refinement of the concepts learned in PHT 1211 on simulated patients. The application of biophysical agents and data collection skills required for safe application of these modalities.

PHT 2252 Orthopedic Disabilities & Treatment Lecture

Concepts of orthopedic physical therapy management as well as the therapeutic applications related to bone, cartilage, muscle, and soft tissue healing processes. Various musculoskeletal diseases and orthopedic conditions will be introduced including their related pathology and treatment plans. Various surgical precautions, tests and measures, common orthotics, gait deviations, joint mobilizations, soft tissue techniques, and use of modalities for orthopedic conditions. Diagnostic tools such as plain film radiography, computed tomography, diagnostic ultrasound, and magnetic resonance imaging will be introduced.

PHT 2252L Orthopedic Disabilities & Treatment Lab

This lab course allows the practice and refinement of the concepts learned in PHT 2252. Clinical scenarios that require data collection and therapeutic applications for common orthopedic conditions. The development of critical thinking, clinical problem solving, and effective treatment plans for various orthopedic conditions.

PHT 2162 Neurological Disabilities & Treatment Lecture

A comprehensive review of the human nervous system and selected neurological disabilities encountered frequently in physical therapy practice. The course addresses knowledge and application of a variety of

therapeutic techniques utilized with patients across the lifespan that have chronic neurological conditions. Stages of motor development and movement strategies are also discussed.

PHT 2162L Neurological Disabilities & Treatment Lab

This lab course allows the practice and refinement of the concepts learned in PHT 2162 on simulated patients. Clinical scenarios that require critical thinking skills to develop treatment, progress and follow-up plans for patients with various neurological conditions. Students will also learn about various assessment techniques including sensory, balance and coordination, reflexes, gait analysis, functional and environmental assessment, and perceptual and cognitive deficit assessment.

PHT 2810L Physical Therapy Clinical Practice II

A supervised clinical experience, 4 concurrent weeks of full-time clinical education exposure for an integrated clinical education experience. Students implement physical therapy services under the close supervision of a clinical instructor. Students will be expected to perform specific therapeutic procedures covered in prior coursework. Students must pass all previous didactic coursework listed in the plan of study to participate in this clinical.

PHT 2704 Advanced Rehab Concepts in PT Lecture

Designed to provide a variety of therapeutic principles and techniques utilized in the clinical setting to address special populations with advanced rehab needs. This includes accessibility to home and community for all patients, women's health, pediatric conditions, bariatrics, geriatrics, and advanced management of amputation and prosthetics. Patient education and the education of others about physical therapy are included.

PHT 2704L Advanced Rehab Concepts in PT Lab

This lab course allows the practice and refinement of the concepts learned in PHT 2704 on simulated patients. Students will engage in patient education and utilize appropriate teaching methods for their target audience.

PHT 2930 Trends in Physical Therapy

This course broadens the scope of the student's understanding of the health care system. Topics include trends in healthcare and their influence on physical therapy, administrative procedures utilized in physical therapy, and ethical problem solving. Community service, citizenship and advocacy will be addressed. The course will include mock quizzes and a timed mock examination in preparation for the NPTE. Students will also develop skills necessary for employment including interview techniques and developing a resume and cover letter.

PHT 2820L Physical Therapy Clinical Practice III

The final supervised clinical experience, 8 concurrent weeks of full-time clinical education designed to prepare PTA students for entry into the profession of physical therapy. Student will have the opportunity to refine all treatment interventions and data collection skills, plus demonstrate professional behaviors throughout the clinical experience. Students must pass all previous didactic coursework listed in the plan of study to participate in this clinical.

D. Course Enrollment Sequence

Students are admitted to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program through a selective admissions process following the successful completion of one semester of required general education (non-technical) coursework. Once admitted, students enter the program as a cohort and are expected to complete the remaining program requirements over the course of four consecutive semesters, allowing for degree completion in a total of five semesters.

General education (non-technical) courses may be completed prior to the semester in which they are listed in the plan of study; however, those designated for Semester One are required for program admission. Any

deviations from the recommended course sequence must be approved in advance by the PTA Program Director on a case-by-case basis. The two remaining general education courses must be successfully completed prior to the start of the third semester in the program. Failure to complete these courses within the prescribed timeline will result in the student falling out of sequence with program requirements and will lead to dismissal from the program.

E. Cost of the Program

Refer to Program Application Packet for estimated expenses.

Equipment and Supplies

Students are required to purchase/have the following items prior to the start of the technical phase:

1. Laptop or iPad for Testing – PTA Program uses ExamSoft Assessment Platform (This will shift to Canvas for the Spring 2026 Cohort)
 - a. [Minimum system requirements](#)
 - b. Must be Windows based, Mac or iPad; will not run on Chromebooks, Android, or Linux operating systems
2. Program Scrubs and name tag
3. Goniometer (available for purchase in the bookstore)
4. Appropriate lab attire:
 - a. Men: shorts and t-shirt
 - b. Women: shorts, t-shirt, and a sports bra, halter top, or swimsuit top
 - c. Students should also wear low heeled, closed toe shoes with rubber soles
5. Analog watch with second hand or digital watch with seconds displayed
6. Lockers will be available for student use. Each student is required to provide their own lock to secure their supplies. Lockers must be cleaned out at the end of each term and locks removed.

F. Financial Services

The mission of the Office of Student Financial Aid at Northwest Florida State College is to remove financial barriers; to promote the success of a diverse student body; and to increase opportunities for access in higher education. They seek to provide a premier experience for students, faculty, and staff by providing timely communication and by providing courteous and efficient financial services while complying with all federal, state, and college policies. Student Success Navigators are available to assist students with financial aid questions via phone, live video chat, and in-person at every campus and distance center. Please visit the [College financial aid website](#) for more information and to access links to check financial aid status and apply for scholarships.

G. Facilities

The PTA Program resides on NWFSC's Fort Walton Beach Campus, Bldg. 8. This building also houses the campus library. The Program has dedicated lecture and lab spaces, male and female locker rooms for changing clothes, and faculty offices.

PTA Lecture Space: The PTA classroom is room 861 in Bldg. 8. It is located across from the lab space.

PTA Laboratory Space and Usage: The PTA lab is in room 851 in Bldg. 8. The lab contains state-of-the-art professional, clinical grade equipment. Students are expected to take full responsibility for learning not only how to safely operate the equipment to complete medically safe treatments on their peers, but also to keep it in a state of excellent repair and maintenance. If a machine is malfunctioning, becomes damaged while in use, or

a student becomes aware of damage to it, they are to stop using it, turn it off, and unplug it. Students must report the issue to a lab instructor immediately so appropriate medical equipment maintenance engineers can be contacted to provide needed repairs and monitoring. The lab is available for student use whenever a faculty member is on premises. Students must make prior arrangements with a faculty member for direct supervision based on the criticality of the practice session. Students retain the responsibility for leaving the lab in the neat and orderly fashion it was found and check that the door is locked at departure.

The lab should be always kept clean. Dirty linens and equipment used should be properly stored before leaving. Students are expected to assist with the laundering of linens using facilities located near the lab on a rotating basis as assigned by the instructor.

Interprofessional Skills Lab: The skills lab is in room 328 in Bldg. 3. It is a shared space used by all Health Sciences programs on the Fort Walton Beach Campus. Students must report any equipment issues to an instructor immediately. All equipment must be used in accordance with the same guidelines that apply to the PTA lab. Students wishing to use the lab outside of scheduled class time must make prior arrangements to ensure the space is available and that an instructor is present for supervision.

H. Academic Services and Campus Resources

Advising: Student Success Navigators are available to assist students with Admissions, Registration, Financial Aid, Academic Advising, Student ID Cards, Records and much more via phone, live video chat, and in-person at every campus and distance center.

Zogby Learning Commons: The Zoghby Learning Commons is located in the Susan Myers Learning Resources Center, Niceville campus, building 500. It is a centralized hub of collaborative and engaging support services for both students and faculty. Primarily home to library, testing, and tutoring services, the commons comprises other academic support services, as well as independent and group study areas, labs, computers, whiteboards, and free printing services.

- Library Services and Learning Resources: The Niceville library is located in the Susan Myers Learning Resource Center in building 500. Students have access to computers, WiFi, books, newspapers, magazines, study spaces, group study rooms, and helpful staff. The Fort Walton Beach campus also offers students direct access to computers, WiFi, books, newspapers, magazines, study spaces, group study rooms, and helpful staff in the UWF Library located in Building 8. All students have access to online resources to include ebooks, databases, and streaming videos.
- Academic Success and Tutoring: Northwest Florida State College is committed to student success and offers all its students free academic tutoring virtually and at various college locations in friendly, supportive environments. Many of our tutors are advanced students and graduates who have excelled in the subjects they tutor and who understand the stresses of college life; others have advanced degrees and provide expert academic assistance for our upper-level classes. Tutors are available on the Niceville Campus at the Susan Myers Learning Resources Center (Building 500). Tutors also serve students at the Fort Walton Beach, Crestview, and DeFuniack locations.
- Accommodation Resource Center: The Accommodation Resource Center (ARC) at Northwest Florida State College is committed to providing equal access and opportunities for educational success to all students with disabilities as guided by the American Disabilities Act and other disability-related laws. Northwest Florida State College does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in any of our programs, services, or activities based on Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Canvas: All NWFSC courses have an online classroom in Canvas where students can find the syllabus and grades for each class. They can also interact with other classmates and faculty.

Raider Life: Raider Life's goal is to engage all students in campus life and offer opportunities for learning, leadership, service, friendship, and fun. Raider Life is here to help students get connected and find a organization that fits their interests.

- Raider Pantry: The purpose of the Raider Pantry is to provide supplemental food, hygiene products, and other necessities to students. It is free and open to any student who would like to take advantage of the Raider Pantry resources.

Veterans & Military Services: The Veterans Success Center provides a one-stop shop to expand educational opportunities, transitional services and career services for veterans and their families. The Center offers a tranquil, professional and respectful location, including state-of-the-art infrastructure and technology, where veterans and their family members can study or pursue other scholastic assignments. Additionally, the Veterans Success Center creates a cooperative community for veterans and provides resources for leadership, support, advisement, and campus engagement.

Counseling Services: Northwest Florida State College has partnered with Bridgeway Center, Inc. to provide mental health resources and counseling services to all actively enrolled students. All actively enrolled students are eligible to receive an initial assessment and up to five therapeutic sessions with a Behavioral Health provider at no cost to the student. Counseling is available both in-person and via telehealth.

College Bookstore: Barnes and Noble is the official store of the College. Items available for purchase include textbooks, school supplies, College clothing, and program uniforms. They also provide textbook buy-back service at the end of each term and operates an online textbook service.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

A. Grading Policy

The general grading policy is outlined in the current Northwest Florida State College Catalog. All general education courses, or courses not designated as part of the technical program, will be graded on a scale consistent with the College.

Physical Therapist Assistant Program – Grading Scale: All courses considered technical in nature (PTA specific courses) will be graded as indicated in the table below:

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	90 - 100
B	80 - 89
C	75 - 79
D	70 - 74
F	Below 70
I	Incomplete
Pass	Pass - applies to clinical courses only
Fail	Fail - applies to clinical courses only

Note: The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) has established a minimum passing score of 600 on the Physical Therapist Assistant National Physical Therapy Examination (PTA NPTE), which is scored on a scale of 200 to 800. In alignment with this standard, students enrolled in the NWFSC PTA

Program must achieve a minimum average of 75% in each technical PTA course in order to earn a passing grade and progress in the program.

Incomplete: A grade of “I” may be considered for clinical experience courses at the discretion of the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE), in consultation with the clinical instructor, program faculty, and Program Director. An Incomplete may be granted when excessive absences or unmet course requirements cannot be completed within the scheduled semester. However, this may delay graduation. All outstanding work must be completed before the start of the following semester; otherwise, the “I” will automatically convert to an “F,” and the student’s progression in the program will be at risk.

Late Assignments: Any assignment received after the posted deadline will receive 10% off the final grade per day late. Exceptions can be made by individual instructors based on specific circumstances.

Failure of a Course with a Co-requisite: If a student earns a “D” or “F” in a course that has a co-requisite, and they are passing that co-requisite with a C or higher, they will receive a “W” (Withdrawal) in the co-requisite course. Students are required to take co-requisites at the same time. This allows the student to repeat the previously passed co-requisite course if they plan to seek readmission to the program.

B. Didactic and Laboratory Examinations

Quizzes: Quizzes may be either scheduled in advance on the course syllabus or administered at the discretion of the course instructor. Any missed quiz will result in a grade of zero unless the student presents extenuating circumstances, as determined by the instructor. If a make-up quiz is approved, it will be rescheduled at the earliest convenience of the course instructor.

Written Examinations: Written examinations are used to assess the theoretical knowledge acquired in a course. Exam dates are provided to students in the course syllabus. A missed exam will result in a grade of zero unless the student presents extenuating circumstances, as determined by the course instructor. If a make-up exam is approved, it will be scheduled at the earliest convenience of the instructor.

If a student scores below 75% on any individual exam, they are required to meet with the course instructor within one week of the exam to review the material and develop a remediation plan. This process must be documented using the Academic Remediation Record (located in the appendix). The instructor will determine appropriate remediation strategies, which may include additional assignments or study activities. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate and schedule the remediation meeting within the required timeframe. Failure to do so will result in a behavioral write-up.

Following a second exam failure within the same course, the remediation plan will include a mandatory referral to the Learning Commons for support in areas such as test-taking strategies, test anxiety, and/or tutoring. Failure to follow through with the recommended support services will also result in a behavioral write-up.

Practical Examinations: Practical examinations are formal assessments of clinical skills taught in each laboratory course. Exam dates are provided in the course syllabi. A missed practical exam will result in a grade of zero unless extenuating circumstances are approved by both the course instructor. If approved, a make-up practical will be scheduled at the earliest convenience of the instructor.

Practical Exam Performance and Remediation Policy: Students must pass all practical examinations to advance in the program. A score below 75% is considered a failure and will initiate the following steps:

- **First Attempt Failure:** The student will receive remediation from the course instructor and be allowed one reattempt. The second attempt must be administered by the course instructor and an additional

PTA faculty member within three (3) academic instructional days of the initial failure. If the student passes the second attempt, the recorded grade will be 75%, regardless of actual performance.

- **Second Attempt Failure:** If the student does not demonstrate entry-level competence on the second attempt, they will not meet the requirements for successful course completion. Written extenuating circumstances may be submitted to the Program Director and course instructor for consideration, but do not guarantee continuation in the program.

Laboratory Skills Competency: The program uses a Skills Competency Notebook to document successful completion of required clinical skills throughout the PTA curriculum. This includes intervention techniques and data collection procedures expected of an entry-level PTA. Students must pass each skill competency check-off to remain eligible for progression and clinical placement. The same remediation and failure policy outlined above for practical exams also applies to skills competency check-offs.

The skills assessed are based on the Minimum Required Skills of PTA Graduates at Entry Level (as defined by the APTA), the Florida Department of Education Curriculum Framework, and ongoing feedback from clinical instructors. This policy is designed to protect patient safety and ensure students do not participate in clinical education until they have demonstrated proficiency in all required laboratory procedures.

C. Program Progression

Students are kept informed of their academic and clinical performance through both formative and summative feedback. During the didactic portion of the program, formative feedback is provided through verbal input from instructors, performance on quizzes, written assignments, and skill check evaluations. Summative feedback is delivered through written and practical examinations that assess overall competency at key points in the curriculum.

Instructors are expected to provide accurate, timely, and constructive feedback for all assessments. All feedback must be delivered in accordance with privacy regulations, including FERPA compliance. Grades are posted in the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) in a timely manner, allowing students to monitor their academic progress regularly and independently.

To meet the program's minimum academic standards, students must earn a grade of "C" or higher in all PTA courses and a "P" (Pass) in each clinical education experience. Failure to achieve a "C" in any PTA-specific course or failure to pass a clinical rotation—as defined in the Clinical Education Handbook—will result in the student being considered out of sequence and may lead to dismissal from the program. Students in this situation must follow the PTA Program's established policies and procedures for course failure and readmission if they wish to be considered for continuation in the program.

D. Academic Advising

Each student in the program is assigned a faculty advisor who serves as a primary resource for academic and professional guidance. Students are required to meet with their advisor at least once per semester to review progress, discuss goals, and develop strategies for success. Students will also complete a Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool (see Appendix) at the end of their first two clinical practice courses. Any concerns identified through this assessment will be discussed and addressed during the next advisory meeting, with an individualized plan for improvement if needed.

Students are encouraged to schedule additional meetings with their advisor or course instructors at any time to address questions, concerns, or ideas. If a significant academic or behavioral issue occurs, the instructor or individual observing the behavior will complete the appropriate documentation (Academic Remediation Record or

Behavioral Counseling Record, see Appendix). The instructor will meet with the student to review the concern and, if necessary, work with the student to develop a remediation plan. The instructor may also recommend that the student meet with their advisor for additional support. The Program Director will be kept informed of all concerns and remediation plans.

E. Attendance/Tardiness

Regular and prompt attendance in all classes is expected. It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor and arrange to complete any missed work. Make-up work is offered solely at the discretion of the instructor. Excessive absences can affect the success of course completion and financial aid funding. This general policy applies to the student absent from class traveling as a member of a college group, club or for personal reasons.

All classes and labs must be attended on time and for the complete time allotted. If tardiness or early departure occurs three times, this will equate to one full class absence. Students are considered tardy if they arrive after class has started and early departure is leaving prior to class dismissal. If a student misses more than 25% of class time, they will be given a full absence.

Students are authorized to have two absences a semester without penalty. After three days are missed, 10% will be deducted from the overall grade applied at the end of the semester (after final). After four days are missed, a student will receive no higher than 75% as the final adjusted grade. More than four days missed will result in dismissal from the program for excessive absenteeism. As part of the standards for Professional Behaviors, students are expected to let the instructor know prior to class that they will be absent. If a student fails to notify the instructor, they may be given a behavioral write-up. Students are expected to be present for all exams, quizzes, and graded lab assessments. It may be possible for arrangements to be made prior at the discretion of the instructor for certain circumstances.

Courses that run in a condensed semester follow a separate attendance policy. These include PHT 1931, PHT 2704, PHT 2704L, and PHT 2930. Due to limited meeting times, there are no authorized absences allowed. 5% will be deducted from the final grade for every absence.

An exception to these policies is possible for illness, hospitalizations, death of a family member, etc. Each individual circumstance will be reviewed by the course instructor who has the authority to grant an exception as deemed appropriate.

ExamSoft Download Policy: Students are expected to download exams and quizzes within the window provided by the instructor. For all courses, this window closes 5 minutes prior to the start of the exam or quiz. If an instructor needs to extend the window, 5% will be taken off the final grade for the first incident, 10% for the second incident, and will continue to increase after that. This is tracked per individual class. Exceptions for extenuating circumstances are at the discretion of the instructor. This policy does not apply to students in the Spring 2026 cohort, graduating in 2027, as the program is transitioning to Cavas for testing.

Religious Observance by Students:

The College shall accommodate recognized religious observances of students under existing state directives. For students whose religious observances interact with the following activities, the Program will take all reasonable steps to make provisions for the student to complete the activity: admission and registration, attendance in class, class activities, examinations, and official ceremonies, and class work assignments. Students wishing to participate in any recognized religious holiday observances are notify the instructor, in advance, of their absence. Students will be excused for such absences without penalty. Students are responsible for any material covered during their excused absence. A reasonable amount of time will be allowed to complete

make up assignments. Students who believe they have been denied an education benefit because of their religious belief or practice may seek redress as outlined in the Student Grievance Procedures.

F. Rescheduling Classes/Changes in Schedule

Occasionally classes may need to be rescheduled. Efforts will be made to reschedule at a time that most students can attend. Each instructor reserves the right to change the class schedule, due dates for assignments, and all other dates and times related to the course and /or program at his or her discretion. The instructor will make every effort to give adequate notice of any scheduling changes that may occur.

G. Academic Integrity

In addition to the standards outlined in this handbook for PTA students, they must follow the [College's Academic Integrity Policy](#). The PTA Program follows the standards set forth by the College. Please use the link above to review the specific policies. Information for filing a grievance is listed below.

H. Student Withdrawal

Withdrawing from the program is a voluntary action taken by the student. If a student withdraws, there may or may not be a possibility of readmission (please see the readmission policy below). It may also have an impact on financial aid, so we recommend the student make an appointment with a student success navigator prior to withdrawing. The first step is to meet with the program director. After meeting with the program director, the student will complete the program's withdrawal form identifying the reason for withdrawal. The student should then work with a student success navigator to complete the [College's request for withdrawal](#). They will need to indicate if they want to withdraw from certain courses, or the entire semester. To be considered for readmission, students must also submit a formal digital letter to the Program Director outlining why they feel they should be considered for readmission, reflect on what went wrong during the semester, and include a remediation plan to address the issues. These steps must be completed within five business days of initial notification of withdrawal.

I. Student Probation and Dismissal

The purpose of probation is to be a constructive means of identifying and correcting areas of deficient student performance. In addition to following the Academic Integrity Policy outlined in prior sections of this handbook, PTA program students must also follow the College's Code of Conduct found in the [College Catalog](#). Additionally, the following programmatic standards apply to the PTA program.

Behavioral Warning/Probation: Any student found to be engaging in unprofessional or minor inappropriate behaviors will be given a behavioral warning. If a student has a second incident, they will be placed on behavioral probation. If there is a third incident, the student will be subject to dismissal from the program. This policy is for additional behaviors that are not subject to the Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity Policy of the College. These are cumulative over the course of the program.

Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from the Physical Therapist Assistant Program for the following reasons without limitation on any other reason stated in the College Catalog, this handbook, or College or program policy or procedure:

1. Inability to progress – If a student does not receive a “C” in all technical courses.
2. If a student falls below 75 on a lab practical/skills check and is unable to successfully pass with the retake policy listed above.
3. Failure of a clinical practice. Specific clinical policies are listed in the Clinical Education Handbook.

4. All general education courses taken in which the student receives below a "C" must be repeated. Failure to repeat such courses within one academic semester shall result in the student being dismissed from the program. Students who elect to push general education courses to the summer semester will not have an opportunity to repeat prior to the start of the fall technical semester. This will put them out of sequence, and they will be dismissed from the program.
5. Successful completion of all required course work and graduation from the program must occur within 3 years of initial enrollment in PTA courses. Failure to do so will create ineligibility for further participation and will require re-application to the program as a new student. Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by the Program Director.
6. Academic Dishonesty – If a student breaks the Northwest Florida State College Academic Integrity policy, disciplinary actions will be taken per that policy and may result in dismissal from the program.
7. Behavioral Probation: any additional behavioral incident after being placed on behavioral probation may result in dismissal.
8. Attendance Policy: If a student does not comply with the program attendance policy.

If a student is dismissed from the program, the program director will administratively withdraw that student from all program classes in which they are currently enrolled.

J. Readmission

Eligibility:

Students considered to be in Good Standing may seek readmission within two years of initial dis-enrollment from the NWFSC PTA Program. "Good Standing" is defined as students who have not been dismissed for poor academic performance, behavioral issues, or specific critical incident infractions. Students need to notify the program director in writing of their intent to reapply to the program. Students are required to successfully pass all skills competencies and a practical examination that is reflective of the material satisfactorily met prior to initial withdrawal from the PTA Program. If a student is selected for readmission, they must complete a drug screen and background check if there has been a gap in the program of study of 3 months or more (not inclusive of normally scheduled College breaks), or if mandated by the Program Director.

Students dismissed from the program due to failure to meet academic standards or those who choose to withdraw due to poor academic performance may seek readmission to the program one time within two years of initial dis-enrollment. They will be required to submit a formal request for readmission per the policy above and meet with the Program Director. Readmission is not guaranteed and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If it has been longer than two years since last enrolled, a student will not be eligible for readmission and must apply as a new student. Because the program curriculum is sequential, students who re-enter will be required to successfully pass all skills competencies and a practical examination that is reflective of the material satisfactorily met prior to course failure. If a student fails this attempt, they must [request](#) permission through academic affairs to repeat the previously completed class(es) for a grade.

Students may only be readmitted to the PTA Program one time regardless of the reason for re-entry. Please note that readmission is not guaranteed.

Exceptions to all points above: If you are in good standing with the College and the PTA Program and are forced to withdraw due to profound illness, serious accident, pregnancy, family crisis, or extended military duty.

If a student has been dismissed from the PTA Program for a critical incident, such as a serious breach of ethics, safety violation or endangering the health or welfare of a patient, or any other behavior that jeopardizes the reputation of the PTA Program and/or the College, they will not be readmitted.

If a student has exhibited unprofessional behaviors towards faculty, clinical facility personnel or patients, or other students and do not accept correction; if they display an unteachable, critical attitude towards faculty; if they are rude or disruptive and do not accept correction, they will not be readmitted.

K. Grievance Process

If a student believes they have suffered an injustice through the action of another student or instructor, they may seek assistance using the procedures cited in the [College Catalog](#). The College prohibits retaliation against any person who files a complaint alleging discrimination, harassment, or other wrongdoing or against any person alleged to have committed discrimination, harassment, or other wrongdoing.

L. Complaints

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at NWFSC engages in continuous and systematic evaluation and improvement. We welcome all comments, suggestions, ideas, and constructive criticism as part of that process. The Appeals Process that is outlined in the Academic Catalog provides a voice for current and prospective students, employees, and other affiliated persons. However, individuals in the community who do not have a formal affiliation with this institution or program are also welcome to provide comments according to the policy listed in the PTA Program Policies and Procedures Manual and the PTA Program website.

NON-ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Student Rights and Responsibilities

PTA Program students are afforded the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as all other college students. They must also abide by College policies and regulations as published in policy statements, in the current College Catalog, official manuals, and publications. Please refer to the Student Handbook in the current [College Catalog](#). Additional rules and responsibilities are included in this handbook and in other PTA Program publications such as course syllabi.

PTA Program students are also expected to abide by the *APTA Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant* and the *Core Values for the Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant*. Copies of these documents can be found in the appendix and for more information refer to the [APTA website](#).

B. Professional Behavior

While enrolled in the program professional behaviors are expected in all settings, directly or indirectly related to the program. Students are expected to take ownership of their learning experience. This includes maintaining regular attendance, being prepared for class, completing all assignments in a timely manner, asking for clarification or assistance when needed, and being receptive to feedback provided by the faculty. Students are encouraged to participate in classroom discussions related to the lecture content. Discussion should remain professional; arguing and disruptive/unprofessional behavior will not be tolerated. Extraneous conversations in the classroom keep other students from listening to the instructor causing them to miss valuable lecture content and should be kept to a minimum. Sleeping will not be tolerated during classroom, laboratory, clinical education, or program activities.

Students must follow professional standards set forth by the program and in line with the *APTA Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant* when in the classroom, laboratory and clinical education settings and other program activities.

A Professional Behaviors Assessment tool will be utilized to assess student professionalism throughout enrollment in the program and will be required to be completed once a semester prior to meeting with their advisor. Guidelines for these standards are as follows:

1. Professional Behaviors (located in appendix): Ten specific “Professional Behaviors” are assessed throughout the PTA Program curriculum. PTA program faculty will assess the Professional Behaviors once per semester with students also performing a self-assessment once per semester.

Expected Professional Behavior levels are:

- Prior to attending CPII: 50% of Professional Behaviors at intermediate level or higher
- Prior to attending CPIII: all Professional Behaviors at entry level

Faculty will provide verbal and/or written feedback regarding professional behaviors each semester. Students are expected to change unsatisfactory behaviors after receiving feedback from faculty. If a student is not demonstrating professional behaviors at an appropriate level, students will develop a plan for improvement. This will be documented through the Behavioral Counseling Record (located in the appendix).

2. American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) [Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant](#).

C. Dress Code

Students are required to wear program-approved scrubs and nametag for all PTA technical classes and maintain a professional appearance at all times. The following guidelines outline uniform and appearance expectations:

Uniform Requirements

- Scrubs:
 - The primary program scrubs brand is Landau Proflex in Graphite.
 - Other acceptable brands and colors include:

Brand	Color
Landau Proflex	Graphite
Landau Forward	Pewter
Cherokee Infinity	Pewter
KOI Next Gen	Charcoal
Skechers Breeze or Reliance	Pewter
Med Couture Insight	Pewter
Healing Hands (Purple Label, HH Works, HH360)	Pewter
Beyond Scrubs Happy	Pewter
Dickies	Pewter

- Scrub pants: If the pants have a drawstring, it must be neatly tied, not hanging. Pants should fit appropriately—not overly baggy or excessively tight. If scrub pants have a drawstring, it must be neatly tied.
- Nametag:

- Must be worn on the top left pocket at all times during PTA technical courses and clinical experiences.
- If lost, students must work with Bay Area Awards to purchase a replacement.
- Shoes:
 - Color:
 - Gray or black; subtle accent colors are acceptable if the majority of the shoe is gray or black.
 - Style:
 - Must be closed-toe, closed-back, and slip-resistant.
 - Acceptable styles include:
 - Athletic shoes
 - Slide-on clogs (nursing style, easy to clean) with full back support
- Undershirts and Jackets:
 - Students may wear a solid black, white, gray, graphite, pewter, or charcoal t-shirt under their scrub top.
 - If short-sleeve, the undershirt sleeves must not extend beyond the scrub sleeves.
 - A matching scrub jacket may be worn if it is the same brand and color as the scrub set.

Appearance Standards:

- Hair:
 - Must be neat and professional. Unnatural colors or highlights (pink, blue, purple, green, etc.) are not permitted.
- Facial Hair:
 - Must be well-groomed and closely trimmed.
- Jewelry:
 - Modest earrings and wedding, engagement, or class rings are permitted.
 - Multiple earrings, gauges, or decorative piercings (tongue rings, nose rings beyond a small stud) are not allowed.
 - A small, inconspicuous nose stud is permitted.

Laboratory Attire: Laboratory attire is required for all classes and skill demonstrations in which the student will play the role of a simulated patient. Lab clothes must be kept clean. Appropriate lab dress for men includes shorts and t-shirts. Women will wear shorts, t-shirt, and a sports bra, halter top, or swimsuit top. Students should also wear low heeled, closed toe shoes with rubber soles. During laboratory classes and practical examinations, a student is only permitted to wear wedding rings, a watch, and small post earrings. Students cannot wear hoop or dangling earrings, necklaces, bracelets. Students with hair longer than shoulder length must keep his/her hair tied back at all times during practical examinations and lab classes where it may interfere with techniques being practiced.

Hygiene: Hands are to be kept clean and fingernails are not to extend beyond the fingertips. Body odor, bad breath, visible dirtiness, cigarette odor, and strong perfumes or aftershave will not be tolerated. Visible tattoos containing lewd or offensive pictures, words or phrases must be covered at all times during didactic, laboratory and practical examinations.

Clinical Affiliations: Please refer to the PTA Clinical Education Handbook

D. Privacy/Confidentiality

Student Privacy Policies: The PTA faculty/staff will abide by the NWFSC Board of Trustees Policy SS 2.00, FERPA and Student Records.

Human Subjects: Students should understand that they will be required to be a subject for simulated treatment by other students and faculty members. This is necessary in order to learn safe and competent manual physical therapy procedures. In every instance the simulation will be professional, discrete, and directed towards the understanding of a specific treatment and/or intervention. Each student will be required to sign an informed consent form prior to the first day of their first lab class. Consent will remain active throughout the student's matriculation. Signed consent forms will be placed in the student's academic file in the office of the program director. A copy of the consent form is in the appendix.

Maintenance of Student Records: Student academic and personal information will be handled in accordance with The Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPPA), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) guidelines.

Instructors will keep all grades in the College Learning Management System, i.e. Canvas. Faculty must abide by the Instructional Record Keeping Guidelines, also provided in this handbook. Furthermore, electronic record-keeping must conform to FERPA guidelines protecting privacy and must be protected. Grades must be submitted in a timely manner according to the College calendar and established processes.

Academic records (final exams, final projects, student papers, forms signed by students) will be maintained electronically by the Program Director and Faculty in accordance with the guidelines listed above. Health Information and clinical education records will be managed electronically by the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education. NWFSC uses Complio for immunization records, background checks, drug testing, and other personal information required for a clinical affiliation site. Students are also required to maintain a copy of their own records.

Audio/Videotaping, Photographing, and Imaging: Students should understand that audio/videotaping, photography, and imaging are the property of NWFSC and may be viewed by community partners for marketing purposes and for instructional purposes. Each student will be asked to sign an informed consent form at orientation and prior to beginning the program. The consent will remain active throughout the student's matriculation. Signed consent forms will be placed in the student's academic file in the office of the program director (located in appendix). Students have the right to refuse.

E. Health Related Policies

Communicable Disease Policy:

Personal Assumption of Responsibility for Disease and/or Injury:

Northwest Florida State College PTA Program students must comply with OSHA standards for hazardous materials control, infection control and exposure to harmful substances, including, but not limited to, blood or other body fluids. Students are responsible for their own health care. Should they contract a communicable disease or be exposed to same via body fluids or other means, they must report such exposure or condition to their clinical instructor immediately. Should immediate assessment and treatment be deemed necessary (including emergency care), they must comply with all agency and college policies regarding the occurrence, which includes payment for any treatment or other required exposure procedures. Further, they must complete all documents regarding the occurrence via agency/site incident as well as appropriate [College incident reporting](#).

Accident: Should a student become injured in a clinical facility or traveling to/from a clinical facility, they must assume the costs and responsibility for diagnosis, treatments (including emergency care), and/or appropriate interventions as a result of the accident. Further, they must complete all documents regarding the occurrence in accordance with agency policy.

NWFSC carries Student Accident Coverage, which works with a student's primary insurance carrier or independently if they do not have insurance. This student accident program provides coverage for college students injured while participating in covered college classes, labs and/or training. Once the course or program of study ends, coverage ends. Please note that the policy only provides coverage for an injury to the student. An injury must be as a direct result of the accident which occurred during the covered activity and not from sickness or disease.

Reporting:

1. Students should report to their instructor any complaint of injury as a direct result of an accident which occurred during clinical, lab, or classroom activity. Instructors will file Incident/Injury Report using the Maxient Reporting system. The link to the form can be found in RaiderNet under the FORMS tab.
2. Students MUST check their College email or contact the College Risk Management Coordinator directly within 30 calendar days of the incident/injury to file an insurance claim. Students have 20 calendar days from the date of the injury/accident to file an insurance claim with the college by directly contacting the Risk Management Coordinator.
3. Failure to comply with this deadline may result in denial of claim.
4. Students should never give bills or invoices to instructors, the PTA Program Director, or staff assistant. All documentation must be submitted directly to the college Risk Management Coordinator.
5. If a student seeks medical attention, they must provide a written medical clearance to their instructor or the PTA Program Director prior to returning to the clinical experience.

Questions about insurance, reimbursement, or claims can be directed to: RiskManagement@nwfsc.edu

Illness: Students are strongly encouraged to maintain personal health insurance coverage while enrolled in the PTA Program. The college does not discriminate based on any medical condition; however, all students must comply with the Essential Functions and Performance Standards required for the program. Students must report any health condition that may pose a risk to patient safety (e.g., febrile illness, infectious skin lesion) or that could interfere with meeting program standards. Before returning to class or clinical after such a condition, students must provide documentation from a licensed healthcare provider (MD, DO, NP, or PA) verifying that they can meet all program standards without restrictions.

If a clinical instructor determines that a student's physical or mental health compromises safe patient care, the student will be removed from the patient care setting and required to arrange transportation home or to a healthcare provider. The PTA Program Director may require proof of medical evaluation and/or clearance prior to return. Students unable to meet program standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, may be dismissed from the program. Dismissals may be appealed through the College's established policy.

Immunizations: Please refer to the PTA Student Application Handbook & Clinical Education Handbook.

Health Services: Please refer to the Northwest Florida State College Student Handbook for information about [Mental Health Counseling Services](#).

Substance Use and/or Abuse: Substance abuse is incompatible with the ethical standards of the physical therapist assistant profession, the PTA Program, and Northwest Florida State College. Substance use or abuse can impair cognitive, sensory, affective, and psychomotor abilities, creating life-threatening risks for patients, classmates, and the student.

Students are required to submit to drug screening as part of the admission or readmission process and as required by clinical affiliates. Additional screenings may be requested at any time by the PTA Program, the College, or an affiliating clinical site, and the program reserves the right to determine the testing agency. Dilute negative results require rescreening; if the initial screen is reported as dilute negative, the student must provide

another sample. If the second sample is also dilute negative, the student will not be admitted into the program, or if already enrolled, will be subject to dismissal. Students are responsible for all costs associated with initial, repeat, or random screenings. Refusal to comply with a requested screening within the specified timeframe (generally 12–24 hours) will result in dismissal from the program.

Once admitted, students must remain drug free throughout the duration of the program. Reporting to class or clinical under the influence of drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited. Students assigned to affiliating agencies are subject to the agency's drug testing policies, which may include testing based on reasonable suspicion. Prior to clinical placement, students must sign a consent allowing the release of drug testing results to the program and provide the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) with a copy of any test results obtained by an affiliating agency. Failure to provide these results promptly will result in dismissal from the program. A positive drug or alcohol test result at any time during the program constitutes grounds for immediate dismissal.

Pregnancy Guidelines and Procedures:

For students who become pregnant during enrollment in the PTA Program, the program will take reasonable steps to promote the safety of both the student and the unborn child throughout participation in all program activities. Current infection control standards indicate that, with appropriate precautions, students may safely continue classroom, lab, and clinical activities during pregnancy. This policy is intended to provide pregnant students with the necessary information and protections in accordance with applicable standards and regulations while ensuring the essential functions of the program are maintained. Please note that all essential functions and performance standards must continue to be met.

When a student confirms pregnancy, they have two options:

Option 1: Choose not to declare the pregnancy. Under this option, the student is not required to disclose the pregnancy to the program and will be expected to fully participate in all classroom, lab, and clinical experiences without any modifications or restrictions.

Option 2: Declare the pregnancy in writing. To do so, the student must complete the "Declaration of Pregnancy" form (located in the appendix) and meet with the Program Director to discuss available options, which include:

- Withdrawing from the program and re-entering with the next available cohort after delivery to complete the program.
- Continuing in the program without interruption, including clinical rotations. In this case, the student will work with lab and clinical instructors to adjust schedules as needed to accommodate the expected delivery date and take appropriate precautions while caring for patients. If pregnancy-related complications result in extended absences, the student will be required to withdraw and re-enter after delivery.

If a student chooses to remain in the program after declaring pregnancy, a current letter from the student's healthcare provider must be submitted and updated as needed throughout the pregnancy. This letter must specify any restrictions and recommendations regarding classroom, lab, or clinical participation. Following delivery, a "fitness to return to duty" statement from a healthcare provider is required before the student may return to class or clinical activities. A student may withdraw the Declaration of Pregnancy in writing at any time if they determine that doing so is in their best interest.

F. Safety and Security

Northwest Florida State College Campus Police: It is the policy of NWFSC that all students and employees of NWF State College campuses are to report criminal acts and safety hazards or occurrences known to them. The proper reporting procedure is to contact the NWFSC Police Department, (850) 729-6888. PTA Program

students will be directed to the Raider Connect App, the official campus safety app of Northwest Florida State College. Through this app, students have access to a Mobile BlueLight, Emergency Contacts, Campus Map, Safety Toolbox and Emergency Plans. The College's Annual Safety and Fire Report and Emergency Action Guide can be found through on the [College website](#).

Emergency Closing: If NWFSC cancels classes, students are not to attend clinical education or on-campus classes. Program course material will be rescheduled and covered at a later date. If classes resume as scheduled and a student believes they cannot safely travel to their clinical site due to road conditions, the student must contact the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) immediately for guidance.

G. Student – Faculty Communication

All students are required to maintain current and accurate contact information in RaiderNet, including but not limited to name changes, home address, home phone number, cell phone number, alternate phone numbers, and NWFSC email address. In addition, students must promptly provide any updated information directly to the Program Director. Accurate contact information is essential for communication regarding clinical assignments, classroom changes, and other program-related updates. It is also critical for notifications during emergencies such as severe weather, campus closures, or safety drills.

H. Cell Phones/Portable Devices

Cell phones and other electronic devices must be set to silent or vibrate during class. Use of these devices, including but not limited to calls, text messaging, and instant messaging, is prohibited unless specifically permitted as part of a learning activity. In certain situations, such as during examinations, electronic devices are not allowed in the classroom. If an emergency requires access to electronic communication, the student must make arrangements with the instructor in advance.

I. Social Media/Networking

Students and healthcare professionals must use social networking platforms with extreme care and professionalism. To avoid potential bias and maintain professional boundaries, students are strongly discouraged from initiating or accepting friend requests from anyone associated with the PTA Program or their clinical experiences. This includes, but is not limited to, clinical instructors, professional staff, patients, and family members of patients or staff. Maintaining these boundaries ensures students are evaluated solely on clinical performance without the influence of personal information shared online.

Students are required to uphold patient confidentiality as both a professional and legal obligation. Because social networking sites are public in nature, privacy and professionalism can be compromised. Students are strictly prohibited from posting any content that could breach patient or peer confidentiality. This includes but is not limited to: names; references to the clinical site, staff, classmates, or instructors; photographs of patients, staff, facilities, or any identifying details; and any comments or information that could reveal the identity of a patient, peer, or staff member.

Students must not post comments or opinions about their clinical experiences, clinical site, clinical instructors, patients, instructors, classmates, or staff on any social media platform, text message, or other electronic networking medium. Additionally, photographs of patients, staff, facilities, or clinical settings are strictly prohibited. Failure to comply with this policy constitutes a serious violation of program standards and may result in immediate dismissal from the program.

J. Food and Beverages

Food and beverages with closed lids will be allowed in the lecture classroom. The area must be left clean and all trash removed at the end of class or the permission for food will be revoked. There will be no food in the laboratory space. Beverages with closed lids are allowed.

K. Off-Site Learning Experiences/Fieldtrips

Students are responsible for their own transportation to off-site learning experiences/field trips, as well as clinical sites. It is the responsibility of the student to follow the parking regulations at the facility. Since students are responsible for the costs, car-pooling is encouraged. Student safety and accountability is paramount in off-campus learning experiences as it is in on-campus learning experiences. A faculty member will accompany students to all off-campus laboratory or field trips events. The faculty member will evaluate the situation and remove all students if the environment is found to be unsafe or inappropriate. Field trips will be submitted to the Dean for approval at least one week in advance. Attendance will be taken at the event to ensure that the students have made it safely to the event. The attendance list will include emergency contact information in the event of an accident. Students are required to sign an Off-site acknowledgment form (located in appendix).

L. Graduate Follow Up

Graduates of the program will be contacted regarding their employment situation and related topics in periodic surveys from the Program Director. It is a professional responsibility of the graduate to respond to these inquiries in order to assist with further evaluation and development of this program.

APPENDIX

Handbook Acknowledgement Form
Please initial each for declaration of understanding:

_____ I understand and will comply with all college, clinical and didactic requirements throughout the PTA Program.

_____ I understand and acknowledge that the inability to meet the physical, psychological, or other requirements will result in removal from the clinical site which, in turn, will result in a failing grade in clinical.

_____ I understand that individual physical clinical requirements include but are not limited to, walking, standing, balancing, lifting/transferring patients, bending, manual techniques with hands and other tasks associated with patient care.

_____ I understand that that exposure to various communicable/transferable diseases may occur during a clinical experience, and that the protection against these conditions (e.g., following safe health practices and becoming immunized) is the student's responsibility.

_____ I understand that other clinical requirements include, but are not limited to, competency requirements, safety of self and patients (also a part of physical and psychological requirements), following the Program Handbook, clinical syllabus, health and safety requirements, and the College Handbook and rules therein.

_____ I understand the information in the Student Handbook and course syllabi is subject to change. I will be held accountable for these changes. Any changes will be provided to me in electronic form.

_____ I understand that I may be dismissed from the PTA Program for failure to follow any of the policies outlined in the College Catalog, College Student Handbook, and the PTA Program Student Handbook.

_____ I understand that if I have any questions about the College or PTA Student Handbook, I need to personally address the concerns with the appropriate parties using proper chain of command.

_____ I understand that the minimum grade for a PTA technical course is a 75% and failure to meet that score will remove me from the PTA Program.

_____ I understand that I must remediate for any examination or practical score below a 75%; failure to remediate will result in a behavioral warning. A third behavioral write-up will result in dismissal from the program.

_____ I understand that dismissal from the clinical site may result in a failing grade ("F") for the clinical course and dismissal from the PTA Program.

_____ I understand that readmission to the PTA Program is not guaranteed and that I will only be offered one readmission attempt based on the guidelines in the student handbook.

Student Name _____

Student Signature _____

Date _____

Northwest Florida State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program
Essential Functions of a Physical Therapist Assistant Student

Healthcare professionals must be able to perform essential functions to provide safe care, gather accurate data, and communicate effectively. Faculty and students are required to demonstrate proficiency of these functions in the campus, lab, and clinical activities. Essential functions (or technical performance standards) represent the critical non-academic requirements of the program that students must master to successfully participate in the program. To participate in a physical therapist assistant education program, students must be able to comply with program's designated essential functions or request reasonable accommodations to execute these essential functions.

Neither the College nor the program discriminates on the basis of disability in admission or access to its programs, services, or activities for qualified individuals who meet essential functions requirements. The College will provide reasonable accommodations for documented disabilities of individuals who are otherwise eligible to receive or participate in College programs, services, or activities. For a student who cannot perform essential functions, whether they are a student who needs reasonable accommodations or a student who does not, the program reserves the right to deny admission or require withdrawal of any student who, in the judgment of the Program Director, presents evidence of being unable to perform the responsibilities and tasks required of the physical therapist assistant profession as described by the essential functions in this section.

Students of Northwest Florida State College Physical Therapist Assistant Program must be able to meet these minimum standards for successful completion of program requirements (separate from the academic standards for admission).

MOBILITY/MOTOR SKILLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• KNEEL OR STOOP FREELY: To floor to adjust patient position or assist with equipment; inspect feet, apply shoes or prosthetics• KNEEL, HALF-KNEEL, CRAWL: On an exercise table to assist with patient activities• REACH ABOVE HEAD: In standing, to adjust and position equipment• LIFT; PULL; GUIDE; TRANSFER: A patient of up to 150 lbs and up to 250 lbs using a two-man technique• BEND, STAND, KNEEL, SIT, WALK OR CRAWL FOR 90 MINUTES WITHOUT REST: To administer emergency care (CPR); to perform lab activities and administer patient interventions• GUIDE; RESIST AND ASSIST: Adult patients (or classmates) during Physical Therapist transfers, ambulation, interventions, and exercises; using your arms, legs, or trunk to provide the necessary stabilization for a patient during therapy• PUSH/PULL: Large wheeled equipment; whirlpools, tilt tables and patients on stretchers or in wheelchairs• WALK: For extended periods of time to all areas of a hospital• CLIMB: Stairs & inclines while safely guarding an unstable patient• BILATERAL DEXTERITY: To adjust and fine tune controls on electrical and heat modalities; demonstrate ADL activities and exercises to patients; To carry out stretching, massage and exercise programs; adjust and use Physical stretching, massage, and exercise programs; adjust and use Physical Therapist devices like goniometers and crutch/cane/walkers, carry out splinting techniques, guard patients• COORDINATION: To perform different tasks with different limbs simultaneously• SPEED AND AGILITY: To protect a walking or moving unstable patient from falling• ASSUME A WIDE BASE OF SUPPORT, BALANCE: To guard, maintain and correct balance of an unstable patient on flat surfaces, inclines, and stairs• PERFORM: patient physical assistance using safe and proper body mechanics• WORK CAPACITY: To perform all essential skills and standards to complete eight-hour days, and a 40 hour work week during PTA Program enrollment

SENSORY ABILITIES AND OBSERVATIONAL SKILLS

- **DEPTH PERCEPTION:** For judging distance, surface changes, level changes while ambulating patients
- **SEE (WITH OR WITHOUT CORRECTIVE LENSES):** Patient skin, discriminate color changes, facial expressions and non-verbal communications, normal and abnormal patterns of movement; the environment for up to 20 feet; to read and set parameters on Physical Therapist equipment, detect small calibrations on measuring instruments
- **FEEL:** To discriminate small and large temperature differences; palpate pulses; assess body segment contour; to assess muscle tone; joint movement, discriminate sharp and dull, light touch and deep pressure sensation
- **HEAR:** Soft voices, masked voices, patient call systems, alarms, timers, blood pressure sounds using a stethoscope; demonstrate active listening skills
- **SMELL:** To detect odors related to patient assessment
- **POSITION, MOVEMENT AND BALANCE SENSATION:** To feel where your individual body segments are located and to know when and how they are moving even when you cannot see them

COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

- **SPEAK AND EXPRESS:** Clearly and understandably in the English language; information to peers, faculty, patients, their families, and other health care providers; to explain conditions and procedures and teach home programs
- **READ:** Typed, handwritten, chart data and computer-generated documents in the English language; at a level of competency that allows safe and timely execution of essential tasks or assignments
- **UNDERSTAND; INTERPRET:** Medical terminology and information given regarding status, progress, and safety of a patient; to follow simple and complex instructions (oral or written) given by a PT regarding patient care; and respond to non-verbal communication/behaviors of self and others
- **FOLLOW DIRECTIONS:** Accurately and efficiently, seeking clarification where necessary
- **WRITE:** To produce legible handwritten or computer word processed documents; use correct medical terminology, spelling, grammar, and punctuation; organize and express thoughts in written form in the English language; to prepare accurate, thorough, legally defensible patient documentation
- **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS:** To work collaboratively; interact professionally; to establish rapport with patients, colleagues, and classmates; to resolve conflicts; with individuals from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds; maintain confidentiality in all interactions

COGNITIVE AND INTELLECTUAL STANDARDS

- **THINK CRITICALLY:** To identify and solve problems; identify cause/effect relationships; to apply reading, lecture, and laboratory information to case study preparation; to employ effective teaching, learning and test taking strategies
- **COMPREHEND:** Relevant information regarding patient diagnoses, Physical Therapist interventions, indications and contraindications, human pathology and impairments from textbooks, medical records, and professional literature
- **PRIORITIZE:** Events to provide for patient safety; appropriate patient interventions; multiple tasks; integrate information and make decisions about sequence and progression
- **CALCULATE:** To collect and/or interpret accurate patient data
- **MAKE CLINICAL DECISIONS:** To respond quickly and appropriately to changes in patient status; to analyze written, observed, or verbal data about patients and make decisions to terminate, modify, progress or cancel patient treatment; act safely and ethically in the Physical Therapist lab and clinic
- **SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM MEMORY:** To accurately and quickly remember data from the chart and information relayed in verbal exchanges with the PT and other members of the health care team; to access learned knowledge to include but not limited to diagnoses, weight-bearing status, indications, contraindications

for interventions, safety precautions, subjective reports of patients, emergency procedures; safety procedures; to participate successfully in the learning and evaluation of knowledge within the Physical Therapist Assistant curriculum

- **THINK QUICKLY AND CLEARLY:** To execute all duties unimpaired by any condition or substance that alters mental processing, speed or quality of thought processes or judgment

BEHAVIORAL/PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

- **FLEXIBILITY:** To adjust to a constantly changing and very demanding full-time schedule
- **COMPASSION:** To respect and show empathy for patients and their families; for people of all personality types, backgrounds, ethnic, race or socioeconomic backgrounds including but not limited to individuals with neurological disorders, physical disfigurement, mental health, or complex medical problems
- **COOPERATION:** To work as a member of a team; develop positive and effective relationships with faculty, clinicians, peers, and patients
- **RECOGNIZE LIMITATIONS:** To request assistance when needed; accept correction and constructive suggestions; assume responsibility for personal development; utilize resources effectively
- **TOLERANCE:** For close physical contact with patients, peers, and classmates during the provision of interventions and in lab; for close proximity, and physical contact with patients that require use of standard precautions during therapy due to open wounds, incontinence or other potential exposure to bodily fluids or pathogens during treatment
- **WILLINGNESS:** To wear scrub top/pants as the assigned uniform for fieldwork assignments; To wear required lab attire that will allow for visualization of body contours and exposure of all major joints and muscles; to participate in lab activities that require palpation, measurement, massage and other forms of therapeutic touching of joints, muscles and bony landmarks; to serve as both the patient model and clinician during patient simulations that allow classmates to practice and perfect Physical Therapist Assistant skills
- **POSITIVE ATTITUDE:** To demonstrate initiative, enthusiasm and appropriate peer and patient interactions
- **WORK ETHIC:** To attend class and clinic promptly and regularly; to stay focused and on task in lecture and laboratory instructional time; to submit work products promptly when due; to display industrious behavior; to submit to all classroom and clinical rules/policies; to demonstrate respect for other health care providers and the profession of Physical Therapist Assistant; to comply with all legal and ethical standards of practice
- **STRESS MANAGEMENT:** Coping skills for fast-paced clinical situations; to manage multiple academic deadlines; deal effectively with psychosocial issues of catastrophic illness, disability, and death; respond appropriately in a stressful environment and during impending deadlines; manage personal matters outside of class/workday
- **PLANNING AHEAD:** To arrange transportation and living accommodations for/during off campus clinical assignments to foster timely reporting to the classroom and clinical center
- **SELF CARE:** To maintain general good health and hygiene in order not to jeopardize the health and safety of self and individuals with whom one interacts in the academic and clinical settings

Reasonable Accommodation for Disabilities

The Accommodation Resource Center (ARC) at Northwest Florida State College is committed to providing equal access and opportunities for educational success to all students with disabilities as guided by the American Disabilities Act and other disability-related laws. Northwest Florida State College does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in any of our programs, services, or activities based on Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students who wish to request reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the ARC to start the process for documenting their disability and determining eligibility for services prior to the start of the program.

Accommodations allow for reasonable modifications or adjustments to a course, skill, or the need for an auxiliary aid and/or service, that allows a qualified individual with a disability to have full and equal participation while demonstrating an acceptable level of competency. The College is not responsible for providing auxiliary aids and services. What constitutes a reasonable accommodation will be determined on a case-by-case basis as the student works directly with the NWFSC ARC, and will include consideration of the individual's documented disability and the academic and technical requirements

of the PTA program. Requests for modifications that are essential to the completion of required competencies will not generally be regarded as reasonable. All students are held to specific academic and technical standards required for safe completion of the PTA program. It is the student's responsibility to self-advocate and determine how they will accomplish these requirements. The PTA program works with third-party sites for clinical placement. Students must meet all requirements that are predetermined by each individual facility via a written affiliation agreement or memorandum of understanding. These facilities are not under the control of the College or the PTA program. Additionally, the PTA program cannot guarantee student placement at any third-party facility. Facilities can elect not to accept students for any reason, including staffing restraints and failure of an individual student to meet any predetermined clinical safety requirements.

By signing below, I am indicating that I have read and understand the PTA Essential Functions and affirm that I can meet all the above Essential Functions with or without reasonable accommodations. I understand that I may not be able to progress in the program if unable to meet specific requirements or if I am unable to be placed at a clinical site due to their specific requirements. I authorize the program to share my request for reasonable accommodation(s) with a clinical site if deemed necessary for safety or successful completion of the clinical experience.

Name	Student ID #	Date
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Off Campus Trip Release Form

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Northwest Florida State College includes a number of off campus trip experiences for you, the adult students. These trips are planned to be an educational experience and are sponsored by a number of organizations related to the PTA curriculum. Any student who participates in a field trip becomes a representative of NWFSC. Since your behavior is a reflection on your curriculum you are expected to conduct yourself in a mature manner that would favorably reflect your chosen profession.

A NWFSC PTA student must be ever mindful of HIPAA and the Physical Therapy Standard of Ethics and professional conduct.

I, (print name) _____ understand that every effort will be taken to ensure my safety and welfare on any field trip endorsed by my curriculum. I voluntarily release from liability for all claims and agree that I will not hold any PTA Program faculty or NWFSC, its trustees, employee, representatives, agents, successors, and assigns responsible for any accident or injury incurred to, from or on any field trip. This includes travel by private vehicle which I operate as a licensed driver, is driven by a licensed classmate or by a licensed NWFSC employee.

Print name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Date: _____

**Northwest Florida State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program
Informed Consent Form**

If you have any cultural or individual differences that require modification of this form before signing, please speak with the PTA Program Director prior to signing the form.

Your Treatment

I, _____ (print your name here), agree to be treated by my instructors, guest lecturers or classmates during any or all mock lab and treatment sessions for the duration of my stay in the program. I understand that all efforts are made to provide modesty and safe conditions for me and that if I feel I am uncomfortable with any draping, manner of touch, or treatment activity or intervention, that I will carefully confront the person regarding this issue. If I still do not feel that the issue is resolved by this action, I will bring my concerns to the instructor and Program Director. I will follow the established dress code for lab classes as detailed in the course syllabus and the PTA Student Handbook. I will give notice to faculty of any relevant allergies, or other conditions prior to the lab session. I will notify the course instructor and the PTA Program Director prior to lab class if there is any significant change in my health status or history that would create a potential contraindication for any treatment intervention.

It is the responsibility of the individual signing below, who is participating in PTA Program activities, to inform the PTA faculty and/or competency proctors of any personal health diagnoses that exist that could be contraindications to the treatment interventions or activities.

Contraindications

In order to participate in lab class, as a competency patient, or as a lab practicum patient, I have informed the PTA faculty and/ or competency proctors of the presence of any health conditions and/or potential contraindications that a reasonable person would believe may be impacted by participation in the mock treatment. I recognize that I am responsible for advising the faculty and/or proctor of any concern that I may have regarding participation in the mock treatment.

Treating Others

I, _____ (print your name here), will endeavor to follow the APTA Standards of Ethical Conduct for the PTA, along with all other posted lab rules. I agree to drape my classmates, guests or instructors in a way that protects the modesty and maintain the safety of all "patients" treated. I will practice considerate and respectful non-verbal and verbal communication during all classroom and lab activities. I will promptly report any malfunctioning equipment to faculty as soon as I become aware of the malfunctioning equipment.

Printed name _____

Signature _____

Northwest Florida State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program
Permission to Use Photographs and/or Other Personal Information

If you are a student or participant who is 18 years or older, you will sign this form for yourself. If you are a student or participant who is younger than 18 years, your parent or legal guardian will sign for you; in that case, all references to "I" or "my" refer to the participant.

I give my consent to Northwest Florida State College ("NWFSC") and its employees, volunteers, and contractors acting on behalf of NWFSC to:

1. Record my image, likeness, and voice through video, audio, or photo recording, or any other medium, and to use my name in connection with these "Recordings"; and
2. Keep, use, reproduce, exhibit, or distribute these Recordings in whole or in part now and in the future in any and all media formats available to NWFSC (including, but not limited to, print publications, video reproduction and publication, internet storage and publication, social media, and any other electronic or other medium existing now or in the future) for any purpose that NWFSC, and those acting on its behalf and under its authority, decide is appropriate, including display, illustration, promotional, recruiting, advertising, electronic transmission, and any commercial or non-commercial use.

I release NWFSC and any and all of its representatives, employees, volunteers, assignees, and successors, from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, causes of actions, suits, costs, expenses, liabilities, and damages whatsoever that I may have now or in the future from liability for any violation of any personal, property, or other proprietary right I may have in connection with use of my image, likeness, voice, or name in any medium. I have read, understood, and agree to the terms of this release. I understand and agree that I am releasing, waiving, or otherwise relinquishing legal rights and opportunity to sue covered by this release.

I expressly waive any rights to privacy or other rights that I may have under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) and Florida Statutes § 1002.22 and other federal or state laws. To the extent required by FERPA, Florida Statutes, or other federal or state laws, I consent to the use of my name, image, likeness, and voice as stated in this release.

I understand and agree that all Recordings are and will remain the property of NWFSC.

If I am a parent or guardian of a student or participant younger than 18 years, I have read, understood, and agree to the terms of this release on behalf of my participant.

Name of Participant: _____

Participant Signature (18 years or older): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature (younger than 18 years): _____

Date: _____

**Northwest Florida State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program
Student Pregnancy Declaration/Withdrawal Form**

Declaration of Pregnancy

To Whom It May Concern:

In accordance with current regulations, I wish to declare that I am pregnant. I am making this declaration voluntarily and understand that I am not required to do so.

In making this declaration, I understand that I must submit to the PTA Program Director a letter from my physician or other health care professional indicating any restrictions and recommendations regarding my participation in theory or clinical coursework. This letter must be updated as I progress through my pregnancy. I also understand that I must submit a "return to clinical care and class" documenting my "fitness to return to duty" following delivery.

Student Name

Signature

Date

Withdrawal of Declaration of Pregnancy

To Whom It May Concern,

Effectively immediately, I am withdrawing my previous declaration of pregnancy. I understand that, by submitting this form, I agree to the removal of any clinical scheduling changes due to my declaration of pregnancy.

Student Name

Signature

Date

**Northwest Florida State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program**

Statement of Withdrawal

This is to certify that _____ was accepted
Student's Name (First and Last)

to the Northwest Florida State College Physical Therapist Assistant program on

_____ and withdrew from the program on
Date Accepted

_____ for the following reason(s):
Date Withdrew

Check all that apply:

_____ Personal or health reasons

_____ Financial status

_____ Transferring to another program

_____ Program is too intense for me

_____ Violation of program rules

_____ Academic failure

_____ Relocating

_____ Other

If you choose OTHER, please explain under the comment section.

Comments:

Student name (print)

Signature

Date

Program Director Signature

Date

**Northwest Florida State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program**

Midterm Evaluation

Fall Spring Summer 20_____

Student: _____

Student ID #: _____

Strengths:

Areas for Improvement:

Comments:

Student Signature

Date

Advisor Signature

Date

**Northwest Florida State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program**

Academic Remediation Record

Students are required to remediate any exam grade below a 75 and a failure on a skill check or lab practical. This form serves as documentation of the remediation session and outlines recommendation or required actions. Students that do not complete the required actions will be subject to the program behavioral policies.

Student Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Course: Click or tap here to enter text.

Type of Assessment: Click or tap here to enter text.

Grade: Click or tap here to enter text.

Remediation Notes and Recommendations:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Action Plan with Timelines:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Student Comments:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Student Signature:

Instructor Signature:

**Northwest Florida State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program**

Behavioral Counseling Record

This form serves as documentation that the student has been notified of the issue(s) they are being counseled on. This form will also document the period of time permitted to correct or improve the situation. The student will abide by all policies and follow the remediation plan determined by program staff. Failure to comply with the terms can result in probation and/or dismissal from the program.

Student Name:

Student ID#: Click or tap here to enter text.

Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Description of Incident or Circumstance:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Recommendations/Actions:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Remediation Plan with Timelines:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Student Comments:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Advisement: Behavioral Warning ☐ Probation ☐

I have read and understand the counseling offense report. I will exercise my right to appeal procedures if it is necessary.

Student Signature:

Instructor Signature:

Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool
Original developed at Marquette University – Milwaukee, WI
(Edited for use by the NWF State College PTA Program)

Student Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Semester: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Advisor Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Date: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Directions:

1. Read the description of each Professional Behavior.
2. Become familiar with the behavioral criteria described in each of the levels.
3. Self-assess your current performance, relative to the Professional Behaviors, using the behavioral criteria.
4. To complete this form:
 - a) **Highlight in green** all criteria that describes behaviors you demonstrate in Beginning (column 1), Intermediate (column 2), or Entry Level (column 3) for each criteria.
 - b) **Highlight in green** the level within which you predominately function (beginning, intermediate, entry).
 - c) Document ***specific examples*** of when you demonstrated behaviors from the *highest level* highlighted, or the one in which you predominately function. You may use examples from any and all experiences that you have had previously, taking into consideration the level of this experience related to one in professional practice when rating yourself.
 - d) For each Professional Behavior, list the areas in which you wish to improve. And, **highlight in yellow** the areas that you have as current goals for yourself. Areas that are *not highlighted* are your long-term goals for yourself.
 - e) Complete the final section, reflecting on the areas that you have highlighted in yellow, and describe specific actions that you will take to work toward and achieve these goals.

****Professional Behaviors were *originally* developed by Warren May, Laurie Kontney and Annette Iglarsh (2010) as an update to the Generic Abilities.**

1. Critical Thinking - The ability to question logically; identify, generate, and evaluate elements of logical argument; recognize and differentiate facts, appropriate or faulty inferences, and assumptions; and distinguish relevant from irrelevant information. The ability to appropriately utilize, analyze, and critically evaluate scientific evidence to develop a logical argument, and to identify and determine the impact of bias on the decision making process.

Beginning Level:

- ❖ Raises relevant questions
- ❖ Considers all available information
- ❖ Articulates ideas
- ❖ Understands the scientific method
- ❖ States the results of scientific literature but has not developed the consistent ability to critically appraise findings (i.e. methodology and conclusion)
- ❖ Recognizes holes in knowledge base
- ❖ Demonstrates acceptance of limited knowledge & experience in knowledge base

Intermediate Level:

- ❖ Feels challenged to examine ideas
- ❖ Critically analyzes the literature and applies it to patient management
- ❖ Utilizes didactic knowledge, research evidence, and clinical experience to formulate new ideas
- ❖ Seeks alternative ideas
- ❖ Formulates alternative hypotheses
- ❖ Critiques hypotheses and ideas at a level consistent with knowledge base
- ❖ Acknowledges presence of contradictions

Entry Level:

- ❖ Distinguishes relevant from irrelevant patient data
- ❖ Readily formulates and critiques alternative hypotheses and ideas
- ❖ Infers applicability of information across populations
- ❖ Exhibits openness to contradictory ideas
- ❖ Identifies appropriate measures and determines effectiveness of applied solutions efficiently
- ❖ Justifies solutions selected

I function predominantly in the **beginning/intermediate/entry** level (highlight your rating)

Examples of **specific** behaviors to support my self-assessment: Click here to enter text.

Regarding this Professional Behavior, I would like to improve in the following ways: Click here to enter text.

2. Communication - The ability to communicate effectively (i.e. verbal, non-verbal, reading, writing, and listening) for varied audiences and purposes.

Beginning Level:

- ❖ Demonstrates understanding of the English language (verbal and written): uses correct grammar, accurate spelling and expression, legible handwriting
- ❖ Recognizes impact of non- verbal communication in self and others
- ❖ Recognizes the verbal and non- verbal characteristics that portray confidence
- ❖ Utilizes electronic communication appropriately

Intermediate Level:

- ❖ Utilizes and modifies communication (verbal, non- verbal, written and electronic) to meet the needs of different audiences
- ❖ Restates, reflects, and clarifies message(s)
- ❖ Communicates collaboratively with both individuals and groups
- ❖ Collects necessary information from all pertinent individuals in the patient/client management process
- ❖ Provides effective education (verbal, non-verbal, written, and electronic)

Entry Level:

- ❖ Demonstrates the ability to maintain appropriate control of the communication exchange with individuals and groups
- ❖ Presents persuasive and explanatory verbal, written or electronic messages with logical organization and sequencing
- ❖ Maintains open and constructive communication
- ❖ Utilizes communication technology effectively and efficiently

I function predominantly in the **beginning/intermediate/entry** level (highlight your rating)

Examples of **specific** behaviors to support my self-assessment: Click here to enter text.

Regarding this Professional Behavior, I would like to improve in the following ways: Click here to enter text.

3. Problem Solving – The ability to recognize and define problems, analyze data, develop and implement solutions, and evaluate outcomes.

Beginning Level:

- ❖ Recognizes problems
- ❖ States problems clearly
- ❖ Describes known solutions to problems
- ❖ Identifies resources needed to develop solutions
- ❖ Uses technology to search for and locate resources
- ❖ Identifies possible solutions and probable outcomes

Intermediate Level:

- ❖ Prioritizes problems
- ❖ Identifies contributors to problems
- ❖ Consults with others to clarify problems
- ❖ Appropriately seeks input or guidance
- ❖ Prioritizes resources (analysis and critique of resources)
- ❖ Considers consequences of possible solutions

Entry Level:

- ❖ Independently locates, prioritizes and uses resources to solve problems
- ❖ Accepts responsibility for implementing solutions
- ❖ Implements solutions
- ❖ Reassesses solutions
- ❖ Evaluates outcomes
- ❖ Modifies solutions based on the outcome and current evidence
- ❖ Evaluates generalizability of current evidence to a particular problem

I function predominantly in the **beginning/intermediate/entry** level (highlight your rating)

Examples of **specific** behaviors to support my self-assessment: Click here to enter text.

Regarding this Professional Behavior, I would like to improve in the following ways: Click here to enter text.

4. Interpersonal Skills – The ability to interact effectively with patients, families, colleagues, other health care professionals, and the community in a culturally aware manner.

Beginning Level:

- ❖ Maintains professional demeanor in all interactions
- ❖ Demonstrates interest in patients as individuals
- ❖ Communicates with others in a respectful and confident manner
- ❖ Respects differences in personality, lifestyle and learning styles during interactions with all persons
- ❖ Maintains confidentiality in all interactions
- ❖ Recognizes the emotions and bias that one brings to all professional interactions

Intermediate Level:

- ❖ Recognizes the non-verbal communication and emotions that others bring to professional interactions
- ❖ Establishes trust
- ❖ Seeks to gain input from others
- ❖ Respects role of others
- ❖ Accommodates differences in learning styles as appropriate

Entry Level:

- ❖ Demonstrates active listening skills and reflects back to original concern to determine course of action
- ❖ Responds effectively to unexpected situations
- ❖ Demonstrates ability to build partnerships
- ❖ Applies conflict management strategies when dealing with challenging interactions
- ❖ Recognizes the impact of non-verbal communication and emotional responses during interactions and modifies own behaviors based on them

I function predominantly in the **beginning/intermediate/entry** level (highlight your rating)

Examples of **specific** behaviors to support my self-assessment: Click here to enter text.

Regarding this Professional Behavior, I would like to improve in the following ways: Click here to enter text.

5. Responsibility – The ability to be accountable for the outcomes of personal and professional actions and to follow through on commitments that encompass the profession within the scope of work, community and social responsibilities.

Beginning Level:

- ❖ Demonstrates punctuality
- ❖ Provides a safe and secure environment for patients
- ❖ Assumes responsibility for actions
- ❖ Follows through on commitments
- ❖ Articulates limitations and readiness to learn
- ❖ Abides by all policies of academic program and clinical facility

Intermediate Level:

- ❖ Displays awareness of and sensitivity to diverse populations
- ❖ Completes projects without prompting
- ❖ Collaborates with team members, patients and families
- ❖ Provides evidence-based patient care

Entry Level:

- ❖ Educates patients as consumers of health care services
- ❖ Encourages patient accountability
- ❖ Acts as a patient advocate
- ❖ Promotes evidence-based practice in health care settings
- ❖ Accepts responsibility for implementing solutions
- ❖ Demonstrates accountability for all decisions and behaviors in academic and clinical settings

I function predominantly in the **beginning/intermediate/entry** level (highlight your rating)

Examples of **specific** behaviors to support my self-assessment: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Regarding this Professional Behavior, I would like to improve in the following ways: [Click here to enter text.](#)

6. Professionalism – The ability to exhibit appropriate professional conduct and to represent the profession effectively while promoting the growth/development of the Physical Therapy profession.

Beginning Level:

- ❖ Abides by all aspects of the academic program honor code and the APTA Code of Ethics
- ❖ Demonstrates awareness of state licensure regulations
- ❖ Projects professional image
- ❖ Attends professional meetings
- ❖ Demonstrates cultural/generational awareness, ethical values, respect, and continuous regard for all classmates, academic and clinical faculty/staff, patients, families, and other healthcare providers

Intermediate Level:

- ❖ Identifies positive professional role models within the academic and clinical settings
- ❖ Acts on moral commitment during all academic and clinical activities
- ❖ Identifies when the input of classmates, co-workers and other healthcare professionals will result in optimal outcome and acts accordingly to attain such input and share decision making
- ❖ Discusses societal expectations of the profession

Entry Level:

- ❖ Demonstrates understanding of scope of practice as evidenced by treatment of patients within scope of practice, referring to other healthcare professionals as necessary
- ❖ Provides patient/family centered care at all times as evidenced by provision of patient/family education, seeking patient input and informed consent for all aspects of care and maintenance of patient dignity
- ❖ Seeks excellence in professional practice by participation in professional organizations and attendance at sessions or participation in activities that further education/professional development
- ❖ Utilizes evidence to guide clinical decision making and the provision of patient care, following guidelines for best practices
- ❖ Discusses role of physical therapy within the healthcare system and in population health

		❖ Demonstrates leadership in collaboration with both individuals and groups
<p><i>I function predominantly in the beginning/intermediate/entry level (highlight your rating)</i></p> <p><i>Examples of specific behaviors to support my self-assessment:</i> Click here to enter text.</p> <p><i>Regarding this Professional Behavior, I would like to improve in the following ways:</i> Click here to enter text.</p>		

7. Use of Constructive Feedback – The ability to seek out and identify quality sources of feedback, reflect on and integrate the feedback, and provide meaningful feedback to others.		
Beginning Level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Demonstrates active listening skills ❖ Assesses own performance ❖ Actively seeks feedback from appropriate sources ❖ Demonstrates receptive behavior and positive attitude toward feedback ❖ Incorporates specific feedback into behaviors ❖ Maintains two-way communication without defensiveness 	Intermediate Level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Critiques own performance accurately ❖ Responds effectively to constructive feedback ❖ Utilizes feedback when establishing professional and patient related goals within the plan of care ❖ Develops and implements a plan of action in response to feedback ❖ Provides constructive and timely feedback 	Entry Level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Independently engages in a continual process of self-evaluation of skills, knowledge, and abilities ❖ Seeks feedback from patients/clients and peers/mentors ❖ Readily integrates feedback provided from a variety of sources to improve skills, knowledge, and abilities ❖ Uses multiple approaches when responding to feedback ❖ Reconciles differences with sensitivity ❖ Modifies feedback given to patients/clients according to their learning styles
<p><i>I function predominantly in the beginning/intermediate/entry level (highlight your rating)</i></p> <p><i>Examples of specific behaviors to support my self-assessment:</i> Click here to enter text.</p> <p><i>Regarding this Professional Behavior, I would like to improve in the following ways:</i> Click here to enter text.</p>		

8. Effective Use of Time and Resources – The ability to manage time and resources effectively to obtain the maximum possible benefit.		
Beginning Level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Comes prepared for the day's activities /responsibilities ❖ Identifies resource limitations (i.e. information, time, experience) ❖ Determines when and how much help/ assistance is needed 	Intermediate Level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Utilizes effective methods of searching for evidence for practice decisions ❖ Recognizes own resource contributions ❖ Shares knowledge and collaborates with staff to utilize best current evidence ❖ Discusses and implements strategies for 	Entry Level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Uses current best evidence ❖ Collaborates with members of the team to maximize the impact of treatment available ❖ Has the ability to set boundaries, negotiate, compromise, and set realistic expectations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Accesses current evidence in a timely manner ❖ Verbalizes productivity standards and identifies barriers to meeting productivity standards ❖ Self-identifies and initiates learning opportunities during unscheduled time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ meeting productivity standards ❖ Identifies need for and discussed need for referrals with supervising PT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Adjusts plans, schedule etc. as patient needs and circumstances dictate ❖ Meets productivity standards of facility while providing quality care and completing non-productive work activities
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I function predominantly in the **beginning/intermediate/entry** level (highlight your rating)

Examples of **specific** behaviors to support my self-assessment: Click here to enter text.

Regarding this Professional Behavior, I would like to improve in the following ways: Click here to enter text.

9. Stress Management– The ability to identify sources of stress and to develop and implement effective coping behaviors; this applies for interactions for: self, patient/clients and their families, members of the health care team and in work/life scenarios.

Beginning Level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Recognizes own stressors ❖ Recognizes distress or problems in others ❖ Seeks assistance as needed ❖ Maintains professional demeanor in all situations 	Intermediate Level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Actively employs stress management techniques ❖ Reconciles inconsistencies in the educational process ❖ Maintains balance between professional and personal life ❖ Accepts constructive feedback and clarifies expectations ❖ Establishes outlets to cope with stressors 	Entry Level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Demonstrates appropriate affective responses in all situations ❖ Responds calmly to urgent situations with reflection and debriefing as needed ❖ Prioritizes multiple commitments ❖ Reconciles inconsistencies within professional, personal and work/life environments ❖ Demonstrates ability to defuse potential stressors with self and others
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I function predominantly in the **beginning/intermediate/entry** level (highlight your rating)

Examples of **specific** behaviors to support my self-assessment: Click here to enter text.

Regarding this Professional Behavior, I would like to improve in the following ways: Click here to enter text.

10. Commitment to Learning – The ability to self-direct learning to include the identification of needs and sources of learning; and to continually seek and apply new knowledge, behaviors, and skills.

Beginning Level:

- ❖ Prioritizes information needs
- ❖ Analyzes and subdivides large questions into components
- ❖ Identifies own learning needs based on previous experiences
- ❖ Welcomes and/or seeks new learning opportunities
- ❖ Seeks out professional literature

Intermediate Level:

- ❖ Researches and studies areas where own knowledge base is lacking in order to augment learning and practice
- ❖ Applies new information and re-evaluates performance
- ❖ Accepts that there may be more than one answer to a problem
- ❖ Recognizes the need to and is able to verify solutions to problems
- ❖ Plans and presents an in-service, research or cases studies

Entry Level:

- ❖ Respectfully questions conventional wisdom
- ❖ Formulates and re-evaluates position based on available evidence
- ❖ Demonstrates confidence in sharing new knowledge with all staff levels
- ❖ Modifies programs and treatments based on newly-learned skills and considerations
- ❖ Consults with other health professionals and physical therapists/physical therapist assistants for treatment ideas
- ❖ Reads articles critically and understands limits of application to professional practice

*I function predominantly in the **beginning/intermediate/entry** level (highlight your rating)*

*Examples of **specific** behaviors to support my self-assessment:* [Click here to enter text.](#)

Regarding this Professional Behavior, I would like to improve in the following ways: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Professional Development Plan:

Based on my self-assessment of my Professional Behaviors and the areas I have identified for improvement, I am setting the following goals:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

To accomplish these goals, I will take the following specific actions:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

By my signature below, I indicate that I have completed this self-assessment consideration of my professional abilities and goals for development.

Student Signature: [Click here to enter text.](#) Date: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant

HOD S06-19-47-68 [Amended HOD S06-09-20-18;
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 and 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.

Standards

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

- 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 therapist services.

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

- 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.

- 3A. Physical therapist assistants shall make objective decisions in the patient's or 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 and 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 or client status requires modifications to the established plan of care.

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

- 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.

- 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 and 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.

- 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 and clients and society.

- 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 and 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 and clients.

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

- 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 therapist services.
- 8D. Physical therapist assistants shall educate members of the public about the benefits of physical therapy.

Effective June 2019

For more information, go to www.apta.org/ethics.

CORE VALUES FOR THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST AND PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

HOD P06-19-48-55 [Amended: 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 (PTs) and physical therapist assistants (PTAs) to provide the highest quality of physical therapist services. These values imbue the scope of PT and PTA activities. The core values retain the PT as the person ultimately responsible for providing safe, accessible, cost-effective, and evidence-based services; and the PTA as the only individual who assists the PT in practice, working under the direction and supervision of the PT. 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.
- **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