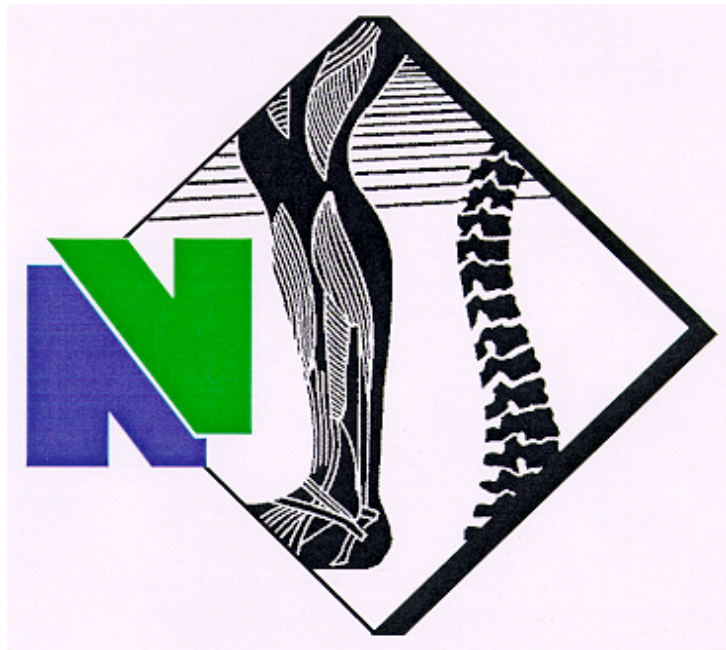


NAUGATUCK VALLEY  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT  
PROGRAM



**STUDENT MANUAL OF  
ACADEMIC AND CLINICAL  
POLICIES  
FOR THE PTA PROGRAM**

January 2020  
2020-2021 Cohort

The *Student Manual of Academic and Clinical Policies for the PTA Program* is a supplement to the Naugatuck Valley Community College *Catalog* and the NVCC *Student Manual*. These policies apply to all students enrolled in the NVCC Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program. Please refer to the NVCC Catalog for additional information about College policies and services.

NVCC College Catalog

<https://www.nv.edu/academics/academic-programs/academic-catalog>

NVCC Student Handbook

<http://www.nv.edu/portals/0/documents/student-services/student-handbook.pdf>

This manual outlines policies specific to the Physical Therapist Assistant Associate in Science (AS) Program. It also provides a framework within which students and faculty can function harmoniously. Students are expected to become thoroughly familiar with its contents and to apply these to govern their behavior in the PTA program. Success will also require student investment in their education with active participation in the learning process.

The provisions of this Manual do not constitute a contract, express or implied, between any applicant, student, or graduate and the faculty or the College.

Please note that the PTA program may make amendments to the *Student Manual of Academic and Clinical Policies for the PTA Program* as college policies, program procedures, or accreditation requirements change. In the situation that changes occur, students will be given notification that changes have been made and the student is responsible for reviewing the changes in the manual. They are also responsible for adhering to the new policies as written.

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# Physical Therapist Assistant Program

## Program Description

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program at Naugatuck Valley Community College is a two-year associate degree program, approved by the Board of Regents for Higher Education, designed to develop the competencies and knowledge required for entering the field of Physical Therapy. The PTA program will prepare individuals to work under the direction and supervision of the Physical Therapist in a variety of settings such as acute care hospitals, rehabilitation hospitals, long term care facilities, outpatient rehabilitation settings, school systems, and/or home care settings. The PTA program is designed to prepare students for the national PTA licensure exam.

The Physical Therapist Assistant program at Naugatuck Valley Community College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia, 22314; telephone: 703-706-3245; email: [accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org); website: <http://www.capteonline.org>. If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call 203-596-2168 or email [jgangaway@nv.edu](mailto:jgangaway@nv.edu).

If the PTA program receives a change in accreditation status from the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education of the American Physical Therapy Association, all students currently enrolled in the program will be notified in writing of these changes.

## Mission

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program is committed to high standards as it educates students with the knowledge, clinical skills, professional behaviors, and core values essential to evidence-based and culturally competent care.

## Vision

The program emphasis on technology and communication facilitates learning in the classroom and the clinic as the program endeavors to educate students who:

- strive for excellence as physical therapist assistants
- commit to high ethical standards
- appreciate and value racial, social, economic, and cultural diversity
- utilize critical reflection
- invest in community involvement
- engage in lifelong learning

## **Philosophy**

We believe the Physical Therapist Assistant curriculum:

- Develops appropriate and critical professional behaviors and core values to create ethical practitioners.
- Is based on a liberal arts education and the concentrated study and application of new knowledge in physical therapy.
- Emphasizes the development of written, oral, and technological communication skills.
- Provides a variety of learning experiences to enhance the student's critical thinking abilities, problem solving skills, and values identification.
- Promotes inter-professional education with other disciplines and programs within the college and community.

## **Program Outcomes**

The design of the PTA curriculum, along with the mission of the PTA Program, and the activities undertaken by the faculty and staff of the NVCC PTA Program should achieve the following program outcomes:

1. Produce safe and competent graduates with the entry-level skills of a Physical Therapist Assistant.
2. The two-year overall passing rate of the graduates who choose to take the Physical Therapist Assistant national licensure examination will be at least 85%.
3. 90% of the graduates who seek employment as a Physical Therapist Assistant will attain a position within one year of graduation.
4. 80% or more of admitted students will complete the program within 1 ½ times the length of the program (3 years) as reported using CAPTE standards.

The PTA Program administers student clinical performance assessments, alumni surveys, employer surveys, and obtains aggregate data from the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy regarding NVCC graduate performance on the national PTA licensure examination.



## **Graduate Goals**

Upon successful completion of all program requirements, the Physical Therapist Assistant Program will prepare graduates whom:

1. Adhere to ethical, professional behavior, legal, regulatory, and licensure standards within their scope of work as a physical therapist assistant.
2. Display skill competence in the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains necessary to provide safe, evidence-based physical therapy services under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist.
3. Demonstrate effective communication skills through professional interactions with patients, families, groups, and the interdisciplinary health care team with consideration of Core Values and patient diversity.
4. Produce accurate and timely documentation supporting skilled physical therapy services.
5. Demonstrate self-assessment and interest in lifelong learning by participating in professional development activities which include volunteerism, advocacy, and leadership.

The PTA Program administers student clinical performance assessments, alumni surveys, employer surveys, and obtains aggregate data from the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy regarding NVCC graduate performance on the national PTA licensure examination.

## **Technical Standards**

Decisions made by the candidate to this educational program for physical therapist assistants should be made with consideration of the following technical standards. The physical therapist assistant (PTA) is a paraprofessional in physical therapy, providing physical therapy interventions after a physical therapist has evaluated the patient and established a treatment plan. The following standards reflect reasonable expectations of the PTA student for the performance of common physical therapy functions. These standards do not reflect what may be required for employment of the graduate PTA.

In adopting these standards the Physical Therapist Assistant Program is mindful of the patient's right to safe and quality health care by our students and graduates. The PTA student must be able to apply the knowledge and skills necessary to function in a broad variety of clinical situations while providing the spectrum of physical therapy treatments. Each candidate in this Associate in Science degree program must have the ability to learn and perform the following competencies and skills:

### **Motor**

Candidate must have sufficient motor capabilities to execute the movements and skills required to provide safe and effective physical therapy interventions. These include, but are not limited to:

- Coordination, speed and agility to assist and safely guard (protect) patients who are walking, exercising, or performing other rehabilitation activities.
- Ability to adjust and position equipment and patients, which involves bending or stooping freely to floor level and reaching above the head.
- Ability to move or position patients and equipment, which involves lifting, carrying, pulling, and guiding weights up to and including 100 pounds.
- Ability to continuously guide, resist, and assist patients, or to provide emergency care, which involves the activities of standing, kneeling, sitting, walking or crawling, for up to 90 minutes.
- Ability to perform, with safe and proper body mechanics, transfer and gait training techniques used during physical therapy interventions with patients.
- Ability and dexterity to manipulate the devices used in physical therapy, which involves adjusting gauges, dials, small nuts/bolts, equipment settings, etc.
- Ability to administer CPR and First Aid without assistance.

### **Sensory**

Candidate must possess the ability to observe and participate in demonstrations and in physical measures applied to patients. This includes the ability to obtain information in classroom, laboratory and clinical settings through observation, auscultation, palpation and other measures, including but not limited to:

- Visual ability (corrected as necessary) to recognize and interpret facial expressions and body language, identify normal and abnormal patterns of movement, to read or set parameters on physical therapy equipment, to discriminate color changes, and to interpret and assess the environment.
- Auditory ability (corrected as necessary) to recognize and respond to soft voices, auditory timers, equipment alarms, call bells, and to effectively use devices for measurement of blood pressure and breath sounds.
- Tactile ability to palpate a pulse and to detect changes or abnormalities of surface texture, skin temperature, body segment contour, muscle tone, and joint movement.
- Sufficient position, movement, and balance sensations to assist and safely guard (protect) patients who are walking, exercising, or performing other rehabilitation activities.

### **Communication**

Candidate must be able to utilize effective and efficient communications with peers, faculty, patients and their families, and other health care providers in the English language. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Ability to read and write at a competency level that allows one to safely carry out the essential functions of an assignment (examples: handwritten chart data, printed equipment operations manuals).
- Ability to effectively communicate (interpret and express) information regarding the status, safety, and rehabilitation of patients.
- Ability to effectively communicate (verbally and document) with patients/families, health care professionals, within the community, and with reimbursement payers.

- Ability to communicate and document effectively via computer.
- Ability to recognize, to interpret, and respond to nonverbal behavior of self and others.
- Ability to initiate conversation with peers, faculty, patients and their families, and other medical professionals.

### **Behavior**

Candidate must be capable of exercising good judgment, developing empathetic and therapeutic relationships with patients and others, and tolerating close and direct physical contact with a broad and very diverse population of peers and patients. This will include people of all ages, races, gender identities, socioeconomic status, religious affiliations, and ethnic backgrounds, as well as individuals with varied physical, medical, or mental health problems. This also includes, but is not limited to:

- Ability to work with multiple patients/families and colleagues at the same time.
- Ability to work with lab partners, patients, families and others under stressful conditions, including but not limited to medically or emotionally unstable individuals, situations requiring rapid adaptations, the provision of CPR, or other emergency interventions.
- Ability to prioritize multiple tasks, integrate information, and make decisions in a timely manner.
- Ability to foster cooperative and collegial relationships with classmates, instructors, other health care providers, patients, and their families.

### **Critical Thinking**

Candidate must possess sufficient abilities in the areas of critical problem solving, reasoning, and decision-making in a timely and safe manner.

- Candidate must be able to prioritize, organize, and attend to tasks and responsibilities efficiently. This includes, but is not limited to:
  1. Ability to collect, interpret, and analyze written, verbal, and observed data about patients.
  2. Ability to prioritize multiple tasks, integrate information, and make decisions.
  3. Ability to apply knowledge of the principles, indications, contraindications and application of physical therapy interventions in the physical therapy plan of care.
  4. Ability to act safely, legally, and ethically in the physical therapy lab and clinic.

The capstone experience of this educational program occurs during the final semester, with the candidate providing physical therapy interventions in clinic settings under the direction and supervision of physical therapists. The candidate must have the capacity to work days of varying length for up to a 40-hour work week to participate in clinical education experiences which run for a full semester. The clinical education experience provides for a truly integrative measure of the candidate's capabilities and requires that the candidate consistently demonstrate entry-level performance of the abilities of the Physical Therapist Assistant.

## **Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Code of Ethics**

The *Standards of Ethical Conduct for the PTA* 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 for the PTA* provide a foundation for conduct to which all physical therapist assistants shall adhere. Fundamental to the *Standards of Ethical Conduct for the PTA* is the special obligation of physical therapist assistants to enable patients/clients to achieve greater independence, health and wellness, and enhanced quality of life. No document that delineates ethical standards can address every situation. Physical therapist assistants are encouraged to seek additional advice or consultation in instances where the guidance of the Standards of Ethical Conduct may not be definitive. (see Appendix)

## **Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values**

The physical therapy profession, through the American Physical Therapy Association, has adopted 8 core values that represent professionalism in physical therapy: 1) excellence, 2) accountability, 3) altruism, 4) compassion and caring, 5) cultural competence, 6) duty, 7) integrity, and 8) social responsibility (see Appendix).

## **Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Professional Behaviors**

Throughout the program, students will be expected to demonstrate progression in the professional behaviors that comprise these ethical principles and core values. Program policies, instructional activities, self-assessment exercises, and faculty feedback are designed to guide development in order to facilitate meeting the behavioral expectations for the entry-level physical therapist assistant.

Students' professional behaviors will be assessed on an ongoing basis while in the PTA program and feedback will be provided to the student. This feedback is designed to foster reflective self-assessment, and students are encouraged to solicit the faculty's insights about their development.

Students who demonstrate deficits in the behaviors will be given written notice. Continued demonstration of behaviors that hinder growth in professionalism may result in a probationary status in the PTA Program. Additional occurrences of behaviors that are not consistent with that of a physical therapist assistant will result in a review by the PTA Program faculty. Their decision and action may include, but is not limited to, dismissal of the student from the PTA Program.

## Standards of Behavior

Students in the NVCC PTA Program are required to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the high standards of the physical therapy profession, in accordance with the Board of Regents (BOR)/Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) Student Code of Conduct (<http://www.ct.edu/files/pdfs/nursing-student-code-of-conduct.pdf>) and the American Physical Therapy Association Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant. ([http://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/Practice\\_and\\_Patient\\_Care/Ethics/GuideforConductofthePTA.pdf](http://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/Practice_and_Patient_Care/Ethics/GuideforConductofthePTA.pdf)).

The faculty relies on the integrity and sound judgment of the students to demonstrate acceptable behavior in the classroom, on or off-campus when representing NVCC and/or the PTA program or when identified as an NVCC student, and in the clinic. The policies and regulations of the program are considered to be in accord with sound judgment and acceptable behavior. The following are considered unacceptable standards of behavior and constitute grounds for dismissal from the PTA Program.

- Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages on campus or during clinical experiences. Intoxication in no way relieves students from full responsibility for their actions.
- Possession or use of illegal substances or controlled drugs that are not prescribed by a physician, or the inappropriate utilization of prescribed medications that are controlled drugs. Utilization of such substances in no way relieves students from full responsibility for their actions.
- Falsification of medical reports, college records, or clinical affiliate records, including the intentional omission of personal medical information that may impact performance in the clinic.
- Unauthorized use of college or medical records or disclosure of information found in these records to unauthorized individuals.
- Possession of a deadly or harmful weapon on campus or during clinical experiences.
- Verbal or physical violence, as defined as an overt act or threat of harm or intimidation to a person or property, or any act that poses a substantial threat to the safety of any person or property.
- Disregard of one's personal hygiene, appearance, uniform, or dress.
- Failure to comply with institutional fire and safety policies or procedures.
- Failure to comply with program, division, and college policies and standards for academic honesty.
- Failure to demonstrate respectful, professional behavior to faculty, staff, and students at all times.

# Expectations of the Physical Therapist Assistant

The education to become a physical therapist assistant is both a challenging and a rewarding adventure. Each day students will learn new knowledge, develop new abilities, and gain invaluable insights into themselves and their future patients. The faculty has designed this curriculum to foster student learning and development so that they may achieve the American Physical Therapy Association's performance and behavioral expectations for entry-level physical therapist assistants. Expectations taken from the *Guide to Physical Therapist Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (2003), *A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Assistant Education: Version 2007*, *Standards of Ethical Conduct for the PTA*, and the APTA Core Values.

## Performance Expectations

### Intervention

- Review the plan of care established by the physical therapist prior to initiating patient/client intervention.
- Provide safe interventions as directed by the plan of care and supervised by the physical therapist.
- Provide effective instruction to the patient/client and others to achieve the goals and outcomes as described in the plan of care.
- Collect data to quantify the patient/client's response to interventions as directed and supervised by the physical therapist.
- Progress the patient/client interventions through the plan of care.
- Complete documentation that follows professional guidelines, health care system, and physical therapy policies.
- Respond effectively to patient/client and environmental emergencies in the work setting.

### Communication

- Expressively and receptively communicates in a culturally competent manner with physical therapists, patients/clients, family members, caregivers, other health care providers, students, interdisciplinary team members, administrators, payers, and consumers.

### Education

- Effectively educate others using teaching methods commensurate with the needs of the learners.
- Educate others about the role of the physical therapist assistant.

### Resource Management (human, fiscal, systems)

- Utilize human and material institution-based resources and services to provide high-quality, efficient, and cost-effective physical therapy services.
- Comply with facility procedures and payer regulations consistent with the health care delivery system and the practice setting.

## Career Development

- Participate in learning and development activities to ensure continued competence.
- Participate in and respond to self-assessment activities.
- Participate in clinical education

## Behavioral Expectations

### Accountability

- Adhere to federal and state legal practice standards and institutional regulations related patient/client and fiscal management.
- Act in a manner consistent with the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant and Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant.
- Change behavior in response to understanding the consequences (positive and negative) of the physical therapist assistants' actions.

### Altruism

- Place patient's/client's needs above the physical therapist assistant's self-interests.

### Compassion and Caring

- Exhibit compassion, caring, and empathy in providing services to patients/clients.
- Promote active involvement of the patient in his/her own care.

### Cultural Competence

- Identify, respect, and act with consideration for the patient's/client's differences, values, preferences, and expressed needs in all physical therapy activities.

### Duty

- Demonstrate behaviors, conduct, actions, attitudes, and values consistent with the roles, responsibilities, and tasks of the physical therapist assistant.
- Support and participate in organizations and efforts that promote physical therapy.

### Integrity

- Demonstrate integrity in all interactions with patients/clients, family members, caregivers, supervising physical therapists, coworkers, other health care providers, students, other consumers, employers and payers.

### Social Responsibility

- Value and support the physical therapy profession in society.
- Demonstrate citizenship.

## **Use of the Title: PTA**

Under Connecticut statutes only licensed physical therapists and physical therapist assistants can provide "treatment of human ailments by physical therapy" (Sec. 20-73). Therefore, until students have completed their A.S. degree and achieved licensure with the state as a PTA they cannot promote themselves, or their services, as a PTA. Students must identify themselves as a SPTA – student physical therapist assistant. This constraint also applies if, during the education process, the student is employed as a physical therapy aide. The skills and techniques taught in this program exceed those of an aide and should not be applied inappropriately in the clinic.

## **Academic Advising**

The faculty is dedicated to assisting students to achieve the learning objectives of the PTA curriculum. Students are encouraged to meet with their advisor whenever there are concerns or questions. In addition, students will have the same advisor throughout your education at NVCC whenever possible.

Students will meet with their advisor in the PTA Program at least once each academic semester (excluding the summer semester) to review progress regarding degree requirements, performance in PTA courses, progress with professional behaviors, and professional development reflections that are significant to learning. It is strongly recommended that students meet with their advisor prior to the first half of the semester so that they can review your performance and discuss strategies for success. It is the student's responsibility to initiate scheduling an appointment with their advisor respecting the deadlines provided by the PTA faculty.

At the time of the meeting, students are required to submit: 1) a self-assessment of professional behaviors including professional goals and 2) a typed summary of a reflection on professional growth using the prompts provided. This meeting is also the opportunity to identify learning objectives and resources and strategies to foster academic development.

If students are having troubles meeting learning goals, or the learning objectives of any course, they are encouraged to contact their advisor as soon as any problems occur.

Students should meet with their advisor if they are considering dropping any course, resigning from the program, or altering their position in the program in any manner.

Office hours will be posted at the start of each semester, but these are not the only times faculty is available. Contact advisors by e-mail or phone to arrange a meeting.

All didactic PTA and general education courses required for the degree must be completed by August 1<sup>st</sup> before Semester 4. Students who have not completed all general education courses will not be placed in a clinical site until all requirements are met.



## PTA Program Full Time Faculty

**Janet Gangaway, PT, DPT, OCS, ATC, ATRIC Professor of Physical Therapy and Program Director, PTA Program.** Received B.S. in Athletic Training from the University of Connecticut; MPT from the University of Southern California; DPT from Simmons College. She is a Certified Orthopedic Specialist and Certified Athletic Trainer with interests in orthopedics, sports medicine, and aquatic physical therapy. She is also certified in aquatic therapy through the Aquatic Therapy and Rehabilitation Institute. Her research interest is in the efficacy of aquatic physical therapy.

**Patricia Beaupre PT, MS Professor of Physical Therapy and Clinical Education Coordinator (ACCE).** Received a B.S. in General Science and her MSPT at Springfield College. Clinical practice areas include medically complex patients, acute care, and neurorehabilitation.

## PTA Program Faculty Locations

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program is located in Founders Hall / Center for Health Sciences on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The program director and clinical education coordinator faculty offices are located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

	<b>Location</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
Janet Gangaway (Program Director)	F117	203-596-2168	<a href="mailto:jgangaway@nv.edu">jgangaway@nv.edu</a>
Patricia Beaupre (ACCE)	F108	203-596-2156	<a href="mailto:pbeaupre@nv.edu">pbeaupre@nv.edu</a>
Cheryl Marie (Division Secretary)	F105	203-596-8746	<a href="mailto:cmarie@nv.edu">cmarie@nv.edu</a>
Program Fax		203-575-8146	

<b>Academic Spaces:</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Classroom/laboratory	F207	4-9130
Mobility laboratory	F208	4-9131
PTA Storage	F209	4-9132
Debriefing Room	F210	4-9133
AV Control Room	F201A	4-9134
Acute Care laboratory	F211	4-9135
OP Exam Room	F211A	4-9136
Student locker room	F212	4-9137
Adjunct faculty office	F229	6-2158

<b>PTL/Clinical Educational Assistants</b>	<b>Email</b>
Rosie DeFeo PT, DPT	<a href="mailto:RDeFeo@nv.edu">RDeFeo@nv.edu</a>
Paul Higgins PT, DPT, ATC, CSCS	<a href="mailto:PHiggins@nv.edu">PHiggins@nv.edu</a>
Jeri Opuszynski PTA, MA	<a href="mailto:JOpuszynski@nv.edu">JOpuszynski@nv.edu</a>
Lisa Presutto-Curley PT	<a href="mailto:LPresutto-Curley@nv.edu">LPresutto-Curley@nv.edu</a>
Emily Ponce PTA, BS	<a href="mailto:EPonce@nv.edu">EPonce@nv.edu</a>
Michelle Saunders PTA, BS	<a href="mailto:Msaunders@nvcc.comnet.edu">Msaunders@nvcc.comnet.edu</a>
Kathleen (Kate) Sileo PT, DPT, MS, MBA	<a href="mailto:KSileo@nv.edu">KSileo@nv.edu</a>
Colleen Weitekamp, PT, MSPT	<a href="mailto:Cweitekamp@nv.edu">Cweitekamp@nv.edu</a>

## PTA Curriculum

The curriculum is designed as a progression of increasing complexity and all courses must be taken during the designated semester. Students who are unable to abide by the curriculum sequence for non-PTA courses must submit in writing to the PTA Program Director which non-PTA course(s) will be out of the sequence stated below, the reasoning for this issue, their plan of when they will be taking the documented course(s).

The coursework is progressive in nature and each successive course is built on the foundations from previous coursework. Students are responsible for all of the skills, knowledge and safety learned in previous courses and lack of retention of the material could affect their grade in a current or future course and/or jeopardize their status in the program. Successful completion of the requirements for one course may require the student to be competent in coursework from a previous or concurrent course.

### PTA Program of Study

#### Admission Requirements

BIO* H211+	Anatomy & Physiology I	4 credits
ENG* H101+	English Composition	3 credits
Elective+	Mathematics (higher level than MAT* H136/H137)	3 credits
PSY* H111+	General Psychology	<u>3 credits</u>
		13 credits

#### First Semester (Spring)

PTA* H120	Introduction to Physical Therapy	3 credits
PTA* H125	PT for Function	4 credits
PTA* H130	Clinical Anatomy & Kinesiology	3 credits
BIO* H212+	Anatomy & Physiology II	<u>4 credits</u>
		14 credits

#### Second Semester (Fall)

PTA* H145	Physical Agents in Physical Therapy	3 credits
PTA* H150	PT Interventions I	4 credits
PTA* H155	Pathology for the PTA I	3 credits
Elective+	Written Communication (ENG 102 or ENG 200)	<u>3 credits</u>
		13 credits

#### Third Semester (Spring)

PTA* H251	PT Interventions II	3 credits
PTA* H256	Pathology for the PTA II	3 credits
PTA* H258	PTA in the Healthcare Arena	2 credits
Elective+	Aesthetic Dimensions/Written Communication	<u>3 credits</u>
		11 credits

#### Fourth Semester (Fall)

PTA* H260	Physical Therapy Seminar	2 credits
PTA* H262	PTA Internship II	5 credits
PTA* H265	PTA Internship III	<u>5 credits</u>
		12 credits

General Education Credits 23 credits

PTA Credits 40 credits

Total Program Credits 63 credits

## PTA Course Descriptions

### **PTA\*H120 Introduction to Physical Therapy 3 cr**

*Prerequisite: Admission to the PTA Program. Co-requisites: PTA\*H125, PTA\*H130.* Learning opportunities in this course assist the student to recognize the roles of physical therapy within various practice settings. Students differentiate functions of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants as members of the health care team through study of the history of physical therapy, documentation, ethical & legal principles, evidence based practice, and medical terminology important to the provision of services. Learning also includes development of knowledge and abilities within the domains of professional conduct, interpersonal and professional communication, and sensitivity to individual and cultural differences.

### **PTA\*H125 PT for Function 4 cr**

*Prerequisite: Admission to the PTA Program. Co-requisites: PTA\*H120, PTA\*H130* This lecture and lab based course provides the student with introductory concepts and techniques regarding physical therapy interventions for function and mobility. Emphasis is placed on enhancing the students' problem-solving abilities and comprehension of the physical therapist assistant's role. The importance of modification of physical therapy interventions within the plan of care developed by the supervising physical therapist is highlighted. The laboratory section of this course allows the student to develop the psychomotor skills through simulated patient scenarios.

### **PTA \*H130 Clinical Anatomy & Kinesiology 3 cr**

*Prerequisite: BIO 211 Co-requisites: PTA\*H120, PTA\*H125* This course is designed to enable students to identify the structure and function of the human body including the spine, upper and lower extremities through computer simulation and application. The course includes the study of skeletal and muscular structures involved in human movement. Students will understand movement control and elements of movement dysfunction. The student will also gain an understanding of biomechanical forces, neuromuscular control, and pathological influences through analysis of biomechanical forces on the body.

### **PTA\*H145 Physical Agents in PT 3 cr**

*Prerequisites: PTA\*H120, PTA\*H125, PTA\*H130 with a grade of "C" or higher. Co-requisites: PTA\*H150, PTA\*H155* This hybrid course develops the student's competence with problem-solving and application of physical therapy interventions using physical agents, including therapeutic applications of heat, cold, water, electricity, light, and mechanical forces or devices. The student will be exposed to online lecture-based facilitation and laboratory experiences regarding therapeutic application of physical agents that will include: scientific theory; common pathologies that would reflect best practice usage of physical agent interventions; indications, contraindications and precautions to use; patient simulations and case scenarios to allow for problem solving and discussion; expected patient outcomes from the use of physical agents; patient education and communication; appropriate documentation for provided physical agent interventions.

**PTA\*H150 PT Interventions I 4 cr**

*Prerequisites:* PTA\*H120, PTA\*H125, PTA\*H130 with a grade of “C” or higher. *Co-requisites:* PTA\*H145, PTA\*H155 This course uses a case study approach to enhance problem solving skills and provide integration of various patient examination, goal setting, and intervention techniques within the scope of physical therapist assistant practice. Topics covered include foundational PT skills of goniometric and muscle strength assessment and exercise prescription. The student will achieve competency in the following patient care techniques: data collection skills, exercise prescription, communication and documentation skills including appropriate billing, and patient safety. Manual muscle testing and goniometric measurement of joint range of motion will be incorporated into laboratory exercises. Professionalism, verbal and written communication skills, and ethics are considered throughout.

**PTA\*H155 Pathology for PTAs I 3 cr**

*Prerequisites:* PTA\*H120, PTA\*H125, PTA\*H130 with a grade of “C” or higher. *Co-requisites:* PTA\*H145, PTA\*H150 This is the first course of a two-course pathology sequence designed to provide the physical therapist assistant student with the knowledge of human pathology of selected body systems including implications for patient management. Topics covered are inflammation, immune responses, hepatic, pancreatic and biliary diseases, and specific diseases of the endocrine, cardiac, GI, and respiratory systems. This is a foundational course as it promotes an understanding of the disease processes, and it guides the student in application and analysis of medical pathology in patient care. Emphasis is placed on the relationship of medical presentation signs/symptoms and its implication on physical therapy treatment

**PTA\*H251 PT Interventions II 3 cr**

*Prerequisites:* PTA\*H145, PTA\*H150 & PTA\*H155 with a grade of “C” or higher. *Co-requisites:* PTA\*H255 & PTA\*H258 This course uses a case study approach to enhance problem solving skills and provide integration of various patient intervention techniques within the scope of physical therapy practice. Topics covered include interventions for special populations such as status post amputation, pre/post-partum, neurological diagnoses, and pediatric conditions. The student will achieve competency in the following patient care techniques: specialized exercise prescription, prosthetic & orthotic management, and normal and abnormal reflex identification. Patient education, appropriate billing, patient safety, professionalism, verbal and written communication skills, and ethics are considered throughout.

**PTA\*H256 Pathology for PTAs II 3 cr**

*Prerequisites:* PTA\*H145, PTA\*H150 & PTA\*H155 with a grade of “C” or higher. *Co-requisites:* PTA\*H251 & PTA\*H258 This is the second course of a two-course pathology sequence designed to provide the physical therapist assistant student with the knowledge of human pathology of selected body systems including implications for patient management. Topics covered include the nervous system diseases and the integumentary system. Diagnoses such as CVA, SCI, TBI, amputee, and pediatric development will be covered in detail. This is a foundational course as it promotes an understanding of the disease processes, and it guides the student in application and analysis of medical pathology in patient care. Emphasis is placed on

the relationship of medical presentation signs/symptoms and its implication on physical therapy treatment.

**PTA\*H258 PTA in the Healthcare Arena 2 cr**

*Prerequisites:* PTA\*H145, PTA\*H150 & PTA\*H155 with a grade of “C” or higher. *Co-requisites:* PTA\*H252 & PTA\*H255 This course develops the student’s ability to apply physical therapy interventions and data collection techniques within the PT’s plan of care in the clinic environment and advances the student’s abilities with communication, professional conduct, and problem solving within the physical therapy clinic. PTA in the Healthcare Arena uses the clinical environment as a framework for the application and synthesis of conceptual aspects of the work environment. Clinical education experiences are acquired in a weekly part-time integrated clinical experience and integrated into the classroom to illustrate the current health care delivery system's impact on the field of physical therapy and the role of the physical therapist assistant. Throughout the semester students will learn to differentiate professional, legal, and ethical standards and analyze how these direct the delivery of patient care.

**PTA\*H260 Physical Therapy Seminar 2 cr**

*Prerequisites:* PTA\*H251, PTA\*H255 and PTA\*H258 with a grade of “C” or higher. *Co-requisites:* PTA\*H262 and PTA\*H265. In this course students demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking to selected professional issues, industry trends, and special populations that may be encountered as a physical therapist assistant. Learning opportunities assist in the transition from student to clinician and identification of interest areas for lifelong learning.

**PTA\*H262 PTA Internship II 5 cr**

*Prerequisites:* PTA\*H251, PTA\*H255 and PTA\*H258 with a grade of “C” or higher. Within this clinic-based course, students learn to integrate and apply physical therapy concepts to effectively perform physical therapy interventions as a physical therapist assistant under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist. Students develop their abilities for daily organization and management of a patient caseload and effectively contribute to the health care team. Students practice professional behaviors in all interactions with patients, families, caregivers, instructors, facility staff, other health care providers, vendors, insurance carriers and administrators. This course takes place during the first half of the semester.

**PTA\*H265 PTA Internship III 5 cr**

*Prerequisites:* PTA\*H251, PTA\*H255 and PTA\*H258 with a grade of “C” or higher. Within this clinic-based course, students learn to integrate and apply physical therapy concepts to effectively perform physical therapy interventions as a physical therapist assistant under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist. Students practice professional behaviors in all interactions with patients, families, caregivers, instructors, facility staff, other health care providers, vendors, insurance carriers and administrators. Students further develop autonomy and competence with daily organization, time management, clinical prioritization and the entry-level abilities of the physical therapist assistant prior to course completion. This course takes place during the second half of the semester.

# **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

## **Student Records**

Your records and grades are confidential. The college follows policies on the retention of student records, both physical and electronic, including abiding by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as set by the Connecticut State Library Office of the Public Records Administrator. Policies on the retention and deletion of electronic records are part of the AIT Policies, Standards, Procedures, and Guidelines created by the former CCC System Office. Any communication, either verbal or written, requiring information about the student's academic records or progress will not be done without the consent of the student. Faculty may keep daily journals for their information that will assist them in the evaluation process or for the documentation of incidents or problems. The journals are property of the faculty and may not be viewed by students.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act and Sect 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended**

Any NVCC student with a documented disability seeking accommodations must contact the Office of Disability Services. After disclosing the nature of their disability and providing appropriate documentation, students are urged to discuss their needs with individual instructors with accommodation letters provided to them. Discussions with faculty should occur at the beginning of every semester anytime an accommodation is sought. Instructors, in conjunction with appropriate college officials, will provide accommodations only to those students who have completed the disclosure and accommodations process in a timely manner.

It is the responsibility of each student to voluntarily contact the Office of Disability Services to disclose their disability and complete the required forms. Disclosure will also include providing appropriate documentation validating the nature of their stated disability.

Eligibility for accommodations must be supported by appropriate documentation validating the need for these services based on the individual's current level of academic functioning in an educational setting. The college reserves the right to determine the nature and extent of appropriate accommodations. This process must be completed *prior* to the implementation of accommodations, and it is the responsibility of the student to initiate the process.

## **Accommodations – Practical Examinations**

Given the nature of the profession and the critical areas of safety, communication, and providing legal and ethical care in a professional manner, it is the student's responsibility to demonstrate safe and competent practice prior to clinic-based education.

Students are encouraged to disclose and request accommodations early in the curriculum. In an attempt to help students achieve the clinic ready status required of clinic based education, limited accommodations can be made for skill-based examinations and clinical experiences on a case by case basis.

## **Audio/video recording agreement**

The NVCC Physical Therapist Assistant program allows students to audio and/or video record classes and on campus laboratory sessions as students deem necessary for enhancement of their studies as long as it does not interfere with class administration.

During participation in simulated clinical experience scenarios, lecture, and laboratory experiences while a student in the Naugatuck Valley Community College Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program students will be both an active participant and an observer. The primary objectives are to support and enhance clinical learning while a student in the program. The faculty believe that these experiences will provide students with an additional method to identify their learning needs and to improve their performance. Clinical simulations are designed to challenge students' response and judgment in a variety of clinical situations. Due to the possible sensitive nature of any simulated clinical scenarios/cases, as well as to maintain optimal simulation experiences for all learners, strict confidentiality regarding the specific scenarios/cases, including what occurred during the experience, is required by all participants and observers. Students are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding cases, their performance, and the performance of others.

## **Participation**

PTA students agree to participate in educational demonstrations and the practice of physical therapy that occur in the classroom, lab, and related clinical experiences at NVCC. Instructors will provide instruction and training in equipment use and storage, universal body substance precautions, and manual procedures.

A component of this instruction to students includes hands-on contact to the student by another student and/or faculty and the requirement that the student practice hands-on contact with other students and/or faculty members. Body parts may need to be exposed for visual and manual inspection (touching) as part of this practice and care we provide to our patients/clients and is an integral part of instruction. In select situations, if hands-on contact makes a student feel uncomfortable, they have the right to let the instructor know.

If a physical therapist assistant student is unable to participate due to medical history or condition, he/she is responsible for informing the instructor during each appropriate session. NVCC and its instructors are not liable for injury, disease, or other damage resulting from instruction and training in physical therapy.

## **Technology, E-mail and Web Access**

College emails will be used in all courses. It is the student's responsibility to save "sent" emails as opposed to requesting an instructor reply following submission. Updates and supplementary material will be done through **Blackboard**. It is the student's responsibility to back up your work. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the "@mail.ct.edu" email is working and able to receive messages. Crashed hard disks or stolen computers will NOT be considered extenuating circumstances for late submission of assignments.



## **E-mail accounts**

It is the responsibility of each student to maintain his/her NVCC e-mail account until graduation. The faculty will use these e-mail accounts to communicate with students. The student must check his/her account each day for any current communication or have the e-mail forwarded to an account used daily. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that this account remains active until graduation from the PTA Program.

## **Grading Policies**

The faculty members of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program are responsible for the evaluation of the learning achieved by students. The following is a supplement to the grading policies contained in the College Catalog.

Grades assigned in the PTA Program are a reflection of the instructor's evaluation of the learning achieved relative to the objectives defined in the course syllabus. These course objectives will include learning expectations in the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. This program, in part, uses a competency-based grading system. A passing grade reflects that the student has demonstrated competence for each of the criteria defined for the course. The grade is determined based on demonstration of successful achievement of the criteria defined for each course.

A grade of "C" or higher designates competence in a lecture or lecture with laboratory-based course, and a grade of "P" (pass) designates competence in the clinic-based education courses.

## **GPA Requirement**

Students must achieve a grade of C or better in all physical therapy courses throughout the entire PTA program in order to progress into the next semester of the PTA curriculum sequence and meet degree requirements.

Students must maintain a cumulative PTA GPA of 2.3 or higher in physical therapy courses to remain in good standing in the program (calculated using all courses listed in the 'Program of Study'). Students who have an overall PTA GPA below 2.3 will receive a letter before the start of the next semester indicating they have ONE semester to bring their PTA GPA to the required level or they may be dismissed from the program. Students must have a cumulative PTA GPA of 2.3 or higher at the end of the third semester will need to repeat coursework within the Program of Study during the summer session or they will not be able to move forward into the final semester. They will then need to follow the procedures for re-entry.

A minimum grade of "C+" is required for Anatomy & Physiology I, Anatomy & Physiology II, and Mathematics. A minimum grade of "C" is required for all other general education courses.

Students must have an overall PTA GPA of 2.3 in order to graduate from the Physical Therapist Assistant program.

## Grading System

**PTA Program Grading System:** For the purpose of computing numerical credit point averages, grades are evaluated as follows for each semester hour of credit. Grades on exams, papers, practical exams and quizzes, will be based on this grading system. Final grades are calculated to one decimal point.

<u>Non-passing grades</u>	<u>Passing grades</u>	<u>Passing grades</u>
F = < 60.0	C = 73.0 - 76.9	A- = 90.0 - 94.9
D- = 60.0 – 62.9	C+ = 77.0 – 79.9	A = 95 - 100
D = 63.0 – 66.9	B- = 80.0 - 82.9	
D+ = 67.0 – 69.9	B = 83.0 - 86.9	
C- = 70.0 – 72.9	B+ = 87.0 - 89.9	

Please note that a course grade of F will be assigned following a documented violation of the Academic Integrity & Plagiarism Policy.

## Minimum Grade Requirement

Students must receive a grade of C or better (or Pass) in all of the didactic and clinical education courses to be considered a passing grade.

- If the student does not receive this minimum grade in a course, the student will need to retake the course the next time it is offered if granted re-entry.
  - Courses may only be retaken once.
- If students are repeating a course in a semester in which there is an integrated clinical experience (semester 3), the student must also retake the integrated clinical experience course, even if passed the first time. The repeated grade is used in the calculation of GPA.
- A student cannot progress in the curriculum if any class grade is less than a C. If granted re-entry, the student must wait and repeat the course the next time it is offered before continuing with the program. This will delay graduation for the student.
- A student who fails any two courses at any point in the curriculum (didactic and/or clinical) will be dismissed from the program.

**Laboratory Component:** (When applicable) There is a standard of competency for every component of the practical examinations in the laboratory courses. This must be met for each component of the task or procedure addressed in order to successfully complete the examination. Students who do not demonstrate the required level of skill and competence, in the laboratory practical exams, will receive a failing grade for the course.

## Grading in laboratory based courses

Many courses in the curriculum have both lecture and laboratory components: PTA\*125, PTA\*145, PTA\*150, and PTA\*251. When this occurs, 50% of the course grade is based on the lecture component and 50% of the grade is based on the laboratory component. Students must pass both components with at least a 73% score to pass the class. Students who do not achieve a 73% on both components will receive a final course grade no higher than a C-.

Competency must be achieved for all parts of each procedure, function, or task in order to successfully complete each course. Students must demonstrate the standard of competence required for all competency and practical examinations. Failure to apply safe and competent practice/procedures in any component of the hands-on testing designated as a Critical Task (marked by an asterisk\* on the evaluation forms) will result in failure of that test. That test must then be repeated.

Performance on each of the *components* of the task/procedure is assessed for safety and effectiveness. Performance measures designated as "lab competency" or "practical examinations" are designed so that competence is demonstrated with a score of 73 or higher.

- A score lower than 73 represents performance that does not demonstrate the required behaviors or skills required to demonstrate competence.
- The examination must then be repeated on a separate day following remedial practice and preparation by the student. Students must arrange to meet with one of the instructors in the course to determine the remediation plan.
- The repeated test is for demonstration of competence only and will be graded on a pass/no pass basis using the same grading form. A passing score will result in a final grade of 73.
- Failure of the repeated test will result in a 0 for that examination and a final grade of F.
- Re-examination for hands-on tests must be completed within two weeks of the original test.
- Retests for a comprehensive practical examination must occur within a week of the original testing date.
- The class schedule does not accommodate for re-testing. Students are required to initiate and schedule with the instructor for remediation and testing outside of the appointed lab times. Remediation and re-testing may need to occur outside of normally scheduled class time.

It is the *student's responsibility* to seek assistance from instructors, faculty, or program advisor if they not progressing satisfactorily.

## Incomplete Grades

The college allows, at the discretion of the instructor, the grade of incomplete, "I". This is not allowed for excessive absences or missing examinations without just cause. Since the Physical Therapist Assistant Program is taught in a sequential pattern, all requirements must be met within the semester as assigned. Therefore, in the PTA Program, this grade will only be used in

extenuating circumstances after review by the faculty of the Program. When a grade of "I" is allowed a deadline for the completion of course requirements must be established and met by the deadline determined by the program faculty, typically no later than the start of the next academic term or add/drop date for that term.

## **Weather Related Schedule Changes**

In the event of inclement weather, listen to the local radio stations. Refer to the NVCC Student Handbook for a listing of radio stations designated to report the College's status. Students are to report to classes as instructed. If the college is closed on a scheduled exam day, that exam will be given at the next scheduled class meeting. Please see Blackboard for further information or assignments for the scheduled class.

For laboratory-based classes when a delayed opening occurs on a lab day, students are expected to arrive on campus at the time of the opening to utilize the remaining lab time. Students will be notified via Blackboard or email by the course instructor of the plan for that day.

## **Class Absence**

If a student unable to attend class due to an emergency or religious holiday, they must contact the instructor on or before the start of class.

## **Exams and Quizzes**

All exams and quizzes are the property of the faculty. Unauthorized possession of a test by a student will result in disciplinary action. Students are prohibited from taking photographs of exams and/or quizzes with any media or printing exam questions from Blackboard. This would be considered a violation of academic integrity and may result in a 0 for the unauthorized possession of testing materials. Faculty will make every attempt to return exams and evaluations to students promptly.

Tests & exams will be kept on file for on campus courses for no more than one year. Exams may be reviewed with course instructor(s) or retention specialists with prior arrangements.

If you arrive late for an examination you will not be given additional time to complete the examination, including online exams and exams being taken in the Testing Center. If you will be unable to take an examination due to an emergency, you must notify the instructor ***prior*** to the start of the examination. Failure to meet this requirement will result in a grade of zero (0) for the exam. If you miss an exam due to illness, medical documentation may need to be provided and the exam scheduled for as soon as the student returns.

In the event of inclement weather, listen to the local radio stations. Refer to the NVCC student Handbook for a listing of radio stations designated to report the College's status. You are to report to classes as instructed. If the college is closed on a scheduled exam day, that exam will be given at the next scheduled class meeting. Please see Blackboard for further information or assignments for the scheduled class.

## Exam Testing Guidelines

1. Students are required to attend exams at the scheduled exam start time. Students who arrive late will not have the exam end time extended.
2. Do not begin the exam until instructed by the proctor.
3. You may write on the paper exam. A single piece of scrap paper and a writing instrument may be used during electronic testing. The scrap paper is turned in following the exam.
4. Length of time allotted for the exam will be announced at the start of the exam. A ten-minute warning will be announced during the exam.
5. Students are not allowed to leave the room while the test is in progress.
6. All personal items, (coats, bags, books, cell phone) should be placed in the designated area in the room. Turn off mobile devices. Only the exam, answer sheet, and writing utensil are allowed on the desk. No electronic devices (including smart watches) are allowed on the desk. Hats and dark glasses cannot be worn.
7. Any student observed looking at another student's exam, recording or photographing the exam, or sharing answers in any way will be addressed immediately and the manner will be dealt with according to the college and BOR student conduct and disciplinary policies.
8. An English dictionary will be provided to look up non-medical words. Students who wish to use the dictionary should approach the proctor at the front of the room.
9. Exams are graded only from the Scantron answer sheet. NO consideration will be given to answers recorded on test paper. Carefully darken the letter of the answer you choose. Do not write anything else on the Scantron. Erase incorrect choices completely. (for paper exams)
10. Please return all items provided to you before leaving the room.
11. Grades will be posted as stated in your course syllabus.

## Course Withdrawal

Withdrawal from a single course during a semester will require the student to withdraw from all co-requisite PTA courses.

If a student withdraws from a course, the student may not continue taking any physical therapy courses in successive semesters. The student must complete the course(s) from which he/she withdrew with a C or better to resume participation in the physical therapy curriculum.

A student that is considering withdrawing from a physical therapy course should meet with the course instructor to develop a plan for strategies to facilitate success in that course. This plan may include accessing additional academic or counseling resources and/or reducing the workload during the semester (general education courses or employment hours) through conversations with the faculty advisor.

Unexpected events may interfere with your ability to effectively apply yourself to this program of study. If a significant personal, family, or other non-medical reason interferes with a student's education and prohibits the student from maintaining the curricular sequence, he/she may submit a formal request to the Program Director for voluntary withdrawal from the program.

Students desiring to voluntarily withdraw from the PTA Program should put this request in a letter to the Program Director, including a description of the event/situation impacting the student's participation at that time. Students should meet with Financial Aid to discuss implications of this withdrawal. The student's major will be changed to "General Studies" and the student will no longer be considered a PTA student unless there is an application for re-entry. Students will be dismissed from the program if there is no request to re-enter within a year of the withdrawal.

## Course Repeat

If a student has either failed a course, or has withdrawn from a course, the student may not subsequently withdraw from the course if he/she is taking for a second time. The student must successfully pass the course that was failed, or from which the student withdrew, prior to the continuation in the remaining physical therapy courses.

## Course failure

If the grade and/or GPA requirements are not met, the student's status in the program will be reviewed by the faculty. Students who fail a **single** course may request re-entry following the guidelines below.

## Re-entry into the PTA Program

Students may re-enter the program only once through re-entry or re-application.

- **Re-application:** students who withdraw from, do not successfully complete, or are dismissed from the first semester must re-apply to the program to be considered for admission a second time.
- **Re-entry:** Students who have successfully completed the first semester of PTA courses and fail or withdraw from a successive PTA course may request re-entry into the program.

If re-entry into the program is desired a student may apply by submitting a written request.

- If a student requests to return, and a vacancy is available based on the availability of openings and clinical education resources, they *may* re-enter the program the following year when the course(s) are available again. Please note that the faculty cannot guarantee that students will be allowed re-entry.
- Re-entry requests for the fall semester must be submitted by **April 1**, and requests for the spring semester must be submitted by **November 1**.
- Re-entry requests following a clinical course failure or withdrawal in the final semester of the program must be received within 48 hours.

Re-entry to the program is subject to, but not limited to, a review of:

- Reason for withdrawal from the program
- Academic achievement
- Evidence of interim efforts to strengthen areas of weakness
- Clinical evaluations (if any)
- PTA faculty review and recommendations

Consideration for re-entry to the program can only be granted if there are available openings and sufficient clinical resources and faculty. In the event there are more re-entry requests than available openings, a ranking system will be applied using the evaluation criteria as stated above. Eligibility requirements for students to be considered for re-entry are as follows:

1. Minimum PTA GPA of 2.3 inclusive of all PTA courses taken.
2. Completion of an exit interview scheduled within thirty days after withdrawal from the course with the PTA Program Director.
3. Written request for readmission submitted by April 1st for the fall semester and November 1st for the spring semester.
4. Requests should be addressed to the PTA Program Director and describe efforts made to strengthen the areas of concern.

Evaluation criteria for students requesting to re-enter include, but are not limited to PTA GPA, compliance with code of conduct, attendance, ability to deliver safe and competent care, adherence to college and program policies, use of remediation resources, and completion of the recommended exit plan as applicable. An available seat does not guarantee the request for re-entry will be approved.

Documentation of current health requirements, Basic Life Support training, Health and Safety training, repeat criminal background check, and repeat toxicology screening, and possibly repeat fingerprinting is required prior to re-entry into the PTA program. Re-entry is granted on a space available basis. Additional items may be required of the student to complete the re-entry process.

Any student who has been separated from the PTA Program for more than one year regardless of reason will not be considered for re-entry and will be dismissed from the program. *All curricular requirements must be completed within 3 years of the student's start of the PTA curriculum to earn this degree.*

Students who re-enter to the program will be required to complete the program in sequence. Upon re-entry students are subject to, and must abide by, the policies and procedures currently in place.

Re-entry to the program following a single course failure or voluntary withdrawal will require demonstration of competence in prior physical therapy knowledge and skills through comprehensive testing and may require a repeat of previous successfully completed coursework. Students must complete the individualized re-entry plan as outlined by the Program Director and Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education. Failure to meet the re-entry requirements, as outlined, will result in dismissal from the program.

## Student Conduct

Students determined to be in violation of the Board of Regents Policy on Student Conduct and the policies of the Division of Allied Health, Nursing, and Physical Education will not be eligible for readmission to their respective program.

## Health and Safety

Health requirements have been developed to maximize both student and client health and safety. Completion and submission of this information is a requirement for participation in the PTA program. **Students will not be allowed to remain in the PTA Program unless all requirements are completely met and submitted according to the deadlines set forth.** Students found to be non-compliant with health requirements are not allowed to attend clinic experiences until compliant.

## Status changes

If the student's physical/mental health status should change, including pregnancy, hospitalizations, or visits to the emergency department/urgent care center, the student must notify the PTA Program Director. This includes any medication(s) with the potential for effects such as impairment in movement, judgment, vision, or thought processes, as this may affect the students' ability to perform safely in the classroom and/or clinic. **Such changes in health status will require documentation of medical clearance that indicates the students' ability to fully participate in laboratory activities or specify the restrictions (with duration),** from a medical physician/PA/APRN. Documentation should be submitted to the PTA Program Director. No specific medical information should be provided.

## Pregnancy

It is strongly recommended, for the health of the fetus, that a student becoming pregnant while enrolled in the program notify faculty and the Program Director. Disclosure of the pregnancy is voluntary. There are procedures performed in physical therapy that may put the fetus at risk; additional vigilance to avoid risk to the mother and fetus must be taken. Students who are pregnant are expected to meet the same learning outcomes as classmates but may be excused from playing 'patient' in laboratory experiences.

## Illness/Injury

Certain acute medical conditions may put the student or others at risk for illness/injury. Students must inform their instructor prior to laboratory activities if any restrictions are present. This may require further medical documentation and/or medical clearance for safe participation in class/lab. Any change in medical status should be reported to the Program Director.

- Open wounds need to be covered appropriately.
- Infections/medical illness should be addressed following Standard Precautions.
- Individuals who are contagious, or suspect a communicable disease, should not attend class/lab/clinic



## Attendance

The Program's faculty encourages students to understand that this is a challenging program of education. Understanding and applying the art and science of physical therapy requires competence with a broad base of knowledge and clinical abilities. Experience has demonstrated that studies must be a student's first priority to succeed in this program. Timeliness and arriving fully prepared are also essential to success in physical therapy.

The program design is such that the first year physical therapy classes and lab/clinic experiences are scheduled 2-3 days weekly, and general education courses must be fit into the remaining times. There is the potential that students may have a full credit load each semester. Individuals who have completed the general education courses prior to entering the PTA program will have a decrease in the credit load per semester.

There are occasional extra learning opportunities which may require student attendance on non-class days. Students will be given as much notice as possible for these learning opportunities; some of these extra learning opportunities will be mandatory, others may not be mandatory.

Physical therapy educational responsibilities extend beyond those days on which classes are scheduled. Obligations such as advisory meetings with faculty, time for practice of clinical skills, meeting with study groups, lab competency/practical examinations and re-tests, library, or computer lab assignments, etc. must be met outside of the days on which physical therapy classes are scheduled.

Attendance and punctuality are expected for all lecture and laboratory classes. Class and laboratory experiences are designed to allow students to meet specific learning objectives essential to safe and competent clinical performance. *Excessive absence may result in students not achieving the student learning outcomes essential to a competent physical therapist assistant.*

Students are responsible for all information discussed in class as well as the material assigned from the texts, other reading, and supplemental material provided.

Excessive absenteeism is defined as having more absences per semester than the number of times the class/lab meets per week. (i.e. for a class that meets twice per week, more than two absences is considered excessive) For absences due to extenuating circumstances, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor in a timely manner. Specific attendance policies are included in the syllabus for each course.

Notification of the course instructor *prior* to the class, with justification for the cause of tardiness or lapse in attendance, is expected from each student.

The college also offers an alert system via **mycommnet**. Please access NVCC college website for details on how to sign up.

## **Classroom behavior and policies**

The classroom and laboratory are educational environments and other students are entitled to freedom from unnecessary interruptions in these settings. Therefore, please note the following classroom guidelines:

- Eating in laboratory is prohibited.
- It is the student's responsibility to arrive prepared for class or laboratory / clinical experience by having studied the day's assignment.
- Do not damage, mark, or otherwise abuse college property (desks, lab equipment, etc.).

### **Personal electronic device**

Cellular phones and other portable electronics should not be used during class time, unless needed to take notes. Such electronics should be turned off and put away so it is not a distraction. Texting and accessing information on cell phones and any electronic device is also prohibited during class time. If a student is expecting an urgent call, notify the instructor at the start of the class period. In this case, have the device in a "vibrate" or mute mode to limit distractions. Refer also to the NVCC policy.

### **Social Media**

Students are reminded that posts to any and all social networking or social media (including personal Facebook, Twitter, personal blogs, and other types of social media accounts) must reflect the same behavioral standards of honesty, respect, consideration, and professionalism that are expected in college and clinical environments. In any social media posts or communications, students must adhere to the same restrictions related to privacy and respect for fellow students, faculty, and clients as they do in a classroom or clinical environment in accordance with federal *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) standards*. Inappropriate use of social media by users with regard to the college, its faculty, students, clinical agencies, or clients is subject to disciplinary action.

## **PTA Laboratory Classes**

The purpose of laboratory-based training in physical therapist assistant education is to allow students, through practice on other people, to develop safe and competent behaviors (performance) in the administration of physical therapy measurement and intervention procedures *before* applying these techniques to patients in a clinic. During the laboratory-based training component of education in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program, students practice on one another under faculty supervision.

## Laboratory expectations

- The Physical Therapist Assistant Program adheres to the policy that students are entitled to an atmosphere conducive to learning. *Privacy and Draping Policies* and compliance with the PTA Program's policy for *Standards of Behavior* will be observed at all times in the laboratory-based clinical classes.
- Some laboratory classes will utilize clinical demonstrations with patients. You are to maintain patient confidentiality at all times. The unauthorized reading of a patient's chart is a violation of a patient's rights. You are not to discuss or divulge any aspect of a patient's illness or history. Photographs and/or videos may not be taken at any time. While at clinic sites you are a guest of the hospital or agency, and you are subject to all rules and regulations of that hospital or agency.
  - Violation of this policy may result in dismissal from the program.
- Adherence to the *Dress Code* for laboratory and clinical experiences is required.
  - Failure to comply with the dress code may include dismissal from the lab, resulting in an unexcused absence.
  - No offensive slogans or attire may be worn.
  - Undergarments and related areas (gluteal cleft, breast cleavage, midriff) should not be visible at any time during lab.
  - Repeated failure to comply with the dress code will be reflected in the professional behavior assessment for that semester/course.

The patients being treated in the clinic will be a diverse population. To prepare for this skill practice in lab requires training with a variety of body types, personalities, communication styles, etc. The lab portion of this education (practice for providing interventions and for receiving interventions as a "patient") requires that students participate in these learning experiences with *all* classmates during the program.

No equipment or supplies may leave the laboratory or classrooms. Any equipment failure or breakage should be reported to the staff at once.

## Open Labs

All instruction of new skills will occur only during the scheduled lab hours. The program supplements these learning experiences with scheduled "open labs". The open labs are provided to foster your practice and learning under the guidance of the faculty. Review of previously instructed skills occurs during open lab hours, faculty office hours, or any appointments scheduled with an instructor.

Non-disruptive guests are welcome to remain in the PTA rooms during Open Lab, however, cannot be utilized as a "patient" for practice or participate in any way. Guests need to be identified to the Open Lab faculty when the student arrives. Students are required to sign in and out of Open Lab.

The PTA laboratory area and equipment is available for PTA students to use on Mondays through Fridays from 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Prior confirmation that a staff member will be in attendance to unlock doors is encouraged to ensure minimal loss of practice time. Saturday utilization of the PTA classroom and laboratory areas requires prior notification/approval of the program director who will notify public safety, require the use of the “buddy” system, and strict adherence to laboratory policies. Skill practice can only utilize non-electrical devices or equipment if there is no faculty present. Application of modalities is never allowed unless a faculty member or peer tutor is present and in the room.

There is **no** food allowed in the PTA classrooms. Only closed beverage containers are allowed.

Students must attend your assigned lab section unless you have made prior arrangements with the faculty member teaching that course.

## **Lab Guidelines**

- No shoes/sneakers on the mats/plinths
- Use sheets and pillow cases on plinths & pillows
- Appropriate lab attire required (see dress code)
- No food allowed in lab area
- A faculty member or peer tutor must be present if you are practicing with electrical modalities
- Clean up the lab area and put away any equipment you have used; wipe down any tables/equipment used with appropriate sanitizing wipes
- Report any equipment that is broken or malfunctioning to faculty or staff member immediately
- Failure to follow lab rules may result in a loss of access to unsupervised open lab times.

## **Dress Code**

The Dress Code provides for an effective learning environment and to promote the safety of students and their patients or lab partners. Instructors have the final decision concerning the dress code. Alterations to the dress code are made on a case-by-case basis and required a documented medical reason. The close physical contact that is necessary in the physical therapy lab and clinic requires consistent attention to personal hygiene. To prevent offending patients or lab partners please use deodorant appropriately, and use moderation with perfume, lotion, aftershave, etc.

For laboratory-based experiences: a bathroom is available for changing. Students are welcome to place a lock on one locker and use this for personal storage. Shorts, T-shirt, and appropriate footwear are required attire for lab. Sweatshirt and sweatpants may be worn over these. Females are required to wear a sports bra or similar garment, and males will be required to remove their shirt. Fingernails must be trimmed sufficiently to allow the practice of techniques for the provision of physical therapy without risking damage to the skin of the lab partner. Long hair must be tied back and should not impact the lab partner’s learning experience. Repeated occurrences of failure to comply with the dress code during lab may include dismissal from the lab, resulting in an unexcused absence.

For all Interprofessional Education experiences: Students must dress professionally for all designated Interprofessional Education (IPE) experiences. This includes:

- An NVCC PTA student picture identification badge,
- The NVCC PTA program polo shirt
- Slacks/dress pants or skirt.
  - Jeans are not acceptable.
  - Well-worn sneakers are not acceptable.
- Clothing must be clean and free from stains and wrinkles.
- Shoes must have closed toes and flat heels, and rubber soles are recommended for comfort in the clinic.
- Undergarments and tattoos must not be visible, including when performing physical therapy interventions.
- Hair must be maintained away from the face.
- Students with a beard or mustache must keep it neat, clean and well -trimmed.
- Fingernails must be trimmed sufficiently to allow you to perform physical therapy interventions without risking damage to the skin of patients.

For all clinic-based learning experiences (including the lab classes held in a clinic): Apparel and grooming must conform to health, sanitation, and safety standards. The complete uniform is to be worn during clinical experiences, and as otherwise directed by the faculty or clinical instructor.

- The required attire is an NVCC PTA student picture identification badge, a watch with a second hand, shoes and socks (and lab coat, when required by the clinical facility).
- Male students wear a dress shirt and slacks. Female students wear a dress or a dress shirt with skirt or slacks.
- Jeans and T-shirts are not acceptable.
- Well-worn sneakers are not acceptable.
- Clothing must be clean and free of stains and wrinkles and must be of a type that does not limit your ability to professionally perform patient care activities.
- Shoes must have closed toes and flat heels, and rubber soles are recommended for comfort in the clinic.
- Undergarments and tattoos must not be visible, including when performing physical therapy interventions.
- Only the following items of jewelry are permitted:
  - wedding bands
  - medical identification bracelets
  - small earrings in each ear
  - wrist watch
  - No other facial/ear/head or other visible piercings are permitted.
- Hair must be maintained away from the face.
- Students with a beard or mustache must keep it neat, clean and well -trimmed.
- Fingernails must be trimmed sufficiently to allow performance of physical therapy interventions without risking damage to the skin of patients.

Failure to comply with the dress code will result in dismissal from the clinical area resulting in an absence. On clinical internship experiences, the student will follow policies and procedures specific to the facility at which they have been placed, including, but not limited to the above dress code.

## **Privacy and Draping Policy**

The program's laboratory is designed to re-create the clinical setting. Lab partners are to be addressed at all times with the same courtesy, dignity, and respect that would be provided to a patient receiving professional services. Lab sessions addressing specific areas of anatomy require that the associated body parts be exposed. It is the student's obligation as the 'treating' student to provide proper 'patient' positioning and draping such that the 'patient' remains covered at all times for these areas:

- Posteriorly from the superior aspect of the gluteal cleft extending distally to the middle of the thigh.
- Anteriorly from the level of the anterior superior iliac spines extending distally to the middle of the thigh.
- Anteriorly from the clavicles to the xiphoid process and sufficient to cover the breasts of female 'patients'.

## **General Information**

### **Communication with Faculty**

Faculty will respond to email communication within 2 business days, during the academic semester schedule.

### **Tracking requirements**

The PTA program utilizes a company that provides on-line tracking of program requirements. This company is called Castlebranch ([www.castlebranch.com](http://www.castlebranch.com)). Any questions related to documents uploaded to Castlebranch can be addressed to their helpline. Students are responsible for monitoring their status regarding program requirements. Failure to remain current with program requirements will result in a review of the student's status and will reflect in their professional behavior evaluation. Students who do not remain current with program requirements CANNOT attend any clinic-based experiences/activities which will be reflected in their grade for that course.

### **CPR Certification**

It is the students' responsibility to pass the **American Heart Association or American Red Cross** CPR Course for the **Health Care Provider/Basic Life Support**, or equivalent. Students must have uploaded documentation to their Castlebranch account verifying current CPR certification, ***no later than April 1st***, and you must maintain this certification through the completion of clinical education courses or students will not be allowed to attend clinical education experiences.

## **Criminal Background Check, Fingerprinting, and Drug Screening Test**

As a program expectation, all students are required to complete a drug screen and a criminal background check including fingerprinting once admitted into the PTA program and accepted a seat in the cohort. A student with a positive drug screen will not be allowed to register for classes and will lose their seat in the program. An individual who has a past criminal record cannot be guaranteed that they can be placed in a clinical education experience, which could prohibit them from continuing in the PTA Program. Pending the specific details of the criminal record, this may prohibit the student from obtaining a license as a PTA from the state in which they are seeking licensure.

Drug screens and criminal background checks (including potentially fingerprinting), are completed on an annual basis. Student refusal of either the background check or drug screening will result in dismissal from the PTA program due to inability to complete clinical learning requirements. A positive drug screen will result in dismissal from the program. A positive criminal background check/fingerprinting may preclude participation in clinical education experiences, eligibility to take the licensure exam, eligibility to obtain a PTA license or future employment. The ACCE will attempt to contact no more than three clinical education facilities to obtain clinical placement in this situation and may need to share details of the positive background check/fingerprinting result with the clinical site. The ACCE cannot be otherwise responsible for finding an alternate clinical placement for a NVCC student who fails to pass the background check.

## **Substance Use**

Substance abuse is defined as the dependency on a chemical substance (ex. alcohol, prescription over the counter and illegal drugs), which creates psychological and physical dependency and alters the individual life style, health, behavior, personal relationships, performance, or financial situation.

The use or abuse of a substance by a student becomes a concern when it impairs functions and affects the individual's well-being, professionalism and safety for self and patients.

If a faculty member identifies a student displaying signs of abuse, the student will be approached regarding the evidence of the problem and action taken. It is the discretion of the clinical instructor or clinical coordinator to remove a student from the clinical setting that they believe may be impaired by drugs and/or alcohol and will then follow college policy.

Intoxication and substance abuse can lead to physical & mental illness, skill deterioration, etc. and in no way relieves the student from full responsibility for his/her actions.

Please note: See Drugs and Alcohol Policy in NVCC College Catalog:  
<https://www.nv.edu/academics/academic-programs/academic-catalog>

See the Student Handbook:  
<http://www.nv.edu/Portals/0/documents/student-services/StudentHandbook.pdf>

## **Reasonable Suspicion Screening**

Students may also be required to submit to additional toxicology screening during the PTA program when reasonable suspicion of impairment exists. Reasonable suspicion screening may be a response to observations by faculty and/or staff to include but not be limited to the following:

1. Physical symptoms such as slurred speech, unsteady gait, confusion or other manifestations of drug/alcohol use;
2. Presence of an odor of alcohol or illegal substance;
3. Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior during clinical or on-campus learning activities, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, or deterioration of performance regardless of any threat to patient safety; and
4. Evidence of involvement in the use, possession, sale, solicitation or transfer of illegal or illicit drugs while enrolled in the PTA Program.

A student who is unable to complete the required clinical experience will be unable to complete the requirements for the Associate Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant but may be able to apply some or all of the credits completed to an Associate Degree in General Studies. Students are advised to meet with an NVCC advisor to discuss degree completion requirements.

## **Computer Resources**

The PTA Program relies on computers to enhance learning experience. Assignments, interactive tutorials, communication with classmates and faculty, and many other computer- based resources are available to promote learning and foster success in this program. The Community College System offers computing services to students through local campus computer centers. It is to the student's advantage to be familiar with local resources.

## **Extra-Curricular Activities**

Social and recreational activities play an important part in life as a student. Students are encouraged to participate in the events which are sponsored by and for the students at NVCC. The Student Physical Therapist Assistant Club through the Student Government Association (SGA) is a student-driven club comprised primarily of student members of the PTA program and facilitated by a PTA faculty member. This club is a wonderful opportunity to get more involved in the field of physical therapy, develop leadership skills, and generate club funds for identified physical therapy class activities or attendance at professional conferences.

## **The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)**

The APTA is the national organization dedicated to promoting physical therapy. The profession's association is an outstanding resource. Once admitted into the PTA Program, it is a program requirement for all students to join the APTA by February 1<sup>st</sup> once being admitted into the program. Annual student costs are approximately \$100, and provide resources that will help with coursework (professional journals, online resources/articles, reduced fees for conferences) – *consider the cost as that of a very valuable textbook.*



The APTA can be contacted at (800) 999-APTA, or through their website at [www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org).

The Connecticut Physical Therapy Association (CT-APTA) is a chapter of the APTA. Students joining the APTA automatically become members of the CT-APTA. The CT-APTA addresses regional issues regarding physical therapy and can be contacted at (860) 246-4414, [www.ctpt.org](http://www.ctpt.org). The CT-APTA sponsors local conferences, meetings, and lectures which you will find beneficial to the development of understanding of physical therapy. There is also a student special interest group (SSIG) which students are encouraged to join.

## **Student and Employer Contracts**

The following guidelines for fairness in offering financial assistance in exchange for a promise of future employment have been developed by the American Physical Therapy Association. Students are urged to consider each of these points when considering one of these contracts and as with any contract legal guidance is recommended.

The APTA Guidelines for Student and Employer Contracts® (HOD 06-92-14-28) are:

- Notification by the employer if the place of employment may be in an isolated area or as a solo practitioner such that the new graduate will not have ready access to mentoring and regular collegial relationships or any resources for professional growth and development.
- Disclosure by the employer of ownership of the practice.
- Notification by the employer to the student if the practice is involved in any situation in which a referring practitioner can profit as a result of referring patients for physical therapy and notification that the American Physical Therapy Association is opposed to such situations.
- Student awareness of any potential future tax obligations that may be incurred upon graduation as the result of deferred income.
- The agreement must not, in any way, interfere with the process and planning of the student's professional education.
- It should be understood that the school is not a party to the agreement and is not bound to any conditions of the agreement.
- There should be a clearly delineated, fair, and reasonable buy-out provision in which the student understands the legal commitment to pay back the stipend with reasonable interest in the event that there is dissatisfaction or reason for release from the contract on the student's part at any time during the term of the agreement.
- A no-penalty bailout provision should be provided in the event of change of ownership, but the student may be required to adhere to a reasonable payback schedule.
- Avoidance of non-compete clauses is recommended, but if there is one, a reasonable limitation of time and distance should be incorporated.
- A student's interest may best be served by obtaining appropriate counsel prior to signing the contract.

## **Public Safety**

For emergencies call the Public Safety Office at **203-575-8112** or use an assistance phone. Notify the dispatcher that you are reporting an emergency or crime, and provide them with your location and related information. Members of this department are police empowered with all rights and responsibilities of their position. The Public Safety Office also provides an escort service. Call 203-575-8113 or use an assistance phone to request an escort.

## **Calendar**

The PTA Program follows the Common Academic Calendar that can be found on the College website. <https://www.nv.edu/academics/academic-programs/academic-calendar>

\*\*There will be a different schedule to accommodate final exams and practical exams for the PTA program in the months of December and May. This schedule will be distributed at least 2 weeks before the start of final exams. Students should remain flexible for the week of final exams.

## **Physical Therapist Assistant Licensure**

Upon graduation from the PTA program, students will be required to pass a computerized licensure exam for employment as a physical therapist assistant in the State of Connecticut. The licensure process requires the submission of fees to the Department of Public Health and the submission of fees to the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy. Upon successful completion of the exam graduates will be granted a PTA license, to be renewed annually. Unsuccessful completion of the licensure exam will require the submission of an additional examination fee in order to retake the exam. Detailed information is located at the Connecticut Department of Public Health website, under Licensing & Certification (<http://www.ct.gov/dph/site/default.asp>). For more information regarding the national licensure exam, please visit: [www.fsbpt.org](http://www.fsbpt.org).

## **Complaint Process**

A complaint in regard to the PTA program can be submitted by completion of the PTA Program Complaint Form. The form can be found on the PTA Program website ([www.nv.edu/pta](http://www.nv.edu/pta)).

Complaints can be originated by, but not limited to, PTA students, non-PTA students, clinical site personnel, NVCC and other consortium college personnel, and the general public.

The written complaint form will be reviewed by the PTA program director with a response within two weeks. The form will be kept on file in the PTA Department for one year.

If the response by the PTA program director does not result in a resolution, the matter can be forwarded to the Associate Dean of Health Sciences upon request of the complainant.

**\*\*A formal complaint does not need to be completed in all situations. All PTA students who have a concern in a specific course should discuss their concern with the specific course instructor. Ultimately if the student feels they need to pursue further assistance, they can utilize the grade appeals process.**

## **Student Safety**

To maintain a safe environment and minimize distractions, all PTA classroom doors will be closed and locked during class times. One door at the front of the classroom will remain unlocked.

NVCC PTA Program adheres to the policies established by NVCC related to safety in the NVCC College Catalog: <https://www.nv.edu/academics/academic-programs/academic-catalog>

The policy can also be found in the NVCC Student Handbook:  
<http://www.nv.edu/Portals/0/documents/student-services/StudentHandbook.pdf>

## **Grade Appeals**

Please see the NVCC Student Handbook:  
<http://www.nv.edu/Portals/0/documents/student-services/StudentHandbook.pdf>

## **Academic Integrity & Plagiarism**

Please see the NVCC Student Handbook:  
<http://www.nv.edu/Portals/0/documents/student-services/StudentHandbook.pdf>

Allied Health and Nursing students are entering professions that require academic, professional, and personal integrity. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the standards of that profession and the program in which they are enrolled. Any violation of appropriate conduct will be dealt with according to the policies outlined in the program handbook and the NVCC College Student Handbook.

## **Academic Honesty Statement**

At NVCC we expect the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in accordance with the Board of Trustees' student discipline policy 5.2.1 Policy on Student Conduct, Section 3, Paragraph 2. This policy prohibits cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration on assignments, unauthorized access to examinations or course materials, plagiarism, and other proscribed activities. Plagiarism is defined as the use of another's idea(s) or phrase(s) and representing that/those idea(s) as your own, either intentionally or unintentionally. Anyone who violates the Board policy may fail the course at the discretion of the instructor. (Please see the Student Handbook on the College website link [page 7] for more information.)

A student may not obtain a transcript notation of “W” in a course if there exists substantial reason to believe the student has engaged in academic misconduct in the course. A transcript notation of “W” will only be permitted for such students when the final resolution results in finding the student did not commit academic misconduct in the course.

Academic integrity is demonstrated by not engaging in conduct that has as its intent or effect the false representation of a student’s academic performance, including but not limited to:

- cheating on an examination,
- collaborating with others in work to be presented, contrary to the stated rules of the course,
- plagiarizing, including the submission of others’ ideas or papers (whether purchased, borrowed or otherwise obtained) as one’s own,
- stealing or having unauthorized access to examinations or course materials,
- falsifying records or laboratory or other data,
- submitting, if contrary to the rules of a course, work previously presented in another course, and
- knowingly assisting another student, in any of the above, including an arrangement whereby any work, classroom performance, examination, or other activity is submitted or performed by a person other than the student under whose name the work is submitted or performed.

From: Connecticut Community Colleges Board of Trustees 5.2.1 Policy on Student Conduct. Section 3: Expectations for Student Conduct

False representation of a student’s academic performance also includes knowingly giving or accepting assistance in the clinical area contrary to the stated rules of the course.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the intentional copying of another’s idea(s) or phrases(s) and representing that/those idea(s) as your own, either intentionally or unintentionally. This includes copying a friend’s paper as well as a published work. Penalties for plagiarism are as follows:

First incident: The first incident of plagiarism will be documented as unintentional plagiarism and as such will be treated as follows: Conference with instructor followed by the mandatory resubmission of the work with all materials correctly documented as stated in the course syllabus. The appropriate professional behaviors form will be completed and placed in the student file.

Second incident: The second incident of plagiarism will be documented as intentional. There will be no opportunity to re-submit the paper and the grade for that paper will be recorded as an “F” and will result in a grade of “F” for the course. A copy of the paper will be sent to the Division Director who may forward it to the Dean of Students for additional sanctions.

At NVCC we expect the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct is prohibited in accordance with the Board of Regents *Student Code of Conduct* (Part D. Prohibited Conduct, 1.

academic misconduct). This policy prohibits cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration on assignments, unauthorized access to examinations or course materials, plagiarism, and other proscribed activities. Academic misconduct extends to any student who aids in another's student's cheating. Plagiarism is defined as the use of another's idea(s) or phrase(s) and representing that/those idea(s) as your own, either intentionally or unintentionally.

The first offense of academic misconduct may result in a grade of "F" or "0" for the assignment and/or failure in the course at the discretion of the instructor. Please see the Student Handbook on the College website link for more information:

<https://nv.edu/portals/0/documents/student-services/student-handbook.pdf>. Any subsequent instances of academic misconduct will require the student to meet with the Dean of Academic Affairs. The Dean, in collaboration with the instructor, will determine the consequence for the subsequent instances of academic misconduct. In addition, as academic misconduct is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, referral will be made to the Dean of Student Services and addressed as appropriate.

A student may not obtain a transcript notation of "W" in a course if there exists substantial reason to believe the student has engaged in academic misconduct in the course. A transcript notation of "W" will only be permitted for such students when the final resolution results in finding the student did not commit academic misconduct in the course.

## **Copyright Information**

Selected portions of the curriculum are taught, reinforced or reviewed through the use of educational software/instructional media such as videotapes, computer programs, audio cassettes, and/or online learning activities. Students are required to adhere to all copyright policies.

## **Reporting Injuries Occurring on Campus and College-Sponsored Activities**

An incident resulting in an injury (including infectious disease exposures/needle sticks where follow-up and treatment may be necessary) or chemical exposure to any student that occurs on campus or while participating in NVCC sponsored activities is reported by completing the NVCC Incident Report Form within 3 days of the incident. The responsible staff or faculty member ensures that the form is completed and submitted.

In addition to the NVCC policy, students who are injured at a clinical facility are required to follow the facility's injury reporting policy and procedures. Students who are injured while participating in program activities, should report the injury to the program director within 48 hours of the incident. The faculty or staff who were supervising the student at the time that the incident occurred must also report the incident to program director within 48 hours of the incident.

Students injured while participating in College activities may be covered by the College's accident insurance policy. It is the student's responsibility to follow the procedures listed in the NVCC Student Handbook in order to receive reimbursement for costs incurred.

The Incident Report Form is available in the Allied Health Division office or it may be obtained by contacting the offices of the Dean of Student Services (203 575 8012) or Dean of Administration (203 575 8089).

The completed form is sent to the Dean of Administration's office, K706. A copy of the form should be given to the party involved in the incident. The Dean of Administration's office will then send the forms to the Dean of Student Services.

Reference: NVCC Procedure for Reporting Injuries Occurring on Campus and College-sponsored activities (February 28, 2018).

# **CLINICAL EDUCATION POLICIES**

## Clinic-based Education

The academic portion of the physical therapist assistant program is designed to utilize didactic and laboratory experiences in preparing students in the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective learning domains. Learning progressions are incorporated within each course and throughout the program to activate students' critical thinking skills, and ultimately their clinical decision-making skills.

Didactic instruction and collaborative learning provide the framework for a working knowledge base within this curriculum. Laboratory experiences provide the opportunity and repetition necessary to gain proficiency in the skills and procedures necessary for successful clinical performance as a physical therapist assistant student (PTA). Although students will experience clinically oriented teaching in the laboratory, it is necessary to provide ample opportunity for students to observe actual patients, and practice the application of their cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills in the clinic. It is through this clinical experience that students will gain the competence and skills of an entry-level PTA.

The clinical education courses provide students a forum for participation in the provision of physical therapy. Each clinic-based education course consists of supervised clinical experiences through agencies affiliated with the PTA Program. Students will be assigned to and supervised by clinicians in the physical therapy community. Clinic experiences are designed to provide students learning experiences with patients and associated activities such as coordination with other health care providers, utilization of support staff, and/or time management. These experiences provide a truly comprehensive learning experience to the provision of patient care and the performance of the PTA student.

This program is designed to gradually introduce “real” patient interaction and measurement and treatment skills into the curriculum in the first, second, and third semesters of didactic coursework (PTA 125, PTA 145, PTA 150 and PTA 251). Clinic/lab-based experiences, such as functional mobility, range of motion & strength testing, and neurological skill practice, will allow the students the opportunity to practice their skills on individuals playing the role of actual musculoskeletal, neurological, and/or systemic conditions.

The curriculum utilizes a part-time integrated clinical experience (ICE) to introduce students to problem-solving skills, treatment interventions, and the role of the PTA following successful completion of the second semester. The curriculum is designed to provide a part-time clinical experience up to 96 hours in length incorporated into a third semester course (PTA 258). This semester-long clinical exposure will be conducted one full day per week over the course of 12 weeks and provide the students with the opportunity to demonstrate basic patient communication skills, data collections skills, intervention techniques and basic documentation. Clinical experience will guide clinical reflections and discussions in the didactic portion of the course.

The program culminates in the completion of two full-time clinical experiences (PTA262, PTA265) at two different physical therapy settings in CT. Objectives for these clinical experiences are based on terminal competencies of the PTA program. At the completion of each clinical experience, students



should be consistently meeting objectives in the major performance categories. It is expected that frequent guidance will be necessary in the early phases in the experiences for areas relating to critical thinking and case management, while only occasional guidance and/or confirmation will be necessary in the final stages of the clinical experiences. Successful completion of the second full-time clinical experience will result in the ability to practice as an entry-level PTA and meet the final requirements of the PTA program.

Clinic-based education is the capstone to the student's education as a Physical Therapist Assistant student, and it is expected that students will develop and then demonstrate clinical performance and behaviors that are consistent with those of an entry-level PTA. Successful completion of the clinic-based education requires that students consistently demonstrate competence of the knowledge and performance of the abilities unique to the PTA, including demonstration of professional behaviors expected of an entry-level therapist.

The clinic-based education is an extension of the educational experience provided through the PTA program. As such, all responsibilities and rights outlined in this manual are extended to students while participating in clinical education.

## **Clinical Education Courses**

Clinical education experiences are a vital component to the development of competent physical therapist assistants. The clinical education faculty of the site is instrumental in providing an active, stimulating environment for our students. An effective relationship between the clinical site and the educational program exists with the purpose of educating our PTA students. The site coordinator of clinical education (SCCE) and the clinical instructor (CI) have a crucial role in providing a supportive and appropriate learning experience, while keeping in consideration the learning needs of each individual student. The students' experiences at the clinical sites lead to further development of the knowledge, skills and behaviors identified in NVCC PTA Program's mission, goals, and objectives.

During the NVCC PTA Program, students participate in three separate clinical education experiences, for a total of approximately 650 hours of clinical learning experiences. Clinical experiences are sequenced throughout the curriculum to allow students to build on academic knowledge and theory taught in the classroom while practicing skill sets gained in the laboratory setting. Each semester students are taught new skill sets and theory, while continuing to practice skills learned during previous terms. Students will be expected to complete their clinical experiences at one in-patient setting and one out-patient setting). By the end of the final clinical experience course, students will have attained the competencies essential to function independently as an entry-level PTA.

## **Acute Illness**

If the student has an acute illness the clinical facility has the final decision in determining if they will be allowed to attend clinical learning experiences.

## Clinical Experience #1

**PTA 258 PTA in the Healthcare Arena** (part-time experience completed during third semester coursework; approximately 8 hours per week for 12 weeks) This course develops the student's ability to apply physical therapy interventions and data collection techniques within the PT's plan of care in the clinic environment and advances the student's abilities with communication, professional conduct, and problem solving within the physical therapy clinic. PTA in the Healthcare Arena uses the clinical environment as a framework for the application and synthesis of conceptual aspects of the work environment. Clinical education experiences are acquired in a weekly part-time integrated clinical experience and integrated into the classroom to illustrate the current health care delivery system's impact on the field of physical therapy and the role of the physical therapist assistant. Throughout the semester students will learn to differentiate professional, legal, and ethical standards and analyze how these direct the delivery of patient care.

## Clinical Experience #2

**PTA Internship II** (minimum 7 weeks full time) In this clinic-based course students learn to integrate and apply physical therapy concepts and to effectively perform physical therapy interventions as a physical therapist assistant. Students develop their abilities for daily organization and management of a patient caseload and effectively contribute to the health care team.

## Clinical Experience #3



**PTA Internship III** (minimum 8 weeks full time) In this clinic-based course students learn to problem-solve and competently function in the clinic environment as a physical therapist assistant. Students develop competence with time management, clinical prioritization and the entry-level abilities of the physical therapist assistant prior to course completion.

## Clinical Education Procedures

\*Please note these procedures are continually reviewed and updated according to college, program, and accreditation changes. If any policies or procedures are revised, students will be provided with the updated version.\*

This portion of the education is done through collaboration with the physical therapy community. These procedures are designed to promote a successful learning experience *and* to ensure that the students meet the professional community's standards for physical therapy providers. Therefore, *please attend to these procedures diligently. If problems arise, discussion should first occur with your Clinical Instructor (CI) and/or the Site Coordinator of Clinical Education (SCCE).* Students should feel free to contact the Academic Coordinators of Clinical Education (ACCE) at any time with questions or unresolved conflicts.

# **Assignment of Clinical Education Experiences**

## **Determination of Clinical Locations**

Every March, NVCC PTA program sends a mass request to clinic sites throughout Connecticut, asking for commitment to student placements for the following year's internships, in accordance with APTA guidelines. Each facility/company will determine the number of students for each clinical experience and the type of rotation they are accepting, according to each facility's clinical education policies. The SCCE typically is the individual responsible for this coordination and then she/he will return this information to the NVCC PTA program/ACCE.

## **Determination of Clinical Assignments**

The program provides a rich diversity of learning experiences by affiliating with a range of agencies that provide physical therapy.

Clinic-based education is an essential learning experience, and as such the assignments are designed to meet students' needs for a comprehensive education. Students' preferences will be considered during assignment of clinical sites, but the final determination rests with the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education.

In preparation for determining the student placements, the students are provided a list of the placement opportunities, access to previous student assessments of clinical sites through the Physical Therapist Assistant Student Evaluation: Clinical Experience and Clinical Instruction (section 1), and upon request are able to review further information on file for each facility, such as the Clinical Site Information Form (CSIF). Students are able to submit their top three choices for each experience and are also able to provide comments to the ACCE, which will be taken into consideration with student placements. The ACCE's considerations in determining student placements are that the facility is able to confirm ability to accept the student and an active contract between the college and the facility exists. The ACCE will review all of the above information and will determine the best student placements to provide optimal learning experiences for all students. The ACCE makes the final decision regarding student placements.

Students are not to make direct contact with any facility/site in efforts of securing a student placement for a clinical experience.

Scheduling of student placements for the part-time clinical experience will be handled during the second semester of the curriculum, and full-time clinical experiences during the third semester of the curriculum. Students who are interested in going to a specific site for a clinical education experience are encouraged to notify the ACCE by email. The ACCE will make every attempt to place students in local areas for at least one clinical experience; however, the final determination will be based on the availability of sites balanced with the learning needs of the students in the program. Students may be

required to travel over seventy-five (75) minutes to their experiences. The SCCE/CI is provided with the student name and contact information assigned for the specific clinical experience.

It is the student's obligation to utilize assigned sites in order to successfully complete the learning experiences inherent in the education of a PTA. If a student chooses not to accept an assignment, the student will not be able to meet the course learning outcomes and the program curriculum requirements will not be met resulting in an inability to graduate. .

Many students will have worked in health care settings prior to admission to the PTA Program or will continue to work part-time while enrolled. While it is realized that the experience will be valuable, it will not be awarded credit in lieu of clinic-based education time. Students may not be allowed to affiliate where they or a family member are, or have been, employed. **Please see the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) if you are in this situation.**

## **Clinic Requirements**

The NVCC PTA Program has specific requirements that all students must follow in order to be in the PTA Program, and specifically to attend clinical education experiences. NVCC Allied Health & Nursing programs have partnered with Castlebranch to assist in the tracking of medical and non-medical requirements. Requirements include updated immunization and health records (PPD, Hepatitis B vaccine, flu vaccine, physical, etc.), current health insurance, color photo ID, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Training, completion of the criminal background check, drug screening test, fingerprinting, and current Healthcare Provider CPR certification (American Heart Association or American Red Cross) and First Aid. To be eligible for participation in clinical education, **all requirements** of the PTA Program must be fully completed within each student's Castlebranch account.

**Clinic sites may have their own specific documentation or requirements of the student.** Students are responsible for providing the necessary documentation of those requirements (as needed) to their designated clinical sites at least two weeks prior to the clinical experience, or earlier if requested by the clinical site. Failure to do so will preclude attendance at clinical sites until compliance is met. This will place the students' status in the program at risk. Liability ("malpractice") insurance will be provided through a blanket liability policy for all students while on clinical experiences.

## **Criminal Background Check/Fingerprinting**

In the event of a positive criminal background check/fingerprinting, the ACCE will attempt to contact no more than three clinical education facilities to obtain clinical placement in this situation. The ACCE cannot be otherwise responsible for finding an alternate clinical placement for a NVCC student who fails to pass the background check/fingerprint.

Some medical facilities require drug screening, finger printing, and/or checks for criminal records prior to employment, and these facilities will require that the same standard be met by any students participating in clinical education experiences. Facilities may require students to complete these

requirements with the specific vendor of their choice and within more stringent timeframes than the NVCC PTA Program. **Students attending clinical education experiences will be subject to the policies and standards established by the clinical education facilities at the student's expense.**

## **Identification as a Student**

According to the State of Connecticut, health care providers must display photographic identification badges during work hours. This act applies to students on clinical education experiences in the PTA program. Identification badges will be obtained at Naugatuck Valley Community College. The PTA program will provide instructions in regards to obtaining these badges and information required to do so. These badges are to be worn at all times while completing your clinical experience at your designated facility. If you do not have identification, you are not allowed to be present at the clinic and it will be considered an unexcused absence, subject to the policies noted within the course syllabi.

## **Professionalism and Behavioral Requirements in the Clinic**

During clinical education experiences, students are expected to adhere to the standards and requirements of the PTA program (as defined in the *Student Manual* and any addendums to college/program policy & procedures provided) AND those of that facility (i.e., dress, behavior, professional standards, confidentiality, etc.). Lack of the ability to demonstrate professional behaviors, as assessed by the clinical site staff/CI/SCCEs and/or the ACCE/Program Director, may include failure of the clinic experience, pending a thorough review of the situation.

## **Expectations for Student Conduct**

Physical therapist assistant students are entering a profession that requires a high level of personal integrity. Compliance with recognized standards and policies of conduct provides an opportunity for students to develop and practice skills in leadership, group process, decision making, and ethical and moral reasoning.

Please note the following when dealing with conflicts or problems while on clinic-based educational experiences. All problems are to be brought to the immediate attention of the student's Clinical Instructor. If this does not achieve an effective resolution, the Site Coordinator for Clinical Instruction (SCCE) at that facility should be consulted. Students should notify the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education when the SCCE is consulted. Students are not to use an argumentative tone with the patients, staff, classmates, or. Unprofessional behavior or communication in a clinic setting may lead to dismissal from the PTA program.

Inappropriate professional behavior/communication skills (verbal and non-verbal) that interfere with patient care may result in the student being removed from the clinical experience. The student will receive a failing grade in the course and may result in dismissal from the program.

Students are to continue to follow the policies and procedures set forth in the *Student Manual of Academic and Clinical Policies for the PTA Program* while on their clinical education experiences.

Students are also expected to follow the safety procedures at each facility and will be oriented to such by facility personnel. The *Affiliation Agreement* addresses student safety during clinical educational experiences.

The clinic is an extension of the academic learning environment. Students are expected to be prepared daily, and to complete any assignments given by the CI in a timely manner.

## Status changes

If the student's physical/mental health status should change, including pregnancy, hospitalizations or visits to the emergency department/urgent care center, the student must notify the ACCE who will notify the Program Director. This includes any medication(s) with the potential for effects such as impairment in movement, judgment, vision, or thought processes, as this may affect the students' ability to perform safely in the classroom and/or clinic. Such changes in health status will require documentation of **medical clearance that indicates the students' ability to fully participate in laboratory activities or specify the restrictions (with duration)**, from a medical physician/PA/APRN. Documentation should be submitted to the PTA Program Director. No specific medical information should be provided-

## Scheduling & Attendance

Students are expected to adhere to, and attend, the clinic for a "full-time" schedule (PTA 262, PTA 265). Depending on the work hours of the clinical instructor, a full-time clinic schedule may include "flexible" hours. Unless otherwise approved by both the ACCE and the SCCE, students are expected to follow the schedule of their CI. Repeated tardiness will trigger involvement of the ACCE and review of the situation by the PTA Program faculty. Action may include (but is not limited to) dismissal of the student from the PTA Program

Daily attendance is required. In the event of illness, the student is responsible for notifying the ACCE/PTA Program **AND** the CI prior to the start of the workday. Time lost from the clinic may need to be made up at the discretion of the ACCE with input from the SCCE, CI, and PTA Program Director. In the event of a natural disaster/state of emergency, the ACCE and PTA Program Director will make decisions regarding make-up time on a situational basis.

Students will follow the clinic's schedule for holiday time-off while on clinical experiences. Students are required to attend clinic during the assigned hours regardless of weather-related college closing or delayed-openings if the clinic is open. It is the responsibility of the student to plan other arrangements for travel or family obligations in the event of inclement weather. If it is likely that you will be late due to road conditions you should notify the clinical instructor in a timely manner and provide an estimated time of arrival.

Students **may** be required to travel considerable distances to their clinic site. In the event that the student feels it is a risk to their safety to travel to the clinic site, they may choose not to travel, but will be required to make up all lost time, which could result in an extension of their clinical experience.

Clinical education experiences must occur during the standard college semesters. If a student suffers a medical issue that does not allow them to attend the clinic, it is possible that the student will need to medically withdraw from the course. It is the student's responsibility to follow the NVCC guidelines regarding medical withdrawal as well as notify the ACCE in a timely manner. The ACCE will notify the PTA Program Director. Depending on the timing, it may not be possible to repeat the course within the given semester. This will affect the student's ability to complete the PTA Program within the standard timeframe and will delay graduation.

## **Transportation**

Students are required to provide their own transportation, living expenses (as necessary), and any other expenses while on clinical education experiences. Students are responsible for transportation to and from clinical education sites. Neither the college nor the affiliating clinic site is responsible for any personal injury or injury to property which may occur while traveling to or from clinical education sites. Students may be required to travel over seventy-five (75) minutes to their experiences, which is not counted as part of your clinical hours. Please adhere to all parking rules as violations may result in your car being ticketed. Violators who are ticketed or towed will incur the associated costs.

## **Electronic Devices**

Students **WILL NOT** be allowed to answer any cell phone call or text while working with patients or if in a patient treatment area and should not carry such devices on their person while doing patient care unless official accommodations have been requested and approved. Students must have cell phones on vibrate mode in the clinic. If there is an **emergency situation**, in which the student anticipates the need to have communication with an individual outside of the clinic, the clinical instructor should be notified in advance. Unapproved use of a cell phone during clinic hours will affect the student's grade. If the clinical facility has more stringent policies in place regarding cellular devices, the student must follow the facility policies. No student is allowed to voice record, screen capture, video record, or save any information that occurs in the clinic. Use of personal electronic devices in the clinic or outside of the clinic is not allowed to view or document patient information.

## **ACCE Communications with CI/Student**

The ACCE will schedule a conference with the CI and/or the SCCE for assessment of student performance and the clinical experience during each clinical education experience either through telephone communication and/or an on-site visit. The ACCE will speak with the CI and/or the SCCE and the student. The student's progress relative to the defined learning outcomes will be discussed, as well as any additional issues needing to be addressed.

# Student Responsibilities

## Prior to the Clinical Education Experience

1. **Make contact with the clinical site** at least one month prior to the start of the experience or upon receipt of confirmation of their student placement. This contact is to introduce themselves, confirm their schedule, as well as any clinic specific requirements.
2. **Complete a Student Data Form.** Completion and submission of the Student Data Form is necessary to let the SCCE and/or the CI know your past experience and learning style. Send/email your Student Data Form in a timely fashion so that your clinical instructor receives it two weeks prior to the start of the clinical experience. If it is not submitted in a timely manner, it may jeopardize your ability to participate in this educational experience at the clinic.
3. **Review the course syllabi** for the experience to be familiar with the course objectives, learning outcomes, and expectations for the clinical education experience.
4. **Review the grading assessment tool** , including completing the APTA PTA Clinical Performance Instrument (CPI) training as instructed, and clarify any questions with the ACCE.
5. **Complete/maintain all requirements.** Confirm that all medical and non-medical documentation required per NVCC policy is completed/maintain compliance and on file with Castlebranch. All necessary documentation and requirements of the facility are completed according to their policies.

Clinical sites may or may not send out information to the student prior to the start of the clinical experience regarding an orientation to the facility, work hours, dress code, parking, etc.

## During the Clinical Education Experience

1. Discuss with the CI their learning styles and preference for constructive feedback
2. Discuss with the CI their personal goals while on the clinical education experience
3. Create weekly goals to assist in progression of their performance with guidance from their CI
4. Accept and seek out constructive feedback from the CI and make appropriate changes in response to the information
5. Offer feedback to CI on how the experience is progressing and offer ideas as to what would assist in the optimal learning experience for you
6. Completed midterm and final self-assessment grading assessment tool (PTA CPI) , including signatures, , according to instructions
7. Complete an in-service/presentation (if noted in your syllabus and/or required by your site) on a topic appropriate for the setting in which you are completing your experience and approved by your CI
8. Prepare daily and/or nightly for your patients
9. Complete assignments as requested by your CI
10. Bring any concerns to the attention of your CI and/or SCCE and to the ACCE as appropriate in a timely manner



## **End of Clinical Education Experience**

1. Complete the Physical Therapist Assistant Student Evaluation: Clinical Experience and Clinical Instruction and share this information with your CI and/or the SCCE
2. Complete the Evaluation of the ACCE and Clinical Internship Design
3. Complete the Clinical Instructor Effectiveness form

(If forms are revised, updated forms will be provided to the student)

## **Evaluations**

### **Midterm Evaluations**

The CI will perform an evaluation at mid-point of each clinical experience that provides the student with feedback on their performance. Each student must complete a self-evaluation to share with the CI during this meeting. Midterm signatures (hard copy and/or electronic) of both the student and CI will be recorded on the evaluation tool to signify the above indeed did occur. Major problem areas, including but not limited to, safety and/or low performance scores for skill or competence at mid-term will trigger active involvement of the ACCE. In these cases, the ACCE will have a discussion with the CI and/or SCCE and the student to develop a Student Success Plan that will target student objectives to meet competency requirements of the clinical experience and how the CI will support the student in their objectives.

### **Final Evaluations**

The CI will perform an evaluation at the end of each clinical experience that provides the student with feedback on their performance. Each student must complete a self-evaluation to share with the CI during this meeting. Final signatures (hard copy and/or electronic) of both the student and the CI will be recorded on the evaluation tool to signify the above indeed did occur.

Successful achievement of the learning outcomes of the clinic-based learning experience (“Pass” grade) will be based on the recommendations of the clinical site. Final determination will rest with the ACCE and academic faculty.

Conditions which place the student at risk for a grade reflecting unsuccessful achievement of learning (Withdrawal or Failure) include, but are not limited to:

- Unprofessional behavior (see *Student Manual*) and/or not adhering to the ethical standards established by the APTA. Unprofessional behavior includes but is not limited to a student’s inability to communicate with patients appropriately which interferes with patient care and/or poses potential safety concerns related to patient care.
- Unsafe clinical performance.

- Excessive clinical tardiness and/or absenteeism.
- Inability to safely and accurately manage the required schedule and caseload.

Unsatisfactory performance in the attainment of all student learning outcomes related to that clinical experience and/or incompetent execution of prior fundamental skills learned in previous semesters.

- Failure to adequately meet the objectives previously outlined in a Student Success Action Plan.

## Grading

Evaluation in the clinic-based courses (PTA\*258, PTA\*262 and PTA\*265) is based on a pass/fail ("P/F") grading system. You must achieve a passing grade in all learning outcomes in order to earn a "P" for the course (PTA258 clinic component), and you must earn a grade of "P" in each clinic-based education course to meet the degree requirements. Unsuccessful completion of the clinic component of PTA 258: A grade of "P" (pass) must be attained in the clinical education component of this course. Unsuccessful completion of the Pass/Fail clinic component of this course will result in a final course grade of "F".

Unsuccessful completion of a Pass/Fail full time clinic-based course (PTA\*262, PTA\*265) will result in a final course grade of "F". A remedial clinical education experience may be offered based on (1) student following program procedures for re-entry as applicable (2) resource and site availability for a clinic-based education experience, (3) only upon the first occurrence of a student not meeting the criteria for a passing ("P") grade, and (4) on the approval of the PTA faculty. The student will need to register for a second section of the failed clinical education based course. **Failure to complete the remedial experience successfully or to complete a remedial experience, will result in a final grade of "F" for the clinical education experience and would be considered a second course failure. Two course failures will result in dismissal from the PTA program.**

Due to the sequencing of courses in the curriculum and the availability of clinical education resources, it is unlikely that a remedial clinical education experience can be completed in the same semester.

A student who is determined by the faculty to be **clinically unsafe** will be removed from the clinical setting immediately and receive an "F" for the course.

Students who do not maintain **patient confidentiality** will be removed from the clinic immediately, receive an "F" for the course, and are subject to appropriate disciplinary and/or legal action.

Students will also be removed from the clinic when **absenteeism or tardiness** make it impossible for the student to safely continue in a clinic-based education course and will receive an "F" for the course.

Each individual situation will be assessed by the PTA faculty, with possible consultation of the situation (without identifying the student) by the PTA Program Advisory Board. Based on the situation, it is possible that the student may be offered a remedial experience based upon completion of a remedial plan, which would be developed by the program faculty on an individualized basis. It is also possible that given the situation of what occurred in the facility, that a student may not be offered a remedial experience. In this situation the student would receive an “F” for the clinical education course and may be able to return via re-application , according to the application requirements at that time.

If it is identified that a student is not likely to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes for a clinic-based learning experience within the scheduled time frame, as a result of extenuating circumstances outside of the student’s/program’s control, the ACCE reserves the option of allowing the experience to continue for up to 5 additional days. This may result in a delay of graduation. This option, on a case by case basis, can occur if: 1) there is reasonable expectation that such an extension would provide the student with the learning opportunities needed to meet the learning outcomes, and 2) the facility agrees to and can accommodate this request.

### **Dismissal following clinical removal**

A student who is determined by the faculty to be **have violated standards of practice, violates professional standards of conduct, or has made egregious safety errors** will be removed from the clinical setting immediately.

Situations that may result in faculty-initiated removal and possible dismissal from the program for clinical education related coursework includes:

- Students who do not maintain patient confidentiality (they will also be subject to appropriate disciplinary and/or legal action).
- Students who are asked to leave the clinic professional conduct violations.

Violation of the BOR student code of conduct deem a student ineligible for re-entry.

## **Clinical Site Information**

### **Criteria for Clinical Sites**

The following are criteria utilized in the selection of clinical education sites.  
The clinical education site will:

1. Be licensed and/or accredited as applicable
2. Function within legal and ethical standards
3. Assign a SCCE who is responsible for coordinating clinical education of students
4. Provide a safe and nurturing environment for student learning

5. Promote staff participation in clinical education activities
6. Provide learning experiences for students appropriate to meet the expectations of each individual internship
7. Provide feedback to NVCC PTA Program regarding academic preparation of students, including comments on the curriculum
8. Provide orientation for students, including location of manuals regarding policies and procedures regarding patients' rights, safety procedures, etc.
9. Expose students to non-patient care activities such as: quality improvement, billing/coding/reimbursement considerations, and other health care disciplines; as appropriate
10. Provide information necessary for students to be aware of for their clinical, such as: facility specific documents or policies/procedures for student to attend internship, parking, or cafeteria information

## **Roles of Clinical Education Personnel**

### **Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE):**

The ACCE is a full-time NVCC employee in the PTA program responsible for the coordination of the clinical education component of the program. The ACCE responsibilities include:

1. Identify potential clinical education sites
2. Communicate with clinical education sites to initiate obtaining clinical contracts
3. Communicate with clinical education sites to ensure student placements for each individual clinical experience
4. Provide orientation to clinical instructors (CIs) and/or site coordinators of clinical education (SCCE) to NVCC PTA Program, clinical experience dates with expectations to be achieved for each specific clinical experience, grading assessment tool, clinical education policies and procedures, clinical education rights and privileges, and other clinical education information
5. Obtain information through communications with CI and/or SCCE to place students at sites that are safe and conducive to meeting the objectives of the clinical experience
6. Informing clinical education site of program changes in policy and procedures related to clinical education
7. Assigning students to clinical sites and ensuring an active contract exists prior to any student placement
8. Communicating with clinical education faculty and/or PTA student during the clinical experience as appropriate and as indicated, through phone calls and/or on-site visits
9. Maintaining clinical education records
10. Evaluating overall effectiveness of the clinical education component of the program and reporting findings to the program director
11. Assist in the professional development of the clinical education faculty of the program as indicated by areas self-identified by the CI/SCCE, from assessments from the clinical experience, and as noted during communications with the CI/SCCE/SPTA during clinical experiences including the mid-term assessment

## **Site Coordinator of Clinical Education (SCCE):**

The SCCE is an individual assigned by the facility responsible for assignment of students to appropriate and qualified clinical instructor(s) and coordinating of clinical education activities.

The SCCE responsibilities include:

1. Acting as a liaison between the college, ACCE, and the clinical site
2. Assuring an active contract exists between the facility and college
3. Assure student is in a safe environment conducive to learning
4. Assure confidentiality regarding NVCC PTA students, by assuring files regarding students are in a secure and confidential location
5. Assigning the student to a qualified CI
6. Assisting in the student's schedule as appropriate with CI input
7. Serving as a resource and/or mediator for student/CI for student progression during clinical experience and/or conflict resolution
8. Insuring that students are provided appropriate supervision by the CIs to provide education necessary for student progression and insuring students are not used in lieu of regular employees
9. Provide feedback to the ACCE regarding the effectiveness of NVCC clinical education program
10. Provide ACCE with updates in the field and any other pertinent information that could be utilized for consideration for the curriculum and PTA Program at NVCC
11. Provide current information about the clinical site and clinical education faculty, including but not limited to the Clinical Site Information Form (CSIF)
12. The SCCE's rights and privileges are the same as the Clinical Instructor (CI). Please see below.

## **Clinical Instructor (CI):**

Clinical Instructors are considered clinical education faculty of the NVCC PTA Program. Clinical instructors are responsible for the direction and supervision of the physical therapist assistant student.

## **Requirements**

Criteria for the clinical instructors in the NVCC PTA Program:

1. A graduate of an accredited PT or PTA program
2. Licensed, or otherwise regulated, in the state in which they practice
3. Have a minimum of one year of clinical experience in the clinical area in which they will be supervising a student
4. Adhere to legal and ethical standards
5. Agree to take on the responsibilities of a CI upon their own will and interest in assisting students in their education
6. Familiarize themselves with NVCC PTA program, curriculum, clinical experience expectations

- for each clinical experience, and additional information provided by NVCC
7. Ability to demonstrate good oral and written communication skills
  8. Ability to provide supportive, professional relationship with students, SCCE, and ACCE
  9. Ability to plan learning activities to meet each individual student needs according to the experience expectations, including assisting in development of weekly goals towards the experience expectations
  10. Ability to provide detailed objective formative and summative evaluations of student performance, including time to review findings of evaluations with student and ACCE, as well as thorough documentation of such in the grading assessment tool provided
  11. Ability to assess when there is a concern with student transition or progression in the clinic and is proactive in communicating this to the SCCE and/or ACCE; with documentation of such
  12. Serve as a positive rolemodel for lifelong learning, ethical and legal practice, maintaining competence in contemporary practice, and professional behaviors
  13. Complete self-assessment of their role as a clinical instructor, attempt to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement, seek further education in strengthening their role as a clinical instructor, as part of the clinical education faculty of NVCC

## **Compensation**

Clinical education faculty, SCCEs or CIs, are voluntary roles and receive no compensation in the form of salary or benefits from NVCC.

## **Responsibilities**

Clinical instructors have the responsibility to:

1. Provide orientation for the student to the clinical site, including but not limited to: layout of facility and equipment, facility staff, policies and procedures of facility relevant for student knowledge
2. Educate the student in regards to policies and procedures specific to student clinical education at your facility.
3. Discuss with the student the dynamics of how you, as the CI, will provide supervision of the student's interactions/treatment of patients, feedback on the student's performance, and your expectations on how the student's performance will be progressed throughout the experience.
4. Instruct the student on documentation and billing procedures at the facility
5. Supervise treatment activities provided by the student to ensure patient treatments are efficient and effective, while maintaining patient safety at all times
6. Provide further education to students in your area of expertise to encourage further development of their knowledge base, and by doing so, will promote lifelong learning
7. Coordinate learning activities/experiences for the student that will incorporate meeting individual student goals, objectives of the experience (see syllabi) and expectations for successful completion of the experience
8. Become familiar with the evaluation tool(s) used by the school for the evaluation of the students which may include completing an online training module for the APTA PTA CPI

Assessment Tool.

9. Set time within schedule for student assessment, including two-week phone call and/or email communication from ACCE, midterm assessment with ACCE involvement either by phone or onsite (will be scheduled in advance), midterm and final assessment of student which should be reviewed with student and signed by both yourself and the student.
10. Maintain written records and performance evaluations on the student and upon completion, send reports to the ACCE.
11. Maintain confidentiality regarding NVCC PTA students, including having files regarding students in a secure and confidential location
12. Assist in assuring student is in a safe environment conducive to learning
13. Provide feedback to the ACCE regarding the effectiveness of the clinical education program (survey provided), by assisting in the evaluation of the clinical education program.
14. Serve as role model for students.

## **Rights**

Clinical Instructors have the right to:

1. Be kept informed of any substantive NVCC PTA program changes
2. Request a conference with ACCE and/or program director as you feel appropriate
3. Concerns related to clinical education or didactic/laboratory courses within the curriculum can be voiced to the ACCE and/or the program director
4. Be aware of the ability to file a complaint involving the PTA program (see complaint process form under Program Resources tab - [www.nv.edu/pta](http://www.nv.edu/pta)).

## **Privileges**

Clinical instructor privileges include:

1. Recognition as NVCC PTA program clinical education faculty
2. Attend PTA program college events such as lectures and workshops as appropriate, pinning ceremony, etc.
3. Access to NVCC library resources and request for literature search; please contact ACCE at 203-596-2156 for more information.

## **Clinical Instructor Orientation**

All clinical instructors will be oriented to the NVCC's PTA Program. Every time a clinician serves as a CI for one of our students, the ACCE will orient/re-orient the clinician to the specific clinical experience.

Prior to this orientation, clinical education documentation/information will be mailed and/or emailed to the SCCE and/or the CI. Prior access to vital documents, will allow the clinical education faculty time to review, prior to orientation with the ACCE.

Orientation/re-orientation may include, but is not limited to the following:

1. NVCC's PTA Program mission and goals
2. NVCC's PTA curriculum
3. Overview of NVCC's clinical education program
4. Learning outcomes and expectations for the specific clinical education experience
5. Utilization of the Clinical Performance Instrument (CPI) or current assessment tool.
6. Grading for clinical education experiences
7. Role of the ACCE/SCCE/CI in clinical education
8. NVCC Clinical Education Policies
9. Clarification of questions in regards to the role of the PTA
10. Clarification of questions regarding the CT State Practice Act
11. Clarification of APTA Documents
12. Professional Development of the CI as needed



# APPENDICES

- a. NVCC PTA Student Code of Conduct
- b. PTA Program Complaint Form
- c. Standards of Ethical Conduct for the PTA
- d. Professionalism in PT: Core Values
- e. Values-Based Behaviors for the PTA

# NVCC PTA Student Code of Conduct

## Accountability

- Understand and abide by program policies and expectations outlined in the *PTA Program Policy & Procedure Student Handbook*. When unsure, refer first to the *Student Handbook* and then clarify with classmates and/or faculty.
- Act in a manner consistent with the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant.
- Act in a manner consistent with the college and division policy on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism.
- Accept responsibility for behavior that negatively impacts academic/clinical performance or interactions with classmates, faculty, patients, families and/or other health care providers.
- Change behavior in response to feedback and understanding the consequences (positive and negative) of the physical therapist assistant students' actions.

## Altruism

- Place the patient's/client's needs above the physical therapist assistant students' self interests.
- Target learning activities and practice to reach a threshold of safe and competent performance of skills with patients, above the minimum passing score.
- Dedicate the necessary time, studying and practice to achieve a level of knowledge necessary to safely and competently provide and progress physical therapy interventions with patients.

## Compassion and Caring

- Exhibit compassion, caring, and empathy in working with classmates, patients and clients.
- Practice in a manner that focuses on identifying, recognizing and responding to patient (or lab partner) needs and wellbeing.

## Cultural Competence

- Identify, respect, and act with consideration for the patient's/client's differences, values, preferences, and expressed needs in all physical therapy activities.

## Duty

- Demonstrate behaviors, conduct, actions, attitudes, and values consistent with the roles, responsibilities, and tasks of the physical therapist assistant.
- Utilize all interactions with faculty, staff and other classmates as an opportunity to demonstrate respectful and professional communication and behaviors.
- Support and participate in organizations and efforts that promote physical therapy (CPTA, APTA).

## Integrity

- Demonstrate integrity in all interactions with patients/clients, family members, caregivers, supervising physical therapists, coworkers, other health care providers, students, other consumers, employers and payers.

## Social Responsibility

- Value and support the physical therapy profession in society.
- Educate family members and friends about physical therapy and advocate for the profession.
- Participate in club, community, social and/or environmental activities.

Modified from: Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values and the Normative Model of Physical Therapist Assistant Education

**Naugatuck Valley Community College  
PTA Program**

**Complaint Form**

Name of person filing complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one of the following:

NVCC employee  student  employer  
 Clinical Site  Community College employee  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Complaint:

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution:

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up needed and/or recommended as applicable):

# Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant

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

## Preamble

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

No document that delineates ethical standards can address every situation. Physical therapist assistants are encouraged to seek additional advice or consultation in instances where the guidance of the Standards of Ethical Conduct may not be definitive.

## 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 therapy 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/client's best interest in all practice settings.

3B. Physical therapist assistants shall be guided by information about best practice regarding physical therapy interventions.

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

3D. Physical therapist assistants shall not engage in conflicts of interest that interfere with making sound decisions.

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

*Standard #4:* Physical therapist assistants shall demonstrate integrity in their relationships with patients/ clients, families, colleagues, students, 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/clients, students, supervisees, research participants, or employees).

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

4D. Physical therapist assistants shall report suspected cases of abuse involving children or vulnerable adults to the supervising physical therapist and the appropriate authority, subject to law.

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

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

*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/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/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/clients.

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

7E. Physical therapist assistants shall refrain from employment arrangements, or other arrangements, that prevent physical therapist assistants from fulfilling ethical obligations to patients/clients.

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

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

8B. Physical therapist assistants shall advocate for people with impairments, activity limitations, participation restrictions, and disabilities in order to promote their participation in community and society.

8C. Physical therapist assistants shall be responsible stewards of health care resources by collaborating with physical therapists in order to avoid overutilization or underutilization of physical therapy services.

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

# Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values

The following behavioral expectations represent elements of professionalism that are expected of entry-level physical therapist assistants, as defined by the American Physical Therapy Association and as described in the *Normative Model of Physical Therapist Assistant Education: Version 2007*, p. 11-12. The PTA faculty expects PTA students to incorporate these behaviors and demonstrate progress in these domains in the classroom, laboratory and in the clinic.

## Accountability

- Adhere to federal and state legal practice standards and institutional regulations related patient/client and fiscal management.
- Act in a manner consistent with the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant and Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant.
- Change behavior in response to understanding the consequences (positive and negative) of the physical therapist assistants' actions.

## Altruism

- Place patient's/client's needs above the physical therapist assistant's self-interests.

## Compassion and Caring

- Exhibit compassion, caring, and empathy in providing services to patients/clients.
- Promote active involvement of the patient in his/her own care.

## Cultural Competence

- Identify, respect, and act with consideration for the patient's/client's differences, values, preferences, and expressed needs in all physical therapy activities.

## Duty

- Demonstrate behaviors, conduct, actions, attitudes, and values consistent with the roles, responsibilities, and tasks of the physical therapist assistant.
- Support and participate in organizations and efforts that promote physical therapy.

## Integrity

- Demonstrate integrity in all interactions with patients/clients, family members, caregivers, supervising physical therapists, coworkers, other health care providers, students, other consumers, employers and payers.

## Social Responsibility

- Value and support the physical therapy profession in society.
- Demonstrate citizenship

## Value-Based Behaviors for the Physical Therapist Assistant BOD P01-11-02-02 [Position]

### Introduction

In 2000, the House of Delegates adopted Vision 2020<sup>1</sup> and the Strategic Plan for Transitioning to a Doctoring Profession, citing professionalism as one of 6 key elements of this vision. As a follow-up, the document Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values was developed to define and describe the concept of professionalism by stating what behaviors a graduate of a physical therapist program should demonstrate. In 2003 the APTA Board of Directors adopted Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values<sup>2</sup> as a core document on professionalism in physical therapist practice, education, and research.

In June 2009, the House of Delegates revised the core ethics documents for the profession, including Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA).<sup>3</sup> This document originally included references to “core values,” which the House related to Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values.<sup>2</sup> The APTA Board of Directors determined that Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values was designed for and applicable to physical therapists (PTs), and so it charged the Advisory Panel of Physical Therapist Assistants to draft a new document describing the core values of the PTA, to be titled Value-Based Behaviors for the Physical Therapist Assistant.

The advisory panel met in September 2009 to begin drafting Value-Based Behaviors for the Physical Therapist Assistant. Their work was guided by numerous APTA documents, including Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values,<sup>2</sup> *A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Assistant Education: Version 2007*,<sup>4</sup> the PTA Clinical Performance Instrument: Version 2009,<sup>5</sup> Minimum Required Skills of Physical Therapist Assistant Graduates at Entry-Level,<sup>6</sup> the newly adopted ethics documents,<sup>3,7</sup> the problem solving algorithm utilized by ptas in patient/client intervention,<sup>8</sup> and applicable APTA positions and policies.

The advisory panel gleaned 8 value-based behaviors from existing APTA documents and reflection on the contemporary work of the PTA. These value-based behaviors are listed below in alphabetical order with no preference or ranking given. They are considered to be of sufficient breadth and depth to incorporate the many values and attributes that PTAs demonstrate. The panel made every effort to state each value and its accompanying definition and indicators so that it would resonate with and be understandable to PTAs.

The table that follows provides definitions and sample indicators (not exhaustive) that describe the actions the PTA would perform to express the 8 value-based behaviors:

1. Altruism
2. Caring and Compassion
3. Continuing Competence
4. Duty
5. Integrity
6. PT/PTA Collaboration
7. Responsibility
8. Social Responsibility

For each value-based behavior listed, a definition is provided with sample indicators (not exhaustive) that describe what one would see if the physical therapist assistant were demonstrating that value-based behavior in his or her daily work.



Values-based Behavior With Definition	Sample Indicators
<p><b>Altruism</b></p> <p>Altruism is the primary regard for or devotion to the interests of the patient/client, assuming responsibility of placing the needs of the patient/client ahead of the PTA's self interest.</p> <p><b>Caring and Compassion</b></p> <p>Compassion is the desire to identify with or sense something of another's experience; a precursor of caring.</p> <p>Caring is the concern, empathy, and consideration for the needs and values of others.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Providing patient/client-centered interventions.</li> <li>2. Readily offering to assist the physical therapist in providing patient/client interventions.</li> <li>3. Generously providing the necessary time and effort to meet patient/client needs.</li> <li>4. Placing the patient/client's needs ahead of one's own, as evidenced by willingness to alter one's schedule, delay other projects or tasks, etc.</li> <li>5. Contributing, as able, to the provision of physical therapy services to underserved and underrepresented populations.</li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Actively listening to the patient/client and considering the patient/client's needs and preferences.</li> <li>2. Exhibiting compassion, caring, and empathy in providing services to patients/clients.</li> <li>3. Demonstrating respect for others and considering others as unique and of value.</li> <li>4. Considering social, emotional, cultural, psychological, environmental, and economic influences on the patient/client (eg, learning styles, language abilities, cognitive abilities) and adapting approach accordingly.</li> <li>5. Recognizing and refraining from acting on one's social, cultural, gender, and sexual biases; ie, demonstrates a nonjudgmental attitude.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Continuing Competence</b></p> <p>Continuing competence is the lifelong process of maintaining and documenting competence through ongoing self-assessment, development, and implementation of a personal learning plan, and subsequent reassessment.<sup>9</sup></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying strengths and limitations in knowledge, skills, and behaviors through self-assessment and feedback from physical therapists and others, and developing and implementing strategies to address the limitations.</li> <li>2. Maintaining continuing competence using a variety of lifelong learning strategies (eg, continuing education, reflective journals, journal clubs, working with a mentor).</li> <li>3. Seeking further education in the use and delivery of interventions based on new evidence as it becomes available.</li> <li>4. Developing and implementing a career advancement plan based on interests, opportunities, and career aspirations.</li> </ol>

<p><b>Duty</b></p> <p>Duty is the commitment to meeting one’s obligations to provide effective physical therapy services to individual patients/clients, to serve the profession, and to positively influence the health of society.</p> <p><b>Integrity</b></p> <p>Integrity is the steadfast adherence to high ethical principles or standards; truthfulness, fairness, doing what you say you will do, and “speaking forth” about why you do what you do.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrating behaviors, conduct, actions, attitudes, and values consistent with the roles, responsibilities, and tasks of the PTA.</li> <li>2. Facilitating each patient/client’s achievement of goals for function, health, and wellness, as directed in the plan of care.</li> <li>3. Preserving the safety, security, and confidentiality of individuals in all patient/client contexts.</li> <li>4. Participating in quality assurance/quality improvement activities in physical therapy care.</li> <li>5. Promoting the profession of physical therapy.</li> <li>6. Providing student instruction and mentoring other PTAs.</li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adhering to applicable laws regarding scope of work, payment policies and guidelines, institutional policies and procedures, and APTA policies, positions, and guidelines to ensure optimal patient/client care and fiscal management.</li> <li>2. Adhering to the highest standards of the profession for the PTA, including the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant,<sup>3</sup> Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant, state practice acts, and payment requirements.</li> <li>3. Demonstrating the ideals of the value-based behaviors of the PTA.</li> <li>4. Demonstrating honesty and trustworthiness in all interactions and relationships.</li> <li>5. Choosing employment situations that are congruent with ethical principles and work standards.</li> <li>6. Identifying ethical and legal concerns and initiating actions to address the concern, when appropriate.</li> </ol>
<p><b>PT/PTA Collaboration</b></p> <p>The PT/PTA team works together, within each partner’s respective role, to achieve optimal patient/client care and to enhance the overall delivery of physical therapy services.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Educating the PT as needed about the roles, responsibilities, and appropriate utilization of the PTA in the PT/PTA team using available resources (eg, state licensure/practice rules and regulations, PTA clinical problem-solving algorithm,<sup>8</sup> PTA direction and supervision algorithms,<sup>10</sup> Minimum Required Skills of Physical Therapist Assistant Graduates at Entry-Level<sup>6</sup>).</li> <li>2. Promoting a positive working relationship within the PT/PTA team.</li> <li>3. Demonstrating respect for the roles and contributions of both the PT and PTA in achieving optimal patient/client care, including the PT’s responsibility for the PTA’s performance in patient/client interventions.</li> <li>4. Seeking out opportunities to collaborate with the PT to improve outcomes in patient/client care.</li> <li>5. Working with the PT in educating consumers and other health care providers about physical therapy.</li> </ol>

### **Responsibility**

Responsibility is the active acceptance of the roles, obligations, and actions of the PTA, including behaviors that positively influence patient/client outcomes, the profession, and the health needs of society.

1. Identifying strengths and limitations in knowledge and skill, and working within limitations of personal ability.
2. Completing patient/client care and other tasks in a timely and efficient manner.
3. Identifying, acknowledging, and accepting responsibility for actions and, when errors occur, following error reporting processes.
4. Communicating in a timely manner with others (eg, PTs, patients/clients, and others).

### **Social Responsibility**

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

1. Advocating for patient/client needs in the clinical setting.
2. Demonstrating behaviors that positively represent the profession to the public.
3. Promoting a healthy lifestyle, wellness, and injury prevention strategies in the community.
4. Serving the profession and the community, including activities occurring in conjunction with work or outside of work (eg, community health fairs, National Physical Therapy Month events, APTA service).
5. Advocating for changes in laws, regulations, standards, and guidelines that positively affect physical therapy and patient/client services.

## References

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### Explanation of Reference Numbers:

BOD P00-00-00-00 stands for Board of Directors/month/year/page/vote in the Board of Directors Minutes; the "P" indicates that it is a position (see below). For example, BOD P11-97-06-18 means that this position can be found in the November 1997 Board of Directors minutes on Page 6 and that it was Vote 18.

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