

**DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL THERAPY**  
**PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

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## Section 1

### **Policy on Professional Behavior**

The faculty of the Duquesne University Department of Physical Therapy expect students accepted into the professional phase of the program to behave in accordance with standards of the profession. Using the American Physical Therapy Association documents *Generic Abilities*<sup>1</sup>, *Core Values in Professionalism*<sup>2</sup>, and the *Code of Ethics and Guide for Professional Conduct*<sup>3</sup>, the department has determined six *essential behaviors* required for successful completion of the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree. These behaviors are: integrity, respect, responsibility, competence, maturity, and communication. A detailed description of these behaviors is included in the *Description of Professional Behaviors* section of this document.

Our goal is to foster students' progress in their professional development as they enter and proceed through the professional phase of the curriculum and move on to clinical practice. We expect that all students will be successful in all parts of their education, including academic, behavioral, and clinical. Just as there are standards and protocols established for students who require remediation for academic issues, we have established a similar process for professional behavior, as represented in this document. The following procedure outlines the identification of a professional behavior issue, a plan for remediation, and the process leading to further action.

#### Identification of Professional Behavior Issue

Standards for professional behavior are described in the *Description of Professional Behaviors* section of this document. Students are expected to behave according to these standards during academic and clinical learning experiences. If an academic or clinical faculty member identifies and documents a serious problem with a student's professional behavior or inability to maintain a standard within the realm of acceptable professional behavior, the following protocol will be followed:

1. The faculty member will meet with the student to identify the behavior and counsel the student to demonstrate behavior consistent with the professional standard.
2. If the faculty determines that the student has a recurrence of an unprofessional behavior prior to the completion of their professional program, both the student and faculty member will meet with the *Professional Behavior Committee* (consisting of the program director, 2 physical therapy faculty members, and 1 Rangos School of Health Science faculty member who does not teach in the physical therapy program) to determine a remediation plan and contract for the student.

3. The remediation plan and contract will include the following items:
  - A description of the specific behaviors that the student is expected to demonstrate.
  - The specific tasks that the student is expected to accomplish.
  - Time frames related to accomplishing the tasks and behaviors.
  - Repercussions for unsuccessful remediation or inability to meet the terms of the contract.
  - Who will monitor the terms of the terms of the contract.
  - How the terms of the contract will be monitored.
4. The committee will meet again, at a time stated in the contract, to determine if the student has successfully completed the remediation plan and has met the terms of the contract.
5. The following are the repercussions resulting from unprofessional behavior.
  - a. Immediate dismissal: In addition to felony conviction or pleading no contest for behaviors that would prohibit the granting of a physical therapy license other behaviors may be determined to be non-remediable.
  - b. Probation: Behaviors that the committee has determined are remediable. The terms of the probation and remediation will be outlined in the contract.
  - c. Dismissal: Behaviors that the committee has determined are remediable; however, the student has been unable or unwilling to remediate, as defined in the remediation plan and contract.

## Section 2

### Description of Professional Behaviors

The American Physical Therapy Association has developed *Generic Abilities*, *Core Values in Professionalism* and the *Code of Ethics and Guide for Professional Conduct* documents that define specific abilities and behaviors that a graduate of a Doctor of Physical Therapy program should demonstrate. The core values include: accountability, altruism, compassion, caring, excellence, integrity, professional duty, and social responsibility. The generic abilities include: commitment to learning, interpersonal skills, communication skills, effective use of time and resources, use of constructive feedback, problem solving, professionalism, responsibility, critical thinking, and stress management. The following represents six *essential behaviors* that integrate items from these documents with a focus on the academic environment.

1. Integrity: Represents one's own and others' abilities honestly; is truthful and sincere; accepts responsibility for one's actions; able to reflect on one's personal reactions to encounters with others.
2. Respect: Adheres to confidentiality and professional boundaries; works toward conflict resolution in a collegial way, demonstrates consideration for the opinions and values of others; shows regard for diversity.
3. Responsibility: Present and punctual for all learning experiences; able to cope with challenges, conflicts, and uncertainty; recognize one's limits and seeks help; recognizes the needs of others and responds appropriately; demonstrates willingness to discuss and confront problematic behavior of self and others.
4. Competence: Takes responsibility for one's own learning; participates equally and collegially in groups; demonstrates self-reflection and accurate self-assessment; able to identify personal barriers to learning; works with faculty to manage learning difficulties.
5. Maturity: Demonstrates emotional stability; appropriately confident yet humble; demonstrates appropriate professional dress, demeanor and language; accepts constructive criticism and applies it in a useful way; inspires confidence in others; displays appropriate emotions; is not hostile, disruptive confrontational, aggressive or isolated; does not engage in behavior that endangers or threatens self or others.
6. Communication: Able to communicate effectively with others; demonstrates courteous and respectful communication, even in difficult situations; uses active listening; communicates with empathy and compassion.

Section 3

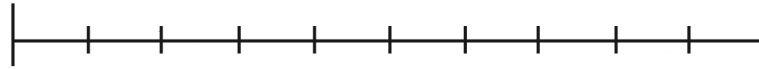
**Professional Behavior Continuum**

The *Professional Behavior Continuum* is a self-reflective tool for students to use to evaluate their professional behavior during their progression through the professional phase of the physical therapy program. Students are encouraged to meet with their advisors to review their progress and to seek guidance as needed.

1. Integrity:

Lacks honesty  
Lacks personal responsibility  
Lacks self-reflection

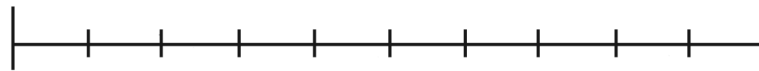
Always honest  
Accepts responsibility for actions  
Exceptional self-reflection



2. Respect:

Lacks respect for confidentiality/  
professional boundaries  
Does not resolve conflict in respectful/collegial way  
Does not respect others' opinions/ values  
Does not respect diversity

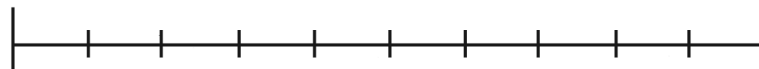
Respects confidentiality/  
professional boundaries  
Resolves conflict in respectful/collegial way  
Respects others' opinions/ values  
Respects diversity



3. Responsibility

Is not present/ punctual for learning  
Does not cope w/ challenge/ conflict/ uncertainty  
Does not recognize limits/ seek help  
Does not recognize others' needs  
Does not confront problematic behavior

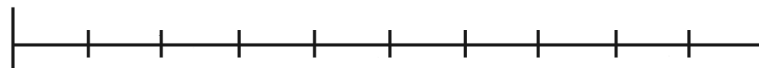
Present/ punctual for learning  
Copes w/ challenge/ conflict/ uncertainty  
Recognizes limits and seeks help  
Recognizes/ responds to others' needs  
Confronts problematic behavior



4. Competence

Does not take responsibility for learning  
Lacks self-reflection  
Unequal/ non-collegial participation  
Does not identify learning barriers  
Does not manage learning difficulties

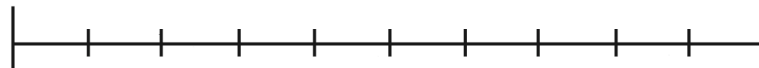
Takes responsibility for learning  
Self-reflective  
Equal/ collegial participation  
Identifies learning barriers  
Manages learning difficulties



5. Maturity

Lacks emotional stability  
Lacks confidence/ humility  
Lacks professional dress/ language  
Does not use constructive criticism  
Inappropriate behavior (hostile, aggressive...)

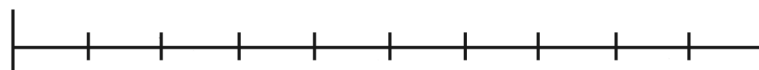
Demonstrates emotional stability  
Confident and humble  
Professional dress/language  
Excellent use of constructive criticism  
Appropriate behavior



6. Communication

Ineffective communication w/ others  
Lacks respect/ courteousness  
Lacks empathy/ compassion  
Lacks active listening skills

Communicates effectively w/ others  
Respectful/ courteous communication  
Communicates w/ empathy/ compassion  
Uses active listening skills



## Section 4

### **Behavioral Expectations During Learning Activities**

Students enrolled in the Duquesne University Doctor of Physical Therapy program are expected to demonstrate professional behavior as determined by the American Physical Therapy Association and the Department of Physical Therapy of Duquesne University. Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate professional behavior during all learning activities, including classroom, laboratory, experiential, group, community and clinical experiences. These professional behaviors include integrity, respect, responsibility, competence, maturity, and communication.

The following behaviors are expected in the academic setting.

1. Attend and participate in all scheduled learning activities at the scheduled times. Students who are unable to attend class due to personal illness or emergency are required to notify the course faculty prior to the scheduled class time. Respect your faculty and your classmates; be on time.
2. Optimal use of time during learning experiences. Students are expected to complete readings and assignments according to assigned dates/times in order to be prepared for learning experiences. Active participation is expected and students are to engage in fair and collegial group activities.
3. Recognize learning problems and seek faculty guidance. Students are expected to recognize learning difficulties and ask the course faculty for guidance. Students should develop a plan of learning that may include additional learning strategies, tutorial assistance, and use of University and external resources.
4. Integrity. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form and under any circumstance. Issues of academic improprieties will be addressed according to the guidelines outlined in the RSHS Student Handbook.
5. Professional Attire. Students are expected to portray the appearance of a responsible health care professional. Classroom guidelines include that clothing must be worn that does not expose the abdomen, chest, or buttocks. Hats and clothing with unprofessional wording or pictures are prohibited. In the laboratory portion of some courses, students will be required to wear clothing that permits the exposure of portions of the body as appropriate for the practice of clinical skills. Professional dress is required for activities that include guest speakers or patients and learning activities external to the University. Professional dress includes: (men) dress pants and shirt, dress shoes; (women) dress pants or skirts, tailored tops, dress shoes. Tattoos and body piercings must be concealed. Facial and tongue piercings must be removed. Long hair must be tied back for learning experiences that involve patients. Duquesne University Student Physical Therapist name tags are required for all external learning experiences.

Section 5

**Professional Behavior Committee**

The Professional Behavior Committee consists of the Department Chairperson, two physical therapy faculty members, and one Rangos School of Health Science faculty member who does not teach in the physical therapy program.

Current Members:

David L. Somers, Ph.D., PT

Department Chairperson

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PT Faculty Member

\_\_\_\_\_

PT Faculty Member

\_\_\_\_\_

RSHS Faculty Member

Section 6

**APTA Supporting Documentation**

APTA Generic Abilities

Generic abilities are attributes, characteristics or behaviors that are not explicitly part of the profession’s core knowledge and technical skills but are required for success in the physical therapy profession. Ten generic abilities were identified through a study conducted at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

<u>Generic Ability</u>	<u>Definition</u>
1. Commitment to Learning	The ability to self-assess, self-correct, and self-direct; to identify needs and sources of learning; and to continually seek new knowledge and understanding.
2. Interpersonal Skills	The ability to interact effectively with patients, families, colleagues, other health care professionals, and the community; deal effectively with cultural and ethnic diversity.
3. Communication Skills	The ability to communicate effectively (speaking, body language, reading, writing, listening) for varied audiences and purposes.
4. Effective Use of Time and Resources	The ability to obtain the maximum benefit from a minimum investment of time and resources.
5. Use of Constructive Feedback	The ability to identify sources of and seek feedback; and, to effectively use and provide feedback for improving personal interaction.
6. Problem-Solving	The ability to recognize and define problems, analyze data, develop and implement solutions, and evaluate outcomes.
7. Professionalism	The ability to exhibit appropriate professional conduct and to represent the profession effectively.
8. Responsibility	The ability to fulfill commitments and to be accountable for actions and outcomes.

9. Critical Thinking

The ability to question logically; to identify, generate, and evaluate elements of logical argument; to recognize and differentiate facts, illusions, assumptions and hidden assumptions; and to distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant.

10. Stress management

The ability to identify sources of stress and to develop effective and positive coping mechanisms.

## APTA Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) House of Delegates adopted *Vision 2020 and the Strategic Plan for Transitioning to a Doctoring Profession* (RC 37-01). The plan included the following six elements.

- Autonomous Practice
- Direct Access
- Doctor of Physical Therapy
- Evidence-Based Practice
- Practitioner of Choice
- Professionalism

The plan describes how these elements relate to and interface with the vision of a doctoring profession. To assist the transition to a doctoring profession, one of the initiatives was to define and describe the concept of professionalism by explicitly articulating what the graduate of a physical therapy program should demonstrate with respect to professionalism.

*Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values* was adopted by the APTA Board of Directors as a core document on professionalism in physical therapy practice, education, and research. (V-10; 2003)

Seven core values were identified that further defined the critical elements that comprise professionalism. They are stated as follows.

- Accountability
- Altruism
- Compassion/ Caring
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Professional Duty
- Social Responsibility

The APTA provides a working definition of each core value as follows.

### Core Value

### Definition

#### 1. Accountability

Accountability is active acceptance of the responsibility for the diverse roles, obligations, and actions of the physical therapist including self-regulation and other behaviors that positively influence patient outcomes, the profession and the health needs of society.

2. Altruism  
Altruism is the primary regard for or devotion to the interest of patients, thus assuming the fiduciary responsibility of placing the needs of the patient ahead of the physical therapist's self interest.
3. Compassion/ Caring  
Compassion is the desire to identify with or sense something of another's experience; a precursor of caring.  
  
Caring is the concern, empathy, and consideration for the needs and values of others.
4. Excellence  
Excellence is physical therapy practice that consistently uses current knowledge and theory while understanding personal limits, integrates judgment and the patient perspective, embraces advancement, challenges mediocrity, and works toward development of new knowledge.
5. Integrity  
Integrity is the possession of and steadfast adherence to high ethical principles of professional standards.
6. Professional Duty  
Professional duty is the commitment to meeting one's obligations to provide effective physical therapy services to individual patients, to serve the profession, and to positively influence the health of society.
7. Social Responsibility  
Social responsibility is the promotion of a mutual trust between the profession and the societal needs for health and wellness.

## APTA Code of Ethics

This Code of Ethics of the American Physical Therapy Association sets forth principles for the ethical practice of physical therapy. All physical therapists are responsible for maintaining and promoting ethical practice. To this end, the physical therapist shall act in the best interest of the patient. This Code of Ethics shall be binding on all physical therapists.

- Principle 1 A physical therapist shall respect the rights and dignity of all individuals and shall provide compassionate care.
- Principle 2 A physical therapist shall act in a trustworthy manner towards patients, and in all other aspects of physical therapy practice.
- Principle 3 A physical therapist shall comply with laws and regulations governing physical therapy and shall strive to effect changes that benefit patients.
- Principle 4 A physical therapist shall exercise sound professional judgment.
- Principle 5 A physical therapist shall achieve and maintain professional competence.
- Principle 6 A physical therapist shall maintain and promote high standards for physical therapy practice, education and research.
- Principle 7 A physical therapist shall seek only remuneration as is deserved and reasonable for physical therapy services.
- Principle 8 A physical therapist shall provide and make available accurate and relevant information to patients about their care and to the public about physical therapy services.
- Principle 9 A physical therapist shall protect the public and the profession from unethical, incompetent and illegal acts.
- Principle 10 A physical therapist shall endeavor to address the health needs of society.
- Principle 11 A physical therapist shall respect the rights, knowledge and skills of colleagues and other health care professionals.

Section 7

**Signature Page**

This confirms that I have read and fully understand the Duquesne University Department of Physical Therapy *Professional Behavior* document. I have been given the opportunity to discuss this document with my faculty advisor in the physical therapy department.

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup> May W. *Generic Abilities*. Journal of Physical Therapy Education; 9(1) 1995.

<sup>2</sup> American Physical Therapy Association, Board of Directors. *Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values*, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> American Physical Therapy Association, Ethics and Judicial Committee: 1981, 2002.