



# UA Cossatot

## Physical Therapist Assistant Program

**Student Handbook**

**2025-2026**

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## **Welcome to UAC Physical Therapist Assistant Program**

Welcome to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at UA Cossatot. You are embarking on a wonderful and rewarding career. Our mission is to prepare highly competent entry-level physical therapist assistant practitioners who can serve a diverse community and improve the quality of life with an unwavering commitment to evidence-based contemporary practice, professional and ethical behavior, and above all, compassionate care as evidenced by life-long learning through continued education.

We have included in this manual the information you need to get started and to carry you through the Program. This information will help you understand the PTA Program, the PTA curriculum, and the policies that relate to them.

The Program has a dedicated staff of professionals who are excited to share their knowledge and expertise with you. We encourage you to contact your faculty instructors, the Director of Clinical Education (DCE), or the Program Director (PD) if questions arise.

## **Accreditation Status**

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at UA Cossatot is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100 Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085; telephone: 703-706-3245; email: [accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org); website: <http://www.capteonline.org>. If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call 870-584-1497 or email [jsanderson@cccua.edu](mailto:jsanderson@cccua.edu).

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program Director is responsible for maintaining compliance with accreditation policies and procedures. (Standard 3H)

## **Non-Discrimination**

UA Cossatot and the Program are committed to providing an environment that emphasizes the dignity and worth of every member of its community and that is free from harassment and discrimination based upon race, color, religion, national origin, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, age, pregnancy, physical or mental disability or genetic information. Such an environment is necessary to a healthy learning, working and living atmosphere. Accordingly, all acts of discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct are strictly prohibited. (College Policy 206)

## **Program Summary**

Students are advised that the Physical Therapist Assistant Program is strenuous in nature. Therefore, students are not allowed to take additional course work that is not directly related to their degree plan while in the Program. The PTA Program is intense and requires approximately 30-40 hours per week of meeting time; this does not include prep or study time. The hours ascribed to each semester while in the Program are considered by the Program to be full time. Therefore, it is not recommended that students attempt to maintain concurrent full-time employment. Students admitted to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program will enter during the fall semester. The courses taken during the fall include Movement Science, Basic Patient Care Skills, Orthopedic Conditions, Administration & Management, and Therapeutic Agents I. Upon successful completion of these courses, students will move into the spring semester. Courses taken during the spring semester include: Therapeutic Exercise, Data Collection, Rehabilitation Techniques,

Therapeutic Agents II, and Clinical Neurology. Upon successful completion of these courses, students will enter the summer semester. The summer semester includes Clinical Practicum I and Neurorehabilitation. Upon successful completion of the summer courses, students will enroll in the final semester which includes two clinical education experiences, Clinical Practicums II and III, and PTA Seminar.

### **Program Philosophy**

The PTA Program is dedicated to preparing highly competent entry-level physical therapist assistant practitioners through quality classroom, laboratory, and clinical education experiences utilizing regional facilities and clinical instructors. The Program faculty understands the importance of providing didactic experiences that encompass the learning styles of all students. The Program faculty will promote quality treatment standards including a commitment to evidence-based contemporary practice, professional behaviors, continuing education, and compassionate care.

The Program acts to fulfill the College mission by providing quality relevant industry training to improve the lives of those in our region.

### **Program Mission Statement**

The mission of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at UA Cossatot is to prepare highly competent entry-level physical therapist assistant practitioners who can serve to improve the quality of life of a diverse community with an unwavering commitment to evidence-based contemporary practice, professional and ethical behavior, and compassionate care as evidenced by life-long learning through continued education.

## **Program Faculty**

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## **Program Goals**

Goal 1. Graduates will be clinically competent and able to serve the college region by working as entry-level physical therapist assistants under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist.

Goal 2. Students and graduates will demonstrate effective communication and interpersonal skills in a culturally competent manner with patients, caregivers and other health care providers.

Goal 3. Students and graduates will exhibit effective critical thinking and problem solving skills in the clinical environment.

Goal 4. Students will participate in research assignments that promote contemporary evidence-based physical therapy practice.

Goal 5. The Program will provide a positive learning environment and a curriculum consistent with contemporary physical therapy practice.

Goal 6. Program faculty will model ongoing personal and professional development through life-long learning opportunities and membership in professional organizations.

## **Knowledge of Program and College Policies & Procedures**

The Program abides by UA Cossatot and the Division of Medical Education policies and procedures. Students are expected to have a working knowledge of the UAC PTA Program Student Handbook. A student who has been granted entrance to the PTA Program agrees that they acknowledge and will comply with the policies and procedures set forth by both the institution and the Program. Program handbooks are reviewed and revised annually by Program faculty. Input on revisions will be accepted from Program students, college administration, Program advisory council, clinical education faculty, and college staff. To ensure compliance with institution policies, Program handbooks are annually reviewed by the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. Any revisions in Program handbooks will be communicated to students and administration.

## **Student Physical Therapist Assistant Club**

The mission of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at UA Cossatot is to prepare highly competent entry-level physical therapist assistant practitioners who can serve to improve the quality of life of a diverse community with an unwavering commitment to evidence-based contemporary practice, professional and ethical behavior, and compassionate care as evidenced by life-long learning through continued education. The mission of the Student Physical Therapist Assistant Club is to strive toward and support the Program mission. It is to promote a spirit of community service among its students, as well as enhance communication, interaction, and positive relationships between the PTA students at UA Cossatot and the community while ensuring that students display a commitment to their educational duties.

All Program students are required to be active members of the SPTAC and will be automatically enrolled into the club upon acceptance into the Program. The club will charge dues for each student. Student dues are utilized as seed money for fundraising and community service activities.



## **Graduation Policy**

Students must have successfully completed all prerequisite courses in compliance with admissions criteria. In addition, students must successfully meet required exam average scores, practical exam scores, and overall course averages as described in this student handbook to graduate from the Program. Upon completion, the student's status will be submitted to the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy declaring that the student has completed their Associate of Applied Science and wishes to sit for the licensing examination. All states require licensure to practice, which is granted, based on the results of the national examination. A misdemeanor or felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to sit for the examination or attain state licensure. It would benefit students with any prior convictions to contact the state board of the state in which they desire to practice concerning policies related to such. The student may be asked to submit documentation and/or evidence of the case prior to rendering a decision as to whether the student would be allowed to attain licensure.

## **Transfers**

Due to differences in the curriculum in other Physical Therapist Assistant programs, the UA Cossatot PTA Program will not accept transfer students. Students who were enrolled in another program will follow the same requirements and admission procedures. Students will also provide a letter of good standing from the institution previously attended.

## **Auditing Courses**

Due to the dynamic nature of physical therapy practices, course auditing is not available. In order to receive credit for a course, a student must be admitted to the Program, enrolled in all coursework, and successfully complete coursework as outlined in the handbook while complying with all College, Medical Education, and Program policies.

## **National Physical Therapy Examination**

After completion of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at UA Cossatot, graduates are granted the Associate of Applied Science. It is important to recognize that completion of the degree program does not permit an individual to practice physical therapy. The individual must sit for the National Physical Therapy Examination. Once the examination is successfully passed, the individual is subject to specific state regulations for application for state licensure. Graduates must graduate from a CAPTE-accredited program to sit for the national board examination in compliance with the FSBPT regulations. See the Accreditation section for specifics on accreditation status.

## **Licensure**

All U.S. states require licensure to practice physical therapy. Licensure is the governmental regulation of practice, designed to protect the health and welfare of the citizens of a state. Failure to become and remain licensed by the state, while practicing, renders both the individual and the employer liable for legal charges and monetary fines. Each state maintains rules and practice acts that govern practice guidelines and eligibility for licensure, as well as requirements for licensure renewal. Upon successful completion of the national examination, students are eligible to apply for licensure. Note that between the time of receiving an associate degree and taking the national exam, some states will provide a temporary license. This is usually granted for a limited amount of time and may have specific supervision requirements. Please refer to individual state boards for more details.

## **Advisory Council**

The UA Cossatot Physical Therapist Assistant Advisory Council includes Physical Therapists, Physical Therapist Assistants, Physical Therapy Directors, Physical Therapy Clinic Owners, and UA Cossatot PTA Program faculty. The purpose of the council is to review and advise on curriculum, clinical experiences/opportunities, best practices, and recommendations for modification to best support the educational needs of our students with consideration for evidence-based practice. The Academic Advisory Council was formed in December of 2016, prior to the matriculation of students, in an effort to best plan for the arrival of students in a new program.

## **Program Lockers**

Lockers are available for Program student's use (at no charge to the students) so that they may store course supplies and personal items necessary for use while in the Program. Students' personal belongings (i.e. cell phones, excess bags, etc.) will not be permitted in classrooms or laboratories for safety, prevention of theft, and a professional environment. The lockers are intended to provide students with a secure location to store personal belongings.

Students who wish to utilize a locker must keep it locked with a key lock (combination locks not permitted) and provide the Program Advisor with a copy of the key. Lockers are to be kept clean with all of the items secured behind the locked door. Students are responsible for keeping the locker in good condition; no mirrors, adhesive, or decorative items may be used. Food, drinks, alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, or paraphernalia are not allowed in the lockers at any time. Students may not share lockers with any other students.

All lockers are the property of the College and, at any time, College representatives may search lockers to ensure the safety of the institution. A student need not be present when his/her locker is searched. Lockers may not store any items that are not permissible on campus as outlined in the College Catalog. Any illegal or unauthorized items in the locker, or any other items reasonably determined to be of a potential threat to the safety or security of others, will be seized by campus security.

Students will clear all of their belongings from lockers, remove locks, and collect their key copy from the Program Advisor at the end of the summer term. Any item not cleared from lockers by the designated time will be disposed of or will become the property of the institution.

The College is not responsible for any loss or damage of any item(s) in lockers whether locked or unlocked. By utilizing Program lockers, students assume responsibility for any loss or damage of items in assigned lockers. If students are unable to comply with these policies, they will lose the privilege of using a Program locker.

## **Curriculum Development**

The collective core faculty of the UAC Physical Therapist Assistant Program have primary responsibility for the development, review, and revision of the curriculum plan. The faculty utilizes the counsel of the Advisory Council and feedback from clinical instructors to ensure contemporary practices are included throughout the curriculum. Upon recommendations, the core faculty may modify the curriculum as indicated.

## **Program Curriculum**

The Program degree plan can be accessed at <https://www.cccua.edu/programs-of-study/medical-education>. UA Cossatot reserves the right to alter the curriculum, syllabi, tuition/fees, and/or admission policies whenever change is deemed necessary to suit the needs of the Program.

## **Academic Integrity**

The Program adheres to UAC academic integrity policies. Please refer to the UAC Academic Catalog for these policies.

## **Artificial Intelligence Use**

While the program allows the use of AI for research purposes, it does not allow AI-generated academic writing, as it does not reflect students' original thinking. If the use of AI is suspected in academic writing by a deviation from the student's previous work, AI detection software will be used to identify the probability of having used AI. If a high probability of AI use is detected, the infraction will be treated as an academic integrity violation. In addition to the first offense of academic integrity, a second offense of plagiarism may be incurred, if the AI generator used is not cited.

## **Student Ethics**

Students enrolled in the PTA Program are expected to behave in a way that reflects high ethical standards. The Program expects students to adhere to the basic guidelines regarding ethical behavior in the classroom as defined in the UA Cossatot Academic Catalog. Students in the PTA Program are expected to comply with all policies, procedures, and codes of conduct established in this manual, as well as any additional requirements included in Program course syllabi. In addition, students are expected to follow policies and procedures specific to clinical education facilities and to follow Program expectations for ethical behaviors as outlined below.

Students must demonstrate respect to instructors, guests, staff, and peers. Students may not insult, disrespect, slur, raise their voices to or degrade instructors, other college employees, other health professionals, or peers. This expectation does not infringe upon a student's right to raise questions and request clarification but does define parameters in which the question or clarification is brought forth. Students will respect other student work. Students may not handle, steal, alter, deface, or otherwise harm another student's project/work. Students may not use the personal information of their peers (i.e. phone numbers, social media, email, etc.) outside of school-related purposes. Students may not falsify records of any type. Students must work with cooperation and respect for peers and other healthcare team members. Each student is expected to contribute equally on group assignments. Students will refrain from engaging in extraneous conversations during class.

Students will honor commitments to peers, college faculty, staff, and clinical educators/instructors by being on time for classes, off-site experiences, and clinical education placements. This includes timely notification in advance, when unable to keep a commitment. When a student is tardy or absent, the student will follow the appropriate procedures outlined in this handbook. All students

will comply with safety procedures when working with peers, patients, and equipment whether in class, laboratory, clinical education site, or elsewhere. Under no circumstance shall a student endanger the safety and welfare of patients, other students, faculty, and/or staff.

Program students will respect the property and rights of the Program and other medical education faculty and staff, all medical education students, clinical education facility staff, and patients. Students will not remove or borrow property without permission and will not damage or misuse property. Students will respect the resources of furniture, fixtures, textbooks, computers, instructional technology, supplies, library books, and journals. Students will not mutilate, deface, damage, or withhold resources for their own use. Students and faculty are expected to conserve resources by using only supplies needed for the completion of assignments and maintenance of equipment. Students should report any damaged resources of any type to the Program Director. Students are not allowed to smoke, including e-cigarettes, or use smokeless tobacco on UA Cossatot campuses, clinical education campuses, or anywhere Program activities are held.

Students are expected to be aware of and comply with these standards of ethics. Acting in a manner counter to these standards will result in consequences that reflect the severity of the infraction which may include financial responsibility and/or dismissal from the program. Students who are dismissed from the PTA Program, due to ethics violations, will not be allowed to re-apply to the Program.

Furthermore, students are expected to comply with the American Physical Therapy Association “Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant” while practicing as a student physical therapist assistant as well as in professional practice. The “Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant” can be referenced at:

<http://www.ptot.texas.gov/idl/6AE93EF1-F21C-EDE1-9C69-5DB686260B5E>.

## **Discipline**

UA Cossatot does not tolerate actions by students, staff, or residents of the college service area that interfere with student learning and safety. UA Cossatot reserves the right to require a student to withdraw at any time for excessive absenteeism or tardiness, ill health, inefficiency, misconduct, neglect of duty, unprofessional behaviors, or nonconformity with regulations of the school and affiliating agencies. Students have the right to grieve actions by an employee or another student as outlined in the UAC Academic Catalog, Student Grievance Procedures: Non-Grade Issues.

If it is determined that a Program student has demonstrated inappropriate conduct, a Program faculty will meet with the student to discuss the matter and inform the student of the specific conduct that was deemed inappropriate. A written record will be placed in the student's Program file outlining the misconduct, actions, and timeline for improvement. If the student's conduct does not improve or additional misconduct occurs, a Program faculty will meet with the student again. A written record of the meeting will be placed in the student's Program file outlining the misconduct, actions, and timeline for improvement. In addition, a copy of the reports will be provided to the Division Chair and/or the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. If the student does not demonstrate satisfactory improvement by the specified deadline or continues to demonstrate inappropriate conduct, the student will be dismissed from the Program.

## **Academic Progression**

Standards of academic progress are established to require students to progress satisfactorily and timely toward the completion of their degree. Students are responsible for their academic progress and for seeking assistance when experiencing academic difficulty. Students are encouraged to work closely with their advisor or Program faculty to ensure that they are successfully completing graduation requirements and maintaining satisfactory progress.

UA Cossatot PTA Program faculty utilize a grade book within Blackboard, which is password protected, to record student grades. Grades are updated throughout the week with any tests or assignments completed. Students can access their grades through Blackboard at any time. This keeps all students and Program faculty current with academic standing. Students may calculate course grades by dividing the total points earned by the total points available and multiplying by 100. Students are encouraged to contact their instructors at any time during a course that a question

arises regarding grades. Students falling below passing course average/exam average or not meeting professional behavior expectations will meet with Program faculty or staff, at midterm. Students are encouraged to discuss any aspects of the Program including but not limited to questions/concerns regarding clinical education, progression through courses, and/or progression through the Program.

Students must have successfully completed all prerequisite courses in compliance with admissions criteria. In addition, students must successfully meet required exam average scores, practical exam scores, and overall course averages as described in this student handbook to graduate from the Program. Students must successfully complete all coursework and clinical education experiences in order to progress to the next semester. Failure to successfully complete any course will prohibit the student from continuing in the Program and the student will be administratively withdrawn. In addition to achieving a grade of 76% or better in each course, students must achieve 76% or better on the written exam average of each course and each practical exam must be passed with a minimum score of 76% or better. Any student who does not achieve a passing grade average as described above in each course or that is deemed unsafe during practical examinations (subject to remediation policies) or during clinical education experiences (subject to remediation policies) will be removed from the program as they have failed to safely progress through the didactic and/or technical phases of the Program.

Upon successful completion of all coursework and clinical education experiences, the student's status will be submitted to the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy Examiners declaring that the student has completed their Associate of Applied Science in Physical Therapy and wishes to sit for the licensing examination.

## **Faculty References**

Program faculty may not provide references or recommendations for students applying/re-applying to the program or for graduates of the program for employment in order to avoid any potential conflict of interest.



## **Grading Scale**

The UA Cossatot Physical Therapist Assistant Program curriculum is designed to meet the requirements of CAPTE and to prepare students to successfully complete the National Physical Therapy Examination for Physical Therapist Assistants in order to obtain licensure to practice as a Physical Therapist Assistant.

The following grade equivalency is established for all coursework and practicums in accordance with the Medical Education Division at UA Cossatot:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 76-79

D = 70-75 (failing)

F = <69 (failing)

Final course grades are rounded utilizing only the tenth place. For example, a score of 75.5 would round up to 76; however, a score of 75.45 would round down to 75.

## **Distance Learning**

Coursework throughout the Program is completed in many different formats. This allows for diversified learning experiences for students. In addition to class lectures, lab activities, community service projects, clinical education, workshops, and off-site experiences, online distance learning will be utilized in several courses using the Blackboard learning management system. In the first fall semester of the technical portion, students will be enrolled in Administration and Management and Orthopedic Conditions online courses through Blackboard. In the spring semester, students will be enrolled in Clinical Neurology in an online format. Distance learning is also utilized during the final semester of the Program. While completing Practicums II and III, Program students will be enrolled in the PTA Seminar course, which is presented in an online format. All Program courses are Blackboard enhanced where PowerPoints, assignments, announcements, and grades will be posted.

For all distance learning courses within the PTA Program, college policy is followed to ensure that the student who is enrolled in the course, and receiving credit for completion, is the student completing the work.

## **Blackboard Learning Management System**

Student assignments that are submitted through Blackboard will need to be saved in a specific file format as indicated by the instructor. Students are directed to utilize Blackboard online help for any difficulties with the Blackboard system. Additional support is provided through the College IT department by phone at 870-584-1161 or by email at [cjones@cccua.edu](mailto:cjones@cccua.edu) or [diss@cccua.edu](mailto:diss@cccua.edu).

## **Coursework**

### Assignments

All courses in the Program are enhanced with the use of the Blackboard Learning Management System. Throughout the Program, students will be assigned various papers, projects, or group assignments. Criteria for each assignment, including deadlines, will be given in conjunction with the assignment. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated; both of which are grounds for immediate dismissal from the Program (see Student Ethics). The Program may utilize software to detect plagiarism. Acceptable percentages for similarity will be determined by individual course

instructors and may vary by assignment. Students may use any color ink or pencils for their own notes but handwritten submitted papers should be in black ink. All formally written research papers should be completed in APA format. Any assignments submitted should include the student's name, date, and course number. Assignments may be submitted on paper or through the blackboard system as indicated by the course instructor. Blackboard assignments will only be open for a single submission. If an additional submission is required, the student must contact the instructor via email to request the reopening of the assignment. A maximum of two submissions will be accepted with a 10% reduction for the second submission. Repeated requests for second submissions will be treated as a professional behavior issue. While in the Program, students will be required to use a tablet or laptop computer for accessing courses, submission of assignments, and completion of exams as indicated by the instructor.

### Skill Checks

A skill check is an assessment of the student's ability to demonstrate competence in a physical therapy skill. Students have an unlimited number of attempts to complete skill checks during course lab time or open lab times. The student is first instructed in the desired skill by the course instructor or content expert. Each skill check then requires a self-assessment, peer assessment, and instructor assessment. The student must fully complete the self-assessment in order to be assessed by a peer. Next, the student must have a fully completed peer assessment in order to be assessed by the instructor. If the student does not complete all steps successfully, the student must receive remediation. While there is not a grade associated with the skill checks, a student must successfully complete required skill checks in order to be able to take the related written or practical exam. It is the student's responsibility to make sure all skill checks have been completed prior to exams or by instructor due dates, according to which comes first. The expectation is that the student has practiced and is ready to complete the instructor skill check-off on the date established by the instructor. If the student is deemed not ready for the instructor to check off on the established date, the student will have a reduction of 5 points from the next written or practical exam for each occurrence. A peer who checks off skills for a student who is not competent in the skills may also receive a reduction of 5 points from the next written or practical exam, at the discretion of the course instructor. In addition, both occurrences will be treated as a professional behavior issue. Students who have successfully passed a skill check have demonstrated competence in that skill

and are expected to maintain their competence through regular, independent or peer, review of the skill.

Students will be required to present their skill check notebook with completed skill checks for entry to take the associated written or practical examinations. Lost skill check notebooks will result in a 10% grade reduction on the associated written or practical examinations and the student will be responsible for the cost of replacement.

### Practical Examinations

Practical exams are used to assess a student's ability to effectively and safely perform a simulated patient treatment following a physical therapist's plan of care. Practical exams integrate content from current and prior Program courses. Each practical exam must be passed with a minimum score of 76% and can be retaken one time if the minimum score is not attained. If a student obtains a score above 76% on a practical examination retake, a maximum score of 76% will be recorded. Practical examinations will consist of critical skills and critical safety elements, which must be performed to competence in order to successfully pass the lab practical. A critical skill is defined as a skill that is required to demonstrate competency. A critical safety element is defined as criteria that in a clinical setting would result in harm to a patient or an incident report if performed incorrectly. Unsafe behavior on a critical safety element or lack of competency on a critical skill is an automatic failure of the practical examination and must be remediated subject to remediation policies. If verbal cueing is required on a critical safety element to avoid injury, the student will automatically fail the lab practical and be subject to remediation policies. Sharing practical exam scenarios or discussing information regarding the practical examination is considered academic dishonesty and will be treated as such.

### Lecture Examinations

Lecture examinations are used to assess a student's ability to comprehend, critically think, and apply their knowledge in the course content being studied. Lecture examinations integrate content from current and prior Program courses and are cumulative in nature. A lecture exam average of 76% or greater is required to successfully complete each course. If a student arrives after the exam start time or misses an exam, policies regarding make-up exams will be enforced.

Discussing/sharing information regarding the examination is considered academic dishonesty and will be treated as such.

### Quizzes

Quizzes are used to ensure students are prepared for coursework. Quizzes may not be made up if a student is not present during the time the quiz is administered. If a student is late and the quiz has begun, the student may not enter the room nor may they make up the quiz. Discussing/sharing information regarding the quiz is considered academic dishonesty and will be treated as such.

## **Clinical Education Practicums**

The Program strives to provide exemplary clinical education learning experiences. Clinical education placements occur in settings that will expose students to patients and clients across the lifespan, representing a variety of conditions and situations that are typical for a physical therapy practitioner to work. Students will be required to attend clinical education sites that may require travel. A practicum may, at the student's request, be scheduled in other parts of the country. Please discuss this option with the DCE early in the Program to enable the Program to establish necessary records for student placements.

Upon appropriate Program progression, students will be placed in the clinical education component of the Program. The first clinical education practicum is integrated into the didactic coursework in the summer semester. The remaining two clinical education practicums are in the final semester, after the completion of all didactic coursework.

### Clinical Education Site Selection

The DCE will provide students with a list of available clinical sites and students are asked to prioritize up to ten sites for each rotation. Considerations are made for student priority requests and attempts are made to accommodate each student, learning needs, and to promote success in the clinical education portion of the Program. Students are not permitted to contact sites directly to request a placement; doing so will result in an automatic disqualification for that site and may lead to disciplinary actions due to lack of professionalism. Clinical education site placements are assigned by the DCE and are final.

### Clinical Education Special Needs Consideration

Appeals for special consideration in clinical education placement are based on demonstrated need for mitigating circumstances or students with disabilities, who have identified themselves to the disabilities coordinator. Appeals found to be made on false claims will be overturned and denied, and students will be removed from the Program for this highly unethical behavior.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to voluntarily disclose their needs for clinical education accommodations with the disabilities coordinator well in advance of clinical site placement. Following this, students must voluntarily disclose their need for accommodations with the DCE prior to the selection of clinical education sites in order for reasonable accommodations to be met. Then, through collaboration with the DCE, disabilities coordinator, and the student, an accommodation plan may be developed. As with classroom expectations, clinical outcome expectations will be the same for all students regardless of abilities/disabilities. However, strategies to achieve entry-level competency may differ based on individual needs. Once an eligible student has disclosed the need for accommodation and/or accessibility to the DCE and has signed a release of information, the clinical instructor may then be contacted to discuss strategies to be implemented at the clinical site.

### Clinical Education Placement Cancellation

A clinical education site may cancel a confirmed placement, unexpectedly prior to the beginning of the clinical education practicum. This may happen for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to, staffing issues/changes, inadequate supervision, poor learning environment, and/or facility closure or merger. In the event a clinical education placement cancellation should occur, the DCE will contact and schedule a meeting with the involved student(s) to discuss replacement options and reschedule the clinical education experience as soon as a placement is available.

### Clinical Site Conflict of Interest

Students will not be placed at a clinical site where a family member may be in a supervisory capacity. A student will not be assigned to a clinical education site where he or she is currently employed, has previously been employed, or is currently negotiating to be employed. Additionally, a student may not be placed at a clinical site where a family member is employed.

### Clinical Education Placement Appeals Process

Extenuating circumstances could precipitate the need to review a student's placement. Mitigating circumstances are those that are beyond the student's control, such as a serious illness or injury to the student, the death or serious illness of an immediate family member, and/or other special circumstances that could not have been foreseen.

In order for a review of the clinical education placement to occur, the student must file a written appeal requesting a change in clinical education placement. The appeal should be addressed and delivered to the DCE, stating clear and concise reasons for the request. Appeals will not be considered unless there are mitigating circumstances. Please be advised that any change in clinical education placement is not guaranteed. Additionally, a change in clinical education placement may delay the clinical education start date and ultimately graduation if timelines and requirements are not met. Students have seven calendar days, from the date of notification of clinical site placement or onset of special circumstances, to submit a letter of appeal to the Director of Clinical Education. Appeal decisions are subject to the availability of clinical sites and accreditation standards. Students will be provided with an appeal decision within fourteen calendar days of submission.

If, after a review of documentation, a change is granted, the DCE and student will meet to discuss clinical education site placement options. The DCE will assign the student to a new site and notify all involved persons. If an appeal is granted but facilities are unable to accommodate the student, the student may be delayed from graduating with their cohort.

## **Make-up Work**

### Late Assignments

Because of the accessibility of email and Blackboard, all assignments must be submitted by the assigned due date and time established by the instructor. Any assignment received after the due date and time will receive a zero (0) score. However, the student must complete the work assigned to the standard of "76%" in order for the assignment to be considered complete. This is to ensure that the student demonstrates an understanding of the material. The score will be recorded as a zero upon completion. If the required assignment is not completed, prior to the next scheduled written and/or practical exam, the student will not be allowed to take the exam and will be subject to the make-up work written and practical examination policy. The student will be counseled, a written record will be placed in the student's file and the student will be subject to established

discipline policies based on professional behavior violation. In addition, hours of attendance will be subtracted from the time of the scheduled examination until the missing assignment is submitted, subject to the completion standards above. Quizzes may not be made up if a student is not present during the time the quiz is administered. If a student is late and the quiz has begun, the student will not be allowed to take the quiz.

### Written and Practical Examinations

Early examinations, of any kind, or other graded activity will not be given. If a student misses a written or practical examination due to tardiness or absence, the student must contact the course instructor to arrange for a make-up exam. The student will have 10% deducted from the highest possible score for the make-up exam. All make-up written examinations must be taken in the testing center or under the supervision of Program staff. Any student who fails to make arrangements on the day of return to campus and/or does not take the exam at the rescheduled time will receive a zero. Arrangements for makeup examinations should occur from the student's college email account to the instructor's college email account in order to provide evidence of documented communication and timeframe. Students will be granted one opportunity to make up a written and practical examination per course due to tardiness or absence.

### Skill Checks

In the event a student misses a laboratory practice in which skill checks are performed, it is the student's responsibility to schedule a make-up with the course instructor prior to the written or practical exam associated with the skill checks. Arrangements for make-up skill checks should occur from the student's college email account to the instructor's college email account in order to provide evidence of documented communication and timeframe. Students will have additional practice opportunities during open lab hours. These skills checks are not associated with a grade but must be completed prior to taking the written or practical exam associated with the skills.



## **Remediation**

The Program curriculum is cumulative in nature and clinical skills are dependent upon successful completion of the didactic portion of the Program. It is imperative that students demonstrate knowledge and competency in all required skills prior to being placed in a clinical setting. This is necessary to ensure the safety of the students, patients, family members, and healthcare workers alike. Students are required to achieve an average of 76% or above on written exams and overall course average as well as demonstrate competencies during skill checks and practical examinations. This will ensure students are safe to progress to clinical education affiliations. Specific course instructors will be responsible for identifying the goals and objectives of the remediation plan, the timelines for implementation, and the completion of the plan.

### Written Examination Remediation

Opportunities to retake written examinations will not be given. If a student fails to achieve a 76% grade on a written examination, the student may be required to perform remediation with program faculty or staff. This remediation may include but is not limited to, additional study materials, a review of the examination, and/or a written paper on deficient topics. No grade will be assigned for remediation and no change in the original test grade will occur. The course instructor will be responsible for identifying the goals and objectives of the remediation plan, the timelines for implementation, and the completion of the plan.

### Practical Examination Remediation

Students will have one opportunity to re-take each practical exam, upon failure to achieve 76% or failure of a critical skill or critical safety element. The student will be required to perform remediation with program faculty or staff and schedule a re-take practical. This remediation may include but is not limited to, additional study materials, a review of skills, and/or additional practice with peers. The highest grade the student can achieve on the retake is 76%. If a student fails the critical skill or critical safety criteria on the lab practical re-take, the student is given a grade of zero and will be dismissed from the Program. These standards must be maintained to ensure that graduates of the Program can successfully complete the licensure examination and are safe to progress to clinical education affiliations. The course instructor will be responsible for identifying

the goals and objectives of the remediation plan, the timelines for implementation, and completion of the plan.

### Skill Checks Remediation

As a means to ensure safety, the Program will offer unlimited remediation for all skill checks during scheduled class and open lab hours. These skill checks are not associated with a grade but must be completed prior to taking the lab practical associated with the skills. Each course instructor will be responsible for the parameters of skill check remediation. Failure of a student to be ready for instructor skill check-off by the date determined by the instructor will result in a 5-point reduction from the next written or practical exam. If a peer has completed a check-off on the student who is not ready, the peer will also receive a 5-point reduction on the next practical exam. In addition, the incident may be treated as a professional behavior issue.

### Clinical Education Practicum Remediation

Students will have scheduled midterm clinical site visits with the DCE and clinical instructor, where the student's progress, or lack thereof, will be discussed. Students are encouraged to communicate any concerns regarding clinical education placements, clinical instructors, and/or passing/failing with the DCE at any point in a clinical education practicum. During clinical education experiences, if a student is deemed to be unsafe by the clinical instructor, faculty, or facility employees, the student may be removed from the clinical experience immediately, subject to remediation. At midterm, if it is felt that that student is on track to fail the practicum, the DCE will meet with the student and clinical instructor to discuss and prepare a plan for remediation. The DCE, with input from the clinical instructor and student, will determine the level of remediation needed. Remediation may require skills practice in the lab, prior to continuing in the clinical education component of the Program, or other form of review/practice as indicated. All remediation strategies and clinical education hours must be completed in order to pass the clinical practicum. One remediation opportunity will be made available for the entire clinical education experience combined (all practicums). The DCE will be responsible for identifying the goals and objectives of the remediation plan, the timelines for implementation, and the completion of the plan.

At the end of a clinical practicum, if an unforeseen failure occurs, every effort will be made for a remediation opportunity as stated above. Since the Program cannot guarantee placement, outside of the established dates of the clinical practicum, remediation may not be possible and the student may not graduate on time. All remediation and clinical education hours must be completed in order to graduate from the Program.

In the event that the CI and/or the DCE feel, that despite remediation efforts, the student continues to lack the skill to safely move on in the clinical component of the Program, the student will be dismissed from the Program.

If at any time, the clinical instructor or DCE feels that the student demonstrates a lack of professionalism, ethics, or privacy or if the student has engaged in inappropriate sexual contact with a patient, or falsification of records the student will not be eligible for remediation and will be immediately removed from the Program.

In the event that a student is placed in a clinical setting where there is a conflict of interest or the student is placed in an unsafe, unethical, or unprofessional environment, the student will be removed from said facility and every effort will be put forth to place the student at a new clinical site. This will not be considered remediation and will be documented as an incident report that does not reflect negatively on the student.

At any time, the DCE, at their discretion, may request a review by any or all of the following: Program Director, Medical Education Division Chair, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, and Chancellor. This review may be performed with student remediation, incidents, or change of clinical sites as deemed necessary.

In the event that a clinical site refuses a student based on prescreening or professional/ethical behaviors, the Program cannot guarantee placement at another site and the student may be removed from the Program.

## **Student Grade Appeal Policy**

If a student believes an error in a grade has occurred, the student should follow the Medical Education Appeal Process published in the UA Cossatot Academic Catalog.

## **Withdrawal**

Students considering withdrawal from the Program are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Program Director. Students should follow the college policies and procedures regarding Program and course withdrawal. Students who fail to follow the proper withdrawal procedures may receive failing grades for courses in which they are enrolled. Students are encouraged to speak with an academic advisor for future education goals.

## **Re-Admission Criteria**

A student who fails a course or leaves the Program will be permitted one opportunity to re-admit to the Program. Students wishing to re-apply to the Program are subject to the admissions and ranking system again. Students re-entering the Program must complete all coursework, lab work, and assessments regardless of previously passed coursework.

Students may not be considered for re-admission if they committed any of the following violations while previously enrolled in the program: uncooperative attitude/behavior that was previously addressed with verbal and written warnings, insubordination, cheating/plagiarism, falsification of records, positive identification of drug activities (taking, buying, selling, manufacturing, etc.), violation of medical ethics (breach of confidentiality, client abuse, etc.), failure to comply with Program or clinical site rules or procedures, endangering the health, safety, or life of a patient or peer, and/or failure to obtain a final passing score of clinical education (or failure of remediation). Students re-entering the program will be required to submit a formal letter of intent to the Program Director for review. The student will need to include documentation of the resolution of the issue that precipitated removal, dismissal, or withdrawal from the Program. This may include documentation of a remediation plan for facilitating the successful completion of a Program course, in which the student did not pass previously.

## **Student Retention**

Program faculty have the desire to see all Program students succeed. Once a student is admitted into the Program, the Program Director and Program faculty work in collaboration with the student to ensure the student is making academic progress. Students have routine access to grades through Blackboard. Grades are posted regularly and in a timely manner to allow students to monitor

academic standing. All students' grades are reviewed by instructors at midterm each semester during the first year. Any student who is considered to be failing will be required to meet with the Program Director for mid-term advising. Students may request additional advising meetings as deemed necessary. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that difficulties are conveyed to the Program faculty when they occur. Academic and Disability Support Services are available to students as needed.

While completing clinical practicums, a Program faculty will meet with students at least once per practicum to ensure progression through clinical education experiences and to provide support as needed. This meeting may occur by phone, virtually, or in person.

## **Student Records**

The Program maintains files that include student information, consent forms, waivers of liability, contracts, correspondence, and/or academic and clinical education progress. These files are maintained for all students and are stored in locked file cabinets or password-protected electronic storage devices. The contents of these files may be released only to the Program advisor or faculty, the Division Chair of Medical Education, the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, and/or the Chancellor. A student may have access to their own file, under faculty supervision. Student files will be maintained while the student is in the Program and for five years thereafter. The files will be destroyed after five years, and the only record maintained will be the official transcript.

## **Student Services**

Student support services are available on all three campuses. Academic counseling, disability support services, and financial aid resources are located within the division of Student Services and are available by phone, mail, email, and website.

## **Disability Services**

UA Cossatot Disability Services is dedicated to the academic and personal success of all students. Students with disabilities are encouraged to voluntarily disclose their needs for accommodations to the disability support services and Program faculty. Then, through collaboration with the Program faculty, the disabilities coordinator, and the student, an accommodation plan may be

developed. Classroom expectations will be the same for all students regardless of abilities or disabilities. Disability services staff will work with students to recognize opportunities to grow and learn, identify any barriers to academic, and/or personal success, and develop action and/or accommodation plans to overcome those barriers. Please refer to the current college catalog on Disability Services.

## **Financial Aid**

Financial aid may be made available through federal programs, state programs, or scholarship opportunities. Please refer to the College website for contact information.

Students are advised of the strenuous nature of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program (PTA Program). It is recommended that students do not enroll in additional coursework that is not directly related to their degree plan while enrolled in the Program. Because the student will have taken all general education coursework prior to admission to the Program, the student may, at times, be enrolled in less than full-time hours during the technical phase of the Program. Students are advised that the didactic, lab, skills practice, remediation, and simulation learning experiences are extensive and may require 30 – 40 hours each week. This does not include preparation such as reading chapters, reviewing prerecorded lectures/videos, completing assignments/projects, or studying. Regardless of the credit hours in which students are enrolled each semester, while in the Program, these students are considered by the Program and the Medical Education Division to be full-time.

## **Educational Resource Center / Library**

The UA Cossatot Educational Resource Center (ERC) is a fully functioning, media-rich, user-friendly resource center striving to enrich the lives of students through active learning. The ERC works with faculty to promote higher education and helps students achieve their maximum academic potential. An Educational Resource Center is located on each UA Cossatot campus with knowledgeable staff available to assist students during hours of operation. Free tutoring is available, along with several computer stations, and a lounging area with comfortable seating. The ERC offers about 10,000 titles in book and media format, as well as numerous online databases. Students may access databases at any time, after acquiring a student identification card. The ERC also handles all textbook rentals. Information regarding the Educational Resource Center can be accessed directly from the College website.

## **Computer Use**

Computer access is available in the Educational Resource Center and in other computer labs throughout the college. No food or drinks are allowed in the computer labs or Educational Resource Center. Students may not save any work onto the computers. Instead, students are advised to store files on a USB drive or cloud storage (i.e. OneDrive, Google Drive). When finished using a computer, students should log off but not shut the computer down. Please refer to the UA Cossatot Course Catalog for appropriate computer use.

## **Offsite Experiences**

Program students may be required to travel off campus for Program related experiences. Students will be responsible for travel and any cost incurred for such travel. Program policies and procedures are applicable during all off-campus experiences.

## **Student Etiquette**

Student behavior, professionalism, and appearance are representative of themselves, UA Cossatot, the Program, the instructors, and the physical therapy profession. While enrolled in the Program, professional behaviors are expected in all settings, directly or indirectly related to the Program.

Students are encouraged to participate in classroom discussions related to the lecture content. Discussion should remain professional; arguing and disruptive/unprofessional behavior will not be tolerated. Extraneous conversations in the classroom keep other students from listening to the instructor causing them to miss valuable lecture content and should be kept to a minimum.

Sleeping will not be tolerated during classroom, laboratory, clinical education, or Program activities. If the student is unable to stay awake, the student will be asked to leave for the day and time will be subtracted from the student's Program attendance log.

It is the responsibility of the student to secure and pay for any lodging required in order to complete clinical education practicums. Breaks and lunches will vary due to course content, college programs, and clinical education scheduling. Students are expected to follow the directions and/or scheduling of the clinical education facility for lunch breaks. Family members (children, spouses, and significant others) are not allowed at any clinical site while the student is "on duty". Family members should not enter any setting unannounced.

All communications with instructors should occur from the student's college email account to the instructor's college email account in order to provide evidence of documented communication and timeframe. Students are expected to monitor college email accounts and Blackboard, at minimum, twice per day, in the morning and evening, during the semester and weekly during the semester breaks for administrative announcements. Responses to individual emails are expected to verify receipt of information. Failure to respond appropriately to time-sensitive requests, made by faculty, will result in disciplinary action.



## Professional Behaviors

Professional behaviors by students are expected at all times. Students must follow professional standards set forth by the Program and in line with the APTA Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant when in the classroom, laboratory, clinical education settings, and any other Program activities. A Professional Behaviors Assessment tool, along with the PTA MACS, will be utilized to assess student professionalism throughout enrollment in the Program. Program faculty will assess the professional behaviors, at minimum, once per semester with students performing a self-assessment as well. Faculty will provide written feedback regarding professional behaviors during the first two semesters. Written feedback will be placed in the student's Program file. Students are expected to change unsatisfactory behaviors, after receiving feedback from faculty. In the event a student is not demonstrating professional behaviors at the appropriate level, the student may be required to develop a plan for improvement with the Program faculty. Deficits identified in the Professional Behavior Assessment tool, with no demonstrated improvement, may result in dismissal from the Program.

The expected levels of Professional Behavior are outlined below.

By the end of the first fall semester, students must be rated, at minimum, "Beginning Level" in 100% of the behaviors using the Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool.

By the end of the spring semester, students must be rated, at a minimum, "Intermediate Level" in 100% of the behaviors using the Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool.

By the end of Practicum II, students must be rated, at minimum, as "Entry Level" in 100% of the professional behaviors, skills 1-11, outlined in the PTA MACS.

By the end of Practicum III, students must maintain the minimum rating of "Entry Level" in 100% of the professional behaviors, skills 1-11, outlined in the PTA MACS.

*Please refer to the Professional Behaviors Assessment Tool and PTA MACS for identified behaviors.*

## **Professional Appearance**

Students' behavior, professionalism, and appearance are representative of themselves, UA Cossatot, the Program, and the profession of physical therapy. Students are expected to arrive to the classroom, laboratory, and clinical education experiences clean and neat. The following are the minimum expectations of a PTA student, expected at all times:

Hair – Students must have natural hair color that should be cleaned and pulled back. Extreme looks such as multiple colors, and extremes in bleaching, dyeing, or tinting are not appropriate. Hats should not be worn during any Program activities. Beards and mustaches must be short, clean, and trimmed. Eyebrows should appear natural.

Makeup – If worn, makeup is to be conservative and not distract from attire, uniform, or work environment, and must reflect a professional image. Artificial eyelashes are an infection control risk and are not to be worn.

Skin and Nails – Tattoos may be visible if the images or words do not convey violence, discrimination, profanity, or sexually explicit content. Tattoos containing such messages must be covered with bandages, clothing, or cosmetics. In addition, students will be required to follow specific facility policies during clinical/fieldwork regarding exposed tattoos (regardless of content—offensive or not). If students are unable to comply with facility policies, they will be removed, and alternate placement will not be offered. Nails need to be smooth, of minimal length (no longer than ¼ inch length), and clean. Artificial nails are an infection control risk and are not to be worn due to the hands-on care provided by students in classroom, lab, service, and community settings.

Scent - Aftershave, cologne, and perfume should be applied sparingly, as patients' sensitivity to scents/odors must be considered at all times. Students should shower daily, apply deodorant, and be free of foul body odor.

Hygiene – Daily attention to one's personal hygiene is an extremely important component of each student's overall image. Students will maintain a high level of personal hygiene including bathing and dental care. Students' breath and clothing/lab coats must not smell of smoke.

Jewelry – Jewelry will be limited to a watch and wedding band (a ring cannot stick up or have jagged edges). No other jewelry will be allowed. This includes but is not limited to smartwatches, earrings, tongue rings, nose rings, eyebrow rings, and piercing spacers/retainers/labrets. Dermal piercings that cannot be removed other than surgically must be covered at all times. In the event

a facility refuses to allow a student with a dermal piercing to attend a clinical rotation, UAC and the PTA Program are not responsible for locating an alternate clinical facility.

Clothing – Students will maintain an appropriate dress during on and off-campus events (students may be given instruction for dress, i.e. scrubs, slacks, etc.). Clothing must be modest, neat, clean, wrinkle-free, and without obvious signs of wear.

Black scrubs and UA Cossatot patches will be purchased from the school by students at orientation for wear during events, lab practical exams, and clinical education experiences, as assigned. The UAC patch must be sewn (approximately 2 inches from the shoulder) on the left arm of each uniform and lab coat. Please note during clinical education experiences, students may be held to differing or stricter policies regarding dress as indicated by the clinical education site.

Some classes will require alternate dress as directed by the course instructor to allow for the nature of the individual lessons. Lab clothes should be taken home and laundered properly. Students are expected to maintain and have available appropriate clothing for scheduled lab activities at all times including schedule adjustments. Lab clothing must consist of athletic shorts, t-shirts, tank tops, sports bras/swimsuit tops, and cover-up clothing. Athletic shorts must be fingertip length or longer and must fit loosely in order to allow easy accessibility of the entire leg, yoga pants and spandex are not acceptable. Sports bras/swimsuit tops must be able to open fully in the back and neck but must be modest in covering the breast. Lab clothing should cover private body parts and undergarments should be worn at all times. A t-shirt or tank top should be worn as a cover-up when not performing lab activities. Classroom presentations, community service activities, and/or off-campus experiences, may require alternate attire as directed by the course instructor. This requirement may be professional attire including UA Cossatot polo, scrubs, business casual, student name badge, or other as directed. Professional attire excludes denim, t-shirts, sagging or baggy pants, and any shoe that can be considered a flip-flop. Failure of the student to have appropriate clothing will result in the student being sent home to change and time will be deducted in half-hour increments.

## Attendance

Students must be diligent in the pursuit of their studies and regular in their class attendance. Whenever possible students are expected to provide advanced notice to instructors in cases of tardiness or absences. Absences and tardiness are strongly discouraged as these are professional behavior issues. Classes will begin promptly. Scheduled activities may vary in time; it is the responsibility of the student to ensure timely arrival. Students may not miss more than a total of 40 hours during the Program and will be administratively withdrawn, from the Program, after 40 hours of absence.

Students will be considered tardy if arriving after the assigned time. If tardy, one hour will be deducted from the total number of hours allowed; no exceptions will be made. Any time missed following the first hour will be deducted in half-hour increments. Students leaving early will be deducted on the half hour. Time will be kept by the instructor according to the program or facility clock. Students who are tardy or leave early shall report to the Program Advisor before or after the scheduled meeting time to complete the necessary documentation.

Tardiness is considered a professional behavior infraction and will be treated as such during the Program. The following is the progression of discipline for chronic tardiness to class. On the third offense, the problem will be considered chronic, and written counseling will occur. For each tardy following the initial written counseling, additional written counseling will occur. Per the Program discipline policy, three written counseling's will result in the student being dismissed from the program.

Attendance is mandatory for all Program coursework, laboratory, student organization activities, seminars, and/or conventions that have been arranged. Illnesses, accidents, and unforeseen circumstances may occur, resulting in absences from the Program. Students are responsible for all coursework, notes, and assignments during any absence. Students, who are absent for the entire day, must report to the program advisor on the next scheduled meeting day to complete necessary documentation; absentee/tardiness hours will be deducted as outlined above. In the event of a sudden school closing (i.e. inclement weather), students will be notified by the mass text system, local radio/TV, Blackboard announcement, and Facebook of a school closure that affects reporting to *class*. As our campus serves a wide geographic area, the student is encouraged to use good judgment when it comes to travel in their particular area and follow the call-in policy if safe travel is deemed uncertain.

Attendance is also mandatory for clinical education placements. Students may miss up to 40 hours while in the Program but of those 40 hours only 12 hours may be missed at clinical education sites. In the event of an illness or an emergency, students are required to contact the DCE by email and clinical instructor *prior* to the beginning of clinical education start time. Documentation relating to the illness or emergency will be required to be submitted to the DCE within 3 days of the absence. The student will be required to make up any clinical hours missed. Upon immediate return, the student must meet with the clinical instructor to identify make-up clinical education time(s) and notify the DCE in writing. Even though clinical hours will be made up, the missed clinical hours will be recorded and deducted from the total hours on the Program attendance log. Students who do not report for class/clinical or leave early without proper notification are subject to discipline due to unprofessional behaviors. Clinical makeup hours will be scheduled at the clinical instructor's convenience and may include evenings or weekends. Makeup clinical hours are not credited back to the student's overall hours allowed.

Students are required to provide their own transportation to any agency or institution included in curriculum requirements. This includes but is not limited to all community service/education, clinical rotations, workshops, and conferences.

Students absent from an examination will receive a zero for the grade unless other arrangements are made with the individual instructor before the graded activity is conducted. This notification should occur from the student's college email account to the instructor's college email. Early examinations, of any kind, or other graded activity will not be given. If a student arrives late to an exam and the exam is already in progress, the student will not be allowed to enter the classroom. The student must go directly to make arrangements with the Program faculty to make up the exam. The student will have 10% deducted from their exam grade. If a student is absent for the entire day, the student must take the exam upon returning with the 10% deduction implemented. Please refer to the Late Assignment & Examination section for detailed information.

Due to the nature of the Program, holidays and vacations observed by UA Cossatot may not coincide with the course schedule of the Program. Specifics will be discussed and outlined in detail but may change at the discretion of the Program Director as necessary to accommodate the course materials.

## **Notification of Absence or Tardy**

In the event of an absence or tardy, the student should make contact with the instructor by email, using college accounts, prior to the scheduled start time of class. In the case of an emergency, notification should be made as soon as possible. When the student is scheduled for clinical education rotation or a community service/education event, the student must notify the DCE and the clinical education site of the absence/tardy at least one hour before the scheduled time of arrival. Notification of absence or tardy must be provided by phone to the clinical site and by email to DCE, using college accounts. Failure to do so will result in an incident report and may result in disciplinary action. Students are to make notifications for themselves. Family members or friends should not call in for the student unless the student cannot call in for himself or herself (i.e., accident, hospitalized, etc.).

During times of clinical site closure for holidays, the student must notify the DCE by email using college accounts to arrange for clinical make-up hours. In the event of inclement weather or other unexpected college or clinical site closure, students should follow the attendance policy and use good judgment about safe travel. Any absence or tardy times will be deducted from the absence hours allowed in the Program regardless of reason. An unscheduled absence or tardy from clinical rotations must be made up and time will be deducted from the absence hours allowed in the Program, despite time made up.

## **Rescheduling of Classes**

In the event a faculty member must cancel a scheduled class meeting, the faculty member will notify the Program Director. The Program Director or other Program faculty/staff will notify students by email of any class cancelation or rescheduling. Efforts will be made to reschedule classes at the most convenient time.

## **Laboratory Protocol**

Laboratory sessions will begin promptly at indicated start times. Students should be prepared in specified lab attire prior to the beginning of the lab. Changing areas are available in the restrooms located near the Program classrooms and laboratories. Lab clothing must consist of athletic shorts, t-shirts, tank tops, sports bras/swimsuit tops, and cover-up clothing. Athletic shorts must be fingertip length or longer and must fit loosely in order to allow easy accessibility of the entire leg. Sports bras/swimsuit tops must be able to open fully in the back and neck but must be modest in covering the breast. Lab clothing should cover private body parts and undergarments should be worn at all times. Clothing to cover up should be worn between lab activities. Students should be prepared to expose the entire treatment area. Privacy and modesty will be respected and maintained as appropriate draping methods will be used. Additionally, students should be prepared for lab with appropriate textbooks, notes, materials, and/or printouts. The laboratories should be kept clean at all times. Plinths, mats, treatment tables, and treatment equipment utilized must be sanitized daily after use. Soiled linen should be placed in the soiled linen hamper identified (Program Infection Control Policy).

## **Laboratory Access**

The PTA Program will provide opportunities to students for lab practice outside of scheduled class times. Students will have access to laboratory 119 for practice outside of class time through a code-entry door lock during open campus hours: Monday-Thursday 8 am - 9 pm and Friday 8 am - 4:30 pm. Each student is issued a unique code for entry. This code is removed when the student leaves the Program. All electrotherapeutic modalities are kept behind a separate key-locked door. Students are not provided access to this equipment without faculty supervision. Access to electrotherapeutic modalities may be gained by scheduling in advance with a Program faculty. Students may not engage in lab practice of electrotherapeutic modalities without faculty supervision at all times. Students may engage in other lab practice without direct line of sight supervision of the faculty, with the expectation that students do not perform skills they are not academically prepared for, and all students acting as patients for lab practice communicate any prior existing health conditions before engaging in lab practice. This expectation is communicated to the students by the core faculty in each class. Faculty members provide additional supervised open lab time upon request and as deemed necessary by the instructor. Program skills coaches,

who are licensed clinicians, may be scheduled for additional practice and/or supervision. Students are advised not to practice skills alone in the lab.

## **Safety**

Safety is of utmost importance during the student's education experience. Guidelines are set forth as a tool to allow the use of the facilities, equipment, and modalities for optimal learning opportunities. The classroom and laboratories are for instruction and practice. For the safety of students and instructors alike, no horseplay will be allowed.

Students and instructors participating in clinical activities or laboratory experiences are required to observe standard precautions and safety guidelines, outlined by the U.S. Public Health Service, when handling or anticipation of handling body fluids or blood products.

In order to ensure the safety of individuals, students are instructed in safety measures prior to the provision of practice scenarios. Furthermore, students are instructed on the indications, precautions, contraindications, and potential risks of said activity. Students are graded on their ability to assess and consider safety criteria during assessment periods. Students are advised to notify the instructor of contraindications or documented health conditions, in which the student may need to refrain from participation (i.e. pregnancy, illness). *Students have the right to terminate treatment interventions/modalities if negative effects begin.* During clinical education experiences, if a student is deemed to be unsafe by the clinical instructor, faculty, or facility employees, the student may be removed from the clinical experience immediately.

Students are expected to treat all lab equipment with care and as advised by manufacturers and/or instructors. Laboratory equipment is for the use of skill development only and not personal use. It should be used with the supervision of instructors/clinicians or by approval of faculty. All electrical equipment should be used in the presence of faculty/clinicians at all times. Students are advised not to practice skills alone in the lab.

Equipment may not be removed from the lab unless under the direction of the Program Director. Equipment will be calibrated/inspected annually and as indicated to keep them in working order. Wheelchairs and other non-electrical equipment will be inspected each semester by Program faculty and repairs or replacements will be ordered as necessary. If a concern with equipment arises, it should be reported immediately to the Program faculty. To maintain equipment, cleanliness is imperative. Maintaining a clean classroom and laboratory improves the safety of



faculty, staff, and students. Students will be responsible for straightening the lab and classroom at the end of each use. Equipment and supplies must be returned to their proper place of storage after use. Campus maintenance will manage the larger cleaning responsibilities; however, they do not organize and clean specific lab equipment. The students will manage this with the direction and supervision of the Program faculty. Systems, such as log sheets, may be implemented for cleaning/upkeep, as instructors deem necessary.

Campus safety of all students is coordinated under the direction of the College's safety and security structure. Fire alarms and detection equipment are inspected regularly, and resource officers are available to students during campus hours to walk students to and from their cars if needed. The College's Emergency Guide is continually assessed and updated on a regular basis. The guide can be found on the College website at the Emergency Guide. The College has an emergency notification system that will text and email all registered students and faculty in the case of an emergency.

### **Program Reference Materials**

Program reference materials will be maintained in room #120. These materials must be signed out with Program faculty or staff and must remain on campus at all times. In the event that reference materials are damaged, lost, or stolen, the student's account will be charged for replacement(s).

### **Personal Property**

Students are advised to secure their valuables at all times in the lockers that are made available to students. The college and the Program do not accept responsibility for damage or loss of personal property.

### **Professional Liability Insurance**

Professional liability insurance is provided by the college and is included in the student tuition and fees. Program students are covered with \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 aggregate.

## **Health Insurance**

The college does not provide student health services on any of the campuses. Student health insurance is not required by the Program but is highly recommended. Health insurance will not be provided by UAC. Students will be responsible for the selection and premiums of their own health insurance policy if they so choose.

## **Immunization**

Program students are required to meet Medical Education immunization requirements communicated on the Program webpage. Additional vaccines and/or tests may be required per clinical facility guidelines of which all expenses will be covered by the student. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with all required immunizations deemed necessary by state, college, and clinical facility requirements. Any immunizations not maintained by the required deadline will result in the student not being allowed to attend the clinical setting and may result in removal from the Program.

## **Potential Health Risks**

It is imperative that students understand that they may encounter potential health risks due to the nature of the healthcare field. The risk for exposure to infections, viruses, and diseases is possible in the classroom, laboratory, and clinical rotation. Lab protocols and low student-to-faculty ratios are in place to minimize these risks. Routine cleaning is used to minimize exposure in the classroom and laboratory settings. Students are instructed in the use of standard precautions and handwashing as their first line of defense. It is possible that students will be exposed to infected bloodborne pathogens, bodily fluids, needle sticks, and/or inhalation of microorganisms. Students are educated about their individual responsibility to maintain safe practices.

In case of an exposure, the student will immediately report to the clinical instructor any incident of exposure. The student and clinical instructor are responsible for notifying the DCE by email and the facility infection control coordinator. Specific recommendations will be made, by infection control, according to the type of exposure and infectious agent involved. A record of the incident will be maintained with the student files.

## **Hazardous Materials**

The storage of hazardous materials will be consistent with OSHA requirements. Standard OSHA workplace inspections will occur as part of the UAC campus policies. An MSDS manual will be maintained and stored in a cabinet in PTA classroom #119.

## **Accident and Illness**

Accidents occurring during theory, clinical, labs, conferences, or other scheduled activities must be reported immediately to the instructor. In the event a student requires medical attention, the student will be responsible for all charges incurred. If the student is ill and unable to attend class, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor and the student will be held to the absence policy of the Program. It is expected that students will not attend class and/or clinical if they have a fever of 100.4 or higher or are vomiting.

UA Cossatot also provides a \$10,000 student accident policy. In the event of an accident during a college-sponsored activity, students will be covered up to \$10,000 according to the provisions of the policy. Please note this is a secondary policy and any insurance coverage a student has in place will be considered the primary insurance. UAC files claims on behalf of the student but cannot guarantee payment or that claims will be approved. For further information, please contact the Human Resources office at 870-584-1104. All students are encouraged to carry medical and/or accidental insurance but it is not required.

## **Emergency Procedures**

In the event of an emergency on campus, students are advised to report the emergency to a faculty member or college staff. If another student is present, send the other student to make the appropriate notification. If appropriate, call for medical assistance, assess vital signs, and begin CPR if appropriate. A first aid kit is located at the Ashdown campus front desk and an automated external defibrillator (AED) is located on the wall across from the front desk. In an off-campus emergency, the clinical instructor will assist the student to emergency services, when in a hospital setting, or notify 911 for all other facilities. Students will be responsible for any charges incurred for emergency care and treatment. Emergency information and evacuation routes are posted in each room.

## **Confidentiality**

The Program will maintain student privacy and confidentiality as required by federal regulations. Student academic records may not be discussed with others without a signed release.

Grades will be posted on Blackboard, which is password-protected for each individual student. Feedback for student grades will be provided in a manner consistent with maintaining confidentiality. If discussion regarding grades is necessary, the instructor and student will meet privately. Clinical instructors must also maintain student confidentiality; student skills, patient interactions, progress, or lack of progress may not be discussed with others except for the student, CCCE, DCE, and/or Program director.

Students must also maintain the confidentiality of patients during all clinical education experiences.

All patient/client information is completely confidential. Any breach of patient/client confidentiality will result in immediate dismissal from the Program and may be punishable in a court of law. Students are instructed in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) at which time they will learn the proper use and handling of confidential patient information. HIPAA guidelines are clear and must be strictly followed. Students must not discuss patient/client information with anyone except clinical instructors and only those directly involved in the patient/client's care. Students may only access information pertaining to patients/clients assigned to them, while in the clinical setting and/or when accessing electronic simulated charting.

## **Infection Control**

The Program has established procedures to ensure a clean environment and to facilitate infection control. Program faculty are responsible for assuring infection control procedures are enforced and may implement tools to ensure compliance. Plinths, mats, treatment tables, and treatment equipment utilized must be sanitized daily after use. Linen such as sheets, towels, and pillowcases will be available for use in the laboratory for practical scenarios and practice. These are not for personal use. Soiled linen should be placed in the soiled linen hamper identified. Program students will be assigned responsibilities regarding cleaning of soiled linens on the UAC campus. Students will rotate in this responsibility and the use of a log may be implemented to ensure this is done. The linens should be washed, dried, and immediately folded upon return to the laboratory. If any

student has a special need for specific detergents, they must notify the instructor. Any special soaps must be purchased by the student.

Program students will follow universal precautions and guidelines regarding bloodborne pathogens. Because many viruses and bacteria are transmitted via body fluids, students will wash their hands before and after each patient. All body fluids shall be considered potentially infectious materials and universal precautions shall be used. Students should wear gloves anytime they are in contact with body fluids or are likely to become soiled. Disposable gloves such as surgical or examination gloves shall be replaced as soon as feasible when they are contaminated, torn, punctured, or their ability to function as a barrier is compromised. All procedures involving blood or other potentially infectious materials shall be performed in such a manner as to minimize splashing, spraying, spattering, and generation of droplets of these substances. Masks, in combination with eye protection devices such as goggles or glasses with solid side shields, or chin-length face shields, shall be worn whenever splashes, spray, spatter, or droplets of blood or other potentially infectious materials may be generated and eye, nose, or mouth contamination can be reasonably anticipated. Specimens of blood or other potentially infectious materials shall be placed in a container, which prevents leakage during collection, handling, processing, transport, or shipping. All personal protective equipment shall be removed prior to leaving the work area and shall be placed in the appropriate designated area or labeled container for storage, washing, decontamination, or disposal.

## **Recording & Photography**

The Program does not allow audio or video recording of instructors, by students, at any time. In the event an instructor desires any type of recording, another Program faculty will assist. A student will be subject to disciplinary actions if caught recording an instructor without expressed permission. Simulated patient scenarios will occur during classroom and/or laboratory. During this time, students may be video recorded or have still pictures taken, for grading and/or educational purposes. Students may be assigned projects to capture still images, video recording, or audio recording of classmates for simulated patient scenarios, treatment interventions, and/or educational training material. Patient/client interactions may not be recorded without the expressed and written consent of the facility and patient. Images or video recordings may not be posted on social media sites. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

## **Electronic Devices**

All electronic devices that may disrupt instruction must be turned off or silenced, not on vibrate and placed in lockers during scheduled classroom or laboratory hours. Electronic devices are not allowed during off-campus Program related activities, including clinical education experiences. This may include but is not limited to cell phones, pagers, smart watches, and/or music players of any kind. Students may check their electronic devices during breaks or between classes. If a student has extenuating circumstances and will be expecting a call, the student must notify the instructor prior to the start of class. If cell phone use is requested by the clinical site, the student will need to get approval from the DCE prior to use. Use of the above-mentioned during class or clinical without expressed permission will result in disciplinary action.

At specified times, instructors may allow use of tablets pertaining to subject matter. Any student using tablets for other purposes during class will be subject to disciplinary action. Tablets should be in airplane mode when utilized in class for note taking purposes. It is unacceptable for a student to take a photograph or screenshot of any part of an exam or quiz while taking the exam or during review process. This behavior is considered cheating and will result in dismissal from the Program.

## **Social Media**

Due to the high standards placed on those in the medical profession, including programs of study, this policy applies to the UA Cossatot Medical Education Division regarding any written electronic communication published online regarding program related matters that students would not otherwise be privy to unless admitted to a medical education program. Confidentiality of students, faculty, staff, and clinical clients is to be maintained at all times. Client information or clinical situations should never be discussed on social networking sites. The use of/posting of unauthorized (where written permission has not been obtained from involved parties) pictures, logos, videos, or UA Cossatot MED materials is strictly prohibited. Students shall not use online social networking to harass, threaten, or discriminate against other students, faculty, staff, or any member of the public. Text, photos, emails, or videos that are demeaning, belittling, or insulting to faculty, staff, or students or are lewd, offensive, and/or unprofessional may not be used/posted. Personal information about students, faculty, staff, and clinical sites will not be shared on networking sites

without written permission from all involved parties. Violation of any online social network policy will result in disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal from the Program.

## **Informed Consent**

Students are educated throughout the Program of the patient's right to refuse participation in any component of clinical education. Informed consent must be provided with patient interactions. Each clinical education site should maintain policies on the use of human subjects for educational purposes. A facility representative should review all policies with students at the clinical education site. Students are instructed to, and are required to, identify themselves as a "Student Physical Therapist Assistant" upon each encounter with patients.

## **Substance Abuse**

The Program complies with the UAC Medical Education Division Substance Abuse Policy, which can be found on the UAC Medical Education and the PTA Program webpages at <https://www.cccua.edu/programs-of-study/medical-education>

## **Background Checks**

The Program complies with the UAC Medical Education Division Background Check Policy which can be found on the UAC Medical Education and the PTA Program webpages at <https://www.cccua.edu/programs-of-study/medical-education>

## **Essential Functions**

Students should be aware of the mental and physical abilities required in the Program. These same abilities will likely be needed for a successful professional career as a physical therapist assistant.

1. Working in a standing position and walking for extended periods.
2. Lifting and transferring patients up to 6 inches from a bending position, then pushing/pulling/pivoting weight up to 3 feet.
3. Lifting and transferring patients to accomplish bed-to-chair and chair-to-bed transfers.
4. Applying up to 10 pounds of pressure to bleeding sites and in performing CPR.

5. Responding and reacting immediately to auditory instruction, requesting, and/or monitoring equipment, performing auscultation without auditory impairment.
6. Performing up to twelve hours in a clinical education setting.
7. Performing close and distant visual activities, which may include but are not limited to people, paperwork, objects, depth, and color perception.
8. Discriminating between sharp/dull and hot/cold when using hands.
9. Performing mathematical calculations for modality preparation/administration.
10. Communicating effectively, both orally and in writing, using appropriate grammar and vocabulary.
11. Recognizing authority and following the appropriate chain of command.
12. Reacting appropriately and professionally under stressful situations.

### **Waiver of Liability**

Program students understand that participation in laboratory, classroom, and on and off-campus activities carries certain risks that cannot be eliminated regardless of the care taken to avoid injuries. The specific risks vary from one activity to another and may include, but are not limited to, minor injuries such as scratches, bruises, and sprains; major injuries such as eye injury or loss of sight, joint or back injuries, heart attacks, and concussions; and catastrophic injuries including paralysis or death. The college and the Program will not be held responsible in the event of injury or death. Students participating in the Program assume any risks involved.

### **Medical Education Appeal Process for Students with Disciplinary Action**

Students who wish to appeal disciplinary action taken by the Program should follow the process outlined in the UAC Academic Catalog titled Medical Education Appeal Process.

\*Retaliation is strictly prohibited when any person is filing any complaint or grievance.

### **Program Complaints**

Students are encouraged to speak with course instructors regarding concerns about the courses. Complaints about the Program, curriculum, policies, procedures, Program faculty, Director of Clinical Education, or Program students may be made directly to the Program Director. Complaints



about the clinical education portion of the curriculum, Program students during clinical education placements, or clinical instructors may be made directly to the Director of Clinical Education who may report to the Program Director. Documentation of complaints will be maintained by the Program Director for five years. The following steps should be used in any complaint or grievance regarding the Program:

1. The individual must present the complaint in writing to the Program Director.
2. The Program Director has five (5) business days in which to investigate and respond in writing.
3. If not satisfied, the individual may appeal within five (5) business days to the Program Director who will submit the appeal to the Division Chair of Medical Education who must respond in writing within five (5) business days.
4. If unsatisfied with this result, the individual may submit a grievance following the Community Complaints process published in the UAC Academic Catalog.

Complaints about the Program Director may be made directly to the Division Chair of Medical Education. Complainant anonymity will be maintained as much as the complaint process allows.

\*Retaliation is strictly prohibited when any person is filing any complaint or grievance.

Jennifer Sanderson  
Program Director  
[jsanderson@cccua.edu](mailto:jsanderson@cccua.edu)  
870-584-1497

Heather Orr  
Director of Clinical Education  
[horr@cccua.edu](mailto:horr@cccua.edu)  
870-584-1487

Kimberly Dickerson  
Division Chair of Medical Education  
[kdickerson@cccua.edu](mailto:kdickerson@cccua.edu)  
870-584-1147

## **Filing a Complaint with CAPTE**

CAPTE Contact Information:

APTA Headquarters  
Accreditation Department  
3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100  
Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085  
[accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org)

## **Chain of Command**

If a student has a problem with an instructor, then they should follow the chain of command until the problem is resolved. Students should attempt to resolve the problem with the instructor first, and then follow the chain of command listed below:

1. Course Instructor or DCE, if related to clinical education
2. Program Director – Jennifer Sanderson
3. Division Chair – Kimberly Dickerson
4. Vice Chancellor for Academics– Ashley Aylett
5. Chancellor – Steve Cole

If the student has a complaint against a course instructor, it is acceptable to proceed to the next contact in the chain of command. Students have the right to grieve actions by employees or other students as outlined in the UAC Academic Catalog, Student Grievance Procedures: Non-Grade Issues.

\*Retaliation is strictly prohibited when any person is filing any complaint or grievance.

## **Outside of Due Process**

Anything that occurs outside of due process will be addressed according to the Program Complaints section of this handbook and/or Community Complaints policies as outlined in the UAC Academic Catalog.

\*Retaliation is strictly prohibited when any person is filing any complaint or grievance.

## **Clinical Education Readiness**

It is the responsibility of core faculty to determine whether students are competent and safe before progressing to clinical education using the Clinical Education Readiness Table. Clinical education readiness is determined by each student passing all lab practical examinations by scoring a minimum of 76% and meeting all critical skills and critical safety elements, passing each course with an overall average minimum of 76% and a written exam average minimum of 76%. In addition each student must be deemed at intermediate level with all professional behaviors outlined on the Professional Behaviors Tool.

## Professional Organizations

*American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)*  
3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100  
Alexandria, VA 22305-3085  
(800) 999-2782  
[www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org)

*Arkansas Physical Therapy Association (ArPTA)*  
P.O. Box 202  
Conway, AR 72033  
(501) 499-6163  
[www.arpta.org](http://www.arpta.org)

*Arkansas State Board of Physical Therapy (ArPTB)*  
P.O. Box 250254  
Little Rock, AR 72225  
(501) 228-7100  
[www.arptb.org](http://www.arptb.org)

*Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy*  
124 West Street South, Third Floor  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(703) 299-3100  
[www.fsbpt.org](http://www.fsbpt.org)

*Louisiana Physical Therapy Association*  
8550 United Plaza Blvd, Suite 1001  
Baton Rouge, LA 70809  
(225) 922-4614  
[www.aptala.org](http://www.aptala.org)

*Louisiana Physical Therapy Board*  
2110 Pinhook Rd., Suite 202  
Lafayette, LA 70508  
(337) 262-1043  
[www.laptboard.org](http://www.laptboard.org)

*Oklahoma Physical Therapy Association*  
P.O. Box 5354  
Edmond, OK 73083  
(405) 562-1280  
[www.okpt.org](http://www.okpt.org)

*Oklahoma State Medical Board*  
101 NE 51<sup>st</sup> Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-1821  
(405) 962-1400  
[http://www.okmedicalboard.org/physical\\_therapists](http://www.okmedicalboard.org/physical_therapists)

*Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners*  
*(Executive Council of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Examiners)*  
333 Guadalupe, Suite 2-510  
Austin, TX 78701-3942  
(512) 305-6900  
[www.ptot.texas.gov](http://www.ptot.texas.gov)

*Texas Physical Therapy Association (TPTA)*  
166 Hargraves Drive, Suite C-400-148  
Austin, TX 78737  
(512) 477-1818  
[www.tpta.org](http://www.tpta.org)

## **CLINICAL EDUCATION:**

### **Clinical Instructor Expectations**

The Program expects clinical instructors to provide a positive learning environment, appropriately supervise students, provide constructive feedback, be clinically competent, and be effective role models. The Program insists that clinical instructors are licensed physical therapists or licensed physical therapist assistants, with a minimum of one year of full-time, or equivalent, post-licensure clinical experience. The Program provides this information to clinical instructors and/or clinical education sites via the public website; a link to this website is provided in all faculty email signature lines as well as during clinical education slot requests and placement notification emails. The Director of Clinical Education (DCE) is responsible for ensuring the credentials, qualifications, and clinical competence of all clinical instructors. Clinical instructors are expected to complete clinical education paperwork and documents timely, which are reviewed by the DCE to ensure the appropriateness of supervision, licensure, and years of practice. On the first day of clinical education experiences, students provide the clinical instructor with forms that must be completed and submitted to the learning management system the same day.

Clinical instructors are evaluated by students and the DCE through several methods. After the first clinical practicum, students will complete an end of course survey. After the second and third clinical practicums, students will complete the Student Evaluation of Clinical Education Experiences. Both of these forms addresses the attributes and engagement of the clinical instructor. The Program will also focus on how the clinical instructor helps the student toward skill mastery. In addition to student feedback, the DCE performs site visits and maintains contact with the student and the clinical instructor through phone calls, face-to-face meetings, virtual meetings, and emails. The PTA MACS is utilized to assess the student clinical performance, as it is regionally the most commonly used tool for PTA students. In the event a CI is unfamiliar with the MACS or has questions related to grading, training will be provided by program faculty at a convenient time for the clinical instructor. The DCE determines that the PTA MACS has been completed correctly via meetings and digital submission of skills, progress reports, and master list.

## **Clinical Instructor Resources**

The Program maintains clinical instructor resources including, but not limited to, Clinical Practicum Syllabi, the Program Student Handbook, and other helpful information at <https://public.exxat.com/D002/UARK%20-%20Cossatot%20Community%20College>

## **Clinical Education Paperwork**

Students must submit all required clinical education paperwork to the Director of Clinical Education in order to progress in the program. Without the necessary paperwork, the DCE will be unable to verify the completion of required skills; therefore, the student will not be able to demonstrate successful course completion.

## **Clinical Education Completion**

Students must complete all clinical hours and all clinical education experiences regardless of being graded as “Entry-level” or “Excellent” in earlier clinical practicums.

## **Confidentiality during Clinical Education**

The Program maintains student privacy and confidentiality as required by federal regulations. Clinical instructors must also maintain student confidentiality. Student skills, patient interactions, progress, or lack of progress may not be discussed with others except for the student, CCCE, clinical instructor, Director of Clinical Education, and/or Program Director. It is the responsibility of the CCCE and the clinical instructor to ensure that any information that the College provides to the clinical site shall be treated confidentially. The clinical agency must also comply with student privacy and confidentiality in the sharing of information with any individuals not directly involved in the educational learning experience.

Students must also maintain the confidentiality of patients during all clinical education experiences. All patient/client information is completely confidential. Any breach of patient/client confidentiality will result in immediate dismissal from the program and may be punishable in a court of law. Students must not discuss patient/client information with anyone except the clinical instructor and those directly involved in the patient/client’s care. Students may only access

information pertaining to patients/clients assigned to them while in the clinical setting and/or when accessing electronic simulated charting.

### **Informed Consent during Clinical Education**

Students are educated throughout the Program of the patient's right to refuse participation in any component of clinical education. Informed consent must be provided with all patient interactions. Each clinical education site should maintain policies on the use of human subjects for educational purposes. A facility representative should review all policies with students at the clinical education site. Students and their clinical instructors are expected to identify the student appropriately prior to initiating patient care and obtain consent from the patient. Patients will never be penalized for refusing student care.

## **Minimum Skills List**

By the end of the terminal clinical education experience, the student will demonstrate “Entry-level” or “Above entry-level” (✓ or +) in the PTA MACS evaluation tool as identified in the Minimum Skills List which can be found at <https://public.exxat.com/D002/UARK%20-%20Cossatot%20Community%20College>.

## **Clinical Education Professional Behaviors**

Professional behaviors by students are expected at all times. Students must follow professional standards set forth by the program and in line with the APTA Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant when in the classroom, laboratory, clinical education settings, and any other program activities. Professional behaviors will be assessed throughout the program including the clinical education component utilizing the PTA MACS. The expected levels of Professional Behavior are outlined below.

By the end of Practicum II, students are expected to achieve, at minimum, as “Entry Level” rating in 100% of the professional behaviors (1-11) as outlined in the PTA MACS

By the end of Practicum III, students are expected to maintain the minimum rating of “Entry Level” rating in 100% of the professional behaviors (1-11) as outlined in the PTA MACS

*Please refer to Section I Professional Behaviors in the PTA MACS for identified behaviors.*



## Clinical Education Attendance

Students are required to attend a minimum of a 40-hour workweek during full-time clinical education practicums. This may include weekdays, evenings, and weekends, which may in some instances exceed a typical 40-hour workweek. Students are not allowed to request time off or ask to leave early without submitting a written request via email to the DCE. Questions about scheduling or student hours should be directed to the DCE.

Students will be considered tardy if arriving after the assigned time. If tardy, one hour will be deducted from the total number of hours allowed; no exceptions will be made. Any time missed following the first hour will be deducted on half hour increments. Students leaving early will be deducted on the half-hour. Time will be kept according to the facility clock. Students who are tardy or leave early shall report to the clinical instructor and DCE before or after the scheduled meeting time to complete the necessary documentation.

While students may miss up to 40 hours while in the program, of those 40 hours only 12 hours may be missed at clinical education sites. In the event of an illness or emergency, students are required to contact the DCE and clinical instructor *prior* to the beginning of clinical education start time. Documentation relating to the emergency will be required to be submitted to the DCE within 3 days of the absence. The loss of clinical hours due to facility closures, holidays, weather, or staffing will be considered missed clinical hours and must be made up. The student will be required to make up any clinical hours missed prior to the scheduled end of that clinical education experience. Upon immediate return, the student must meet with the clinical instructor to identify make-up clinical education hours and notify the DCE in writing. Even though clinical hours will be made up, the missed clinical hours will be recorded and deducted from the total hours on the program attendance log. Students who do not report for class/clinical without proper notification are subject to discipline due to unprofessional behaviors and may result in dismissal from the Program. Clinical makeup hours will be scheduled at the clinical instructor's convenience and may include evenings or weekends. All clinical hours must be made up prior to beginning the next course. Makeup clinical hours are not credited back to the student's overall hours allowed.

Students are required to provide their own transportation to any agency or institution included in curriculum requirements. This includes but is not limited to all community service/education, clinical education experiences, workshops, and conferences.

Due to the nature of the program, holidays and vacations observed by UA Cossatot may not coincide with the course schedule of the program. Specifics will be discussed and outlined in detail but may change at the discretion of the program director as necessary to accommodate the course materials.

### **Clinical Education Notification of Absence or Tardy**

The expectation is that students are not tardy at clinical education experiences; each tardy to clinical practicums will result in written counseling. Per program discipline policy, three written counseling's, during the duration of the program, will result in dismissal from the program. While at a clinical education experience, students must notify the DCE and the clinical education site of the absence or tardy at least one hour before the scheduled time of arrival. Notification of absence or tardy must be provided by phone to the clinical site and by email to DCE, using college accounts. Failure to do so will result in an incident report and disciplinary action. In the case of an emergency, notification should be made as soon as possible. Documentation of the emergency will be required. Students are to make notifications for themselves. Family members or friends may not call in for the student, unless the student cannot call in for himself or herself (i.e., accident, hospitalized, etc.). Absences/tardies are for illness and emergencies only. Doctor's appointments and such should not be scheduled during scheduled clinical hours.

Students must notify the Director of Clinical Education, regardless of CI approval, prior to abandoning a clinical education site. Abandonment will be defined as leaving the clinical education site or failure to arrive as scheduled with appropriate prior authorization. Any abandonment of one's professional responsibilities to the patient and facility is considered a serious violation of professional ethics. The student will receive a failing grade if they leave a clinical education site or fail to arrive as scheduled without notifying the DCE and will be administratively withdrawn from the program.

In the event of inclement weather or other unexpected college or clinical site closure, students should follow the attendance policy, requiring notification to the DCE, and use good judgment about safe travel. Any absence or tardy times will be deducted from the absence hours allowed in the program regardless of reason. Unscheduled absence or tardiness from clinical experiences must be made up and time will be deducted from the absence hours allowed in the program, despite time made up.

## **Email Communication Expectations during Clinical Education**

Students are expected to check their student email at a minimum of twice a day during clinical rotations. Emails that require a response, should be responded to on the same day unless a different time has been specified. Responses to individual emails are expected to verify receipt of information. Failure to respond appropriately to time-sensitive requests, made by faculty, will result in disciplinary action.

## **Recording & Photography in Clinical Education**

The program does not allow audio or video recording of course instructors, by students, at any time. In the event a clinical instructor desires any type of recording, expressed and written consent must be obtained prior to doing so. A student will be subject to disciplinary actions if caught recording a clinical instructor without consent. Patient/client interactions may not be recorded without the expressed and written consent of the facility and patient. Images or video recordings must not be posted on public or social media sites. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

## **Electronic Devices during Clinical Education**

All electronic devices that may disrupt must be turned off or silenced, not on vibrate, during off-campus program-related activities, including clinical education experiences. This may include but is not limited to cell phones, pagers, smart watches, earbuds, and/or music players of any kind. Students may check their electronic devices during breaks. In the event that cell phone use is requested by the clinical education facility, the student must obtain approval from the Director of Clinical Education prior to use. Use of the above-mentioned devices during clinical education experiences without expressed permission will result in disciplinary action.

Tablets and laptop computers may be utilized by clinical education facilities, at the discretion and direction of the clinical instructor. Students must be certain that the use of tablets and laptops coincides with documentation, and/or clinical instructor guidelines. Any student using tablets or laptops for other purposes during clinical education will be subject to disciplinary action. It is unacceptable for a student to take a photograph or screenshot of any patient information. This behavior is considered a breach of confidentiality and would result in dismissal from the program.

## **Electronic Document Management for Clinical Education**

Students maintain access to their electronic documents via a web-based document management system. This system is used to house clinical placement data, background checks, immunization records, drug screens, and a number of other documents for Program students. Students are required to maintain up-to-date records in the clinical education software and provide copies to facilities at their request.

## **Clinical Education - Student Concerns**

Students are responsible for discussing/disclosing any problems or issues that may arise while placed at a clinical education experience with the Director of Clinical Education (DCE). Discussions should first be conducted with the clinical instructor on site. The DCE is available to assist the student in planning how to express concerns or issues. If the issue cannot be resolved between the student and clinical instructor, the DCE will take appropriate steps to remedy the situation, which may include consulting the program director.

## **Clinical Education Progression**

During clinical education, if student performance is not satisfactory at mid-term or at any point in the clinical education experience, the DCE must be notified immediately. The DCE will remain in close communication with the clinical instructor to discuss student progress. The DCE will review the circumstances and consider all aspects of the unsatisfactory nature to determine if the student will continue with the clinical education experience or if the student should be removed. If the decision is made for student removal, the Program will comply with the remediation policy for clinical education. All decisions and plans for students will be provided to students in writing and a copy maintained in the student record. Failure to demonstrate acceptable progress with remediation will result in failure of the clinical education experience. In the event a student is unable to successfully progress in the clinical education portion of the Program; the student will be dismissed from the Program.

## **Clinical Education Termination**

Clinical education is the opportunity to put academic learning into clinical practice. Applied knowledge, clinical decision-making, and critical thinking are paramount to being a successful student physical therapist assistant. It is necessary to demonstrate proficiency in both the clinical and academic components of the Program. Students who do not demonstrate proficiency within the timelines established for clinical education risk failure. The clinical education site may terminate a clinical education experience at any time if performance is not satisfactory and/or threatens the patient's treatment/safety. Termination may also occur if the student violates a facility policy or procedure. Examples include but are not limited to drug use, theft of property, unsafe practice, unprofessional behavior, violation of patient's rights, violation of ethics, excessive tardiness/absenteeism, or HIPAA violations. It is important for students to be familiar with facility policies and procedures, particularly policies related to patient confidentiality. Depending on the nature of the problem, which resulted in the termination of the clinical education experience, the student may be withdrawn immediately from the Program and not provided the opportunity for readmission into the Program. Administrative withdrawal shall occur if a student is deemed unsafe.