

## **PHYSICAL THERAPY DEPARTMENT TECHNICAL STANDARDS**

### **Introduction**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) (Public Law 101-336) was established to empower qualified persons with disabilities to seek employment opportunities, transportation and access to programs and services without fear of discrimination. These laws provide a framework for qualified individuals with documented disabilities to request reasonable accommodation needed to participate in an educational program.

The Physical Therapy Department at D'Youville is prepared to make reasonable accommodations to allow students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate and succeed in the academic program. An accommodation must be reasonable and may not be provided if it fundamentally alters the nature of the curriculum, including the didactic component, laboratory sessions, or supervised practice experiences, requires substantial program modification or lowering of academic standards, causes undue hardship for D'Youville or affiliating agencies, or jeopardizes the health or safety of the student or others.

If the student feels he or she meets the requirements of the ADA and will require ADA accommodation, the disability must be supported by medical documentation **prior to** receiving accommodation. To receive accommodation, the student must take the responsibility to make the department aware of the need for accommodation by notifying the Physical Therapy Department chair, **and** the student must contact the Disability Services office at D'Youville and complete the process required. The Disability Services office will then contact the Physical Therapy Department, and reasonable accommodations will be made based on the recommendations of the disability office. Some accommodations may be the fiscal responsibility of the student.

No otherwise qualified person shall be excluded from participation, admission, or matriculation, or denied benefits solely by reason of his or her disability. The Physical Therapy Department will not discriminate against qualified individuals but will expect applicants and students to meet certain minimum academic and technical standards.

## Technical Standards

The Physical Therapy program at D'Youville is a rigorous program that places specific requirements and demands on enrolled students. An objective of this program is to prepare graduates to enter a variety of employment settings and to render care to a wide spectrum of individuals. The technical standards set forth by the Physical Therapy Department identify the attributes needed to establish the knowledge, skills and values necessary to meet the standards of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) in order to achieve the **educational outcomes required for initial practice in physical therapy and for lifelong learning necessary to function within an ever-changing health care environment** and fulfill the Physical Therapy Department mission. The mission of the Physical Therapy Department at D'Youville is as follows: Consistent with the mission of D'Youville, the Department of Physical Therapy prepares students for professional success as doctors of physical therapy and leaders in their communities. The Department uses evidence-based learning and community service to develop student skills and contributes to the PT profession through faculty and student scholarly activity.

Full participation in the academic and supervised practice environments requires that students, with or without reasonable accommodation, possess abilities, attributes and skills in five major areas: (1) Sensory Processing; (2) Communication; (3) Motor/Strength/Coordination; (4) Conceptual/Integrative/Quantitative; and (5) Behavioral/Social. All these skills must be performed in a reasonable time frame required for clinical practice. Details regarding these essential abilities are found in the following paragraphs; they are not intended to be all inclusive.

### **Sensory Processing**

Candidates and students must:

1. have sufficient vision to be able to observe demonstrations or physical changes, such as in skin and musculature, or changes in other areas of the body, in lecture, lab and clinical settings in the program
2. have sufficient functional visual ability and processing to read printed material in both hard copy and electronic formats
3. have sufficient functional auditory acuity and processing to comprehend multiple sounds, such as one or more persons engaged in conversational speech, and to hear timers and alarms

### **Communication**

Candidates and students must:

1. be able to communicate effectively and sensitively, orally, in writing, and non-verbally with peers, faculty, staff, community partners, the general public and patients/clients, including individuals of different ages and from different cultural and social backgrounds
2. be able to understand, read, speak, and write the English language at a level consistent with competent professional practice, using appropriate grammar, spelling and vocabulary

### **Motor/Strength/Coordination**

Candidates and students must:

1. have sufficient dexterity, coordination and fine motor function to perform PT-related skills
2. have sufficient physical strength and endurance to carry equipment and supplies, lift and transfer patients and other items (up to 50 pounds), walk, bend, and stoop while carrying items, and sit and stand for long periods of time
3. have the capability to physically maneuver in required settings in a safe manner
4. have the ability to access transportation to attend classes and supervised practice experiences in a timely manner

### **Conceptual/Integrative/Quantitative**

Candidates and students must:

1. be able to utilize all assessment parameters to assess the physical status of the clients and implement a plan of care to achieve optimal health (e.g., obtaining the client's history, performing physical assessments and analysis of laboratory data)
2. have sufficient conceptual, integrative and quantitative abilities, including but not limited to measurement, calculations, reasoning, analysis and synthesis; additionally, a student must be able to understand spatial relationships related to patient care
3. have the ability to critically think, solve problems, and deal effectively with a variety of concrete and abstract variables in situations where limited standardization exists within reasonable time frames
4. have the ability to analyze, conceptualize and summarize complex relationships as ascertained from patient records, research studies, and other written reports and be able to communicate that information effectively
5. have the ability to learn and work effectively in both independent and collaborative situations
6. have the ability to execute multiple tasks simultaneously

## **Behavioral/Social**

Candidates and students must:

1. possess the emotional health required for utilization of his/her intellectual abilities
2. be able to exercise good judgment in the prompt completion of all academic and supervised practice responsibilities
3. have affective skills and appropriate demeanor and rapport that relate to professional education and quality patient/client care and customer relations
4. be able to develop mature, sensitive, ethical, and effective relationships with instructors, colleagues and patients/clients/customers
5. have the capacity (maturity, emotional stability) to adapt to change, maintain composure and display flexibility in the face of uncertainties and stressful situations
6. portray attributes of professionalism that include but are not limited to honesty, integrity, caring, respect, trustworthiness, competence, and responsibility to and for their instructors, colleagues and patients/clients/customers

## **Conclusion**

The D'Youville Physical Therapy Department and its sponsoring institutions will provide reasonable accommodations as needed to open the program to competitive, qualified individuals with disabilities. In doing so, however, the program and sponsoring institutions must maintain the integrity of the curriculum and preserve those elements deemed essential to the education of a physical therapist (which include the technical standards set forth above). The program and sponsoring institutions cannot compromise the health and safety of patients/clients/customers or students. It is inevitable that adherence to minimum requirements will disqualify some applicants and students, including some who have a disability. However, adherence to those requirements is necessary, as an applicant or student who is unable to meet the minimum academic and technical standards is not qualified for participation in the program or the practice of the profession.

## **Disability Statement**

D'Youville attempts to assist employees and students on individual concerns they may have while they work or learn at D'Youville. Individuals with disabilities, who provide appropriate documentation, will be provided with reasonable accommodations to assure access, independence and full participation in the mainstream of the educational and work process. For more information, contact the coordinator of accessibility resources at 716-829-7728.