



## Physical Therapy

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

### ***Technical Standards for Admission, Promotion, and Graduation***

#### **I. Introduction**

These technical standards support the admission, promotion and graduation of the University of Colorado School of Medicine Physical Therapy Program. Physical therapy is an intellectually, physically, and psychologically demanding profession. It is during the rigorous "lock-step" longitudinal curriculum that the student begins to develop the qualities necessary for the practice of physical therapy. Students acquire the foundation of knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviors needed throughout the physical therapist's professional career. Those abilities that physical therapists must possess to practice safely are reflected in the technical standards that follow. **Candidates for the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree must be able to meet these minimum standards, with or without reasonable accommodations, for successful completion of degree requirements** (see Section III).

#### **II. Standards**

##### **Observation**

Observation requires the functional use of vision, hearing and somatic sensations. A student must be able to observe lectures, laboratory dissection of cadavers, lecture and laboratory demonstrations. The student must be able to observe a patient accurately, observe digital and waveform readings and other graphic images to determine a patient's condition. Examples in which these observational skills are required include: palpation of peripheral pulses, bony prominences and ligamentous structures; visual and tactile evaluation for areas of inflammation and visual and tactile assessment of the presence and degree of edema or other changes in the skin and underlying tissues.

##### **Communication**

Communication includes: speech, language, reading, writing and computer literacy. Students must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients to elicit information regarding affect and functional activities, as well as perceive non-verbal communications. Students must also be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in person and in writing with other members of the health care community to convey information essential for safe and effective care.

## **Motor**

Students must possess sufficient motor function to elicit information from the patient examination, examples include: palpation, auscultation, tapping, manual muscle testing, and other examination maneuvers. Students must be able to execute movements required to provide general and therapeutic care, examples include: safely lifting, transferring and positioning large or immobile patients and guard during gait training, using assistive devices and orthotics. Students must also be able to learn to position and perform manual mobilization techniques, perform non-surgical wound debridement, and place electromyographic electrodes. Learning these skills requires coordination of both gross and fine muscular movement, sufficient strength, balance, proper body mechanics and the integrated use of touch and vision, or the functional equivalent.

During the curriculum, students are required to perform motor skills representative of licensed physical therapists working with patients in a variety of settings. The percentages listed are reflective of the amount of time that this activity may occur in any given day. However, at times, these skills may be called upon more or less often than indicated.

## **Intellectual-conceptual, integrative and quantitative abilities**

To effectively solve problems, students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize information in a timely fashion. For example, the student must be able to synthesize knowledge and integrate the relevant aspects of a patient's history and examination findings to develop an effective treatment program. In addition, students must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand spatial relationships of structures.

## **Behavioral and Social Attributes**

A student must possess the psychological ability required for the full utilization of their intellectual abilities, for the exercise of good judgment, for the prompt completion of all responsibilities inherent to diagnosis and care of patients, and for the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, colleagues and other health care providers. Students must be able to tolerate physically and mentally taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to a changing environment, display flexibility and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients. As a component of their education, students must demonstrate ethical behavior commensurate with profession of physical therapy.

## **III. Reasonable Accommodations**

The University of Colorado Physical Therapy Program welcomes qualified learners with disabilities and encourages early requests for accommodation. The program is committed to equal access through the use of reasonable accommodation who can perform the technical standards with or without accommodation. Candidates who, after review of the technical standards, determine that they require reasonable accommodation to fully engage in the program should contact The Office of Disability, Access, and Inclusion on the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus [disabilityresources@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:disabilityresources@cuanschutz.edu) or visit the website <https://www.cuanschutz.edu/offices/disability-resources-and-services> to schedule a confidential access consultation. Given the clinical nature of our program, time may be needed to create and implement the accommodations and accommodations are never

retroactive in nature; therefore, to ensure equal access to our program, timely requests are essential and encouraged.

CPI. American Physical Therapy Association, 2006

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(initial) I have read the Technical Standards and understand the minimum requirements. I know how to access accommodations if I determine I may need any to fully engage in the PT Program.

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(initial) I will contact the PT Program Student Services Coordinator and/or my faculty advisor within 5 business days if my ability to meet these minimum standards, with or without accommodation, should change while I am a student.