

Physical Therapist Assistant Faculty

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
What is a Physical Therapist Assistant?	3
Physical Therapist Assistant Job Description.....	5
Accreditation Status Statement.....	7
Philosophy and Mission.....	7
Physical Therapist Assistant Program Objectives	9
Overall Curriculum.....	11-12
Academic Policies.....	13
Attendance/Tardiness/Absences	13
Academic Standards.....	14
Grading Policy	14
Laboratory Competency Evaluation.....	14
Examinations.....	16
Progress Standards	17
Academic Warning	17
Probation.....	17
Suspension.....	18
Dismissal	19
Readmission	20
Removal from Internship	20
Appeal of Dismissal.....	21
Withdrawal.....	21
Degree Requirements.....	22
Instructors' Responsibilities to Students	23
Students' Responsibilities to Instructors	24
Clinical Policies	25
Attendance/Tardiness/Absences	25
Qualifications for Clinical Placement.....	25
Academic Standing	25
Health Requirements.....	26
Physical Therapist Assistant Technical Standards.....	27
Liability Insurance	28
Health Insurance	28
Accident Insurance.....	28
Transportation and other expenses.....	28
Dress Code.....	28-29
Confidentiality	29-30
Cancellation of Internship.....	30
Problem Resolution Procedure	30
Complaints	31
Clinical Standards	31
APTA Requirements.....	31
Clinical Contracts.....	31
Contract Responsibilities of Students to Clinical Sites	33

Levels of Clinical Experience.....	33
Clinical Evaluation.....	34
Comments	35-36
Clinical Coordinator's Responsibilities to Students.....	37
Students' Responsibilities to Clinical Coordinator	38
Clinical Instructors' Responsibilities to Students.....	39
Students' Responsibilities to Clinical Instructors.....	40
General Policies	41
Part-time Work.....	41
Financial Aid.....	41
Counseling and Advising.....	41
Dress Code.....	42
General Class Procedures	42
Discipline	42
Transfer Students	42
Phone Calls	43
Student Bulletin Boards	43
Licensing Examination	43
American Physical Therapy Association.....	43
Current Address	44
Student File.....	44
Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy	44
Smoking Policy.....	44
Appendices	
Personal Protection Precautions.....	Appendix A
Protocol for accident/injury/exposure reporting	Appendix B
Mandatory Patient Safety Education Requirement.....	Appendix C
Loan Default and Immediate License Suspension Memo	Appendix D
Equipment Safety Policy.....	Appendix E
Alcohol/Drug Policy	Appendix F
Smoking Policy.....	Appendix G
Information Responsibility Form.....	Appendix H
Background/Fingerprint.....	Appendix I

INTRODUCTION

This Physical Therapist Assistant Handbook has been prepared to provide accurate information for students who have been admitted to the Gulf Coast State College Physical Therapist Assistant program. Students are held responsible for knowledge of all information contained in the Handbook. A statement to the effect that the student has received, read, and understands the contained information will be signed by the student and kept in the student's folder in the office of the Coordinator of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

The preparation and review of the information contained in this handbook was carried out with great care to ensure that all policies contained herein do not conflict with Gulf Coast State College policies. Should a question arise and an apparent conflict is uncovered, Gulf Coast policy may override program policy. Students should become familiar with Gulf Coast State College policies as published in the [General Catalog](#) and in the [Gulf Coast State College Student Handbook](#).

What Is a Physical Therapist Assistant, and How Does a Physical Therapist Assistant Work With A Physical Therapist?

Physical therapy is a health profession that contributes to meeting the health needs of society through programs of prevention, rehabilitation, public education, and research. A statement defining physical therapy was adopted in 1993 by the Board of Directors of the American Physical Therapy Association:

"Physical therapy is the assessment, evaluation, treatment and prevention of physical disability, movement dysfunction and pain resulting from injury, disease, disability, or other health related conditions. Physical therapy includes: (1) the performance and interpretation of tests and measurements to assess pathophysiological, pathomechanical, electrophysiological, ergonomic, and developmental deficits of bodily systems to decide diagnosis, treatment, prognosis and prevention; (2) the planning, administration, and modification of therapeutic interventions that focus on posture, locomotion, strength, endurance, cardiopulmonary function, balance, coordination, joint mobility, flexibility, pain, healing and repair, and functional abilities in daily living skills, including work; and (3) the provision of consultative, educational, research and other advisory services.

The therapeutic interventions may include, but are not limited to the use of therapeutic exercise with or without assistive devices, physical agents, electricity, manual procedures such as joint and soft tissue mobilization, neuromuscular reeducation, bronchopulmonary hygiene, and ambulation/gait training".

Physical therapists practice in a variety of health care settings, including hospitals, ambulatory health clinics, home health, independent practices, specialized clinics, schools and institutions of higher education, research centers, industries, wellness and fitness centers, health maintenance organizations, extended-care facilities, and nursing homes. The trend of moving physical therapy into a comprehensive health care model is consistent with the expanded scope of physical therapy practice and changes occurring in the health delivery system, such as health care cost-containment programs, technological advances, and increasing public awareness of, and responsibility for, health and prevention programs.

As physical therapy has matured as a health profession, it has become more autonomous in its practice and less dependent on physicians for prescriptive referral and direction. As health professionals, physical therapists and physical therapist assistants work with physicians and other health-care providers in a collegial relationship. Physical therapists determine the needs of individuals who seek their services through the careful assessment of each individual. Physical therapists examine patients, interpret data, plan and implement programs of care designed to meet the goals of each patient, reassess on a continuing basis, and assist individuals to reach their highest possible functional level. As professionals, physical therapists develop, promote, and maintain standards for practice and education. Currently, two levels of physical therapy practitioners, the physical therapist (PT) and the physical therapist assistant (PTA), perform the functions of the profession. The physical therapist may be a generalist or a specialist. The PT provides services for the maintenance of wellness and the prevention of disability. The physical therapist also provides therapeutic services and related psychosocial support to individuals of all ages with musculoskeletal, neurological, sensorimotor, cardiopulmonary, vascular, and other physiological dysfunctions

The PTA is a para-professional in the practice of physical therapy who delivers physical therapy services under the supervision of the PT. The PTA, in many states, must sit for a licensing examination after graduation and prior to obtaining employment. Physical therapist assistants carry out the treatment for the patient that has been designed by the physical therapist after his/her evaluation of the patient record, interview, and physical assessment of the patient. The PTA will communicate any observed changes in the patient's condition that may require the physical therapist to reassess the patient and thus modify the treatment program. PTs and PTAs work in a variety of clinical practice settings. Acute care is often delivered in the hospital; rehabilitation may be effected in a separate rehabilitation setting or as part of home care. Physical therapy may also exist in private office practice settings and in geriatric and pediatric settings.

Many PTs continue their education to become specialists in a particular area of practice. Increasingly PTs participate in planned programs of continuing education or obtain advanced degrees to enhance professional skills and continue to meet public needs in a rapidly changing health-care arena. Physical therapist assistants may also continue their education by obtaining a baccalaureate degree in some allied field, in some cases PTAs will go on to become physical therapy students. It is important for the PTA student to understand that the technical courses offered in the physical therapist assistant program do not necessarily transfer for credit in a physical therapist education program. In some cases the liberal arts component of the physical therapist assistant program may be accepted, but the student may be required to make up several prerequisites in order to be eligible for admission to a physical therapist education program.

JOB DESCRIPTION

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

General Description

The Assistant is a skilled technical worker who performs physical therapy treatments and related duties as assigned by the physical therapist. This work is carried out under the direction of the physical therapist, who provides the assistant with supervision in accordance with state law.

The Physical Therapist Assistant has many diversified career opportunities, not only in the selection of different types of institutions, but also in working with different age groups and disabilities.

Duties of the PTA performed under the direction and supervision of a PT include:

1. Assisting the physical therapist when performing tests, evaluations, and complex treatment procedures.
2. Assisting the therapist in consulting with family members, physicians and other health care professionals, as appropriate.
3. Assisting with the care of the physical therapy department and equipment.
4. Assisting the physical therapist with in-service programs and other meetings as assigned by the physical therapist.
5. Providing physical therapy treatments as directed by the physical therapist and ordered by the physician.
6. Use of therapeutic exercise, mechanical traction, therapeutic massage, compression, heat, cold, ultraviolet, water and electricity.
7. Measurement and adjustment of crutches, canes, walkers, and wheelchairs, and instruction in their use and care.
8. Instruction, motivation and assistance to patients and others in improving pulmonary function, learning and improving functional activities such as pre-ambulation, transfer, ambulation, and daily living activities, and the use and care of orthoses, prostheses, and supportive devices.

9. Performance, without interpretation, of selected measurement procedures such as range of joint motion, gross strength of muscle groups, length and girth of body parts, and vital signs.
10. Observing, recording and reporting to the therapist the conditions, reactions and responses of patients related to his/her assigned duties.
11. Modification of treatment procedures as indicated by patient response and within the limits specified in the plan of care, and reporting orally or in writing to the physical therapist.
12. Maintaining daily records of treatments. Documenting progress notes on patients as directed by the therapist.
13. Assisting with clerical and office duties as assigned.
14. Providing physical therapy services in the absence of a registered physical therapist.

The physical therapist assistant participates in routine administrative procedures required for physical therapy service.

ACCREDITATION STATUS

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM

The APTA Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education granted the Gulf Coast State College Physical Therapist Assistant Program full accreditation on May 6, 1998 and continued accreditation granted October 29, 2003. The program reaccreditation continues until December 31, 2013.

Gulf Coast State College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate's and bachelor's degrees. GCSC has been accredited since 1962, and was recently reaffirmed in 2011. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions regarding the accreditation status of the institution or if there is evidence that appears to support Gulf Coast State College's significant non-compliance with a requirement or standard.

Gulf Coast State College is also a member of the American Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Florida Colleges, the American Council on Education, and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program of Gulf Coast State College perceives its commitment to education in three dimensions:

A legal obligation to uphold the philosophies, policies and procedures of the College.

An ethical obligation to the community, the physical therapy profession and the consumers of physical therapy to assure the competency of entry-level physical therapist assistants.

A moral obligation to enrolled students to provide quality education that will enable them to improve the quality of the lives they touch and to receive satisfaction from their care giving.

The program's mission is to educate and train PTAs who are not only competent in the skills necessary to perform as a PTA in a variety of settings, but who are educated in the social sciences and humanities. Graduates will be working with clients with psychological and social needs as well as physical needs and must, therefore, be sensitive to the total individual.

The program embraces the College's philosophy and SACS requirements for a minimum of 15 semester hours of curriculum in the general studies area. The College's mission is to graduate men and women, who will interact successfully in both their career and social worlds; whose contribution to their career and to society will be professionally and personally fulfilling.

The program ensures that graduates have entry-level competencies in the field but also recognizes the value of and need to continue their education through reading, active participation in the profession, and attending continuing education courses/seminars. The program has been designed with approximately one quarter of the course transferable to a baccalaureate program if graduates should choose to continue their education.

PTA Program Level Objectives

Upon completion of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program, the student will:

1. Exhibit conduct that reflects a commitment to meet or exceed the expectations of the community and other members of the healthcare profession as evidenced by satisfactory completion of skill number 1 in the competency evaluation manual.
2. Implement selected interventions identified in the plan of care as evidenced by satisfactory completion (3 or 4) of skill numbers 14, 16, 17, and 18 in the competency evaluation manual during the terminal clinical rotations.
3. Perform data collection skills essential for carrying out the plan of care as evidenced by satisfactory completion of skill numbers 12, 13, and 21 in the competency evaluation manual during the terminal clinical rotations.
4. Complete thorough, accurate, logical, concise, timely, and legible documentation as evidenced by satisfactory completion of skill number 10 in the competency evaluation manual during the terminal clinical rotations.
5. Work effectively in a clinical setting under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist as evidenced by satisfactory completion of skill number 16 in the competency evaluation manual during the terminal clinical rotations.
6. Communicate verbally and non-verbally with the patient, physical therapist, health care delivery personnel, and others in an effective, appropriate, and capable manner as evidenced by satisfactory completion of skill number 8 and 9 in the competency evaluation manual.
7. Possess the knowledge to think independently and critically, use fundamental theory, and basic sciences to solve patient care scenarios as evidenced by satisfactory completion of the PTA program exit exam.
8. Educate patients, families, caregivers, and members of the health care team using effective instruction methods as evidenced by satisfactory completion of skill number 7 in the competency evaluation manual.

GULF COAST STATE COLLEGE

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM CURRICULUM

FRESHMAN

CREDIT HOURS

FALL

BSC	2085	Anatomy and Physiology I	3
BSC	2085L	Anatomy and Physiology I Lab	1
		Humanities Elective	3
OST	1257	Medical Terminology	2
PHT	1000	Introduction to Physical Therapy	3
PHT	1102	Applied Anatomy for PTA's	1
PHT	1200	Basic Skills in Patient Care	2
PHT	1200L	Basic Skills in Patient Care Lab	<u>2</u>
			17

SPRING

BSC	2086	Anatomy and Physiology II	3
BSC	2086L	Anatomy and Physiology II Lab	1
PHT	1124	Functional Human Motion	3
PHT	1124L	Functional Human Motion Lab	2
PHT	1220	Introduction to Therapeutic Exercise	2
PHT	1220L	Therapeutic Exercise Lab	2
PHT	1131	Assessment, Measurement and Documentation	1
PHT	1131L	Assessment, Measurement and Documentation Lab	<u>2</u>
			16

SUMMER

PSY	2012	General Psychology	3
ENC	1101	English Composition I	3
PHT	2224	Therapeutic Interventions I: Medical/Surgical Disabilities	2
PHT	2224L	Therapeutic Interventions I Lab	1
			9
ENC	1102	English Composition II	3
PHT	2211	Therapeutic Modalities	2
PHT	2211L	Therapeutic Modalities Lab	<u>2</u>
			16

SOPHOMORE**CREDIT HOURS****FALL**

PHT 2225	Therapeutic Interventions II: Orthopedic Disabilities	3
PHT 2225L	Therapeutic Interventions II Lab	2
PHT 2226	Therapeutic Interventions III: Neurological Disabilities	3
PHT 2226L	Therapeutic Interventions III Lab	2
PHT 2801	PTA Clinical Practice I	<u>3</u>
		13

SPRING

PHT 2810	PTA Clinical Practice II	5
PHT 2820	PTA Clinical Practice III	5
PHT 2931	Seminar	<u>2</u>
		12

GULF COAST STATE COLLEGE

ACADEMIC POLICIES

I. Attendance/Tardiness/Absences

- A. It is the strong desire of the faculty and staff of Gulf Coast State College that all students successfully complete every course in which they are registered. Regular attendance and responsibility for class work are two of the most significant factors for success in college. Students are urged to begin each course determined to be present, punctual, and prepared for every class meeting, and are urged to seek additional help from instructors when needed.

All students are expected to attend every class or clinical (and be present on time) unless an illness or an emergency occurs. If absence or tardiness is unavoidable due to these circumstances, the student is required to notify the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at 850.913.3312 and, if applicable, the clinical agency to which he/she is assigned prior to the tardiness or absence.

An excused absence or tardy will be awarded in appropriate circumstances. The course instructor will determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. Attendance records are extremely important as the college is audited by the Veterans Administration and obligated to report attendance under a number of other programs, including financial aid.

Students who are absent from class in excess of the equivalent of one-eighth of a term (4-6 classes in regular three hour course in a regular semester) without permission of the instructor shall be withdrawn from the course by the instructor. Multiple episodes of tardiness may also count as an absence.

The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor. It is important that the student make himself aware of each instructor's absence policy. The policy can be found in the syllabus for each PTA course.

- B. The student is responsible for all work missed during absences. It is expected that the student will contact the instructor to make arrangements for class work missed. Make-up work for extended illness or emergency absence is required. Make-up work for announced tests, reports, projects, etc., for valid absences will be permitted or an alternate opportunity provided. Make-up work or quizzes for unannounced activities are at the discretion of the instructor. Missed work may be assigned a grade of zero. (Refer to the syllabus concerning completion of missed work.)
- C. Clinical attendance is expected as assigned. The student has the responsibility to be in the PT agency at the specified time. If the student cannot be present or will be late it is mandatory that he call the clinical supervisor and the PTA program at Gulf Coast.

II. Academic Standards

A. Grading Policy

Letter grades are assigned for all credit courses. Number equivalents are as follows: A (90-100); B (80-89); C (70-79); D (60-69); and F (0-59). In addition, the following letter grades are used where appropriate: W (Withdrawal), S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory), I (Incomplete), and N (Audit). A grade of "I" may be assigned a student failing to complete the class work on schedule. The incomplete grade will be changed to "F" if not removed within 30 calendar days from the end of the term in which the grade was earned.

Failure in Physical Therapist Assistant courses necessitating extension of the program beyond the normal two years may increase the time away from clinical skills significantly and, at the discretion of the instructors, it may be required that the student attend these courses on an audit basis to refresh the skills prior to clinical internship, or to pass a comprehensive skills practicum.

The final letter grade is determined by the total number of points that the student earns on quizzes, tests, competency exams, papers, reports etc. as assigned in the individual course. Some courses require a minimum pass rate for each quiz/test given; please refer to the syllabus for specific requirements within each course.

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT LABORATORY COMPETENCY EVALUATION: GENERAL FORMAT COMPETENCY TO BE TESTED (ex: Passive ROM)

See Appendix E for Equipment Safety Policy

The student will be given:

- a patient whose plan of care appropriately includes the skill being tested
- a physical therapy plan of care that includes an explicit statement of goals of treatment, frequency and duration of treatment, area to be treated, precautions, and preselected method and instrumentation

The student must execute the skill according to acceptable standards:

- outcome must be consistent with treatment goals
- safe, administered to correct area, and of proper dosage and duration
- executed with acceptable technique
- within tolerance of the patient
- accomplished within a reasonable time for the complexity of the situation
- adequately documented

CRITERIA FOR DIFFERENT AREAS OF COMPETENCY:

Preparation of treatment area. Gathering, preparation and adjustment of necessary supplies and equipment.

- Recognize supply/equipment and treatment area needs including patient safety and privacy
- Recognize need for adjustment of equipment
- Apply safety rules for preparation/adjustment of equipment and treatment area including infection control

Preparing the patient for treatment

- Introduce yourself as a student PTA and identify the patient
- Explain the general procedure
- Assist the patient as necessary into an appropriate treatment area
- Position patient for comfort, security and access
- Drape patient appropriately and use curtains for privacy if necessary

Administration of treatment/demonstration of skill

- Explanation of procedure with thoroughness and at an appropriate level for patient understanding
- Demonstration of appropriate guarding/safety techniques and proper body mechanics
- Instructions/teaching of skills to patient and/or family
- Modification of treatment/technique as indicated by patient's response

Clean-up

- Proper disposal of contaminated linen/supplies
- Disinfection of treatment area and equipment
- Proper storage of equipment/supplies

Documentation

- Consistent with established policies and procedures
- Includes all necessary information
- Meets accepted standards of clarity, brevity, and legibility

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION CRITERIA:

ABOVE AVERAGE

SCORE: 3

Performs all functions and tasks with mastery. Demonstrates efficiency and skill in the preparation, adjustment and use of all materials and equipment. Operates in a confident and professional manner. Is well organized in communication and actions. Demonstrates awareness of personal and patient safety at all times.

AVERAGE

SCORE: 2

Performs required functions competently. Skills are safely performed in a clinically acceptable manner.

BELOW AVERAGE

SCORE: 1

Needs prompting from the instructor. Disorganized and/or inefficient. Uses minimum care in safety. Needs improvement.

CLINICALLY UNACCEPTABLE

SCORE: 0

Performs required tasks or functions in an unacceptable manner. Lacks knowledge of procedures and/or equipment. Inattentive to safety or infection control issues. Actions and/or appearance unprofessional.

GRADING:

For each specific competency criteria may be critical to obtaining a passing grade and will be so indicated on the evaluation form. Any critical skills receiving a score less than 2 may necessitate repeating the check-off.

A= an average score of 3.0

B= an average score of 2.5

C= an average score of 2.0

A grade less than C (2.0) is unacceptable and students will have the option of retesting a maximum of 2 times. If the grade is less than a 70% on the 3rd attempt the student may be withdrawn from the course. The retest will be averaged with the original score and the grade earned can be no more than a C. A final comprehensive skill exam in any course may not be repeated unless the instructor gives special permission.

B. Examinations

Instructors are free to develop their own examinations but are encouraged to use a variety of methods. The number and type of examinations may vary from course to course and will be specified in the course syllabus.

A final examination is required in each course and is given according to the published college schedule. If courses in the PTA program are completed prior to the end of the academic term, the final examinations will be scheduled by the

instructor of the course at the appropriate time. Except under emergency circumstances students may not be excused from these examinations. If a student is unable to appear, it is his responsibility to inform the instructor prior to the scheduled examination and to request an "I". An "I" (incomplete) grade means the student has not completed course requirements due to circumstances, which **JUDGED BY THE INSTRUCTOR**, were beyond the student's control. The student must personally request an incomplete grade. It is not granted automatically. Generally, make-up exams are given after the formally scheduled exam NOT before. Each instructor will work with the student to schedule make-up exams.

★Incomplete grades must be removed no later than 30 calendar days after the term in which the incomplete was granted or the grade will be changed to an "F". Students may not continue in the sequenced progression of PHT courses until the grade of "I" is removed from his record.

C. Progress Standards (See also the GCSC [General Catalog](#))

The student must pass all courses required by the program (PHT courses and general studies courses) with a minimum grade of "C". In addition, each competency exam must be passed with a minimum grade of "C". A grade of "C" is interpreted as "the student meets the minimum standards for competency". See General Format for Laboratory Competency Evaluation pages 13 - 15.

To continue in the PTA program students must successfully complete all prerequisites as detailed in the course descriptions.

D. Academic Warning

Students will be given an indication of their academic standing mid semester through the posting of mid-term grades and/or with a verbal warning from the instructor.

The clinical component of a health related program is recognized as academic in nature. Therefore, decisions regarding a student's progress within a clinical component are within the professional assessment and judgment of the appropriate faculty member. Any student who does not exhibit the knowledge, behavior skills or ethics deemed necessary for the health, safety or welfare of patients may be suspended or dismissed from the program.

1. Probation (See also the GCSC [General Catalog](#))

- a. A student who does not achieve the predetermined clinical competencies, in the judgment of the faculty member assigned to the clinical setting, will be placed on probation status.

- b. When a student is placed on probation, the student will be counseled by the appropriate faculty member and will receive written notice of the program clinical deficiencies.
- c. The written report will provide steps for individualized remedial activity toward achieving predetermined competencies, which the student is expected to fulfill within an established time period.
 - (1) If the student achieves the predetermined competencies, the student will be removed from probation status.
 - (2) If the student does not achieve the predetermined competencies, the faculty member will discuss the student's progress with the program coordinator, who may refer the student to a faculty review committee.

2. Suspension (See also the GCSC [General Catalog](#))

- a. A faculty committee for a program may consider the suspension of any student who is referred to the committee through the above provisions. Suspension results in a student's withdrawal from the program, in that further participation in academic or clinical settings is suspended until remedial activity is achieved.
- b. During clinical suspension, the student is ineligible to enroll in any additional courses within the program. The student may continue until the end of the session in any other courses, except co-requisites or courses impacted by the withdrawal.
- c. At any meeting of the faculty committee at which clinical suspension of a student is to be considered, the student will be given notice of the meeting no less than 24 hours prior to the meeting. The student will be permitted to attend that portion of the meeting during which the student's suspension is presented and will be permitted to respond verbally and in writing to any of the reasons given for suspension by the faculty member who referred the matter.
- d. The committee, after considering the faculty member's recommendation and the student's response, shall, by a majority vote, make a recommendation to the program coordinator to do one of the following:
 - (1) remove the student from probation status;

- (2) extend the probation status and complete an additional written report to the student, spelling out the expectations as set forth; or
- (3) suspend the student from the program.

Upon receiving the committee's recommendation, the program coordinator will take appropriate action.

- e. Any student who is suspended shall be informed of the deficiencies, which must be corrected and may reapply to the program at a future date.

3. Dismissal

- a. A student who has been suspended from a program for at least one semester, who is readmitted to the program, and who then fails to achieve predetermined clinical or academic competencies will be evaluated by the faculty committee and may be dismissed from the program by the program coordinator. Students who are dismissed are ineligible for program readmission for a period of one year.
- b. At any meeting of the faculty committee at which clinical or academic dismissal of a student is to be considered, the student will be given notice of the meeting no less than 24 hours prior to the meeting. The student will be permitted to attend that portion of the meeting during which the student's dismissal is presented and will be permitted to respond verbally and in writing to any of the reasons given for dismissal by the faculty member who referred the matter.
- c. The committee, after considering the faculty member's recommendation and the student's response, shall by a majority vote, make a recommendation to the program coordinator to do one of the following:
 - (1) return the student to "normal" status;
 - (2) place the student on probation status, as set forth above; or
 - (3) place the student on suspension status, as set forth above; or
 - (4) dismiss the student.

Upon receiving the committee's recommendation, the program coordinator will take appropriate action.

4. Readmission

- a. Students who receive a "D", "F", or "W" in any PHT course or whose overall GPA falls below 2.0 may apply for readmission when the course is offered again if space is available.
- b. A student who has been academically dismissed may be readmitted one time only. Students who fail to obtain a "C" or better for the same course for the second time will be dismissed from the program.
- c. Students who fail to obtain a minimum grade of "C" for two different PHT courses will be dismissed from the program and will be ineligible for readmission.
- d. Readmission must occur within one year and is possible only if essential elements of the curriculum are unchanged. Readmission is not guaranteed.
- e. Conditions of readmission, including validation of competencies in PHT courses, will be determined by the admissions committee.
- f. Applicants must complete readmission application forms and/or file a letter with the coordinator of the PTA program indicating their desire to be readmitted.
- g. A readmission interview by the PTA coordinator or other PTA faculty member may be required.

E. Removal from Clinical Internship

Notwithstanding the above, if at any time, the faculty believe that a student's level of performance, attitude, knowledge, or any other action or lack of action are such that real or potential detriment exists for patient care, the student will be removed from a clinical site.

Violation of policies regarding confidentiality of information may result in dismissal from the program.

If, in the judgment of the PTA faculty and the dean of workforce education, a student's attitude or conduct on or off campus reflects unfavorably upon the college, the student may be requested to withdraw or may be suspended from the physical therapist assistant program.

F. Appeal

Any student who is suspended or dismissed from a program may appeal the decision through the Academic Grievance Procedures established by Gulf Coast State College (see [General Catalog](#)).

G. Withdrawals ("W" grades) (See [General Catalog](#))

1. Student Withdrawal: A Withdrawal Form must be completed and returned to the Office of Admissions and Records for each class from which the student wishes to withdraw. Students who withdraw after the week following the posting of mid-term grades shall receive a "W" if passing or an "F" if failing.

Students may withdraw from an Open College course no later than two weeks following the second examination. After that date, students shall receive a "W" if passing or an "F" if failing.

All students receiving any kind of financial aid should contact the Financial Aid office to insure that withdrawals will not adversely affect their aid.

2. Administrative Withdrawal: Instructors may also initiate withdrawals by completing an Administrative Withdrawal Form, which is then sent to the Office of Admissions and Records. A student may be withdrawn for excessive absences (see attendance) or if the Physical Therapist Assistant Faculty identify attributes or behaviors which will interfere with the students successful, ethical or legal performance of the duties of a Physical Therapist Assistant.

A "W" grade will remain on the student's record unless the instructor completes a Grade Change Form and changes the grade or submits an "F" grade on the final Grade Report, in accordance with the college's grading policy.

DO NOT WITHDRAW FROM ANY REQUIRED COURSES!!

Any student withdrawing from a scheduled course should first speak to their advisor. Although the course in question may be offered in a subsequent semester, the class schedule for physical therapist assistants usually prohibits them from taking it. Also, withdrawal from a course may disrupt the sequencing of progression due to the prerequisite requirements for most PHT courses. Withdrawal from a course may essentially withdraw a student from the Physical Therapist Assistant program, as they may not take PHT courses out of sequence.

**ALL ACADEMIC COURSES MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE A STUDENT WILL BE PERMITTED TO ATTEND CLINICAL TRAINING.

Students, either passing or failing, who voluntarily withdraw from the program, have no guarantee of reinstatement to the program. Readmission will be dependent on space available. Students requesting consideration of readmission must make written request to the Program Coordinator on the readmission application or by letter.

H. Degree Requirements

To be awarded the Associate in Arts Degree, the Associate in Science Degree, or a Certificate, a student must complete one of the published curricula, earn a grade point average of 2.00 (C) on all work attempted at Gulf Coast State College (transfer students must have an overall 2.00 GPA), complete a graduation evaluation, and by the published date make application for graduation during the semester of graduation. A minimum of 15 semester hours must be completed at Gulf Coast State College in order to receive a degree or a certificate.

Course requirements for Associate in Science Degrees will vary from program to program as to the content, number of hours required for graduation, and the number of required physical education courses. Associate in Science Degree candidates should follow the published curriculum of their elected programs.

Physical Therapist Assistants must pass all 74 credit hours of courses required in the PTA curriculum with a grade of C or better.

Comprehensive Examination

In order to evaluate the minimal level of competence needed to practice, a final comprehensive examination is given at the end of the second year. Students must pass this examination at the 70% level or above in order to graduate from the program.

Should the student fail the comprehensive examination, it may be repeated twice, at intervals no less than 48 hours apart and prior to the scheduled graduation ceremonies. Re-takes will be scheduled at the convenience of the instructor and it is the student's responsibility to be in attendance.

Should the student not pass the examination after three attempts, he/she must complete a commercially offered refresher course or complete remedial work as determined by the PTA faculty. Remedial work will be followed by re-testing and must be completed within 6 months of the original expected graduation date. Students not completing these requirements within the stated time frame may not be graduated from the program.

INSTRUCTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES TO STUDENTS

1. Be on time for classes and hold classes for the required scheduled period of time. No classes will be canceled without the permission of the Coordinator. The Coordinator's classes may be cancelled with permission of the Chair of Health Sciences.
2. Be prepared with significant lecture and/or discussion material and well-organized laboratory procedures.
3. Remain in the classroom or laboratory during scheduled classes, except in the case of an obvious emergency.
4. Prepare a syllabus for each class, listing office hours, assignments, lecture and lab topics, text and related resource materials and requirements of the course.
5. Be fair and impartial in the treatment of students.
6. Be available during scheduled office hours.
7. Be familiar with, and adhere to, college policies and procedures.
8. Be familiar with, and adhere to, [APTA accreditation guidelines](#).
9. Adhere to the [Code of Ethics](#) and [Standards of Practice](#) of the APTA.
10. Be familiar with, and adhere to, all Physical Therapist Assistant Program policies and procedures.
11. Meet with all advisees as requested or as necessary throughout the semester.
12. Keep informed of college happenings through attendance at required meetings and participation on college committees.
13. Keep informed of changes within the profession of Physical Therapy and keep the curriculum updated to incorporate these changes.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT TO THE INSTRUCTOR

1. Adhere to all policies of Gulf Coast State College and the Physical Therapist Assistant program as published in the respective [student handbooks](#).
2. Be committed to attendance of all classes and laboratory sessions except in the case of a dire emergency. Be on time.
3. Put in the hours of study it takes to come to class prepared. Be attentive in class and participate in the learning process.
4. Seek help from the instructor immediately when encountering difficulty with course material. Most skills will build on previously acquired skills. If you don't learn them as you go along you can become hopelessly lost. Your instructors want every one of you to succeed, so please ask for help if you need it!!
5. Take your career decision seriously. This doesn't mean a little laughter along the way is inappropriate, but your commitment to "book" learning will reflect in your patient care. You will have responsibility for other people's welfare when you graduate. Think - who would you want caring for you? Someone who knows 75% or someone who knows 90%? **Health care careers are serious business!**

CLINICAL POLICIES

I. Attendance/Tardiness/Absences

- A. Clinical attendance is expected as assigned. The student has the responsibility to be in the Physical Therapy agency at the specified time. If the student cannot be present or will be late it is mandatory that he (1) call the clinical supervisor at the agency and (2) call the Physical Therapist Assistant program at Gulf Coast (usually the ACCE or a designated individual).
- B. Since placements are provided by the agency at time and expense to themselves (they provide the training and take supervisory responsibility without compensation from the college) we attempt to disrupt their schedule as little as possible. Therefore, you are expected to be present for the days you are assigned, taking lunch and coffee breaks as assigned by the clinic. The working hours for a clinical internship will be the working hours of the agency to which the student is assigned and may vary from facility to facility.
- C. Holidays and vacations are at the discretion of the clinical agency. Should the college have a scheduled holiday or vacation period, which the clinical agency does not observe, the student is required to report to the internship as usual. Remember, you are a guest of the agency and they are providing you with clinical training for no fee. The agency schedule takes priority over the college schedule.
- D. All missed clinical hours in excess of 1 day per clinical course must be made up. It will be the student's responsibility to schedule make-up hours with the facility and the make-up schedule must be approved by the ACCE prior to being completed. For liability reasons, no unapproved make-up time will be permitted. **** The student is responsible for notifying the ACCE prior to scheduling any elective procedure.****

II. Qualifications for Clinical Placement

A. Academic Standing

In order to qualify for placement in a health care facility, the student must:

1. maintain an overall cumulative grade point average of 2.0.
2. have passed all required courses (including both PHT courses and general studies courses) with a "C" or better and must have a sophomore standing in the college.
3. have current, valid cards in CPR and First Aid. Students are required to get these cards on their own; they are not part of the curriculum. Copies of the cards must be submitted to the program coordinator.

4. have a current negative TB (PPD not tine) test (within 1 year of dates of clinical assignment).
5. have proof of attendance at the 4-hour basic AIDS training program. A copy of the certificate must be submitted to the program coordinator. Students are required to get this training on their own. It is not part of the curriculum.
6. have all immunizations required by the college and by the clinical facility to which assigned. (Some facilities have requirements beyond those of the program.)
7. pay all required insurance fees.
8. have a clear physical examination on file.
9. Students are required to purchase liability insurance (against malpractice) and accident insurance (which covers injuries the student may receive while in the clinic). Both of these insurances are purchased through the college and fees are automatically attached to clinical courses each semester. These insurances are required in addition to any personal insurance the student may already have.

B. Health Requirements

Students must provide an immunization record.

It is strongly recommended that all students receive Hepatitis B vaccine (HBV) due to possible exposure in clinical agencies. Students must sign a statement declaring they have received the vaccine or that they have refused to receive it.

The cost of this vaccine is the responsibility of the student and should be arranged with the student's personal physician or with the Public Health Department.

Students currently employed in a hospital or other health care agency may be provided with the vaccine free of charge. Check with your employer.

Prior to clinical placement in the Sophomore year, the student will need to repeat a tuberculin skin test. Certain clinical agencies may have other specific health requirements, which relate to students affiliating with them. These must be adhered to as a condition for affiliation.

Each student admitted and enrolled in a health related program is strongly encouraged to carry health insurance. Some clinical facilities require proof of health insurance.

C. Drug Screening

For clinical placement, students may be required to have a drug screening prior to clinical placement. A positive drug screen will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Physical Therapist Assistant students must meet the technical standards as outlined below:

PTA TECHNICAL STANDARDS:

The practice of physical therapy is a physically demanding occupation. All applicants must, therefore, meet the following technical standards to be admitted into the Physical Therapist Assistant Program:

1. Able to tolerate being physically active the entire working day.
2. Able to lift 70 pounds as needed.
3. Able to transfer, lift and guard patients safely, providing appropriate assistance.
4. Able to bend, stoop, squat and lift numerous times daily.
5. Able to carry out fine motor and manual dexterity skills with tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment.
6. Mental acuity and judgment skills to adequately and safely perform job requirements.
7. Able to see and hear adequately in order to respond to auditory and visual cues for the observation, monitoring and assessment of patients.
8. No medical problems such as brittle diabetes, uncontrolled seizures, etc. which could endanger self or others if such should occur while providing patient care.
9. Critical thinking ability sufficient for sound clinical judgment.
10. Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, educational, cultural and intellectual backgrounds.
11. Communication abilities sufficient for interaction with others in verbal and written form.

C. Liability Insurance

Each student is required to pay a fee for liability insurance once a year. The fee is payable at the time of registration for the clinical course. Non-payment of insurance fees will disqualify the student from being assigned a clinical internship placement. Non-payment of insurance fees will be considered as voluntary withdrawal from the Physical Therapist Assistant program.

D. Health Insurance

Some clinical sites require the student to purchase health insurance, or sign a waiver to acknowledge that the student does not have health insurance. It is the student's responsibility to check with each clinical site regarding this requirement.

E. Accident Insurance

Each student is required to pay a fee for accident insurance one a year. This insurance covers the student for medical costs incurred while injured on clinical affiliation or in the PTA laboratory. Non-payment of fees will disqualify the student from clinical internships.

Should an accident occur during a clinical affiliation, the student must fill out the appropriate accident form for the facility with the Clinical Instructor. Within 48 hours, the student must also obtain and fill out the GCSC ***FCC Accident-Incident*** form, which is available from the Clinical Coordinator

Information on filing insurance claims is also available from the Clinical Coordinator. See Appendix B.

F. Transportation and other expenses

Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from internship, and for any expense of internship in addition to tuition (such as housing if affiliating outside of locally accessible facilities). Chronic "car problems" is not a valid excuse for tardiness or absences from internship. Ride sharing is not a valid excuse for altering the working hours as required by the clinical agency.

G. Dress Code

A professional appearance is expected while enrolled in the Physical Therapist Assistant program. In general, the following guidelines must be adhered to, although a clinical agency may have additional requirements. (Consult the clinical agency files in the office of the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education or contact the clinical agency before your affiliation begins.)

1. No jeans or shorts. In most facilities, khaki's and polo shirts are standard attire. Khaki pants and a navy blue polo shirt with a collar is required for the program.

2. Shirts or blouses, with sleeves, may be casual, but no T-shirts, tank tops or low-cut necklines are permitted. One navy blue polo shirt with a collar is required.
3. Good shoes, preferably with non-slip soles. No high heels or sandals. Many facilities will allow sneakers, but some will not. Check prior to each affiliation.
4. Extravagant jewelry must be avoided. (medic alert bracelet or simple necklace is acceptable.) Rings other than plain wedding bands are unacceptable. Rings are a scratch hazard to patients and they may harbor organisms that can be transmitted from patient to patient, or even carry an infection to the wearer. Earrings, other than the small stud-type for pierced ears are not permitted. Dangling earrings may be a source of personal injury should a patient grab hold of one.
5. A watch with a second hand or digital second indicator is considered part of your uniform and is required.
6. Nails should be neatly trimmed to fingertip length and clean. Nail polish, if worn, should be clear or natural. Dark pinks, reds, purple, green or black, etc. are not acceptable.
7. Hair must be pulled back or up if longer than shoulder length. No two-tone hair, radical haircuts or teased dos are permissible, as they are not considered professional.
8. Students should have a small notebook and a pen with black or blue ink with them at all times.
9. Personal hygiene is of vital importance. Daily bathing and the use of deodorant should be routine. Consideration should be shown for the fact that the scent of strong perfume, hair spray, coffee or cigarette smoke is offensive to many patients who may not be feeling well.
Some clinical sites are smoke-free facilities. It is the student's responsibility to adhere to the smoke-free policy. Violation of a clinical policy is grounds for dismissal from the program.
10. Each student must be identified by an approved nametag acquired through the college.
11. A transfer belt should be carried with you or be kept close at hand.

H. Confidentiality

All information, which you read, observe, generate, hear or over-hear about a patient, is considered confidential and may not be passed on to anyone who is not involved in the direct care of the patient. Violation of confidentiality may be

cause for the student to be terminated from the clinical affiliation and/or withdrawn from the program. Approved HIPAA training is mandatory prior to clinical affiliation and is available through the college.

I. Cancellation of Internship

Any student who is found to be frequently tardy, absent, untrustworthy, unsafe, unable to accept supervisory criticism, unacceptable in terms of professional appearance, quality of work or who is otherwise a disruptive influence in the internship may be terminated after counseling by the clinical instructor and a conference with the student and the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education. Depending on the circumstances this may result in the student not being allowed to continue in the PTA program, as internship is a required course.

J. Problem Resolution Procedure

The Problem Resolution Procedure is an orderly process for the student to present their problems, complaints, suggestions or ideas to the faculty. In turn, the procedure provides faculty with an opportunity to listen to and address students' concerns.

1. A problem is any matter of concern to a student.
2. This resolution procedure is not a substitute for informal, one-to-one conversations between faculty and students. This should always be the first step in resolving a problem, but if, due to circumstances, the usual avenues of discussion are ineffective or insufficient, a more formalized approach may be necessary.

Procedure

Step 1: The student discusses the problem with the clinical instructor or the faculty advisor as soon as possible after the problem arises. The faculty advisor listens to the student's version of the problem, conducts a speedy and thorough investigation of the situation and meets again with the student to discuss the resolution.

Step 2: If the student is not satisfied by the resolution of Step 1 or if the resolution requires action beyond the authority of the faculty advisor, the faculty advisor and the student will meet with the Chairman of Health Sciences. At this meeting, the problem, again, will be thoroughly explored and if possible, resolved.

Step 3: If the complaint or problem remains unresolved at this level, it should then be discussed with the dean of career education in accordance with the grievance procedure outlined in the [GCSC Student Handbook](#) and in the [General Catalog](#).

Note: The student has the option to initiate the discussion at any step of the procedure - with the understanding that if the problem should properly be brought to the attention of a lower level, the problem will be referred back to the program faculty for initial review.

K. Complaints

All complaints about the PTA program will be summarized in writing and signed by both the individual filing the complaint and by a program representative (Program Coordinator, ACCE or Chair of Health Sciences). Copies of any complaints and their resolution will be maintained by the program coordinator. Complaints initiated by persons other than students, will follow the same process as outlined for students.

III. Clinical Standards

- A. American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) guidelines state that clinical experiences must be consistent with APTA [standards of ethical practice](#) and the philosophy of the college program. The clinical education is an organized sequence of learning activities integrated within the curriculum. The collective experiences should allow for opportunities in patient care and teaching, as well as opportunities for students to learn through participation and observation of activities such as administration, quality assurance, and supervision of other supportive personnel.

Clinical education provides students with the opportunity to perform their responsibilities under appropriate physical therapist or physical therapist assistant supervision and with positive role modeling. The clinical experiences should provide exposure to a variety of patients and learning activities in a variety of practice and health care settings and ensure participation in direct patient care.

- B. Clinical Contracts.

A written agreement, which defines the rights and responsibilities of the college and the clinical facility, is necessary.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT TO CLINICAL SITES

As part of the contractual agreement with clinical facilities providing training sites for physical therapist assistant students, students are bound to the following responsibilities and will sign a form prior to clinical internship agreeing to adhere to these conditions

1. To report to the clinical facility on time and professionally attired on each day of the clinical assignment or to report to the clinical supervisor and Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education an unavoidable absence, according to established policy.
2. To learn and adhere to policies and procedures specific to the clinical facility during the time assigned to that facility.
3. To exhibit exemplary professional behavior at all times as a representative of Gulf Coast State College and a member of the physical therapy profession, and to exhibit the highest of ethical and moral standards while dealing with patients and their families, staff and employees of the facility.
4. To complete an evaluation of the clinical experience form which will be shared with the clinical supervisor prior to leaving the clinical affiliation and returned to the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Educational
5. To strictly adhere to policies regarding confidentiality of information.
6. To adhere to health prerequisites of the facility.

C. Levels of Clinical Experience

There are three levels of clinical experience: introductory, intermediate and advanced. These experiences are designed to provide students with the opportunity to integrate academic knowledge with the application of technical skills, attitudes and interpersonal skills.

INTRODUCTORY LEVEL: Physical Therapist Assistant Clinical Practice I

This experience in the fall semester of the sophomore year is a 4 week full-time clinical internship. Students are assigned to an agency, which provides physical therapy services for an introductory experience in the application of skills learned in the classroom to patients in the clinical setting. Students will perform specific clinical tasks under the close supervision of a physical therapist. This is an introductory experience and emphasis will be on developing ease in the moving and handling of patients; confidence in communicating and interacting with staff, patients and their families; sharpened powers of observation; and an

understanding of the role of the physical therapist assistant. A patient care study with related literature review will be completed.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL: Physical Therapist Assistant Clinical Practice II

This is a full-time (40 hours/week) placement for 7 weeks.

This course is an intermediate level, full-time clinical placement and is designed to be an in-depth experience in the delivery of physical therapy services to patients in a clinical setting. It is a supervised experience in the application of academically acquired knowledge. Problem solving techniques are employed in the interpretation and execution of patient care plans. An in-depth patient care study will be completed and an in-service program will be prepared and presented.

ADVANCED LEVEL: Physical Therapist Assistant Clinical Practice III

This is a full-time (40 hours/week) placement for 7 weeks.

This course is an advanced level, full-time clinical placement and is designed to be an in-depth experience in the delivery of physical therapy services to patients in a clinical setting. Although a supervised experience in the application of academically and clinically acquired knowledge, emphasis will be on the students' developing more autonomy in patient care and more independence in involvement with the entire scope of physical therapy services from clerical to patient scheduling and treatment to department maintenance. Also of emphasis will be a continuation of the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and communication/teaching skills. An in-depth case study will be completed and a quality assurance study on a topic approved by the CI will be completed and presented to the facility staff.

D. Clinical Evaluations

Specific objectives have been developed for each clinical experience. They reflect the technical skills completed at the time of the internship and the level of the internship. All technical competencies passed in the laboratory setting may be asked of the student in the clinical setting and should be practiced to clinical competency as opportunities arise. In the supervisory relationship, both the clinical instructor and the student assume responsibility for: 1) identifying the students specific learning needs and goals, and 2) formulating a plan of growth which leads to achievement of technical competencies as outlined in the specific objectives for the given clinical experience.

Students will be evaluated at the end of the first clinical, and at both the mid-point and end of clinicals two and three by the clinical supervisor. Performance should be discussed at those times. Students will evaluate the clinical experience at the end of each affiliation and will share this evaluation with the clinical supervisor. This evaluation form is to be turned in with your performance evaluation. Your

grade is not complete until it is turned in. After you have discussed and signed the final evaluation form, the final form will be returned to the ACCE.

E. Comments

1. You are privileged to be a community representative of your college. You are a guest of the facility providing your experience, and their opinion of you will also be their opinion of Gulf Coast State College. This determines whether the facility will accept future Gulf Coast State College students.
2. Never, Never attempt any procedure of which you are not sure without having someone supervise you. Remember, you are a student, and are neither expected nor required to know how to do everything. But, also, don't be afraid to try. Your supervisor would not let you do anything that would harm the patient. Be confident in what you know, and work hard to develop confidence in skills you are unsure of.
3. Never discuss information concerning patients in public or semipublic places(including social networks). Do not gossip about patients (clients), staff or supervisors. Remember that much of the information you come in contact with is confidential, even to the fact that the patient was in the department. This is no one's business except that of the patient, the doctor, and the Physical Therapy staff. PLEASE RESPECT YOUR PATIENT'S PRIVACY. Always check with your supervisor before releasing any information regarding a patient. Failure to do so may lead to dismissal of the student from the clinical area and to the withdrawal of the student from the program.
4. Do not discuss your personal life or problems with your patients. Patients have their own problems and do not need yours. Maintain a respectful, professional distance from your patients.
5. Loud noisy behavior is unprofessional and is annoying to patients and staff. Needless to say, one should always maintain a professional attitude with respect to one's use of the English language in a clinical setting.
6. Good manners are a must. This is particularly true if there are disruptions in the department's schedule. Regardless of how a patient acts towards you, treat him with the courtesy that you would like accorded you. Remember, patients are in the department because of a problem and no one's problems are as important to the individual as his own.
7. Your patient may often be preoccupied with himself because he does not feel well and is anxious about seeing the doctor or about tests that he must have. Please take this into account. People are not always on their best

behavior under these circumstances. However, we must accept them for what they are and extend every professional courtesy to them.

8. Never, Never, Never offer an opinion to the patient as to how his condition should be treated or should have been treated by the doctor. This is the physician's responsibility alone.
9. The amount that you learn on any one affiliation is going to be related to the amount you ask. Ask the clinical supervisor why? how? when? etc. Even if they are rushed, they're usually willing to explain as they go along. You'll be a better assistant if you understand reasons for specific techniques. Never be afraid to say "I don't know" - it's far better to feel a bit foolish than to find yourself in a situation you can't handle. It is your responsibility to gain from the internship, not for the internship to feed you experience on a silver spoon. An internship where you find yourself with nothing to do is one where YOU ARE NOT LOOKING. One can always practice with equipment, review office procedures, help with filing or observe an unfamiliar procedure.
10. Each clinical education center has its own defined policies and procedures, which are specific for that facility. You are expected to become familiar with them and to adhere to them during the time you are assigned.
11. Problems related to the internship should be dealt with by your clinical supervisor and the ACCE. Do not hesitate to bring them to their attention no matter how small they are.
12. Confirmation and Additional Information: A minimum of one month prior to the student's arrival, the student must write a brief letter of introduction to the clinical supervisor with a copy to the ACCE confirming the dates and times of his affiliation and requesting additional information if necessary. Please inspect the facility information on file in the ACCE's office prior to writing your letter.
13. Additional information regarding the clinical part of the education program may be found in the Physical Therapist Assistant Clinical Education Handbook. A copy is available in the office of the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE).

**ACADEMIC COORDINATOR OF CLINICAL EDUCATION
RESPONSIBILITIES TO STUDENTS**

1. Assign all eligible students to a variety of clinical internships and confirm the assignment, in writing, to each clinical supervisor.
2. Assure that all written contracts and letters of agreement between the educational institution and facility are signed and reviewed regularly.
3. Make regular contacts with each clinical agency in which students are placed, either by phone or in person.
4. Maintain a current file for information on each agency.
5. Expand the number of clinical contracts to provide a wide variety of options for student clinical experience.
6. Orient students to the process and purposes of clinical internship experiences and provide the needed evaluation forms.
7. Assign a letter grade to each clinical internship based on the clinical instructor's evaluation and any conferences held with the clinical instructor and the CCCE or CI.
8. Be available for personal visits to a clinical agency if requested by the student or the agency.
9. Act as intermediary between the clinical agency and Gulf Coast State College in the case of the necessity for a disciplinary action against a student. Act as the responsible individual for Step 1 in the problem resolution process.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE ACCE

1. Keep the ACCE informed of any problems arising in the clinical internship on an ongoing basis after discussing the problem with the clinical instructor.
2. After receiving a clinical assignment, review the facility file in the ACCE's office. You must check for dress code, working hours, health and other requirements unique to that facility and make sure that you will be in compliance prior to the start of your internship.
3. Provide the ACCE with proof of 1) certificates for immunizations, TB test etc. as may be required, and 2) CPR and First Aid.
4. Although special requests for a particular internship are not guaranteed, should you have a special request, please discuss it with the ACCE no less than 6 weeks prior to the anticipated date of the start of the internship. No changes can be made once assignments have been posted. (approx. 4 weeks prior to the internship)

CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE STUDENT

1. Establish an environment in which the student feels comfortable, providing appropriate support for student concerns, frustrations and anxieties.
2. Practice physical therapy with competence, demonstrating professional, ethical behavior as an exemplary role model for the student.
3. Manage time well so that there is sufficient time to explain procedures/treatments and assist the student in performing assigned skills.
4. Provide useful feedback, in private and in a non-threatening manner. Openly and honestly assess student performance and encourage interactive dialogue with the student.
5. Allow the student progressive, appropriate independence.
6. Plan effective learning experiences with a variety of patients, helping the student to understand the relationship between academic knowledge and clinical practice.
7. Be available to the student to answer questions and make effective learning experiences out of situations as they arise.
8. Help the student define specific objectives for the clinical experience under the general guidelines of the clinical course syllabus.
9. Schedule formal regular meetings with the student (at least once weekly during full-time affiliations and at least once monthly in part-time affiliations.)
10. Accept each student as an individual and not judge their performance by comparing them to other students.
11. Make the mid-term and final evaluation a constructive process.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR

1. Report to the clinical agency on time, properly attired and prepared to go to work every day of the scheduled affiliation period, or call the agency and ACCE if you will be late or absent due to an emergency.
2. Attempt to do your best to safely and effectively perform any tasks requested of you. Ask for supervision or help when you are unsure how to proceed.
3. Discuss problems or concerns with the clinical instructor as soon as they arise. Don't let things fester until they seem overwhelming. Let the instructor know if they are going too slowly or too fast for you. Students develop clinical confidence at different rates. Your instructors can't know how you are coping if you don't tell them.
4. Observe, ask questions at appropriate times and places, and brush up on academic work, which relates to the day's experiences. Review textbooks and other resources, which will help you, understand why treatments are done certain ways, and change to meet the changing needs of patients.
5. Represent yourself, the Physical Therapist Assistant program, and Gulf Coast State College with the highest standards of moral and ethical behavior at all times.
6. Strictly adhere to policies for confidentiality of patient information.
7. Complete the evaluation of the clinical experience and share it with the clinical instructor on or before the last day of the affiliation but after you have received your evaluation from the facility. Use the evaluation as a constructive interaction with the clinical agency. Be honest and objective.

GENERAL POLICIES

I. Part-time Work

Because the Physical Therapist Assistant program is designed as an intensive paraprofessional preparation and because it will demand many hours of study and skill practice on the part of the student, it is strongly advised that students do not hold more than minimal hours of part-time employment during the time they are enrolled in the program. Although the college recognizes the fact that employment may be necessary, a full-time student is expected to put full-time effort into their studies. From November of the second year through May, there is little time for paid employment because students are in clinical affiliations 40 hours a week. Plan ahead and set some money aside to carry you through these few months.

II. Financial Aid

Gulf Coast Community State offers an extensive program of aid to students with documented need. Additional opportunities exist for others. Those substantially aided are expected to be at least half (six or more hours) enrolled students. Several programs provide limited aid to less than half time students. A number of scholarships are awarded each year to students with special talents and to those who have achieved academically. Information can be obtained from the Financial Aid Office and the various academic divisions.

Students are encouraged to apply as soon as possible during the spring and summer preceding the beginning of the academic year in which they wish aid. Applications are accepted in some programs as late as April of the ongoing academic year. Do not assume that you are too late in applying. Ask the Financial Aid Office. Apply early--some deadlines occur during the spring before school starts.

III. Counseling and Advising

A. Counseling services related to testing, placement, academic adjustment, or personal problems are integral functions of Student Development. Counseling is considered personal in nature and care is taken to insure the confidentiality of contacts between counselors and students. If you are having problems succeeding in a course, please visit a counselor. A plan can be developed that will put you back on the road to success. Whether your problem is academic or personal the counselors in the Counseling Center are available to help you. The Counseling Center is located in the Student Union - East.

B. Each student will be assigned a faculty advisor. The program encourages an open door policy with respect to student/faculty communication.

Plan to see your faculty (academic) advisor at least once each semester for review of academic progress in the classroom and clinic and for program advising, assistance and support. Problems, complaints and concerns should be shared with

your faculty advisor. Special problems and unforeseen circumstances relative to graduation should be called to the attention of the Program Coordinator.

IV. Dress Code

- A. Lecture classes: It is expected that students will wear clothes that do not cause any undue classroom interruption to the teaching/learning process.
- B. Laboratory classes: Laboratory dress consists of shoes (with non-slip soles), socks, shorts, and T-shirt. Clothes such as sweat suits may be worn over lab attire when the student is not practicing skills. Shoes must be worn except when necessary to remove them during practice. Laboratory dress for all labs is expected unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. Students may not be admitted to lab without appropriate dress. Laboratory time is not available for changing clothes. Arrive at the lab, on time and appropriately dressed. Special clothing requirements may be necessary (such as bathing suits for whirlpool therapy) and you will be advised of these requirements by the instructor.
- C. Laboratory practices. When laboratory skills competencies are being tested, appropriate dress will be as for clinical internship. See dress code under Clinical Policies.
- D. Clinical dress code: see dress code, under Clinical Policies.

V. General Class Procedures

- A. Breaks are provided between classes and during classes as necessary.
- B. Family and friends are not allowed in class sessions or in practice sessions in the laboratory due to safety and liability considerations
- C. Students may practice procedures in the laboratory when it is not being used for class. When a student is practicing in the laboratory, a faculty member must be present in the Physical Therapist Assistant Department or the program secretary must be notified that the students are in the lab.

VI. Discipline

As students at Gulf Coast State College, Physical Therapist Assistant students are subject to all rules and regulations of the college. Any alleged infractions, as outlined in the [Gulf Coast State College Student Handbook](#), will be reported to the Discipline Committee for possible disciplinary action as provided in the college policy.

VII. Transfer Students

A transfer student from an accredited Physical Therapist Assistant program may request consideration for acceptance into the appropriate freshman or sophomore session determined by academic standing. Decisions will be made on an individual basis.

VIII. Phone Calls

Permission must be obtained from the Program Coordinator for placing urgent and necessary calls on the program office phone. It is expected that discretion will be displayed in the use of the telephone and that this privilege will not be abused. Cell phones are to be turned OFF during classes and labs.

(Cell phones may be permitted under special circumstances as specified by the instructor.)

IX. Student Bulletin Boards and/or online sources

Information pertinent to Physical Therapist Assistant students will be posted on the student bulletin boards. Each student is responsible for being aware of this information. Please check the bulletin boards or online sources (GCSC PTA facebook page) frequently for new postings. Students are also responsible for checking emails connected with GCSC's online learning system for daily updates.

X. Licensing Examination

It is mandatory for graduates of the program to become licensed if they wish to practice in the State of Florida and in a majority of the other states. A few states do not yet require Physical Therapist Assistants to be licensed, but unless you are sure you wish to reside permanently in one of these states, it is recommended that graduates schedule their licensing exam soon after graduation so that academic material is still fresh in your memory. Licensing is expensive and fees for testing and licensure may run between \$600. - \$800. You should start saving for these costs at the beginning of the program so that lack of fees will not be a deterrent to taking the licensure exam as soon as possible after graduation. The longer you wait the more arduous the process of preparation.

Additional recent requirements for licensure are included in Appendices C, D, E, and H.

When you make application for your Florida license, you will be required to complete a section on the application relative to a prior arrest record. If you have a record, you may be required to produce court records regarding the incident and in some cases, depending on the resolution of your case, you could be denied a PTA license. You should check with the State Board of Physical Therapy if you have a concern in this area before investing 2 years in your educational program. See appendix H for specific requirements.

XI. American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)

Students are eligible for student affiliate membership in the APTA. Forms for application are made available at the beginning of the year.

Participation in events and meetings sponsored by the Northwest District - Florida Physical Therapy Association (FPTA) are encouraged. Information on scheduled events is posted on the Program's bulletin boards.

XII. Current Address

Students are required to inform the program coordinator of any address or phone number changes as they occur. This is necessary so that you can be contacted in case of emergencies or in the event of unpredicted schedule changes.

Please give address and phone number changes to the coordinator or to the PTA Administrative Assistant in Health Sciences room 102. You must also change your address in the office of admissions.

When you are on clinical affiliations and/or off campus, please let family (children, spouse) and friends know where they can reach you. It is not the responsibility of college staff to take messages for you or to track you down in case of an emergency. It is your responsibility to let people know where you are.

XIII. Student File

Any required forms submitted to the program become the property of the program. If you need copies of items such as physicals, TB tests, Aids Training, CPR cards, etc., for yourself, please make the copy before submitting the originals to the program. The college does not provide copies of these items to you once they have been submitted. It is your responsibility to make copies for your records.

XIV. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy

(For a copy of the complete policy, see Appendix G).

In compliance with the Drug Free School and Communities Act Amendment of 1989, Gulf Coast State College:

. . .prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by all students and employees.

. . .enforces sanctions, including those applicable under local, state, and federal law, for unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol, including but not limited to suspension, expulsion, termination of employment, and referral for prosecution which may result in arrest, appropriate fines, and imprisonment.

. . . encourages anyone with a drug or alcohol problem to seek help at one of the local agencies.

Any evidence of suspected use of drugs or alcohol, which might impair the individual's ability to safely provide care to patients in a clinical setting, is cause for immediate withdrawal from clinical training. Students are subject to all drug/alcohol use policies of the affiliating agency including mandatory random drug testing. Refusal to comply with the agency's policy is cause for dismissal from the internship.

XV. Smoking Policy

In accordance with GCSC's policy smoking is prohibited on campus beginning January 1,2012. Violation of this policy may result in probation/suspension from the program.