Policy and Procedures

Doctor of Physical Therapy Program
Exercise Science Department
Arnold School of Public Health
University of South Carolina
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Faculty of and students enrolled in the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree program are governed by the policies and procedures of the University of South Carolina (USC) as documented in the Faculty Manual, Arnold School of Public Health Faculty Guidelines and the Graduate School. This document is designed to set forth the policies and procedures of the DPT Program and is intended to supplement (not replace) those of the University, School and Graduate School of USC.

1.0 Administration
Administration of the DPT Program consists of the Program Director (PD), the Director of Clinical Education (DCE), and administrative assistants to the program. The roles and responsibilities of these positions are described below.

1.1 Program Director (PD)
The PD of the DPT Program administers the daily operation of the Program. The individual employed by the institution, as a member of the Core Faculty, coordinates the activities of faculty related to accreditation, curriculum, budget, faculty recruitment/hiring, and academic standards. The PD also evaluates faculty and is the signature authority for the budget. The PD is responsible to the Chairperson of the Department of Exercise Science (EXSC) and the Dean of the Arnold School of Public Health (ASPH).

Physical Therapy Programs are granted accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). Accreditation is a Core Faculty responsibility and as such is coordinated by the PD.

It is the responsibility of the PD to insure:

- Timely submission of all required fees and documentation, including reports of graduation rates, performances on state licensing examinations, and employment rates to the appropriate University and Accreditation authorities.
- Timely notification of expected or unexpected substantive change within the Program and of any change in institutional accreditation status or legal authority to postsecondary education to appropriate University and Accreditation authorities.
- Maintenance of a mechanism for handling complaints about the Program and maintaining records of complaints about the Program.
- Restoration of Program compliance with accreditation criteria within two years of being determined to be out of compliance.
1.2  **Director of Clinical Education (DCE)**
This Core Faculty member is responsible for the planning, coordination, facilitation, administration, monitoring, and assessment of the clinical education component of the curriculum. The DCE(s) is the faculty member of record for the clinical education courses.

1.3  **Administrative Assistants**
Administrative assistants to the program are responsible for the maintenance of all student communications and records. In addition, the administrative assistants work with the PD and DCE to coordinate and implement the daily activities of the program including scheduling, facilities upkeep, and admissions and student communication.

2.0  **Faculty**
Faculty in the DPT Program have the same rights and privileges of faculty of similar academic rank at USC which are detailed in the University **Faculty Manual**.

2.1  **Definitions**
Faculty of the DPT Program are classified into subcategories to clarify the role of each faculty member and assist in the accreditation process. All faculty involved with the Program, include: (1) the Core Faculty, (2) the Clinical Education Faculty, and (3) the Associated Faculty.

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**Core Faculty:**
Those individuals appointed to and employed primarily in the Program, including the PD, the DCE and other faculty who report to the PD. The Core Faculty has the responsibility and authority to establish academic regulations and to design, implement, and evaluate the curriculum. Members of the Core Faculty typically have full-time appointments, although some part-time faculty members may be included among the Core Faculty. The Core Faculty includes physical therapists and may include others with expertise to meet specific curricular needs. The Core Faculty may hold tenured, tenure track, or clinical faculty (non-tenure track) positions.

**Clinical Education Faculty:**
Those individuals engaged in providing the clinical education components of the curriculum, generally referred to as either Site Coordinator of Clinical Education (SCCEs) or Clinical Instructors (CIs). While the educational institution/Program does not usually employ these individuals, they do agree to certain standards of behavior through contractual agreements for their services. The primary CI for DPT students must be a physical therapist; however this does not preclude a DPT student from engaging in short-term specialized experiences (e.g., cardiac rehabilitation, sports medicine, wound care) under the supervision of other professionals, where permitted by law.

Associated Faculty:
Associated Faculty are those individuals who have classroom and/or laboratory teaching responsibilities in the curriculum and who are not Core Faculty or Clinical Education Faculty. The University Associated Faculty may include individuals with full-time appointments at the University, but who have primary responsibilities in programs other than the DPT Program. Associated Instruction Faculty is a subdivision of Associated Faculty for those without a primary University appointment. They possess clinical expertise but often have limited academic experience. For this reason, the Faculty is supervised by a member of the Core Faculty.

2.2 Governance
Rights and privileges of the Core Faculty are based upon academic rank and are set forth in the Faculty Manual. Faculty of the Columbia campus, subject to the review of the President and the Board of Trustees have legislative powers in all matters pertaining to the standards of admission, registration, requirements for and the granting of degrees earned in course. As well as the curriculum, instruction, research extracurricular activities, discipline of students, the educational policies and standards of the Program, and all other matters pertaining to the conduct of faculty affairs, including discipline of their own members.

Core Faculty of the DPT Program, regardless of rank and appointment, have direct governance over admissions, Program policies and procedures, academic standards, and curriculum. It is the responsibility of the Core Faculty to review these areas and propose revisions. Changes to these areas of responsibility must be brought to the Core Faculty for discussion and approval prior to submission to higher committees. Core Faculty members are also participating faculty members in the Department of EXSC and the ASPH.

2.3 Evaluation of Faculty
Faculty of the DPT Program are considered members of the ASPH. Faculty in the ASPH are appointed to either a tenure or clinical faculty position depending upon their role and responsibilities. Evaluation is conducted annually and is based on policies and procedures established by ASPH and the type of appointment. The following is a summary of the annual faculty evaluation procedures of the ASPH. Please refer to the specific documents for additional detail.
All faculty members receive an annual administrative review conducted by the PD and/or department chairperson. The administrative review for members of the Core Faculty serves as the mechanism for the PD and the faculty member to review the past years accomplishments in the areas of teaching, scholarship and service, and plan developmental activities for the coming year. The administrative review is also used for decisions regarding merit salary adjustments.

2.3.1 Tenure Track Appointments
Tenure track faculty, except tenured full professors, participate in the School’s annual review process conducted by Tenure and Promotions Committee (This review is under the supervision of the School’s Tenure and Promotion Committee and managed by the Office of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs). All faculty participate in an administrative review conducted by the Director of the DPT Program and/or the Chairperson of the Department of EXSC.

Faculty in tenure track positions are also reviewed on a regular basis for progress toward tenure and promotion. The primary responsibility for all tenure and promotion procedures rests with the tenured faculty of the ASPH. General University tenure and/or promotion procedures are outlined in the Appointment, Tenure and Promotion Procedures. The President is the final authority for recommending tenure or promotion to the University Board of Trustees. Final authority for approving recommendations of tenure or promotion rests with the Board of Trustees. The University Committee on Tenure and Promotion offers faculty an annual workshop on tenure and promotion matters where the criteria and procedures are discussed and faculty are provided an opportunity to ask questions.

2.3.2 Clinical Faculty Appointments
Clinical faculty play an important role in the development and operation of the Program and are critical to the successful pursuit of the clinical, teaching, and research goals of the Program. These faculty are annually evaluated for retention and promotion. Annual letters of appointment detail the specific distribution of effort of these faculty members (teaching, scholarship and service) which may change annually based on the needs of the Program and faculty member. Specific guidelines for this review process and standards for promotion are set forth in the Clinical, Instructional and Practice Faculty guidelines of the ASPH. Workload distributions are determined based on faculty interest, program needs, and equity across program faculty.

2.3.3 Associated Faculty
Associated Faculty (sometimes referred to as adjunct) make a significant contribution to the foundational and clinical core of the curriculum. Some contribute clinical expertise that enhances the clinical component of the Program while other faculty provide content and research experience contributing to the foundational core. Associate Faculty are evaluated on a number of factors that contribute to their effectiveness in delivering relevant instructional content. Evaluation components used as part of evaluative process include; academic credentials, quality of the learning experiences provided to students, instructional
effectiveness, student review, student/instructor interaction, and quality of the materials used in instruction.

In general, **University Associated Faculty** have academic experience and the Program relies upon this instructional and research expertise to design and implement appropriate instructional experiences. Core Faculty members, acting as content liaisons, provide suggestions and guidance to support faculty ensuring that the content they deliver is relevant for the students enrolled in the DPT Program. Core Faculty have taken the opportunity to meet individually with each University Associated Faculty to review the content of their course and offer feedback. This process of Core Faculty review has proven to be valuable in assisting the Core Faculty to better understand the content of the classes taught by University Associated Faculty and providing Associated Faculty with insight into the relevance of their content to physical therapy (PT).

University Associated Faculty often have academic appointments in a related department or school. Although the Core Faculty depend upon the University Associated Faculty members’ home department to ensure content and instructional expertise, the Core Faculty reviews the academic credentials of these Faculty members to ensure it meets the need of the DPT Program. The home department of the University Associated Faculty is responsible for their annual evaluation. The PD reviews their instructional performance, as evaluated by students, at the conclusion of each course. Additional informal student assessments of University Associated Faculty provide valuable insight into the quality of instruction provided. If problems are identified, the course liaison or the PD meets with the faculty member in an attempt to correct the problem. If the problem persists, the chair of the University Associated Faculty’s department is consulted to assist in correcting the instructional deficiency. To date, this review process has been used successfully to improve the instruction delivered to our students and guide changes in the curriculum.

**Associated Instructional Faculty** possess clinical expertise but often have limited academic experience. For this reason, the Faculty are supervised by a member of the Core Faculty. It is the responsibility of the core faculty member to have meetings held prior to the course offering and throughout the semester to discuss course content, delivery and student evaluation. It is further expected that the core faculty member will observe the adjunct faculty’s instruction each semester, mentor appropriate and effective instructional strategies/evaluation techniques, and input the final grades for the course.

The Core Faculty reviews and approves the professional credentials of all Associated Instructional Faculty prior to appointment. Instructional competence is evaluated using both student assessments of instruction and the Core Faculty’s assessment of teaching. Faculty with concerns regarding the instructional content and/or effectiveness of an Associated Instructional Faculty are expected to bring these concerns to the attention of the PD and Core Faculty. If the problem cannot be corrected, the services of the adjunct faculty member will be discontinued.
If instructional support of an Associated Instructional Faculty member is necessary/desired, the program is willing to financially support activities designed to increase clinical expertise and/or instructor effectiveness. Associated Instructional Faculty are welcome to attend Program faculty meetings, but do not have voting privileges.

Specific rights and privileges of Associated Instructional Faculty include but are not limited to:
- The right to be identified as an Associated Instructional Faculty of the DPT Program
- The right to a University identification card with the privileges of such as outlined in the Faculty Manual.
- Invitation to all professional seminars in DPT Program.
- Instructional materials and supplies to facilitate instruction.
- Use of a laptop computer to use for instructional purposes.
- The right to seek instructional assistance using University resources.

2.4 Faculty Mentoring
USC has no formal policies and procedures for mentoring new faculty (tenure or clinical track). For this reason, the DPT Program has established the following policies and procedures to assist new Core Faculty make an appropriate adjustment to USC. These policies and procedures are not intended to diminish the PDs role in faculty development and evaluation, but are designed to supplement these efforts.

1. Soon after hiring, the PD or Chair of the Department of EXSC will assign the new faculty member a mentor who has advanced faculty rank (Associate or Full) and tenure (if available).
2. Mentoring of faculty may take place in two settings: formal and informal. Formal mentoring sessions are designed to provide the new faculty member with information and insight regarding the role of faculty and administration in the DPT program. Informal interactions are those in which the mentor and faculty member exchange information of interest to the new faculty member. Information exchanged during informal mentoring sessions is confidential.
3. The mentee is encouraged to actively facilitate questions for the mentor regarding activities required for tenure/promotion and annual review (e.g. peer review of teaching, assignments to School and University level committees, submission of grant proposals).
4. A mentor will continue to be assigned to a faulty member until that faculty member has submitted their tenure and/or promotion file or a clinical faculty member has been on staff for at least five years. At that time it is up to the faculty member to maintain or discontinue the mentoring relationship.
5. If concerns, by either mentor or faculty member, are raised every effort will be made by the PD to facilitate a positive mentoring experience and reassign the faculty member if necessary.
2.5 Faculty Development
Faculty development activities are designed to (1) fulfill specific program needs identified by the Core Faculty and/or (2) enhance individual faculty instructional/research expertise. Program needs are identified by the Core Faculty and provided to the PD for consideration. The PD at his/her discretion will request specific faculty to participate in developmental activities to address these program needs.

Biennially (every even year), individual Core Faculty establish developmental plans that are reviewed by the PD. Faculty development plans are designed to identify activities intended to maintain and/or enhance instructional/research expertise. The program provides financial support for faculty development activities.

2.6 Content Liaisons
The DPT curriculum contains selected courses taught by non-PT faculty in an interdisciplinary classroom setting. The faculty of the DPT Program has the responsibility to insure the material presented in these classes meets the needs of the DPT students enrolled in the course. Interdisciplinary courses will have a content liaison assigned whose responsibility is to assure the needs of the curriculum and students are met. The following guidelines have been established for the faculty of interdisciplinary courses and the content liaison.

1. The semester preceding the offering of a course taught in the DPT curriculum by a non-physical therapist faculty member, the PD will assign a Core Faculty member to act as a content liaison to that course.

2. The content liaison is to act as a resource to the faculty of the interdisciplinary course. The role of this position is to assure that the content relevant to the DPT students enrolled in that course is presented in a manner to meet the professional needs of these students.

3. As a resource, the content liaison is to review the course schedule of each course and provide input regarding material specific to the field of PT. It is the responsibility of this individual to make available to the faculty of the course those materials that facilitates the delivery of this professionally related content.

4. Students will be informed of the content liaison assigned to each interdisciplinary course. Students will be encouraged to communicate their reactions of the course to the content liaison.

3.0 Students
Enrollment in the DPT program is limited to approximately 30 students per year. Recruitment, admission and retention of students are the primary responsibilities of the Admission committee made up of Core Faculty and Physical Therapists that are PhD students at USC, guided by the following policies and procedures:
3.1 Recruitment

Students are recruited to the DPT program using a variety of techniques.

- A web page containing information related to all aspects of the program and which allows students to directly request additional information and/or e-mail Program Administrative Assistants or Faculty
- Direct contact with students and faculty in Exercise Science at our school.
- Publication of faculty and student generated research in professional journal or presentations at meetings.
- Cooperating with the ASPH and the Graduate School in preparing materials for distribution on their recruiting trips.
- Physical Therapy Centralized Application Service (PTCAS)

3.2 Admissions

Admission to the DPT program at USC involves meeting the admission requirements of the Graduate School, the ASPH and the DPT Program. All applications to the DPT program are taken electronically (PTCAS) and are received by the program once the student has paid a supplemental application fee. The DPT Admissions Committee makes all admissions decisions and forward these to the Graduate School for action. There is an opportunity for early admission to the program via PTCAS.

3.2.1 Arnold School of Public Health Requirements

The ASPH Admission Requirements are described in detail on the website. The admission process is a joint, cooperative effort of the Graduate School, ASPH, and the DPT Program. No application will be given final consideration until all credentials, fees, etc. have been received.

3.2.2 DPT Program Requirements

Applicants for the DPT degree in the Department of EXSC must have an earned baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and will be reviewed for admission by the Core Faculty. Each applicant must pay the non-refundable application fee ($80) or met waiver requirements and have a verified PTCAS application with: official transcripts from each institution attended showing all previous course work; letters of recommendation; official GRE and TOEFL scores.

The applicant’s transcripts, regardless of major, must demonstrate successful completion of the following prerequisites:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credit hours</th>
<th>General Physics</th>
<th>8*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>8*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human Anatomy and Physiology</td>
<td>8*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biology</td>
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</tbody>
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In rare instances Core Faculty can waive a prerequisite if the applicant demonstrates proficiencies in a specific content area. Applicants interested in obtaining such a waiver should contact the Admissions Administrative Assistant for the appropriate procedures for submitting such a request.

In addition to meeting the academic requirements for admission for the DPT degree, students enrolled in the Program must provide evidence of vaccinations, immunizations, background checks, and CPR certification. This is outlined in the Clinical Education Guide, accessible on the Program Webpage.

### 3.2.3 Admission Criteria to the DPT Program

The Admission Committee makes recommendations to the graduate school for admission decisions. Admission decisions are made after reviewing a completed admission file and are based on the applicant’s academic credentials and personal and professional experiences. Confirmation of undergraduate degree is required if admissions decision is made prior to degree completion. In addition, if an applicant is offered admission prior to completing all prerequisites, that applicant must complete all prerequisites with a grade of “C” or better to matriculate into the class.

#### 3.2.3.1 Academic Credentials

The initial phase of the admission process is designed to insure that students enrolled in the DPT Program possess the academic credentials to successfully complete the program of study. A number of criteria are used during this phase of the admission process, each with a weight assigned by the Admissions Coordinator prior to the admissions process. Criteria used during the initial phase of the admission process includes:

**Undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA):** This is defined as the Applicant’s total GPA for credit hours taken at the undergraduate level. Applicants who have taken graduate work in a related field will have that work considered. If an applicant has completed a graduate degree in a related field, that GPA may be used in lieu of the undergraduate GPA.

**GPA of Prerequisite Course Work:** This is defined as the applicant’s GPA calculated on the prerequisite courses required for admission into the DPT Program.

**Graduate Record Examination Scores:** This is calculated by assessing the combined quantitative, verbal scores, and the writing score on the applicant’s graduate record examination.
Values for each of the criteria are entered into a formula to produce an admission score that is used for evaluating applicants.

### 3.2.3.2 Personal and Professional Experiences

The second phase of the admission process is designed to evaluate the applicant’s personal characteristics and previous professional and work experiences. This phase of the admission process is designed to identify applicants who possess the characteristics to make successful professionals.

During the admissions process, the committee may subjectively evaluate a number of factors that may be considered for admission. For example, a student’s previous graduate study/graduate degree, research experience and/or relevant work/life experiences, or diversity may be given priority in the admissions process. The Core Faculty on an individual basis will evaluate applicants possessing such experiences and consider this information in its deliberations. It is the intent of this subjective process to consider an applicant’s demonstrated desire and efforts to seek admission to the Program and not to “substantially change” the academic standards of the Program.

Criteria to be used during the second phase of the admission process are more subjective and include:

**Graduate Study / Graduate Degree:** Applicants with previous graduate study or a graduate degree will be given credit for their experience based on the extent and quality of their course work and/or degree attained.

**Research Experience:** Applicants with previous experience (graduate and undergraduate) collecting, analyzing and preparing written or oral reports of research will be given credit for the quality of their experience(s).

**Previous Work Experience:** Applicants with post graduate work will be given credit for this experience. Work in a rehabilitation field, military service, or past work with disadvantaged populations is rated greater than other unrelated work experience.

**Letters of Recommendation:** The information provided in the recommendations will be evaluated and used in the selection process.

### 3.2.4 Transfer Students

The DPT Program does not accept transfer students from other programs. All students must complete the program of study as defined.
3.3 Criminal Background Checks and Drug Screening

This is outlined in the Clinical Education Guide, accessible on the Program Webpage.

3.4 Student Responsibilities

3.4.1 Professional Organizations

Students enrolled in the DPT Program are strongly encouraged to be student members of the national and state chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). Students attending professional meetings will be excused from class, and are required to contact the instructor to make up content. Students presenting at professional meeting will often be provided with financial support to partially cover their expenses. The amount awarded will be individually determined by Graduate School, ASPH, EXSC, or DPT program depending on who student applies to for a travel grant.

3.4.2 Academic Responsibility/ Honor Code

Students enrolled in the DPT Program are governed by USC Code of Academic Responsibility which states: \textit{It is the responsibility of every student at the University of South Carolina to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty in connection with any academic program}. A student who violates, or assists another in violating the Honor Code, will be subject to university sanctions.

3.4.3 Ethical Behavior

Students enrolled in the DPT Program are expected to adhere to the ethical standards of the PT Profession. This Code of Ethics, adopted by the American Physical Therapy Association, shall be binding on all students enrolled in the DPT Program.

3.4.4 Attendance

Students enrolled in the DPT Program are required to attend, \textbf{and be on time}, to all classes unless otherwise excused. To be excused students are to notify the instructor of the course (preferably prior to the absence) to document the reason for the absence. Students absent from a class are expected to obtain the content of the class missed. Students exhibiting a pattern of unexcused absences or tardiness shall be placed on probation by the Program and will receive a learning contract.

3.4.5 Dress Code

PT is a professional degree and as such, students enrolled in the program are expected to dress appropriately.

\textbf{Classroom – Lecture:} Students may dress for lectures in casual clothing. Students should refrain from wearing clothes that are excessively worn. Good judgment should guide the selection of proper dress. \textbf{Students are expected to wear a nametag any time they are in}
Classroom – Lab: Dress is to be appropriate for the class activities, including clinical dress for skills competencies. Students should be prepared to uncover the body part to be studied. Day lockers are available. Students are expected to wear a nametag any time they are in lab.

Clinical Setting: Students are to follow the dress policy of the clinical site that they have been assigned. CI’s will provide this information to the student.

3.4.6 Transmitted Diseases
Students enrolled in the DPT Program and faculty should be particularly aware of the potential contamination from infectious agents in the health care environment. Students enrolled in the DPT Program must comply with the requirements in the Clinical Education Guide.

3.4.7 Use of Clinical Classroom
Students have access to the clinical classrooms to practice clinical skills and complete assignments when classes are not scheduled. The following rules govern the use of the clinical classrooms.

1. Classrooms are to be left neat and clean after use. Students are to wipe down the tables and stools when finished. Then place the stool upside down on the table and raise the table to its highest position. Students should make sure that all equipment is clean, put away, and is turned off when completed.
2. Students are to remove shoes and any other items that could puncture the leather prior to using the tables.
3. Students are not to use any equipment that they have not been instructed on nor treat individuals other than those enrolled in the program. Students are not to use modalities on themselves.
4. Students should close and make sure clinical classrooms are locked when they leave. When using the classrooms students should always have a mobile phone to use in case of an emergency.
5. Do not allow unauthorized individuals into the clinical classrooms.
6. Do not share the combination to the room with anyone other than those enrolled in the program.
7. IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY CALL UNIVERSITY POLICE AT 803-777-9111.

3.4.8 Computer Use
Computers and printers are available for student use in the Blatt PE Center. The following rules govern the use of program computers.

1. Room is to be left neat and clean after use.
2. Do not allow unauthorized individuals to use the computers.
3. Do not share the combination to the room with anyone other than those enrolled in the program.
4. When done leave the computers on but log out.

3.4.9 Use of Electronic Equipment in Classroom
Computers are allowed in the classroom for the purposes of activities related to instruction. All other use during class time is prohibited and considered disrespectful to the instructor and the class. A student violating this privilege will be asked to leave class, and not be allowed further use of the computer in this class. Repeat violations across multiple classes will result in the loss of the use of computers in the remainder of the program of study.

All mobile phones should be muted prior to each class. Texting and the reading of text messages in class is not allowed. Repeat violation in a particular class may result in the student being withdrawn from class. Individual syllabi may have point deductions for violations to this policy.

3.5 Academic Responsibilities and Retention
Students enrolled in the DPT Program are required to meet the academic standards of the Graduate School as detailed in the University Graduate Studies Bulletin and those established by the Core Faculty of the DPT Program.

3.5.1 Graduate School Requirements
Every graduate student at USC has online access to the Graduate Studies Bulletin. The first part of this document contains general information concerning USC and the Graduate School. The Graduate Studies Bulletin also includes a complete section of specific information on the School of Public Health; graduate degrees offered by the Department of EXSC; and a description of graduate courses.

Grade Point Average: The student must maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale on all courses attempted for graduate credit. The student must also maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale on all courses numbered 700 or above.

I (Incomplete) to F: An "I" is a temporary mark that may be assigned at a professor's discretion to allow a specified additional time to finish course requirements following illness, accident, or unusual hardship. A grade of "I" is converted to a grade of "F" after one (1) year if requirements are not met.

3.5.2 DPT Retention Criteria
PT is a clinical profession and therefore it is vital to public safety that Program faculty are assured that students progressing to their clinical experiences, and those entering the profession have the skills necessary to practice in a safe and ethical manner consistent with
contemporary practice. For this reason, Core Faculty of the DPT Program have established formal academic standards of performance beyond those of the Graduate School, and a method by which a faculty members concerns regarding a student’s professional behavior and/or academic performance may be reviewed. Students not meeting these standards of performance will not be retained in the Program. The Core Faculty makes all retention decisions. Dismissal from the Program is a major decision and will usually only be made when other attempts at resolving the problem have failed.

3.5.2.1 Academic Standards

Successful completion of the program of study requires that students must receive minimum grade of ≥B or ‘Pass’ on all courses identified with a PHYT delimiter with two exceptions- PHYT 702- Musculoskeletal and Gross Anatomy Dissection and PHYT 731 Mechanism of Motor Skill Performance which must be passed with a grade of ‘C’ or higher. All other courses in the program of study must also be passed with minimum grade of ‘C’ or ‘Pass’ (within the rules of the graduate school). 

All other grades (incomplete or withdraw) will be considered as not successfully completed.

Remediation and Learning Contract: Students receiving less than a passing grade (<79.6%) on any major evaluation (written or practical) in a PHYT course may be offered a chance to remediate that content. The presence, content and structure of the remediation sessions are course dependent (determined by the instructor). Course Instructors will have specific remediation policies and procedures in the syllabus that outline the content and structure of remediation for their course. Remediation is considered a second attempt to secure knowledge or clinical skills to facilitate student safety and competence in clinical practice. Remediation is not used to replace a poor grade in a class. Remediation of an evaluation will not change a student’s original score. The original score will be used in final grade calculations for the course.

Students are provided only one attempt at remediation per exam. If that remediation is not successfully passed, the student may be dropped from the class. Any subsequent remediations are at the discretion of the Core Faculty. Failure to earn a final score of 79.6% or greater score on the skills competency will result in failing the course.

Students are expected not to exhibit a pattern of needing remediation or of scoring less than B on exams. Exhibition of such a pattern may (at the discretion of the Core Faculty) result in dismissal from the Program. All exam scores less than B are reported via a centralized reporting system. If a student develops a “pattern” of scoring less than B on exams, defined as greater than or equal to three occurrences within a semester across PHYT courses or within a single course, they will be placed on “probation” for the remainder of that semester and the next full semester. If a course structure includes multiple quizzes, the instructor will have defined the number of quizzes that equate to the weight of one exam in the course syllabus. If a student reaches this threshold (<B on a certain number of quizzes), this will be counted as one of the three allowed scores below B for that semester.
A Learning Contract may be developed for the student that reaches the three exam threshold within a single semester. This contract will outline the requirements for the student to successfully be removed from probation. This will include, but not be limited to, a requirement of no scores on exams less than B (in PHYT courses) in the probation period. If the student scores below B on another examination during the semester probation period, the student may be dismissed from the Program. The PD and the Core Faculty will evaluate each instance independently and determine if dismissal or another action is warranted (e.g. failure of the class, establishment of further learning contract).

A learning contract may contain:
- Re-taking of selected segments of courses or complete courses within the program of study.
- Completing additional assignments selected to demonstrate clinical competence
- Development of a plan for a student’s continued progress in the program of study.

Remediation is a privilege provided by the faculty and is granted to students enrolled in the DPT Program. Core Faculty have the right to withdraw the opportunity for remediation from individual students abusing this privilege. Students having their remediation privilege revoked and not passing an evaluation (written or practical) will fail the class and may be dismissed from the program.

Progress through the DPT Program is dependent upon successful completion of each course at the time that it is offered in the program of study. Courses are sequenced in the curriculum to build upon the knowledge gained in previous courses. For this reason, students not successful in completing a course may be restricted from taking additional courses until that coursework is remediated. This may result in the student’s graduation being delayed. Faculty will review each case individually and notify the student of his/her ability to enroll in additional coursework prior to the semester following the deficient course work. Possible decisions that may be made by a DPT Core Faculty vote include, but are not limited to the following:

- Suspension from the program with return to the program the next time the deficient course is offered. - This is the most likely decision with the next two being possible if extenuating circumstances exist.
  - Continue in the program and remediate the deficient course (unless it is a core foundational class such as anatomy, functional anatomy, or neuroscience) while remaining on track in the program of study.
  - Continue in the program but only be allowed to enroll in classes identified by the Core Faculty.
- Dismissal from the program

Faculty members establish the grading policies and procedures for their individual courses. The
DPT program has adapted a set grading scale that is consistent across most courses, this scale and the exceptions are detailed in each course syllabi.

- **A** = 89.6% to 100%
- **B+** = 87.6% to 89.5%
- **B** = 79.6% to 87.5%
- **C+** = 77.6% to 79.5%
- **C** = 69.6% to 77.5%
- **D+** = 67.6% to 69.5%
- **D** = 59.6% to 67.5%
- **F** = <59.6%

In establishing these grading policies, faculty members must insure student mastery of all course work. Students not demonstrating mastery in specific aspects of the course may, at the decision of the faculty member, be provided remedial work. The opportunities for remedial work may be limited and if available will be delineated in the grading section of the course syllabus. Remedial work may or may not be considered in assigning a final grade by the course instructor. Unsuccessful completion of any PHYT course retaken for remediation will automatically result in dismissal of the student from the program.

Students at the conclusion of the didactic course work will be required to pass a comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination for the DPT Program will consist of multiple-choice questions. The exam focuses upon the student’s mastery of clinical knowledge and practice. The passing grade for the exam will be established each year by taking the **mean class grade + 1.5SD**. A student’s research project Defense presentation and performance on the questions and answers portion of this presentation are considered the oral portion of the comprehensive examination. Students not passing the comprehensive examination will be required to retake it. Students are allowed to take the comprehensive examination a maximum of three times. A second failure will require the student to take an oral exam prepared and graded by the Core Faculty. Pass or failure of the oral examination will be determined by the assessment of the Core Faculty. Failure to pass the oral examination will result in the student not being retained by the program.

Students must meet the deadlines established for the research component of the program of study. Those students not meeting these deadlines must be reported by the faculty member responsible for their research to the Core Faculty for action. Actions taken by the Core Faculty may include, but are not limit to the following:

- Suspension from the program including all course work and clinical experiences until the research deadlines are met.
- Dismissal from the program of a student not progressing in a timely manner.
Students receive midterm and final evaluations of clinical performance in all clinical courses. In all clinical courses the CI rates the student using the CPI Web. The Clinical Grading Policy is outlined in Clinical Education Guide. In the Clinical Education Policies and Procedures section of the Clinical Education Guide, policies and procedures are detailed for 1) Clinical Problems and 2) Repeat or Extension of a Clinical Course.

3.5.2.2 Professional Standards

Faculty, staff and other students may notice the action of a student enrolled in the DPT Program that may result in behavior considered unethical or unprofessional. In addition, a student may experience academic problems with selected course content. Independent observations of isolated events may not be sufficient to draw attention to a larger potential problem. For this reason, collective observations may assist in the identification of a significant problem and indicate a need for external assistance.

Faculty and staff of the DPT program have established a policy and procedure for assisting students exhibiting behavioral or academic problems. The objectives of this program are:

- The early identification of students exhibiting behavioral and/or academic problems that will be detrimental to their progression in the academic program or practice as a physical therapist.
  - Early Identification Plan is initiated when a student has a course average less than 75% in the first 4-6 weeks of the semester. This notification reintroduces students to resources available in the Program (faculty meetings, TA meetings) or outside the Program (Student Health Services).

- The development of a remedial plan of action designed to assist a student in managing and addressing behavioral or academic problems.

- Although one isolated incident may not rise to the level of dismissal from the Program, a pattern of unprofessional behavior may result in sufficient cause for dismissal.

The following procedures should be followed by faculty, staff or students who observe unprofessional behavior or academic problem on the part of a student enrolled in the DPT program.

1. An individual who observes an unusual behavior or poor academic performance, physical signs, emotional signs, or inappropriate social interactions should complete the Individual Referral Form. This form can be sent anonymously.

2. Upon receipt of a completed form the PD of the DPT Program will respond to the form submitter (if identified).
3. The PD’s office will maintain a confidential file of all submitted forms. In evaluating the nature of an individual student’s problem, the PD will evaluate the number of forms submitted on a student, the nature of the submitted reports and any additional information obtained from the respondent interview.

4. If appropriate, the PD will inform the identified student of the reported problem and meet with the student and the student will have the right to rebut the observations/assertions.

5. The PD will synthesize all relevant information and submit a report to the Core Faculty and solicit input regarding the appropriate steps for providing assistance to the involved student.

6. The PD of the DPT Program will prepare a final report and define the steps to be taken to resolve the problem. A meeting will be held with the involved student to summarize the report and provide an opportunity for assistance. Both the student and PD will sign the report. If the student does not agree with the report or the remedial step they may request a hearing with the ASPH Grievance Committee.

7. Students may also be referred to additional support agencies on campus including the Counseling and Human Development Center (Student Health Services) for professional and personal problems and Educational Support Services (Office of Student Development) for problems related to academic skills.

3.5.2.2.1 Social Media Policy:

The Program recognizes that electronic forms of communication and social media have assumed a larger role in education, clinical practice, and research. However, an increasingly widespread use of social media also means that distinctions between private, personal matters and public information have become blurred. It should be recognized that it is illegal to post some protected information or activities. In these cases, violations can be subject to civil and criminal penalties, which may include fines and/or imprisonment. In addition, violators may face administrative actions by the Program, which could range from a letter of reprimand to course failure and/or dismissal from clinical experiences. Communication and social applications may include but are not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Groupme, Snapchat, and YouTube.

The following activities are strictly forbidden and may be subject to legal action and/or Program sanctions:

- Students may never post the personal health information of others. De-identifying an incident involves much more than removing an individual’s name. Other potentially
identifiable information includes the date or location of the encounter, age, gender, race/ethnicity, diagnosis of the individual, and/or treatment plan. This is a federal and state-protected right that holds violators accountable to disciplinary actions and personal legal liabilities.

- Clinical affiliation sites may have specific policies for obtaining limited consent to photograph and/or record patients and clinical care for educational purposes. Social media postings of photographs or videos of surgeries, wounds/injuries, and patients in clinical or class outreach activities may contain identifiable information and thus are forbidden.
- It is not permitted to disclose the academic information about another student, which may include but is not limited to examination or course grades, clinical education experience evaluations, and academic or disciplinary sanctions. This information is federally protected and violators are subject to legal and civil penalties.
- Students may not identify themselves as an official of the Physical Therapy Program of the University of South Carolina, or state posted opinions as representative of the Program.
- Similarly, students may not represent themselves as another person (real or fictitious) or obscure their identity in an attempt to circumvent the social media regulations specified in this policy.
- Students may never make direct or implied threats against others, including but not limited to patients, students, instructors, staff, or clinical faculty.

The following activities are **forbidden and subject to Program sanctions**: 

- Students may not take or post photos, audio or video recordings of lectures, labs or review sessions, or any course materials or exams without the authorization of the instructor. Students should always obtain permission directly from the course instructor before taking or disseminating information.
- Social media may not be used for unauthorized collaboration on assignments, online quizzes or exams that have been designated as individual work. If the students are not certain whether an assignment is individual or collaborative, they must first ask their instructor for clarification. Unauthorized collaboration in any form for any item that has been designated as individual work is considered a violation of the USC honor code and subject to separate disciplinary action up to and including removal from the program.

The following unprofessional behaviors are **strongly discouraged and may be subject to disciplinary action from the Program, clinical affiliation site, or both**: 

- Use or display of offensive language, photographs, or videos.
- Photographs, videos, or language that can be interpreted as disrespectful to individuals or groups based upon their age, gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.
- Posting of potentially inflammatory or unflattering material on a group or another individual’s social media page (i.e., Twitter post, “wall” of another’s Facebook page).
**Final Social media considerations:**

There is significant legal precedent for institutions to use the content of social networking sites as an employment screening tool or as cause for job termination. Therefore, a responsible and professional approach should be used for all personal and professional social media exchanges. Videos or other social media that do not violate laws but present others under a false light, imply professional incompetence, or defame character may be subject to personal civil legal actions filed by individuals.

Remember that even stringent privacy barriers can be breached, and unauthorized individuals may still gain access to a student’s webpage or social media site. While a post can be removed from a social networking site, the information may have already been exported or printed by another user. Therefore content can survive far beyond an initial post, in other sites or media formats.

This policy illustrates the most pressing and most common areas of concern and is not intended to identify every action that does not comply with the law, University policy, or professional standards (refer to APTA). Please consider posts carefully. Use a waiting period or seek consultation if there is a possibility the content could be misinterpreted.

### 3.5.2.3 Appeal Policy

Students who for reasons above are suspended or dismissed from the program have a right of appeal. Appeals of suspensions or dismissals from the program are conducted by the ASPH Grievance Committee. Grievance procedures are initiated following the procedures outlines in the Policies and Procedures of the [Arnold School of Public Health Grievance Committee](#).

Students not in compliance with the requirements of the Graduate School should follow the appeal procedures outlined by the Graduate School. Graduate School appeals will be reviewed by the Core Faculty and a recommendation of the Core Faculty for action will be forwarded to the Graduate School.

Students not in compliance with the requirements of the DPT Program must appeal in writing (within two weeks of notification) to the PD who will bring the matter to the Core Faculty for complete review. In response to an appeal, faculty may take no action and leave the current ruling in place or change, or modify, the current ruling. For reinstatement following dismissal, a student must demonstrate extenuating circumstances that significantly contributed to his/her performance.

### 3.6 Additional Requirements

#### 3.6.1 Insurance

MALPRACTICE INSURANCE
Malpractice insurance in the amount of Two Million/Four Million dollars of coverage per incidence/occurrence is required for the duration of each clinical experience and is provided by USC DPT program. Additional personal student professional liability coverage can be obtained through Healthcare Providers Service Organization. Information regarding this coverage can be found in Clinical Education Guide, accessible on the Program Webpage.

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE
Students are required to maintain health insurance coverage and must keep proof of this insurance coverage on file with the DCE. Failure to provide the required statement of health insurance coverage will prevent the student from attending the required clinical education experience and will likely result in delayed graduation.

4.0 Academic Program

4.1 Program of Study
Students are required to complete the program of study (i.e. sequence of coursework, clinical experiences and research) documented in the program of study. The program of study of each cohort is available at the program website under the year of expected graduation. **It is the responsibility of each student to keep track of his or her progression and insure they are fulfilling the requirements for graduation.** Prior to graduation the office of the PD’s office will check to insure that each student approved for graduation has met the Program’s requirements.

4.2 Clinical Education Requirements
Students must successfully complete all clinical experiences. Failure to complete a clinical experience may result in delayed graduation and restrictions placed on academic progression. All clinical experiences must be completed and are regulated by the policies and procedures outlined in the Clinical Education Guide.

4.3 Research Project
Students enrolled in a DPT Program must submit an approved research project to the office of the PD to satisfy part of the requirements for the DPT degree. This document is the ultimate requirement of the academic program because it remains as a permanent record of the independent research and creative effort that led to the award of the DPT degree. Guidelines for conducting and preparing this research project can be obtained from the program website under the link for current students. Authorship on any professional dissemination of a research project completed to fulfill the requirements of the program of study should include the contributing committee members directing the project.

5.0 Essential Functions
It is the policy of the DPT Program at USC to provide *reasonable accommodations* for qualified students with disabilities so they can perform the essential functions required for graduation and the practice of PT. USC Office of Student Disability Services and the DPT Program make the determination of *reasonable accommodation* jointly. These are outlined in the [Essential Functions form](#) on the program website.

### 6.0 Informed Consent

DPT students are required to sign an “Informed Consent” document detailing the activities they will experience during laboratory courses throughout the program of study and clinical experiences.

The rights and safety of research participants are protected by the policies and procedures set forth by the [Office of Sponsored Awards Management (SAM)](#). All research conducted by students enrolled in the DPT Program involving human and/or animal subjects is conducted under the guidelines and review of the Institutional Review Board.

### 7.0 Program Complaints

There are several methods by which individuals can submit a complaint or comment regarding the DPT Program at USC, its faculty, staff or student.

#### 7.1 Making a Complaint or Comment

**For Complaints or Comments Regarding the Program’s Accreditation.**

The DPT Program at USC is an accredited program by CAPTE, a nationally recognized accrediting agency. As part of the accreditation process, the DPT Program is encouraged to provide a method by which the general public and academic community can file a formal written complaint regarding any aspect of the program or the conduct of one of its faculty/students.

Complaints can be submitted to the accrediting agency with written testimony regarding the program or file a formal complaint following the procedures detailed at the CAPTE website or by directly contacting: American Physical Therapy Association, Attention: Accreditation Department, 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-1488; Fax: 703/706-3387; or e-mailed to [accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org).

**For Informal Complaints or Comments**

Informal comments or complaints regarding the program can be made through the office of the Chairman of the Department of EXSC. Individuals wishing to make a complaint or comment about the program, its faculty or students may do so by following these procedures:
- Detail complaint in a brief narrative. Identify all the important details and identify those individuals involved.
- Provide dates when applicable.
- Provide details regarding role in the complaint/comment.
- Submitter should offer suggestions as to how they believe the complaint/comment should be resolved.
- Provide steps that have already been taken to resolve the issue.
- Provide contact information.

Complaints and Comments can be mailed to the Chairman, Department of EXSC, ASPH, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208. Once the complaint or comment has been submitted, the submitter will be notified regarding the action taken in response to concerns.

**For Formal Complaints Regarding the DPT Program**

There are established procedures for filing formal complaints about the Program, its faculty and students. If the nature of a concern is major and the individual desires to file a formal complaint with the University, they should contact the Office of the Dean, ASPH, University of South Carolina 29208 to discuss the nature of the complaint and to determine what procedures should be taken to initiate the formal complaint process.

**For Complaints that Fall Outside the Normal Mechanisms Listed Above**

The Program also has a mechanism for individuals to submit complaints about the Program outside the normal mechanisms of due process. Informal complaints regarding the Program may be submitted at any administrative level via the Individual Referral Form.

### 7.2 Resolution of the Complaint

Formal complaints or comments forwarded to CAPTE or through the University’s due process procedures will be resolved following the policies and procedures of the agency to which the complaint or comment was submitted.

Informal complaints of comments will be investigated by the Office of the Chairperson of the Department of EXSC who will make recommendations to the Core Faculty and PD. Individuals submitting a complaint or comment will expect receive a written explanation of the action taken resulting from the submission within thirty (30) days.

As for the Program and the University of South Carolina there is a **prohibition of retaliation following complaint submission**. This “Non-Retaliation Policy” means that it is a violation of this policy for any person to retaliate, intimidate or take reprisals against a person who has filed a complaint, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in the investigation or resolution
of a complaint. Appropriate disciplinary actions shall be taken against any person who has been found to have violated this policy.

8.0 Campus Resources

8.1 Counseling
Counseling services feature a multi-disciplinary staff representing psychology, social work, and counseling. Counseling staff provide psychological counseling, education and consultation to the university community, as well as clinical supervision for selected mental health graduate students. Its multidisciplinary team offers services that promote social, emotional, and physical and cognitive well-being for people facing developmental or unplanned challenges. Counseling is available on campus and walk-ins and appointments are welcome.

8.2 Financial Aid
Financial Aid and Scholarships is under the division of Student Affairs and Academic Support. This service can help students evaluate costs and determine what type of financial aid support they need. They can also assist with completing the FAFSA, as well as a variety of resources for students including information on cost and aid, grants, loans, and student employment.