

SECTION C: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE & STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

A. DEPARTMENTAL ADVISING

1. Faculty Advisor

Each student will be assigned to a faculty for advisement throughout the physical therapy program. The advisor's role is one of academic counseling, but as personal matters frequently affect academic performance, students are encouraged to discuss any and all problems with the faculty member. Students will meet formally with their advisor with regard to their academic performance to discuss the following:

- a. Development of a professional development plan within the DPT program during their first semester of the professional curriculum based on the generic abilities self- assessment found on page G.21-22 of this handbook.
- b. Monitoring and revision of the professional development plan on an annual basis.
- c. Monitoring of academic performance.
- d. Evaluating grade performance to insure minimum level requirements are met prior to beginning clinical practica.
- e. Establish a written plan for improving academic performance if a student's GPA falls below the department and universities expectations.

2. Meetings

The student and faculty will meet first during student orientation and then are required to meet at least once per semester while on campus. The faculty may request additional meetings throughout the semester as needed. And, students may request a meeting with their advisor at any time throughout the semester.

3. Assignment of Advisor

Students will typically have the same faculty advisor throughout the didactic portion of the curriculum. A conflict of personalities may occur since students are randomly assigned to faculty advisors. Students may petition for a change of advisors in instances where conflicts cannot be resolved. To petition for a change of an advisor, the student must ask the Chairperson, verbally or in writing to assign a new faculty advisor. The Chairperson will inform all persons involved of the change. During the full-time clinical internships, students are encouraged to seek advisement from the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) but may always contact the advisor if preferred.

4. If the student indicates special needs to maintain expected academic and behavioral standards (for example, tutoring or stress management), the student should be directed toward the appropriate area in the department, college, or university.

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5. When difficulty is indicated by the faculty, the advisor will evaluate grade performance of advisees to insure minimum level requirements are met prior to beginning clinical practica.
 - a. At the middle and end of each academic semester, all faculty members are required to report grades to the chairperson. Mid-term grade reports are compiled and distributed to each student. Final grades are posted in secure student accounts online by the university.
 - b. Also at the middle and end of each academic semester, the department sends a letter to each student who is not meeting the expectations of academic performance. (as indicated in the Professional DPT Student Handbook) This letter requires the student to meet with their academic advisor to discuss their academic performance and devise a written plan for improving the student's performance.
 - c. The written plan for improvement must be approved by the student's advisor and the chairperson. For students who are placed on academic probation, the written plan for improvement must also be approved by the Academic Progress Committee.
 - d. Refer to the Professional DPT Student Handbook for additional description of how the program monitors student academic progress through the curriculum and deals with academic probation issues.

B. MINIMUM ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE LEVEL

In addition to completion of required courses, the student must meet established scholarship standards for the Department of Physical Therapy in order to complete the professional program successfully. Refer to the [UCA Student Handbook](#) (Academic Policies) for information regarding the university's policy on academic probation and expulsion. At the middle and end of each academic semester, all faculty members are required to report grades to the Chairperson. Mid-term grade reports are compiled and distributed to each student. Final grades are posted in secure student accounts online by the university. At the middle and end of each semester, the department sends a letter to each student who is not meeting departmental expectations of academic performance.

1. Departmental Academic Warning
Notice oral or written that the student's academic performance is unacceptable to the point that without intervention (such as tutoring) the most likely result is more serious academic action (i.e. probation or expulsion). The notice serves as an official warning that continued unacceptable academic performance will result in more serious action by the Department of Physical Therapy. The student should meet with their faculty advisor to discuss the implications of this warning.

2. Departmental Academic Probation

As outlined in the [UCA Graduate Bulletin](#), a graduate student is expected to maintain a cumulative 3.0 grade point average. A student whose cumulative grade point average is less than 3.0 is on academic probation. In the next semester the student should achieve a cumulative GPA of a 3.0 or at least show meaningful improvement towards a 3.0 GPA. If the cumulative 3.0 GPA is not met or there is no meaningful improvement shown, the student is ineligible to continue graduate studies at UCA. The student has responsibility for reporting probationary status to an advisor regardless of notification by the Graduate Dean or Chairperson. A student on academic probation must 1st meet with the assigned department academic advisor within the first week of the probationary semester to discuss academic performance and devise a written plan for improvement. Next, the student on academic probation will meet with their advisor and the Academic Progress Committee to discuss their written plan for improvement by the second week of the semester in which the student is placed on academic probation. Approval of this plan must be obtained by the Academic Progress Committee and the Department Chair. The Academic Progress Committee may call the student to meet with the committee as often as necessary to ensure that the student is making meaningful improvement. At the end of the semester of probation the Academic Progress Committee will meet again with the student and their faculty advisor to determine if the student is eligible to continue in the program.

3. Departmental Academic Expulsion

A student will be expelled from the curriculum if a grade of D or F is received in any course, or if the student is placed on academic probation for a second time. Students on probation will be expelled if they fail to make progress toward a 3.0 cumulative GPA for the curriculum as outlined in the probation plan (Item 2 above). In addition, a student will be expelled from the Department of Physical Therapy with any of the following occurrences:

- a. Cheating/academic misconduct.
- b. Academic Progress Committee determines lack of consistent progress toward removal of probationary status.

4. Graduation

Graduate students must have a 3.0 grade point average in graduate course work to graduate from the university.

5. Clinical Education Practicum

A DPT student must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 for all required course work within the curriculum to be eligible for enrollment in the clinical education practicum courses. Students on academic probation must petition the Academic Progress Committee to attend an integrated clinical experience. Upon approval by the Academic Progress Committee required courses may need to be repeated or elective

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courses in the Department may need to be taken to improve the cumulative grade point average to the required 3.0 before the clinical experience. The student must achieve a cumulative 3.0 GPA in one semester. Students may be enrolled simultaneously in several clinical courses or in academic and clinical courses where grades are submitted to the Registrar. However, the final grade is determined by the Director of Clinical Education at the end of the clinical experience. The grading criteria for the clinical is a "pass/fail" where a "pass" constitutes an "A" or "B" and a "C or below" constitutes failing or an "F" grade. Students receiving an "F" grade on a clinical experience will be expelled from the Department and may not continue course work or clinical experiences. Removal from course work will occur regardless of the current semester status.

6. See Section F: Clinical Education, pages F.16-F.17, for academic probation occurring where timing of probation would limit opportunities to improve grade point prior to clinical rotations.

C. DUE PROCESS

The Department adheres to Due Process for students as established in the [UCA Student Handbook](#) (Academic Policies), the [UCA Graduate Bulletin](#) and the university publication [Student Judicial Handbook](#) (available in the Chairperson's office). Departmental procedures for Due Process are outlined below:

1. The Department of Physical Therapy has established an Academic Progress Committee for the purpose of considering student appeals from department academic policies. Refer to pages B.3-B.4 for a description of the structure and function of this committee.
2. The university has established an Adjustment Committee for the purpose of considering student appeals from university academic policies. Petitions for appeal are available in the office of the Provost and the Registrar.

D. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A student in good standing (cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better) who wishes to apply for a leave of absence from the DPT Curriculum, must submit a written request to the Department Chairperson. A student may pursue a leave of absence for situations such as illness or injury, pregnancy or severe financial strain. Upon departmental approval, a position in the following class may be granted without requiring the student to go through the competitive process provided the following conditions are met:

1. "In good standing" is interpreted to include a cooperative and professional attitude as determined by the faculty as well as acceptable academic performance with a cumulative GPA of 3.0. Academic difficulty will not constitute an acceptable cause for a leave of absence.
2. A written request for a class leave of absence needs to be submitted by the student

petitioner to the Chairperson of the Department. The request will clearly state the reason for the leave of absence. The Academic Progress Committee will determine the legitimacy of the cause for the leave of absence.

3. A student must petition and receive an answer regarding permission to re-enter the program's next incoming class prior to the actual leave of absence.
4. If the Chairperson and the Academic Progress Committee approve the leave of absence, then the petitioner must accept a position in the program's next incoming class prior to the actual leave of absence.
5. If the student fails to accept a position and wishes to return to the PT program at a later time, then the student must file a formal application for the program's next incoming class and or subsequent class, and the student will be reviewed in competition with all other applicants.

E. DEPARTMENTAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Part of becoming a professional is to display professional behavior. Here at the University of Central Arkansas, Department of Physical Therapy, you will have an opportunity to participate in this process. The following document details: 1. Examples of professional behavior, 2. the department's Professional Behavior Policy, and 3. the departmental process to document exceptional behavior.

F. STUDENTS IN THE PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM ARE EXPECTED TO:

1. Show responsibility and integrity for learning by:
 - a. arriving on time and remaining for the entire time period in class, lab and clinical affiliations;
 - b. demonstrating initiative and professional curiosity by being prepared for class and lab, actively participating in class and lab, and completing course assignments on time;
 - c. setting priorities and correcting problems which interfere with, or potentially interfere with, academic performance;
 - d. refraining from plagiarism and other dishonest acts on tests and assignments;
 - e. reporting dishonest acts by other students;
 - f. adhering to the American Physical Therapy Association Code of Ethics and Standards for Ethical Conduct;
 - g. following the regulations of the University and the Department.
2. Show respect for, and exhibit a positive attitude through cooperation with, faculty, clinical instructors and fellow students by:
 - a. speaking to others with tact and diplomacy;
 - b. giving and accepting constructive criticism appropriately.

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3. Communicate clearly and appropriately by exhibiting appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior.
4. Avoid behaviors inconsistent with expectations. Examples include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. repeated non-excused absences from class, laboratory sessions and clinical affiliations;
 - b. academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc);
 - c. missing an exam without prior notification of instructor;
 - d. demonstrating disrespect for a student, faculty member, or patient;
 - e. violating the departmental policy concerning illicit drugs.

G. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR POLICY

The development and display of professional behaviors is an essential part of the integration of individuals into a profession. Development and assessment of professional behaviors for students in the Professional DPT Program at the University of Central Arkansas will occur through the following mechanisms:

1. Assessment of applicants to the DPT program by clinicians during required observation experiences using the Generic Abilities Assessment Scale (page G.20) during clinical observations.
2. Self-assessment of DPT students during the 1st semester of the professional curriculum (introduced in Professional Issues) using the Generic Abilities Self-Assessment (see pages G.21-G.22).
3. Development of a professional development plan for each student within the DPT program during the 1st semester of the professional curriculum based on the self-assessment and meetings with the faculty advisor.
4. Monitoring and revisions of professional development plans each semester through meetings between the student and advisor. This process will occur in the summer of the 1st year and then in the fall of the 3rd year. Input from faculty will be utilized in revision of the professional development plan.
5. Assessment of student's professional behavior during the DPT program by faculty in all classes using the Generic Abilities Assessment Scale. Students will be provided regular feedback regarding their professional behavior in the following ways: (1) verbal feedback from the faculty and (2) written feedback in the form of a summary report of all faculty ratings and comments at the beginning of each semester regarding behavior observed the previous semester. Revisions of the professional development plan should

be based on faculty feedback and self-assessment. Students may be required to undertake remedial work prior to the clinical rotation if deficiencies in professional behavior are identified by the faculty.

6. Reporting of exceptional student behavior (positive or negative) using the Professional Behavior Reporting Form found on page G.19.
7. Assessment of students' professional behavior during the clinical education component of the DPT program by clinical faculty using the Generic Abilities Assessment Scale found on page G.20.

H. EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT BEHAVIOR

1. Documenting Good Behavior

A student may be acknowledged for helping other students and for positive contributions to the class or community. Fellow students and faculty may document good behavior by writing a letter to that student's file, with a copy for the student. When the time comes for writing recommendations to potential employers, the faculty will have a record of academic and non-academic performance.

2. Documenting Problematic Behavior

Behavior inconsistent with expectations of the Department of Physical Therapy may also be documented for the record by filing a Professional Behavior Reporting Form (see page G.19). The following section of this document outlines the procedures that will follow incidents of inappropriate behavior.

3. Filing a Professional Behavior Report

A demonstration of inappropriate behavior may be reported either by a faculty member or by a student. A clinical instructor may report an incident to the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) who serves as course director for all clinical experiences. Behaviors reported to the DCE may be filed at the discretion of the DCE.

4. The Process after Filing

a. Faculty Filing

A faculty member observing inappropriate behavior that is of sufficient severity to warrant the filing of a report should outline the behavior on the Professional Behavior Reporting Form. The report will be submitted to the Chairperson, who will then forward a copy to the student and the student's advisor. If the faculty filing the report is the student's advisor, then the Chairperson will appoint another faculty to serve as the student's advisor. Subsequently, this report will be discussed between the student and the faculty advisor. The faculty advisor will prepare a written summary of the meeting. This summary, as well as the

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original report, will become part of the student's permanent departmental file. The student will have one week to submit a short, written response to the report. This response should not argue the validity of the initial report, but should present the student's viewpoint of the incident. The student's response also will become part of the student's permanent record.

b. Student Filing

A student observing inappropriate behavior that is of sufficient severity to warrant the filing of a professional behavior report should detail the behavior on the reporting form. This report will be submitted to the Chairperson, who will then forward it to the student and the student's faculty advisor. Subsequently, this report will be discussed between the student and the faculty advisor. The faculty advisor will prepare a written summary of the meeting, and this summary, as well as the original report, will become part of the student's permanent departmental file. The student will have one week to submit a short, written response to the report. This response should not argue the validity of the initial report, but should present the student's viewpoint of the incident. The student's response also will become part of the student's permanent record.

5. Second Incident

An incident report from a second occurrence of behavior inconsistent with the behavioral expectations will be addressed by the faculty and the Academic Progress Committee. Refer to page B.4 of this handbook for information on the duties of this committee. To be considered a second incident the behavior must occur after the student has met with his/her advisor concerning the first incident. The faculty and the Academic Progress Committee will review the two incidents and the faculty advisor will meet with the student in question. At this time the student will have the opportunity to explain his/her behavior. The faculty advisor and the student will develop a plan of action (with written objectives and specific timelines for completion) and present it to the Department Chairperson. The Department Chairperson will review the plan and make recommendations as needed. The student has the responsibility of completing the developed plan of action. The student and their faculty advisor will meet to discuss whether or not the student successfully completed the plan of action and will report the student's status to the Academic Progress Committee, faculty and the Department Chairperson. If the student does not meet the goals within the time frame agreed upon, then the Chairperson and faculty advisor may ask for recommendations by the faculty and the Academic Progress Committee. Corrective action may range from remediation to dismissal from the program. Documentation of all meetings, developed plans of action, and recommended corrective action will be kept in the student's departmental file.

6. Third Incident

The incident report from the third occurrence of inappropriate behavior will again be addressed by the faculty and the Academic Progress Committee. To be considered a third incident, the behavior must occur after the student has completed the objectives from the second incident. The faculty and the Academic Progress Committee will review the two incidents, and the faculty advisor with the Department Chairperson will meet with the student in question. At this time the student will have the opportunity to explain his/her behavior. The faculty advisor, the student and the Chairperson will develop a plan of action (with written goals and specific timelines for completion). The faculty and the Academic Progress Committee will be advised of the objectives and timeframes for completion. The student has the responsibility of completing the developed plan of action. If it is determined by the student's faculty advisor, the Academic Progress Committee, the faculty and the Department Chairperson that the student failed to meet the objectives within the specified timeframe, for the third time without significant improvement toward the objectives, the student will be dismissed from the program. Documentation of all meetings, developed plans, and recommendations will be kept in the student's departmental file.

7. Ultimate Consequences

In order to enroll in a Clinical Education Practicum, a student must have no recommendations for dismissal, and must be complying with any applicable plan of action. Inability to enroll may delay graduation. In addition, passing of all clinical courses requires that behavioral expectations be met. As with any course in the curriculum, failure to pass a Clinical Education Practicum due to unprofessional behavior will necessitate immediate dismissal from the program.

8. Student Appeals

Students have an opportunity to appeal decisions made by the faculty to the Dean of the College. The appeals process will follow the procedure described in the UCA [Student Handbook](#) (Standard of Student Conduct- Appeals).

* It should be noted that any single incident may be sufficient cause for a faculty member to request that the Academic Progress Committee, the faculty and the Chairperson review the incident and request dismissal from the program.