



HARCUM COLLEGE

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Policy and Procedure Manual 2022-2023

Dear Student,

On behalf of the faculty, staff and administration, we would like to welcome you to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Harcum College.

The field of Physical Therapy is a fascinating and exciting career choice. It is a field that is constantly evolving as clinical research provides new treatment ideas and techniques to practicing clinicians. Your instructors here at Harcum will provide you with “the basics” of patient care and treatment. Hopefully, you will continue your education beyond graduation through professional development activities, including continuing education courses, ongoing membership in the American Physical Therapy Association, regular review of professional journals and review of the advances in evidence-based practice.

This handbook is designed to provide you with the important information you need while you are a student in our program. You are expected to read and abide by the information and policies written here. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to discuss them with the PTA Program Director.

Sincerely,

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College Policies

Harcum College Mission Statement

Harcum College provides its students with an opportunity for outstanding academic, career and life preparation. We teach, mentor and prepare students for success in their chosen profession in an experiential environment. Harcum's core values of excellence, civility, empowerment, integrity, community service and respect for diversity assure that every student is valued and supported.

Equal Opportunity

Harcum College is an equal opportunity institution, and, as such, does not discriminate in its educational and employment practices with regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, sexual orientation, applicable veteran status or any other legally protected classification. The College complies with all federal and state nondiscrimination laws, orders and regulations.

Emergency School Closing and Campus Alert System

e2Campus Security and Classroom Cell Phone Policy: All students must put their cell phones on silent status during classroom instruction and activities. No student will be permitted to use cell phones during instructional or testing times. Harcum College has an e2campus emergency notification text message program. It will be mandatory practice for the instructor to keep his/her phone on ring to regularly review text messages during class time for a potential emergency. The instructor is not expected to respond to any messages except to notify the students of a potential emergency from e2campus. All Harcum students must register for the e2Campus emergency notification system. To register, go to Harcum's e2Campus page, click on "I Need to Create an Account" and sign up: <http://www.e2campus.com/my/harcum>.

In the event of inclement weather, it may be necessary to close the College. School closing information will be sent out via the campus alert system. School closing information is posted on the home page of the Harcum web site: www.harcum.edu

On the first day of class, the PTA faculty will create a contact list for each member in the class. Please be advised that the phone number you identify will be the number that will be called. If necessary, present cell phone, day, and evening numbers to the program director.

College Grading System

The PTA Program uses the grading system established by the College. **PLEASE NOTE:** Students need a **minimum of 73%** to pass each of their PTA courses, BIO103, BIO 104 and AHS 101.

A	95 - 100
A-	90 - 94
B+	87 - 89
B	83 - 86
B-	80 - 82
C+	77 - 79
C	73 - 76
C-	70 - 72
D+	67 - 69
D	63 - 66
D-	60 - 62
F	Below 60
I	Incomplete
W	Withdrawal

(PTA Policy) Final course grades will not be rounded. The minimum passing grade is a 73. A 72.99 or lower is not considered a passing grade.

Course Withdrawal

A student, due to medical or personal problems, may request to withdraw from his/her course(s). In the event a student withdraws, he/she will need to complete the "Withdrawal from Class" form and submit it to the Program Director and Vice President of Academic Affairs for the appropriate signatures. The student should meet with the PTA program director to initiate the withdrawal process. Please refer to the college catalog for specific considerations related to the withdraw process. Any change in course load may affect the student's financial aid and eligibility for aid for the future semester(s); the student should contact financial aid for information prior to initiating the withdrawal process. Withdrawal from any PTA course or PTA pre-requisite course will delay a student's graduation date by a minimum of one year.

(PTA Policy) A student may not withdraw from a PTA course more than once and may not withdraw from more than four PTA courses during duration of studies. Doing so will result in dismissal from the program.

Incomplete Grades

On occasion, due to prolonged illness or other personal problems, a student may be unable to complete the course requirements. At this point, the student may request an "Incomplete" grade for the course (this request should be made prior to the start of the week of finals). The decision to grant an incomplete is determined by the course instructor and the PTA program director. The student must meet with the instructor and complete a "Request for an Incomplete Grade Form". This form can be obtained from the PTA Program Director or the Office of Student Records.

In the event that an "Incomplete" is granted, the student will need to make arrangements with the course instructor for completion of the course requirements. Students are allowed 6 weeks after the last day of the semester to complete the course requirements. If they

are unable to successfully do so, they will receive an “F” in the course. If the student is subsequently enrolled in a course where the “I” course is a pre-requisite, the student must complete any incomplete coursework within the drop/add period of the next semester (or six weeks after the end of the course in which the “I” was given, whichever is first), or the student will be dropped from the enrolled course.

Grade Appeal Policy

(PTA Policy)

The student can appeal grading by a faculty member within two weeks of the course grade being posted (10 business days).

The student must, in writing, document why he/she considers the grade to be inaccurate and present it to the faculty member who will respond within ten business days.

The student must present supporting evidence in tests, papers and other supporting documents to the faculty member.

If this appeal is denied, the student may then appeal to the program director, in writing, within 10 days of the denial. The program director will review the appeal and follow up with the student in writing within 10 business days of the appeal.

If the appeal is denied, the student may then appeal to the Vice President of Academic Affairs in writing within ten days.

If this appeal is denied, the appeal can be taken to the President of the College, within 10 days of the denial.

Appeals will not be considered if a student has not followed the appropriate chain of command and/or timeline.

Security

The campus security office phone number is 610-526-6099. There are campus phones located at designated areas. This system of paging can be used to communicate with the security department at any time, day or evening.

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Policies

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Mission Statement

The mission of the PTA Program at Harcum College is to prepare students from diverse backgrounds to enter into a career in the profession of Physical Therapy as a Physical Therapist Assistant, working under the supervision of a Physical Therapist.

The PTA Program curriculum incorporates didactic and clinical learning experiences designed to foster the development of the knowledge, clinical reasoning skills and psychomotor abilities necessary to be a competent entry-level clinician. This includes development of appropriate psychosocial skills, the ability to demonstrate cultural competence, demonstrate appropriate communication skills, and demonstrate the ability to provide education to team members, families and patients.

Through involvement in the program, the College and clinical activities, the students are provided with opportunities for leadership roles, lifelong learning and professional accomplishments.

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Essential Functions

Essential functions are those skills recognized as necessary for students to demonstrate to be successful in the PTA Program. A full list of the Essential Functions is included below, as well as in the College Catalog. It is the expectation of the PTA faculty that each student has carefully reviewed the essential functions and recognizes the importance of demonstrating each of these functions (with or without reasonable accommodation). Inability to demonstrate one or more of these essential functions may have an impact on a student's ability to successfully complete the PTA Program. If, after admission, the PTA student experiences a change in his/her ability to fulfill the Essential Functions requirements, the student is required to notify the PTA Program Director in writing.

Essential Functions for the PTA Program

For students to be successful in the PTA Program, they must possess the following qualities:

- Academic ability to earn a grade of C or higher in all PTA courses
- Ability to achieve competency level performance in all physical therapy procedures which include, but are not limited to, the following:

Cognitive Domain: The student must demonstrate the ability to:

- Reason with abstract and concrete variables, define problems, collect data, establish facts and draw valid conclusion
- Master information presented in course work in the form of lectures, demonstrations, independent study, clinical experiences, written material, material presented through computer imaging and projected images.

- Interpret instructions furnished in oral, written, or schedule form
- Problem solve and deal with unexpected situations
- Carry out written or oral, one, two, or three-step instructions
- Remember instructions and carry out tasks over time
- Generalize instructions from one situation to another
- Read and comprehend physical therapy evaluations, educational and medical charts, manuals and instructions for maintenance of equipment, safety rules and procedures
- Document entries into medical charts
- Prepare and write written educational reports using appropriate grammar, punctuation and spelling
- Manage his/her time effectively and ability to maintain a work pace appropriate to a given caseload, including regular and punctual attendance at the clinical affiliation sites as well as all classes
- Recall coursework materials and integrate appropriately in problem solving scenarios
- Demonstrate an entry-level knowledge of clinical and didactic materials
- Effectively process information, prioritize and problem solve within an environment containing multiple distractions
- Understand spoken and written English and utilize the English language appropriately in written assignments and documents

Psychomotor Domain: The student must demonstrate:

- Functional vision, hearing, motor and tactile sensation which must be adequate to monitor and assess a patient's health needs and to perform duties as noted in a PT plan of care
- Adequate ability to guard patients safely during ambulation activities on level surfaces and stair climbing when the patient is using a cane, walker, crutches, or other assistive devices
- Ability to transfer patients safely from bed to chair or mat and from table to chair using minimum, moderate, maximum, or dependent-lift techniques
- Ability to perform the full range of motion to a patient
- Ability to apply graded manual resistance to patients' individual muscle groups for the purpose of determining the patient's strength or applying exercise techniques for strengthening or stretching all muscle groups
- Ability to safely and competently apply modalities and electrical stimulation, including contra-indication/precaution review, using appropriate parameters and set-up techniques. These treatments include, but are not limited to moist heat, cold packs, cryocuff, intermittent compression, paraffin, fluidotherapy, ultrasound, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation, Russian stimulation, high volt pulsed current stimulation and neuromuscular stimulation.
- Ability to apply ultrasound safely, which includes manipulating dials at the same time that the sound head is kept moving on the patient's treatment site
- Ability to complete wound care techniques on open wounds
- Ability to perform cleaning procedures for sterile techniques with all size

whirlpools

- Good body mechanics in the process of all patient treatment techniques
- Communicate effectively with patients by explaining procedures to patients; obtaining consent from patients to proceed with treatment; receiving information from patients, their charts, other healthcare providers and/or their physician; introducing self while confirming patient's identity and documenting clear, concise and accurate notes in the patient's chart
- Ability to set up treatment sessions using laboratory or clinic equipment within the time restraints of the treatment requirements to provide safe and effective treatments to the patient
- Ability to perform CPR
- Ability to apply standard precautions when indicated for patients with potential blood borne pathogens
- Ability to monitor vital signs and respond to emergencies

Affective Domain: The student must demonstrate:

- Ability to handle stresses of competency testing, lab practicals and clinical affiliations.
- Empathy—being sensitive and responding to the feelings and behaviors of others
- Ability to engage in a face-to-face verbal conversation, making eye-contact and using appropriate body language
- Ability to cooperate and work effectively with other individuals
- Ability to initiate or self-start projects, tasks and communication, searching out answers using appropriate resources
- The organizational and time management skills necessary to coordinate class, study and clinical responsibilities
- Ability to give and receive constructive feedback and to modify behavior accordingly
- Ability to present oneself in a manner (dress, body language, personal hygiene, verbal style) that is accepted by peers, clients, and employers
- Students must possess the emotional health required to complete all academic and clinical requirements and to follow appropriate classroom, testing and clinical protocols.
- Ability to express self clearly in English, and to be easily understood when using the English language

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Goals

An entry-level graduate with an Associates of Science Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant from Harcum College will:

1. Apply and integrate the fundamental theories of patient treatment including the knowledge of indicators, contraindications and precautions of specific treatment procedures within the scope of practice of a PTA.
2. Use critical thinking and problem-solving skills to select the most appropriate patient care activities in a safe and legal manner within the scope of practice of a PTA.
3. Perform patient treatment and analyze, monitor and appropriately adapt to the patient's condition during a treatment session; complete accurate documentation of the effect of physical therapy treatment as it relates to the patient's plan of care.
4. Demonstrate and educate the patient, family and healthcare team in physical therapy techniques which will maximize the patient's functional independence.
5. Demonstrate appropriate communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal), recognize the values and beliefs of diverse patient populations and display empathic responses and use these to develop effective interpersonal relationships with patient, family and colleagues.

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Philosophy

Physical Therapist Assistants play an integral role in patient care. The PTA needs to have a foundational knowledge of medical conditions, treatment techniques and parameters, and indications and contraindications for patient treatment, and must be able to use this information and apply it to persons with compromised physical abilities within a plan of care provided by a physical therapist. The clinician must be able to make recommendations related to progressing the treatment plan and must demonstrate interpersonal skills to communicate changes in a patient's status to the supervising physical therapist.

The faculty believes that certain qualities are important components of clinical professional behavior. These include honesty, loyalty, understanding, respect for the rights and dignity of others and sensitivity to culturally diverse backgrounds. As such, we believe it is important for students to demonstrate professional behavior throughout participation in the PTA Program, by abiding by the APTA Standards of Ethical Conduct for the PTA. It is necessary for the PTA student to be able to successfully demonstrate all of the Essential Functions of the PTA Program.

Throughout the PTA Program curriculum, the faculty work to develop the students' abilities to analyze clinical situations and develop appropriate treatment interventions. The focus is on development of a student's ability to create a treatment program (within the parameters of the Plan of Care developed by a Physical Therapist) that will optimize the functional outcome for the patient. The faculty promotes a creative approach to patient care that emphasizes individualization of treatment activities for each patient, while encouraging students to recognize patterns of functional impairment that drive the development of the treatment plan.

Faculty Responsibilities

Education is a partnership between a faculty member and a student. In order for this partnership to succeed, there are responsibilities for which each is accountable. The following list designates the responsibilities of the faculty to the student:

- ◆ The faculty will develop and work to maintain a program curriculum that meets the standards established by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.
- ◆ The faculty will provide the students with didactic instruction that includes a diversity of treatment philosophies, as well as the current theories related to the clinical practice of Physical Therapy.
- ◆ The faculty will provide the students with an opportunity to explore current theory and practice through research projects and “hands-on” training of clinical skills.
- ◆ The faculty will assess the students’ didactic knowledge and clinical skills on an ongoing basis to ensure that students meet the program requirements for entry-level clinicians.
- ◆ The faculty will conduct themselves in a manner that facilitates a collegial atmosphere, and present the students with positive role models.

“It is not the responsibility of your teachers to make it convenient for you to carry on with your life like it was before you enrolled in school. It is your responsibility to modify your life so that you can successfully complete the requirements of the program.”

◆ Bill Hendricson

Student Responsibilities

In order for a partnership to succeed, both parties must make an active effort. The faculty will expect each student to accept the following responsibilities.

- ◆ The student will attend each class (lecture and lab) promptly as scheduled. In the event a student is unable to attend a regularly scheduled class, he or she will inform the instructor of the reason prior to missing any classes. The student also accepts the responsibility for getting class notes and assignments from classmates.
- ◆ The student will complete and hand in all assignments on time. This includes completing the designated competencies for each course in the time frame established.
- ◆ The student will uphold the APTA standards of ethical conduct for the PTA.
- ◆ The student will obtain all health clearances, and complete all required forms for clinical affiliations, by the posted deadlines.
- ◆ The student will dress in a professional and appropriate manner for all classes. The student will comply with the PTA program dress code requirements during all lab classes, competency tests, course practical exams and clinical affiliations. The student will wear the Harcum College polo shirt for all clinical site visits, practical exams, and may wear it to clinical placements pending site dress code requirements. Refer to Appendix 1 for dress code requirements.
- ◆ The student is responsible for maintaining compliance with HIPPA regulations at all times.
- ◆ The student will follow appropriate chain of command when stating concerns about the program.
- ◆ The student is responsible for abiding by all Academic and PTA Program policies with regard to academic performance and clinical education.
- ◆ *The PTA faculty recognizes that the PTA curriculum is time consuming and challenging and requires a significant time commitment. We strongly recommend that students minimize outside work commitments while completing the curriculum to maximize success.*

Attendance

Physical Therapy is an intensive field, and attendance in lectures and labs is extremely important. Students are expected to attend their lectures and lab sessions as scheduled. If a student is unable to attend a lecture or lab session, she/he is responsible for contacting the appropriate instructor prior to the scheduled class time.

Regular and punctual attendance of classes is mandatory. In order to provide for the event of illness or other extenuating circumstances, students are allowed to miss one hour of class per course credit, e.g. one hour in a one-credit course, three hours in a three-credit course. The course instructor must be notified of absence before class or as soon as possible thereafter.

Significant lateness (more than 10 minutes), or leaving the class before it is over, counts as one hour of absence.

Being on time includes being IN THE APPROPRIATE ATTIRE at the start of lab class. Students who need to leave lab class to change into lab clothing may be considered late for class.

Enrolling in a professional program should reflect a serious commitment to professional behaviors; therefore, any further absences will result in a final grade reduction of one letter grade per hour absent. Exceptions may be made in emergency situations only. The student is responsible for making up missed work, and obtaining hand-outs, class notes and other information.

Excessive unexcused absences will have a detrimental effect on the student's grade, according to the PTA program policy. Any student who is absent (for medical or personal reasons) more than the equivalent of 3 weeks of classes and or labs in one course will be asked to withdraw or take an incomplete in said course. This may impact on the student's ability to register for/complete the next semester's courses and may result in a delay in the student's expected graduation date of a minimum of one year.

Grades

Students must earn a **minimum of 73% ("C")** to pass each of their PTA courses. Final course grades are not "rounded". A grade less than a 73.0 is not considered a passing grade.

Students are required to achieve a "C" or better in each of their PTA courses in order to receive a passing grade. A student who receives a "C-" (a 72.99) or less is considered to have failed the course, and will not be allowed to take further PTA courses until the failing grade has been remediated.

Any failure in laboratory requirements (competencies or lab practical) in PTA courses will result in failure of the entire course. All course competency tests must be successfully completed prior to the student taking the course lab practicum. If the course competencies are not scheduled and successfully completed by the competency program deadline, the student will fail the course. The student must successfully complete the lab practical exam in the time allotted and achieve a minimum grade of 73% to pass the lab practical, including passing all safety activities. Students should be aware that taking the lab practical/skill competencies in a lab setting with the lab instructor within specified time limits is considered a major component of this course and cannot be modified. A student who fails the lab practical will have one opportunity to retake the practical. All practical exam retakes will be videotaped to allow a video review of student performance. Video

records are maintained for students who do not pass the practical exam retake for a minimum of 2 weeks after the end of the semester. The student must successfully complete the lab practical on the second attempt. The maximum grade a student can attain on any retake of a practical is 73%. Failure of the second attempt of the practical will result in failure of the course. A student who earns a failing grade in a course due to competency or practical exam performance will earn a C- or their actual course average in the course, whichever is lower. Both laboratory and lecture portions of the course must be successfully completed for a student to earn a passing grade in the course.

Students who do not show up on time for their practical will be considered a no show and the student waives the right to complete a first practical attempt. The student will be scheduled on the practical exam re-take day at the discretion of the instructor and the maximum earned grade will be a 73%. The student will not be eligible for a re-take if he/she does not successfully pass the practical exam at this time.

A student behavioral contract will be issued for a student who does not show for the practical exam.

A student may not withdraw from the same PTA course more than once and may not withdraw from more than four PTA courses during duration of studies. Doing so will result in dismissal from the program.

A student who has failed any two PTA courses will be dismissed from the PTA program. This is defined as failing any two PTA courses across the curriculum, or failing the same course twice.

Students in the program must maintain a G.P.A. of 2.0 in order to remain in the program. Students who pass all their PTA courses, but have a G.P.A. of less than 2.0 will not be allowed to complete their clinical affiliations. Students who maintain a G.P.A. less than 2.0 for 2 semesters will be dismissed from the program.

Late Assignments

It is the expectation of the PTA Program that all assignments will be completed as directed and handed in on time. Any assignments that are handed in late (defined as after the end of the class period in which they are due) will be subject to a 10% grade reduction from the assignment grade per day the assignment is late.

In case of an emergency, the student is to notify the instructor prior to the date the assignment is due, and at the discretion of the instructor, the deadline may be extended without penalty. If a student receives the instructor's permission to email an assignment, it is recommended that the student request a read receipt as verification that the instructor received the assignment.

Tutoring

Tutoring for registered Harcum students is available on an individual and small group basis for most courses. Students should initially be assessed for their needs by the Office of Educational Support Services. A counselor will make the appropriate referral for tutoring services. The PTA

faculty is available to assist with any concerns regarding tutoring. It is the student's responsibility to request tutoring. If a faculty member recommends a student for tutoring, the student should follow up with the ESS Center within one week of the recommendation being made. Each faculty member typically offers at least one hour per week of open lab time, as well as office hours. This time should also be utilized for additional study assistance.

Open Lab

Regular practice of clinical skills is an important part of the learning process. Each student is required to attend open lab to practice the clinical skills associated with this course. It is the student's responsibility to have their open lab attendance checklist signed by an instructor during each hour of attendance. The student will also sign into lab each session. The minimal required hours for the semester must be completed to progress to the course practical exam. The open lab attendance sheet will be checked by the course instructor or the PTA Program director the week prior to course practical exams.

Academic Warnings

An academic warning will be filled out for any student who is in danger of receiving a grade less than a C (less than a 73%). Academic warnings may be distributed after each test, or after the midterm exam. A student who receives an academic warning should make an appointment to discuss his/her academic performance with the course instructor within 1 week. Additionally, students are recommended to complete a remediation plan any time they receive a grade in a PTA course less than a "C". An academic warning does not indicate the student will fail the course, but is meant to be a warning signal that the student's academic performance is not meeting the minimum program standard.

Academic Remediation

The PTA program recognizes the importance of each student attaining a consistent and adequate level of academic performance. It is the general expectation that each student achieve a minimum of a "C" in all course assignments, quizzes and exams.

It is recommended that any student who earns a grade lower than a "C" (less than 73%) on any quiz or minor assignment should:

- create an action plan for remediation and submit the plan to the course instructor for approval.

Any student who earns a grade lower than a "C" (less than 73%) on a major test or assignment, or who receives an academic warning should:

- create a *formal, written remediation plan* (and submit said plan to the instructor for approval) within one week of receiving grade or warning,
- attend all open labs/study groups for said course, AND
- meet with or show the instructor proof of weekly progress toward plan completion.

It is the responsibility of the student to follow up as noted above.

Students who are required to submit a remediation plan as a result of a course final exam score and who do not complete the required document/plan and receive approval of the plan by the due date will be barred from registering (and if they are registered, the courses will be dropped) from all subsequent PTA courses. This will result in a delay of graduation by one year.

The course instructors and PTA Program Director are available at student request to assist with the development of a remediation plan.

Academic Conduct and Violations

The college policy on academic conduct and violations is stated in the Harcum College Student Handbook. The PTA Program strictly enforces the college policies.

A student who is dishonest in any assignment, lab practicum, test or examination receives a grade of “F” and the incident is reported to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. The penalties for such violations are cumulative; a second violation will result in failure of the course; the third, expulsion from the program and college.

EXAMINATION PROCEDURE

Students are expected to follow explicitly all directions provided by the faculty or proctor regarding conduct during the examination.

No grades will be posted after exams. Students may review their exams in the PTA faculty member or program director’s office. Student’s exams will be filed in the PTA Program Director’s office at the end of each semester. No exams may be taken from the office, unless granted permission by the faculty member. If exams are released for review in a PTA lab room, the student will leave his/her phone in the PTA office. All quizzes and course exams are maintained in the PTA office and remain property of the PTA program for exam security purposes.

Reproduction/copying/photographing or any other replication of quiz or exam materials by a student is considered an Academic Violation.

WRITTEN WORK

Students should use great care when preparing all written work and must acknowledge the sources of all ideas, language, diagrams, charts, etc., which are not their own work. A student who intentionally appropriates the work of another person and presents it without providing the source is guilty of plagiarism. When in doubt, students should contact their instructors. The following must be observed:

- a. Statements appearing in a student essay taken from another source must be enclosed in quotation marks and the source identified. *This includes information gathered from ANY source, including web-based resources.*
- b. An interpretation based on an identifiable source must be so referenced.
- c. All assignments are to be completed individually and independently unless specified in writing, on the assignment, by the instructor.
- d. The PTA program utilizes the conventions of the AMA for referencing purposes.

LABORATORY WORK

Unless otherwise directed by the lab instructor or course instructor, students are expected to take all measurements, perform lab procedures and write SOAP notes independently.

PROCEDURE FOR ACADEMIC VIOLATIONS

Members of an academic community have an unequivocal responsibility to present as their own work only that which is truly theirs. Dishonest means of obtaining information in examinations or

by duplicating the works of other students is a most serious offense and one which strikes at the foundation of academic integrity. The responsibility of the faculty in this area is four fold:

- a. To explain the importance of academic integrity.
- b. To explain the consequences of academic dishonesty to those they teach.
- c. To minimize temptation by careful supervision of all assignments and tests.
- d. To report all academic violations to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, so that cumulative incidents may be recorded. If an academic violation is reported or the question of plagiarism arises, it shall be handled first by the instructor with the individual student.

Appeal of any penalty may be made to the Vice President of Academic Affairs who will hear the student's appeal in the presence of the instructor who reported the incident. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will determine the guilt or innocence of the student. The Vice President of Academic Affairs will keep records of all cases of academic violations and will carry out penalties as described above.

The cumulative effect of violations is for the entire enrollment period to graduation and not merely for a semester or school year.

Academic Grievance Process

The student will follow the appropriate chain of command when voicing concerns about the program. The chain of command is outlined below:

1. The student will discuss his/her concern individually with the appropriate course instructor or course assistant. If the student remains with concerns after the meeting, the student will submit the concerns, in writing, within 10 business days, to the PTA program director.
2. Upon receipt of a written concern, the PTA program Director will schedule a meeting with the student, within 10 business days. Once the student has discussed the concern with the program director, there may be a meeting with the student, the instructor and the program director. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, the student may then go to the next level of administration.
3. The student will submit a statement outlining the concern, in writing, to the vice president of academic affairs of the college. This level of intervention may also include a group discussion with all appropriate parties. The VPAA may convene an ad hoc grievance board (as per the college handbook).

Professional Standards

All students in the PTA Program are expected to read and abide by the Professional Standards established by the American Physical Therapy Association. These standards include Values-Based Behaviors for the PTA and the APTA standards of ethical conduct for PTA. These documents are available at www.apta.org and will be distributed to students during their first semester class: Introduction to Physical Therapy (PTA 110).

Students are expected to present themselves in a professional manner at all times, in all activities where they represent the PTA program or the physical therapy profession. This expectation includes personal presentation and communication and applies to all venues of communication, including written and digital/on-line communication.

Students will participate in self-assessment of professional behaviors. These behaviors will be assessed by PTA faculty members, as well as by peers, for each student, each semester on

campus, until the student demonstrates competence. Any student who performs below the program's standards specific to demonstration of professional behaviors as outlined in the course syllabus will be required to create and adhere to an action plan or a behavioral contract. Failure to comply with the action plan or behavioral contract will result in earning a failing grade (C- or the actual course average, whichever is lower) in the lab course for which the action plan or behavioral contract is issued for. Egregious behavior, as determined by the PTA faculty, may result in immediate dismissal from the PTA program.

Program Safety and Security

All policies related to safety apply to educational experiences both on and off campus.

Lab Safety

The PTA program provides open lab times to safely practice lab skills. Open lab times are posted on the PTA Office door, as well as in individual course syllabi.

Students are responsible to help maintain a safe lab environment. Students are expected to exercise safety and good judgment when using college or program equipment and supplies.

The labs should be kept clean at all times. Dirty linens and equipment should be properly stored prior to leaving lab. Everyone is expected to clean up after themselves, as will be expected in the clinic.

Skills involving a safety risk can only be practiced with faculty supervision/when a faculty member is on campus. The student is responsible to verify that a faculty member is on campus, and to notify the faculty member that he/she going to be practicing. Electrical equipment can be manipulated, but not turned on if a faculty member is not on campus. Once a student has passed the skill competency for an intervention, he/she may practice that skill in an unsupervised lab. All student use of modalities and therapeutic interventions shall be for the purpose of clinical learning and simulation only. At no time shall a faculty member or student utilize a modality to diagnose or treat an actual or perceived medical condition of himself or herself, another student or faculty member. After use of the whirlpool, the whirlpools will be cleaned using proper technique and under the supervision of a PTA faculty member.

Equipment and supplies must be returned to the proper storage place after use. No equipment/supplies/books should leave the classroom/lab area without faculty member approval, and completion of an equipment sign out sheet.

Students are expected to simulate the role of a patient and a PTA in lab courses. Students must sign an Informed Consent form prior to participation, and are expected to notify faculty/PTA program director if there is any change in medical status or ability to participate (Appendix 2).

Students are expected to check vital signs and review and clear for contraindications prior to initiating a treatment intervention on a classmate or patient.

All volunteer “patients” will need to complete an Informed Consent form. These are kept on file in the PTA office for one semester.

Students are expected to promptly inform the course instructor when lab supplies are low or equipment is in need of repair.

The student is expected to comply with Lab Safety Minimum requirements at all times (Appendix 3).

General Safety

Core faculty and students must maintain up to date healthcare provider/basic life support CPR certification, starting at the end of the first semester (for students).

All students must attend an annual Safety/Infection Control training scheduled by the program. The PTA Assistant Program Director will maintain records of attendance. Students must successfully pass a post quiz with a 73% or greater. Students who do not pass the quiz will remediate and retest until they pass.

Students exposed to bodily substances and/or hazardous materials will follow standard precautions and guidelines from the annual Safety/Infection Control training.

Students will follow college and/or facility policies in the event of a building evacuation.

Students requiring emergency care during an on-campus or off campus educational experience should report to their immediate supervisor (or instructor), proceed to the nearest emergency room, or call 911. The student is responsible for costs related to these services.

PTA program students are expected to notify academic faculty (and clinical faculty when participating in clinical affiliations) of any medical conditions and/or medications that could potentially impair or alter the student’s safe or effective performance in the clinic, lab or classroom. Students having, or who have recently had, surgery or who are under a doctor’s care post injury or related to a medical issue must follow physician imposed restrictions and provide written verification from the physician about these restrictions if they impact on the student’s attendance or participation, or the student’s ability to meet the essential functions of the PTA Program. Students who contract an infectious disease during their time in the program must report that to a program faculty member and follow appropriate medical guidelines to minimize risk of transmission. Faculty may remove a student from class, lab or clinical if safety issues related to the student’s health are present.

Students should be familiar with all other college policies and procedures related to safety as found in the college safety guidelines:

<http://www.harcum.edu/s/1044/edu/index.aspx?sid=1044&gid=1&pgid=1127>

http://www.harcum.edu/s/1044/images/editor_documents/new_site/student_life/campus_safety/emergency_plan_december_2015_revised.pdf

To promote security and safety, students participating in off-campus educational experiences are accompanied by a PTA program faculty member or are assigned a designated staff person at the observation site/facility. Students are not permitted to participate in direct patient care activities during clinical observations or site visits.

Professional liability insurance is provided by the college and is included in the tuition cost for PTA 150, PTA 250 and PTA 251. Students not registered for these courses are not covered to treat patients and cannot treat patients.

Students are required by the college to provide proof of health insurance coverage during the entire time they are enrolled as PTA program students.

A physical exam and up to date immunizations are required for all PTA program students. These records are maintained electronically in Castle Branch.

Medical emergency: Students are expected to respond quickly to ANY emergency. If the emergency occurs during clinical, follow the emergency policy of the clinical site. If the emergency occurs in an on campus lab, do not leave the patient. Call for help/send a classmate to report to a faculty member or to call campus security (610-526-6099). If indicated, call 911. Assess vital signs, initiate CPR as indicated. The Harcum College Health Office is available to students for minor illness and referral to health care providers. The office number is 610-526-6090.

Equipment

All electrical equipment owned and used by the PTA program will be annually inspected and labeled by qualified biomedical engineers. This company will provide annual testing and calibration, labelling that verifies calibration, documentation of testing results and repair as needed.

Wheelchairs and treatment mats are inspected at a minimum annually (in August) by faculty. Repairs are made or arranged for as needed.

Any real or potential safety concerns discovered by a student should be immediately reported to a PTA faculty member and the equipment should be labelled and taken out of use until deemed safe.

Drugs and Alcohol

Harcum College is a substance-free college and work place. The College policy is stated in the Harcum College Student Handbook and refers to all students and college employees on school premises or as part of any of its activities. This includes clinic and any clinically related activities.

Harcum College observes Pennsylvania law which states that the sale, possession, distribution or consumption of alcohol by any persons less than 21 years of age is illegal. Any student or

student's guest seen possessing, serving, using or selling alcohol on the College campus will be subject to disciplinary actions.

The use, possession, sale or distribution of non-prescription drugs, narcotics or drug paraphernalia is prohibited by federal, state and local laws and regulations, as well as College policy. Possession and/or use of illicit drugs and drug paraphernalia by students is grounds for severe sanctions, including expulsion and referral to law enforcement authorities for prosecution.

The PTA program and the clinical sites reserve the right to mandate urinalysis for any student as needed. A student who tests positive for an illegal substance during required drug testing will be denied the ability to progress to clinicals and graduation. At the discretion of the PTA program, the student may be given one opportunity to repeat the drug test. In this case, clinicals and graduation will be delayed pending the ability to successfully complete a negative drug test (one opportunity to retest, completed at the discretion of the DCE and completed no later than 2 weeks after the DCE is notified of a positive test result). The student must submit the results of the repeat drug test (which must be negative) to the DCE and the college nurse. If the student continues with a positive drug test result on re-test, the student clinical affiliation will be cancelled and the student will be administratively dropped from the course/semester. This will delay graduation by one year.

The student must complete the application for re-entry into the program as per program policy and fulfill all audit requirements while out of sequence and then repeat the clinical affiliation the following year when the course is offered in sequence. Subsequent failure of a drug test that results in cancellation of a second clinical course will result in dismissal from the PTA program.

Confidentiality/Data Privacy

The PTA program maintains student privacy in the following ways:

Grades are posted electronically. Students must log in to see their grades. Exams and quizzes are returned in a manner that does not expose the grade to other classmates.

Feedback after practical exams is shared via the practical exam grade sheet. If a student requests additional feedback, the instructor may schedule a meeting during office hours.

Requests for student information from any government agency are referred to Student Records office.

Information specific to or about a student will be discussed only with the student. Information about student status, grades, or any other aspects of student performance will not be discussed with a parent or significant other unless it is during a meeting that the student is present at and has invited the person to attend.

Each student is required to complete a Data Privacy Release Form during Orientation. Students may decide which information they agree to release. Program faculty members will not complete letters of recommendation or act as references for current students, prior students or graduates unless the student completes a "Release of Information Form" and the student requests, in writing, directly to the faculty member that he/or she provide the reference.

Social Media / Networking

The use of social networking by students and health care professionals should be done with careful consideration. In order to avoid any potential biases, students are **STRONGLY** discouraged from initiating or accepting friend requests from anyone associated with the clinical experience or PTA program faculty. This includes but is not limited to clinical instructors, professional staff, patients, and/or family members of patients or staff. This allows students to be evaluated solely on clinical performance and not on personal information from social networking sites.

As both a professional ethic and legal requirement, students are expected to maintain patient confidentiality. Due to the public nature of social networking sites, privacy and professionalism may potentially be compromised. Students may not post anything that compromises patient or peer confidentiality. This includes, but is not limited to, names, references to the clinical site or clinical staff, classmates, instructors, pictures of any part of the patient's body, pictures of patients, and any information that may identify the patient or peer. No photographs should be taken or posted of any patients, staff or the facility. Students should refrain from posting any comments about their clinical experience, site, clinical instructor, patients, instructors, classmates or any other staff member on their personal social networking profile, via text messaging, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter feed or any other electronic networking medium. Failure to comply with the policy stated above may result in the student being removed from the program immediately.

Competency Testing

Prior to attending their scheduled clinical affiliation, all students must successfully complete the established clinical competencies as a requirement of passing each course. Students who do not complete their competencies will not be allowed to complete the course practicum, nor attend the clinical affiliation as scheduled.

Refer to PTA Competency Program, below, for complete competency policies.

Clinical Education

Students are not permitted to complete clinical affiliations at a place of employment or volunteer experience. (HOD standard RC #34-92, 1992.)

The Director of Clinical Education (DCE) is responsible for arranging clinical affiliations for each of the students. Student placements, in aggregate, are selected to provide the student with a breadth and depth of clinical exposure. If a student is interested in completing an affiliation at a particular clinical site, she/he should inform the DCE. Students are not permitted to contact sites to arrange their own affiliations. Students who attempt to arrange their own clinical sites will not be guaranteed a clinical placement.

Due to the competition for clinical sites for student affiliations, students may be assigned to clinical sites in a distant location. Should a student be assigned to a distant location, the student is responsible for his/her own transportation, living arrangements, and expenses.

Students are advised that they must successfully complete all pre-requisite competencies, skill checks, lab practicals, and coursework prior to beginning a clinical education experience. The student must submit all required health records (including drug tests), background and child abuse clearances by the program due dates to be eligible for clinical placements. Students who have not completed these clearances prior to the deadline will move out of sequence for one year and will need to complete the readmission application forms. Readmission is not guaranteed. Please see the PTA program policy for Readmission.

Students must successfully complete ALL PTA and general education courses prior to being eligible to proceed with PTA 240, PTA 250, and PTA 251.

It is the student's responsibility to review his/her PTA Academic Plan and compare this with his/her unofficial transcript in the College Self-Service system each semester to ensure that all required general education/core courses and PTA courses are completed prior to the terminal semester and clinical placements.

All PTA students refer to the Clinical Education Handbook for policies and procedures related to clinical affiliations. This handbook is available online on the PTA webpage, and will be distributed to students during a clinical education meeting (this is scheduled at the discretion of the DCE and is considered to be mandatory), prior to the first clinical affiliation, PTA 150.

Additional Requirements

Students are required to maintain annual immunizations, drug tests and any additional requirements indicated by a health care facility as a requirement for the student to complete an affiliation at the facility.

All travel to and from clinical affiliations and site visits and observation visits is the responsibility of the student.

Students are responsible for the purchase of all required books, lab equipment and dress code items. If used textbooks are purchased on-line, the student must verify that the appropriate edition is purchased, and that ancillary text support is included if appropriate (electronic access, DVDs, etc.). The faculty is not expected to make accommodations for students who do not purchase the textbooks or who do not purchase the recommended textbook edition.

Licensure

After successful completion of the physical therapist assistant coursework, graduates are awarded an Associate of Science degree in Physical Therapist Assisting from Harcum College. Graduates of the program are then eligible to take the national licensure examination for Physical Therapist Assistants (NPTAE), which is administered by the Federation of the State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT).

The State of Pennsylvania (along with all other states and the District of Columbia) requires that all graduates of a PTA program pass a licensure/registration exam prior to becoming a practicing clinician. Graduates who are expecting to practice in another state are advised to contact the appropriate state licensing board for complete information regarding licensure/registration.

Students are advised that it is their own responsibility to obtain the correct application to sit for the state exam, as well as ensure that the application is filled out correctly, and that all fees are submitted by the fixed date testing deadlines. There are fees to register for the exam with FSBPT, state fees, and fees to register at Prometric. These fees change annually, and will typically cost

~\$700. For more information regarding fees, visit:

<https://www.fsbpt.org/ourservices/candidateservices/examregistrationpayment.aspx>

All FSBPT deadlines for application are hard deadlines. A student may not take the licensing exam until he/she has completed all program requirements, including completion of all three clinical education experiences. It is recommended that all students sit for the exam during the first available fixed date test slot after completion of the program requirements.

The licensure exam is a nationally administered exam. The PTA coursework and curriculum are designed in conjunction with the criteria set forth by CAPTE and the content outline created by FSBPT. Harcum College provides educational opportunities and information to maximize potential for successful completion of the board exam, but passing the board exam is not implicitly or explicitly guaranteed. Performance on the licensure exam is based on individual preparation, skill, competency level as well as individual test taking skills. The onus is on the test taker to demonstrate competency.

Admissions

All students, whether current Harcum students or transfer students, must meet the admissions criteria for the PTA Program. Students currently attending Harcum College who wish to enter the PTA Program must submit an application to the Admissions Department for review.

Students who wish to be re-instated into the program must submit their request, in writing, to the PTA Program Director. Re-instatement into the program will be decided on an individual basis depending on space availability and student academic performance. Typically, no more than two seats are offered for first year students who seek re-instatement. If more than two students apply for re-instatement, the faculty will determine which two students will be offered the seats (with consideration given for date of submission of application for re-entry, cumulative GPA and prior course performance). Students who have been dismissed from the program for academic reasons will not be considered for re-admission.

In addition, all students are advised that clinical coursework requires successful completion of a child abuse and criminal background check. Information regarding prior criminal/abuse history may prevent a student from being permitted to complete his/her clinical affiliations, and from being eligible to sit for the PTA Licensing Exam, as well as from being eligible to practice as a PTA.

Specific questions can be directed to the PTA Program Director or the Pennsylvania State Board of Physical Therapy at

ST-PHYSICAL@state.pa.us

or

<https://www.dos.pa.gov/ProfessionalLicensing/BoardsCommissions/PhysicalTherapy/Pages/default.aspx>

Accepting Courses for Credit

The Office of the Registrar will evaluate all non-PTA courses. All course work approval or denial decisions by this office will be accepted by the PTA program.

PTA Courses

Generally, all PTA courses must be taken at Harcum College.

*PTA courses are not routinely challenged for acceptance of credit after completion of a course at another college, nor are PTA courses from other institutions typically accepted for transfer. Exceptions to this rule are at the discretion of the director of the PTA Program and these exceptions must meet the minimum standards listed below:

- The course was taken at an institution in a PTA program accredited by CAPTE within the last two years.
- The student obtained a C or better in the course.
- The course syllabus is similar to Harcum's course (determined by the PTA faculty). The student is responsible for submitting a copy of the course syllabus.
- The student is able to successfully complete all skill competencies associated with the equivalent Harcum College course. Minimum requirement is a grade of 73% on each competency.
- The student is able to complete and pass the equivalent Harcum College course's final practicum with a grade greater than 73%.
- The student is able to complete and pass the equivalent Harcum College course's final exam with a grade greater than 73%.

ALL of the above criteria must be met for a PTA class from another institution to be accepted for credit at Harcum College. If a student fails ANY portion of the testing, the course will not be accepted/waived, and the student will need to take the equivalent class at Harcum College.

The scheduling of the testing is at the discretion of the PTA program director, and the student is advised that the testing for most classes will require 6-8 hours.

The charge to challenge a PTA course from another college for acceptance of credit is determined by the vice president of academic affairs.

Any student requesting to test out of a PTA class must allow a minimum of 3 weeks for the testing process to be completed. Any request made less than 4 weeks prior to the start of the semester that the student is trying to test out of will not be considered.

Readmission Policy

Re-admission after a voluntary leave of absence or withdrawal for non-academic reasons:

Any student who has requested a leave of absence (for any reason) or who has voluntarily withdrawn from the PTA program may request to be readmitted. The student must request readmission, in writing, to the PTA program director by August 1 for spring readmission and by January 1 for fall readmission. To be eligible for re-admission, the student must apply within one calendar year from the end of the last semester he/she attended. If the student is re-admitted, the student must audit lab courses per the PTA program audit policy and the student must repeat and

pass all skill competencies and the lab practical for all lab courses the student had completed prior to taking the leave. It is the student's responsibility to review and prepare for the skill competencies. The list of skill competencies can be obtained from the PTA Program Director. Students who are out of the program longer than one year must re-apply as a new student through the admissions office. Any class with a lab component taken during a prior matriculation will need to be repeated.

The decision to re-admit a student will be made by the PTA program faculty. Factors such as program space and staffing as well as the student's prior academic performance will be considered. Re-instatement into the program will be decided on an individual basis. Re-admission is not guaranteed.

Readmission after earning one failing grade:

Students who earn a failing grade (less than a "C") in one PTA or pre/co-requisite course (BIO 103, BIO 104) may apply to be reinstated one time.

Students are only permitted one re-admission to the program.

Students who are re-admitted after a first dismissal must repeat any course in which they earned less than a "C".

- If the student earned a failing grade (less than a "C") in PTA 109, PTA 110, PTA 111, or BIO 103, the student must apply for re-admission to the PTA sequence for the following academic year. The student must reapply to start the program following the usual admission procedures and timelines.
- If the student earned a failing grade (less than a "C") in PTA 112, 114, 116, 130, 150, 212, 218, 222, 231, 240, 250 or 251, OR if the student withdraws from one or more of these courses for academic reasons, the student must submit the *Readmission Statement of Intent* to the PTA Program Director *prior* to exiting the program. The student must also notify the PTA Program Director of the intent to re-enter the sequence in writing by August 1 for spring readmission and by January 1 for fall readmission. Students who submit the paperwork after the deadline, or too late to complete audit requirements, will not be eligible to re-enter. Failure to complete these steps will result in ineligibility for readmission.

The student will be required to audit any lab courses that occur while the student is out of sequence per the PTA audit policy. The student must successfully complete all skill competencies for ALL lab courses and pass the lab practical exams for all audited courses with a 73% or greater to be eligible to be considered for re-entry.

If the student successfully completes these requirements, he/she will be permitted to re-enter the course sequence, one time.

Any student who is readmitted must follow the policies and procedures of the program which are consistent with the year he/she returns. All college policies must be followed, including those related to expiration of technical courses and the appropriate academic plan under which the student will graduate. If the PTA curriculum has undergone revision, the student will be responsible to complete the curriculum in place once readmission occurs.

Any student who has been readmitted to the PTA course sequence once who then fails a second PTA course will be dismissed from the program and is not eligible for readmission.

Withdrawal from a PTA course because of documented unsatisfactory clinical performance will be considered an “F” grade for purposes of readmission review.

The Readmission Application and the Readmission Statement of Intent can be obtained from the PTA Program Director or Assistant Director.

Auditing Courses

It is expected that all students will maintain up-to-date skills in preparation for their clinical affiliations, and one mechanism by which this is tested is via skill competency testing, course practicals and cumulative course final exams. All students must have successfully completed all of the skill competencies for all 100 level courses within the school year immediately preceding their first clinical affiliation placement (PTA 150). The student must have successfully completed all 200 level skill competencies in the year immediately prior to clinical affiliation placements PTA 250 and PTA 251. All students who move out of the typical PTA sequence (either due to failing or withdrawing from a course, or due to taking a leave) must audit all appropriate courses with a lab component and/or a practical exam (PTA 111,112,114,116, 130, 222,231) and successfully complete all skill competencies and the lab practical with a 73% or greater for those lab classes for the year prior to the 150 clinical, and/or for the year prior to the 250 and 251 clinicals.

All students who are auditing a course are expected to comply with all course requirements and PTA program expectations/policies. Students must comply with all class policies, including attendance. Students must sign up for all competency and practical exam testing with the remainder of the class (no special times will be offered for auditors).

Any student who refuses to audit the classes, who audits but is noncompliant with course policies, or who does not successfully pass EACH skill competency and/or the lab practical exam will not be permitted to continue in the PTA sequence, and will be dismissed from the PTA program.

Students who audit courses are bound to the PTA Policies and Procedures, and the Competency Program Policy and Procedures.

Dismissal

A student who has failed any two PTA courses, defined as two different courses or failing the same course twice, will be dismissed from the PTA Program.

A student who maintains a GPA less than 2.0 for two consecutive semesters will be dismissed from the program.

Students who are dismissed from the program are not eligible for readmission.

PTA Competency Program

Competency Tests are an important learning experience, as the skills the student demonstrates are the skills he/she will be performing in the clinic, both as a student and as a professional.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program to assure ALL students are competent, professional, and safe when performing the skills and techniques learned in the classroom, as well as in lab class, prior to completing a described course and advancing to the next level of the program.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy will describe for the student the components and processes for Competency Testing, including:

- The Competency Testing Booklet
- The Competency Testing Checklists and Grade Sheets
- The Competency Proctors
- Scheduling of Competency Testing
- Identifying a “patient” for the test
- Expectations of Students taking the Competency Tests
- Demonstration of Safe Practices
- Grading of the Competency Tests
- Remediation and Re-testing of a Competency

PROCEDURE

Competency Testing Booklet

Each student will be given a Competency Testing Booklet at orientation that will contain the checklists and grade sheets for the competencies they will be expected to complete for that academic year. It is expected that each student will maintain this booklet in a neat and organized fashion and bring it to each of the Competency Testing sessions.

Additionally, the student is expected to bring the completed skill check off sheet for the competency test they are completing, when they arrive to complete the competency. Any student who presents without the competency book **or** the completed skill check off will not be permitted to complete the skill competency and will need to reschedule with the Competency Program Coordinator within one week.

Competency Testing Checklists and Grade Sheets

There will be one checklist for each Competency Test given. Each sheet will contain all components of that particular Competency Test, including “Safety Components.” There will be a section for comments made by the Competency Proctors. These comments may include constructive criticisms or commendations for correct and appropriate techniques. The comments may be discussed with the Proctor after the test is completed.

The grade sheets will be in the front of the competency book. The Proctor will document your grade in the front of the book and initial this sheet. The student will hand it in to the PTA

Director's office (to be given to the Competency Coordinator) at the end of the semester, prior to Lab Practicums. The student must hand in the comp book at semester end in order to receive a pass/fail grade for that semester's Competency Tests.

The booklet with completed Checklists will be returned after it is checked so that it can be used as a study reference for Lab Practicums and Finals.

Competency Proctors

There are several Competency Proctors, and those available to complete testing vary from semester to semester.

The Competency Proctors for Harcum Colleges' PTA Program are Licensed Physical Therapists or Assistants who have been practicing for at least two years. Most Proctors test between 2 and 6 hours per week as most work full time in a variety of clinical settings. Each Proctor participates in a training program given by the Competency Program Coordinator for the PTA Program prior to becoming a proctor.

The Competency Coordinator or another member of the PTA program will evaluate the Competency Proctors periodically to assure consistency throughout the program.

Scheduling Of Competency Tests

- The Competency Tests will be given in 20 minute intervals.
- The student will take the Competency Test AFTER (s)he has completed: classroom and lab work, and the minimum of five practice trials (required on the skill check off sheet) for that particular skill.
- The Competency Tests will be scheduled throughout each semester with a maximum of 4 weeks to complete each competency. It is noted at the top of the competency schedule sheet which competencies the student may sign up for. After a Competency Test has "expired," the highest grade a student may receive on it is 80%.
- Each sign-up sheet will have hours for which a Proctor is available. Most testing will be scheduled in the late afternoon/early evening hours. There may be some daytime hours available and occasional weekend hours depending on availability of proctors.
- No competency shall be scheduled by a student for a time that a student should be attending a class or lab. There will be no exceptions. Attendance in class and lab is mandatory, and absence will have a detrimental effect on the student's grades.
- Students may sign up for a maximum of 3 Competency Tests per day, providing the time slots are available.
- **ONLY ONE COMPETENCY TEST IS ALLOWED PER 20 MINUTE TIME SLOT.**
- Copies of the schedules will be posted on the bulletin board outside of Room 200. **The students may not change these schedules once they are posted.**
 - If a student needs to remove his/her name from the schedule, he/she should find another student to fill in the slot. Points may be deducted from the student's final course grade (lab points) if the student repeatedly changes slots or removes him/herself from the slots he/she is signed up for.
- If there are any "open times," they will be posted on the board outside of Room 200, and the students may sign up to test for a Competency they have not already signed up for.

- If a student is unable to keep a scheduled time slot, he/she must notify the scheduled Proctor via a call or email to the PTA Program director **and** the Competency Program Coordinator.
 - Gabby Ferreira: gferreira@harcum.edu
 - Jacki Klaczak Kopack: jkopack@harcum.edu
- NO CALL, NO SHOW WILL RESULT IN A FAILURE FOR THAT COMPETENCY WITH THE RETAKE GRADE STARTING AT 80%.
 - The student must sign up for all retakes with the competency program coordinator, Gabby Ferreira. The student must contact the competency coordinator within 1 week. Any further no show/no call will be referred to the Program Director.
 - Gabby Ferreira: gferreira@harcum.edu
 - Jacki Klaczak Kopack: jkopack@harcum.edu
- Should the school be closed due to inclement weather, all competencies will be canceled. The students will be responsible for rescheduling. A student will receive school cancellation info via the campus alert system, by checking the Harcum web page, or listening for the school closing numbers (300 for DAY classes and 2300 for EVENING classes) on KYW 1060.
- The last two set of comp sign-ups for the semester may be offered first to students who have completed all comps up to that point in the semester in a timely manner. Students who have been less compliant with signing up for competencies will need to utilize comp slots that remain after the first group of students sign up.

While the PTA Program Staff understands that many students are employed when not in class, only the scheduled hours are available for Competency Testing. Competency Testing is a mandatory part of the curriculum, and the student is expected to test as scheduled. All students must schedule and complete successfully all comps within the time frames allotted by the program.

Any student who fails to complete the competencies because he/she did not sign up during the available times during the semester will be ineligible to sit for the course practicum and will fail the course. THERE WILL NOT BE ANY SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS MADE FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS.

Identifying a “Patient” for the Test

The “patient” is the person who will be receiving the treatment performed by the student during the Competency Test. The student should bring his or her own patient. In most instances, the student will choose a classmate to be a patient. The classmate may only be the patient if he/she is not scheduled to take the **same competency test** after being the patient on the same day. If he/she has already been tested on that Competency on that day, he/she will be permitted to be the patient.

The student may also choose to bring another student from another program, a family member, or friend. If this is the case, the person must sign a consent form, for each time (s)he is a patient, stating (s)he does not have any of the contraindications for that particular treatment. A contraindication is a physical or mental condition, which would cause harm to the patient if a specific treatment were performed. All “patients” must be at least 18 years of age.

Expectations of Students Taking the Competency Tests

- *The students will be fully prepared to take the Competency Test, including bringing ALL required tools, supplies, and materials with them, as well as the competency test booklet and the completed skill check off sheet.*
- *The student will carry out the treatment, as described for the Competency Test, as if in a clinic setting.*
- *The student will be on time as scheduled.*
- *The student will be **dressed professionally** and will exhibit behaviors appropriate for the clinical setting.*
- *The student will notify the Proctor, as stated above, if they are unable to keep a scheduled time.*
- *The student will complete the testing in a timely fashion.*

Competency Testing and Criteria

Patient Area Preparation and Cleanup

The student will:

- Prepare the treatment area, including linens, pillows, and towels.
- Remove restrictive clothing from the patient, including jewelry, etc.
- Properly drape and position the patient for optimal patient comfort.
- Assist the patient to prepare for the next treatment or to leave the room.
- Clean up after him/herself for the next student.

Patient Interaction

The student will:

- Introduce him/herself to the patient.
- Explain and demonstrate, if necessary, the procedure to the patient using the appropriate terminology including:
 - What the patient is expected to do.
 - What the patient may or may not feel.
 - Length of the treatment
 - Inquiry about any possible contraindications.
 - Obtaining consent from the patient
 - Obtain vital signs for the patient, and be able to state if the vital signs are appropriate/indicate that it is safe to proceed with the intervention
 - Writing a self-assessment of their interaction with the patient on the back of the competency sheet after he/she has taken the test. The Competency Coordinator or a PTA Program Staff member as necessary will review these, though they WILL NOT be graded.

Hands-On Skills

The student will:

- Complete the Competency skill as outlined on the specific Competency score sheet. *The student may not refer to their competency score sheet or notes during the competency.*

- Document the necessary information as it relates to the specific Competency Test and complete a SOAP note if required for that competency.

Question and Answer

The student will:

- Successfully answer questions regarding the patient, the treatment plan, or the treatment activity.

The student may be asked, from time to time, questions that are not listed on the grade sheet. There will not be a grade given for these questions, but it will assist the Proctor in assessing whether or not the student understands the information. Students should refrain from asking questions during the competency. Any questions concerning the competency that are not technique or intervention specific should be asked prior to the start of the competency.

After the Competency Test is completed, the student is allowed to ask the Competency Proctor questions.

Demonstration of Safe Practices

It is expected that a student entering the clinic setting is competent and safe when working with patients. There will be components within each Competency Test that are in **bold** lettering. These are Safety Components. **The student will need to pass ALL Safety Components in order to pass the Competency Test.** If one or more of these components are not completed satisfactorily, the student will need to retake the Competency Test with the Competency Coordinator. (See policy on Remediation and Re-Testing below)

Grading of the Competency Test

Each component of the Competency Test has a one point value. Each component is an objective statement, describing a step in the process of carrying out the treatment. The student will either carry out this step or not. The Proctor will mark that the student has or has not carried out the step. If yes, the student will receive one point. If not, no point will be given.

All Competency Tests, in all classes, **MUST** be passed to receive a passing grade and to pass each class.

The Testing Proctor will discuss the grade with the student, if necessary, once the patient has left the room to ensure confidentiality. If there is a dispute, the student may discuss the issue with the Competency Coordinator. If the student still disputes the outcome, he/she should address the issue with the PTA Program Director.

Remediation and Re-testing

If a student fails the Competency Test (a grade of 73% or lower, or a fail related to a safety issue) he/she will retake the test with the Competency Coordinator.

The student must contact the competency coordinator within one week of the failing performance to schedule a retake.

Gabby Ferreira: gferreira@harcum.edu

If a student fails to show up for a scheduled test, without notification, or if the student arrives to a competency without all required supplies or the competency book and completed skill check off sheet, the student will also re-test with the Competency Coordinator.

Gabby Ferreira: gferreira@harcum.edu

If the student successfully retakes a failed Competency Test (or re-tests because of a no show-no call), a score of 80% of the original value of the test will be the maximum grade a student can achieve.

If a student fails a competency twice, the Competency Coordinator will notify the instructor, and the student must follow up with the course instructor **within one week** to schedule the remediation.

The student will complete remediation with the instructor at the instructor's convenience and will then retake the competency with the instructor. The re-take will be recorded. If the student fails the competency after completing remediation, the student will receive a failing grade for the class (a C-, or the actual grade average, if it is lower than a C-).

PTA Program Accreditation

The PTA Program at Harcum College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085; telephone: 703-706-3245; email: accreditation@apta.org; website: <http://www.capteonline.org>.

The PTA program is accredited November 2015- December 2025. The most recent re-accreditation on-site visit was May 2015.

Harcum College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

PTA Program Policy and Procedure Manual Review Process

The PTA Policy and Procedure Manual is reviewed and revised on an annual basis by PTA program faculty. The program faculty consider input from college constituents, students, the PTA Advisory board, and program faculty (core, adjunct and clinical) when making such updates. As with all processes, there is always room for improvement. All of the above-described policies are subject to change in order to enhance the program. When any changes made after the initial publication of each academic year's P&P manual, students and appropriate stakeholders will be notified of the updates and directed to the website where the most current version of the manual can be found.

Appendix 1

Professional Dress Checklist for Harcum College PTA Program and PTA Clinical Affiliations

Clinical Affiliations, Lab Practicals and Comps Criteria	Met	Not Met	Comments
Overall neat & clean grooming			
Deodorant applied, No strong perfume or cologne			
Nails are neat and short (and do not extend past fingertip), No artificial nails			
Facial and visible piercings are removed			
Only small stud earrings permissible			
Tattoos are covered			
Overall neat & clean appearance of clothing			
Conservative use of jewelry/accessories			
Appropriate fit to clothing			
Conservative neckline, Chest/cleavage remains concealed when bending forward			
Undergarments remain concealed during all movements			
Abdomen/low back remains concealed when reaching overhead, sitting, performing a transfer, kneeling on floor and reaching forward			
Appropriate footwear (sneakers or flat shoes with good traction), Wearing socks/stockings			
Wearing Harcum SPTA polo shirt and nametag			
Lab class criteria	Met	Not Met	Comments
Lab clothing is required in all lab classes. If a student does not come prepared with lab clothing, a gown will be provided.			
Bathing suit/sports bra for women			
Tank top or T-shirts for men			
Athletic type shorts men and women			
Gym shoes, sneakers, running shoes and socks men and women			

Appendix 2

Harcum College Physical Therapist Assistant Program Informed Consent Form

If you have any cultural or individual differences that require modification of this form before signing, please speak with the PTA Program Director prior to signing the form.

Your Treatment

I, _____ (print your name here), agree to be treated by my instructors, guest lecturers or classmates during any or all mock lab and treatment sessions for the duration of my stay in the program. I understand that all efforts are made to provide modesty and safe conditions for me and that if I feel I am uncomfortable with any draping, manner of touch, or treatment activity or intervention, that I will carefully confront the person regarding this issue. If I still do not feel that the issue is resolved by this action, I will follow the chain of command as outlined in the PTA Program Policy and Procedure Manual. I will follow the established dress code for lab classes as detailed in the course syllabus and the PTA Program Policy and Procedure Manual. I will give notice to faculty of any relevant allergies, or other conditions prior to the lab session. I will notify the course instructor and the PTA Program Director prior to lab class if there is any significant change in my health status or history that would create a potential contraindication for any treatment intervention. I will maintain compliance with lab safety protocols.

It is the responsibility of the individual signing below, who is participating in PTA Program activities, to inform the PTA faculty and/or competency proctors of any personal health diagnoses that exist that could be contraindications to the treatment interventions or activities.

Contraindications

In order to participate in lab class, as a competency patient, or as a lab practicum patient, I have informed the PTA faculty and/ or competency proctors of the presence of any health conditions and/or potential contraindications that a reasonable person would believe may be impacted by participation in the mock treatment. I recognize that I am responsible for advising the faculty and/or proctor of any concern that I may have regarding participation in the mock treatment.

Treating Others

I, _____ (print your name here), will endeavor to follow the APTA Standards of Ethical Conduct for the PTA, along with all other posted lab rules. I agree to drape my classmates, guests or instructors in a way that protects the modesty and maintain the safety of all "patients" treated. I will practice considerate and respectful non-verbal and verbal communication during all classroom and lab activities. I will promptly report any malfunctioning equipment to faculty as soon as I become aware of the malfunctioning equipment.

Printed name _____ Signature _____

For Program Use Only:

Faculty Signature _____

Date _____

Follow up needed: Y N

Faculty Follow-up: _____

Appendix 3

Harcum College PTA Lab Safety

The following list is a guideline to remind the student as to what activities/actions constitute safe practice. *This list is not all inclusive of actions. A student must use good judgment at all times. The student will follow any additional lab safety protocols issued by the college or the PTA Program.*

The student must always:

- Lock the wheelchair or other device
- Maintain standard precautions, and implement all appropriate infection control procedures
- Secure the patient in a transfer device (ex. Hoyer Lift)
- Transfer patients between surfaces to the correct side
- Maintain a clear path for gait, transfers, treatment activities
- Guard the patient on the correct side, with the correct amount of assistance (from maximal assistance to independent) for all activities
- Maintain/ cue patient for appropriate weight bearing status
- Ensure that the patient performs the correct gait pattern
- Maintain appropriate precautions for the diagnosis (i.e. total hip precautions: maintain the prescribed ROM; i.e. ROM: does not move the patient beyond the end of the ROM/does not cause excessive pain).
- Check the machinery for broken parts/wires
- Avoid contamination of patient and self
- Apply the proper dosage of a modality to a patient

Remember to:

- Treat the involved body part (ex. right vs. left, thoracic vs. cervical, place pads on the correct muscle group, etc.)
- Plug in and turn on the machinery before treating the patient
- Accurately measure vital signs (including correct placement of equipment and obtaining BP within 10 mmHg of actual reading and HR/RR within 10% of actual reading)
- Implement accurate treatment based on diagnosis and comorbidities
- Read the patient's chart
- Collect data that may influence the PTA's treatment.
- Be well versed with the PT evaluation and plan of care.
- Recognize indications, contraindications and precautions to physical therapy treatment and report any contraindications to the physical therapist.
- Do not add anything beyond the scope of the prescribed treatment...check the PT POC!

ADDITIONAL Considerations SPECIFIC TO CLINICAL PERFORMANCE

The following list is a guideline to remind the student as to what activities/actions constitute safe practice. *This list is not all inclusive of actions. A student must use good judgment at all times.*

Always:

- Maintain environmental safety. (i.e. Remove obstacles from gait path, re-apply restraints, use of appropriate PPE and sanitation activities)
- Administer treatment as instructed by the physical therapist.
- Progress or modify interventions within the plan of care in response to the patient's age, discomfort, diagnosis, comprehension and cooperativeness.
- Treat the patient with dignity and respect and recognize a patient's demonstration of emotional distress and interact effectively with the patient for the desired support.
- Maintain confidentiality of information.
- Seek assistance with patient care when unsure of the procedure.
- Initiate and complete assigned tasks without prompting.
- Comply with departmental policies and procedures.
- Adhere to ethical and legal standards of practice.
- Individualize treatment for patient needs.
- Report back to the supervising therapist when changes in the patient's condition and response to treatment occur.
- Request that the PT reevaluate, discharge and/or modify the short term goals according to patient needs when appropriate.

I, the undersigned, have read the Harcum College PTA Program Policy and Procedure Manual. I fully understand my role as a student in the program, and the policies and procedures set forth in the manual.

My signature below signifies that I agree to comply and uphold said policies.

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

STUDENT'S NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

DATE