The University of Minnesota Program in Physical Therapy
Minimum Technical Standards for Admissions and Matriculation

The University of Minnesota Program in Physical Therapy is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status or sexual orientation.

In adhering to this policy, the University abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Minnesota Human Rights Act and other applicable statutes and regulations relating to equality of opportunity. In this venue, the Program in Physical Therapy encourages all qualified individuals to apply for admission to the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program.

The University of Minnesota Program in Physical Therapy recognizes the award of a Doctor of Physical Therapy Degree carries with it the full authority of the institution and communicates to those who might seek the services of the bearer that he or she is competent to practice physical therapy. The DPT degree is a broad degree unique in that the graduate is prepared and upon licensure is allowed to practice all disciplines of the physical therapy profession. This requires that the student in the curriculum acquire didactic knowledge as well as learning skills and attitudes essential to the profession and agreed upon by the faculty as requisite for the practice of physical therapy. The student requires both cognitive and technical skills to negotiate this curriculum.

The Program of Physical Therapy is mindful of the unique nature of the physical therapy curriculum. Applicants must possess the skills and abilities that will allow them to successfully complete the course of study and receive the full benefit of the education. In the process, the student is required to direct or perform treatment on the patients throughout the University of Minnesota Program in Physical Therapy curriculum and its clinical affiliates. This includes the completion of treatment safely and within an acceptable amount of time. With this in mind, the student must be able to meet the following technical standards with or without reasonable accommodation.

1. Motor Skills
   GENERAL: Candidates and students should have sufficient motor functions such that they are able to execute movements reasonably required to provide general care and treatment to patients within an acceptable amount of time.

   SPECIFIC: It is required that a candidate possess the motor and sensory skills necessary to directly perform a patient examination, palpation, percussion, auscultation and other diagnostic maneuvers and procedures. The candidate must be able to perform general movements to provide therapeutic care, such as transfer/transport and position disabled patients, physically restrain adults and children who lack motor control, position and reposition self around patients, gait training, manual mobilization techniques, and wound debridement. A candidate must be able to perform basic life support (including CPR).
2. Sensory/Observation

GENERAL: A candidate must be able to acquire a defined level of required information as presented through demonstrations and experiences in the basic and physical sciences.

SPECIFIC: This includes, but is not limited to, information conveyed through the use of vision, hearing and somatic sensations. A candidate must be able to understand and interpret information from written documents and to process information presented in images from paper, films, slides, video, computer and cadaver dissection.

GENERAL: A candidate must be able to learn to observe a patient accurately, at a distance and close at hand, and observe and appreciate non-verbal communications, waveform readings and other graphic images to determine a patient’s condition and safety when performing physical or manual techniques.

SPECIFIC: A candidate must be able to learn to perform visual and tactile physical examinations and treatment to discern differences and variations in color, shape, and general appearance between normal and abnormal, soft and hard tissues. Use of tactile senses may be through either direct or indirect musculoskeletal bony prominence or ligamentous palpation and peripheral pulse palpation; visual and tactile evaluation for inflammation and presence and degree of edema. A candidate must also possess the visual acuity to read charts, records, small print and handwritten notation, and distinguish variations in colors.

3. Communication

GENERAL: A candidate must be able to learn to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and/or guardian, physician, other health care professionals, community or professional groups and colleagues; convey or exchange information at a level allowing development of a health history; identify problems presented; explain alternative solutions; and give directions during treatment and post-treatment. For effective patient treatment, the candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with all members of the health care team.

SPECIFIC: A candidate must have sufficient facility with English to: retrieve information from literature, computerized data bases and lectures and to communicate concepts on written exams and patient charts; elicit patient backgrounds; describe patient changes in moods, activity and posture; and coordinate patient care with all members of the health care team.

4. Cognitive/Intellectual

GENERAL: A candidate must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, and synthesize in order to effectively problem solve.

SPECIFIC: A candidate must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures. Problem solving, a critical skill
demanded of a physical therapist, requires all of these intellectual abilities. A candidate must be able to synthesize knowledge and integrate the relevant aspects of a patient’s history and examination findings to develop an effective treatment program. A candidate must be able to perform these problem-solving skills in a timely fashion for effective patient treatment.

5. Behavioral
GENERAL: A candidate must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, academic honesty, maintenance of patient confidentiality, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with faculty, fellow students, clinical instructors, other healthcare providers and patients of all ages, gender, races, socio-economic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

SPECIFIC: A candidate recognizes the curriculum is physically, mentally and emotionally taxing. He or she must be able to tolerate demanding workloads, to include functioning effectively under stress, adapting to changing environments, displaying flexibility and learning to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that will be assessed during the admission and educational processes. A candidate must reasonably be able to accept criticism and respond by appropriate modification of behavior. In order for a candidate to become a competent physical therapist, he or she will need to participate in lab sessions with other classmates, both as a practitioner and as a patient. This requires sufficiently exposing various areas of his / her body during classroom lab sessions, and practicing clinical techniques on both male and female classmates / patients.

The Program in Physical Therapy’s Technical Standards are required to successfully complete the Program’s competencies needed for graduation. These competencies are available upon request through the Director of Physical Therapy, University of Minnesota Program in Physical Therapy, MMC 388, 420 Delaware Street SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455.