PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT STUDENT HANDBOOK

Effective: June 1, 2012

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Brightwood College in Dallas is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA, 22314; telephone: 703.706.3245; email: accreditation@apta.org; website: www.capteonline.org.

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WELCOME

Dear Physical Therapist Assistant Student,

Welcome to Brightwood College!

Physical Therapist Assistant is a dynamic and challenging profession, one in which should provide you with the opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives. We are excited that you have taken the first step toward your new career by enrolling in the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program.

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide you with specific information you will need during your education in the PTA program. This, along with the Brightwood College Catalog and individual course syllabi, will serve as essential resources to assist you in successfully completing the PTA program. You will receive additional relevant information on the clinical education component of the program at a later date.

Keep this Handbook in a place where you can refer to it often. Any changes to the Handbook will be provided to you by the PTA program faculty or the Program Director. You will be responsible for the content contained in this Handbook or any addenda to it. If you have a question that is not addressed in the Handbook, please contact the Program Director or any PTA program faculty member.

We are pleased that you selected Brightwood College for your PTA education and look forward to working with you.

Best regards,

The PTA Program Director and Faculty
SECTION I: ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Mission
The mission of the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program is to provide students with the knowledge, technical skills, and work habits to pursue an entry-level PTA position in various health care settings under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist. The mission of the PTA program supports the mission of the Brightwood College: “providing quality programs that integrate curriculum with professional skill development, empowering students to achieve their lifelong personal and professional goals.”

Philosophy
The PTA Program’s philosophy subscribes to the philosophy of Brightwood College that an educated person demonstrates, in personal and professional relationships, that all people must be treated with dignity and respect. Each student is valued as a unique individual, and empowered to succeed in the classroom and in their chosen career. We believe that, as a community, we are responsible for promoting the qualities of an educated person, which include knowledge, competence and integrity. The PTA program is designed to prepare students to deliver clinical services in a professional, sensitive, competent, appropriate and safe manner, which is consistent with this philosophy. The values of the college and the program are reflected in the members of the Brightwood College community whose leadership serves as a model and standard for students to emulate.

Program Goals
The goals of the PTA program support the program’s mission and philosophy and are consistent with the mission and philosophy of the college. They are to:

- Deliver a curriculum consistent with the mission and philosophy of both the program and college.
- Provide the students with experienced faculty with a passion for excellence in teaching and who can serve as role models with respect to professional behaviors.
- Provide for the needs of the profession in the region where graduates will contribute to the workforce.
- Follow a model of total quality management and continuous quality improvement throughout all aspects of the program.
- Provide a comprehensive educational curriculum consistent with the current guidelines of the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education and the college’s accrediting body.
• Provide students with a curriculum based on *A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Assistant Education: Version 2007*, by the American Physical Therapy Association, and trends generally found in practice with an emphasis on the acquisition of skills using didactic and experiential learning.

• Provide an environment that is conducive to learning with respect to classrooms, labs, library, academic support and other services.

• Promote a sense of professional association and appreciation for lifelong learning for PTA students.

• Provide an environment for clinical education that is safe, supportive and integrates the academic learning experiences with clinical exposure to a variety of patients, learning activities and health care settings.

• Encourage diversity in the program by supporting students with individual, cultural and socioeconomic differences.

• Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with other physical therapy and physical therapist assistant programs in the region.

Program Objectives

The objectives of the Brightwood College Physical Therapist Assistant program are reflective of the mission and philosophy of the College and the mission, philosophy and goals of the program.

• Over an average of three years, at least 80% of the program graduates will achieve a “pass” rating on the National Licensing Examination.

• The PTA program will review the components of the program annually, (i.e. curriculum, program policies and procedures) in order to identify strengths, concerns and areas for improvement in an effort to meet the needs of students, faculty and the local community.

• The PTA program will sponsor informational training opportunities during the year designed to support the development of clinical faculty and that will meet the needs of students and the community.

• The PTA program will ensure that each faculty member has a current professional development plan designed to meet the identified needs of the program and the individual faculty member.

• The PTA program will annually review and ensure classrooms and labs remain in safe and efficient condition consistent with current clinical practice by replacing and updating materials and equipment.

• The PTA program plans to maintain contact with a minimum of 50% of its graduates for purposes of collecting information on outcomes related to the educational experiences of the graduates.

• The PTA program will annually review and ensure library and classrooms have the current journals and textbooks available to the students.
The PTA program will maintain and open line of communication with other departments within the Institution including: Admissions, Financial Aid, Library/Student Services, Business Office and Career Services.

The PTA program will meet or exceed accreditation standards as set forth by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.

The PTA faculty members will maintain office hours, open lab time and a low student-to-faculty ration of \(<\ or\ =\ 20\ students: 1\ instructor\) in laboratory courses.

The PTA program will sponsor student membership in the American Physical Therapy Association for enrolled students.

The PTA faculty will be consistent with the Brightwood College Anti-Discrimination Policy. They will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, non-disqualifying disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, or veteran status in the recruitment of students, or in the implementation of its policies, procedures, and activities. Sexual harassment is a prohibited aspect of sexual discrimination under this policy.

Program Overview

The program overview, which includes a description of the program and its courses, can be found under “Academic Programs” in the Catalog. Physical Therapist Assistant Student Essential Skills and Functions in Appendices contains general expectations of Physical Therapist Assistant students during the program.

Expected Student Outcomes

At the completion of the Physical Therapist Assistant program, the graduate should be able to:

- Perform physical therapy techniques safely, professionally, legally, ethically, and competently at entry-level for a physical therapist assistant.
- Communicate effectively, respectfully, and timely using verbal, nonverbal, and written methods at entry-level for a physical therapist assistant.
- Adapt communication and delivery of physical therapy services with regard to patient diversity at entry-level for a physical therapist assistant.
- Participate actively in self-assessment and self-development at entry-level for a physical therapist assistant.
- Demonstrate clinical problem solving at entry-level for a physical therapist assistant.
- Participate in the efficient delivery of physical therapy services at entry-level for a physical therapist assistant.
- Work under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist at entry-level for a physical therapist assistant.
- Demonstrate competency on the licensure examination for a physical therapist assistant.
- Obtain employment in the local or surrounding community as a physical therapist assistant.

Note: These expected student outcomes are not a guarantee of passing the licensure examination, obtaining a license, or obtaining employment.

Curriculum Sequence

**Physical Therapist Assistant Associate’s Degree**  
1650 Hours / 105 Qtr Cr.

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SECTION II: STUDENT AND FACULTY ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Roles and Responsibilities

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program is a demanding course of study requiring dedication and commitment from its students. The PTA requires critical thinking skills, complex content mastery, the ability to demonstrate appropriate judgment, and the ability to consistently perform skills safely. The PTA student is responsible for his/her own learning and is expected to manage time and energy efficiently.

PTA students are encouraged to develop study groups and to use available resources, including library resources, supplemental texts, journal articles, and tutoring services on campus. PTA students are responsible for seeking assistance if they have questions relating to managing their academic activities. PTA faculty, as well as a variety of the college’s departments, are available to support students.

PTA students are expected to review and adhere to the responsibilities established by Brightwood College, which are published in the Catalog. See “Student Responsibilities” and “Conduct” in the Catalog. PTA students are also expected to:

- Gain an understanding of his/her personal strengths and areas for development in order to achieve academic, professional, and personal goals.
- Master assigned skills and competencies through the learning activities and practice provided by the Physical Therapist Assistant program.
- Be directly supervised by faculty or clinical supervisor when performing skills until the faculty or clinical supervisor deems the student has achieved competency and may perform the skill(s) under indirect supervision.
- Develop the skills to work effectively on an independent basis, as well as within a team.
- Collect and analyze clinical data from multiple sources.
Be accountable for his/her clinical practice activities and to verify information as needed to ensure accuracy in providing care.

Demonstrate awareness and respect for the unique characteristics, culture, and values of the patients, families, caregivers, and members of the healthcare team or community he/she encounters during the program.

Contribute to patient learning through preparation of accurate and appropriate information that is presented in a manner that addresses the learning style and condition of the patient and family and/or caregivers.

Place patient safety as the first priority.

Apply concepts learned in one environment to multiple patient populations and environments.

Seek learning experiences that will increase student’s effectiveness through collaboration with the faculty.

Initiate communication with faculty and program staff regarding any questions or concerns related to the student’s experience or program.

Regularly check postings (which may include electronic postings, such as through Student Portal) from faculty regarding exams, final course grades, clinical assignments, written assignments, or program activities, as instructed.

Note that some clinical sites may require that students have health insurance. If required, students are responsible for obtaining and maintaining their own independent health insurance coverage. The college does not provide student health insurance.

Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

Program faculty is expected to adhere to the responsibilities established by Brightwood College, which are published in the Campus Catalog (https://www.brightwood.edu/dallas-tx/course-catalog/) under “Student Responsibilities.” Faculty has an obligation to uphold the rights of students.

Program faculty are expected to:

- Establish clear expectations regarding the student’s role in patient safety and complying with the PTA program’s policies and any clinical site’s requirements.
- Teach new skills, information, and techniques and assist students in applying newly learned concepts to multiple patient populations in various environments.
- Provide clear, objective and thorough feedback to students.
- Engage students in active participation toward achieving their academic performance goals and competency in clinical performance.
- Serve as role models for professional behavior and safety-focused patient care.
- Facilitate learning by relating the course objectives to the learning opportunities.
- Stimulate students’ development of critical thinking skills, including presenting students with specific activities that foster critical thinking.
- Assist students in developing strategies to improve their academic and clinical performance;
- Maintain office hours, which are communicated to students, to be available for individual assistance.
- Provide students with appropriate class schedules at the onset of the course and notify students of any changes if necessary.
- Communicate with students in a pre-established, easily accessible location regarding exams, final course grades, clinical assignments, written assignments, or program activities, as necessary.

PTA Program Faculty

**ACCE Role and Responsibilities**
The Academic Clinical Coordinator of Education (ACCE) is a full-time Brightwood College staff member with the primary role and responsibility of administering the clinical education component of the PTA Program and coordinating the clinical affiliation staff and clinical affiliation sites. The ACCE may also serve as an instructor in the didactic portion of the Program.

**Clinical Education Administrator Role and Responsibilities**
The PTA Clinical Education Administrator will serve in a supportive role to the PTA Program’s Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) and will not have any direct oversight of PTA students or final decision-making for the PTA Clinical Education Program.

**CCCE Role and Responsibilities**
The Center Coordinator of Clinical Education (CCCE) is the appointed representative for the Clinical Affiliation Site or Company that will plan and implement the clinical education program at the clinical center. This individual may collaborate with clinic staff, the ACCE, and company representatives to supply the clinical affiliation agreement.

**CI Role and Responsibilities**
The Clinical Instructor (CI) is a Physical Therapist or Physical Therapist Assistant who is willing to be involved in the education and supervision of student clinicians pursuing a career in the physical therapy profession. As a CI, the therapist can enjoy many professional rewards; from gaining knowledge on new, innovative treatment techniques to the satisfaction of contributing to the growth of a new physical therapy professional. Students bring an enthusiastic mission to the clinical setting. The CI is expected to be of good standing, meet the requirements for licensure, and provide professional and scholarly preparation.
SECTION III: STUDENT RESOURCES

Student Portal

The Student Portal is an avenue for communication between all faculty/staff and their students. The Student Portal is a web-based application for students to view grades, attendance, financial information, and job postings. They can also make online payments, access tools for students to post resumes, and perform job searches. Activities can be sent to a single student or to a large group of students such as web alerts, email, text messages, or meeting information. The admissions representative will assist the new student with the account creation process. Students will then receive an orientation to the Student Portal from the Admissions Representative. Each student has their own unique identification number, password, and security question to provide account security. In addition, the following forms are available on the Student Portal:

- Academic Calendar
- Alternative Loan Lenders: List of alternative student loan options
- Computer Troubleshooting Guide: Read tips for resolving common technology issues
- Emergency Response Plan: For carrying out emergency functions so that essential services may continue to be provided to the Campus
- Financial Literacy Insider: Tips and advice on a range of student finance related topics
- How to Apply for Financial Aid: Student Information and Instructions on how to apply for Financial Aid
- Student Consumer Information: Includes Placement Data, Graduation Rates, Retention Rates, and Pell Diversity Information
- Writing Reference Library: Explore a variety of reference documents about grammar, mechanics, formatting, and citations, and the writing process itself

Library and Learning Resource Center (LRC)

All students receive an orientation to the campus-based LRC. Physical Therapist Assistant students and faculty have access to the Online Library. The Online Library offers access to ebooks, research guides, databases, and articles from professional, scholarly, and trade journals. Services include: ebook delivery, real-time and multimedia instructional materials, and research collaboration with Online Library staff. Reference assistance and technical support is available via the online help desk. Students, faculty, and staff with access issues, or who need a login, should contact the campus LRC staff for assistance with obtaining access. Additional information can be found in the Catalog in “Learning Resource Center.”

Open Lab

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program will provide open lab hours for the purpose of facilitating learning, providing informal tutoring, and allowing students to practice
psychomotor skills. Students will need to follow the expectations outlined in “Code of Conduct” in Section IV of this Handbook. Open lab hours will be available in addition to scheduled class hours with a calendar developed for each academic term.

- The open lab schedule will be developed by the Program Director at the beginning of each term.
- The scheduled open lab hours will be posted on the door of the PTA lab. These hours may be subject to change at the discretion of the Program Director.
- A faculty member who is a licensed physical therapist or PTA will be available during open lab times to supervise students.

Student Advising

Instructors are available for advising, by appointment, either before or after instructional hours. Additional information can be found in the Catalog in “Advising.”

Students Seeking Reasonable Accommodations

Brightwood College seeks to provide an environment to facilitate student success. Students may request reasonable accommodations by meeting with the Disabilities Coordinator, who can be found in the Catalog under “Administration, Staff, and Faculty.” Students may also ask any staff member for a referral to the Disabilities Coordinator. Additional information can be found in the Catalog in “Policy of Nondiscrimination.”

Tutoring

Students who may be experiencing academic challenges are advised to contact the college Education Department, as noted in the Catalog in “Tutoring.” Students who need extra assistance because of academic difficulties may arrange for tutoring through their instructor, Program Director, or the Director of Education. Faculty may recommend that individual students attend tutoring sessions due to academic concerns. General tutoring sessions are held by faculty when the need is identified. All students desiring help with study, test-taking, organizational skills, etc. are invited to attend. Student study groups are encouraged. The commitment to review new and/or difficult material with at least one other student is very important and successful students make this effort.
Web Resources

Students are encouraged to explore membership in professional organizations. The following are organizations that students may be interested in learning more about:

- American Physical Therapy Association (APTA): http://www.apta.org/
- Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT): http://www.fsbpt.org/
- Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE): www.capteonline.org
- World Confederation of Physical Therapy (WCPT): www.wcpt.org

SECTION IV: PROCEDURES & REQUIREMENTS

Attendance

The program follows “Attendance/Tardiness Policy” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to this. When a student is absent from class, the student is responsible for obtaining the information that they missed from the faculty. Students are responsible for obtaining missed handouts from their instructors before or after class or during scheduled breaks.

Individual clinical sites may choose to establish their own attendance requirements. Students will be advised of these requirements during clinical site orientation and/or preparation for clinical rotation. The student is expected to adhere to these requirements.

When a clinical absence occurs, the student must contact his/her clinical faculty at least 30 minutes prior to the clinical start time. If the student does not make contact with the clinical instructor, the student is to contact the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) or the Program Director. The student should speak with the ACCE or Program Director on the phone or leave a voicemail if neither is available. Within the voicemail message, the student should leave his or her name, contact phone number, and information related to the absence.

Code of Conduct

The program follows “Conduct” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to this. Requirements and expectations of students in the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program also include:
While in lab:

- Students must be under faculty or staff supervision while in the lab. Any student found to be utilizing the PTA lab without supervision will be subject to immediate disciplinary actions.
- Students are never allowed to perform any therapeutic intervention/procedure without the supervision of the licensed Physical Therapist or PTA who is a member of the program faculty.
- The PTA lab will be used for the purpose of practicing PTA procedures or other uses as authorized by the Program Director.
- Food or drink will not be allowed in the PTA lab, unless prior permission has been obtained from the Program Director.
- No one other than students, faculty, and staff are permitted in the lab, unless prior permission has been obtained from the Program Director.
- Students must assist in the set-up, cleaning, and dismantling of lab equipment when asked.
- Students must be prepared for the skills lab by reading assignments before scheduled practice and competency testing.
- With faculty permission, students may observe other students practicing skills or being tested.
- Students are directly responsible for the safety of their lab partner, mock patients, and other permitted guests and must perform procedures safely under the supervision of faculty and/or onsite supervisors.

While at the clinical site:

- Students must adhere to all the regulations and procedures of the clinical site explained during site orientation, including all confidentiality regulations and procedures, such as the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). (See Confirmation of Clinical Site Confidentiality Policy in Appendices.)
- Students cannot bring children to the clinical site.
- Students cannot leave the clinical site unless authorized to do so by their clinical instructor or Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE).
- Students who are not adequately prepared for the learning experience or who are uncooperative will be dismissed for the day and required to meet with the Program Director or designee. Dismissal from the clinical site will be considered an absence and may be subject to other disciplinary action as outlined in “Dismissal/Suspension” in Section IV of this Handbook.
- Students must be supervised at all times during any interactions with patients/clients, their caregivers, or their family members while in the clinical setting.
• Students will only be expected to perform those clinical skills for which they have documented competency. Documented competency includes competency check-offs performed during the academic portion of the curriculum and/or competence as assessed by the clinical instructor.

• Students will respect the risk-free right of patients to refuse to participate in clinical education. (See Clinical Site Confirmation of Patient Right of Refusal for Treatment in Appendices.)

Confidentiality of Patient or Client Information

Confidentiality is of major importance when caring for and/or working with patients/clients, whether as part of a lab activity or at a clinical site. Students are personally responsible for maintaining patient/client confidentiality, including those related to the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which will be discussed as part of the curriculum in the first term. Confidentiality regulations and procedures of the clinical site must also be followed. Students must maintain confidentiality of patients/clients even after the lab activity or the clinical rotation has ended.

Violation of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or dismissal from the Physical Therapist Assistant program. Violating patient/client confidentiality is considered to be detrimental to the welfare of others, and therefore the “Suspension and Dismissal” Policy in the Catalog may be applied. Students will need to sign the Confirmation of Clinical Site Confidentiality Policy in Appendices prior to their first clinical rotation.

• HIPAA regulations require strict confidentiality of patient/client and clinical site information obtained for the purpose of providing care and clinical learning.

• All clinical discussions must occur in a protected environment and with other individuals on a “need to know” basis.

• Any information obtained about patients/clients from their health records, families, caregivers, and providers, as well as the patient/client, is protected under HIPAA. The law stipulates that making a photocopy of patient records and/or paperwork that contains names or other identifying information is prohibited.

• Students will only engage in personal data collection from patients/clients in relationship to the requirements of the course. Any personal data that is collected for the purposes of completing an assignment for coursework is to be altered such that the identity of the patient/client is protected. The data is to be destroyed in a manner that maintains confidentiality upon completion of the assignment.

• All online discussions, assignments, and seminars related to experiences with patients/clients in the community will occur with all identifying information related to the patient/client altered, or removed, to protect privacy.

• It is the student’s responsibility to be informed of, and comply with, clinical site specific requirements for maintaining patient/client confidentiality.
Criminal Background Check
The program follows “Admission Requirements and Conditions,” which includes information on background checks, as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to this.

Discrimination
The program follows “Student Responsibilities” and “Policy of Nondiscrimination” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to these.

Dismissal/Suspension
The program follows “Attendance/Tardiness Policy” and “Suspension and Dismissal” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to these. During the clinical rotations, students will also be expected to review and adhere to “Externship/Practicum, Clinical, or Fieldwork” as published in the Catalog.

Dress Code/Personal Appearance
The program follows “Personal Appearance” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to this. During Physical Therapist Assistant lab sessions, it may be necessary to wear specific clothing; the course instructor will supply the students with additional dress code requirements as needed to meet course objectives for that class. During clinical rotations, the student is expected to follow requirements and procedures of the clinical site, which will be reviewed as a part of the orientation to the clinical site. Students must also wear a badge that designates their status as a student during their clinical rotations.

Drug-Free Learning and Practice Environment
The program follows “Drug and Alcohol Abuse Awareness and Prevention,” “Admission Requirements and Conditions,” and “Externship/Practicum, Clinical, or Fieldwork” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to these. The college and its faculty are committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from the abuse or unauthorized use of drugs and alcohol. Many clinical agencies require drug screening prior to student affiliation. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) prior to the drug screen if he or she is taking or has taken any prescription or over-the-counter medications that may alter the results of this drug screen.
Physical Therapist Assistant students must be capable of performing without impairment during their classroom instruction, lab, and clinical practice. The following situations are considered to be or have the potential to be detrimental to the welfare of others, and therefore the “Suspension and Dismissal” Policy in the Catalog may be applied:

- The drug screen is positive. (Presumptive positive drugs screens may require further testing.)
- The request for drug screening was not completed on or by the date required, as instructed.
- Evidence has been obtained that a student is using or is in possession of illegal drugs, alcohol or controlled substances in the classroom, lab, or clinical setting.

Evaluation of Student Clinical Performance

The program follows “Externship/Practicum, Clinical, or Fieldwork” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to this. The Physical Therapist Assistant program is a competency-based program. Specific clinical assessment forms describe the clinical objectives and grading criteria and are provided to students at the beginning of the clinical rotation.

- Clinical grading is on a letter grade basis, in accordance with the “Grading System” Policy as stated in the Catalog.
- Attending the required clinical orientation is mandatory for each rotation.
- Attendance and punctuality play a role in how sites evaluate students. The student should adhere to the schedule established by the clinical instructor and/or the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE). Any changes to the schedule must be reported to the ACCE. Failure to report changes could lead to academic disciplinary action and possible termination of the clinical rotation.
- Clinical instructors will complete a performance evaluation of the student.
- All clinical documents must be submitted to the ACCE prior to a grade being issued for that clinical practicum course. Students should understand that the clinical rotation documentation is their responsibility. They should ensure that the clinical instructor receives a copy of the evaluation, approves each weekly timesheet, and verifies all required forms are completely filled out. All required forms will be issued to the student during the clinical rotation orientation session, which occurs prior to the clinical rotation. A grade cannot be issued for the clinical practicum course until all documentation has been received and approved by the ACCE. Documents that are incomplete will not be accepted and will be returned to the student for correction and resubmission upon completion.
Field Trips

During a course an instructor may make arrangements for an off-campus educational experience, or field trip, to enhance material covered in the classroom or lab. While it is recommended that students participate in these experiences, students that are unable to attend will be provided with alternate work to provide those students with similar learning opportunities. Students who do not attend the field trip will be required to attend class at the regularly scheduled date and time. Students will also be required to sign the Release of Liability and Consent Form, which will be provided by the instructor prior to the field trip.

Grading

The program follows “Grading System” and “Appeals Procedure” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to these. Physical Therapist Assistant students must achieve a minimum level of competency in the lecture, lab, and/or clinical components of each course in order to pass to the next course and progress in the program curriculum. Please refer to each course syllabus for specific course requirements. Failure to demonstrate a minimum level of competency will result in not being placed in a clinical rotation and/or failure of the course. Repeat courses are permitted by the “Repeated Courses” Policy; refer to the procedure outlined in the Catalog.

To successfully complete a PTA Program core curriculum course a student must achieve a 73% or higher in the lecture portion and an 80% or higher on the competency skills exams. Students have two attempts to achieve 80% on the competency skills exams.

Grievance/Appeals

The program follows “General Student Complaint Procedure/Grievance Policy” and “Appeals Procedure” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to these.

Health and Liability Insurances

The student bears the responsibility of maintaining his or her own medical insurance, if required by the clinical site, and covering his or her own medical expenses. The College maintains liability insurance.

Medical Release Criteria

The Physical Therapist Assistant program is concerned for the health and well-being of students, as well as its faculty and guests. Regardless of where an injury occurred or an illness began, any Physical Therapist Assistant student who wishes to return to class, lab, or clinic after an injury and/or illness resulting in an absence may be asked to present the Program Director with a medical release signed by a licensed and qualified healthcare practitioner indicating that he or she is released to return (see Medical Release Form to Return to
Class/Lab/Clinic in Appendices). Any financial responsibility for this medical release will belong to the student.

Parking
Designated student parking must be used while on campus or at clinical sites. Failure to comply may result in the student’s car being towed and/or dismissal from the clinical site. Parking stickers, if applicable, are to be used as directed.

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty
The program follows “Conduct” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to this.

Privacy of Student Information
The program follows “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to this. For accurate grading and to improve the educational experience for other Physical Therapist Assistant program students, students are required to sign one of the two statements on the Imaging Release Form in Appendices. For further information, students are encouraged to speak with the Program Director.

To expedite the assignment of clinical sites, the college will need to release certain information from the educational record to the student’s assigned clinical site. Information that is considered part of the educational record, as it is being used for the clinical education portion of the curriculum, includes but is not limited to student name, social security number, background check results, drug screen results, and immunization and vaccination records. Students must consent to this release by signing one of the two statements on the Release of Information to Clinical Agencies in Appendices. For further information, students are encouraged to speak with the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE).

Transfer of Credit
The program follows “Prior Learning Assessment,” “Credit Awarded to Education Corporation of America Diploma Graduates,” and “Transfer of Credit Between Education Corporation of America Institutions” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to these. As the program is designed to prepare students for the physical therapist assistant licensure examination, transfer credit for core courses in the Physical Therapist Assistant curriculum will only be considered from a program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). Courses and credit values must be comparable to those offered by the college. The Program Director or designee will meet with the student to determine whether courses are able to be awarded transfer credits.
Transportation

Transportation to and from the campus and clinical sites is the responsibility of the individual student. Punctual attendance at clinical sites is a requirement for successful course completion. Consider making plans to have alternate arrangements available in case of transportation difficulties. Carpooling may be a viable option. Clinical rotation assignments cannot be guaranteed or assigned to meet personal preference or geographical convenience, as other factors need to be considered, such as the patient/client population at the clinical site. Occasionally, clinical rotation assignments may require traveling up to 150 miles from the campus.

Withdrawal/Dropping

The program follows “Withdrawal from the Institution” and “Dropping or Adding Courses” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to these.

SECTION V: HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION

Accidents/Incidents/Emergencies

The program follows “Student Health Services” as published in the Catalog; students are expected to review and adhere to this.

For all emergency situations, alert a staff member to phone 911 immediately for assistance. Be prepared to assist if requested. If at a clinical site, alert a staff member at the clinical site and assist as requested.

For all nonemergency situations, the following will apply:

- For accidents/incidents while in academic classes or school-sponsored events, the student must immediately notify a member of the program faculty. The program faculty will assist the student to seek appropriate medical attention, if required. The Program Director will assist the student with completion of an Incident Report form and other necessary forms, as dictated by the incident.
- For accidents/incidents involving the student while on a clinical site, whether or not there was actual injury to the student/faculty or patient/client, the student must immediately report the incident to the clinical instructor and to the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) or Program Director. The student will then follow the regulations and procedures of the clinical site. The program faculty will assist the clinical site, if needed, with helping the student seek appropriate medical attention, as appropriate for the situation. The ACCE will work with the clinical site and/or student to obtain a copy of the clinical site incident report form. The Program Director will assist the student with completion of an Incident Report form and other necessary forms, as dictated by the incident.
If required by “Medical Release Criteria” in Section IV of this Handbook, the Medical Release Form to Return to Class/Lab/Clinic (in Appendices) will be completed in order for the student to return to class, lab, or clinical site.

Blood or Body Fluid Exposure

Standard Precautions should be followed according to standards set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Protective equipment such as goggles, gloves, gowns, and masks will be available in the lab for circumstances that dictate their use. Students should sign the Standard Precautions Acknowledgement Form in Appendices after receiving the training in PTA120.

In addition to the steps outlined above for Accidents/Incidents/Emergencies, these additional precautions must be followed if a student has been exposed to blood or body fluids. The CDC defines blood or bodily fluid exposure as:

- A needle stick, or cut, caused by a needle or sharp that was actually or potentially contaminated with blood or body fluids (urine, saliva, sputum, vomit, feces).
- A contaminant splash to mucous membranes (e.g. eyes, nose, mouth) with blood or body fluids.
- Prolonged skin contact or exposure to blood or body fluids, especially when the skin is chapped, abraded, or afflicted with dermatitis or somehow otherwise not intact.

If the exposure takes place at a clinical site, the site’s procedure and plan for exposure incidents supersedes the following action plan. It is the responsibility of the students to learn the clinical site’s procedures and emergency plan as part of their clinical site orientation. If an adverse event involving blood or body fluids occurs, the student must follow the following procedure:

- Immediately notify the program faculty and/or on-site clinical instructor of the incident. Prompt reporting of exposure is crucial to ensure proper medical evaluation and treatment, if necessary.
- Unless extraordinary circumstances are present, the program faculty and/or on-site clinical instructor will assist the exposed individual in removing contaminated clothing, wiping/washing off visible blood and/or body fluids, and disinfecting the exposed area using warm water and a skin-approved bactericidal. Care should be taken not to use abrasive cleaners that will damage the skin. If blood or fluids get into the eye or come in contact with the mucous membranes, flush the area vigorously with running water.
- Program faculty will assist the exposed individual in completing an Incident Report form and other necessary forms, as dictated by the incident. If at a clinical site, also complete the site’s incident report form and provide a copy to the Program Director.
- Program faculty will assist the exposed individual in completing the Blood-Borne Pathogens Exposure Report in Appendices.
• Program faculty and/or the on-site clinical instructor will inform the Program Director within 60 minutes of the exposure.
• Program faculty will assist the exposed individual in making arrangements for evaluation, testing and prophylactic treatment. If at a clinical site and the site is unable or unwilling to assist, the exposed individual will be treated and tested at a designated healthcare facility or the nearest emergency medical facility. The exposed individual will be responsible for the cost of medical treatments, unless otherwise notified.
• Program faculty will work (with the clinical site if applicable) to make arrangements to test the source individual for HIV, HBV, and HCV infectivity, if warranted.
• If warranted by the treating healthcare practitioner, after initial prophylactic treatment, the exposed individual will be provided information regarding arrangements for continued prophylactic treatment, follow-up testing, and counseling.
• In addition to the resources provided by the program, exposed individuals may call the 24-hour national Needle Stick hotline 1-888-HIV-4911 for questions or concerns.

Equipment Maintenance

Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) students and program faculty are responsible for maintaining equipment in the PTA lab in safe and effective working order. The following will be adhered to by all associated with the PTA program:

• Program faculty will inspect equipment in the PTA lab at the beginning and end of each lab session.
• Any faulty equipment (electrical or non-electrical) is to be put aside and clearly labeled as “broken” by means of a tag or label.
• Any faulty equipment will be brought immediately to the attention of the Program Director, who will determine the best means to fix the broken equipment (either by school’s physical plant or by returning it to the manufacturer).
• An independent biomechanical engineering company will test all electrical equipment annually, with inspection dates clearly marked on each piece of equipment. The Program Director will ensure this testing is completed annually on all PTA program equipment owned by Brightwood College.
• All electrical loaner equipment received from manufacturers must be inspected by an independent biomechanical engineering company (as described above in item 4), prior to its use in the lab.
• All electrical equipment, loaner or not, that is not current on its annual inspection (as described above in item 4) shall be clearly tagged or labeled “needs electrical check”. This equipment cannot be used until it has been checked as described above in item 4.
• All lab/treatment tables and equipment must be sprayed or wiped down with the disinfectant provided, following each use.
• All supplies and equipment will be returned to the appropriate storage area after each use.
Handling of Lab Chemicals

All chemicals will be handled according to label instructions with appropriate protective equipment as required.

- All chemicals used in the lab will have a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) on file in the MSDS binder stored in the lab. The Program Director is responsible for keeping the MSDS binder updated.
- All chemicals are to be handled according to label instructions.
- Protective equipment such as goggles, gloves, gowns, and masks will be available in the lab for circumstances that dictate their use.
- All chemicals that are not in use during daily operations will be stored in a secured location.
- Students and faculty with allergic reactions to specific chemicals or materials must notify the Program Director and/or lab instructor(s) immediately to ensure that appropriate accommodations can be made.
- In the event of a medical emergency, the procedure described in “Accidents/Incidents/Emergencies” will be placed into action.

Immunizations and Other Health Requirements

Immunizations or other health requirements may be required by specific clinical sites. Students will be required to comply with the clinical site requirements. Students will be given sufficient notice by the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) to complete any immunization and other health requirements of the clinical site. Sufficient notice is determined at a minimum by the timeframe required for completion of the immunization or other health requirements.

Students who fail to comply with the requirements will not be permitted to attend clinical rotation at that location. Students may be assigned a different clinical site, if one is available. If another clinical site is not available, the student will not be able to complete the clinical practicum course until such time that another suitable clinical site is available.

Students are responsible for keeping their original immunization and other health records and providing the ACCE and clinical site (if required) with a copy for their student records. Students will be shown information on the Hepatitis B Virus, according to the *Hepatitis B Vaccination Form* in Appendices, which will then be completed by the student. This information will be reviewed during the initial four weeks after the start of the first term which should provide students adequate time to schedule an appointment with their own provider for completion of the Hepatitis B Vaccination at their own expense, prior to the first clinical rotation.
Infection Control

As part of their education, students are taught health behavior information regarding personal health, infection prevention, and behavior that places individuals at a health risk. Students are expected to demonstrate behavior that reduces the risk of infection (e.g. proper hand washing, hygiene, and use of personal protective equipment) and to follow the safety practices and guidelines that are known to reduce the risk of infection and prevent the transmission of disease.

Students receive printed and verbal information and instruction regarding infection control; including the risk for occupational exposure to blood-borne pathogens and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines in regards to standard precautions. A student-signed confirmation form acknowledging instruction and comprehension of infection control best practices is maintained in the Physical Therapist Assistant program student file. (See Standard Precautions Acknowledgment Form in Appendices.)

The delivery of care by healthcare providers is associated with exposure to health risks. Education Corporation of America and the College are not responsible if a student acquires health problems as a result of his/her patient care and educational experiences. Additional infection control requirements may be required at certain clinical education sites. Students that fail to comply with clinical site requirements will not be permitted to attend clinical rotation at that location.

Informed Consent

The Physical Therapist Assistant faculty will conduct lab sessions throughout the curriculum in which students will be asked to participate in various physical therapy interventions, both as the person receiving and performing the intervention. (See Lab Experiences Informed Consent Form in Appendices.) Each type of participation provides valuable learning and feedback for the students. To ensure a safe experience for all involved parties, the following will be followed for lab sessions:

- Participation is required as part of the coursework unless there is a medical reason that precludes student participation. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the lab instructor(s) of any condition, which may affect his/her participation. (For example, if the intervention being studied is knee joint ROM and the student has a knee injury, it is the student’s responsibility to inform the lab instructor(s) prior to the lab session.)
- On rare occasions, while learning a physical therapy intervention, the recipient of the intervention may experience pain or discomfort. If this happens, it is the student’s responsibility to inform the lab instructor(s). A decision will be made as to whether or not medical attention is necessary, using the procedure described in Accidents/Incidents/Emergencies in Section V of this Handbook.
- As part of participation in all required lab situations, physical contact as a student PTA or a mock patient is to be expected. Contact will occur during data collection and interventions. If physical contact poses a problem for the student, it is his/her responsibility to discuss the issue with the lab instructor(s), prior to the lab session.
- Students are directly responsible for the safety of the mock patient and must perform procedures safely under the supervision of the program faculty.
- All volunteer subjects or guest patients will sign a release form prior to participation in any lab activity/demonstration. (See Guest Participation and Release of Liability Form in Appendices.)

Latex Allergy

Some individuals have an allergic reaction to latex products. All students, for their own protection, should read and sign Latex Allergy Statement in Appendices prior to use of lab equipment.

Pregnancy

Some therapeutic interventions are contraindicated in the case of pregnancy. For safety of herself and the fetus, female students in the PTA program are instructed to report their pregnancy to the Program Director, either upon enrollment or upon learning of the pregnancy. Additional information regarding the impact of the PTA program on the health of a pregnant student or the fetus can be obtained from the Program Director. (See Health Risk and Pregnancy Protocol in Appendices.)

Safety Procedures

All PTA faculty will be readily prepared to assist with the management of emergencies. All faculty have access to the college Emergency Response Plan. Students should make themselves familiar with procedures described below. Students should always follow the directions given to them by the college or clinical site staff. Any questions about the application of any stated procedures should be addressed to the Program Director. While at the clinical site, the student should inquire with the clinical instructor about any questions regarding emergency and safety procedures.

- Electrical Safety: Keep portable electrical equipment away from sinks to minimize the hazard of the machine falling into water. When performing maintenance on any equipment, such as changing the light bulb, unplug the unit. In case of electrical shock, do not touch the victim; turn off power at the source (main shut off), if accessible, and then follow emergency procedures as noted in Accidents/Incidents/Emergencies in Section V of this Handbook. If a piece of equipment seems defective or has exposed wires, do not use it; immediately report it to a member of the program faculty. In the event of an electrical fire, immediately alert a staff member to turn shut off main power, if accessible, and use the fire extinguisher (as described below).
Fire Safety: An unexpired labeled Fire Extinguisher is located in the PTA lab. Fire alarms are located in the hallway, adjacent to the PTA lab and/or in the classrooms. In the event of fire that is not immediately put out, pull the fire alarm. Exits are readily visible with lighted signs. Doorways are never to be obstructed as to prohibit easy exit. For example, extension cords are never to be run through doorways. Evacuation routes are posted next to exit doors in the PTA lab and classrooms.

In Case of Fire:
- Rescue those that may be in need.
- Alert 9-1-1.
- Contain the fire with an extinguisher if possible.
- Evacuate the building and meet in the parking lot. (See Evacuation Procedures below).

Using a Fire Extinguisher:
- Pull the pin.
- Aim at the base of the fire.
- Squeeze the handle.
- Spray back and forth over the fire.

Evacuation Procedures: Evacuate according to posted placards, following instructions given by college or clinical site staff, as they are familiar with these procedures. Routine evacuation drills occur according to college and clinical site policies, respectively.

- Extreme Weather Conditions: Follow instructions given by college or clinical site staff, as they are familiar with these procedures.

- Suspicious or Dangerous Individuals and Situations: Notify the nearest college or clinical site staff member and follow their instructions to assist as needed. If unable to notify a staff member while at the college, call the desk receptionist. If unable to notify a staff member while at a clinical site, contact the appropriate phone number as described during site orientation. However, if at any time you feel your safety is at risk, call 9-1-1.