

# Doctor of Physical Therapy **STUDENT HANDBOOK**



**EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

## Welcome to the ETSU Doctor of Physical Therapy Program

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Welcome to the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program!

I am delighted to welcome you to the DPT Program and to our professional community of future physical therapists. You have worked hard to get here, and your admission reflects not only your academic strength, but also your character, resilience, and commitment to caring for others.

Over the next nearly three years, you will be challenged to think critically, to integrate complex science with compassionate care, and to grow as a professional colleague. You will practice new skills, make mistakes, ask hard questions, and steadily develop the clinical reasoning and judgment needed to serve your patients well. Our faculty and staff are here to support you through that process—we will expect a lot from you, and we will walk alongside you as you rise to meet those expectations.

As you begin, I encourage you to:

- Stay curious and engaged in class, lab, and clinic.
- Take care of your own health and well-being.
- Lean on your classmates and be the kind of teammate with whom you would like to work and learn.
- Remember *why* you chose this profession and come back to that “why” when the workload feels heavy.

You are now part of a profession that values integrity, empathy, service, and life-long learning. We are honored to share this journey with you and look forward to seeing you grow into the kind of physical therapist your patients and communities deserve.

On behalf of the faculty and staff—welcome to the DPT Program. We’re glad you’re here.

Warmly,

Laurie A. Schroder, PT, DPT, EdD, DMin  
Program Director, Doctor of Physical Therapy Program

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The purpose of this Student Handbook is to ensure that students have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the policies, procedures, and practices of the ETSU DPT Program. Students are expected to abide by the policies outlined in this handbook, as well as the policies of the Graduate School and the University. In general, the program abides by the policies of the Graduate School and University, but in those instances where program policies may differ, the Handbook should serve as the student's guide. The Program Director and faculty are committed to the policies and practices herein, so that students in the program experience a consistent, equitable, safe, and successful educational experience.

## General Information

### Introduction

This manual serves to outline the policies, procedures, and practices of the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at East Tennessee State University. It is a supplement to, and not a substitute for, information published in the Graduate Catalog and the University Policies and Administrative Rules. Policies and procedures not addressed in this document should be understood to be in alignment with those of the University. Any questions regarding policy should be directed to the Graduate Coordinator and/or Program Director.

### Program History and Overview

The physical therapy program at ETSU was established in June 1993, as a bachelor level program. The first cohort was matriculated in January 1996. The program received initial accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) in October of 1997 and graduated its first class in December of that year.

The program converted to a master's degree program in 1998, in accordance with the mandate that entry-level programs be at the post-baccalaureate level. In 2003, the program converted to the doctorate level, admitting its first doctoral cohort in 2004. The program has held continuous accreditation since its inception, with the most recent CAPTE approval granted in 2024.

The program is delivered in an on-ground, traditional, sequenced manner over eight consecutive terms, and includes comprehensive didactic and clinical coursework designed to graduate entry-level generalist practitioners.

### Program Mission and Goals

The Mission of the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program is to prepare physical therapy practitioners who embody lifelong learning, collaboration, and leadership, to improve the health of individuals in our region and society. This mission is in alignment with the missions of the department, college, school, and University.

The goals of the program are:

1. The program graduates competent, ethical, and professional entry-level, generalist practitioners.
2. The program offers current and evidence-based curriculum, to facilitate advancements in the physical therapy profession.
3. The program establishes and maintains community partnerships that foster growth of the physical therapy profession.
4. Faculty demonstrate professional currency and ongoing development through continuing education, clinical practice, and/or scholarly activity.
5. Faculty create a learning environment for students that facilitates personal and professional growth.
6. Students demonstrate developing and progressing professional behaviors along with cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills' competence.

7. Students develop an appreciation for the role of the PT (Physical Therapist) as a member of the interprofessional healthcare team and are prepared to advocate for their patients and the profession.
8. Graduates demonstrate entry-level competence in physical therapy clinical skill with sufficient depth and breadth of experience to be prepared to enter the workforce in a variety of settings.
9. Graduates exhibit a commitment to life-long learning and professional development, engagement in the profession, and leadership in their communities.

Program goals are measured by various qualitative and quantitative tools that are reviewed by the faculty annually. Stakeholders of the program, including students, clinical partners, graduates, faculty, and others, are invited to share feedback with the program.

### Curriculum and Coursework

The Doctor of Physical Therapy curriculum is 2 2/3-years in length, starting in January of the first year, and ending in August of the third year.

Course descriptions are published in the ETSU Graduate School's Graduate Catalog found here: <https://catalog.etsu.edu/content.php?catoid=37&navoid=1621>.

### Complaint Policy

#### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide students, faculty, staff, clinical education partners, and members of the public with a clear process for submitting, reviewing, and resolving complaints related to the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Program that fall outside of the formal University grievance and appeal processes. Concerns or complaints specific to a course should first be addressed to the course instructor. This ensures transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement consistent with the mission of the program and the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) requirements.

#### Scope

This policy applies to:

- Concerns or complaints specific to the DPT Program, its policies, procedures, or operations.
- Complaints from students, faculty, staff, clinical partners, or the public.
- Issues not otherwise covered by existing institutional policies (e.g., grade appeals, Title IX complaints, ADA accommodation requests).

#### Policy

1. Right to File a Complaint
  - Any individual may file a complaint about the DPT Program.
  - Complainants will not be subject to retaliation for submitting a good-faith concern.
2. How to Submit a Complaint
  - Complaints must be submitted in writing to the Program Director.
  - Written complaints should include:

- Name and contact information of the complainant (anonymous complaints will be reviewed if sufficient detail is provided).
  - Description of the concern or issue.
  - Dates, locations, and individuals involved (if applicable).
  - Any prior attempts at resolution.
3. Review Process
    - The Program Director (or designee) will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 business days.
    - Complaints will be reviewed, investigated, and documented.
    - When appropriate, the Program Director may consult with faculty, staff, or University offices.
    - A written response outlining findings and, if applicable, corrective actions will be provided within 30 business days.
  4. Escalation
    - If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, the matter may be referred to the Chair of the Department of Rehabilitation.
  5. Record Keeping
    - All complaints and their resolutions will be kept on file by the Program Director for a minimum of five years.
    - Records will be reviewed annually to identify patterns and opportunities for program improvement.
  6. Confidentiality
    - All complaints will be handled with discretion. Information will be shared only with individuals who need to know to address the concern.

The program relies upon the Graduate School and institutional policies for the resolution of concerns and complaints that cannot be resolved at the program level. Should you have a concern that cannot be addressed by the program or department please visit the BucsCARE webpage at <https://www.etsu.edu/bucscare/report.php>, which will direct you to the appropriate process for reporting your concern. Should you have a concern or complaint that you feel is not governed by any other complaint or appeal policy at the University, please visit <https://catalog.etsu.edu/content.php?catoid=42&navoid=1780#complaint-policy-and-procedures-for-students>.

The program will not retaliate against any person because that person has filed or may file a complaint, provide information or assistance, or participate in any manner in an investigation or proceeding related to a complaint.

Complaints regarding accreditation standards may be submitted directly to CAPTE at:

Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE)  
 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, VA 22305-3085  
 E-mail: [accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org) | Website: [www.capteonline.org](http://www.capteonline.org)



## Academic Policies and Procedures

### Admissions and Enrollment

Admissions and enrollment information for the program can be found at:

<https://www.etsu.edu/doctoral/physical-therapy.php>.

### Essential Functions and Technical Standards

Students in the program must have the ability to perform, either unaided or with reasonable accommodation, the following essential functions:

- Critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment
- Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds
- Communication abilities sufficient for interaction with others in verbal and written form
- Physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces
- Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective physical therapy care
- Auditory abilities sufficient to monitor and assess signs and outcome measure responses
- Visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in physical therapy care
- Tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment and treatment
- Physical ability to assist moving, transferring, and ambulating patients who have impairment or dysfunction

### Attendance Policies

#### Class and Lab Attendance

Students are required to attend all scheduled classes, clinic, and laboratory sessions, including those that may occur outside of the typical weekly class schedule or outside of business hours. Consistent attendance is a prime indicator of maturity and professional behavior. The Physical Therapy Program's requirements are usually scheduled during typical business hours, from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Students are expected to give the program's requirements priority over extracurricular commitments. Scheduling of extracurricular activities should avoid any conflict with classes or clinical experiences. Occasionally, course schedules may be changed to meet unusual requirements (i.e., guest lecturer, offsite activities, weather-related changes, emergencies). In these instances, faculty will provide at least 24 hours' notice, if possible, of any course schedule changes, and students are expected to adjust their schedules accordingly.

Absences are considered excused or unexcused, as outlined below. In the event of an unplanned absence that arises unexpectedly, students are still expected to complete the Student Absence Form as soon as possible, to determine if the absence is excused or unexcused. The Student Absence Form is described below.

Students who miss 15% or more of a course's content, regardless of excused and/or unexcused, have missed a significant portion of the course. In this instance, the student's

attendance will be reviewed by the Student Promotion and Retention Committee for possible unsatisfactory academic performance or unprofessional behavior.

### **Excused Absence**

An excused absence is one that the faculty have approved after reviewing the Student Absence Form. Examples of potential excused absences include but are not limited to:

- Military service requirements
- Jury duty
- Weddings
- Illness, death, or another medical emergency
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Birth of a child
- Time-sensitive medical appointments or procedures
- Program-sponsored, clinical, research, and/or educational service activities

**To request an excused absence during an impending term, students must complete the Student Absence Form by the end of the first week of the semester.** The form is located on the ETSU DPT program website, under the “Students” tab. The faculty will review the completed form and determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

Students are responsible for making up any missed work for excused absences from all classes and activities. Students are expected to communicate with the course director to establish a plan prior to the excused absence. Make-up of written and practical examinations for an excused absence will be left to the discretion of the course director. There are some activities that may not be able to be made up, at the discretion of the course director.

### **Unexcused Absence**

An unexcused absence is considered an unprofessional behavior. An unexcused absence is any absence not approved by the faculty after review of the submitted Student Absence Form. An unexcused absence may impact a course grade, as determined by the course syllabus and course director. Repeated unexcused absences may warrant professional behavior probation or dismissal from the program. Examples of unexcused absences include but are not limited to:

- Honeymoons
- Vacations
- Work duties
- Job interviews

Students are responsible for making up any missed assignments or activities for unexcused absences for all classes and activities. Students are expected to communicate with peers to obtain missed course information. Make-up written or practical examinations will **NOT** be allowed for unexcused absences.

### **Class Participation**

All students are expected to participate in classes to promote student learning. Individual courses may have specific policies based on course requirements and delivery.

## Academic Progression

### Grading Scale

All courses in the program, apart from those graded on a pass/fail basis, adhere to the following grading scale:

94.51-100%	A
89.51-94.50%	A-
85.51-89.50%	B+
81.51-85.50%	B
77.51-81.50%	B-
73.51-77.50%	C+
70-73.50%	C
Below 70%	F

### Grades of Incomplete

Students may receive a grade of “I” (incomplete) if they are passing the course at the end of the semester, but due to circumstances beyond their control, they are unable to complete the course requirements. It also indicates that the student has received consent from the instructor to complete the work for which an “I” is assigned. The “I” grade cannot be used to allow a student to do additional work to raise a deficient grade or to repeat a course. An “I” grade must be removed no later than one calendar year from the time the grade is awarded.

Time extension requests for removal of “I” grades must be submitted to and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School before the allotted time expires. An “I” grade not removed under the guidelines noted above will be converted to an “F.” When an “I” grade converts to an “F” after one calendar year, the GPA is adjusted retroactively; consequently, a student may be subject to dismissal without a probationary term. A student cannot withdraw from or drop a course after a grade of “I” has been assigned or after one year has elapsed. To remove an “I” grade, the student must complete the work independently and must not register for the course a second time or attend the same course later to complete the course requirements.

### Repeated Coursework

If a student repeats a course, all grades earned in that course are calculated in the student’s GPA. Any additional grades earned when a course is repeated will not replace the original grade earned. See the [Determination of Grade Point Average Policy](#).

### GPA Requirements / Academic Standing

Students must earn a “C” (2.0) or better in each required physical therapy course to remain and progress in the program. To remain in good standing, physical therapy graduate students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (“B”) or better on all graduate work attempted. The requirements for graduation are as follows:

- Overall GPA of 3.0 in all graduate coursework
- Overall GPA of 3.0 in the graduate program of study
- Pass the program’s comprehensive examination (see Culminating Experience Policy)

- A satisfactory mark (“S”) in all clinical education experiences
- Discharge all financial obligations to the University
- All other program and University requirements for application for the degree

Students may remain on probation for two semesters before dismissal. The Dean of the Graduate School or their designee may at their discretion grant additional probationary semesters for students who demonstrate significant academic improvement. A student will be removed from probationary status upon attaining a cumulative 3.0 grade point average. At the end of the second probationary semester, a student whose cumulative grade point average is still below 3.0 will be dismissed from the program. Students whose performance results in a GPA so far below 3.0 to make it mathematically impossible to attain an overall GPA of 3.0 after one semester may be subject to dismissal without a probationary term.

A student will be removed from probationary status upon attaining a cumulative 3.0 or better grade point average. See the Graduate Catalog for more information.

#### Course Repetition & Remediation

The program is committed to remediation of student knowledge and skills when such remediation will result in student progress within a reasonable time frame. Students are encouraged to seek assistance from their peers, their faculty, and the Program’s Student Success Coordinator, if they are facing academic challenges. Additionally, the program employs at least one second year student per year to serve as a tutor for first year students.

The program curriculum is designed to be completed as a continuous program of study. Consequently, successful completion of each semester is required for progression to the next semester. Students who are required to retake a course or who receive a grade of incomplete for a course, may be delayed in progressing through the curriculum, which may impact their planned completion and graduation date. Permission to progress to the next semester when coursework has not been completed for the previous semester must be granted by the Program Director.

#### Written and Practical Examination Policy

To progress in the curriculum, students must demonstrate competence in the didactic and laboratory components of each course. Competence is assessed through written examinations and practical examinations. The purpose of competence assessment is to ensure that students demonstrate sufficient mastery of foundational academic knowledge and clinical psychomotor skills prior to advancing within the curriculum and participating in clinical education experiences. Individual modifications to this policy are at the discretion of the Program Director.

**Written examinations:** To successfully pass each course within the curriculum, students must pass all written examinations with a score of **70% or higher.** \*

1. If a student scores below 70% on the first attempt of a written exam:

- a. The student must remediate with the course instructor to identify and address knowledge gaps.
  - b. The student will then be given a second attempt to retake the exam. The format of the retake is determined by the course instructor.
2. If the student passes the second attempt:
  - a. The original exam score from the first attempt will be the recorded final grade.
3. If the student does not pass the second attempt:
  - a. This constitutes failure of the course, and by extension, dismissal from the program.
4. If a student fails multiple written exams on the first attempt during the curriculum:
  - a. The Promotion and Retention Committee, inclusive of the Student Success Coordinator, will convene to review the student's academic progress.
  - b. The Committee will make a recommendation to the Program Director regarding the student's continuation within the program.
  - c. The final decision as to the student's status resides with the Program Director, in consultation with the Graduate School Dean.

**Practical examinations:** All students **must pass** all practical exams to successfully pass each course in which they occur. \* Each course that includes practical exam(s) provides assessment rubrics outlining required safety and psychomotor skill expectations. Unsafe activity results in automatic failure of any practical exam. The practical exams are graded as pass/fail, and passing is defined as a **grade of 80% or higher**, as established on the course's grading rubric.

1. If a student scores below 80% on the first attempt:
  - a. The student must remediate with the course instructor to address performance gaps.
  - b. The student will then be given a second attempt to pass the practical.
2. If the student passes the second attempt:
  - a. The original score from the first attempt is the recorded final grade.
3. If the student does not pass the second attempt:
  - a. This constitutes failure of the course and, by extension, results in dismissal from the program.
4. If a student fails multiple practical exams on the first attempt during the curriculum:
  - a. The Promotion and Retention Committee, inclusive of the Students Success Coordinator, will convene to review the student's academic progress.
  - b. The Committee will make a recommendation to the Program Director regarding the student's continuation within the program.
  - c. The final decision as to the student's status resides with the Program Director, in consultation with the Graduate School Dean.

\* PHYT 6101 Functional Anatomy is not currently included in this policy.

Once a student has **failed two items** (e.g., exams, practicals) in a single semester, the **student** is required to reach out to the Student Success Coordinator (SSC) within **five academic days** to

schedule a meeting. Failure of the student to schedule a meeting with the SSC within five academic days may result in a referral to the Promotion and Retention Committee for breach of professional conduct.

### **Academic Probation and Dismissal**

The program defaults to the policies and procedures of the Graduate School, which are outlined below. Further information is available in the Graduate School Catalog. See the Graduate School's [Retention Standards Policy](#) for more information.

To remain in good standing, a graduate student must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B) or better on all graduate work attempted. When the cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0, the Dean of the Graduate School or designee will place the student on academic probation. If the student does not achieve a 3.0 cumulative grade point average at the conclusion of one probationary semester, the Dean of the Graduate School or designee will determine whether the student should be dismissed from the program or continue on probation. Students whose performance results in a GPA so far below 3.0 to make it mathematically impossible to attain an overall GPA of 3.0 after one semester may be subject to dismissal without a probationary term.

Students may remain on probation for two semesters before dismissal. The Dean of the Graduate School or their designee may at their discretion grant additional probationary semesters for students who demonstrate significant academic improvement. A student will be removed from probationary status upon attaining a cumulative 3.0 grade point average.

If a student has an "I" grade at the end of a term, the decision related to dismissal will not occur until the "I" is converted to a grade, unless it is mathematically impossible for the student to be in good standing when the "I" is converted. When an "I" grade converts to an "F" after one calendar year, the GPA is adjusted retroactively; consequently, a student may be subject to dismissal without a probationary term at the discretion of the Dean of the Graduate School.

### **Reinstatement, Leave / Withdrawal**

A student dismissed for failing to meet academic and/or program requirements, provisions of admissions, or for exceeding the number of probationary semesters may be eligible for reinstatement. A student who is dismissed for any other reason is not eligible for reinstatement. To request reinstatement, the student must submit the [Request for Reinstatement Following Dismissal Form](#). Reinstatement requests will follow the policy and procedures outlined in the Graduate School's Retention Standards policy, linked above.

Students dismissed from the program due to failure to meet academic requirements may be given one opportunity to be readmitted to the cohort behind them. Should students be granted readmission, they must audit all courses previously passed and successfully pass all written and practical exams in the audited courses.

Students afforded the opportunity to re-enter the program may be required to register for and successfully complete those courses in which they earned a "C" or lower.

A student who experiences circumstances leading to the need for a temporary leave from the program should complete the Graduate School's Leave of Absence form and review the Graduate School's [Graduate Student Leave of Absence Policy](#).

Information on withdrawal from a course and/or from a term can be found [here](#) in the Graduate School Catalog.

### **Support and Advisement / Role of Student Success Coordinator**

The Student Success Coordinator (SSC) serves as a resource to support the success of DPT students. The SSC collaborates with faculty, staff, and students to promote early identification of barriers to success and facilitate timely interventions.

#### ***Roles and Responsibilities of the SSC***

##### **Academic support**

- Meet with students individually to identify challenges in academic performance, study strategies, time management, or test-taking.
- Connect students with available academic support resources (e.g., tutoring, writing center, library services, study groups).

##### **Professional development**

- Coach students on professionalism, communication, and expectations in the DPT program.
- Personal/wellness support
- Provide guidance on balancing coursework, clinical preparation, and personal wellness.
- Serve as a point of contact for students navigating stress, burnout, or personal challenges.
- Recommend counseling, Disability Services or other resources when appropriate

##### **Collaboration and communication**

- Maintain open communication with faculty and/or administration regarding student progress while preserving confidentiality when appropriate.

#### ***Roles and Responsibilities of the Student Referred to the SSC***

##### **Engagement**

- Attend scheduled meetings with the SSC
- Be open and honest in discussing challenges, goals, and barriers.

##### **Follow-through**

- Collaborate with the SSC to develop an individualized plan for success.
- Take responsibility for implementing agreed-upon strategies and utilizing recommended resources.

## Accountability

- Provide updates on progress and challenges as agreed upon.
- Recognize that the SSC is a supportive role, but the ultimate responsibility for success remains with the student.

## *Criteria for Referral of Students to the SSC*

### Academic

- Once a student has failed two items (e.g., exams, practicals) in a single semester, the student is required to reach out to the SSC within five academic days to schedule a meeting.
  - The two failed items do not have to occur in the same class; they may occur in concurrent classes in the same semester.
  - Failure of the student to schedule a meeting with the SSC within five academic days may result in a referral to the Promotion and Retention Committee for breach of professional conduct.

### Self-referral

- Students may schedule a meeting with the SSC at any point in time to discuss academic, professional, personal, and/or wellness concerns as listed underneath the section “Roles and Responsibilities of the SSC.”

### Faculty referral

- Faculty may refer a student to the SSC at any point in time for academic, professional, personal, and/or wellness concerns as listed underneath the section “Roles and Responsibilities of the SSC.”

## *Frequency and Duration*

Students referred to the SSC will meet according to the following guidelines:

- Academic concerns or faculty referral
- The SSC will establish the frequency of meetings. Engagement will continue for at least the remainder of the current semester, with possible continuation at the discretion of the SSC.

### Self-referral

- The student and SSC will collaboratively determine the frequency and duration of meetings, based on the student’s individual needs.

## *Confidentiality*

All discussions between the student and SSC will remain confidential except when:

- Information must be shared with faculty or administration to address academic or professional concerns.
- Safety concerns require disclosure in accordance with university policies.



### **Promotion and Retention Committee**

The Promotion and Retention Committee is responsible for reviewing overall performance of each physical therapy student on a continual basis while in the program.

#### ***Composition***

The Committee members shall include three core DPT faculty members, one being the committee chair, all assigned by the Program Director. The Committee Chair can invite others to meetings that may include but is not limited to the Program Director, Department Chair, clinical instructor, adjunct faculty, and/or student representative, when deemed necessary. Invited guests are non-voting individuals.

#### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

- The Committee will meet and review the progress of all students throughout their time in the DPT program and at a minimum, at the end of each semester. Each student will be considered individually with an emphasis on quality of performance. The Committee prioritizes the review of those students with deficiencies including, but not limited to:
  - A failing grade in a course;
  - A grade of “Incomplete” in a course (may exclude PHYT 7633 and PHYT 7734 for on-going capstone projects);
  - Less than satisfactory performance in didactic, clinical, or professional conduct;
  - Ability to perform safely within clinical education;
  - A cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale);
  - Being accused or suspected of academic misconduct.
- Committee Chair is responsible for preparing meeting agendas, notifying any involved student(s) at least 3 business days before the meeting, providing student(s) with written notification of Committee action(s), discussing pertinent Committee action(s) with the student(s) to whom the actions apply, and maintaining meeting minutes.
- Committee Actions
  - Actions of the Committee include but are not limited to:
    - Recommend student promotion to the next semester;
    - Placement on probation (related to academics, clinicals, safety, or professional conduct)
    - Remediation or action plan for student to follow
    - Dismissal from the Program; or
    - Graduation from the Program
  - All actions of the Committee will require a simple majority vote.
  - All Committee actions are recommendations to the Program Director. Final decisions regarding student performance and programmatic actions are made at the discretion of the Program Director, in consultation with the Department Chair and Graduate School Dean.

- All deliberations of the Committee are strictly confidential, and therefore, the meetings are closed to all, but the Committee, invited guests, and those called before the Committee, unless formally approved by the Committee.

### **Progression to Clinical Education / Internships**

Clinical Education constitutes a major component of the Physical Therapy Program curriculum. During Clinical Education, students come to appreciate their role and responsibilities as physical therapists, as well as evaluate their readiness for physical therapy practice after graduation.

During clinical education, the theoretical and practical components of the curriculum are applied to authentic clinical situations. The clinical environment also provides real world experiences as a context for learning new skills and for practicing previously learned skills.

Refer to the Clinical Education Handbook for Clinical Education Policies. Questions regarding Clinical Education Policies can be directed to the faculty member who serves as the Director of Clinical Education. The handbook may be found at:

<https://www.etsu.edu/crhs/physther/clinicaleducationhandbook.php>

### **Culminating Experience**

In accordance with the ETSU Graduate School and to ensure that graduates are knowledgeable, competent, and safe, each DPT student shall complete a culminating experience that includes a comprehensive examination and a capstone experience. Students must fulfill the requirements of both the comprehensive examination and the capstone experience to graduate with the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree. Failure to complete either of these requirements will result in dismissal from the program.

The comprehensive examination is a multiple-choice exam that assesses comprehension of didactic material, in preparation for the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE). The comprehensive exam date is set by the DPT faculty to align with the University and program schedule. The exam is graded as pass/fail, with the passing score and need for remediation determined annually by the DPT faculty and based on the examination tool utilized. The student's performance on the comprehensive examination is classified into 1) pass; 2) fail with an opportunity for remediation through a structured remediation plan; or 3) fail the examination without an opportunity for remediation. If a student does not pass the examination, the Promotion and Retention Committee will meet with the student to develop a required remediation plan. The remediation plan is written by the student and includes a detailed study timeline of content areas, as well as study strategies. The student is expected to meet with their advisor and/or the Student Success Coordinator regularly regarding progress toward the study plan. Additional practice exams will be highly encouraged but may not be required.

### **ExamSoft Procedures**

#### **What Is ExamSoft?**

ExamSoft is a secure testing solution that is used for high stakes exams. This software enables secure testing on student computers by blocking access to programs, files, and Internet usage

during the test. ExamSoft is not dependent on an internet connection while testing, which allows it to be used almost anywhere a laptop can be used. The client (vendor) used for testing students is Examplify.

### Laptop Requirements

Students are required to have a computer or tablet that is compliant with ExamSoft (Examplify). In general, students can expect to need access to and ongoing use of a near state-of-the-art laptop computer or tablet while enrolled in the DPT Program at ETSU. The choice of platform, Apple or PC and the brand of the laptop or tablet is up to the student. Students will need to update Examplify, so up-to-date software is available.

Information on the technical requirements will be provided to students upon entry into the DPT Program from the Graduate Coordinator or from the departmental ExamSoft administrator.

Updates to these details can be found on the ExamSoft website.

### Downloading the Software

Each student must have a personal laptop computer or other appropriate web enabled device (tablet) that meets the recommended guidelines from ExamSoft. Students will be provided instructions for downloading the software to their laptops prior to the first exam administration.

### Downloading Exams

Students will download the exam to their device before coming to the facilities to take the exam or prior to the scheduled start time of the exam in case of a virtual exam offering. The exam is password protected. The password will be provided at the beginning of the exam.

### Assistance During Testing Sessions

Technical assistance during the exam will be coordinated by the program's ExamSoft administrator. This may be in person or by phone. There will be paper copies of all exams available for students with technical difficulties that cannot be resolved within a reasonable time during exam administration.

### Exam Protocol for In-Person Exams:

#### Exam-Day Procedures

Students must bring to the exam:

- Laptop or another device with Examplify downloaded onto the device.
- Laptop/tablet power cord if needed
- Pencil or pen to use on the scratch / exam comments paper. The scratch / exam comments paper will be provided.

On the day of the exam, it is important to follow key procedures to ensure your test remains secure.

1. Students must leave their personal effects outside the classroom or in the back of the room. This applies to any electronic device that will not be used in exam administration, including phones, watches, other laptops, or tablets. This also applies to non-religious head coverings (hats) and beverage containers (water bottles, coffee cups, etc.). Calculators may be allowed at the discretion of the course instructor.
2. The proctor or course instructor will be available several minutes before the start of each testing session.
3. Blank/scratch paper will be available prior to the start of the examination. These forms must be turned in after the students have completed their examination review and will be submitted to the course director for analysis. The forms will have names of the student who was using them.
4. Students will be given the password to the exam by the proctor. No talking or other communication is allowed once a testing session begins. Devices that make noise must be silenced or left outside the room.
5. Each exam session has a prearranged duration. A computerized warning is given when 5 minutes remain.
6. Once an exam session begins, the exam room should be quiet. No talking or asking questions is allowed. This includes clarification or interpretation of exam questions. Students should note questions about the examination or errors in test questions on the scratch paper provided and turn this in after completing the exam. The proctor has the discretion to provide critical information to the class when necessary to ensure smooth exam administration.
7. In the event of a malfunction on an exam-taker's computer that cannot be resolved quickly, a paper copy of the exam will be made available to the student.
8. Before each student can leave the testing area, the proctor will verify that the student's answer file has been uploaded by having the exam takers show their green confirmation window on their laptop.
9. Students **MUST** turn in their scratch paper with their names included before leaving the examination.

Students are NOT allowed to reenter the testing room once they leave. This means students are generally not allowed to visit the bathroom and return to an exam session in progress, and students will not be allowed reentry to access the rooms' kitchenettes. The proctor has the discretion to allow reentry on a case-by-case basis for personal emergencies or illness, but this should be a rare occurrence. If a student does leave prematurely, they should close their laptop or tablet.

#### Late Arrivals

Under normal circumstances, there is NO provision to give extra time to students who arrive late. If the exam has started and is past the first 10 minutes, entry will not be permitted. Extensions or alternate testing times are possible for special situations; contact the course coordinator.

Exam Protocol for Remotely Delivered Exams:

The procedures below are intended to assist the faculty in enforcing the integrity and fairness of exam administration during this period of remote instruction and examination. The academic honor code noted in your student handbook applies to all testing environments during your physical therapy education. Purposeful attempts to access material or other means of academic misconduct will be punished. The Zoom Sessions will be recorded during all tests.

The examination process will involve both the device for taking your exam (using ExamSoft/Examplify) and a second device, most commonly a phone. The second device will log into zoom with video enabled to show your actions during exam administration.

1. Enter the zoom session 5-10 minutes prior to the exam start time so that you can start your “check-in process” prior to the exam. Please download the zoom app as needed to access your phone or other second device.
2. Make sure to have your “secondary” device set up with zoom for the proctor to view you. Students may NOT use a virtual background setting on their Zoom video during testing. The proctor must be able to view your environment. Please have your camera positioned so that the proctor can see your face and body. The proctor may ask you to modify your environment (turn on lights, etc.) if they are not able to see you appropriately. Please position yourself in a room with adequate light but minimize backlight (not in front of a window or camera picking up the ceiling light).
3. The zoom session will be set up to start 10 minutes before the exam is to start and until 15-30 minutes after the end time of the exam to be on the safe side. Make sure to be in the room by yourself. Warn everyone else in your home/apartment that you are taking an exam and to not enter the room.
4. If there are multiple people in your current residence using the internet and you know you have bandwidth/connectivity issues, we recommend that you ask them to refrain from use of their devices (if at all possible) during the time you are taking your exam to avoid you being disconnected from the exam or the zoom session.
5. Check-in Process to start the exam once you get into the Zoom session:
  - a. Set up your zoom session device as noted above
  - b. Open the chat function on Zoom
  - c. Clear your desk. You are permitted 1 piece of paper, a pen, and a drink.
  - d. Remove any smart watch.

- e. If you are going to use a piece of paper and pen during the exam, hold the paper up and show the proctor both sides of the paper. The proctor will verbally indicate they have seen your paper.
  - f. If you will not be using a piece of paper, please let the faculty member know.
  - g. Your Zoom Setting should NOT be “mute”. If there are significant background noises from your device, your proctor may ask you to mute your microphone.
  - h. The proctor will give you the password to start the exam.
6. During the exam:
- a. Please do not access your Zoom device during your exam except for asking a question to the proctor via chat, or to notify the proctor that you are finished with your exam.
  - b. Avoid looking away from your computer screen or around the room while taking the exam.
  - c. If you have a question, you may access your zoom device and open the chat function to ask the proctor a question. Once the question has been answered, replace the Zoom device to its original position.
  - d. If your session becomes disconnected from the Zoom session or frozen, please rejoin the session. We understand that your focus should not be on Zoom cameras, rather on focusing on the exam itself. The proctor will be monitoring this and may contact you to notify you to rejoin.
7. Upon Completion of the exam:
- a. Use the chat feature to indicate you are done with the exam. Then show them your screen indicating that you have submitted the exam.
  - b. At that time, close your computer, and if you used a paper during the exam, show the proctor the front and back of the paper and then tear the paper up in front of the zoom device. Make sure your zoom session is on mute while doing this.
  - c. The proctor will excuse you from the Zoom session once they see that your exam has been submitted.

### Make-up Exams

Students unable to attend class on the exam day for reasons consistent with an excused absence, approved by the course instructor, must not download the exam file before the scheduled exam date. Students must schedule an exam make-up date with the course instructor in advance of the exam date. Course faculty will re-release the exam to the student on the day of the make-up for download and testing. Students who download the exam file before the exam day and then do not attend it due to illness or emergency must not attempt to access it. Students must contact the

faculty to schedule a make-up examination. Course faculty will release the exam to the student on the day of the make-up for download and testing.

### Testing Considerations

- **Hallway / Background noise:** At times, students will congregate in the hallway outside the testing area. Those waiting outside the testing area should refrain from loud conversation and other disruptive behavior. Be courteous to those who may be taking exams.
- **Disruptions:** From time to time, a testing session is disrupted by unforeseen events such as fire alarms and power failures. When this occurs, students are to turn off their laptops. This stops the clock and locks their testing station until the exam can be resumed. The proctor or course instructor will provide the students with a resume code to restart the exam.
- **Post-exam review:** Following exam completion, students will not have access to exam scores until the course instructor has reviewed the exam. Exam scores will be released in ExamSoft or D2L depending on the course. Review of exams will be by appointment with the course instructor.

### Use of Artificial Intelligence

The DPT Program follows the ETSU policy, [Use of Artificial Intelligence Technologies for Instructional and Assignment Purposes Policy](#). The four Core Principles for use of generative AI are found [here](#). Failure to comply with ETSU's policy or course-specific guidelines may be considered academic misconduct.

General procedures to follow when engaging in generative AI use include:

- Follow Course Guidelines:* Clearly review and adhere to the instructor's specified parameters regarding AI use, as stated in the syllabus or assignment instructions. (Core Principle 1)
- Cite Generative AI:* Whenever generative AI contributes substantially to assignment completion, clearly cite its use according to the instructor-specified format or standard citation practices provided by style guides. (Core Principle 1)
- Ensure Academic Integrity:* Avoid submitting fully AI-generated content as original work unless explicitly permitted by the instructor. Submitting such work without clear permission constitutes academic misconduct. (Core Principles 1, 3)
- Research Compliance:* When involved in research activities, students must obtain IRB approval and explicit consent for any human-subject data processed using AI. Data must always be anonymized before system upload or analysis activities. (Core Principle 2)
- Stay Informed:* Regularly review available university resources to remain current on best practices for responsible AI use. (Core Principle 4)

### Academic Misconduct

Cheating is broadly defined as using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or aids in any academic exercise or test/examination. The use of ANY electronic devices beyond those required for the examination during an exam will be considered cheating.

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Students guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly, through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. In addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed through the University's academic misconduct policy as a result of academic misconduct, the instructor has the authority to assign an "F" or a zero ("0") for the exercise or examination, or to assign an "F" in the course, or to refer the student to the Program Director. The University's Academic Misconduct Procedures are included here in full. The program will follow the University's procedures, should incidents of misconduct be committed.

### Academic Integrity and Misconduct Procedures

The DPT Program follows the University's [Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy](#) when possible academic misconduct has occurred. The policy outlines the rights and responsibilities of the student, the instructor, the Dean/Designee, and other members of the campus community in matters of academic integrity and misconduct. It also includes definitions, procedures for reporting, formal hearing, and appeals, among other pertinent information.

### Sitting for the NPTE Prior to Graduation (Early Testing)

The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) administers the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE) and sets eligibility requirements. To take the NPTE, candidates must provide proof of receiving a degree appropriate for the exam level from a CAPTE-accredited institution. Schools are responsible for validating their students' graduation status.

FSBPT allows candidates to take the NPTE up to 90 days before their validated graduation date, if the school confirms eligibility.

Currently, ETSU DPT students register for and take the NPTE after graduation. Students who wish to test up to 90 days early must meet these criteria:

#### Professional Requirements

- Submit an email request to the Program Director by the deadline set during the 7th semester.
  - Subject line: "Request to take NPTE early."
- Have no active academic or behavioral probation as determined by the Promotion and Retention Committee.
- Be in good standing in clinical education, with no unresolved concerns from Clinical Instructors or the Director of Clinical Education.



### Decision Timeline

- Students will receive a decision at least 60 days before the requested test date.
- Students are responsible for checking jurisdictional requirements, which may be stricter.

### Exceptions

If unforeseen circumstances prevent meeting these requirements, the Program Director, in consultation with faculty, may approve early testing.

## Professional Policies and Procedures

### Standards of Professional Conduct

Students, as citizens, will conduct themselves as law-abiding members of the community. Students are expected to abide by all federal, state, and local government laws. Students are expected to abide by the rules and regulations developed by ETSU to govern student conduct while attending academic assignments in any location. Additionally, students will be expected to adhere to the [APTA Code of Ethics](#), [APTA Guide for Professional Conduct](#), [Core Values for the Physical Therapist](#) and the [State Practice Acts](#) of the state in which the assignment or activity is held. Violation of any of the cited documents during school sponsored assignments, clinical experiences, or activities could be cause for removal from the assignment/experience and possible dismissal from the Physical Therapy Program. If the student feels they have been put in an ethically compromising situation, they should immediately discuss this with the appropriate faculty member overseeing the educational activity, or the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) if it occurs during clinical experiences, as soon as possible. Unprofessional conduct by a student not covered by federal, state, or local laws, or the professional codes of ethics cited above, and not covered in the student handbook will be reviewed by the Student Promotion and Retention Committee.

Students are expected to behave in a professional manner which is intended to promote ethical and professional behavior associated with the profession of physical therapy. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner because they represent themselves, the Physical Therapy Program, College of Health Sciences, the University, and the profession of physical therapy. Professional conduct covers student behavior, appearance, and professionalism while in the classroom, clinical internships/practicums, and within the community. Students who represent themselves in an unprofessional manner will be subject to disciplinary action from the Physical Therapy Program, independent of any actions taken by legal authorities or the University.

Professional behavior extends to all learning and research environments, service activities, and social activities sponsored or endorsed by the Physical Therapy Program, both on campus and off, as well as situations where it can be reasonably considered that a student is representing the

Physical Therapy Program, College of Health Sciences, or the University. This includes any public arena such as internet postings, whether on personal or private websites, social media, etc.

Physical therapy students should understand that, as future health care professionals, they are expected to conduct their personal and professional lives in a manner that shows respect for others and brings honor to themselves, the program, the College, the University, and the profession.

Examples of behavior that shall be consider violations of professional conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Purposely falsifying documents or otherwise furnishing false information;
- Consistently engaging in behavior that disrupts, obstructs, or otherwise interferes with the teaching and learning environment in the classroom or practice site;
- Consistently failing to adhere to appearance standards or other policies and regulations pertaining to enrollment, classroom, or physical therapy practice experience behavior;
- Making false accusations or providing false information about a member of
- the University faculty and staff, student, or other individuals who may be associated with the University;
- Committing or threatening violence or harm against a member of the University faculty and staff, student, or other individuals who may be associated with the University;
- Misusing or misrepresenting one's status as a physical therapy student, or engaging in any unauthorized practice of physical therapy;
- Unauthorized or inappropriate use of university property or resources, which includes the property and resources of preceptor sites;
- Stealing, damaging, or defacing University property, or the property of others, including faculty, staff, students, and citizens of the community;
- Use, possession or distribution of illegal drugs or substances, or improper use of prescription drugs not prescribed for the user;
- Accessing or revealing confidential information about faculty, staff, fellow students, or patients without proper authorization;
- Treating patients with disrespect;
- Violations of University policies and regulations pertaining to student conduct;
- Violations of local, state, and/or federal law.

## **Professional Behaviors**

The Physical Therapy Specific Behaviors serve as a guide in ongoing physical therapy student professional and personal development. Students develop and demonstrate these behaviors throughout their time at ETSU and continue developing professional conduct as a practicing clinician. Professional Behaviors, outlined by the American Physical Therapy Association and outlined below, are used as a reflective tool throughout the curriculum to facilitate and promote professional growth. In addition, students are expected to be well-prepared for lecture and labs, maintaining composure when discussing examination results, being seated and ready to proceed when class is scheduled to commence, remaining present and alert until class is dismissed, avoiding excessive conversation during class, etc.

<b>Professional Behavior</b>	<b>Definition</b>
1. Commitment to Learning	The ability to self-direct learning to include the identification of needs and sources of learning; and to continually seek and apply new knowledge, behaviors, and skills
2. Interpersonal Skills	The ability to interact effectively with patients, families, colleagues, other health care professionals, and the community in a culturally aware manner
3. Communication	The ability to communicate effectively (i.e., verbal, non-verbal, reading, writing, and listening) for varied audiences and purposes
4. Effective Use of Time and Resources	The ability to manage time and resources effectively to obtain the maximum possible benefit
5. Use of Constructive Feedback	The ability to seek out and identify quality sources of feedback, reflect on and integrate the feedback, and provide meaningful feedback to others
6. Problem -Solving	The ability to recognize and define problems, analyze data, develop and implement solutions, and evaluate outcomes
7. Professionalism	The ability to exhibit appropriate professional conduct and to represent the profession effectively while promoting the growth/development of the Physical Therapy profession
8. Responsibility	The ability to be accountable for the outcomes of personal and professional actions and to follow through on commitments that encompass the profession within the scope of work, community and social responsibilities
9. Critical Thinking	The ability to question logically; identify, generate and evaluate elements of logical argument; recognize and differentiate facts, appropriate or faulty inferences, and assumptions; and distinguish relevant from irrelevant information. The ability to appropriately utilize, analyze, and critically evaluate scientific evidence to develop a logical argument, and to identify and determine the impact of bias on the decision-making process

## 10. Stress Management

The ability to identify sources of stress and to develop and implement effective coping behaviors; this applies for interactions for: self, patient/clients and their families, members of the health care team and in work/life scenarios.

### Technical Standards / Essential Functions

Students must have the ability to perform, either unaided or with reasonable accommodation, the following essential functions for successful participation in the didactic component of the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program:

- Critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment;
- Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual background;
- Communication abilities sufficient for interaction with others in verbal and written form;
- Physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces;
- Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective physical therapy care;
- Auditory abilities sufficient to monitor and assess health needs;
- Visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in physical therapy care;
- Tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment and treatment;
- Physical ability to assist moving, transferring, and ambulating patients who have physical impairment or dysfunction

Students are advised that clinical education sites may not provide reasonable accommodations, as the clinical environment is an actual working environment.

### Classroom and Laboratory Participation

All students are required to participate in clinical course laboratories as the student physical therapist. Student participation as subjects in these laboratories is voluntary but should be considered as critical to learning and experiencing skills, as the faculty of the Physical Therapy Program deem student participation important to the future physical therapist's recognition of normal and abnormal patient sensations to physical therapy modalities and treatments. As a professional physical therapy student, it is the student's responsibility to inform the course instructor in a timely fashion prior to the laboratory in question as to any reason(s) that would preclude his/her participation as a subject in that laboratory.

Various classroom and laboratory skills have potential side effects and may not be appropriate for all students. Electrothermal modalities, psychomotor skills, exercise, and other activities may not be safe or appropriate for all students. Students are responsible for their own safety and should inform the course instructor of any conditions which limit participation in any laboratory or class activity.

## Dress Code

Student attire is a representation of the physical therapy profession, the DPT Program, and the University. Therefore, students are expected to wear appropriate attire while engaged in ETSU DPT Program activities, including offsite affiliated conferences and events.

Appropriate attire is defined as modest clothing that minimizes exposure and maintains a neat, professional appearance, except during skill laboratory, as explained below. Students should refrain from any attire that distracts or interferes with the learning environment. At all times, breasts, buttocks, naval, lower back, and upper thighs should be covered unless exposure is temporarily appropriate for the laboratory's content. Low waisted pants or other garments that may expose undergarments, naval region, lower back, or buttocks when bending or squatting are not acceptable. Clothing with offensive language or logos is not acceptable. Faculty members may offer guidance regarding appropriate attire to ensure alignment with professional standards and the Dress Code. Additionally, the course instructor may dismiss a student from the classroom, laboratory, or special event if the student is not following the Dress Code.

Initial violations of the Dress Code will result in a verbal warning. A second violation will be documented in writing and placed in the student's permanent file. Should a third violation occur at any time during the program, the matter will be referred to the Promotion and Retention Committee for review and consideration of placement on Professional Behavior Probation or recommendation for dismissal from the program.

**Classroom attire:** Students are expected to wear modest attire that minimizes the exposure of the body, thereby avoiding attire that is distracting or interferes with the learning environment. Appropriate classroom attire includes short and long-sleeved T-shirts, shorts, and long pants.

- Appropriate pants: athletic pants, jeans, leggings, dress pants, loose fitting athletic shorts
- Appropriate tops: t-shirts, blouses, polos, dress shirts, sweatshirts, sweaters

**Skill laboratory attire:** Students are expected to wear modest attire, as described above, that minimizes the exposure of the body unless exposure is for the purpose of learning a skill such as palpation, examination, treatment application, etc. In that instance, the course instructor will notify the students beforehand of the need for a particular body region to be accessible during the laboratory. For example, a sports bra, tank top, halter top, or swimsuit top are appropriate when the body region of interest is the shoulder. Once the skill practice is completed, the exposed body region should be re-covered with clothing or draped with a sheet.

At all times, the following should be avoided during skill laboratory to ensure safety and comfort of the patient/lab partner:

- Excessive jewelry
- Hair that is past the shoulders (should be pulled back in a tie)
- Fingernails longer than ¼ inch
- Strongly scented perfume/cologne/aftershave

- Body piercings that interfere with the expectations of the laboratory

**Clinical education experience attire:** For clinical experiences, additional dress code policies must be adhered to and are found in Chapter 1 of the [Clinical Education Handbook](#). The dress code policy for a given clinical site supersedes ETSU DPT's Dress Code.

**Special occasion attire:** Students are required to dress professionally on special occasions such as class presentations, hosting a guest speaker or live patients, off-site visits such as a hospital or clinic setting, professional conferences, and practical examinations. Students will be notified ahead of time of these occurrences.

### Professional Behavior Probation and Dismissal

Professional Behavior Probation: The Promotion and Retention Committee may recommend professional behavior probation for a set period (e.g., for the remainder of the term, multiple terms, or until graduation) or dismissal from the program for any student who fails to maintain professional behaviors. Please see professional behavior/conduct standards above.

The Committee will review and may recommend the dismissal of any student with deficiencies (academic performance, clinical performance, safety, and/or professional behavior). When assessing a student with deficiencies, the Committee will consider, but is not limited to, the following:

- the student's previous overall performance;
- the student's current circumstances;
- the student's performance in the course(s) or clinical internship in question;
- the student's potential for success in the program;
- consultation with relevant University and/or clinical personnel (HIPAA compliance officer, state board of licensing, Clinical Instructor, ETSU Graduate School, Tennessee Physical Therapy Association).

The Promotion and Retention Committee will recommend action to the Program Director following review, should action be required. Decisions regarding student performance and programmatic action are at the discretion of the Program Director, in consultation with the Chair and Graduate School Dean.

### Timeline / Maximum Time to Completion

Students who elect to leave the program due to personal or family circumstances may be eligible for consideration of readmission. Should a student opt to remove him or herself from the program, the student should meet with the Program Director to discuss future opportunities for readmission. The program may require the student to apply for readmission, and to compete for admission in the normal selection process. If a student is readmitted, he/she must demonstrate competence in all skills learned prior to leaving the program and may be required to audit or retake courses previously completed.

## Schedules And Calendars

The ETSU DPT Program will start and end their semesters according to the University's academic calendar. Scheduling of individual class times may not correspond to the typical scheduling blocks implemented by the University. A master copy of the schedule of classes is available for student viewing through Outlook. Directions for access to this group calendar are made available for students as part of or prior to their incoming orientation. This calendar is updated for each semester as schedules for the following semester are finalized.

Classes will typically be scheduled between the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday. Occasional variances will occur in which classes or portions of classes will be required to be scheduled outside of this standard scheduling window. Alterations to the class schedule may also become necessary after the beginning of the semester. Students will be made aware of class changes or alterations in the schedule as soon as possible. Faculty are requested to give students a minimum of 24-hour notice if scheduling changes need to occur.

## Revisions To the Handbook

Following a revision to a student-related policy within the DPT Student Handbook, students will be notified at the start of the subsequent semester (when new policy is enforced), through their ETSU email. Students are required to sign an agreement addendum form stating they have read and understood the new policy.

## American Physical Therapy Association Membership

Students in the Physical Therapy Program are required to be members of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), and the Tennessee Chapter of the APTA throughout the three-year DPT curriculum. The benefits of membership will be explained on multiple occasions throughout the curriculum. Students can establish membership at the following website:

<https://www.apta.org/for-students>.

## University Policies

### Discrimination And Harassment Policy

East Tennessee State University seeks to provide students, staff and faculty members with a safe and secure learning environment, free of crime and or violations motivated by discrimination, sexual and other bias-related harassment. The Physical Therapy Program adheres to ETSU's [Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#). The purpose of this policy specifies ETSU's procedures for reporting and addressing discrimination and harassment under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and sex-based discrimination and harassment under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Reports of discrimination, harassment, and/or sexual misconduct may be filed with [ETSU'S Office of University Compliance](#), which is further outlined in the [Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#). Reports can be made anonymously.

All students are required to complete the annual ETSU Discrimination and Harassment training.

### **Substance Abuse / Drug Free Campus**

The Physical Therapy Program aligns with ETSU's Policy Statement on Drug Free Campus as stated here: It is the policy of this University that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, use of alcohol and illicit drugs on the ETSU campuses, in the workplace (on or off campus), on property owned or controlled by ETSU, or as part of any activity of ETSU is strictly prohibited. All employees and students are subject to applicable federal, state and local laws related to this matter, Additionally, any violation of this policy will result in programmatic disciplinary action.

## **Program Costs & Financial Resources**

### **Tuition and Fees**

Tuition and fees are established by the ETSU Board of Trustees and are subject to change without notice. Current costs per credit hour as well as the deadlines for fee payments can be found at the following website: <https://www.etsu.edu/bf/bursar/tuitioninfo/calendar.php>. Summer maintenance and out-of-state tuition and fees are assessed on a per credit hour basis with no set maximum. All students planning to attend classes at ETSU must pay fees or confirm registration by the Fee Payment Due Date for the term. Registration is considered confirmed once fees are paid, or a payment plan is established. Payment plans require a 25% initial payment with the remaining balance due in three equal payments.

The College of Graduate and Continuing Studies has established a tuition and fee estimator to assist students with calculating an estimated expense for each semester. When using this tool, students enter their residency and total credit hours being taken to estimate tuition. Additional course specific fees are estimated by the student indicating which courses they are registered for. Expenses for on-campus housing and a meal plan can be included. Financial aid and scholarships are assessed and credited to give the student an estimated total balance due for the semester. This tool can be accessed by the following link: <https://www.etsu.edu/gradschool/funding/paying.php>.

### **Clinical Education Expenses**

Students are responsible for providing their own transportation to all clinical experiences, as well as their own living expenses during those experiences. It is the responsibility of the student to secure housing when assigned for a rotation outside of the area. Information on possible stipends and the possibility of assistance with housing arrangements can be found on Exxat. Additional anticipated student expenditures, including those for drug screenings, flu shots, TB testing, CPR certification, and liability insurance, are listed in the Clinical Education Handbook, which can be found on the program web page.

### **Other Program Costs**

A health profession fee of \$110 per credit hour is added to the base tuition (maintenance fee) for students in the Physical Therapy Program. This fee is assessed for each credit hour taken



throughout the 8 semesters of the program. A personal computer is required for student use in class and for taking exams. Students are also required to carry personal health insurance while in the program; a student policy is not offered by ETSU.

### **Financial Aid Resources**

A variety of financial aid options are available through ETSU as well as Program specific scholarships. The Program offers a limited number of Tuition Scholarships and ½ Graduate Assistant Scholarships for each incoming cohort of students. These scholarships are available throughout the initial 2 years of the curriculum. These scholarships are awarded to incoming students in the fall semester prior to beginning the Program. Additional Tuition Scholarships and Graduate Assistantship positions are available throughout the University. Students may apply for these scholarship options through other departments/Programs at any time for which they are eligible during the Program. Additional information regarding Tuition Scholarships and Graduate Assistantships as well as a listing of open positions can be accessed on the College of Graduate and Continuing Studies website by the following link: <https://www.etsu.edu/gradschool/funding/gats.php>.

Government sources of loans and grants are available for students to assist with payment of tuition, fees and living expenses while in graduate school. Students are encouraged to set up an appointment with a financial aid counselor through the ETSU Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships for discussion of options. Students may also choose to take out a personal loan through a local bank or credit union to assist with expenses.

The program currently has four program-specific scholarships available for students. These include the PT Pros/Hauser Family Scholarship, William M. “Mac” Hensley Scholarship, the Paul E. and Nancy Stanton Family Scholarship. and the Dr. Duane Williams PT Founders Scholarship. Applications for these scholarships are open to students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of their program. Additional information regarding these scholarship opportunities can be found under the scholarships tab on the PT website. Information about applying for these scholarships is provided to students once they are eligible.

To help defray the expense of out-of-state tuition, ETSU offers the George L. Carter Scholarship for students who reside within a 250-mile radius of ETSU or the Sidney G. Gilbreath Scholarship for students who reside beyond the 250-mile radius of ETSU. These scholarships are available to all incoming graduate students and are renewable for the duration of the program of study. These scholarships cannot be combined with a Graduate Assistantship or Tuition Scholarship. Additional information regarding these scholarship options for out-of-state students, as well as other scholarship opportunities for current graduate students, can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.etsu.edu/gradschool/funding/scholarships.php>.

## Student Services and Miscellaneous Practices

### Student health clinic

The [University Health Center](#) offers ETSU students a variety of services, including physicals, preventative health exams, medication management, acute care/sick visits, behavioral health, TB testing, lab work, minor procedures and specialist referrals. Students paying a Health Service Fee as part of their tuition are able to be seen at the University Health Center without an office visit charge. Appointments are available Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 4:30 pm, except on University Holidays. To schedule an appointment, call 423-439-4225.

### Counseling services

The Counseling Center offers a variety of counseling services for students attending ETSU and can be found on their [website](#), by calling 423-439-3333 or emailing [counselingcenter@etsu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter@etsu.edu).

BUCS Press 2 is a 24-hour mental health help line for ETSU Students. It provides FREE, confidential crisis counseling over the phone. It is staffed 24/7/365 by counseling professionals under contract with The Counseling Center. To access dial 423-439-4841, then press 2.

### Graduate Student Success Specialists

[Graduate Student Success Specialists](#) (GSS) are trained graduate students who provide free, confidential assistance to other graduate students. The GSS can help with (1) setting realistic personal and academic goals, (2) addressing obstacles you may in day-to-day living, (3) resolving problems and providing support; and (4) connecting you with campus and community resources that fill a need. The GSS office is located in Sherrod Library on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, and virtual appointments are also available.

### Center for physical activity

The Wayne G. Basler Center for Physical Activity (CPA) offers diverse facilities to ETSU students, faculty, and staff. Learn more about the CPA by visiting the [website](#) or in-person at 1244 Jack Vest Drive.

### Disability Services

It is the policy of ETSU to accommodate students with disabilities, pursuant to federal law, state law, and the University's commitment to equal educational access. Disability Services coordinates accommodations and services designed to provide access for students with disabilities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example arrangement for examinations or seating placement, should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course and contact Disability Services [here](#) or visit the office in the D.P. Culp Center, Suite 390, telephone 423-439-8346.

### Campus safety

THE EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER IS 439-4480 or 98-911

The Public Safety Building is at the entrance of ETSU on University Parkway and has personnel on duty 24 hours a day for assistance and is open 365 days (about 12 months) per year. A 24-hour dispatch service is also maintained. Public safety is a full-service police department encompassing

traffic and parking enforcement, uniformed patrol, criminal investigations, and crime prevention education.

Public Safety also provides these services: an escort service, engravers, and booster cables. A traffic and parking regulation brochure has been prepared to inform and to protect all who use the campus roadways and parking areas. It is available in the Public Safety Building or at window #10 on the second floor of Burgin E. Dossett Hall.

Police emergencies, fire emergencies, and requests for ambulance service can be reported by telephoning 439-4480 or 911, or by using the direct emergency telephones placed across campus or in person by stopping by the public safety office. Police non-emergencies can be reported by telephoning 439-6900.

### **ETSU Alert system**

The ETSU Alert warning system is intended to alert the campus community to emergencies that could affect the health and safety of personnel on the ETSU and VA campuses. This system consists of strategically placed sirens that warn the university community in an emergency. When the warning system is activated, a brief siren/tone will be transmitted, followed by voice instructions, and then a longer siren/tone.

A mass notification system is used to provide email, text messages, and push notifications via the ETSU Safety App to members of the campus community. To get the emergency text messages, you must text ETSU to 237233 to enroll. If you only have the ETSU Safe App, you can receive push notifications when an emergency message is sent if you allow them in your phone settings. Email updates are sent to all student, faculty, and staff accounts, and notifications are sent to all campus desktops. More information can be found at [ETSU Safe App and Emergency Alerts website](#). Fire alarms will be activated to alert occupants of a fire or other emergency in the building. Everyone must evacuate the building when the fire alarm sounds. If being evacuated from Building 2, the standard meeting site for the DPT Program is the gazebo on the VA campus.

### **Inclement weather**

East Tennessee State University and its branch campuses will remain open during periods of inclement weather even though classes may be cancelled. Students are responsible for any academic work they miss due to inclement weather. It is the individual student's responsibility to take the initiative in making up any missed work, and it is the faculty's responsibility to provide students with a reasonable opportunity to make up missed work.

The ETSU Alert Page and WETS-FM (89.5 FM) will announce the official university cancellation or closure information.

### **Parking and transportation**

Parking on campus requires a permit available at the Parking Services office (132 Stout Drive) during regular business hours. Weekday enforcement times for designated faculty/staff and student parking spaces are 7:30 am – 4:30 pm. After 4:30 pm, during weekends and administrative

holidays (when administrative offices are closed), students and employees may park in any designated Faculty/Staff or Student parking space. Meters are free after 4:30 pm. All other parking and traffic regulations are monitored and enforced 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For additional information, consult the [ETSU Parking Services Office](#).

### **Bucky's food pantry**

Bucky's Food Pantry is at 325 Treasure Lane next to the Office of Sustainability in the Central Receiving Warehouse. This resource offers a variety of food and supplies for students, staff, alumni, retirees, and faculty who may be food insecure. If you need supplemental food to get you through the week, then fill out a form and email it to the [foodpantry@etsu.edu](mailto:foodpantry@etsu.edu) or bring it to the food pantry when it is open. Our volunteers will respond to your request and ensure you receive a package of food within 24 hours. Clients may use the food pantry twice in one month, but after that we will refer you to one of our agency partners in case you need further assistance that we are not qualified to handle. Hours of operation vary by semester. Please consult the [Bucky's Food Pantry](#) website for current hours of operation and more information.

### **Student Travel**

Students are encouraged to attend continuing education opportunities sponsored by the APTA or TPTA, when schedules and finances will allow. The program will provide financial assistance at a maximum of \$400 for registration or expenses related to an APTA sponsored continuing education event for each student in the program. These funds can be requested by a student only once during their time in the program and are contingent on available funds. Associated paperwork, including application and request for travel forms, and registration materials, must be submitted to the Executive Assistant at least four weeks before the event. Receipts and proof of course completion must be submitted at the conference's end.

Financial assistance for TPTA sponsored local or state events and conferences may also be available, as the budget allows. Students must submit appropriate paperwork and documentation prior to and after the conference to receive these funds.

### **Student Records**

Student records related to admissions, progression through the program, and graduation requirements are kept electronically kept by the Graduate Coordinator while students are actively registered in the program. Records related to clinical education will be housed with the Director of Clinical Education and are primarily secured through the Exxat Program. Students will retain access to their medical records, background checks, and additional information stored through Exxat after completion of the DPT Program.

### **Student Events**

The ETSU DPT Program sponsors two celebration events of student progress through the curriculum. The White Coat ceremony is a celebration of the progression of students into the full-time clinical education portion of the curriculum. The White Coat ceremony is scheduled for the beginning of the fall semester of the second year of the program.

Following successful completion of the entire DPT curriculum, including presentation of their capstone projects, students will participate in a ceremony the week prior to graduation. During this ceremony, students will be hooded in recognition of their completion of the program and transfer to the status of professional colleagues. Additional student awards and recognitions are presented at this ceremony.

Any student led events in which the ETSU DPT Program is advertised or represented will require prior approval of the program. These events may be used to promote community awareness, aid with community events, or as fund-raising projects for the program and its students.

### **ETSU Photo and Video Consent**

Photos taken of ETSU DPT students while in the program may be used for identification purposes, for advertisements and on social media postings. Students are asked to acknowledge consent to have these photographs used by the program for these purposes. If any student does NOT consent to use, a written opt-out request must be submitted to the Program Director in writing. Students will indicate by signature that they grant East Tennessee State University and the DPT Program the absolute right and unrestricted permission to take, use and/or publish audio remarks and photographic images, whether still, single, multiple, or moving, while they are a student enrolled in the program. Students waive the right to royalties or other compensation arising from or related to the use of the image or produce and will hold harmless ETSU, its Board of Trustees, officers, employees, faculty, agents, nominees, department, and/or others from any liability by virtue of taking the pictures or products.

Photographs of patients, community members or other volunteers working with students or as part of their academic training may require those participants to sign a consent form as well.

Photographs of patients in a clinical setting are prohibited from being published on personal websites or social media sites and are considered a HIPAA violation – see the Clinical Education handbook for additional guidelines.

### **Social Media**

Students are prohibited from posting defamatory information regarding ETSU or the DPT Program on their personal social media sites. Use of social media to vent regarding ETSU or the DPT Program is considered a violation of professional conduct and may result in disciplinary action from the program.

Use of social media by the ETSU DPT Program must be approved through University Relations. The program currently utilizes a Facebook page and Instagram account to keep followers informed about events and activities occurring in the program and to acknowledge awards and achievements of the program, its students and faculty.

### **Use Of ETSU Name/Logo**

Any external (commercial) or internal (promotional merchandise and apparel) use of ETSU's name or trademarks requires advanced permission from the University via a contract or trademark license agreement. Once approved, the business or person requesting permission becomes a "licensee" and the individual products become "licensed products". Prior to the production of any

merchandise containing ETSU marks, licensees must submit to the ETSU Director of Trademarks and Licensing for approval through Brand Manager 360. Artwork approval is required for each new design and reorder, regardless of who orders it. This includes merchandise ordered by all University departments and student groups/organizations, in addition to commercial use.

### **Class Officers**

Each cohort of the ETSU DPT Program elects class officers during the second semester to provide leadership for the cohort and to facilitate efficient and effective communication between the faculty and students. These officers may include the following positions:

- President – Coordinates with the Program Director and Executive Aide to lead and organize class activities and events.
- Vice President – Assists the President with leadership activities, as needed or designated.
- Faculty Liaison – Provides primary means of communication between the faculty and students.
- Secretary – Maintains written documentation of class events and meetings. Assists with registration and organization of fund-raising events and class activities.
- Treasurer – Primary person with fiscal responsibility for the cohort. Works with the Executive Aide to make deposits to and/or withdrawals from appropriate accounts.
- APTA Liaison – Communicates with the class regarding APTA meetings and activities. Coordinates with the Executive Aide, as needed, for registrations.
- TPTA Liaison - Communicates with the class regarding TPTA meetings and activities. Coordinates with the Executive Aide, as needed, for registrations.
- Social Chair – Responsible for coordination of social activities for the cohort. Works with social chairs from other cohorts to schedule larger events as well.
- Intramural Chair – Coordinates with the CPA to register and schedule teams for various intramural sporting events.
- Historian – Primary record keeper for the class. Responsible for recording events and activities of the cohort. Develops and maintains a list of appropriate means of communication with students after graduation.

### **Classroom Facilities, Equipment & Supplies**

#### **Facilities and Equipment**

Students are encouraged to congregate in the student multipurpose area (Room 230), unused classrooms, IPE building cafeteria or patio. or on pleasant days at the back of building 2 on the VA campus. The building space is shared, and faculty may be in meetings or working so please be respectful of others in the building.

All equipment in the program is available for student study use, except for electrical equipment (see below). When not in use, please clean and return to the location from which equipment was taken. Program equipment is for use within the program only and is not to be removed. Only under exceptional circumstances, and with permission, may equipment leave the program's facilities. If equipment or items are needed for exceptional circumstances, notify the Program Executive

Assistant or your course instructor who oversees the course for which you require the equipment. Use of facilities and equipment is a privilege, and this privilege may be revoked if rooms are left in disarray, or equipment is not cared for.

Although ETSU DPT students have 24/7 swipe card access to Building 2 and the program environment, any electrical equipment used for specific DPT courses, such as modalities equipment, requires faculty supervision for student use. Students are not allowed to apply modalities to themselves, other students or outside individuals without the consent and supervision of an ETSU DPT faculty member. Violation of proper equipment usage and supervision may result in a student's dismissal from the program.

### **Care of & Proper Use of Facilities**

Students are required to keep the classroom, laboratories, and all other areas of student access clean and tidy. This includes replacing equipment, materials, books, and supplies in their proper storage or disposal area.

Students are expected to clean all equipment at the end of laboratory sessions regardless of who utilized the equipment previously. Plinths require particular care so as not to damage the vinyl. When using them, please do not wear shoes, set heavy or sharp items on them, or use them as writing tables. Students are required to clean the plinths with germicidal wipes at the end of the laboratory session prior to leaving the area.

Eating is not allowed in the classrooms or laboratories except for having drinks with lids as needed, and for special, planned group occasions (potluck meals, holiday meals). Students are to ensure that any area where food or drinks were consumed is cleared and cleaned prior to leaving the room. Waste bins have been provided for this purpose. Recycling containers for plastic bottles and aluminum cans are provided in the hallways.

### **Reporting Problems with Equipment or Facilities**

Please see Program Executive Assistant to report any issues with computers, equipment, or facilities.

### **Graduation and Licensure**

Licensure is ultimately at the discretion of the Tennessee State Board of Health-Related Professions. Consequently, students should contact the State Board for any questions or concerns related to licensure. While the program will ensure that students have met licensure requirements in terms of didactic and clinical preparation, the program is not responsible for decisions of the board related to past legal infractions or other limiting factors.

