

Loma Linda University  
School of Allied Health Professions  
Department of Physical Therapy

# Physical Therapist Assistant Program

## **Policy and Procedures Manual**

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## **I. Admissions**

Students are eligible for admission into the physical therapist assistant program based on satisfactory completion of the following:

- a. All prerequisite courses prior to the start of the program with the respective minimum GPAs:
  - (1) Overall pre-requisites at least 2.5 GPA
  - (2) Science pre-requisites at least 2.5 GPA
  - (3) Non-science pre-requisites at least 2.5 GPA
- b. Personal interview with one of the faculty
- c. Essay written at time of the interview
- d. Work or volunteer/observation experience in the physical therapy setting for a minimum of 80 hours, with at least 20 hours done in an inpatient setting and at least 20 hours done in an outpatient setting
- e. Three recommendations
- f. Submission of online application to the program

Students are selected for admission to the program by the faculty on a "rolling admissions" plan until the class target size is reached: As soon as an applicant demonstrates program eligibility during the admissions cycle (by satisfactory completion of the above steps), their name is forwarded to the SAHP Admissions Office/Ad Council for final approval. After the cohort reaches 50, other qualified applicants are placed on an "Alternates" waiting list.

All prospective students are encouraged to apply early to increase their probability of acceptance during a particular admissions cycle. The published "early deadline" is November 1 preceding the June start date.

Applicants who self-identify as Seventh-day Adventists and/or who transfer credits from an SDA educational institution are given priority status.

## II. Attendance

Attendance is required for all classes in accordance with policy outlined in the University Catalog. Regular attendance at all appointments (class, clinic, laboratory, chapel, TBAs) is required beginning with the first day of each term. If the absence is *excusable*, the student is allowed to make-up quizzes, tests and late assignments. If *unexcused*, they may not be allowed to do so. A pattern of absence, excused and unexcused, will be referred to the program director for consideration and action.

*Excused absences* are defined as follows:

Illness, verified by a physician's statement or official statement from Student Health Service submitted to the program director;

Participation in an institution-sponsored activity (verified by a written statement from a faculty sponsor);

Recognizable emergency approved by the program director.

Tardiness is disruptive, distracting and inconsistent with professional behavior. Students who arrive after the beginning of class may be counted absent.

Cell phones and other personal communication devices must be turned off during class and laboratory sessions. Laptop computers, if used, may only be used in support of the specific educational purposes of the respective class or laboratory session.

If a student is expecting an urgent or emergency communication (i.e., concerning a minor child) during a class or lab, the student may leave their mobile phone with the program administrative assistant when appropriate.

### **III. Anatomy Grade**

A passing grade (“C”) in the PTAS 201 Anatomy course is required to continue in the PTA program. A grade of less than a C disqualifies the student and requires administrative withdrawal from the program.

A “C” grade is determined by a minimum of 75.0 % cumulative score in the course.

A student who drops or fails PTAS 201 may elect to continue and complete any program courses in which he/she is currently enrolled and have already started. In such cases, the program withdrawal becomes effective at the end of those courses.

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#### IV. Grade Review Process

Final grades are determined by the program faculty and contract instructors who review all the PTAS grades in a Grade Review Committee Meeting at the end of each quarter. Grades for the AHCJ course and the religion courses are determined by the respective instructors.

The program's grading system is designed to objectively measure the student's achievement of the stated student learning objectives for each course in a manner that encourages student cooperation rather than competition. In most courses, letter grades are assigned based on a percentage of maximum possible points in the course. In only a few didactic courses and in all clinical education courses, students receive either "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" grades. S/U grades do not contribute to the calculation of the grade point average.

The percentage ranges listed below are used by the Grade Review Committee when determining final grades. An individual student's course grades may be further adjusted depending on the student's participation in the WIN --*Wholeness Incorporated Now*-- program (see separate policy).

Percent	Letter Grade
95-100	A
92-94	A-
89-91	B+
85-88	B
82-84	B-
78-81	C+
75-77	C
74	D
≤ 73	F

## **V. Grade Adjustments with WIN Points**

The PTA Program seeks to help students develop habits that promote the harmonious balance and health of the entire being which is referenced in the motto of Loma Linda University, "To Make Man Whole." A voluntary action plan entitled *Wholeness Incorporated Now*, known as the WIN Program, offers an incentive to students to regularly practice specific aspects of a lifestyle that has been shown to contribute to overall health.

The students are encouraged to assess these four components of their personal lives—the physical/physiological, emotional/social, mental/intellectual, and spiritual/community—and find ways to enhance and balance time spent in activities associated with healthy development of each component. If they choose to participate in the program, the students record their activities on a weekly WIN form and return the forms to the PTA Office each week for accountability.

For each week that the student records and submits their wholeness activities for each of the four components, they receive one-tenth of one percentage point. At the end of each quarter, the number of weeks of participation is tallied to a maximum of 10 weeks. A student may receive up to one full percentage point which is added to their final score in each letter-graded PTAS course in that quarter. This may or may not change the final grade, depending on their percentage grade prior to addition of the WIN points. One restriction applies to the WIN points: they cannot be added to any final score that is below 75%; in other words, WIN points cannot be used to pass a course that would otherwise be failed.

The WIN program is generally introduced with the Portfolio project during the first summer quarter. Actual participation and submission of WIN forms begins with the fall quarter and continues through spring quarter for all letter-graded PTAS courses.

## **VI. Grade Entry for University Records**

During the fall, winter and spring quarters, the faculty meets in Grade Review session after the end of the last final exam of the quarter to review all student scores in all PTAS academic courses with the instructors of each course. The faculty applies the established scale score and percentage guidelines to determine the final course grades for each student. The faculty also reviews the grades for any clinical courses which conclude and coincide with the respective end-of-quarter Grade Review sessions.

The faculty reviews grades for clinical courses that do not conclude and coincide with Grade Review sessions during the weekly faculty meeting scheduled following closest to the conclusion of the clinical course.

The faculty reviews grades for academic courses during the first summer quarter (which have staggered starting and ending dates) during the weekly faculty meeting scheduled closest to the conclusion of each course.

Each course instructor enters the final course grades into the online University Record's Banner system within three business days of the end of the course.



## **VII. Adding and Dropping Courses**

Students may change their schedule by completing a “Change of Program” pdf form available on line at [www.llu.edu/ssweb](http://www.llu.edu/ssweb). The last day to add a course is five days after the beginning of instruction of the quarter. The last day to drop a course without record on the transcript is 10 school days after the beginning of instruction of the quarter.

A “W” (withdraw) is recorded on the transcript for courses dropped prior to 14 calendar days before the final examination week. Courses may not be withdrawn after that date.

## **VIII. Student Mailboxes**

Students receive a secure, combination-lock mailbox assignment during summer quarter of the first year. Announcements, completed course assignments and tests, and other items are placed in the student's mailbox.

Students are encouraged to check their mailboxes daily.

At the end of spring quarter, the student mailboxes are emptied in preparation for the incoming class. Any confidential/personal material is transferred to the respective student's file in the program office and a note is placed in the WIN file of same student in Room 1912 to inform student that they may request that material. Students are encouraged to empty their WIN files at the time of their exit interviews. Any material left in WIN files is discarded after the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> quarter.

## **IX. Accommodations**

Any individual with a disability who needs reasonable accommodation to fully participate in the program may obtain the *Student Information and Requested Accommodation* form from the office of Dr. Craig Jackson, Dean, School of Allied Health Professions, Nichol Hall, Room 1603.

Accommodations granted for the didactic courses in the curriculum do not extend to the clinical portion. A student who desires accommodations in the clinical settings for the clinical courses of the curriculum must submit a new request to the Dean of the School.

## **X. Maintaining Program Accreditation Status and Compliance**

The physical therapist assistant program maintains program accreditation with the *Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education* (CAPTE), 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. 703-684-2782. Current accreditation is granted through December 2011.

Continued accreditation for CAPTE requires that approved PTA programs file an annual accreditation report and pay annual fees. It is the responsibility of the program director to assure these tasks are completed thoroughly and on time. If substantial changes are warranted in the program, the director will notify the School Dean and CAPTE and comply with the Commission's policies and directions. The program director also notifies CAPTE of any changes in college administration including the president, vice-president, dean, and program director or of any change in the University's accreditation status. If the program director leaves the position, the college administration will follow the guidelines for qualifications of the program director as specified by CAPTE when recruiting a new director.

Program assessment is primarily the responsibility of the program director and is based on CAPTE criteria (see Assessment Process Documentation Grid in Appendix 1). For each criterion, the Grid identifies the person responsible, sources of information, data collection methods, timeline, threshold and linkage to other data and/or information. Contributors include all faculty members, students, graduates, employers, advisory committee members, clinical instructors and center coordinators of clinical education. The program director reviews the grid at the beginning of each quarter and assures that each element is carried out and or revised as needed.

Every ten years, the program will complete a Self-Study that is sent to CAPTE before its due date. This study will be comprehensive and match responses to questions posed in each of the standards. The program director assumes leadership for this process, and input will be gathered and used from multiple sources as described above and will use multiple measures.

Once the on-site visit has occurred, the program will receive notice from CAPTE regarding the accreditation status with one of the following potential actions:

- Withhold or withdraw accreditation
- Place the program on probation
- Recommend that action be deferred
- Recommend continued accreditation with progress report(s) due
- Recommend continued accreditation.

If continued accreditation with progress report(s) due is the recommendation, it is the responsibility of the program director to prepare the report in conjunction with the faculty and administration of the university. This report will be received by

CAPTE on or before the due date with the ultimate goal of coming into compliance with accreditation criteria within 15 months. The same action will be taken if the status decision is deferred until adequate information has been provided to CAPTE to grant accreditation.

If the accreditation decision is to place the program on probation, the program faculty, including the program director, will meet with the appropriate administrators to develop a strategic plan and timeline to ameliorate this status. If, after this meeting, the university determines that the best action is to ask for withdrawal of accreditation, CAPTE will be notified in a timely manner. The university would then follow its procedure for program closure including matriculating continuously enrolled students or implementing the alternate plan of transferring the student to another accredited program. A good faith effort would be used by faculty and administration to remove probationary status whenever feasible. During this entire process, the public would be notified, according to CAPTE requirements, of accreditation status in all publications such as schedule of classes, the University Catalog (as publishing date allows), advising information sheets, websites for the program, and program information sheets.

If the CAPTE decision is to withhold accreditation, every effort will be made to assist students to transfer to another accredited program.

If the program is granted continued accreditation without progress reports, the program director will begin work on the next Self-Study.

University accreditation is the responsibility of the President and is directed by the University's Office of Educational Effectiveness.

## **XI. Clinical Education**

*Clinical education* refers to that portion of the curriculum spent in full-time (40 hrs/wk) clinical environments, including inpatient settings (acute and sub acute hospitals and medical centers, rehab centers, skilled nursing facilities) and outpatient settings (private practice, pediatric, geriatric, rehab, wellness centers, sports medicine). The clinical education courses are integrated with the didactic courses in the curriculum. Advance permission must be obtained from the ACCE before any adjustments may be made to a student's clinical education schedule.

All clinical assignments are made by the academic coordinator of clinical education (ACCE) or designate. The ACCE monitors the clinical experiences via personal, phone and/or email communication with the clinical faculty and the student. Before students receive their final clinical assignments, the ACCE or designate reviews the contracts for each clinical facility to be used and determines if a contract exists and if it is not expired.

Attendance is required for all clinical education orientation sessions for instruction regarding clinical expectations and the use of specific tools, procedures and processes. These sessions are scheduled at various times throughout the program and indicated on class schedules for the related quarters. Students are responsible for information posted by the ACCE via email. Additional information may be communicated via Blackboard, on the pin boards, in class announcements as well as student mail boxes.

Individuals will not be enrolled through the program in clinical education courses or given clinical rotations unless they have completed all of the requirements of the technical portion of the PTA curriculum at LLU (i.e., regarding requests from individuals who have receiving training elsewhere with identified deficiencies).

## **XII. Complaints**

Information for students regarding alleged, perceived, or real incidents of student mistreatment or other complaints may be found in

- A. The *PTA Program Student Handbook* (2009), p. 30;
- B. The *University Student Handbook* (2002), pp. 67-70, 75-78;
- C. The online *University Student Handbook*  
<http://www.llu.edu/pages/handbook/documents/2006-07student-handbook.pdf>

Students with complaints are advised to follow the steps below, in consecutive order, to resolve any program-related complaints. If the complaint remains unresolved at any level, the student may proceed to the next level.

- A. Discuss the issue with the instructor/coordinator of the \_\_\_\_\_ course
- B. Discuss the issue with the program director, Jeannine Mendes  
(x 47254)
- C. Discuss the issue with the department chairman, Dr. Edd Ashley  
(x 42982)
- D. Discuss the issue with the Dean of the School of Allied Health Professions, Dr. Craig Jackson (x 44545).

Complaints presented to the PTA program director are recorded (handwritten on a specified complaint form or typed in similar format) and are stored in a dedicated three-ring binder kept in an enclosed area within the program director's office. The director records the date and nature of the complaint, what was planned and/or accomplished in response to the complaint, and the final resolution and date of the resolution. Records of complaints are maintained in this manner for at least five years following resolution of the complaint.

PTA students sign acknowledgement forms on the first day of school, during PTA program orientation, that they have each received the current *PTA Program Student Handbook* and instructions on how to access additional online information in the *University Student Handbook* at  
<http://www.llu.edu/pages/handbook/documents/2006-07student-handbook.pdf>

Clinical education sites, employers of graduates and the general public may file complaints with the program director and/or the School or University.

Information regarding complaint policies and grievance procedures is located at the following places:

- A. For all stakeholders: *University Catalog 2008-2009* hard copy, pp. 18, 64
- B. For all stakeholders: *University Catalog* website URL  
<http://www.llu.edu/pages/documents/2008-09universitycatalog.pdf>
- C. For clinical education faculty and staff: the *Physical Therapist Assistant Clinical Education Manual* which is carried to each clinical education facility by the physical therapist assistant student at the time of assigned clinical rotations

Information may be found in the *LLU Faculty Handbook* (1998) for faculty regarding the University grievance procedures (p. 85), legal recourse (p.92), and sex discrimination (p. 94) in addition to the online *University Catalog*.

**Public Complaints** – The process for responding to complaints is dependent on the type of complaint (i.e. if it is a legal matter, a safety issue, etc.). However they come in, they are forwarded to the appropriate department, usually to the administrative lead.

Records of all complaints will be kept in a secure location by the program for a minimum of five years.



### **XIII. Web-Based Resources**

A personal Identification Number (PIN) or password is required to access the Student Services Website and the offices listed below. The initial PIN notification is sent to the student at their local mailing address.

The 7-digit LLU ID number located on the student ID card is the initial password for Blackboard. Each service is a separate account with a separate password.

More information on web-based resources can be found at

<http://ssweb.llu.edu/studentemail/>


The following services are available on the Student Services Web (SSweb):

- a) University Records: Grades, Transcript, Holds, Academic History, Registration
- b) Financial Aid: On-line Application, Requirements Tracking, Holds, Costs, Awards
- c) Student Finance: Financial Clearance, Account Withdrawal, Account Summary, Bank Card Payment
- d) Instructions for log in: <http://www.llu.edu/ssweb/>
- e) Changing the PIN: At the time of the initial student log in, the computer will require a change of the PIN by clicking on Personal Information and then Change PIN. The PIN is considered equivalent to a legal signature.

E-mail is the medium through which LLU officially communicates with students who are required to check personal LLU email at least once a day during the school week for communication from the department or instructors.

- a) Email log in requires a username and password. The username is the first part of the email address (the part to the left of the @llu.edu). Email addresses may be found on SSweb by clicking the link: “Need your LLU email address and ID#?”
- b) Changing the password: Use this link: <http://swap.llu.edu> or click on the password change link in LLUonline

*LLUonline* is a system for delivering web-based courses and for instructors to post course materials.

- a) Log in: <Http://lluonline.llu.edu>
- b) Changing a password: From LLUonline, click the  [LLU Password Changer](#) link, or follow the links from the question “How do I change my password?”

#### **XIV. Student Lockers**

Lockers are available for student use in the men's and women's dressing rooms in the anteroom of laboratory rooms identified as PT-1 and PT-2. Students must provide their own locks to secure the containers. Use of the lockers for storage of personal items is provided only during one's lab time to allow for maximum availability of lockers during all scheduled laboratory times.

At the end of the quarter, the lockers are cleared out and any remaining items are discarded.

## **XV. Equipment Safety and Maintenance Procedures**

It is the responsibility of all faculty members to check equipment used by students and instructors in the classrooms and laboratory rooms for proper function prior to each use. If equipment needs repair, it should be clearly marked for repair, reported to the program director or to maintenance for repair and, if possible, removed to a storage closet. Instructors are not to use defective equipment or supplies.

Faculty should instruct students in safe use of all equipment used in labs. Students may not practice with equipment until they have been instructed on its use in class.

Equipment manuals are to be kept in the program directors office or with the unit.

An annual inventory of existing equipment is conducted under the direction of a faculty member within the physical therapy department. After the inventory, the program administrative assistant schedules an annual safety inspection with a clinical engineering company whose staff inspects and calibrates the equipment. The inspectors provide a final inspection report to the program which is designed to bring any equipment functional problems or equipment safety issues to the attention of the program director. Records of these inspections are kept in the program office.

External vendors, who loan equipment to the program for use in class or laboratories, such as transcutaneous electrical neuromuscular stimulation units (TENS) and ultrasound units, provide a memorandum with the equipment that ensures the safety of the equipment.

## **XVI. Approval of New and Revised Policies and Procedures**

The program director and/or the assistant program director/DCE develop drafts of new and revised policies and procedures for the program.

The program director presents new policies (unrelated to clinical education) to the faculty during faculty meetings and/or via email for discussion and revision. The ACCE presents new policies relating to clinical education to the faculty during faculty meetings and/or via email for discussion and revision.

Policies are reviewed and approved during faculty meetings.

## **XVII. Drayson Center Membership for Contract Instructors**

Contract instructors for the physical therapist assistant program are eligible for the discounted membership rate (currently \$15/month) per Drayson Center policy, provided that the PTA program provides a letter to the Drayson Center stating that the individual is a contract instructor. This rate grants membership privileges to both instructor and spouse. Children who are 14 years of age or older, may be added for \$10/month.

The PTA program informs all of its contract instructors about this option available to them in writing per the following:

“If you wish to purchase a membership at the Drayson Center, the discounted cost for contract instructors is \$15 /per month which includes membership for you and your spouse. Please request a letter of introduction from the PTA Program Director for the Drayson Center prior to purchase.”

## **XVIII. Faculty Development Plan**

The PTA program follows the SAHP Guidelines for Faculty Development outlined in the LLU Faculty Handbook, pages 274 - 286. These guidelines were revised March 29, 2007, voted June 8, 2007 and implemented October 1, 2007, by the SAHP Faculty Council and may be found in the Bulletin Board shared drive for SAHP and in the SAHP Policy Handbook found in the PTA program director's office. The guidelines address faculty appointment, rank and step increases, and development that would lead to promotion. Faculty may be promoted on the basis of an emphasis in teaching, an emphasis in research or scholarly contributions, or an emphasis in service. Each individual candidate selects the area of emphasis.

Faculty members in the PTA Program are encouraged to follow the steps recommended in the guidelines for rank increases through Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor and for step increases within the appointed rank.

Educators in the PTA Program are also encouraged to improve their teaching skills, presentation manner, syllabus organization, examination writing skills, computer usage skills, and their clinical knowledge and understanding of their own specialty through continuing education that is offered by the University or through the APTA and other continuing education providers.

In the process of evaluating each course that an instructor teaches, through peer evaluation, student evaluations, and instructor self-evaluations, the instructor may be required to attend courses to help rectify a weakness in teaching, or an area of deficiency in the PTA program. Such instruction is provided free for the core faculty members. Adjunct faculty may also be required to take further courses as a requirement of their continued appointment as adjunct faculty. The PTA program will provide reimbursement as the budget will allow, for any required training of adjunct faculty.

In cases where there is a weakness in teaching methodology or syllabus preparation, the remedial work may be done either under the mentoring and tutelage of a more experience teacher, or through attendance at a training session.

## **XIX. Clinical Education and Clinical Faculty Development**

Clinical instructor training and materials are offered to all clinical sites upon the establishment of a clinical education relationship and when a specific weakness is identified through DCE, CCCE or student feedback.

Clinical instructors and clinical sites are assessed by the DCE and students each time they provide training for a student affiliation. The DCE personally visits sites in southern California, while more distant sites are contacted by telephone. The students provide valuable feedback during the DCE visits and at the end of the clinical experiences. The forms used for these evaluations are in the Appendix.

The SAHP Department of Physical Therapy has a standing Clinical Education Committee that acts as an advisory committee on specific issues as needed for both the DPT and the PTA programs, i.e., coordination of clinical education activities, policy development. Members include the program directors, the DCE, the ACCEs for both programs and former ACCEs still on faculty. In addition, the PTA faculty serve as an advisory committee for most student issues that arise related to clinical education experiences.

For example, at the completion of each six-week affiliation, the DCE reviews the performance evaluations for each student. If a situation arises that requires immediate attention, a Committee meeting will be called as needed to discuss the situation and take appropriate action. In addition, if the DCE identifies a serious dilemma during an affiliation that requires consultation with the Committee, they may be called into session.

Actions taken may include recommendation for clinical instructor (CI) training, training in the use of the Clinical Performance Instrument (CPI), clinical instructor credentialing, the gifting of a copy of the *APTA Guide to Physical Therapy Practice* (as a resource for professional growth and to encourage APTA membership), forming a behavioral contract with the student, removing the student from the clinical site, and/or terminating the affiliation relationship with the clinical site.

All clinical sites will be reviewed annually. Those that are identified through the evaluation process as having areas of weakness in clinical mentoring will be reassessed. If we find that the clinical facility has not responded adequately to recommendations for improvements, the site will be removed from our list of clinical education sites. Information regarding such sites will be shared with the

southern California consortium of PT Education programs (IACCC) if the site participates with IACCC.

At an annual Clinical Education Committee meeting, a review of the entire clinical education program is conducted. The effectiveness of the clinical education component of our program is also evaluated in the light of comments from recent graduates, and from employees of graduates via surveys sent annually to new graduates six months after program completion. Changes that may be needed to improve the clinical education component of the program will be identified at this meeting, and then presented to the program faculty.



## **XX. Annual Evaluation of Core Faculty**

Each core faculty member of the PTA program meets annually with the PTA Director for a performance evaluation. This meeting is held in fall quarter before the end of the calendar year. At this session the following areas are addressed.

Annual Faculty Workload Document

Annual Faculty Report

Course Evaluations

Required Updates: BLUE Book on Safety (university)

PT License

APTA Membership

Eligibility for step or rank increase

Discussion of areas that need improvement and methods to achieve these changes, which may include mentoring by a more experienced teacher, tutoring and/or assistance methods of developing an organized syllabus, continuing education in the subject area, continuing education in the area of test/examination writing.

The annual meeting is documented, signed and a copy is kept in the director's file for that instructor.

## **XXI. Course Evaluations/Course Instructor Evaluations**

The PTA program director or designee, will meet with each teacher, whether core or contract faculty, at the end of each course for which that teacher is responsible. The discussion will include the following

1. Self-evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching
2. Self-evaluation of the strengths and areas needing improvement of the teaching
3. Students' evaluation of the teacher's style, teaching methods and effectiveness
4. Peer teaching evaluation of the teacher's style, teaching methods and effectiveness
5. Identification of any improvements that need to be carried out in style, knowledge of subject, syllabus content, organization or clarity.
6. In the course evaluation form, items rated 4.0 and higher are considered acceptable. Items rated 3.0 and lower are seriously addressed to identify potential areas needing improvement and to formulate plans to achieve needed improvements.

Methods available to improve any teaching or organizational problems may include mentoring by a more experience teacher, tutoring and/or assistance in methods of developing an organized syllabus, continuing education in the subject area and in test item writing skills. The remediation plan includes the timing of methods for improvements to occur prior to term that the course in question is taught again the following year.

The meeting between instructor and program director or designee is documented, signed, and a copy kept in the director's file for that instructor.

## **XXII. Individual Rights and Safety**

Safety, the right to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent apply to any individual involved with the Physical Therapist Assistant Program, including, but not limited to: students, faculty, staff, visitors to the program, human subjects for classroom or laboratory demonstrations, and clients interacting with students at clinical facilities.

### **Grievance Procedures**

Any person with a complaint or concern about the PTA Program or one of its policies, programs, faculty, staff or students will be asked to submit their concern in writing. Persons with a verbal complaint/concern should be asked to submit their issues in writing to the program director, department chairperson or to the Dean of the School of Allied Health Professions. For the PTA program, if the nature of the concern falls into the possibility of a formal complaint to the program's accrediting body, contact the APTA's Department of Accreditation to discuss the nature of the complaint and to determine what procedures should be taken. This department can be reached by fax at 703-684-7343 or email at [accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org). See full policy for complaints in section XXII of this manual.

### **Use of Protected Information**

Information collected from fellow students, lab subjects, and patients/clients is considered confidential information, and protected by applicable Health and Human Services laws (available through: <http://www.os.dhhs.gov/>). As such, the information can only be used for purposes other than direct health care, upon written informed consent from the patient/client or designated official. Use of the information should still protect the right to anonymity, when possible, and be used for educational purposes, either in the classroom or to other professionals. If images are requested, a separate consent form must be obtained prior to obtaining and using such images.

### **Human Subjects**

Policies regarding patient/client rights within the clinical setting are established by that institution and should allow clients the right to refuse to participate in clinical education.

Subjects used to demonstrate in the classroom setting are afforded the same right to informed consent as in other setting. Forms may be obtained from the

administrative assistant, and completed forms should be placed in the course curriculum file.

### **Personal Safety**

Faculty, staff and students should follow Universal Precautions, as identified by the Centers for Disease Control, available at:

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/bp\\_universal\\_precautions.html#](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/bp_universal_precautions.html#) when there is the possibility of contact with any body fluid or potential contaminant. This policy is presented in the PTA Student Handbook and PTA students receive instruction in Universal Precautions during their first quarter in the program in the course PTAS 212 PT Procedures.

### **Off-Campus Educational Experiences**

Clinical education courses are full-time learning experiences where the student is assigned to a clinical instructor who supervises the learning experience in agreement with the course objectives and goals. The University maintains a current contract for clinical and instructional programs with each facility utilized by the program which delineates the responsibilities of the facility and the university.

Off-campus learning experiences related to didactic courses occur in clinical facilities but are not full-time; during these experiences the students are under the direction and supervision of the academic course instructor. Prior to these field experiences, the course instructors provide a review of relevant procedures and precautions to be followed during the experience to ensure the safety of the student. The University maintains a current memorandum of understanding or a full affiliation contract with such facilities which delineates the agreement by the facility to provide suitable learning experiences, equipment and supplies, and the agreement by the University to provide personnel to coordinate the experience, to provide emergency medical care and to provide and maintain the records and reports related to student evaluation, and to require students to follow facility rules and regulations related to the learning experience.

### **XXIII. Progression to Clinical Education Courses**

In brief, students must successfully complete and receive a passing grade in all PTAS courses as they occur in the curriculum in order to progress to subsequent clinical education courses. This policy operates in concert with the current program policies on remediation (XXVI) and academic disqualification and dismissal (XXVII).

Thus, if a student fails any PTAS course in fall quarter, the student is not allowed to complete the Practicum as scheduled in winter quarter. If not academically disqualified from the program, the student must remediate the fall term failed course(s) prior to the end of winter quarter. Then the student may progress to the two-week *PTA Practicum* course during the first part of spring quarter. The Practicum must be completed prior to the start of spring quarter academic courses.

If a student fails one or more PTAS courses in winter quarter, that student is not allowed to progress to *PTA Affiliation I* in spring quarter. If the student is not academically disqualified from the program, he/she is allowed to remediate the failed course(s). Remediation must be completed before the first day of classes in spring quarter.

If all spring quarter courses and remediation are completed successfully, the student may progress to *PTA Affiliation I* and *PTA Affiliation II* during summer quarter and to *PTA Affiliation III* during fall quarter of the same year. Such students are allowed to participate in the June graduation ceremonies with their classmates with the expectation that, although delayed, all degree requirements will be successfully completed by December of the same year.

## **XXIV. Background Checks**

Each new student completes an online Background Check (BGC) as required for enrollment and as instructed on the New Student Registration Portal. The complete data resides in a University database.

The Department Chair or his/her designee accesses the BGC database within the first two weeks of the start of the PTA program and does the following:

- a. Confirms whether all new students have completed the BGC.
- b. Identifies the grade listed on each BGC certificate, whether “Passed” or “Failed and enters such notation into the Clinical Education database.
- c. Prints a hard copy of each certificate and gives it to the program ACCE who stores them in a locked cabinet.

The Chair’s designee notifies the Program Director of

- a. any student who receives a “Failed” grade on the BGC, and
- b. any student for whom a BGC is not found in the database.

The Program Director contacts

- a. any student who has “failed” the BGC, or whose BGC is not found, to discuss implications and possible consequences.
- b. the University’s Manager of Academic Relations to discuss “Failed” BGCs.
- c. the Program ACCE regarding any “Failed” or missing BGCs.

## **XXV. Monitoring a Student with Background Check Failure**

Students sign an agreement to comply with the LLU standards upon acceptance and must complete a University-specific background check in the enrollment process. All background checks which reveal a history of misdemeanor and/or felony charges (also referred to as “failed” background checks) are reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel for the University. The General Counsel may require the program to monitor the student throughout the program. The following protocol will be instituted either in the whole or partially, depending on the individual circumstances.

1. When the Office of the General Counsel indicates that monitoring is required for a student, the program director meets with the student to discuss the circumstances of the background check failure.
2. If the student has already completed a court-ordered rehabilitation/treatment program, and can provide the program with documentation of such, no further intervention is required and the student enters the PTA Program’s monitoring program (described below).
3. The student signs a contract of commitment to not participate in any drinking of alcohol for the duration of the school program and to participate in the monitoring program which includes the following:
  - a. Agrees to make appointments to meet with the Program Director no less frequently than once a month from day of signing to discuss progress in treatment and/or school;
  - b. Agrees that the Physical Therapist Assistant Program may need to describe the reasons for required treatment, as well as treatment compliance and progress, with any future employers to whom he/she may apply and to whom the Program is authorized or required to give recommendations as well as to state licensing boards;
  - c. Agrees to consent to such releases of information as deemed necessary or required by the Program in the future;
  - d. Agrees that any failure to comply with these treatment requirements as well as any failure to comply with the “Alcohol, Controlled Substances

and Tobacco Policy” or other policies of Loma Linda University and/or the Program may result in suspension or dismissal from the Program.

4. The student must complete a new annual background check every 12 months, from the date of the initial background check related to enrollment at LLU, and provide the PTA Program Director with a copy of the certificate.
5. If the student has not completed a court-ordered rehabilitation program, the student obtains a professional evaluation (as directed by the program) to determine alcohol dependence, which if present, requires participation in a dependence treatment program and in the PTA Program’s monitoring program described above. The student also signs a “Release of Information Agreement” prior to entering the treatment program.



## XXVI. Consequences of Grade Failures

Students in the Physical Therapist Assistant program must receive a grade of C or better in all subjects to complete the program. Grades of C- or D are considered failing grades in the PTA Program. If a student fails one or more courses, but **no more than four units** of course work, the courses may be remediated and the student may remain in the program. Students must successfully **complete all didactic courses** in the curriculum **before progression to the clinical affiliation courses**. The University policy for **remediation** of a failed didactic course offers **two options**:

1. Re-register for the specified tutorial course during the following quarter in addition to the "block courses." (The program director must "open" such course.) The tutorial rate applies to the repeated units only (one-half of full tuition rate). The student reviews the course work under supervision of the instructor, and then takes a final examination. This examination cannot be taken until at least two weeks after the original final examination of the block course. The student needs to pass this examination; the course grade resulting from a repeat examination may be no higher than a "C." However, the number of failed units remains on the student's record and is cumulative.
2. Repeat the class the following year, paying full tuition. The grade earned in the course will be the grade the student receives. Students may not be enrolled in courses for which the failed class is a pre-requisite, until the course has been completed satisfactorily.

If a student fails any course in fall quarter, but is not academically disqualified from the program, the student is allowed to complete the practicum at the start of the winter term as scheduled. However, if a student fails any PTAS course in winter term, they will not be allowed to progress with the Affiliation I until remediation of failed course(s) is completed. The three affiliations will be postponed and rescheduled pending satisfactory completion.

## **XXVII. Scholastic Disqualification and Academic Dismissal**

There is a limit to the number of course units that a student may fail and still continue in the program. A student is allowed a **maximum of four course units** of failure during the entire program (all of which must be remediated prior to program completion).

A **failure of five course units or more** results in the student becoming scholastically disqualified with the consequence of immediate **academic dismissal** from the program regardless of remediation measures.

## **XXVIII. Re-Admission Following Scholastic Disqualification**

If a student who is dismissed from the program wishes to re-apply to the program for the following year, that student must meet the following requirements:

1. Re-apply online for admission to the program and pay a re-application fee.
2. Write a letter to the program faculty committee describing what steps have been taken to overcome the problems that may have contributed to the academic dismissal.

The committee will evaluate the student's situation very carefully and **may** allow the student back into the program if the evidence submitted is sufficient to convince them that the student will be successful in the program on a second admission. If a student is re-admitted into the program for the following year, the **PTA program re-admission policy** offers **two options**:

1. All PTAS courses with C and C+ grades on first admission must be repeated and successfully completed. Any other requirements that the faculty determine are necessary must also be completed. A maximum of ten units of repeat work will be charged at the reduced tutorial rate (half the current tuition rate). A STUDENT RE-ADMITTED UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IS NOT ALLOWED ANY FAILING GRADES FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE PROGRAM. Any additional failure will result in permanent dismissal from the program.
2. If the student would prefer to re-enter the program without the prior failure being taken into account, the student would enter as a "new" student and retake ALL PTAS COURSES, even the ones that were passed above the "C" level. This would allow the student to be admitted without prior scholastic disqualification units on their record for the second admission and without the fear of being disqualified with one additional failure.

### **NON-PTAS COURSES**

The student who returns on a second admission following academic dismissal does not need to repeat any courses in the program that do not carry the "PTAS" prefix if the course was completed with a "C" grade or higher.

Courses in this category would include:

RELE 456	Personal and Professional Ethics
RELR 475	The Art of Integrative Care
AHCJ 305	Infectious Diseases and the Healthcare Provider