



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

School of Allied Health Professions

*Department of Physical Therapy*

# Physical Therapist Assistant Program

## **Policy and Procedures Manual**

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## **1. Admission Process**

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

- a. Successful completion of all prerequisite courses prior to the start of the program with the minimum GPA or higher within each subset of courses:
  - (1) Science pre-requisites  $\geq$  2.5 GPA
  - (2) Non-science pre-requisites  $\geq$  2.5 GPA
- b. Submission of an online application to the program
- c. Assessment of a personal interview with one of the faculty
- d. Writing assessment completed at time of the interview
- e. Work experience or volunteer/observation experience in physical therapy clinical settings for a minimum of 80 hours, with at least 20 hours in one or more inpatient settings and at least 20 hours in one or more outpatient settings
- f. Three recommendations from individuals (family members excluded) who know the student well. Places to consider for such persons include:
  - (1) Professional/employment (mentor, supervisor or boss)
  - (2) Church or community service related (pastor, community service supervisor)
  - (3) Academic or school related (professor, teacher, or advisor)

Students are selected for admission by the PTA faculty in a series of committee meetings on a "rolling admissions" plan until the class target size is reached: As soon as an applicant is selected, their name is forwarded to the SAHP Admissions Office/Administrative Council for final approval. After the cohort size 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 timeframe for an "early" submission of the application is August 1 through 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.

## **2. 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 an absence is *excusable*, the student is allowed to make-up quizzes, tests and late assignments. If an absence is *unexcused*, they may not be allowed to do so. A pattern of absence, whether excused and unexcused, will be referred by instructors 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 the 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.

All electronic communication devices must be in silent mode during class and laboratory sessions unless being used in support of the specific educational purposes of the respective class or laboratory session.

## **3. Assessment of Learning Experiences**

### **3.1 Grading System**

The program grading system is designed to objectively measure student 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 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.

Every course syllabus outlines the specific details for the grading of the course, including methods of student evaluations, grading breakdown for all

assignments, quizzes and exams, the grading scale of percentages required for each grade level and opportunities, if any, for earning extra credit points. A syllabus is provided for each student for each course on the first day of the course and the outline for grading in the course remains constant throughout the course.

The percentage ranges listed below are used by instructors when determining final grades. An individual student's course grades may be adjusted depending on the student's participation in the *Wholeness Incorporated Now* program. (See Policy #4, WIN Program). Each course instructor enters their final course grades into the online LLU University Record's Banner system within three business days of the end of the course.

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
$\leq 73$	F

### 3.2 Extra-Credit Points

Instructors may provide opportunity for students to earn extra-credit points for specified learning experiences that are in addition to the total number of points possible in a course. The description and conditions for the use of extra-credit points must be clearly specified in the syllabus; these points must constitute no more than 1% of the total points possible and can ONLY be applied to a student's cumulative score after the student has achieved at least 75% of the points possible for the course. In other words, extra-credit points cannot be used to pass a course that would otherwise have received a non-passing grade.

### 3.3 Grade Review

During the fall, winter and spring quarters, the program faculty meets in a "Grade Review" session after final exams with the instructors of each PTAS course to review student grades and any concerns with professional behaviors and to approve progression of each student to the subsequent term. The faculty review the grades for all clinical education courses during either Grade

Review sessions, or during faculty meetings that occur just after the conclusion of clinical experiences. Grades for the AHCJ course and the religion courses are determined by the respective instructors.

During the first summer quarter, several courses are taught in a shortened, modular style (less than 11 weeks). The faculty reviews those grades and any concerns with the course instructors during the weekly faculty meeting scheduled closest to the conclusion of each course.

### *3.4 Minimum Required Grade in PTAS 201 Anatomy*

A passing grade (“C” or higher) 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 courses in which he/she is currently enrolled and which have already started. In such cases, the program withdrawal becomes effective at the end of those courses.

### *3.5. Examination Policy*

Academic dishonesty is not tolerated. To protect the integrity of the assessment process in face-to-face and remote testing environments, multiple exam formats and video surveillance may be used during exams. Remote online quizzes and exams are administered via the Canvas (learning management system) utilizing Respondus Lockdown Browser and student webcams.

Students must observe the following:

1. The student is expected to remain in front of their computer screen or paper exam for the entire examination. Restroom breaks or other activities should be taken care of prior to starting the exam. If a student leaves the room, the test will be considered completed at that moment.
2. All quizzes and tests are to be completed individually (as are all assignments), and not in group settings, unless indicated otherwise by the course instructor.
3. All course notes, books, and reference materials, and all electronic items not required for test-taking must remain out of the student’s sight during the exam (i.e., cell phones, pagers, smart-watches, headphones, ear devices, Bluetooth devices, etc.).

4. Hats may not be worn during examinations.
5. All exams are timed. If the Internet connection is lost during a remote exam, the allotted time will continue to count down. (Note that wired connections tend to be more reliable than wireless.)
6. Students cannot begin taking the exam before the established start time and are not be allowed to pause the exam. The exam will no longer be available to any student at the end of the scheduled time period for the exam.
7. The reproduction or saving of exam/quiz questions in any fashion is prohibited (i.e., use of cameras, screen shots, pictures, writing, copying, etc.).
8. No talking is permitted during an exam. The instructor cannot answer questions during the exam.
9. Students may email the instructor for clarification on test questions. Requests to consider possible errors in grading must be submitted to the instructor **in writing within one week** of the posting of test scores.
10. In extenuating circumstances, the student may wish to take an examination at an alternative time. The student must submit a written request in advance to the program director. If the request is approved, a \$50.00 fee is applied to each examination that will be taken at an alternative time.

#### **4. *Wholeness Incorporated Now!* The WIN Program**

The PTA Program seeks to help students develop habits that promote the harmonious balance and health of the entire being, a concept captured in the motto of Loma Linda University, "To Make Man Whole." A voluntary action plan entitled *Wholeness Incorporated Now*, also known as the *W/N* 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 the four components of their personal lives—physical/physiological health, emotional/social wellness, mental/intellectual status, and spiritual/community connections—and to find ways to enhance and balance the time they spend 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 *W/N* report form and

upload them into the Canvas course shell (the online learning management system) for *PTAS 265 Professional Seminar*.

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. By doing so, a student may earn up to one full percentage point 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.

## **5. Professional Development and Behavioral Expectations for Students**

All students accepted into the program will be evaluated on professional behavior and abilities in the classroom, in the laboratory and in clinical settings. The following documents will be used when defining professional behavior and for which references may be found in the current PTA Student Handbook:

- 1) The current, online Loma Linda University *Student Handbook*
- 2) The American Physical Therapy Association's (APTA) *Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant and Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant* available at [apta.org](http://apta.org)
- 3) The APTA *Values-Based Behaviors* at [apta.org](http://apta.org)

Descriptions and expectations for professional behaviors are introduced and reinforced by instructors throughout the curriculum in an effort to help students identify with and integrate these behaviors while in the program and before the onset of the fulltime clinical experiences. Students are given periodic opportunities to evaluate themselves regarding their developmental level toward reaching these expectations. Clinical faculty also evaluate students regarding these expectations.

The following actions will be taken if a student demonstrates behavior inconsistent with the criteria established in the identified documents.

1. When behavior is perceived as being inappropriate, the student is given feedback regarding the inappropriate behavior and is provided with relevant

expectations for remediation. This feedback may come from program faculty, instructors, and/or clinical faculty. The student is expected to remediate the behavior as advised.

In the academic setting, feedback may take the form of a *Professional Development Card* (carbon-duplicate) which may be handed to the student at the time inappropriate behavior has been observed by faculty/instructor. Upon receipt of a card, the student may write-in any extenuating circumstances, and must sign the card and return it to the person who issued the card by the end of the same class period or lab, if not immediately.

In some situations, the faculty member/instructor may choose to send an email to the student notifying them that a *Professional Development Card* has been placed in their school mailbox and that the student's response is required by the end of the following school day. In this case, the student may return their completed card to the program office.

An accumulation of one or more cards, depending on the situation, may require the student to appear before a faculty committee for professional behavior review. Three cards will automatically trigger an appearance before the faculty committee.

2. In either an academic or a clinical setting, if a change to more appropriate behavior does not occur as a result of the feedback system, the faculty will determine consequences for the student which may include remediation of the unprofessional behavior or dismissal from the program.

## **6. 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.

## **7. Accommodations**

Any individual with a disability who needs reasonable accommodations to fully participate in the program may obtain the *Student Information and Requested Accommodation* form from the office of Chuck Dart, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, School of Allied Health Professions, Nichol Hall, in Cottage 60.

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 in the curriculum must submit a new request to the Assistant Dean of the School.

## **8. 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 31, 2021.

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 Standards and Elements. The CAPTE-required Program Assessment Matrix and a Secondary Program Assessment Matrix. For each area of assessment, the Matrix identifies the person(s) responsible, sources of information, data collection methods, timeline, threshold and linkage to other data and/or information. Contributors include program faculty and instructors, students, graduates, employers, advisory committee members, clinical instructors and center coordinators of clinical education. The program director reviews the matrices 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 eight 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.

## **9. Clinical Education**

*Clinical education* refers to that portion of the curriculum spent in full-time (40 hours/week) 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 and home health). The clinical education courses are integrated with the didactic courses in the curriculum.

All clinical assignments are made by the director of clinical education (DCE) or designate; a clinical instructor is a licensed physical therapist or a licensed physical therapist assistant and must have at least one year of clinical experience. The DCE monitors the clinical experiences via personal, phone and/or email communication with the clinical faculty and the student. The student must obtain advance permission from the DCE before any adjustments may be made to a student's clinical education schedule.

Prior to finalization of clinical assignments, the DCE or designate reviews the contracts for each clinical facility to be used and determines if a contract exists and is current.

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 DCE via email. Additional information may be communicated via the Canvas course management system, on the pin boards, in class announcements, emails and student mail boxes.

Regarding requests from individuals who have received training elsewhere and are seeking clinical experiences in the LLU PTA program to meet educational deficiencies: Only students who have enrolled in the complete LLU PTA program and have completed all of the requirements of the technical portion of its curriculum are able to participate in the clinical education courses of the program.

## **10. 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*, p. 32, under “Policies on Individual Rights and Safety” and available online at  
<https://alliedhealth.llu.edu/academics/physical-therapy/degree-options-physical-therapy/physical-therapist-assistant-ptp>
- B. the *LLU University Student Handbook* online at  
<https://home.llu.edu/sites/home.llu.edu/files/docs/student-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. Larry Chinnock  
(x 47251))
- 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 a locked cabinet 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.

Each PTA student signs an acknowledgement form on the first day of school (program orientation) that they have received a hardcopy of the current *PTA Program Student Handbook* and instructions on how to access the online *LLU University Student Handbook* (URL above).

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* website  
<http://llucatalog.llu.edu/general-information/communicate-luu/>

- B. For clinical education faculty and staff: the *Physical Therapist Assistant Clinical Education Handbook* which is carried to each clinical education facility by the student at the beginning of each clinical experience
- C. For academic faculty: Information may be found in the *LLU Faculty Handbook* <http://www.llu.edu/pages/handbook/facultyhandbook/index.php>

Public Complaints made to the PTA Program Office: – 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.). All complaints 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.

## **11. 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 web services.

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) Canvas is the institutional, online learning management system utilized by students and faculty for managing face-to-face courses and web-based courses
- e) Instructions for log in: <http://www.llu.edu/ssweb/>
- f) 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.

**LLU E-mail** is the medium through which LLU officially communicates with students; they are required to check personal LLU email at least once a day during the school week for communication from the university, the department, program faculty 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:  
<https://webmail.llu.edu>
- b) To change a password, use this link: <http://swap.llu.edu>

## **12. Video and Audio Recording**

Video-recording of any activities in any lecture or laboratory settings or other instructional environment by students is not permitted.

Audio-recording of any activities in any lecture or laboratory settings or other instructional environment by students may be permitted at the discretion of the course instructor.

## **13. 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.

#### **14. 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 DCE 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.

#### **15. Faculty Development Plan**

The PTA program follows the policy on faculty development that is outlined in the School of Allied Health Professions (SAHP) "Guidelines for Faculty Development," implemented 2007-10-01. The full copy is stored electronically in the SAHP file *Shared Folders/Dean's Office/Faculty Files/Faculty Development Application*. The SAHP policy aligns with the institutional policy found in the *2015 Loma Linda University Faculty Handbook*, Section 2.3.1 and 2.3.2. These sections address faculty appointment, rank and step increases, and development that would lead to promotion. A faculty member must have completed criteria in the three areas: teaching effectiveness, professional achievement and academic growth; and service to the university.

<http://www.llu.edu/pages/handbook/facultyhandbook/FH%202015%20Chapter%202-Appt.%20Discipline,%20Recog,%20Termination%20of%20Faculty.pdf>

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

Instructors in the Physical Therapy Assistant 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-examination, the instructor and program director may identify areas in which the instructor could improve. The instructor may be required to attend courses to help rectify a weakness in his/her teaching, or a weakness in the PTA program itself. Such instruction will be provided free for the core faculty members. Associate faculty may also be required to take further courses as a requirement of their continued appointment as associate faculty. The PTA program will provide reimbursement as the budget will allow, for any required training of associate 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 experienced teacher, or through continuing education courses.

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

Each core faculty member meets annually in July with the program director for a performance evaluation where the following areas are addressed:

The Annual Faculty Workload Document for the previous year:

Did the projected work take place successfully?

Did the faculty member successfully reach the projected goals?

Annual Faculty Workload Document, prepared for the current academic year:

Is the projected workload feasible?

Are there other things that should be included in the workload?

The Annual Faculty Report (online institutional requirement):

Did the faculty member update the report last October as required by the institution?

Has the faculty member completed all required online courses in the OWL (*Organization Wide Learning*) portal?

Course Evaluations

What progress has been made in areas identified as needing improvement in the course evaluation meetings?

Are the following requirements current?

HIPAA training, the institutional online BLUE Book on Safety, Fire Extinguisher Training, CPR Certification, PT License and APTA Membership.

Is this faculty member eligible for a 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 in methods of organization of syllabus; continuing education in the subject area; continuing education in the area of test/examination writing

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

## **17. 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 clinical experience. The DCE or faculty designate 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 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 clinical experience, 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 a clinical experience that requires consultation with the Committee, they may be called into session.

Actions taken may include recommendations for clinical instructor (CI) training, training in the use of the Clinical Performance Instrument (CPI), sponsorship for APTA clinical instructor credentialing, formation of a behavioral contract with the student, removal of the student from the clinical site, and/or termination of the affiliation relationship with the clinical site.

Clinical sites are reviewed annually. Those that are identified through the evaluation process as having areas of weakness in clinical mentoring will be reassessed. If it is found that the clinical facility has not responded adequately to recommendations for improvements, the site will be removed from the list of clinical education sites.

A comprehensive review of the entire clinical education program is conducted at an annual Clinical Education Committee meeting. The effectiveness of the clinical education component of the 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.

## **18. Evaluation of Course Instructors: Core and Associate Faculty**

The program director or designee meets with instructors following the completion of courses for which they are responsible. Core faculty who teach multiple courses meet once or more times yearly. Associate faculty who teach one course per year will meet at the completion of the course. The discussion will include:

1. The instructor's self-evaluation of teaching effectiveness;

2. The instructor's self-assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching;
3. Review of student course evaluation data on teaching methods and effectiveness;
4. Peer classroom evaluations of instructor's style, teaching methods and effectiveness
5. Identification of any improvements needed in teaching style and learning experiences provided; instructor's knowledge of the subject; syllabus content, organization, clarity; methods of assessment.

Ratings on evaluation forms ranging from 4.0 – 5.0 are considered acceptable. If there are sections that receive a 3.0 – 4.0, we will attempt to identify the problem and will work on gaining improvement. If there are sections with a score below 3.0, we will consider this to be a serious problem which needs immediate improvement or change of instructor.

A discussion of methods available to improve any teaching or organizational problems may include mentoring by a more experienced teacher; tutoring and/or assistance in methods of developing an organized syllabus; continuing education in the subject area; continuing education in the area of test/examination writing.

If or when a determination is made that changes need to be made, these changes must be made before the course is taught again the following year. This meeting between instructor and program director or designee is documented on the respective form, signed, and a copy kept in the Director's file for that instructor.

## **19. 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, they will be instructed to 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 <https://www.ahrq.gov/funding/process/grant-app-basics/hsubjects.html>). 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.

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 settings. 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 are instructed to utilize universal precautions, as identified by the Centers for Disease Control (available at: [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/universal.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/universal.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 in *PTAS 212 PT Procedures*, first quarter of the curriculum. They receive instruction in standard precautions for airborne contaminants in *AHCJ 305 Infectious Disease and the Healthcare Provider* in fall quarter.

#### *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.

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

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 (Policy 25) and academic disqualification and dismissal (Policy 26).

Thus, if a student fails one or more PTAS courses in winter quarter, that student is not allowed to progress to *PTA Clinical Experience 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 no later than the last Friday before final exam week in spring quarter.

If all spring quarter didactic courses and remediation are completed successfully, the student may progress to *PTA Clinical Experience I* and *PTA Clinical Experience II* during summer quarter and to *PTA Clinical Experience 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 all degree requirements will be successfully completed by December of the same year.

## **21. Background Checks**

Each new student is required by LLUH to complete an online Background Check (BGC) for initial enrollment as instructed on the *New Student Registration Portal*. An updated BGC may be required before completion of the program.

All BGC hits are reviewed by the LLUH Office of General Counsel. The LLUH General Counsel's office may determine that, based on the BGC results, a student is not allowed to participate in clinical education experiences at any LLUH entities. In such cases, the program finds the student disqualified from the program and the student is given administrative dismissal.

### *Procedure for review of BGC data*

1. The SAHP Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (or his designate) accesses the BGC database within the first two weeks of the start of the program and
  - a. Confirms whether all new students have completed the BGC.
  - b. Identifies the status on each BGC certificate, whether it is "clear" (no findings) or it reveals any "hits" (one or more findings).
  - c. Notifies the program director of BGC's with hits or missing BGC's and follows up with students for whom the BGC is missing.
  - d. Forwards an electronic copy of all the new certificates to the program director and DCE.
  - e. Contacts the LLUH Office of General Counsel regarding decisions on BGC hits as to whether the individual(s) would be allowed entry to LLUH entities for clinical education experiences.
  - f. Notifies the program director of any individuals who would be denied access to LLUH entities for clinical education.
2. The Program Director
  - a. Arranges a meeting with any student whose BGC findings result in program disqualification and initiates administrative program withdrawal.
  - b. Establishes monitoring program for any student with a BGC hit that requires monitoring without dismissal (see Policy #24).
  - c. Communicates any consequential BGC outcomes to DCE and program faculty.

## **22. 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.

### **23. Course Failure and Course Remediation**

Students in the program must receive a grade of C or better in all subjects to satisfactorily complete the program. Grades of C- or lower are considered failing grades. If a student fails one or more courses, but **no more than four units** of course work, the course(s) may be remediated and the student may remain in the program.

**Remediation process:** The University policy for **remediation** of a failed didactic course offers the student two options:

1. 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 pre-requisite, until the course has been completed satisfactorily. Thus, the student would need to withdraw, take a leave of absence and resume the program the following year.
2. The student must register for a specified course which is a tutorial version of the same course. The tutorial course must be completed during the subsequent quarter in addition to the normal PTA curricular courses for the quarter. The tutorial rate (50%) applies to repeated units. The student reviews the course work under supervision of the instructor, and then takes a final examination. This exam can be taken no sooner than two weeks after the final exam of the failed course and no later than the Friday prior to exam week for the term. If the student passes the tutorial final exam, the resulting course grade will be "C." However, the number of failed units remains on the student's record and is cumulative (see Policy #26.)

The student must pass the final exam in the tutorial course to continue in the program. Consequences of failure of the final examination for the tutorial course are determined by faculty review of the student's performance regarding progression in the program. The student will face either:

- 1) Suspension from the program at the end of the current term and wait until the full course is offered the following year and can be repeated, or
- 2) Disqualification from the program.

If a student fails any PTAS course in winter term, they will not be allowed to progress to *PTA Clinical Experience I* in spring term. The student is allowed to progress to the didactic courses in the normal PTA curriculum in spring term while remediating the failed course. Under this circumstance, all didactic courses must be satisfactorily completed prior to progression to any clinical affiliations. The three *PTA Clinical Experience* courses will be postponed and rescheduled pending satisfactory completion of all didactic courses.

## **24. Academic Disqualification and Dismissal**

There is a limit to the number of course units that a student may fail and 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) with the **exception** of a failure of *PTAS 201 Anatomy* (see Policy #3).

If a student **fails five course units or more**, the student is found academically disqualified with the consequence of immediate **academic dismissal** from the program regardless of remediation measures.

## **25. Re-Admission Following Academic Dismissal**

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

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 request and may grant re-admission to the program if the evidence submitted is sufficient to predict that the student could be successful in the program on a second admission.

If a student is re-admitted into the program for the following year, the student may choose either of **two options**:

OPTION #1: The student would enter as a “new” student and retake ALL PTAS courses, regardless of the grade earned on the first admission. Scholastic disqualification points from the first admission would be erased and would not carry over to the second admission (see Policy #26).

OPTION #2: All PTAS courses with grades of C+ grades or below are repeated. Only the most recent grades are counted towards requirements for program completion. In addition, any other requirements that the faculty determine are necessary must be completed. A maximum of ten units of repeat work will be charged at the reduced tutorial rate (50% of current tuition).

***Failure of a repeated course under Option #2 will result in permanent dismissal of the student from the program.***

## 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 257	Health Care Ethics
RELR 275	Intro to Art & Science of Whole Person Care
AHCJ 305	Infectious Diseases and the Healthcare Provider