**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Western Technical College is to provide evidence-based, contemporary education in a collaborative environment that results in graduates who are an effective, productive and a valued member of the healthcare team.

**Philosophy Statement:** The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Western Technical College values the success of our students, and holds ourselves accountable for providing excellence in student learning based on the diverse needs of each student. The program is committed to the safety of future patients and to the quality and integrity of the profession. This commitment influences all program development and decisions.

Revised 3/28/16

**Program Outcomes:** The graduate of the PTA program at Western will be able to:

1) Demonstrate clear and collaborative communication with patients, families, and health care team.
2) Exhibit behaviors and conduct that reflect respect and sensitivity according to physical therapy practice standards.
3) Function under the supervision of a physical therapist in a safe, legal, ethical manner to ensure the safety of patients, self, and others throughout the clinical interaction.
4) Produce documentation to support the delivery of physical therapy services.
5) Demonstrate critical thinking skills to implement and modify treatment within a plan of care under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist.
6) Perform data collection essential for carrying out the plan of care under the direction and supervision of the physical therapist.
7) Perform technically competent, evidence-based physical therapy interventions under the direction and supervision of the physical therapist.
8) Educate patients, families, and other health providers.
9) Integrate components of operational and fiscal practices of physical therapy service in a variety of settings.
10) Implement a self-directed plan for career development, credentialing, and lifelong learning.

**Program Goals:** In accordance with the program mission, the program has the following goals:

1) The program will meet or exceed the highest level of professional standards for PTA Education as set forth by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE).
2) Faculty will demonstrate commitment to high quality, collaborative education with a focus on serving the college, the profession and the community.
3) Graduates of the PTA program will demonstrate professional, collaborative communication (verbal and non-verbal) in all interactions at work and in the community.
4) Graduates of the PTA program will be safe, ethical and effective members of the healthcare team; functioning under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist.
5) Graduates of the PTA program will demonstrate the knowledge, skills and competencies required of the entry level PTA.
6) Graduates of the PTA program will be productive members of the healthcare team who demonstrate commitment to lifelong excellence in delivery of quality care.
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The Key to Success

You will spend the better part of two years completing the core courses of the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program. True, the courses are rigorous, but the perception of intensity has to do with the amount of time you will spend with your instructors and fellow students and with studying the information. It will be important to collaborate with those around you as you work daily to learn and use the information in the program.

You may be familiar with a traditional educational format where you come to class to sit, develop blisters on your writing hand, and then regurgitate your wagonload of short-term memories on an exam. That will NOT work in the PTA program! You will still have to absorb a lot of information, but how you use the information is what will make you a successful PTA. You will be required to think, to assemble information from past units and courses and to create solutions to patient problems. That is how it is in the clinic. Every patient, every situation is different. You CANNOT memorize all the answers!

Another major difference in the program is that you will be educated in and held accountable for your professional behaviors. What are professional behaviors? They are the qualities — over and beyond the knowledge you gain and the skills you perform — which are essential for your success in the classroom and clinic. In broad terms, you are expected to demonstrate respect for others, communicate effectively, cooperate with fellow workers, and display the dependability expected of a professional. It’s the “Golden Rule” applied to school. Treat your classmates, instructors, patients, and coworkers, as you would like to be treated.

Behaviors displayed in the classroom are correlative to behaviors in the workplace. Picture the prospective employer inquiring about a recent graduate whose memorable behaviors were consistent tardiness, inability to work with others, and whining at every opportunity. That is not someone an employer wants to hire. That is not someone you want taking care of your loved one in the hospital. That is not even the person you want to stand in line with at the grocery store.

Those who make the most of the program learn early on that the classroom instructors, clinical instructors, tutors, counselors, and other college staff are working extremely hard to provide you with an education that will allow you to realize your dreams. You, in turn, must do your part with the same dedication. You need to make the most of the assistance available from the program, from the college and from your classmates.
So where in all this is the Key to Success?

First, acknowledge what it will take to become a Physical Therapist Assistant. Second, understand that the program, just like the profession and your eventual patients, has high expectations for you. Third, recognize that the education you are about to undergo will most likely be different from anything you have experienced before.

✔ You will be held accountable for material from every class and expected to use this knowledge throughout the program to demonstrate your growth.

✔ You will problem solve and use critical thinking in practical situations; therefore, comprehension and the application of knowledge is emphasized instead of rote memorization.

✔ You are responsible for your behaviors, the cornerstones of professional attributes and indicators of your aptitude as a coworker and health care giver.

✔ You have to be willing to trust, communicate, and become involved in your own improvements. Abundant assistance is available but it must start with you.

You are entering a new situation with demands tailored to promote the best in you both professionally and personally. Make the most of it. You will find that becoming a cooperative learning partner with us is much more rewarding than simply showing up. Use the key. Open the gate to a great opportunity in education and a rewarding career.

This program handbook contains all of the key information, policies and procedures necessary to complete the program successfully. Read it through completely and refer to it often!

**Please note that many students who successfully complete the PTA Program and receive their degree wish to continue their education at some point in time. Please keep the following records to ease the transition into the next phase of your education:**

1. Copy of summary transcript
2. Syllabus from each of your Western PTA courses
**Key Contacts & Resources**

**Emergency Contacts**
If someone needs to reach you in an emergency (for example; day care, parent, spouse, kids, etc.), make sure they have a copy of your schedule and some way to contact you. These two program assistants are one additional point of contact. They can access your schedule and try to get a message to you during the school day if needed.

- 785-9233 for Kat Anderson, Program Assistant
- 789-6080 for Mary Leske, Health and Public Safety Division Administrative Assistant

**Program Instructors**
All instructors have *voice mail* and *email for convenient contact.* Please talk with your instructors. While you are welcome to drop by the faculty offices at any time, you are encouraged to *schedule appointments with your instructor.* Each instructor posts a semester class schedule by his or her office door and each has “office hours” set aside for appointments. If you must cancel a scheduled appointment -- let the instructor know in advance and ask the instructor if you may meet at another time.

<table>
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<th>Phone</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
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<td>Shari Berry</td>
<td>HSC 4058</td>
<td>785-9598</td>
<td><a href="mailto:berries@westerntc.edu">berries@westerntc.edu</a></td>
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<td>Jeff Komay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scott Ziolkowski</td>
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<td>789-4742</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ziolkowskis@westerntc.edu">ziolkowskis@westerntc.edu</a></td>
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**Clinical Instructors (CIs)**
Clinical Instructors (CIs) supervise PTA students who are completing clinical affiliations. CIs are volunteer physical therapists (PTs) and PTAs with a minimum of 1 year of clinical experience. They give freely of their time and abilities because of their belief in their importance of clinical education. A PTA student’s clinical instruction may fall under the supervision of more than one CI, depending on the site. The student PTA (sPTA) is responsible to clarify whom they are to report to and who is supervising them on a day-to-day or treatment-to-treatment basis.

For specific supervision guidelines, refer to the PTA Supervision Guidelines in the Clinical Education Manual posted online. The Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) will provide you with necessary CI names and numbers prior to each clinical rotation.
**Program Administrative Assistant**

Kat Anderson  HSC 4031  Phone: 785-9233

Kat Anderson is the Program Assistant. You will want to know her number if, for some reason, you cannot reach an instructor. She can direct you to other persons who may be able to help you with your issue or she can give you an idea of when the instructor may be available. As mentioned already, she is a contact for emergency needs. It is an expectation that you treat her politely and with respect with any issue that you may have.

**Program Counselors**

Western Welcome Center  Phone: 785-9585

If you have a problem not directly related to course material, or a personal problem affecting your ability to be successful in college, the counselors at the Welcome Center can help. If you are concerned about something but cannot put your finger on it, they are also the ones to see. A number of students establish a working relationship with one or more of the counselors at Western. Counselors can also help you with interest surveys and career planning if you should decide the PTA program is not a good fit for you. Take advantage of this resource if needed!

**Classmates**

During the first week of the program, you will confirm or update contact information that will be shared with all PTA classmates. Contact information should include phone number and E-mail address – and may include street address (your choice). We recommend that you use the contact information to arrange mutual study times, group work, shared rides, and the like.

**Peer Tutors**

One or more students serve as peer tutors. The tutor(s) will be able to assist you with learning and practicing patient care techniques. Peer tutors are available within individual courses based on need. If you feel that scheduled assistance would help you succeed and a tutor has not been identified, please contact the course instructor to request this service.

**Learning Commons**

ARC Room 122  Phone: 785-9198

Assistance is also available at Western’s website or you can input this web address directly – [https://www.westerntc.edu/current-students](https://www.westerntc.edu/current-students)

The Learning Commons offers help in the fundamental Math, Science, and English skills to support you in any class. It is also the place to hone your “student skills” as a reader, note taker, or test taker. In addition, there is an online writing center at Western – take advantage of online editing tips from the comfort of your computer!
Requests for Accommodation Related to a Disability

Please carefully review the syllabus for each course and consider the requirements expected of you in the classroom and labs. See the instructor for clarification if needed. If you find that you are in need of support services or reasonable accommodations for a disability, the PTA Program asks that you maximize our ability to work together by taking the following steps within the first week of class:

1. Make a request of the instructor for suitable academic adjustments. The request is held in confidence!

2. See the staff in Disability Services, located in the Welcome Center-Room 164H. (Phone: 785-9875)

Disabilities need to be documented according the the documentation guidelines listed in the college’s student handbook.

Program Specific Resources

Physical Therapy Resources/ Books/ Videos - Physical Therapy resources are found in the campus Library. The library collection includes a large variety of relevant journals, books, and videotapes. Computer lab, internet access and private study rooms are also available. Library personnel are valuable in helping students take full advantage of the library facilities. Resource materials are also available in lab rooms in the HSC. Instructors will leave make key materials available for use with each unit of study as well as post relevant online materials for use in your blackboard courses.

Program Computer Access – There are three computer lab options available to PTA students: HSC Computer Lab, Western Computer Labs on main campus and PT/PTA labs. Each computer lab allows the student access to word processing, PowerPoint presentation programs, and internet access. Students must comply with the specific lab policies related to computer use & printing. The PTA Program maintains several student computers in PT/PTA labs. Program software for exercise protocols, anatomy software and video editing is available only on selected PT/PTA computers. HSC lab computers are intended ONLY for support of course requirements. Any inappropriate use of lab computers for personal use is strictly prohibited.

Program HSC Building Access- Due to the rigors of the PTA program, students will study didactic and practical skills outside of the regularly scheduled course times. PTA students have access to the HSC building in the evenings and on weekends, with specific access to PTA labs. Students will be given “swipe card” access after reading, discussing and agreeing to all of the HSC building policies. Any violation of HSC building policies will result in loss of access to the building.
PTA Program Textbooks: Textbooks selected for each course have been evaluated and are considered current and relevant to the practice of physical therapy. Before changing textbooks, instructors review new books and consider student feedback about books currently in use. Course textbooks assist the student in learning course material and are valuable reference material during subsequent courses and all clinical rotations. Students need to demonstrate an ability to read critically and use textbooks to support and enhance classroom, lab, and clinical experience.

All required course textbooks are available for purchase at the Western Campus Shop. It is strongly recommended that each student purchase a Western Student Planner. These are also available at the Western Campus Shop.

Additional College Resources

College Wide Services: Western is committed to serving students. There are a number of resources available on campus to assist current and future students. The following is a list of some possible services that may be helpful to you as you work through the program.

• “Paying for College” – Go to https://www.westerntc.edu/paying-for-college for help with financial aid, scholarships, military connected students, and tuition.
• “Student Life” – Go to https://www.westerntc.edu/student-life for information on athletics, government clubs and organizations, dining services, and the wellness center.
• “Welcome Center” – Go to https://www.westerntc.edu/student-services for help with career services, childcare, counseling, disability services, health and wellness and multicultural services.
• “Western’s Library” – Go to https://www.westerntc.edu/western-library to learn about the help and resources available at the campus library.
• “Western Campus Shop” – Go to http://www.westerntcbooks.com/ to shop for new and used textbooks, Western apparel, school supplies and more. The campus shop is located on the first floor of the Kumm building.
• “Student Housing” – Go to https://www.westerntc.edu/Housing to learn about Western’s residence hall.

Student Employment Services: Western is committed to helping you find employment. From the main Western website, you can connect to job placement notifications such as Tech Connect and Part-Time Job Board. These sites offer you many opportunities to see what employment opportunities are “out there”. While most of these are targeting the graduates from Western, some of the job postings target students looking for on-call hours or summer employment. Check it out!

Student Medical Care:

• Student Health Center: The Student Health Center, located in the Health Science Center, corner of Badger and 13th Streets, provides comprehensive primary care services for Western students with a valid student ID. Services include primary care for illness or injury, care for chronic health problems, minor surgical procedures, medical management of mental health concerns, obstetric (limited) exams and gynecological services, immunization and TB testing, physical exams, reproductive services, basic lab services, allergy injections, HIV testing and counseling, physical therapy services, consultation and referral. Cost of this service is provided by student activity money with the exception of a $10 per visit co-pay. Students may be responsible for the cost of additional services such
as, but not limited to, ongoing therapy, medications, x-rays, and comprehensive tests. These services are billed directly to the students. Eligibility guidelines for Student Health Center Services follow:

**Fall and Spring Term**
- Enroll for six credits or more OR enroll for at least one credit and pay a $100 fee

**Summer Term**
- Enroll for six credits or more OR enroll for at least one credit and pay a $50 fee;
- OR enroll for spring term and fall term, but not summer term and pay $50 fee.

*Appointments are recommended; please call (608)785-8558 or visit www.uwlax.edu/StudentHealth for more information.

**Student Accident Insurance** - Students enrolled in degree classes will be automatically enrolled in the Wisconsin Technical Colleges Mandatory Accident Only Insurance Plan. The cost of this plan will be $6.00 per term and will automatically be assessed to the student at the beginning of each term. This coverage is secondary to any other insurance coverage students may already have. This Accident Only Insurance Plan covers the student when an accident occurs while on campus, attending a practicum program, or attending a recognized student group activity approved by Western Technical College. Coverage is in place while on school premises when school is in session and during College-approved activities. Coverage is in place to and from a Western Technical College sponsored event within the state of Wisconsin, and up to 2 hours from the Wisconsin state border. The plan offers comprehensive benefits that include hospital room and board, inpatient and outpatient surgical procedures, labs and x-rays, physician office visits, ambulance, durable medical equipment, emergency care, and prescription drugs as related to the accident. There are no deductibles and the maximum benefit allowed for each accident is $50,000. Students are responsible for processing their own claims.

To Access Student Accident Only Insurance Plan Information:

1. Go to gallagherstudent.com and select your school from the dropdown menu.
2. On the left hand side of the page you will have the following links to choose from:
   a. My Benefits and Plan Information – includes a Schedule of Benefits and FAQ
   b. Other insurance products
   c. Discount and wellness
   d. Claims company
   e. Resources and links

To Print an Insurance ID Card:

1. Go to gallagherstudent.com and select your school from the dropdown menu.
2. Log in using your existing account information (first time visitors will need to create an account).
3. Select “Authorize Account” located to the left of your screen under Account Information and enter your Student ID number along with your date of birth.
4. Once your account has been authorized, select “Account Home” and click on “Generate ID Card”.


- **Student Health Insurance**: Western Technical College DOES NOT carry health insurance to cover students while attending classes at the College. This means that each student is responsible for his/her own coverage in case of an illness that might require medical attention. Students who are not covered under a parent’s policy, an employer, or a personal policy are urged to arrange for coverage to be compliant with the Affordable Care Act. Comprehensive student health insurance, covering illness, is available at a group rate through a private firm. Premiums are paid by the student and forms can be picked up at the Student Development Office, Kumm Center, Room 100 or in the Welcome Center. Other coverage options are available at www.healthcare.gov.

**Key Program Policies and Procedures**

**Admission Procedure - General**

In accordance with the Admission Policy for Western (E0200), admission to the PTA program is as follows:

1) Students must apply to and be accepted to the college. (Application details and requirements are outlined at [https://www.westerntc.edu/apply](https://www.westerntc.edu/apply))

2) Students must apply to the PTA program and meet the following requirements:
   a) Complete placement testing. Western Technical College uses ACCUPLACER, a computer-based, online assessment that measures your abilities in writing/sentence skills, reading comprehension, and arithmetic. This information will be used to place you in courses that best fit your academic goals. Based on your scores, you may need to take additional general studies course(s) along with the general studies courses required for your program.

Several options for waiving the ACCUPLACER test are available; [view the exemptions here](#).

Learn more about placement tests and how they are used at Western: [Placement Testing](#).

b) After admission to the College, read the program’s Essential Functions and complete a background check. You can find links to these documents below.

- [Physical Therapist Assistant Essential Functions](#)
- [Physical Therapist Assistant Background Check form](#)
c) Complete the prerequisites for General Anatomy and Physiology with a grade of “C” or better.

General Anatomy and Physiology Prerequisites

One year of High School Biology or one term of Developmental or College Biology

One year of High School Chemistry or one term of Developmental or College Chemistry

**Admission preference given to students who have successfully completed General Anatomy and Physiology (10806177)**

d) The last step for admission to the program, complete an Intent to Enroll form. Please see the details below.

Contact the Welcome Center to make an appointment with a Health & Public Safety Enrollment Services Advisor to complete your Intent to Enroll form.

3) Students who complete the program admission requirements are placed on a waitlist. The program has a tiered admission with students who have completed General Anatomy and Physiology at a college level accepted into the core program first. If more than one student has the same “completion date” for General Anatomy and Physiology, priority is assigned to the students by the date of submission of their “Intent to Enroll” form. The waitlist is updated after every term.

4) If the entering cohort is not filled with students who have General Anatomy and Physiology complete, students who do not have General Anatomy and Physiology completed will be offered a spot according to the date of submission of the “Intent to Enroll” form.

5) All students are required to attend mandatory college and program orientations in the spring of their designated fall start date. Students will receive information about the program expectations, program rigors, class schedule, building information, and will meet one-on-one with faculty to discuss any personal concerns or answer any questions. Students cannot register for classes until the program orientation is complete.

**Admission Procedure- from another PT/ PTA program**

Students may apply to the PTA program at Western after completing core course work in a Physical Therapist or Physical Therapist Assistant program at another school. All admission requirements for the college and program must be completed (see Admission procedure-general).

In addition, the following is also required:

1) A syllabus from each course completed with a “C” or better that outlines the competencies covered in each course. The program chair will compare the completed course work to the curriculum content of the PTA program at Western to determine what courses will transfer.
2) If transfer to Western’s PTA program results in a discontinuous completion of the PTA curriculum (one semester or more without being enrolled in core PTA courses), the student may need to pass a competency exam for each course in the core curriculum that was completed. Competency exams will test the critical competencies in the completed courses and may have a written or practical component, or both, depending on the course content. A passing grade of 78% or better must be earned on all competency exams before student is allowed to continue in the program at Western.

**Admission to the program is contingent upon space and clinical site availability even if all admission criteria and competency exams are completed successfully.**

**Procedure for Withdrawal from the PTA Program**

Withdrawal from the PTA Program may result from a number of causes including:

1. Desire by the student to drop from the program. This may be due to unforeseen life circumstances, financial difficulties, or the recognition by the student that s/he is not interested in becoming a Physical Therapist Assistant.

2. Excessive absences from scheduled activities (lecture, lab, required meetings).

3. Failure to receive a grade of C or better in any PTA program course (Core classes, Occupational support classes, and General Education coursework)

**Withdrawal Procedure:**
If withdrawal from the PTA program becomes necessary, the student is advised to consider the circumstances carefully. Thought should be given to the period for reimbursement of fees from the College. The program faculty, academic advisor, and counselors will assist the student in understanding the intent and procedures for withdrawal. Any of these individuals will also have input into possible future plans for the student. The student is encouraged to meet with program faculty before withdrawing from the program.

**Procedure for Dismissal from the PTA Program**

Students may be dismissed from the PTA program for a number of reasons:

1. Exceeding the maximum allowed written and/or practical exam failures as outlined in “Minimum Grade Requirements for Written and Practical Exams”.

2. Any unexcused absences from a clinical rotation. Students must attend all clinical experiences, arriving on time and departing on time. Any absences must be arranged in advance and the time made up with approval from the ACCE and clinical instructor.

3. Failure to pass all required clinical education components.

4. Any action that falls under the Health and Public Safety Division Policy on Program Dismissal (see copy of policy under Division Policies in this handbook).
Procedure for Re-entry into the PTA Program

A student who leaves the PTA program for personal or academic reasons has the opportunity to re-enter the program later. Re-entry is always contingent upon available classroom and clinical space in the program.

Students Who Withdraw Before Completion of Any Core Program Courses

The student may apply for re-entry into the PTA program by completing a re-admission application at the Admissions Office. Upon completion of the application, Admissions will assign the student a new seniority date. The date of the student’s re-entry into the PTA program, beginning with the first semester of the program, will be determined by this new seniority date.

Withdrawal Any Time After Successful Completion of the First Semester

Students who have completed any of the core PTA courses who desire to re-enter the program, must follow the Health and Public Safety Division/Program Re-Entry Appeal Process which reads:

Students failing or dismissed from a Health and Public Safety Division program may appeal to the Dean of Health and Public Safety. Students will follow the re-entry process and recognize that the Dean reserves the right to deny the student program re-entry.

Students requesting program re-entry are required to follow the following process:

1. Write a letter of intent requesting re-entry into the program that includes:
   * The student’s professional goals.
   * An examination of the student’s choices and behaviors that prevented successful completion of courses/program.
   * The student’s plan for change and improvement for program success.
   * Contact information: name, program, student ID number, address, phone and email.

2. Mail letter of intent to: Dean of Health and Public Safety, Room K211, Western Technical College, 400 North Seventh Street, PO Box C-0908, La Crosse, WI 54602-0908.

3. The Division will contact student to schedule an appeal meeting with the Dean of Health and Public Safety.

4. The student will be notified of the Dean’s decision by letter (email or USPS).

Program re-entry is always dependent on space availability. In situations where re-entry is granted, the Dean will often refer the student to meet with program faculty to develop a program success plan. The success plan may include (but is not limited to the following):

1. Additional courses for remediation.

2. Competency demonstration.

3. Required meetings with Western faculty or staff.
**Procedure for Conflict Resolution**

Students who enter the PTA program are held accountable to the policies set forth by the college, the program, and the instructors. Every attempt is made to make these policies/rules as clear as possible. It is the student’s responsibility to ask questions if clarification is necessary.

If the student is either unable or unwilling to comply with the policies, a meeting will be held to discuss the issues. **It is the student’s responsibility to prepare a written student success plan** that addresses the following:

- Identification of the behavior(s) or issue(s) which conflicts with the policies of the program and/or the professional expectations of program students
- A concrete and realistic plan which the student will put into action to change the unfavorable behavior(s) and bring them in line with the expectations of the program
- A timeline for change
- Acknowledgment that failing to successfully make the desirable change(s) will result in consequences that may include dismissal from the PTA program. (These consequences will be clarified at the meeting.)

Using input from both student and instructor (or program chair), a contract for change will be developed and signed by all involved with the discussion.

**Right to Appeal**
The student has a right to appeal any decision made by faculty.

1. As in the “professional world”, the student is asked to first discuss their concerns with the faculty person most directly involved.

2. The student may then bring their concerns to the PTA Program Chair for further review.

3. In the event that the student wishes to discuss the issue further, he/she can contact the Associate Dean or Dean of the Health and Public Safety division.

**Students are advised to consult the Western student handbook for further information on the appeal process.**
**External Complaints**

Any enrolled student of Western Technical College, or any member of the community at large, may file a complaint that a violation of College policy has been committed. Such a complaint may be submitted in writing to the Dean of Health and Public Safety:

Diane Osterhaus Neefe  
Western Technical College  
400 7th Street North  
P.O. Box C-0908  
La Crosse, WI 54602-0908  
608.789.6080

*All formal complaints will be investigated within thirty (30) days. All records of complaints will be confidentially maintained in the office of Health and Public Safety Division for a time of five years.

**Professional Behaviors in the PTA Program**

Appropriate professional behaviors are expected of all members of the learning community. Respect, demonstrated by how one interacts with others, is hard won but easily lost. Experience shows that behaviors demonstrated in the classroom do carry over into clinical practice.

- **Consider the prospective employer** who seeks our assessment of your work ethic. Saying, “This individual was always late for class” will speak volumes; adding, “But we hope that wouldn’t be the case in the clinic” will not help.

Additionally, the profession has standards for professional behavior outlined in the document titled “Value Based Behaviors for the Physical Therapist Assistant”. These behaviors include **altruism, caring and compassion, continuing competence, duty, integrity, PT/PTA collaboration, responsibility and social responsibility**.

**Development of professionalism - sample student behaviors**

A. **Accountability**

- Seeks and responds to feedback
- Acknowledges and accepts consequences for actions
- Meets deadlines, including on time for class
- Attends classes/labs for expected times
- Adheres to code of ethics and policies/procedures
- Contacts instructor (phone, E-mail, or in person) in advance of scheduled activities when unable to attend; in cases of unexpected emergency, contacts instructor as soon as possible

B. **Altruism**

- Assists classmates
- Assists faculty/program chair/staff
- Participates in program and/or college sponsored events
C. Continuing Competence
- Actively involved in group work – scheduling, attending, participating
- Takes full advantage of time available by staying on task and involved
- Initiates study and review activities with peers and instructors
- Accepts limits to own knowledge on subject matter
- Seeks opportunities to enhance knowledge
- Takes initiative to learn and seek out additional information

D. Compassion/Caring
- Demonstrates understanding of socio-cultural influences on patient care
- Considers individual differences when interacting with others (is non-judgmental about others)
- Advocates for needs of others
- Maintains calm tone in conversation; Avoids use of offensive statements

E. Duty
- Completes all work with effort to meet quality requirements
- Utilizes resources responsibly in completion of work
- Acknowledges and accepts responsibility for meeting expectations and attempts to make corrections when feedback is given
- Dresses appropriately (no hats, appropriate lab attire)
- Uses correct terminology and expression in verbal and written communication
- Integrates concepts from other courses
- Demonstrates a tolerance for ambiguity

E. Integrity
- Maintains academic honesty
- Is trustworthy
- Recognizes own limits and acts accordingly
- Contributes to a positive academic environment
- Maintains appropriate and effective professional relationships

F. PT/PTA Collaboration
- Considers role of the PTA in all situations (stays within scope of work)
- Resolves dilemmas/problems in a respectful manner
- Responds during interactions using appropriate verbal and nonverbal style
- Communicates concerns/ questions for the PT with respect

F. Responsibility
- Demonstrates safe practice and maintains confidentiality
- Shows commitment to learning
- Demonstrates flexibility and is adaptable to change
- Schedules and keeps appointments
- States the component parts of a problem clearly
- Identifies resources needed to develop solutions for identified problems
- Analyzes possible solutions to problem
- Determines which solutions are realistic, likely to succeed, and effective choices
- Considers the consequence of each possible solutions
G. Social Responsibility
✓ Participates in volunteer activities
✓ Promotes cultural competence
✓ Promotes health/wellness
✓ Advocates for policy changes that may impact patient care

H. Self-Assessment
✓ Recognizes problem or need; Actively seeks feedback and help
✓ Develops plan of action in response to feedback
✓ Demonstrates improvement based on self-assessment or feedback
✓ Critiques own performance and will share that self-assessment
✓ Maintains open line of communication with individual offering critique

Professional Communication Expectations

The following guidelines are to be used with phone and E-mail communication with your course and clinical instructors. Violation of these guidelines is a breach of appropriate professional behaviors.

Phone etiquette
✓ State who you are (If calling someone new, state you are a student PTA).
✓ State reason for the call.
✓ Leave a call back number(s) and/or E-mail.
✓ State times that you are available for a call back.
✓ Do not call very early or very late.
✓ Speak clearly.
✓ Do not use slang.

Netiquette
✓ Check E-mail daily and respond promptly for requests for information from instructors. E-mail will be our primary means of offsite communication with you.
✓ Notify all instructors if you have a change in E-mail address.
✓ Use complete sentences.
✓ Do not use “slang” abbreviations i.e. LOL, etc.
✓ Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. If you need to, type out in Word, use spell and grammar check then copy to E-mail.
✓ Send attachments in Word only unless told to use a different program.
✓ If a person is cc’d hit “reply to all” if the information you are sending is pertinent to that person as well as the sender.
✓ If a large group has received an E-mail and you are sending information that is only pertinent to you and the sender hit “reply”.
✓ Refrain from sending any chain letters.
✓ Refrain from sending jokes, uplifting messages, cute pictures, web links etc., unless instructed to do so.
✓ Maintain confidentiality of patients, fellow students and faculty.
✓ Do not share another person’s E-mail address unless you have their permission.
✓ Use a title in the subject line.
Please use E-mail for necessary questions. Problem solve first, rely on others, then request information from instructors. This prevents too many E-mails and slows down the ability to reply in an efficient manner.

Use please, thank you, your welcome, etc.

**Cell phone Etiquette**

- All phones will be turned off and stored during class, laboratory and clinical hours. You may check your phone during breaks only.
- If there is an emergency that requires you to have your phone on, please speak to the instructor before class starts.

**PTA Program Procedure for Breach of Professional Behaviors**

Consistent and effective professional behaviors are expected in classroom, labs, and clinical settings at all times. Behaviors not conforming to those expected of an entry level PTA are considered a breach of professional behaviors. A breach of professional behaviors will be brought to the student's attention and addressed based on the level of attention and concern indicated. For example, behaviors that violate college policy – such as blatant plagiarism, cheating, bringing alcoholic beverages or drugs on campus, or attending class while under the influence of alcohol or drugs – could justify dismissal from the program.

In contrast, other behaviors that compromise the educational experience for the student or their peers may place the student “at risk” of point deductions but would not require disciplinary action or dismissal unless the behaviors remain uncorrected after sufficient notification and opportunity for improvement has occurred.

**Step one: Problem identified and student is made aware of the concern.**

The breach of professional behavior is documented using any written or verbal form (E-mail, grade book, handout, verbal discussion). This documentation is shared with the student and the student is encouraged to discuss the issue with the course instructor.

- Other program faculty are informed to determine if the problem requires monitoring across the program or can be identified as an isolated circumstance.

**Step two: Impact on grade and development of a plan to help the student take the necessary steps to demonstrate change.**

- A 10% point deduction is applied to the student's overall course grade in accordance with the grading procedure outlined by the course instructor.
- The student and course instructor identify what course of action must be taken to resolve the concern and to prevent further occurrences. The plan and consequences of a failure to demonstrate improvement are identified in a student success plan which is entered into the student record.
- A method of tracking concerns across all program settings (class / lab / clinic) is initiated to insure that the problem is addressed and corrected by the student in all program settings.
- The student may be required to meet periodically with one or more of -- program instructor, program director, or program counselor -- to address and document progress or lack of progress related to professional behaviors.
Ideally, concerns are addressed satisfactorily at step two. Student and faculty establish the plan and agree on positive and negative consequences.

**Step three: Recommendation for a change in program status**

Problems are ongoing and have not been resolved. This student has not demonstrated acceptable levels of improvements in the identified behaviors established by the student and program faculty. The program faculty feels the student is not competent to provide therapy services at this time.

- An additional 10% point deduction is applied to the summative grade for the course.
- PTA program may recommend the student exit or modify participation at the program level and establish a plan for this change. Participants in this step may include - student, program director, & program counselor, Associate Dean, Dean.
- If the student’s status in the program changes, he or she may request re-entry in the PTA program. This petition would follow the Health and Public Safety Division/Program Re-Entry Process. (See earlier section or student handbook provided by the college.)

**Professional Development in the PTA Program**

In addition to honing your professional behaviors, your participation in professional development activities is important both now and once you embark on your career. The profession is always changing and graduates will need to stay current in contemporary and evidence based practice. Therefore, in the PTA program, you are required to start participating in professional development opportunities with the intent that you will develop an attitude of life-long learning. The PTA program can only help you get started; it is up to each of you to continue to grow and improve in your professional and personal life after school ends.

**Professional Activity Expectations**

* (Graded in PTA Professional Issues 2)

- All students are expected to participate in at least 20 total hours of approved activities during the course of study in the PTA program.
- Can fulfill the requirement with any combination of at least 3 approved activities.
- Each student is required to keep track of his/her own hours.
- Each student must get pre-approval from the instructor to receive credit for the hours.
- Proof of attendance provided to the instructor for each activity. (agenda, course schedule, attendance log, course outline/notes/packet, etc.)

**Grading**

- The professional activities are a requirement to receive points towards the course grade.
- Final grade for these professional activities will be calculated by April 1st of the year of graduation.
- The same rules apply as if for any assignment. (Must be completed in a satisfactory manner or a grade of incomplete will be given for the course. The activities need to be completed but no points earned if after the deadline)
The following are examples of UNAPPROVED activities:

- Activities attended during clinical rotations that are an expectation of your clinical education experience.
- Activities attended as part of your employment
- Non healthcare or non-educational activities
- Activities as part of a formal PTA course (Service Learning activity or other assignment)

The following are examples of APPROVED activities:

- West Central District meetings
- WPTA fall or spring conference/ Student Conclave
- APTA National Student Conclave
- WPTA Physical Therapy Legislation Day
- Continuing education workshop
- PT related community activity/community volunteer
- In-services provided in HSC (not while on clinical)
- PT research participant
- Various seminars
- Assist with Special Olympics
- Volunteer for local nursing home activities

PTA Course Specific Information

Uniform Grading Policy

Your final course grade is determined by a compilation of scores from written tests, practical testing, projects, and assessment of professional abilities. Grading throughout the PTA Program is done on a uniform scale. If your final composite score falls between letter grades, you may be rewarded with the higher grade upon consideration of participation, demonstration of exceptional effort, and adherence to proper professional behaviors. The grading scale is shown below.

- A= 95-100%
- B= 86-91%
- C= 78-82%
- F= < 70%
- A/B= 92-94%
- B/C= 83-85%
- D= 70-77%
PTA Course Expectations

The following guidelines are used in all PTA core courses.

Grading
1. Grading Scale: Shown above.
2. Students must receive a final grade of C (78%) or better in order to continue in the program.

Communication
1. The primary means of communication with you will be E-mail. Any messages sent to you via E-mail are considered formal contact and you are responsible for this information. Check E-mail often!
2. All faculty have voicemail that we check often. You may use this as a means of communicating with us, but please leave a contact number.
3. For specifics on communication expectations please refer to that section of this handbook.

Assignments
1. All assignments/projects are due at specified times.
2. Assignments due on the day of an absence must be turned in by noon of the next day that the student attends classes at Western Technical College.
3. All quizzes must be made up by the start of the next class period.
4. “Pop” quizzes and in class assignments may not be made up.
5. All assignments must be completed (even if late). If all are not completed (and to a satisfactory level) you will receive an incomplete for the course.
6. Assignments must be written on a college level for terminology, spelling, grammar and overall appearance. All typed assignments must be in “Word” format.
7. Multiple page assignments are to be stapled before handing in.
8. Any larger projects/papers should be handed in with a protective cover.
9. All assignments should look professional with no wrinkles, spills, large scratched out areas, doodling etc.
10. It is up to the discretion of the instructor to assign alternative learning activities if a significant classroom activity was missed.

Attendance
1. Class attendance is strongly recommended. Some courses grade attendance. If you are going to miss a class or be late for a class you must notify the course instructor as soon as you are aware of the fact that you will not be there for the start of class.
2. You are expected to be to class, seated and ready to learn at the designated start time. Running in to the class as the “bell rings” in not considered to be “on time”.
3. Being tardy by 10 minutes or greater is equivalent to an absence.

General rules:
1. No food is to be eaten in the labs.
2. No hats are to be worn.
3. Cell phones must be turned off prior to class (talk to instructor for emergency cases).
4. Students must be seated in a good learning position during class activities (good posture, head up, eye contact made, etc).
**Minimum Grade Policy on Practical Examinations**

** Students are required to perform at a minimum a C grade (78% or better) on all practical examinations. One failure (less than 78%) will be allowed each course. If a student fails a second practical exam in the course, he or she will receive and “F” for that course. Failure of five practical exams in the program will result in program dismissal.

**Retaking a Practical Examination**

The student who is unable to achieve a C grade on a practical examination (or who misses a critical safety component of a practical exam) will have the opportunity to take a second examination of similar style and content. During the time between the initial examination and the “retake,” the student will be encouraged to work with the instructor, tutor, and/or Learning Commons personnel to assist in preparing for the retake examination.

1. In the case of any examination other than the final, the retake must occur within two weeks of the return of the initial examination.*

2. In the case of the final examination, the retake must within 2 weeks of the end of the term. *In the interim period, the student will carry an incomplete grade for the course. This grade will only be removed upon successful completion and passing of the practical examination and course. Failure to retake the practical exam in the allotted time will result in the conversion of the incomplete to a Failed grade.

3. Students are only allowed to re-take one practical exam per course. Upon failure of the second practical examination, the student will receive an “F” for the course. Student can remain in the other PTA courses in which he or she is enrolled that semester but will not be able to progress with coursework in the program due to the Division General Policy—“All repeat courses must be successfully completed prior to completing sequential courses in the program.”

4. Students are allowed a total of four practical examination re-takes for the entire program. Upon failure of the fifth practical examination, the student will be dismissed from the program.

**Passing the Retake Practical Examination**

If the student achieves the equivalent of a C grade on an allowed retake examination, s/he may continue in the class, program, and clinic. The original grade, however, will remain as part of the overall course grade compilation.

**Failing the Retake Practical Examination**

For the student who fails to complete the retake before the deadline or who does not achieve a C on the retake, all of the following will hold true:

1. S/he will receive an F for the course. The student may elect to withdraw immediately or continue until the completion of the course.

2. S/he will not be permitted to continue in the clinic.
3. S/he can remain in the other PTA courses in which he or she is enrolled that semester but will not be able to progress with coursework in the program due to Division General Policy—“All repeat courses must be successfully completed prior to completing sequential courses in the program.”

A student may petition the faculty to set up an individualized student success plan to allow the student to enroll in the course again the next time it is offered. Due to the discontinuous nature of completing the program after a failed course, a student success plan will include a competency exam (written and practical) for all of the coursework the student has completed in the program. The student must pass all competency exams prior to enrolling in the petitioned course. This process is to assure that the student has maintained all of the competencies in the completed courses which is a requirement of CAPTE. Students are required to perform at a minimum of C grade (>78%) on all competency examinations.

**Minimum Grade Policy on Written Examinations:**

**Students are required to achieve a 78% or better grade on all written examinations. Two “failures” (less than 78%) only will be allowed each course.** If a student fails to achieve this grade on a written exam, the faculty may give an alternate activity to allow for demonstration of competence of the material. However, the original grade scored will remain in the cumulative point total for the course. **Upon “failure” of a third written exam (less than 78% grade), the student will receive an “F” grade for the course.**

Student will be allowed to continue in other PTA courses in which he or she is enrolled but will not be allowed to enter the clinic or progress in the program as stated in the Division General Policy—“All repeat courses must be successfully completed prior to completing sequential courses in the program.”

A student may petition the faculty to set up an individualized student success plan to allow the student to enroll in the course again the next time it is offered. Due to the discontinuous nature of completing the program after a failed course, a student success plan will include a competency exam (written and practical) for all of the coursework the student has completed in the program. The student must pass all competency exams prior to enrolling in the petitioned course. This process is to assure that the student has maintained all of the competencies in the completed courses which is a requirement of CAPTE. Students are required to perform at a minimum of C grade (>78%) on all competency examinations.

Students will be allowed a total of five written examination failures (less than 78%) for the entire program. Upon failure of the sixth written examination, the student will be dismissed from the program.
Photo and Video Use

During classroom and lab activities in the PTA program, photographs and video clips may be taken to facilitate learning. Photos and video clips taken during a semester may continue to be used by the instructor for educational purposes. At times, students will be asked to volunteer for photos or videotaping that is specifically intended to market the program. Students can opt out of photo and video use at the beginning of the program in writing.

Possible Risks & Discomforts

Safety in application of interventions will be a primary emphasis in the PTA program as it should be in your future practice. If doubt exists, a conservative treatment approach will be utilized. Remember this maxim:

*Apply the least amount of force or intensity to achieve the physical therapy treatment goals.*

As with any intervention, you should understand that there exists the possibility of discomfort, pain, muscle soreness, freezing or burning of tissue, and/or unexpected electrical phenomenon. It is your responsibility as a student to adhere to safety guidelines. Additionally, you should immediately report any problems or feelings of discomfort to your instructor.

Please don’t let it happen!

The Physical Therapist Assistant must have a thorough understanding and high degree of knowledge and competence in the many skills used to treat patients safely and effectively. Your grades reflect your mastery of the material.

Students who have any difficulty with examinations or assignments are encouraged to seek remedial help from the instructor, tutor, peers, or Learning Commons personnel. The faculty cannot emphasize this point enough:

*If a person fails a challenge and takes no steps to improve,*

*then it is just as likely that the person will fail the challenge again.*

Numerous opportunities are presented for self-improvement. Students are urged to make the personal commitment to become better learners and more active participants in their education.
Pre-existing Conditions

The purpose of lab is to learn about and practice an array of interventions that you might expect to administer in physical therapy. It is best to experience each intervention yourself so that you know what sensations the patient might be feeling. **If you have a pre-existing condition (orthopedic or otherwise), please discreetly bring it to the attention of your instructor!** You must not feel compelled to receive any intervention. It is very possible that the instructor will find a suitable and safe alternative so that you may still have the intended experience.

Infection Control

In this program, you will become acquainted with standard precaution procedures to be utilized at all times in the lab and clinic. You will also be assigned duties for sanitizing the lab after using it in class or on your own. You will be shown the location of first aid kits and told how to prevent the spread of blood-borne pathogens. Your practice of sanitary procedures is the first line of defense in preventing infection!

Lab Clothing

Observation, palpation, assessment, and treatment of the extremities and back may be a component of each lab. Please wear clothing that will preserve modesty but allow access to these areas. There is little space in the lab for changing of clothes, so it is best to come prepared with a sweat suit or other loose clothing over your lab outfit. If you are not wearing the appropriate attire, you may be asked to wear a gown.

Skill Acquisition & Approval Ladder

You must become proficient in the performance of many skills. The chart below illustrates the steps the program uses for accomplishing this. You are expected to participate in all of the steps in order to give yourself plenty of opportunity to learn, make mistakes, and correct them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
<td>Read assignments &amp; review notes. Attempt to come into the lab prepared with a general understanding of what will be covered that day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>The instructor will demonstrate the skill in the lab.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Practice</td>
<td>You will practice the skill in lab with a partner. Because no two people (clients) will respond alike, <strong>it is highly recommended that you switch partners frequently for a different experience.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice with</td>
<td>During available times, practice the same skill with a partner. This is a good time to develop questions for clarification with the instructor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peer Check</strong></td>
<td>Have a partner Peer Check you as you perform the skill. <strong>Message to the Peer: Be meticulous in your assessment!</strong> Offer constructive criticism so that the student learns the correct method.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Competency Check**
You will complete a Competency Check on selected skills with the course instructor. **Please be fully prepared!** If you do not pass, the instructor will indicate what you missed & clarify information. You will need to schedule an appointment for an additional Competency Check on another day.

**Practical Exam**
Practical Exams will incorporate a number of skills into a single session of testing. **You will not be permitted to take the Practical Exam until all related Competency Checks are successfully completed.** The instructor will provide deadlines and consequences for failing to meet the deadlines.

**Clinical Practice**
Once in the clinic, you will arrange with your Clinical Instructor (CI) to perform a specific list of skills. If supervised, you may assist with any skills that you have completed in the PTA curriculum prior to the internship. You may have the opportunity to practice skills not yet learned or not included in the PTA curriculum. The CI is responsible for this instruction and supervision and it may or may not be included in the assessment of skills on the PTA Clinical Performance Instrument (CPI).

**Unsupervised Laboratory Setting**
There will be many opportunities for PTA students to practice in an unsupervised laboratory setting in order to develop proficiency in program skills as outlined in the Skill Acquisition and Approval Ladder. It is important to note that students are not allowed to turn on or use any electrical equipment without direct supervision from a faculty member. Examples of this equipment include but are not limited to ultrasound machines, electrical stimulation units (portable or free standing), iontophoresis units, TENS units, etc... It is the responsibility of the student to use the equipment and resources safely and to report any misuse or problems with any of the equipment or resources. Program faculty will investigate any reported damage to equipment, resources or reported misuse of electrical equipment by students with possible dismissal from the PTA program. Misuse of unsupervised laboratory time (rough housing, napping, etc…) will result in the loss of access to the unsupervised laboratory setting.

All students are expected to follow the rules/guidelines for use of the Health Science Center as outlined in the HSC Student Guide as well.

**Laboratory Equipment Safety and Inspection**
All electrical equipment owned and used by the PTA program will be annually inspected and labeled by the Biomedical Engineer students under the supervision of a qualified biomedical engineer. Annual testing and calibration, labelling that verifies calibration, documentation of testing results and repair will be completed. An outside vendor may be utilized if the Biomedical Engineering program is unable to provide the service for specific equipment inspection or repairs.
Wheelchairs and treatment mats are inspected at a minimum annually (in May) by faculty. Repairs are made or arranged for as needed.

Any real or potential safety concerns discovered by a student should be immediately reported to a PTA faculty member and the equipment should be labelled and taken out of use until deemed safe.

**Storage, Use or Spill of Hazardous Materials**
The PTA program will follow Western’s emergency procedures for spills. A copy of the procedures is posted in each lab. Western will also have the MSDS sheets available in the lab for any hazardous materials used. Storage and use will follow the recommendations on the MSDS sheet(s).

**Clinical Policies and Procedures**
Clinical education is an integral part of the curriculum of the PTA program at Western Technical College. It is during the clinical education component of the program that the student is given the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom/laboratory settings to actual patients. This is done under the supervision of a clinical instructor (CI) who is a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant employed by the clinical site. Through clinical and internship rotations, students will be given an opportunity to work with a variety of patient types. The clinical education portion of the curriculum starts in the third semester of the program and warrants its own handbook titled The PTA Clinical Education Manual. Please read the manual posted online for details regarding clinical policies and procedures.

**Key Health and Public Safety Division Policies and Procedures**

**General Policy**
- Students whose actions significantly endanger patient safety (which includes but is not limited to, alcohol/drug usage or sexual misconduct) will be dismissed from the course, program, and/or clinical/internship site immediately.
- All repeat courses must be successfully completed prior to completing sequential courses in the program.
- Students who receive a total of three or more non-passing grades (“D”, “F”, or “W”) in program core and/or science courses will be dismissed from the program.
- Students may appeal their dismissal to the Dean of Health and Public Safety for course re-entry and/or program re-entry.
- No student will be allowed to enroll in a core program course more than twice. Each course drop, withdrawal, or failure will count as a course enrollment.
Background Check Policy and Procedure

Students applying to Health and Public Safety Division programs with an arrest (with charge pending) and/or a conviction as noted in the Background Check record may be barred from engaging in the required clinical placements. Failure to disclose an arrest (with charge pending) and/or a conviction that subsequently appears on the Department of Justice record may also bar the student from clinical placements. It is the clinical sites’ prerogative to accept or deny clinical rotations to students with an arrest (with charge pending) and/or a conviction.

It is the student’s responsibility to inform the program and/or college of any changes in his/her criminal history during the course of his/her education.

It is the policy of the Health and Public Safety Division to notify a student with an arrest (with charge pending) and/or a conviction that s/he may not be able to complete the required clinical experiences to earn a degree. The student shall be required to read and sign the Disclosure of Possible Bar from Clinical Experiences waiver.

PROCEDURE:

1. If a student has a positive Background Check, the authorized school representative will contact two clinical sites used by the program.
2. The Associate Dean (for the program the student is apply for admission) or designee will meet with the student to discuss the results of the clinical site(s) decision. The student will be advised as to his/her options. If possible, the Associate Dean may want to invite a counselor to join the discussion.
3. It will be the student’s decision as to whether or not he/she will begin/continue in the program.
4. If the student chooses to continue, the student and Associate Dean will sign the Disclosure of Possible Bar from Clinical Experiences Waiver.

If the student chooses to begin/continue his/her education, the student is not guaranteed a clinical site can be obtained. For each clinical rotation, the program will contact up to two clinical sites that meet the program competencies. If the site(s) deny the student for clinical education based upon the results of the background check, the student cannot continue with the clinical education portion of the program or subsequent courses in which clinical education is a prerequisite. Acceptance for clinical placement during one rotation does not guarantee subsequent clinical placements.

*For clarification purposes, the term “clinical” can be used interchangeably with the terms “internship”, “practicum” or “fieldwork”.

Body Art or Piercing Policy

In the Health & Public Safety Division, a student may display no body art or piercing that might be considered offensive. Most employment settings have policies that are generally broad; however, they do reserve the right to deny employment and student clinical/practicum/fieldwork placement if body art or piercings are found to be offensive to those in that setting. The wearing and displaying of jewelry in the health care or public safety
setting is generally limited to wrist watches and wedding rings or small non-dangling earrings. The purpose of this limitation is related to infection control, safety and public perception of the employees while they are on duty. Education programs (Early Childhood Ed, Instructional Assist), or Human Services Associate programs may allow additional wearing of jewelry as outlined within the program’s practicum handbook or guidelines.

If a Western student has significant visible body art and/or piercings, we are unable to guarantee that the student will be able to be placed for the multiple clinical/practicum/fieldwork experiences that most programs require. You may be asked to cover the body art with clothing or dressings or remove the piercings in order to complete your rotation. If your program has a more restrictive policy on body art or piercings, it will be enforced. It is your decision whether or not to enter the program based on the uncertainty of being accepted at those sites.

Confidentiality Policy

The clinical/practicum/internship or fieldwork experience requires students to read and use health or educational records of clients, patients or children. All Western Technical College students should hold information concerning the identity, diagnosis, prognosis, condition, family situations, care or treatment of their clients, patients or children in confidence. Information systems may not be used to access confidential information that is not essential for completion of professional/student activities.

This obligation of professional confidentiality must be carefully fulfilled not only regarding the information in the person’s charts and records, but also with regard to your activities and behavior outside of your Western course. Do not discuss such information with others unless it is required directly for the treatment or care of the client, patient or child. Discuss the above information within the following parameters:

1. Only in appropriate places (i.e., out of earshot of other clients or staff not caring for the client). Places that are inappropriate are public areas such as the cafeteria, parking ramp, elevators, stairwells, break room, community and your home.

2. Only discuss names, diagnosis, etc., with people directly caring for the client, patient, or child. Examples of inappropriate people would include client family members, facility staff not directly caring for the client, neighbors, your family members, friends, classmates and news reporters.

3. Information transmission must be kept within the facility. Client information may not be copied by you or staff and taken out of any facility. Information should not be transmitted to or from, or stored within, any form of personal technology (e.g., personal computers, laptops, cell phones, cameras, tablets, iPods, Smartwatch, etc.). Use of any social media (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.) which mentions, depicts or photographs clients or clinical sites by name or care/treatment given to any persons will not be tolerated.

Any intentional or accidental violation of these confidentiality provisions, by you or others, must be reported to the faculty member instructing the class or to Health and Public Safety Division administration, Kumm 211, La Crosse campus. Any violation of this confidentiality
policy may result in clinical/practicum or fieldwork disciplinary probation, dismissal from the course and/or program or college discipline related to a Student Code of Conduct violation. It may also bring about legal consequences for the student by parties involved.

**Course Repeat Policy**

Each course drop, withdrawal or failure will count as a course enrollment. A student seeking to enroll in a program course for a second time must initiate a student success plan with program faculty prior to enrollment. Enrollment in a course for a second time is on a space-available basis. Students will not be allowed to enroll in a course more than twice without appealing to the Dean of Health and Public Safety for course re-entry (See Program Re-entry Appeal Process).

General Procedure:

1. The student is required to complete a student re-entry success plan with the course instructor and/or program chair.
2. The faculty member provides the associate dean a copy of the student success plan.
3. If the student is enrolled in a program course for the second time, but has not developed a success plan, the associate dean will direct admissions to drop student from the course.
4. A program may require a student to demonstrate competency skills with a passing grade of a “C” or better prior to re-enrollment in a course.

**HPS Program Dismissal Policy**

Students may be dismissed from a program for:

- Violation for the Western Student Code of Conduct.
- Actions that significantly endanger patient safety (including, but not limited to, alcohol/drug use or sexual misconduct) will result in immediate dismissal from the course, clinical/internship site and/or program.
- Breaching patient confidentiality.
- Jeopardizing clinical/fieldwork or internship relationships
- Violation of program or facility-specific policies.
- Receiving a total of three or more non-passing grades (“D”, “F”, or “W”) in program core and/or science courses.

Students may appeal their dismissal to the Dean of Health and Public Safety for program re-entry. Please refer to the Program Re-Entry Appeal Process listed in the Western Student Planner and Handbook. The planner can be purchased at Western’s Campus Shop or found on Western’s website at www.westerntc.edu.
Program Re-entry Appeal Process

Students failing or dismissed from a Health and Public Safety Division program may appeal to the Dean of Health and Public Safety for re-entry. Students will follow the re-entry process and recognize that the Dean reserves the right to deny the student program re-entry.

Process:

Students requesting program re-entry are required to initiate the following process:

1. Write a letter of intent requesting re-entry into the program that includes:
   - The student’s professional goals.
   - An examination of the student’s choices and behaviors that prevented successful completion of courses/program.
   - The student’s plan for change and improvement for program success.
   - Contact information, including name, program, student ID number, address, phone and email.

2. Mail letter of intent to: Dean of Health and Public Safety, Room K211, Western Technical College, 400 North Seventh Street, PO Box C-0908, La Crosse, WI, 54602-0908.

3. The Division will contact student to schedule an appeal meeting with the Dean of Health and Public Safety.

4. The student will be notified of the Dean’s decision by letter (email or USPS).

Program re-entry is always on a space-available basis. In situations where re-entry is granted, the Dean will often refer the student to meet with program faculty to develop a program success plan. The success plan may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Additional courses for remediation
2. Competency demonstration
3. Required meetings with Western faculty or staff

HPS TB Policy

The student must provide negative tuberculosis results as a requirement to attend the clinical or fieldwork portions of the Health and Public Safety Division courses. Students will need to show proof of annual testing for TB or will need to obtain a baseline test using two-step testing with the Mantoux Tuberculin Skin Test (TST).

Procedure:

Prior to beginning the clinical/practicum/fieldwork/internship portion of a program, students must provide proof of TB testing. Proof can be provided through two mechanisms:

* Annual documentation of TB testing.
* Baseline testing using the two-step testing with the Mantoux Tuberculin Skin Test (TST).
1. If the two-step TB skin test is negative, a one-step skin test is required on an annual basis. If 12 months elapsed since the previous skin test, a two-step will be required.

2. If the two-step TB skin test is positive, the student must see his/her healthcare provider for follow-up and provide documentation annually of such follow-up. Usually the initial chest x-ray is required to rule out active TB.

3. Students should seek medical attention if they experience signs and symptoms suggestive of active TB.

**Immune Status Impact on Clinical Experiences Policy Waiver**

The Health and Public Safety Division has clinical agreements with outside agencies which require students to demonstrate evidence of immunity or vaccination to specific diseases (e.g., Influenza, varicella, tuberculosis, etc.). If a student does not comply with this requirement, they may be denied clinical placements. It is the prerogative of a clinical site to deny students who are unable to demonstrate their immunity or vaccination status. Being denied a clinical rotation will result in the inability to complete the program or failure of the course.

Some sites may allow a student to participate in a clinical experience without an influenza vaccination. At these sites, the student may be required to wear a mask at all times when at the agency. Should an Influenza outbreak occur, students without verification of Influenza vaccination may be immediately denied access by the placement site, which will result in the inability to complete the program or failure of the course.

**Procedure:**

1. Students will demonstrate their immunity and vaccination status by uploading verification documents to their online medical document manager.

2. If a student cannot submit evidence of immunity or vaccination (due to medical circumstances), the clinical coordinator or the authorized school representative will contact sites used by the program (up to two per rotation) inquiring as to the student’s eligibility for clinical placement. Acceptance for clinical placement during one rotation does not guarantee subsequent clinical placements.

3. If after two sites are contacted and are not able to accept the student for placement, the student will be unable to complete the clinical portion of the class/program and will fail the course or not be able to complete the program. The student cannot enroll in subsequent courses in which clinical education is a pre/co-requisite.

*For clarification purposes, the term “clinical” can be used interchangeably with the terms “internship”, “practicum” or “fieldwork”.*
Needlestick Policy
Student accident insurance covers testing performed on students who are stuck with a needle in a clinical setting. This testing can cost hundreds of dollars. The insurance does not cover testing of the patient who was stuck with the needle. Some organizations cover the cost to test the patient, but some will not. If the patient is not tested, the student must be treated as if they are infected—this treatment is expensive and costs the insurance company more than if the patient had been tested and determined to not be infected with HIV, hepatitis or other diseases.

QUESTIONS
Do the other Technical Colleges pay to have the patient tested if the organization will not pay? The consensus of the Risk Managers in attendance at the April 2012 DMI Risk Managers meeting was that if the organization refuses to pay, the College will pay for the testing on the patient.

Would the insurance company be willing to pay for the patient testing? No.

RESOLUTION
In the event of a needlestick involving a Western student, Western will work with the clinical site. If the site is unwilling to pay for the testing, Western will cover the cost.

Pregnancy Statement
It is strongly recommended that students voluntarily inform their instructor if they are pregnant. Our primary concern is the safety of you and your baby. Depending on the program, there may be potential risks you should be aware of, and which you may want to discuss with your healthcare provider in order to determine if you should continue in your program at this time. After discussion with your instructor, some adjustments (if any) might be made in class activities to promote your comfort and safety. The choice of continuing is yours; however, we want to ensure that your choice is fully informed, and that you know we are here to support you during your pregnancy.

Program Records Policy
The Division requires programs and/or courses to maintain program and student records in accordance with the standards required by each accreditation and/or regulatory agencies standards.

Social Media Policy
Social media creates opportunities for students to communicate in a public forum. Just as there are guidelines for respectful face-to-face communication, there are also standards of conduct for the use of internet tools such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and YouTube. All engagement in social media is bound by Western Technical College’s Computer Use Policy, Student Code of Conduct and other generally established policies governing student behavior (e.g., program handbooks, course syllabi, clinical training site guidelines, employer policies, etc.), as well as the Terms of Use of the specific social media site being used. Disregard of these standards will be considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.
Because the technology that drives web communication changes rapidly, this policy may be adjusted to reflect issues that may arise in its management and implementation or for any other reason that supports the College’s priorities.

**Guidelines for Individual Use of Social Media**

These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Students must adhere to the principles of patient/client privacy and confidentiality in safeguarding identifiable patient/client information as it relates to social media.
- Students should represent their own views and be professional and accurate in their communications.
- Students should not misrepresent when they are speaking for themselves or Western, other organizations, educational institutions, clinical sites, or employers.

**Student Employment at Clinical* Site Policy**

Any agreement a student may enter into with a clinical affiliate for employment purposes is not a requirement of the program and is a separate agreement between the clinical* site and the student in an employer/employee relationship. Any student employed while he/she is still enrolled in a program in the Health and Public Safety Division may not receive payment for his/her clinical* time. Paid time can NOT count as clinical time.

*Note: for purpose of this policy, the term “clinical” is interchangeable with the terms fieldwork, internship, and practicum.

**College Wide Policies and Procedures**

All college wide policies listed in the Western Student Handbook are also in effect. For emphasis, a few important college policies are repeated here.

**Student Drug and Alcohol Use Policy**

As per the Western Technical College Alcohol and Drug Policy for Employees and Students (C0105), Western is committed to maintaining a drug-free learning and work environment.

To ensure a safe and effective learning and work environment, and to provide a tool for faculty and staff to use in identifying and responding to situations where student drug and/or alcohol use is suspected, a drug/alcohol testing policy has been created.

**Student Drug/Alcohol Testing Policy**

Any student at Western who appears to be impaired or under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance may be required to submit to drug and/or alcohol testing (paid for by the College) under the following circumstances:

1. If a faculty or staff member has *reasonable cause* to believe that the student is impaired or under the influence of a controlled substance(s), abused prescription drug(s), alcohol, or other mind-altering substance(s).
2. If a student is involved in an accident or incident where safety precautions were violated by a careless act resulting in injury to a person or damage to equipment.

**Student Drug/Alcohol Parental Notification Policy**
The Vice President of Student Development and Success, the Dean of Students, and/or designee has the authority and reserves the right to notify parents or guardians when students have committed serious or repeated violations of university policies, local and/or state laws related to the drug and alcohol policy.

**Smoking Policy**
Western Technical College campuses are completely tobacco-free. Western has joined other area businesses, health care providers, and educational institutions in promoting a tobacco-free environment. This program is designed to create a healthier environment for everyone who comes to Western Technical College to study, work, or visit.

**A Tobacco-Free Campus**
- Provides a healthier environment for students, staff, and visitors.
- Assists students and staff in improving their own health.
- Enhances the health of the communities we serve.

**Tobacco-Free Policy**
- Tobacco-Free Campus prohibits the use of all tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, on all properties owned, leased or operated by Western, including College vehicles.
- Only exclusion will be private vehicles.
- The sidewalks on 7th Street between Badger Street and Vine Street have been designated as a “Courtesy Zone.” A Courtesy Zone is a section of city property where individuals are asked to refrain from using tobacco out of respect and courtesy for the high volume of Western students, staff, and visitors who use the walkways.
- Ash receptacles are located throughout the perimeter of campus. It is expected of all individuals to be respectful when using tobacco off of Western property and ensure waste gets in the proper containers.
- Policy enforcement focuses on positive reinforcement and is the responsibility of all staff and students. The goal is self-enforcement. Repeat violations of the policy will be handled through already established judicial/discipline procedures for both students and staff.
**Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure**

Western Technical College is committed to upholding academic integrity in all modes of learning. Faculty, students and staff are all responsible for ensuring the integrity, fairness, and honesty of the intellectual environment. Academic integrity violations, include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, falsification and other forms of dishonest or unethical behavior, and are considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

**Academic Dishonesty Definitions:**

Violations of academic integrity include, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

- **Cheating** – using or attempting to use materials, information or communications without permission of the instructor. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - Copying or allowing another person to copy a test paper, assignment, report or any other graded material
  - Using external aids of any kind (e.g. notes, books, electronic devices, and information from others) or a test, quiz or other graded assessment without permission of instructor.
  - Taking a test for someone else or having someone else complete a test or graded assessment in one’s place
  - Using, buying, selling, stealing, soliciting or copying any contents of an examination, quiz or other graded assessment without authorization of instructor

- **Plagiarism** – intentionally or unintentionally representing another person’s work as one’s own. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - Quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing another’s work or ideas without properly acknowledging or citing the source of the work
  - Submitting another person’s work as one’s own, including purchasing another’s work to submit as one’s own

- **Unauthorized Collaboration** – sharing information or aiding another person during an examination or in preparing academic work without prior authorization of instructor

- **Fabrication** – using invented, altered, forged or falsified information in academic work or documentation whether in hard copy or electronic format

- **Multiple submission** – the submission of the same work or substantially the same work to more than one class, and/or submission of prior academic work submitted for credit at a different institution

- **Academic Misconduct** – other forms of dishonesty or inappropriate conduct. Examples included, but are not limited to:
  - Requesting an academic benefit such as requesting an extension, excused absence, or other benefit based on false information or deception
  - Knowingly and willingly damaging the efforts or work of other students
  - Accessing student or faculty records or files without authorization
  - Misrepresenting oneself as a student or faculty member to obtain protected information or other academic or personal benefit
Academic Integrity Procedure:
To ensure a fair and timely resolution to any academic integrity allegations, the following process shall be implemented:

1. Course level process - Faculty notifies the student of the suspicion of academic dishonesty and offers to discuss the matter in person, by phone or via email
   a. If student accepts responsibility – faculty determines appropriate outcome (see below), notifies student of outcome, and documents via Academic Integrity Report
   b. If student denies allegation – faculty reviews all information to determine if a violation of academic integrity occurred, determines appropriate outcome (if applicable), notifies student of outcome and right to appeal decision to academic dean (along with appropriate contact information), and documents via Academic Integrity Report

Upon notification to the student of an allegation of academic dishonesty, the student is prohibited from withdrawing from the course while the allegation is being considered. Students found to be in violation are prohibited from withdrawing from the course at any time. Attempting to withdraw will result in a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and be referred to the Dean of Students office for resolution.

Outcomes will be at the discretion of the instructor and may include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Verbal or written warning to the student
- Student Success Plan
- Deduction of points or assigning a failing grade or score for the work or assessment in question
- Assigning a failing grade for the course (with prior consultation of academic dean)

Students found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy have the right to appeal the process. The appeal is limited to failure to notify student of allegation, failing to provide student opportunity to discuss allegation, failing to follow the published academic integrity process, or other specific error or omission that may have influenced the outcome.

The appeal for a course level academic integrity allegation must be made in writing to the academic dean or designee within five (5) calendar days of student receiving notification of outcome of violation. The dean or designee will make a final decision after full review and consideration of the process and related information. The student and instructor will be notified in writing of the decision. The decision of the dean or designee is final.

OR

2. College level process - Repeat academic integrity violations and/or allegations that include possible violation of other Student Code of Conduct standards will be referred to the Dean of Students to be addressed through the Student Code of Conduct procedure.

At the college level process, outcomes for allegations referred to the Dean of Students may include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Verbal or written warning
- Non-academic probation
- Community service assignment
- Suspension or dismissal from program (with consultation of academic dean)
The appeal for an academic integrity allegations addressed by the Dean of Students must be made in writing to the Office of the Vice President for Student Services and Engagement within ten (10) calendar days of student receiving notification of outcome of violation. A vice president will make a final decision after full review and consideration of the process and related information. The student and instructor will be notified in writing of the decision. The decision of the vice president is final.

Student Code of Conduct

Western Technical College provides education and training to the residents of the Western District. As a learning organization, Western Technical College monitors student conduct and encourages positive behaviors in support of a positive teaching and learning environment as well as Western’s values. A student is defined as any person who attends and/or is enrolled in any classes or program at the college.

In the classroom and in all aspects of college life, our goal is to provide the best opportunity for student success for all. Aspects of college life range from attending classes to being a representative of the College in the community and beyond. The College will take action to prevent and stop any negative behavior that inhibits learning. The following actions and/or behaviors shall be considered violations of the Student Code of Conduct and will subject any student or student organization to possible conduct sanctions:

1. Physical or verbal abuse of any person.
2. Disruption of the normal operation of the College, including behavior which prevents or interferes with a program, event or classroom instruction.
3. Endangerment of the health, safety or rights of any person.
4. Theft or damage to College property or property of any person on campus.
5. Unauthorized entry or use of a College facility.
6. Use, possession, or distribution of drugs, alcohol, firearms, explosives, dangerous chemicals, or other weapons; being under the influence of alcohol or drugs; and/or use of tobacco on campus property.
7. Academic dishonesty such as plagiarism or cheating (see Academic Dishonesty Definition in Student Handbook).
8. Unethical, inappropriate, or illegal use of technology in the District.
9. Failure to comply with reasonable request of College officials acting in the performance of their duties and/or failing to positively identify one’s self to a College official when requested to do so.
10. Violent or threatening behavior such as, but not limited to, sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.
11. Engaging in actions which intimidate, harass, threaten, coerce, or otherwise endanger any person.
12. Bullying such as aggressive and continual behaviors of making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and/or purposefully excluding a person from learning opportunities whether in person or through technological means.
13. Retaliation (any adverse action whether physical, verbal or psychological) toward an individual or group who initiated a complaint with the College.
Should alleged violations of the Student Code of Conduct arise, a hearing procedure will be followed in accordance with the College conduct guidelines and/or the Non-academic Code of Conduct Hearing Process (http://wire1.westernte.edu/policy/e0707.htm). If determined that a violation did occur, conduct sanctions may range from referral for counseling support in situations where students need support services to suspension or expulsion from the College in situations where serious violations arise. In keeping with the mission of the College, any action taken will reflect an opportunity for the student to learn conduct that is more conducive to a positive learning environment.
Thriving...Not Just Surviving

Making the decision to enter the Physical Therapist Assistant Program took much thought and consideration. Many of you waited years for your opportunity to enter the program. The next two years will be filled with challenges, laughter, tears, new friends, stress, and feelings of accomplishment. Our hope is that years from now you will look back at your experience at Western and realize that these were some of the best years of your life.

Our experience has shown that you are more likely to succeed if you:

- **Remain open to new experiences.** College courses, if done right, will challenge you to expand your horizons.

- **Have a positive attitude.** It's been proven that the ability to learn is improved with a positive attitude. Having a positive attitude will make it easier for you and your peers/instructors to work together.

- **Practice good time management.** Get in the habit now of using your time wisely and efficiently. Waiting until the night before the test to study is a good way to fail an exam. You will be asked to do many papers and projects during your two-years...take that project and break it down into small chunks and work on it slowly but surely. The PT skills that you learn will require practice on your part so that you can gain a level of proficiency sufficient to treat patients. Work to balance your time, many of you are juggling not only school but work and family as well. Make time to play, you are more likely to retain the information that you are studying if your stress level is lower. Never underestimate the power of a good laugh.

- **As best you can, keep stress to a minimum.** Eat...get adequate sleep...take time to play...practice relaxation skills....practice good time management. Have a support system in place and don't forget about exercising. The Wellness Center is available for student use...or even a walk around the block is helpful. Take time to smell the roses.

- **Study Wisely.** Use good time management. Identify your learning style (something we'll do in class). Choose your study partners carefully (just because you really like your classmates doesn't mean you are compatible study partners). If your studying doesn't seem to be paying off...be willing to seek assistance of others (faculty/academic success center) for ideas of changes to make.

- **Take ownership for your behavior and performance.** It is our job as faculty to provide information to you and guide you in the application of the new information. How you choose to receive, study, and practice with the information will be totally up to you. As faculty, we won't take responsibility for the grade you get...but will take responsibility for assisting you in any way we can...provided you are open and responsive.

- **Communicate.** The more the better. As instructors, we'll strive to let you know what is expected in the course. You should at all times know where you stand as far as how you are doing in the course. If you aren't sure...ask! Share with instructors information that you think is relevant.

- **Seek help before it is too late!** The time to seek help is before you reach the crisis mode. Many people on campus are committed to assisting you in successfully completing the program. Use the Learning Commons and remember that counselors are available free of charge for assistance with personal issues. Don't be afraid to seek help!