



**Vice-presidency of Academic and Students Affairs  
School of Health**

**PHYSICAL THERAPY  
ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAM  
INFORMATIVE MANUAL**

**FOR PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANTS**

**2014-2016**

## Contents

I. Licenses and Accreditations.....	4
II. Huertas Vision, Mission, and Philosophy.....	5
III. Mission and Philosophy of the Program .....	6
IV. Program Goals .....	6
V. Program Objectives .....	7
VI. Graduate Profile .....	8
VII. Qualifications and Requirements .....	9
A. Description of the Profession.....	9
B. Requirements for Clinical Practice Centers .....	9
C. License and Credentials .....	10
D. Professional Association Memberships .....	10
E. Physical and Psychological Requisites.....	11
F. General Responsibilities of the Physical Therapist Assistant.....	11
G. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 –Reasonable Accommodations Act .....	12
H. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification.....	12
I. HIPAA Certification.....	12
J. Practice Insurance.....	12
K. Estimated Program Costs.....	13
L. Financial Aid.....	13
VIII. General Description of the Study Program Sequence .....	14
IX. Curricular Sequence for the Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program.....	15
X. Characteristics of the Physical Therapist Assistant Student.....	17
XI. Academic Standards.....	17
A. Admissions Criteria and Process .....	17
B. Policy of Satisfactory Academic Progress.....	18

- C. Attendance and Tardiness Policy ..... 19
- D. Competency Assessment ..... 19
- E. Academic Counseling ..... 20
- F. General Procedures for Retention, Recruitment, and Early Detection of Needs ..... 20
- XII. Other Policies and Procedures ..... 23
  - A. Student Privacy and Confidentiality ..... 23
  - B. Off Campus Activities ..... 23
  - C. Policy for Dismissal from the Program for Inappropriate Conduct or Dishonesty ..... 24
  - D. Comments and Grievances from Individuals Outside the Institution ..... 24
  - E. Withdrawal Policy ..... 25
  - F. Readmission Policy ..... 25
  - G. Dress Code ..... 26

Huertas College does not discriminate against any person on account of race, color, gender, religion, age, political ideas or affiliation, ethnic origin, disabilities, pregnancy or military or civil status.

## **I. Licenses and Accreditations**

1. The Puerto Rico Council of Education has provided the Institution with the corresponding licenses to operate.
2. Huertas College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (267) 284-5000. Middle States Commission on Higher Education is recognized by the Secretary of Education of the United States and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.
3. The Technology in Health Information Management Associate Degree is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM).
4. The Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program at Huertas College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314; telephone: 703-706-3245; email: [accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org); website: <http://www.capteonline.org>.

## **II. Huertas Vision, Mission, and Philosophy**

### **Vision**

To be an educational institution of excellence in teaching and service for the benefit of the community.

### **Mission**

Huertas College is a leading institution committed to excellence in postsecondary education and social responsibility. It develops among its constituents intellectual, technological, and human competencies to achieve an inclusive and self-sufficient society.

### **Philosophy**

Huertas College bases its existential purpose on teaching and preparing capable individuals who will be able to compete effectively in the occupational world and to contribute to society. The curricular offer of the College is in harmony with its principles; therefore it is aimed at satisfying the needs of the occupational market.

Huertas College is committed to a quality teaching-learning process; consequently it is wholeheartedly dedicated to the incorporation of new concepts and technologies in the daily activities taking place in the classrooms and Laboratories.

To sum it up, the Institution designates itself as a “community college” and, for that reason its activities are geared to satisfy the needs of its community. The College exists as a living, dynamic, and innovative entity which inspires hope in a modern and competitive Puerto Rico.

### **III. Mission and Philosophy of the Program**

#### **Mission**

In accordance with the mission of Huertas College (HC), the mission of the Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program is to facilitate the acquisition of the skills and knowledge needed to graduate physical therapist assistants with the highest standards of proficiency in Physical Therapy who are prepared to obtain and maintain the credentials that are required to practice the profession in Puerto Rico and offer expert services anywhere.

#### **Philosophy**

The philosophy of the program is to contribute to the development of an integral, competent, and responsible person who is responsive to individual needs and capable of meeting the profession's expectations through the performance of his/her role as a Physical Therapist Assistant in an ethical, safe, and legal manner.

The Program is committed to foster in our students the development of critical thinking for the appropriate and effective application of selected components of Physical Therapy interventions and for handling emergencies and controversial situations while upholding at all times the ethical conduct standards of the profession established by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA).

We expect to accomplish this through an integrated curriculum that includes an assortment of excellent academic and clinical experiences, a faculty with superior educational levels prepared with the most advanced clinical and pedagogical skills in the profession, and modeling by the academic and clinical faculties exemplifying the values and standards that regulate the profession.

We also intend to emphasize in our students the development of ethical, professional, and human values; tolerance to individual and cultural differences; and dedication to respond to the needs of the general community, while taking responsibility of their own learning and professional growth. Consequently, we expect to contribute to the improvement of health in general by promoting healthy lifestyles and enhancing the quality of life in our society.

### **IV. Program Goals**

- A. To prepare students to work adeptly in the occupational world as Physical Therapist Assistants with the most advanced knowledge and skills in the Physical Therapy field.
- B. To graduate Physical Therapist Assistants committed to offer Physical Therapy services of the highest quality in an ethical, safe, and legal manner, following legal regulations, and behaving in accordance with APTA's ethical standards of conduct.

- C. To prepare the student, once graduated, to obtain and maintain the professional license required to practice the profession in Puerto Rico.
- D. To foster in the students and the Program's graduates an ongoing interest for seeking up-to-date knowledge to maintain a level of proficiency corresponding to the needs of the patients/clients and the advances in the profession.
- E. To obtain and maintain the Program's accreditation granted by the Accrediting Commission of Physical Therapy Programs and APTA (refer to the statement below).

## **V. Program Objectives**

- A. To prepare the students with the most advanced knowledge and skills in the Physical Therapy field.
- B. To provide the students the necessary skills to offer selected components of the Physical Therapy plan of care proficiently under the supervision of a Physical Therapist in an ethical, effective, legal, and safe manner.
- C. To develop in the students' critical analysis skills for providing Physical Therapy services of the highest quality aimed at reaching the established goals and at making responsible clinical decisions.
- D. To develop in the students oral and written communication skills in Spanish and English to achieve effective communication in all their interactions as Physical Therapist Assistants.
- E. To develop in the students writing skills aimed at producing clear, precise, and effective documentation using the required formats in physical therapy and following legal and medical insurance regulations.
- F. To prepare the students to perform as Physical Therapist Assistants following the profession Standards of Practice, American Physical Therapy Association Code of Ethics, and applicable local and federal regulations.
- G. To develop socio-humanistic values in the students to prepare them to respond to the individual and cultural differences of the patients/clients with sensitivity, respect, and empathy.
- H. To develop in the students the ability to educate patients, relatives, colleagues, coworkers, and the general community using assorted teaching skills appropriate to the audience's characteristics and learning styles.
- I. To foster an attitude of commitment and vocation to the profession by participating in activities aimed at their professional development and in professional associations.
- J. To foster the participation of the Program's graduates in continuing education activities provided by Huertas College and other accredited institutions.
- K. To provide excellent clinical education experiences in which the student is able to integrate and apply the knowledge, skills, and ethical values that are necessary to offer Physical Therapy services.
- L. To offer an academic curriculum that prepares the student for obtaining and maintaining the professional license required to practice as a Physical Therapist Assistant in Puerto Rico.

- M. To maintain qualified academic and clinical faculties with the up-to-date competencies required in the Physical Therapy field.
- N. To comply with the program's accreditation standards and those of the accrediting agency.

## VI. Graduate Profile

The students who complete the courses of the Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program will demonstrate the following characteristics and competencies:

- A. Practice the profession in compliance with APTA's standards of ethical conduct and the laws and policies regulating the profession at the local, state, and federal levels.
- B. Carry out the responsibilities of a Physical Therapist Assistant in an ethical, safe, and legal manner, uphold professional practice standards, and work under the supervision and direction of a Physical Therapist.
- C. Read and interpret Physical Therapy professional literature and medical terminology in general as part of the intervention process with the patient/client and the review of the medical file to offer effective and assertive interventions.
- D. Apply selected components of the Physical Therapy plan of care appropriately as designed by the Physical Therapist, following state and federal regulations, ethical codes, and the policies and procedures of the Physical Therapy Facility.
- E. Apply strategies for risk management, such as aseptic technique, body mechanics, and safety measures while providing Physical Therapy services, minimizing risks to the patient/client, to him/herself, and to others.
- F. Perform patient/client data collection in an assertive, valid, safe, and timely manner to document and measure the patient's progress during the Physical Therapy intervention.
- G. Advance the patient/client competently according to the Physical Therapy treatment plan and with patient's status change, in order to achieve the established goals, while in consultation with the Physical Therapist.
- H. Recognize if the patient is or is not progressing toward the established goals and if not, determine the need to modify the treatment plan to achieve a better response from the patient/client and notify the Physical Therapist.
- I. Identify safety risks and possible environmental or architectural barriers for the functional performance of the patient in his/her customary surroundings and offer appropriate and practical recommendations according to the situation.
- J. In clinical records and documents related to Physical Therapy services, write down in a clear, precise, effective, and timely manner, following the guides and formats required by law, billing policies, and the clinical facility.
- K. Participate in the process of discharge planning and patient/client follow-up plans in collaboration with the Physical Therapist and other members of the health care team, as needed.



- L. Provide clear and effective instructions, education, and orientation to the patient/client and his/her relatives, implementing educational strategies that take into consideration individual needs and learning styles, as delegated by the Physical Therapist.
- M. Educate other members of the health care team, colleagues, students, and the community about the responsibilities, education, and scope of practice of a Physical Therapist Assistant, as well as issues related to the profession, as delegated by the Physical Therapist.
- N. Employ effective oral and written communication with the Physical Therapist, other professionals, the patient/client, relatives, and others while maintaining appropriate interpersonal relationships exhibiting integrity in all their interactions.
- O. Apply analysis and critical thinking skills to resolve problems and to handle emergency situations while providing Physical Therapy services responding ethically and responsibly within the PTA scope of practice.
- P. Recognize individual and cultural differences by demonstrating values such as tolerance, empathy, respect, and sensitivity toward the patient's condition and psychosocial factors that arise in the physical therapy intervention.
- Q. Demonstrate commitment to the profession and their own development by continuously updating their knowledge and skills on behalf of the profession, the patients/clients, and the community and by participating in professional organizations.
- R. Demonstrate awareness of their roles and responsibilities to the general public, including active participation in community activities, physical therapy voluntary services, and community service organizations.

## **VII. Qualifications and Requirements**

### **A. Description of the Profession**

Physical Therapist Assistants work under the direction and supervision of a Physical Therapist. Their basic responsibilities are: the application of selected components of the Physical Therapy plan of care, collecting information from the patients to measure their progress, documenting progress notes, communicating effectively with the Physical Therapist, physician, or other professionals, educating the patient and relatives, and participating in health promotion, among other things. Some of the techniques that the students will learn are: application of thermal agents, therapeutic massage, application of exercise programs, training in the use of assistive equipment, ambulation, mobility, and daily life activities. Physical Therapist Assistants work in hospitals, physical therapy facilities, private medical offices, sports medicine practices, home health care services, rehabilitation facilities, and programs for children and schools.

### **B. Requirements for Clinical Practice Centers**

The contracts of Huertas College with practice centers will certify that our students are committed to complying with the rules and procedures of the facilities concerning the care and handling of patients, their behavior, required documents, and uniforms, among others.

Students will receive orientation about the center to which they are assigned before initiating their clinical practice. Students must refer to the Clinical Practice Handbook to identify the required documents and the specific policies in order to participate in the clinical experiences.

To see more details regarding the clinical practice, such as objectives, pass policies, and grades, students must refer to the specific syllabus of each clinical practice. Some of the required documents may be a criminal background certificate, evidence of hepatitis immunization, drug tests, and others. Students must understand that if they fail to provide any of these documents, they will not be able to participate in the clinical experience, which will delay their progress in the Program.

A student with a criminal record may not be able to complete the clinical experiences and to take the licensing exam, which is required to obtain the PTA License and to practice the profession.

Students who get a positive result in a drug test will not be able to advance to clinical experiences and through the program. These students will be referred to the Counseling and Orientation Office. Students, who do not comply with the established procedures to manage their cases, will not be allowed to continue in the Program or to reenter the Program at a future date.

For more information, contact the Program Director.

### **C. License and Credentials**

1. An Associate Degree in a Physical Therapy Program that is accredited and approved by the Puerto Rico Council of Education and other national agencies is required to practice as a Physical Therapist Assistant in Puerto Rico.
2. In order to practice the profession in the United States, the Physical Therapy Program must be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE).
3. To obtain their professional license, graduates must pass a licensing exam administered by the Examining Board of Physical Therapy of the Puerto Rico Department of Health.
4. The professional license is a requirement for practicing the profession.
5. Once a Physical Therapist Assistant obtains the license, he/she is responsible for renewing it every three years. The PTA must complete 21 credits of continuing education during the three year period.
6. To practice in the United States, the graduate must pass the licensing exam administered by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy ([www.fsbpt.org](http://www.fsbpt.org)).

### **D. Professional Association Memberships**

Huertas College and the faculty of the Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program are committed to foster in our students the interest and desire for supporting and participating in

professional organizations. Enrolled students are candidates to request membership to the Puerto Rican Physiotherapy Association and to the American Physical Therapy Association. The latter offers the benefits of a monthly subscription to PT Magazine and the Journal of the American Physical Therapy Association. Both associations offer discounts for conventions and continuing education courses. Students will pay around \$90.00 a year for both memberships.

## **E. Physical and Psychological Requisites**

### **1. Physical skills and aptitudes**

Working conditions that Physical Therapist Assistants may find in their line of work could include: a high number of patients, overcrowding, stressful environment due to a temporary lack of personnel, lack of essential equipment, momentary shortage of materials, and a patient's or coworker's unpleasant behavior. These situations will be discussed and simulated in specific courses of the Program. The students and graduates will be required to perform tasks that entail moderate effort for safely lifting and carrying equipment and materials of up to 50 pounds without assistance and over 50 pounds with assistance. The students and graduates must be able to use adequate body mechanics to lean, push, pull, move, and position a patient or equipment to apply the physical therapy components of treatment. Constant awareness about the high risk of suffering back injuries in this profession is necessary.

### **2. Sensory and Motor Abilities**

Students must have the following characteristics:

- Visual and auditory acuity – An accurate perception of colors and average hearing ability to be aware of the patient's reactions to the treatment and to identify potential hazards and changes in the patient's condition. Students must be capable of responding and adapting to changes and able to read instructions, treatment plans, and safety precautions.
- Written and oral comprehension and documentation abilities to understand and interpret medical terminology as it applies to physical therapy; to communicate with patients/clients, colleagues, physical therapists, and physicians; to prepare precise reports, progress notes, and record patient treatments and reactions; and to evaluate the patient's progress by reading notes.

## **F. General Responsibilities of the Physical Therapist Assistant**

- To respect the confidentiality and privacy laws that protect the patients while interacting with them and while reviewing their medical information and other documents.

- To plan and organize the daily burden of patients and other tasks under the supervision of the Physical Therapist.
- To supervise, directly and indirectly, aides, students, volunteers, and patients in the waiting room.
- To communicate effectively and tactfully with patients, relatives, referring physician, physiatrist or other specialist involved in the patient's care, physical therapist, and occupational therapist, among others.
- To adhere to the rules and procedures of his/her employer, as well as the laws and standards that regulate the profession.

### **G. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 –Reasonable Accommodations Act**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination on the basis of physical or mental disabilities. It stipulates that educational institutions will make all their study programs available to students with disabilities. If a student has a physical disability that could interfere with his/her progress in the study program, the student is responsible for notifying the Program Director in advance to request reasonable accommodations so that modifications may be made according to his/her needs. The student must also refer to the Counseling and Orientation Office, for receiving assistance and guidance regarding reasonable accommodations. This office is located in the main building and the telephone number is 787-746-1400, extensions 1503, 1500, and 1501.

### **H. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification**

While students are enrolled in the Program, they must obtain and maintain the CPR Certification. Arrangements will be made for the certification of new students during the Introduction to Clinical Procedures course.

### **I. HIPAA Certification**

In compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Huertas College is committed to ensure patients' rights to privacy and confidentiality. In keeping with this policy, students will receive a complete training in HIPAA Policy during their first semester, and will receive a HIPAA Policy training certificate. The date of the workshop will be coordinated during the first or second semester by the Program Director and announced at least a week in advance. Students must make arrangements to attend the workshop on the designated date or notify the faculty about any situation that may interfere with their attendance. Students will not be allowed to initiate their clinical practice or to participate in any type of activity that includes visits to practice centers without the HIPAA Certification.

### **J. Practice Insurance**

All students admitted to the Program must pay \$20.00 every year to acquire the Institution's insurance policy. This policy covers the students for accidents related to the Program's educational activities outside the Institution, equipment damage, and malpractice/liability insurance. Students who do not pay this insurance policy will not be allowed to participate in

clinical experiences. We recommend that students pay for this insurance at the beginning of their third semester.

### K. Estimated Program Costs

The Institutional Catalog provides information regarding tuition costs, credit transcripts, and other general expenses. The following itemization of expenses is only an estimate for the PTA Associate Degree Program. For information regarding other institutional fees, such as enrollment cancellation and document duplicates, among others, students must refer to the Institutional Catalog ([www.huertas.edu](http://www.huertas.edu)) or seek assistance in the Registrar's Office.

Description	Estimated Cost
5 semesters with a minimum of 12 credits	\$3,250 per semester Total: \$16,260
Admission Application	\$10.00
Uniforms	\$100.00
Books and materials	\$500.00
Practice Insurance	\$20.00
Costs related to clinical practice (immunizations, certifications, transportation, etc.)	\$500.00
Graduation	\$75.00
<b>Total estimated costs</b>	<b>\$17,465.00</b>

### L. Financial Aid

The Financial Aid Office offers an assortment of alternatives for students who want to study in the Institution. Students must visit this office in order to receive orientation about available options. For more details, please refer to the Institutional Catalog ([www.huertas.edu](http://www.huertas.edu)).

## VIII. General Description of the Study Program Sequence

The Huertas College Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program is intended to provide a specific progression throughout its development. It is an integrated program that must be completed within five semesters or 75 weeks. The Program includes general courses such as, Spanish, English, sciences related to human anatomy, and technical concentration courses. Each semester includes at least three concentration courses which may include additional laboratory hours. As the curriculum advances, the student will encounter courses that are more complex and could entail more practice time in the clinical areas, the classrooms, and the Laboratories. Students **must** read and sign the **Student Consent Form for Classroom, Laboratory and Clinical Experiences** which will be handed out during the first week of classes.

As of their first semester, the students will have the opportunity to visit the practice centers as part of the teaching strategies of some courses. This is intended to provide the student with the opportunity of observing basic physical therapy procedures in a real setting and being exposed to professional socialization. These visits will be coordinated by the course's professor and may be in or outside class time; they are also subject to the availability of the center at the time.

The student will begin to participate in limited clinical experiences as of the third semester because their practical skills by then will be minimal. However, the student is expected to demonstrate some specific skills in accordance with the courses already taken. By the fourth semester, the student will participate in the first full-time clinical practice, for a 5 week period. At that time, the student is expected to demonstrate greater skills and aptitudes in the responsibilities of a Physical Therapist Assistant. During the fifth semester the student will participate in the second full-time clinical practice, which will be the final practice and will be completed within 8 weeks.

**The program of studies will take place from Monday to Friday, daytime hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., except for clinical practices whose hours range from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.** Consequently, students who are admitted to the Program are expected to set aside this time and not use it for other activities or personal commitments. Punctuality, attendance, and compliance with established schedules are of crucial importance for effective progression in the Program.

Students will be admitted only once a year to enter the Program in the month of January. Accordingly, concentration courses are offered only once a year, which means that a student who fails a technical concentration course will have to wait until the following year to repeat it and consequently the student progression through the program will be affected. If, at any time during their progression in the program, students are affected by personal problems or any situations that interfere with their effective advancement, they must seek assistance and counseling from the Program Coordinator in order to make an acceptable decision consistent with the situation.

**IX. Curricular Sequence for the Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program**

Code	Title	Credits	Pre-requisites
<b>FIRST SEMESTER</b>			
ING 1031	Basic English I	3	
BIOL 1124	Anatomy and Physiology I	3	
BIOL 1134 L	Anatomy y Physiology Laboratory I	1	
TERA 3901	Introduction to Physical Therapy	3	
TERA 3902	Introduction to Clinical Procedures	2	
TERA 3902L	Introduction to Clinical Procedures Laboratory	1	
TERA 3903	Physical and Mechanical Agents	1	Co requisites: BIOL 1124, BIOL 1134 TERA 3902
TERA 3903 L	Physical and Mechanical Agents Laboratory	2	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>16</b>	
<b>SECOND SEMESTER</b>			
BIOL 1125	Anatomy and Physiology II	3	BIOL 1124 y 1134
BIOL 1135 L	Anatomy and Physiology Laboratory II	1	
ING 1032	Basic English II	3	ING 1031
SOC 1015	General Psychology	3	
TERA 3904	Kinesiology	1	BIOL 1124, BIOL 1134
TERA 3904 L	Kinesiology Laboratory	2	
TERA 3905	Therapeutic Massage	2	TERA 3901, TERA 3902, BIOL 1124, 1134
TERA 3905L	Therapeutic Massage Laboratory	1	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>16</b>	
<b>THIRD SEMESTER</b>			
TERA 3909	Therapeutic Exercise	2	TERA 3902, TERA 3903, 3903 L TERA 3904, 3904L, BIOL 1125 Y 1135
TERA 3909 L	Therapeutic Exercise Laboratory	2	
TERA 3906	Physical Dysfunction	3	BIOL1125, BIOL1135, TERA 3901, SOC1015
TERA 3907	Introduction to Clinical Practice	2	BIOL 1125 y 1135 TERA 3901, TERA 3902, TERA3903, 3903L, TERA 3904, TERA 3904 L, TERA 3905, 3905L
ESP 1021	Basic Spanish I	3	
MAT 1041	General Mathematics	3	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>15</b>	

Code	Title	Credits	Pre-requisites
<b>FOURTH SEMESTER</b>			
TERA 3910	Functional Activities	2	TERA 3909, 3909 L,

<b>Code</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Pre-requisites</b>
TERA 3910 L	Functional Activities Laboratory	2 (10 weeks)	TERA 3906, TERA 3907
TERA 3911 TERA 3911 L	Application of Physical Therapy Application of Physical Therapy Laboratory	2 2 (10 weeks)	TERA 3909, 3909L, TERA 3906, TERA 3907, Co-requisite: TERA 3910 y 3910 L
TERA 3908	Clinical Practice I	4 (5 weeks)	TERA 3907, TERA 3906, TERA 3909, 3909L, TERA 3910
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>12</b>	
<b>FIFTH SEMESTER</b>			
TERA 3912 TERA 3912 L	Psychosocial Aspects in the Physical Therapy Practice	3 (7 weeks)	SOC 1014, TERA 3906
ESP 1022	Basic Spanish II	3 (7 weeks)	ESP 1021
TERA 3913	Clinical Practice II	6 (8 weeks)	TERA 3908, TERA 3910, 3910 L, TERA 3911, 3911 L, TERA 3912
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>12</b>	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>71</b>	



## **X. Characteristics of the Physical Therapist Assistant Student**

The faculty of the Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program expects students to exhibit the following characteristics:

- A. Responsibility for their own learning
- B. Commitment to completing the Program
- C. Values consistent with those of a health care professional
- D. Responsibility for demonstrating the attitudes and behaviors expected from a Physical Therapist Assistant according to the Code of Ethics of the American Physical Therapy Association.
- E. Effective interpersonal relationship skills, including sensitivity and tolerance for diversity.
- F. Responsibility for communicating with the faculty and administrative personnel in an assertive and timely manner.
- G. Responsibility for adhering to institutional rules and policies, as described in the catalog of the institution and the Program's handbooks and manuals.
- H. Active participation in the planning and preparation of the clinical experience
- I. Openness to constructive criticism, suggestions, and recommendations from the faculty and fellow students.
- J. Respect toward faculty, staff members, and fellow students
- K. Acceptance of responsibility for their own actions
- L. Responsibility for participating in the continuous evaluation process of the Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program

## **XI. Academic Standards**

### **A. Admissions Criteria and Process**

All persons who request admission to the Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Be a High School graduate or its equivalent.
2. Complete the College Admission Application and pay the non-refundable application fee.
3. Have a High School or transfer Grade Point Average of at least 2.50.
4. Attend an interview with faculty members on the stipulated date and pass it with at least 70%.

The admission offices will provide specific deadline dates to submit an application to enroll in the physical therapy assistant program. When approximately 50 applications have been submitted, the students who meet the minimal criteria of high school diploma and a minimum graduation GPA of 2.50 will be called for an interview with the program's faculty. The interview is intended to evaluate skills such as writing, communication skills, leadership, and critical analysis, among others. It will be divided into an oral section and a written section. The purpose of the oral section is to evaluate communication, analysis, and

interpersonal relations skills; the purpose of the written section is to evaluate the prospect's knowledge about the profession and his/her writing skills. Both the oral and the written sections have a value of 15 points each, for a total of 30 points. Students who have volunteer experiences in the observation of physical therapy procedures will have 2 extra points; however, this is not a requirement to enter the program.

The punctuation obtained in the written section will be added to the punctuation obtained in the oral section at the end of the interview. Then a total punctuation will be calculated to include the academic grade point average of the student and the interview punctuation. The GPA will account for 40% and the interview for 60% of the weight of the total punctuation. For example, if the student has a GPA of 2.80 and the total percentage of the interview was 85% (equivalent to an interview punctuation of 25.5 to 30), his/her total punctuation would be calculated as follows:

$$\text{GPA} = 2.80/4.00 = 0.28$$

$$\text{Interview} = 85/100 = 0.85 \times 0.60 = 0.51$$

$$\text{Total} = 0.28 + 0.51 = 0.79 \times 100 = 79$$

**The student's final punctuation will be 79.**

Once the process is completed, the 20 students with the highest punctuations will be chosen. They will be notified via regular mail and/or telephone call. The students will also be summoned to receive a detailed orientation about the Program. In this orientation the students must read and sign the consent form to participate in the educational activities and experiences of the Program.

## **B. Policy of Satisfactory Academic Progress**

In order to advance effectively in the Program, all enrolled students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.00. All Program technical courses must be approved with at least a "C"; if the student receives a lower grade, he/she must repeat the course. The student will have up to two additional opportunities to repeat the course. To determine the academic progress of the student in the case of repeated courses, the highest grade will be taken into consideration; however the original grade will remain in the academic record. Clinical practices and laboratories must be approved with at least an 80% score. The grading curve that will be used for this program will be the following:

A – 90-100

B – 80-99

C – 70-79

D – 60-69

F – 0-59

The grading curve for clinical experiences will vary according to the Clinical performance Instrument (CPI) expectations. For more details regarding satisfactory academic progress, please refer to the Institution's catalog 2009-2012 ([www.huertas.edu](http://www.huertas.edu)).

### **C. Attendance and Tardiness Policy**

The student's progress in the Program as well as the quality of his/her educational experiences, depend on class attendance. Attendance to classes in the stipulated schedules and compliance with the laboratory rules established in the manual are mandatory. Absences, tardiness, or leaving the class early may affect the student's performance and that of his/her fellow students, as well as the final grade in the course. Each professor may have specific requirements regarding attendance. Please refer to the syllabus of each course for attendance requirements.

For clinical practices, each absence represents a 10% reduction from the final grade. Please refer to the Clinical Practice Guidelines for Physical Therapist Assistant Students for more details.

### **D. Competency Assessment**

During the student's progression through the Program, he/she will be evaluated on the assorted skills and competencies that a Physical Therapist Assistant must master. The primary methods for the development and evaluation of these skills and competencies are laboratory practices guided and supervised by the professor as well as theoretical and practical exams. In each technical course with a laboratory, the professor will complete a Rubric of Laboratory Skills that will include the skills that the student must master at the end of that particular course. To approve the course satisfactorily, the student must demonstrate proficiency in the different skills. Before engaging in the first clinical experience, students will be assessed by core faculty members in the minimal required skills for this clinical experience.

The students will also be periodically assessed in their professional behavior and the integration of professional values in their activities. The American Physical Therapy Association has established a set of core values in the practice of physical therapy that include: accountability, altruism, compassion/caring, excellence, integrity, professional duty, and social responsibility. These values will be explained and fostered in the different courses of the Program by the academic and clinical faculties. Rubrics will be used to evaluate the integration of these values at different levels throughout the student's progression in the Program. If the student does not reach the minimum expected levels in the Rubric of Skills or in the Rubric of Professional Values, his/her progress toward clinical practices will be affected. All professors will be responsible for carefully following the established procedures for the use of each of the rubrics and for explaining them to the students.

## **E. Academic Counseling**

In Huertas College we are committed to help our students achieve their goals and objectives and to foster their development to their utmost potential. The Physical Therapy faculty is also committed to prepare students who demonstrate high standards of ethical, safe, and responsible practice. Consequently, counseling services will be available for PTA students by the program faculty in addition to the mentoring services provided by the Institution. Each student should go through the process of counseling once per semester. The counseling meeting is intended to discuss the next semester's schedule and the student's progress in the Program.

The Program Director will present the available counseling schedule for each semester. Students are responsible for communicating with the Coordinator to reserve their space.

## **F. General Procedures for Retention, Recruitment, and Early Detection of Needs**

One of the main goals of the Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program is to graduate Physical Therapist Assistants who are committed to offering services of the highest quality. To attain this goal, the recruitment of committed students who are capable of meeting the demands of the Program, and eventually, the demands of the profession is essential. For the Program it is also important to offer students the tools that they will need to achieve effective progress throughout its sequence. This will result in keeping a stable enrollment and in achieving a graduation percentage that meets the expectations of the profession and the needs of the community. For these reasons, in addition to the policies and procedures that the Institution practices for student retention, the Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program carries out a series of actions whose main purpose is to keep a good retention percentage as well as to ensure that students progress effectively through the curriculum and meet the expectations of the Program.

The procedures described below are applicable to the Program's students and they will be implemented by the Program's faculty. The Program Director will be in charge of ensuring full compliance with these procedures in collaboration with the Dean of the School of Health.

### **1. Recruitment:**

- a. Each student interested in entering the Program will go through a general orientation and evaluation process before going through the admission process.
- b. The initial evaluation will be carried out by personnel from the Guidance and Counseling Office and will be aimed at evaluating the following:
  - Feasibility of the student being a full-time daytime student
  - Graduation or transfer GPA of 2.50 or more

- Possibility of the student traveling long distances to attend the assigned practice center
  - Up to date immunizations
  - Viability of covering the Program's necessary expenses and financial aids
  - Reasons for wanting to study the profession
- c. Once the student goes through the initial orientation and evaluation, he/she will be summoned for the interview process (please refer to the *Admissions Criteria and Process* section of the manual).
- d. When the students are chosen, they will be summoned to receive orientation regarding the policies and procedures related to classes, laboratories, and clinical practices. Students must sign an informed consent form about their participation in the activities of the Program.
2. Early Detection of Needs
- a. Each student enrolled in the Program must go through the guidance and counseling process once per semester (see section above, *Academic Counseling*).
- b. The Program will offer a tutoring program for concentration courses each semester. Students with academic deficiencies will be referred to tutoring with the Program's faculty. Each professor will be responsible for identifying these deficiencies and for referring the student immediately.
- c. Huertas College has a tutoring program for general education courses, including anatomy and human physiology. The student who has difficulties in any of these courses will also be referred to tutoring.
- d. Each student referred to tutoring for laboratory skills will be reevaluated and must demonstrate improvement in his/her performance and competency level in order to advance in the program; otherwise the student will not approve the course.
- e. All students will go through a process of formal evaluation of competencies prior to the start of their first clinical experience. This evaluation is meant to verify if students have the skills that are required for clinical practice and to detect pre-existing deficiencies or weaknesses.
- f. The student who does not approve the formal evaluation of competencies will not be able to start the clinical practice at the appointed time, even if he/she has completed the pre-requisite courses. A tutoring plan will be established for this student and upon satisfactorily completing it the student will advance to clinical practice.

- g. Each professor is responsible for maintaining effective communication with students, so if a student incurs in absenteeism without previous notice he/she will be called by the professor of the course to verify his/her status. If the professor is unable to locate the student, the issue will be documented and referred to the Guidance and Counseling Office.
- h. Any student who is having academic, behavior or absenteeism problems will be summoned for counseling with the Program Director or the Clinical Education Coordinator.
- i. The following cases will be referred to the Guidance and Counseling Office once they have received orientation by the faculty but do not demonstrate changes or improvements in their performance:
- Students with more than 3 consecutive and unjustified absences to a class or laboratory
  - Students with more than 4 random absences to laboratories within a one month period
  - Students who are below the minimum expected GPA at mid-semester
  - Students who have been referred to tutoring and have not complied
  - Student with behavior and attitude problems who are not complying with the Program's policies
  - Students with personal problems and situations that are affecting their performance and progress in the Program
  - Any other situation or problem that is identified as a risk to the student
- j. The Program's faculty will always be available to address any situation that may be affecting the student. Students must always approach the Program Director first to notify him/her about situations or problems or to seek his/her advice. If the problem concerns clinical practice situations, students must approach the Clinical Practice Coordinator first, and then the Program Director if necessary.

For specific policies or procedures regarding the evaluation of laboratory competencies and clinical practice requisites, students must refer to the *Policies and Procedures for Laboratories Handbook* and the *Clinical Practice Handbook* respectively. They must also refer to the syllabus of each particular course.

For other retention policies and procedures of Huertas College applicable to all students, please refer to the Student Handbook, available at [www.huertas.edu](http://www.huertas.edu).

## **XII. Other Policies and Procedures**

### **A. Student Privacy and Confidentiality**

The Registrar's Office has the fundamental responsibility of safeguarding student records that contain personal and academic information. Each file will be kept in strict confidentiality in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.

In addition to the academic file, the PTA Program will maintain a student file with information regarding academic and clinical performance, medical information, and other information such as the informed consent, and copies of documents required for clinical practices. This file will be kept in a locked file cabinet located in the Program Coordinator's office; the disclosure of any information to other parties will be carried out only upon the student's written authorization.

In addition, in keeping with this privacy policy, the program will attempt to maintain privacy/confidentiality in the following manner:

- Exams and quizzes will be returned in a manner that does not expose the resulting grade.
- After practical exams and skill checks, the professor must provide immediate feedback with only the student present. When necessary and appropriate, with the student's permission, the professor may provide feedback in front of other students.
- Students must have a private username and password to access their grades electronically. Each student will only have access to his/her grades specifically.
- The PTA program courses require classroom attendance, however online instructional programs like Moodle will be used to make program handbooks and specific course documents accessible. For this program, the login process also requires a username and password, which only the student should know.

### **B. Off Campus Activities**

In order to provide quality educational experiences, some off-campus activities will be schedule by the PTAD Program Faculty. Activities are only for educational purposes and can include field trips to Physical Therapy Facilities to observe specific procedures and to participate in college community activities, among others. For Huertas College, security is a priority. In order to secure an on-campus comparable security level for off-campus educational experiences, students must comply with the Institution policies and procedures. The following are general policies that will be applied to this kind of activities:

- The student must sign the Responsibility Release Form
- The Institution will provide transportation to the scheduled activities whenever possible.
- In order to minimize risks when students are engaged in off-campus educational experiences, a faculty member will accompany them to all off campus laboratory, field trips, or community activities.

- The faculty member will assess the overall safety of the environment and will remove students if it is found to be unsafe or inappropriate.
- The student's attendance will be taken at the event. Each professor will be responsible for supervising a maximum of ten (10) students.
- For emergency situations, the faculty member will follow the emergency protocol established in the Institution's First Aid Protocol for the management of emergency situations.
- Students must approach the professor in charge for any kind of situation that occurred during the activity.
- The student will be covered by the Institution's insurance.

### **C. Policy for Dismissal from the Program for Inappropriate Conduct or Dishonesty**

The faculty of the Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program and the Institution's personnel expect the students to exhibit honest and disciplined behavior. The Physical Therapist Assistant Student is expected to observe the Institution's rules of behavior and the ethical standards for Physical Therapist Assistants. If a member of the academic or clinical faculties identifies inappropriate behavior or dishonest actions in a student, he/she must notify the Program Coordinator (PC) and the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) immediately. The professor or instructor must also document the incident in detail.

- If the incident occurred during the clinical practice, the Clinical Instructor (CI) must notify the ACCE who will visit the practice center or ask the student not to attend the practice and then summon the CI and the student to a meeting.
- The PC will meet with the faculty, the ACCE, the course's professor, and if necessary, members of the clinical faculty.
- The student will be allowed to present his/her point of view or version of the facts.
- The PC, faculty, and CI will meet to decide if the inappropriate conduct or dishonest action of the student (cheating in a test, stealing an exam, falsification of documents, etc.) represents a conflict for executing the fundamental responsibilities of a Physical Therapist Assistant Student (PTAS).
- If The PC determines that the inappropriate conduct or dishonest action of the student infringes the rules and regulations of the Institution and the clinical facility and is an obstacle for performing the responsibilities of a PTAS in compliance with ethical standards, the student will be dismissed from the Program.
- If the student wants to appeal this decision, he/she must follow the process stipulated in the Institutional Catalog.
- Refer to the Institutional Catalog for other disciplinary rules and procedures, disciplinary actions, appeal process, and procedures for submitting grievances.

### **D. Comments and Grievances from Individuals Outside the Institution**

Huertas College is a community college that engages in continuous and systematic evaluations and improvement. For this reason, we are committed to welcome all



comments, complaints, suggestions, ideas, and constructive criticism as part of that process. Individuals in the community who do not have a formal affiliation with this institution, including but not limited to, clinical education sites, employers of graduates, and the general public will be able to provide comments according to the following policy:

- Comments must be provided in writing and signed by the author. Anonymous submissions will not be acknowledged.
- Comments must be submitted to the following:

Huertas College  
Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program  
PO BOX 8429  
Caguas, PR 00726

- Clinical Instructors, Physical Therapy Supervisors, or CCCE are asked to initially direct complaints to the ACCE. If adequate response is not received within a reasonable time frame, the complaint should be directed to the Program Coordinator.
- The Program Coordinator shall respond to all comments within ten (10) days to further discuss and resolve the issue. If satisfactory resolution is not or cannot be reached, an appeal may be made to the Dean of Academic Services within seven (7) days. The Dean of Academic Services will not become involved until all attempts to resolve the issue with the Program Coordinator have been exhausted, unless the comment is directly related to the performance of the Program Coordinator.
- Records of all correspondence will be confidentially maintained by the Program Coordinator for three (3) years. These records will not be open to the public.

#### **E. Withdrawal Policy**

Students considering withdrawal from the program for any reason whatsoever should discuss this matter with the Program Coordinator. This process must be completed by the student following the rules and policies established by Huertas College for this procedure which are detailed in the Institutional Catalog ([www.huertas.edu](http://www.huertas.edu)).

#### **F. Readmission Policy**

A student who interrupts his/her studies for a semester or more and wishes to continue is considered a reentry student. This candidate will be evaluated by the Program faculty and personnel of the Orientation and Retention Office to determine his/her Satisfactory Academic Progress. A maximum interruption of two years is recommended for this program. The process below must be followed:

- The student must complete the application provided at the Registrar's Office for that purpose and pay the non-refundable reentry fee.
- The student will be evaluated by personnel of the Orientation and Retention Office to determine his/her Satisfactory Academic Progress.
- The student must complete a form provided by the program explaining the reasons for the interruption of his/her studies and the justification for readmission to the Program. The form must be submitted to the Program Coordinator.

- The Program's faculty will determine the appropriateness of allowing the student to reenter, taking into consideration the reasons and justification offered by the student, the availability of space, and the student's potential to complete the Program. This determination will be made on a case-by-case basis.
- If the interruption was for a period greater than two years, the student must be audited on previously completed technical courses approved with at least a "C". This will be subject to the availability of space and to course instructor availability.
- The student reentering the Program will begin in the semester in which he/she did not approve the courses. The student is responsible for maintaining and demonstrating the ability to perform satisfactorily all previously learned skills. The student may have to take some practical exams before reentering the program. The appropriateness of this option will be discussed and determined by the faculty of the Program according to the student's case.

### **G. Dress Code**

Students are required to attend classes in appropriate attire; casual and comfortable clothing is recommended. For the laboratories, the students must wear a special uniform which is described in the Laboratory Safety Manual. A uniform conforming to the rules of the practice centers must be used for clinical practice. It is possible that for the Health School Programs a specific uniform may be adopted with each program label. The Institution will present the student a free uniform; the student will be responsible for acquiring additional uniforms. The student will be notified in advance to allow him/her to obtain the uniform in a timely manner. In general terms, the following is forbidden:

- Short pants (above the knees)
- Low necklines in women
- Open and loose sandals
- Artificial fingernails
- Jewelry (except for small earrings, wedding or engagement ring, and watch)
- Earrings in men
- Visible body piercings
- Hair must be a normal and natural color (blue, green, pink, or orange hair, among others, will not be allowed)

Students who do not abide by these rules will not be allowed to participate in classes, laboratories, or clinical practice. Persistent infringement of these rules will significantly affect a student's progress and may even result in dismissal from the Program. Please refer to the Clinical Practice Guidelines for Physical Therapist Assistant Students and to the Laboratory Safety Manual for more details.

**The information contained in this manual applies exclusively to the Physical Therapy Associate Degree Program. For other policies and procedures, please refer to the Student Handbook, to the Institutional Catalog 2013-2018, or seek assistance from the Program Director, the Dean of the Health School, or any of our students' services offices.**