CORE ABILITIES
FOR
PHYSICAL THERAPY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ABILITIES-BASED ASSESSMENT*

Directions: The Core Abilities listed in the shaded boxes are to be assessed, developed, and reassessed by the student during the academic phase of their professional education.

- This form is to be used primarily as a self-assessment tool by students and will serve as a reference for discussions with advisors.
- Rank each core ability within the shaded box in accordance with the descriptors below the numbered line. The ranking represents a continuum for expected student progress during the academic portion of the curriculum.
- The descriptors below the boxes serve as examples of the attributes and associated behaviors expected for that particular ability. Evaluate your level of proficiency in each are by indicating with a mark in the O those behaviors you believe you perform well in most situations. Leave a blank in front of those behaviors you perform poorly or inconsistently. Your assessment need not be based on prior experience in physical therapy settings. You may base your assessment on your behavior and abilities in prior or current vocational, academic, or social situations.
- The ranking is to be completed by each student in accordance with the Core Abilities Overview.
- Students may enter the program with several of these abilities fully developed. Other abilities may require further development. Ranking should be done accordingly.
- Students should use feedback from multiple sources when self-assessing. When asked, students should be able to support their rankings with specific program related examples. Feedback might come from:
  - Faculty
  - Classmates
  - Written comments
  - Non-verbal messages
  - Self awareness

* Adapted from May et al. Model for Ability-Based Assessment in Physical Therapy Education. Journal of Physical Therapy Education. 9:3-6, 1995. University of Wisconsin at Madison
1. **Commitment to Learning:**
The ability to self-assess, self-correct, and self-direct; to identify needs and sources of learning; and to continually seek new knowledge and understanding.

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<td>Requires direction often, has difficulty identifying needs and sources of learning and rarely seeks out new knowledge and understanding.</td>
<td>Self-directed, frequently identifies needs and sources of learning, and invites new knowledge and understanding.</td>
<td>Highly self-directed, consistently identifies needs and sources of learning, and deliberately seeks out new knowledge and understanding.</td>
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**Examples of Expectations/Behaviors**

- **Demonstrates when admitted or no later than end of 3 terms**
  - **Demonstrated by:**
    - ⬤ identifies problems
    - ⬤ formulates appropriate questions
    - ⬤ identifies own learning needs based on previous experience
    - ⬤ identifies and locates appropriate resources
    - ⬤ demonstrates positive attitude (motivation) toward learning
    - ⬤ sets personal and professional goals
    - ⬤ attentive
    - ⬤ identifies need for further information
    - ⬤ attending class consistently

- **Develops during the program no later than end of 2nd academic year**
  - **Demonstrated by:**
    - ⬤ prioritizes information needed
    - ⬤ takes collaborative approach – (e.g. contributes to group process)
    - ⬤ analyzes and subdivides large questions into components
    - ⬤ monitors own progress
    - ⬤ accepts learning as a lifelong process
    - ⬤ accepts that there may be more than one answer to a problem
    - ⬤ recognizes the need to and can verify solutions to problems
    - ⬤ prioritizes use of professional literature
    - ⬤ reads articles critically and understands limits of application to professional practice

- **Demonstrates at entry-level and beyond**
  - **Demonstrated by:**
    - ⬤ questions conventional wisdom
    - ⬤ reconciles conflicting information
    - ⬤ seeks out additional learning opportunities
    - ⬤ applies new information and re-evaluates performance
    - ⬤ formulates and re-evaluates options based on available evidence
    - ⬤ verifies solutions to problems

**Examples and Comments:**

UAB:DeptPT
Student Handbook:2005
### 2. Interpersonal Skills:
The ability to interact effectively with patients, families, colleagues, other health care professionals, and the community.

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<td>Engages in non-effective or judgmental interactions with persons in the academic setting and loses focus in unexpected/new situations.</td>
<td>Usually engages in effective and non-judgmental interactions with most persons in the academic setting, and maintains focus in unexpected/new situations.</td>
<td>Consistently engages in highly effective and non-judgmental interactions with all persons in the academic setting, and responds exceptionally well to unexpected/new situations.</td>
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#### Examples of Expectations/Behaviors

**Demonstrates when admitted or no later than end of 3 terms**

**Demonstrated by:**
- Maintains professional demeanor in all clinical/classroom interactions
- Demonstrates empathy and interest in patients as individuals
- Recognizes appropriateness of body language
- Cooperates with supervisor(s)
- Communicates with others in a respectful, confident manner
- Respects personal space of patients and others
- Recognizes influence of outside commitments on clinical/classroom performance, and is able to strike balance
- Maintains appropriate confidentiality in all clinical/classroom interactions

**Examples and Comments:**

**Demonstrates during the program no later than end of 2nd academic year**

**Demonstrated by:**
- Assumes responsibility for mistakes
- Apologizes when appropriate
- Motivates others to achieve
- Establishes trust
- Maintains appropriate patient/practitioner relationship
- Recognizes impact of non-verbal communication and modifies non-verbal communication to meet the message; listens actively

**Demonstrates at entry-level and beyond**

**Demonstrated by:**
- Recognizes role as a supervisor and delegates responsibility to others
- Aware of differences in learning styles in patients and coworkers, and is able to accommodate those differences
- Allows expression of feelings but returns to original focus; diverts anger
- Listens to patient but reflects back on original concern
- Approaches difficult patient with appropriate affect
- Responds appropriately to unexpected and or entirely new experiences

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UAB:DeptPT
Student Handbook:2005
3. Cultural Competence:
The ability to acknowledge and deal effectively with cultural and ethnic diversity issues.

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<td>Unaware of cultural differences or may perceive cultural differences, but label them negatively.</td>
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<td>Tries to avoid stereotypes and appreciates differences in cultures, but may view own values as universal</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Is able to shift perspective to that of another culture while maintaining own values.</td>
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Examples of Expectations/Behaviors

**Demonstrates when admitted or no later than end of 3 terms**

**Demonstrated by:**
- O recognizes cultural differences that have escaped notice previously
- O recognizes and becomes more tolerant of differences; sees basic similarities among people of different cultures

**Develops during the program no later than end of 2nd academic year**

**Demonstrated by:**
- O learns more about own culture; avoids projecting own culture onto other people’s experience.
- O conscientiously considers other’s cultures in the classroom and the clinic

**Demonstrates at entry-level and beyond**

**Demonstrated by:**
- O understands the perspective of persons from other cultures
- O is able to accept cultural differences without automatic assignation of negative labels
- O understands and demonstrates differences in stereotyping and generalizing and utilizes cultural generalization in a positive manner in the provision of culturally competent health care.

Examples and Comments:
4. Communication Skills:
The ability to communicate effectively (i.e., speaking, body language, reading, writing, listening) for varied audiences and purposes.

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<td>Exhibits poor written, verbal and non-verbal communication skills and lacks ability to modify information to meet the needs of various audiences/purposes.</td>
<td>Exhibits acceptable written, verbal and non-verbal communication skills and is usually capable of modifying information to meet the needs of various audiences/purposes.</td>
<td>Exhibits superior written, verbal and non-verbal communication skills and readily modifies information to meet the needs of various audiences/purposes.</td>
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Examples of Expectations/Behaviors

Demonstrates when admitted or no later than end of 3 terms

Demonstrated by:
- O demonstrates understanding of basic English; uses correct grammar, accurate spelling and expression
- O recognizes voice quality and avoids vocal detractors (e.g., sing-songing, sighing, etc.)
- O writes legibly
- O recognizes impact of non-verbal communication; maintains eye contact, listen actively
- O demonstrates basic computer skills

Develops during the program no later than end of 2nd academic year

Demonstrated by:
- O summarizes verbal or written message clearly and concisely
- O presents verbal or written message with logical organization and sequencing, using accurate professional and/or lay terminology
- O utilizes non-verbal feedback constructively
- O receives feedback without defensiveness
- O reconciles differences with appropriate level of assertiveness
- O listens actively

Demonstrates at entry-level and beyond

Demonstrated by:
- O aware of differences in learning styles in patients and co-workers, and able to accommodate those differences
- O tactfully redirects conversation
- O collects all necessary information from the interview process
- O speaks at receiver’s communication level and modifies communication to meet needs of different audience; lay, professional, and third party payers
- O dictates clearly and concisely

Examples and Comments:

UAB:DeptPT
Student Handbook:2005
5. Effective Use of Time and Resources:
The ability to obtain maximum benefit from a minimum investment of time and resources.

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<td>Exhibits poor use of time and resources, shows lack of flexibility/adaptability, and seems incapable of setting goals.</td>
<td>Obtains good results through use of time and resources, shows adequate flexibility/adaptability and is capable of setting goals.</td>
<td>Consistently obtains maximum results through superior use of time and resources, shows unusual flexibility/adaptability and sets realistic goals.</td>
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**Examples of Expectations/Behaviors**

**Demonstrates when admitted or no later than end of 3 terms**
- meets external deadlines
- able to focus on tasks at hand without dwelling on past mistakes
- demonstrates flexibility/adaptability
- uses instructional materials as appropriate
- recognizes own resource limitations and uses existing resources effectively
- sets own schedule

**Demonstrated by:**

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<tr>
<th>Sets priorities and reorders when necessary</th>
<th>Collaborates with others</th>
<th>Coordinates schedule with others</th>
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**Develops during the program no later than end of 2nd academic year**

| Sets realistic goals | Able to perform multiple tasks simultaneously and delegate when appropriate | Able to use limited resources creatively | Has ability to say "no" |
|---|---|---|

**Demonstrates at entry-level and beyond**

**Demonstrated by:**

**Examples and Comments:**
6. Use of Constructive Feedback:
The ability to identify sources of and seek out feedback and to effectively use and provide feedback for improving personal interaction.

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<td>Accepts feedback defensively, does not identify or integrate feedback, provides non-constructive, negative or untimely feedback to others.</td>
<td>Usually accepts, identifies and integrates feedback from others, and frequently provides appropriate feedback to others.</td>
<td>Seeks out, identifies, and eagerly integrates feedback from others, and provides constructive, timely and positive feedback to others.</td>
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### Examples of Expectations/Behaviors

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<td><strong>Demonstrated by:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>○ demonstrates open and active listening skills using appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication</td>
<td>○ critiques own performance</td>
<td>○ applies feedback by considering multiple solutions to issues/problems</td>
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<td>○ receptive without becoming defensive</td>
<td>○ establishes personal goals based on feedback</td>
<td>○ provides positive and timely feedback to patients and peers</td>
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<td>○ actively seeks feedback and help</td>
<td>○ integrates feedback for effective use</td>
<td>○ maintains two-way communication with CI</td>
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<td>○ demonstrates a positive attitude toward feedback while respecting own limits</td>
<td>○ gives feedback constructively and receives feedback without defensiveness</td>
<td>○ reconciles differences with appropriate level of assertiveness</td>
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### Examples and Comments:

UAB:DeptPT
Student Handbook:2005
### 7. Problem Solving:
The ability to recognize and define problems, analyze data, develop and implement solutions, and evaluate outcomes.

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<td>Does not regularly recognize and define problems, analyze data, develop and implement solutions, and evaluate outcomes.</td>
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<td>Frequently recognizes and defines most problems, analyzes data, develops and implements solutions, and evaluates outcomes.</td>
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<td>Consistently and insightfully recognizes and defines problems, analyzes data, develops and implements solutions and evaluates outcomes</td>
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#### Examples of Expectations/Behaviors

**Demonstrates when admitted or no later than end of 3 terms**

- Recognizes problems
- States problems clearly
- Reports or describes known solutions to problem

**Demonstrated by:**

- Identifies contributors to problem
- Identifies resources needed to develop solutions when not known
- Possesses skills such as active listening and interviewing needed to define problem
- Objectifies problem (e.g., identifies specific behavioral components of a problem)
- Accepts responsibility for implementation of solutions and evaluates outcomes

**Demonstrates at entry-level and beyond**

- Considers advantages/disadvantages of possible solutions
- Evaluates outcomes of implemented solutions
- Seeks solutions through brainstorming and peer interaction
- Seeks solutions to community health related problems

**Examples and Comments:**

UAB: Dept PT
Student Handbook: 2005
### 8. Professionalism:
The ability to exhibit appropriate professional conduct and to represent the profession effectively.

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<td>Exhibits questionable or poor conduct concerning ethics, regulations, policies and procedures, and represents the profession in an incompetent and negative manner.</td>
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<td>Usually exhibits professional conduct concerning ethics, regulations, policies and procedures, and represents the profession in a competent and positive manner.</td>
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<td>Exhibits superior professional conduct concerning ethics, regulations, policies and procedures, and actively promotes/represents the profession in a highly competent/commendable manner.</td>
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#### Examples of Expectations/Behaviors

**Demonstrates when admitted or no later than end of 3 terms**

- Participates in ALAPTA and APTA activities and meetings
- Identifies appropriate professional role models
- Discusses professional values and societal expectations
- Displays scientific skepticism in current PT practice
- Discusses role of physical therapy in health care and society
- Applies professional literature to patient care

**Demonstrated by:**
- Abides by APTA Code of Ethics
- Follows state licensure regulations
- Projects professional image
- Identifies personal value system
- Relates personal value system to professional issues

**Develops during the program no later than end of 2nd academic year**

**Demonstrated by:**
- Accountable to patients and society for decisions
- Acts on moral commitment
- Involves patients and other health care professionals in decision making and informed consent
- Appreciates the value of research
- Actively promotes profession
- Recognizes when physical therapy services are not warranted and directs patients to appropriate services
- Dedicated to improving quality of physical therapy services

**Demonstrates at entry-level and beyond**

**Demonstrated by:**
- Able to exhibit appropriate professional conduct and to represent the profession effectively.
9. **Responsibility:**
The ability to fulfill commitments and to be accountable for actions and outcomes.

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demonstrates a poor level of commitment, is not dependable, not punctual, not aware of personal and professional limitations, and does not accept responsibility for actions and outcomes.

demonstrates an appropriate level of commitment, is usually dependable, punctual, aware of personal and professional limitations, and accepts responsibility for actions and outcomes.

demonstrates a high level of commitment over and above normal responsibilities, very dependable, always punctual, acutely aware of personal and professional limitations and accepts full responsibility for actions and outcomes.

**Examples of Expectations/Behaviors**

- **Demonstrates when admitted or no later than end of 3 terms**
  - Demonstrated by:
    - **O** completes assignments and other requests in a timely manner
    - **O** demonstrates dependability
    - **O** demonstrates punctuality
    - **O** fulfills commitments
    - **O** budgets time wisely

- **Develops during the program no later than end of 2nd academic year**
  - Demonstrated by:
    - **O** accepts responsibility for actions and outcomes
    - **O** provides safe and secure environment for patients
    - **O** collaborates with others who have complementary skills
    - **O** providing constructive feedback to the appropriate person
    - **O** encouraging colleague accountability

- **Demonstrates at entry-level and beyond**
  - Demonstrated by:
    - **O** promoting education
    - **O** accepts realistic workload
    - **O** delegates when appropriate
    - **O** knows personal and professional limitations
    - **O** accepting leadership roles
    - **O** facilitating responsibility for program development and modification

**Examples and Comments:**

UAB:DeptPT
Student Handbook:2005
10. **Critical Thinking:**
The ability to question logically; to identify, generate, and evaluate elements of logical argument; to recognize and differentiate facts, illusion, assumptions, and hidden assumptions; and to distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant.

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<td>Does not identify, articulate or analyze problems, does not distinguish relevant from irrelevant, does not recognize/differentiate among facts, illusions and assumptions, and does not present ideas.</td>
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<td>Frequently identifies, articulates and analyzes problems, distinguishes relevant from irrelevant, recognizes/differentiates among facts, illusions and presents ideas.</td>
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<td>Readily identifies, articulates and analyzes problems, consistently and accurately distinguishes relevant from irrelevant, recognizes/differentiates among facts, and generates original ideas.</td>
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### Examples of Expectations/Behaviors

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<th>Demonstrates when admitted or no later than end of 3 terms</th>
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<th>Demonstrates at entry-level and beyond</th>
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<td><strong>Demonstrated by:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Demonstrated by:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ø raises relevant questions</td>
<td>Ø identifies and articulates problems</td>
<td>Ø recognizes and differentiates among facts, illusions, assumptions and hidden assumptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ø uses information effectively</td>
<td>Ø generates, originates, and formulates new ideas</td>
<td>Ø demonstrates beginning intuitive thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ø understands and appreciates scientific method</td>
<td>Ø critiques solutions</td>
<td>Ø distinguishes need to think intuitively vs. analytically</td>
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<td>Ø thinks analytically: systematically and thoroughly</td>
<td>Ø formulates alternative hypotheses</td>
<td>Ø recognizes own biases and suspends judgmental thinking</td>
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<td>Ø recognizes gaps in knowledge base</td>
<td>Ø accepts challenge to understand and solve problems</td>
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### Examples and Comments:

- UAB:DeptPT
- Student Handbook:2005
### 11. Stress Management:
The ability to identify sources of stress and to develop effective coping behaviors..

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<td>Fails to identify sources of stress/problems in self and does not seek assistance or utilize coping skills and is unsuccessful at balancing professional/personal life.</td>
<td>Is usually aware of sources of stress/problems in self and others, frequently seeks assistance as needed, utilizes coping strategies, and maintains balance of professional/personal life.</td>
<td>Accurately identifies sources of stress/problems in self and others, actively seeks assistance when appropriate, demonstrates effective use of coping mechanisms and successfully maintains balance of professional/personal life.</td>
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#### Examples of Expectations/Behaviors

- **Demonstrates when admitted or no later than end of 3 terms**

  **Demonstrated by:**
  - ○ recognizes own stressors or problems
  - ○ recognizes distress or problems in others
  - ○ seeks assistance when appropriate
  - ○ maintains professional behavior regardless of problem situation

- **Develops during the program no later than end of 2nd academic year**

  **Demonstrated by:**
  - ○ keeps balance between professional and personal life
  - ○ demonstrates appropriate affective responses to situations
  - ○ prioritizes multiple commitments
  - ○ has appropriate outlets to cope with stressors
  - ○ handling unexpected changes appropriately

- **Demonstrates at entry-level and beyond**

  **Demonstrated by:**
  - ○ accepts constructive critical feedback
  - ○ works effectively with colleagues
  - ○ deals effectively with health care environment
  - ○ recognizes unsolvable problems

#### Examples and Comments:

UAB:DeptPT
Student Handbook:2005
Based on my Core Abilities Assessment, I am setting the following goals:

To accomplish these goals, I will take the following specific actions:

Student Signature _____________________________________________________________  Date ____________

Faculty Member Signature ______________________________________________________  Date ____________
Based on my Core Abilities Assessment, I am setting the following goals:

To accomplish these goals, I will take the following specific actions:

Student Signature _____________________________________________________________  Date ____________

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Student Signature _____________________________________________________________ Date ____________

Faculty Member Signature ______________________________________________________ Date ____________

UAB:DeptPT
Student Handbook:2005