

IMPROVING THE CULTURE OF SCHOLARSHIP/RESEARCH IN PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAMS

ACAPT Institute for Scholarly Inquiry (ISI) White Paper

BACKGROUND

In 2022, the American Council on Academic Physical Therapy (ACAPT) created four different institutes to support the mission and vision of the organization. One of those institutes, The Institute for Scholarly Inquiry (ISI), was charged “to cultivate a culture of scholarship and research” [among physical therapy programs]. The first step in improving the culture of excellence in scholarship in physical therapy programs was to create an inclusive, aspirational vision statement to which ALL programs could align to improve their culture of scholarship. With this charge, the ISI created the ISI Vision Statement Task Force to craft this vision. An important focus of the Task Force was to create an inclusive vision accessible to all programs regardless of their Carnegie Classification. This vision statement is an initial, foundational step laying the groundwork for future ISI initiatives aimed at supporting programs in their pursuit of an improved culture of scholarship. ISI intends to support programs interested in building and enhancing their culture of scholarship by developing and providing resources and tools designed to foster a shared value of scholarly inquiry within programs. Ultimately, it is hoped that a unifying vision will help elevate the collective impact of physical therapy research, which strengthens the profession by advancing practice, driving innovation, and positioning physical therapy to lead future healthcare solutions.

WHY ESTABLISH A VISION STATEMENT FOR ISI?

Physical therapy is at a critical inflection point for the profession. Science in healthcare is expanding exponentially, and there is concern that our current pace of knowledge creation in physical therapy is not keeping pace with these changes.¹ Moreover, the value proposition of being a physical therapist is also being challenged as salaries are not keeping up with inflation, physical therapy education costs are increasing, and insurance reimbursement for physical therapy services is constantly being challenged. These pressures create a critical need to accelerate our efforts to build the science of physical therapy, and this falls squarely on the scholarship being conducted by the educators and researchers at physical therapy programs, the primary foundational entity for knowledge creation in physical therapy. While the profession has made great progress in building research infrastructure, a pressing need remains to increase our effort, focus, and commitment to scholarly inquiry that will ultimately improve societal health through improved physical therapy practice. To have the desired impact, this vision statement calls all programs to a united effort to address this critical need.

HOW WAS THE VISION DEVELOPED?

The Task Force that developed the vision statement consisted of a 6-member team, with individuals representing both teaching-focused universities (i.e., Carnegie Master's Colleges and Universities) and research-focused universities (Carnegie R1/R2 universities). This Task Force met monthly for over a year and received regular feedback from ISI leadership and another 6-member ISI Task Force with an adjacent charge. In addition, the Task Force sought feedback from a focus group of approximately 20 physical therapy educators from various institutional types at the 19th Annual Physical Therapy Education Leadership Conference in Oakland, California. These focus groups offered valuable insights about the direction of the vision statement and need for supportive documentation.

HOW WAS THE VISION DEVELOPED?

After considerable discussion and input, the following vision was adopted:

PT programs will produce impactful scholarship through rigorous scientific inquiry that advances PT practice and enhances the health of individuals and society.

As mentioned earlier, the vision statement aims to balance inclusivity and aspiration by providing a unifying goal, which highlights value in the profession and its contribution to society. The vision statement was designed to be broad enough for all programs to align, while inspiring them to elevate their scholarly and research culture, not by pursuing a singular model of excellence, but by fostering growth and impact in ways that reflect each program's unique strengths and context. The Task Force also recognized that some of the terms in the vision would need to be clearly defined to promote a shared language around scholarship. The words underlined above are defined as follows:

1. PT program includes the personnel and invested parties of the program (i.e., faculty, administrators, students, clinical education faculty).
2. Impactful (also advances and enhances) is defined as having a measurable effect, benefit, or contribution to the health of individuals and society in terms of primary research-related impact, influence on policy-making, health and health systems impact, health-related and societal impact, and broader economic impacts.²
3. Scholarship is defined as Boyer's Model of Scholarship: Scholarship of Discovery, Scholarship of Integration, Scholarship of Application (Scholarship of Engagement), and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.^{3,4}
4. Rigorous is the strict application of the scientific method to ensure unbiased and well-controlled design, methodology, analysis, interpretation and reporting of results.⁵

WHAT DOES THIS VISION MEAN FOR PT PROGRAMS?

The Task Force recognizes that some programs might find this vision statement daunting, especially if their program does not have the infrastructure or administrative support to prioritize the types of scholarship espoused in the vision statement. It is hoped that this statement can lift programs where they are as part of an iterative process toward a common goal. The Task Force recognized that changing the culture of scholarship in physical therapy programs takes sustained effort over time. While a cultural shift is undoubtedly a philosophical change among all the invested parties (e.g., faculty, administrators, students, clinical education faculty), it is strongly connected to robust support systems (e.g., workload, personnel, equipment, space), meaningful collaborations, and faculty expertise and engagement. Collectively, all of these elements need to be in place to have a thriving and productive culture of excellence in scholarship. However, in most cases, it will take years of effort with incremental changes in many of these different areas and this does not need to happen in sequence. The culture can improve across different areas at varying paces. However, significant progress can be made as has been demonstrated by many programs over the years who have worked hard to improve their culture. It is also hoped that this vision statement can be used by programs to align faculty and leadership with a scholarship identity and can be used to advocate or negotiate for more resources within their institution. The unifying vision of improving the culture of scholarship is an important foundational step in the process.

HOW WILL ACAPT SUPPORT PROGRAMS TO ALIGN WITH THE VISION?

ACAPT and the ISI are committed to supporting physical therapy programs in their effort to align with this new vision. Another ISI task force is currently developing a Scholarly Assessment Tool (SAT) that can be used by programs to establish a baseline, develop a plan to determine how best to prioritize resources, and monitor progress. It is critical that a physical therapy program have a way of determining if efforts to improve their culture of scholarship are effective. This SAT will be forthcoming in the next year. Among the many other ideas to support programs, are several future initiatives to develop mentorship programs (e.g., program-to-program, chair-to-chair), webinars/courses/workshops (e.g., scholarly resource development, optimizing workload for research, faculty scholarly development, negotiation skills for more scholarly resources, grant mechanisms), and collaborations (e.g., faculty-to-faculty matching across institutions). There will be an effort to make sure that ALL programs can find benefit from the aforementioned resources. For instance, in the grant mechanisms workshop, there will be discussions about grant programs for universities with limited resources as well as grant programs for universities with an already well-developed scholarly infrastructure. ACAPT and ISI are committed to tailoring initiatives to programs' unique starting points and offering support applicable across various institution types. The ISI anticipates that several of the aforementioned resources will be developed in the near future as the focus of the Vision Task Force and Assessment Task Force will change from vision and assessment to support and development. The ISI will also seek input on the topic and format of programs to be offered to ensure that the needs of ACAPT members are being met. As we move forward together, ACAPT and the ISI remain steadfast in

their commitment to nurturing a vibrant culture of scholarship across all physical therapy programs, providing the tools, resources, and collaborative opportunities needed to transform this vision into reality.

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Assessing and Fostering Scholarship Culture in Academic Physical Therapy Programs: A Self-Assessment Discussion Guide

ACAPT Institute for Scholarly Inquiry

Research Culture Task Force

2025

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INTRODUCTION

The American Council of Academic Physical Therapy (ACAPT) Institution of Scholarly Inquiry (ISI) research culture task force recently created the following vision statement: ***"PT programs will produce impactful scholarship through rigorous scientific inquiry that advances PT practice and enhances the health of individuals and society."*** This vision requires deliberate action from all academic physical therapy programs.

The following discussion guide supports programs in achieving the vision by providing a systematic framework for evaluating and strengthening scholarly culture across five key domains: **Strategic alignment, Support, Collaboration, Impact, and Engagement**. Using a discussion-based self-assessment approach, it guides programs through reflection and goal-setting whether they are initiating new scholarly activities or expanding existing efforts. The framework enables all physical therapy programs to advance the profession's scholarly impact through systematic assessment and strategic institutional alignment.

Recognizing that programs operate in diverse contexts with varying resources, the guide offers flexible implementation pathways. Programs can choose the approach that best fits their needs: conduct an intensive half-day or full-day faculty retreat for comprehensive evaluation across all domains; dedicate quarterly faculty meetings to systematic assessment of individual domains; or establish a scholarship committee or task force to lead ongoing, structured evaluation processes.

Critical Implementation Requirements:

Successful implementation requires commitment to actionable outcomes. Each assessment session must generate three key deliverables:

- **Strategic Recommendations:** Specific, evidence-based recommendations that directly inform program strategic planning and resource allocation decisions
- **Action Items:** Concrete tasks with clearly defined timelines, responsible parties, and success metrics
- **Progress Monitoring:** Mechanisms for tracking implementation progress, measuring impact, and ensuring accountability over time

Recommended Implementation Sequence:

Programs should begin with Domain 1 (Strategic Alignment) as it establishes the foundational context and institutional commitment necessary for meaningful progress in subsequent domains. Domain 2 (Support) should typically follow second, as it addresses the resource infrastructure needed to operationalize strategic commitments. Domains 3-5 can be addressed in any sequence that aligns with program priorities and current developmental stage.

To maximize the value of each assessment, consider using a structured analytical approach such as SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) that promotes both reflective analysis of current state and forward-thinking strategic planning.

THE FIVE DOMAINS

This guide evaluates research culture across five interconnected domains. Each domain includes key guiding questions for discussion and detailed supporting questions in the appendices.

Domain 1	Strategic Alignment: Program and institutional philosophies that promote and value research and scholarly activity.
Domain 2	Support: Institutional and program-level support systems and infrastructure that enable faculty scholarship.
Domain 3	Collaboration: Ability to cultivate, align, and sustain meaningful partnerships that strengthen scholarship.
Domain 4	Impact: Success in generating measurable benefits for health through research translation, innovation, and dissemination.
Domain 5	Engagement: Operational implementation through clear expectations, recognition systems, and inclusive culture.

DOMAIN 1: STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The Strategic Alignment domain evaluates program and institutional philosophies that promote, and value research and scholarly activity conducted with integrity, inclusivity, and ethical responsibility.

Key Guiding Questions

1. Do the program and institutional mission and vision statements specifically cite scholarship as a core component?
2. How well aligned are the program and institutional research agendas and/or goals?
3. How well aligned are the program research and scholarly activity with professional research strategies or initiatives (e.g., ACAPT Excellence Framework; APTA Research Agenda)?
4. How well does the institution and program track metrics for research and scholarly productivity?
5. What are your program's aspirations for strategic alignment for scholarly endeavors?

→ See [Appendix A](#) for detailed supporting questions

DOMAIN 2: SUPPORT

The Support domain examines the institutional and program or department-level support systems and infrastructure resources that enable faculty to engage in and produce inclusive, ethical, and sustainable scholarship. The questions examine both the broader institutional infrastructure and the support the program or department provides to faculty. Consider evaluating how the institutional and program/department support come together to create an environment that fosters scholarly inquiry and productivity.

Key Guiding Questions

1. How are the distinct scholarship development needs of faculty at different career stages currently identified and addressed?
2. How would faculty describe the current workload policies, allocations, and scheduling practices across teaching, scholarship, and service?
3. How well do these workload policies, allocations, and scheduling practices support faculty scholarship?
4. How is scholarship considered in annual evaluations, promotion, and tenure processes?
5. What internal funding exists to support scholarly inquiry?
6. How does the institution and program/department support faculty with scholarship development and compliance?
7. How adequately do current physical spaces, equipment, and technology resources support the diverse scholarship needs of faculty and students?
8. What support systems exist to promote faculty well-being and prevent burnout as faculty attempt to fulfill all responsibilities, including scholarship?
9. What are your program's aspirations for scholarship support systems?

→ See [Appendix B](#) for detailed supporting questions

DOMAIN 3: COLLABORATION

The Collaboration domain evaluates the program's ability to cultivate, align, and sustain meaningful partnerships that strengthen scholarship and extend its impact. Within this guide, clinical partnerships refer to academic–clinical relationships that support clinical education, research integration, translation of research into practice, and practice-informed research design; community partnerships involve collaborations with organizations in local, regional, national, and/or international communities to address shared health, education, or service priorities; intraprofessional partnerships denote collaboration within the physical therapy profession (e.g., the PT/PTA team) with each member contributing within their defined role and scope; and interprofessional partnerships reflect the Interprofessional Education Collaborative's (IPEC's) definition of two or more professions working together to learn from, with, and about each other to improve outcomes in research, education, and practice.

Key Guiding Questions

1. How are collaborative partnerships initiated and nurtured with:
 - 1a. Clinical partners?
 - 1b. Community partners?
 - 1c. Intra-/interprofessional research networks?
2. How are collaborative partnerships strengthened with:
 - 2a. Clinical partners?
 - 2b. Community partners?
 - 2c. Intra-/interprofessional research networks?
3. How do projects ensure responsiveness to identified needs and priorities of the program and collaborative partners?
4. What evidence demonstrates measurable outcomes from collaborative partnerships?
5. What mechanisms exist to ensure sustainability of these collaborative partnerships long-term?
6. What are your program's aspirations for fostering collaboration?

→ See [Appendix C](#) for detailed supporting questions

DOMAIN 4: IMPACT

The Impact domain evaluates the program's success in generating measurable benefits for individual and societal health through three dimensions: (1) direct research translation into clinical practice and policy-making; (2) innovative approaches that advance physical therapy through novel technologies, treatment methods, and care models supported by external funding; and (3) strategic dissemination of findings across professional, academic, and public spheres.

Key Guiding Questions

1. How would you characterize the overall impact of the program's research on physical therapy practice, patient outcomes, health care policy, and societal healthcare needs?
2. What specific contributions have you made to the PT (clinical or academic) body of knowledge?
3. What knowledge translation activities could amplify your research impact?
4. How would you characterize your program's overall approach to innovation in physical therapy research?
5. How would you assess your overall research communication and visibility strategy?
6. What are your program's aspirations for research impact?

→ See [Appendix D](#) for detailed supporting questions

DOMAIN 5: ENGAGEMENT

The Engagement domain evaluates the program's operational implementation of scholarship through clear expectations, recognition systems, strong leadership, and inclusive culture development.

Key Guiding Questions

1. How clear are faculty about their specific scholarly role expectations?
2. What recognition and rewards are provided for faculty research productivity?
3. What is the perceived importance of research among program leadership and how is this demonstrated?
4. What formal and informal mechanisms are used to stimulate and maintain research activity amongst faculty?
5. How effectively have you integrated research and evidence-informed practice into your curriculum?
6. How does the program ensure that research culture is inclusive and welcoming to faculty and students from diverse backgrounds?
7. What are your program's aspirations for operational implementation and engagement in scholarship?

→ See [Appendix E](#) for detailed supporting questions

The following appendices provide detailed supporting questions for each domain to facilitate in-depth discussion and assessment.

APPENDIX A: DOMAIN 1 - STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The physical therapy program and institution have philosophies that promote and value research and scholarly activity conducted with integrity, inclusivity, and ethical responsibility.

Key Question 1: Mission and Vision Alignment

Do the program and institutional mission and vision statements specifically cite scholarship as a core component?

Supporting Questions:

- How prominently is scholarship featured in mission statements compared to teaching and service?
- What specific language is used to describe scholarly expectations?
- How do stakeholders interpret these mission statements in practice?
- How often are mission statements reviewed and updated to reflect scholarly priorities?

Key Question 2: Research Agenda Alignment

How well aligned are the program and institutional research agendas and/or goals?

Supporting Questions:

- Where do program research priorities complement or conflict with institutional priorities?
- How are research agendas developed and by whom?
- What mechanisms exist for ongoing alignment between program and institution?
- How do resource allocation decisions reflect these alignments or misalignments?

Key Question 3: Professional Research Alignment

How well aligned are the program research and scholarly activity with professional research strategies or initiatives?

Supporting Questions:

- How does the program stay current with ACAPT Excellence Framework priorities?
- To what extent does faculty research address APTA Research Agenda priorities?
- How aligned is program research with other health professional organizations (e.g., Institute for Healthcare Improvement Quintuple Aim)?
- Does the program have strategic research initiatives to address university aims (e.g., MSI, DEI) and community needs (e.g., rural health, health disparities)?

Key Question 4: Metrics and Analytics

How well does the institution and program track metrics for research and scholarly productivity?

Supporting Questions:

- Does the program and institution each have goal statements for research and scholarly activity?
- Is research and scholarship part of program and institutional strategic plans with identified areas for growth?

- Does the program and institution strategically act on research metrics?
- How well does the program and institution promote research outputs to internal and external constituents?
- What mechanisms exist for ongoing assessment and adaptation of research culture initiatives?
- How do metrics address diverse forms of scholarship?

Key Question 5: Aspirations

What are your program's aspirations for strategic alignment for scholarly endeavors?

Supporting Questions:

- What do you aspire to achieve in the next 3-5 years related to strategic alignment? (SMART goal)
- How do you envision better aligning program and institutional scholarly priorities?
- What strategic changes would most significantly advance your scholarly mission?

APPENDIX B: DOMAIN 2 - SUPPORT

The Support domain examines the institutional and program or department-level support systems and infrastructure resources that enable faculty to engage in and produce inclusive, ethical, and sustainable scholarship. The questions examine both the broader institutional infrastructure and the support the program or department provides to faculty. Consider evaluating how the institutional and program/department support come together to create an environment that fosters scholarly inquiry and productivity.

Key Question 1: Faculty Development Needs

How are the distinct scholarship development needs of faculty at different career stages currently identified and addressed?

Supporting Questions:

- What mentorship structures exist to support faculty scholarship development across different career levels, and how effectively do these relationships function across different career levels?
- How do mentorship programs and scholarship support programs address diversity, equity, and inclusion considerations to ensure underrepresented groups develop scholarly careers?
- How is faculty development and training supported throughout careers in specialized scholarship areas.
- How is faculty development and training provided to support the responsible conduct of research, research ethics, and research integrity?
- How are needs assessments conducted to identify emerging professional scholarship development requirements?
- What professional development barriers prevent faculty from optimizing scholarship productivity?
- What skill-building opportunities exist for faculty at each career stage to prepare them for emerging trends in scholarship to ensure long-term productivity?
- What faculty development initiatives/programs could better support scholarship engagement and productivity as faculty navigate the demands and responsibilities of their faculty roles?

Key Questions 2 & 3: Workload Management

How would faculty describe the current workload policies, allocations, and scheduling practices across teaching, scholarship, and service?

Supporting Questions:

- What percentage of faculty have formal protected time allocations for scholarship activities?
- How well do workload policies align with institutional expectations for faculty scholarship, and is there tension between these demands?
- What mechanisms exist for temporary workload adjustments during intensive scholarship periods?

- If the department could redesign workload distribution to optimize scholarship while meeting program needs, what would that look like?
- How well do these workload policies, allocations, and scheduling practices support faculty scholarship?

Supporting Questions:

- How do flexible work arrangements support scholarship productivity?
- How effectively do current scheduling practices provide faculty with uninterrupted blocks of time for scholarly activities?
- What competing demands most frequently pull faculty away from scholarship?
- How are faculty teaching responsibilities structured to either support or hinder scholarship continuity throughout the academic year?
- How does the workload allocation model account for different career-stage scholarship needs?
- What scheduling arrangements would better support scholarship productivity?

Key Question 4: Evaluation and Promotion and Tenure

How is scholarship considered in annual evaluations, promotion, and tenure processes?

Supporting Questions:

- Does the institution require scholarship for annual evaluation, promotion, and/or tenure (for research faculty? for non-research faculty)?
- How does the institution define scholarly work in its promotion and tenure criteria?
- How does the faculty evaluation process consider scholarship excellence in addition to teaching excellence?
- How do promotion and tenure criteria recognize and value diverse forms of scholarship (beyond traditional publications, using Boyer's model)?
- What role do alternative metrics play in evaluation (e.g., CRediT contributor roles, societal impact)?
- Do merit increases or bonuses recognize scholarly productivity?
- How clear are the scholarly expectations for different faculty tracks?
- How does the institution and program/department support early-career faculty in establishing scholarship programs for promotion and tenure?
- How are senior faculty supported in their scholarly efforts related to promotion and tenure?
- How does workload policy address faculty editorial work, peer review, or professional service?

Key Question 5: Internal Funding

What internal funding exists to support scholarly inquiry?

Supporting Questions:

- What internal seed funding exists for pilot projects, feasibility studies, or small-scale investigations?

- What differentiated funding mechanisms exist for faculty at different career stages?
- What funding specifically supports pilot projects for innovative or high-risk research?
- Are there internal funding mechanisms that provide course releases for scholarship projects?
- What funding exists to support open science practices (e.g., data management, open access publishing)?
- How does the institution support faculty pursuing advanced degrees, fellowships, or training?
- What financial support exists for dissemination of scholarly inquiry?
- Are funds for scholarship available in start-up packages for faculty and are they adequate?
- What financial support exists for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in research?

Key Questions 6 & 7: Infrastructure Support

How does the institution and program/department support faculty with scholarship development and compliance?

Supporting Questions:

- Does the institution provide access to a Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB), or does it have an Institutional Review Board (IRB)?
- How effective is the institution's HSRB or IRB at reviewing and approving diverse scholarly projects as defined by Boyer's model of scholarship?
- Does the institution have a central office that manages scholarship compliance for work with local, federal, and private agencies?
- How is grant writing, even for smaller-scale projects, supported?
- Are there funds or other resources available to support scholarship skill-building, including grant-writing?
- How adequately do current physical spaces, equipment and technology resources support the diverse scholarship needs of faculty and students?

Supporting Questions:

Physical Space and Equipment:

- How is shared laboratory and equipment time allocated among faculty and research projects?
- What mechanisms exist for equipment maintenance, calibration, and replacement?
- How does the program address space constraints that limit research activities?
- How does the physical infrastructure support accessibility and inclusive research practices?

Technology Infrastructure:

- What software licenses, databases, and digital tools are available for scholarship?
- How does technology infrastructure support emerging research methodologies?
- What support exists for open science practices, including data sharing platforms?

Human Infrastructure:

- What technical and administrative support staff are available to assist faculty?
- How effectively does the program facilitate participant recruitment and community engagement?
- What support exists for research integrity training and compliance?

Methodology-Specific Infrastructure:

- *Qualitative Research*: What private, quiet spaces are available for interviews and focus groups?
- *Biomechanical/Movement Analysis*: What motion capture systems, force plates, or 3D analysis tools are available?
- *Community-Based Participatory Research*: What mobile data collection equipment and accessible community spaces exist?
- *Educational Research*: What simulation equipment and learning management system analytics support curriculum evaluation?

Key Question 8: Faculty Well-being

What support systems exist to promote faculty well-being and prevent burnout as faculty attempt to fulfill all responsibilities, including scholarship?

Supporting Questions:

- How does the program address work-life balance concerns for faculty engaged in scholarship?
- How does the program create a safe environment for discussing both research successes and failures?
- What support exists for faculty when research projects don't proceed as planned?
- How does the program encourage innovation and appropriate risk-taking in research?
- What mental health resources and counseling services are available?

Key Question 9: Support Aspirations

What are your program's aspirations for scholarship support systems?

Supporting Questions:

- What do you aspire to achieve in the next 3-5 years related to scholarship support? (SMART goal)
- How would you envision an ideal support system for faculty scholarship?
- What support gaps most limit your current scholarly productivity?

APPENDIX C: DOMAIN 3 - COLLABORATION

The Collaboration domain evaluates the program's ability to cultivate, align, and sustain meaningful partnerships that strengthen scholarship and extend its impact. Within this guide, clinical partnerships refer to academic–clinical relationships that support clinical education, research integration, translation of research into practice, and practice-informed research design; community partnerships involve collaborations with organizations in local, regional, national, and/or international communities to address shared health, education, or service priorities; intraprofessional partnerships denote collaboration within the physical therapy profession (e.g., the PT/PTA team) with each member contributing within their defined role and scope; and interprofessional partnerships reflect the Interprofessional Education Collaborative's (IPEC's) definition of two or more professions working together to learn from, with, and about each other to improve outcomes in research, education, and practice.

Key Question 1: Initiation & Nurturing Collaborations

How are collaborative partnerships initiated and nurtured with:

- 1a. Clinical partners?*
- 1b. Community partners?*
- 1c. Intra-/interprofessional research networks?*

Supporting Questions:

1a. Clinical Partnerships:

- List the clinical research/scholarly partnerships currently maintained (partners, length of relationship, examples of impact).
- What formal mechanisms (MOUs, joint appointments) exist to initiate clinical partnerships?
- How are relationships with clinical sites cultivated and maintained over time?
- How do partnerships ensure diverse clinical perspectives and address health disparities?
- To what extent are academic and clinical research goals aligned?
- What processes ensure clarity of roles, responsibilities, and expectations for collaboration?
- How do partnerships address ethical considerations and patient-centered outcomes?
- How are clinician contributions recognized and supported?
- What opportunities exist for co-learning and capacity building with clinical partners?

1b. Community Partnerships:

- How are new community partners identified and recruited?
- What opportunities exist for co-learning and capacity building with community partners?
- How does the program ensure partnerships are inclusive of diverse communities?
- How are community needs assessed (focus groups, surveys, advisory boards)?
- What governance structures ensure clarity of roles and mutual expectations?
- How do partnerships address power dynamics and ensure community voice?
- How are findings shared with communities in accessible ways?

- How do partnerships contribute to addressing health disparities and promoting health equity?
- How are community partner contributions recognized and supported?

1c. Intra-/Interprofessional Research Networks:

- How are new networks identified and initiated?
- How do networks promote diversity and inclusion across disciplinary boundaries?
- What opportunities exist for co-learning and capacity building with community partners?
- How are institutional, professional, and disciplinary priorities aligned across partners?
- What agreements or shared processes clarify roles and goals?
- How do networks address ethical considerations in multi-site research?
- How are institutional, professional, and disciplinary priorities aligned across partners?
- What agreements or shared processes clarify roles and goals?
- How do networks address ethical considerations in multi-site research?

Key Question 2: Strengthening Collaborations

How are collaborative partnerships strengthened with:

- 2a. Clinical partners?
- 2b. Community partners?
- 2c. Intra-/interprofessional research networks?

Supporting Questions:

2a. Clinical Partnerships:

- What training, mentorship, or shared resources strengthen clinician engagement in scholarly activity?
- What mechanisms exist to sustain long-term clinical partnerships?
- What strategies exist to expand partnerships to underserved clinical populations?
- How do clinical partnerships endure beyond single projects or grants?

2b. Community Partnerships:

- How does the program build capacity for community-led research initiatives?
- What ensures long-term viability and impact of community partnerships?
- What strategies are in place to sustain and expand community collaborations and track long-term impact?
- What training, mentorship, or shared resources strengthen community engagement in scholarly activity?
- How do community partnerships endure beyond single projects or grants?

2c. Intra-/Interprofessional Research Networks:

- What mentorship or infrastructure strengthens collaborative scholarship among members of research networks?
- What training, mentorship, or shared resources strengthen intra-/interprofessional engagement in scholarly activity?

- How do research networks evolve into formal structures (consortia, centers)?
- How do research networks adapt to include emerging disciplines?
- What ensures long-term viability and impact of research networks?
- How do research networks endure beyond single projects or grants?

Key Question 3: Responsiveness

How do projects ensure responsiveness to identified needs and priorities of the program and collaborative partners?

Supporting Questions:

- How do projects ensure responsiveness to collaborative partner-identified needs and priorities?
- What processes incorporate collaborative partner input into research agendas?
- What examples demonstrate alignment between research projects and collaborative partner priorities?
- How is decision-making authority shared between academic and collaborative partners?
- How do collaborative partnerships ensure cultural competency and appropriate methodologies?

Key Question 4: Outcomes

What evidence demonstrates measurable outcomes from collaborative partnerships?

Supporting Questions:

- How many peer-reviewed publications include collaborative partners as co-authors?
- How are findings disseminated back to collaborative partners in accessible and actionable ways?
- What examples exist of collaborative research findings being applied in clinical or community settings?
- How do partners describe the benefits of collaboration?
- How have collaborative partnerships influenced research productivity, dissemination, or translation into practice?

Key Question 5: Sustainability

What mechanisms exist to ensure sustainability of these collaborative partnerships long-term?

Supporting Questions:

- Which collaborative partnerships have lasted 5+ years, and what contributed to their longevity?
- What funding or resource-sharing mechanisms support sustainability of collaborative partnerships?
- How does the program leverage external partnerships and shared resources?
- What strategies support scaling to larger, multi-institutional collaborations?

Key Question 6: Collaboration Aspirations

What are your program's aspirations for fostering collaboration?

Supporting Questions:

- What do you aspire to achieve in the next 3-5 years related to research/scholarly collaboration? (SMART goal)
- How do you envision expanding collaborative partnerships to address health equity and global health challenges?
- What collaborative opportunities represent the greatest potential for impact?

APPENDIX D: DOMAIN 4 - IMPACT

The Impact domain evaluates the program's success in generating measurable benefits for individual and societal health through three dimensions: (1) direct research translation into clinical practice and policy-making; (2) innovative approaches that advance physical therapy through novel technologies, treatment methods, and care models supported by external funding; and (3) strategic dissemination of findings across professional, academic, and public spheres.

Key Question 1: Overall Research Impact

How would you characterize the overall impact of the program's research on physical therapy practice, patient outcomes, health care policy, and societal healthcare needs?

Supporting Questions:

- Do you have evidence that research findings have influenced clinical practice or healthcare policy?
- What metrics does the program use to evaluate research quality and impact (e.g., journal impact, citation counts, h-index, external recognition)?
- How does your research contribute to addressing health disparities and promoting health equity?
- What evidence exists that research findings have been reproduced or validated by other groups?

Key Question 2: Contributions to PT Knowledge

What specific contributions have you made to the PT (clinical or academic) body of knowledge?

Supporting Questions:

- Has your research or efforts contributed to clinical practice guidelines in physical therapy?
- How would you assess your success in conducting patient-centered or student-centered outcomes research?
- What novel research approaches, technologies, or treatment methods have you developed?
- What innovative assessment tools or methods have emerged from your research?

Key Question 3: Innovation Approach

How would you characterize your program's overall approach to innovation in physical therapy research?

Supporting Questions:

- How successful have you been in securing extramural grant funding?
- Have you engaged in industry-sponsored research collaborations?
- How effectively have you integrated new technologies into research programs?
- What intellectual property or patents have resulted from research innovations?
- What barriers exist to pursuing more innovative research approaches?
- How have you contributed to developing new models of care?

- How could you expand engagement with digital health or rehabilitation technology research?
- What role does your program play in supporting high-risk, high-reward research?

Key Question 4: Communication and Visibility

How would you assess your overall research communication and visibility strategy?

Supporting Questions:

- What evidence do you have of media coverage or public recognition of research?
- How frequently do you present research at professional conferences?
- How do you maintain an active research presence through websites and social media?
- What mechanisms do you use to regularly communicate faculty and student research accomplishments?
- How effectively do you disseminate research findings to diverse audiences?
- How do you ensure research communication is accessible to underserved communities?
- What barriers exist to increasing research visibility and communication?
- What role does your program play in science communication and public engagement?
- How does your program support open science practices, including data sharing, open access publishing, and transparent reporting?
- What training and support exist for faculty and students in open science practices?
- How does your program contribute to reproducible research practices in physical therapy?

Key Question 5: Knowledge Translation

What knowledge translation activities could amplify your research impact?

Supporting Questions:

- What barriers exist to translating research into clinical practice?
- What untapped opportunities exist for translating current research into practice?
- How might you better leverage research to influence healthcare policy?
- What partnerships could enhance capacity for knowledge translation?
- How do you measure and track knowledge translation outcomes?

Key Question 6: Impact Aspirations

What are your program's aspirations for research impact?

Supporting Questions:

- What do you aspire to achieve in terms of research impact in the next 3-5 years? (SMART goal)
- How do you envision positioning your program as a recognized leader in research impact?
- What role do you aspire to play in advancing open science and reproducible research in physical therapy?

- How might you expand your impact on health equity and global health challenges?

APPENDIX E: DOMAIN 5 - ENGAGEMENT

Key Question 1: Faculty Expectations

How clear are faculty about their specific scholarly role expectations?

Supporting Questions:

- Are internal mechanisms of support clearly understood by faculty?
- Are scholarly expectations documented in writing and regularly reviewed?
- How well do faculty understand the difference between minimum requirements and aspirational goals?
- Do faculty understand how scholarly expectations align with promotion and tenure criteria?
- Do mechanisms exist for faculty to negotiate the level of research activity?
- Are faculty routinely engaged in discussions around program research goals?
- How are expectations for research integrity and ethical conduct communicated?
- How do expectations account for different career stages and diverse forms of scholarship?

Key Question 2: Recognition and Rewards

What recognition and rewards are provided for faculty research productivity?

Supporting Questions:

- Are recognition criteria transparent and consistently applied across all faculty?
- How timely is recognition provided after research achievements?
- What mix of formal and informal recognition mechanisms exist?
- How do you recognize and reward student research achievements?
- How does recognition address diverse forms of scholarship and contribution types?
- How satisfied are faculty with their current level of scholarly engagement?
- How equitable is recognition across different types of scholarly contributions?

Key Question 3: Leadership Role and Advocacy

What is the perceived importance of research among program leadership and how is this demonstrated?

Supporting Questions:

- What is the perceived importance of research among program leadership and how is it demonstrated?
- How do program leaders model research engagement through their own scholarly activities?
- How actively does leadership advocate for research resources at the institutional level?
- What institutional and program messaging highlights the value of scholarship?
- How does leadership recognize and celebrate scholarly achievements?

- Are faculty recruited with research potential?
- How does leadership model and promote ethical research practices and research integrity?
- How does leadership support diversity, equity, and inclusion in research activities?
- How does leadership foster innovation and support risk-taking in scholarship?
- What role does leadership play in regional or national scholarly initiatives?
- How consistently do leadership decisions prioritize research development?
- How frequently are research discussions or meetings held among faculty?

Key Question 4: Stimulating Research Activity

What formal and informal mechanisms are used to stimulate and maintain research activity amongst faculty?

Supporting Questions:

- Are there regularly scheduled meetings to review strategic research goals?
- Are there journal clubs, seminar series, or research retreats?
- Are there opportunities to share research among faculty and collaborators?
- Do faculty routinely participate in society and professional scientific meetings?
- What role do informal meetings play in research culture?
- How effectively does your program engage faculty in scholarly activities?
- What mechanisms exist to re-engage faculty who were previously research-active?
- How does the program create a psychologically safe environment for research discussions?
- What mechanisms exist to support faculty through research setbacks and failures?

Key Question 5: Curriculum Integration

How effectively have you integrated research and evidence-informed practice into your curriculum?

Supporting Questions:

- What is the quality and extent of research methods coursework?
- To what extent do students have early exposure to research practices?
- What research or scholarship requirements exist for students?
- How well do journal clubs and critical appraisal activities engage students?
- What opportunities do students have for direct participation in research activities?
- How effectively do you support student research development and career preparation?
- Are clinical research opportunities encouraged during clinical experiences?
- What barriers prevent students from participating more fully in scholarly activities?

Key Question 6: Inclusive Culture

How does the program ensure that research culture is inclusive and welcoming to faculty and students from diverse backgrounds?

Supporting Questions:

- What mechanisms exist for ongoing assessment and improvement of research culture?
- How does the program address and learn from research culture challenges or conflicts?
- What role do students and early-career faculty play in shaping research culture?
- How does the program stay current with evolving best practices in research culture development?
- What processes exist for celebrating diversity of thought and research approaches?
- How does the program support individuals from underrepresented groups in research?
- What training exists to promote cultural competency in research practices?

Key Question 7: Engagement Aspirations

What are your program's aspirations for operational implementation and engagement in scholarship?

Supporting Questions:

- What do you aspire to achieve in the next 3-5 years related to faculty and student engagement? (SMART goal)
- How do you envision creating a more inclusive and continuously improving research culture?
- What engagement strategies would most significantly advance your research culture?

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