



MOTION

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PROPOSED BY: ACAPT Admissions Task Force

- Matthew Nuciforo, Rosalind Franklin University (chair)
- Michael Sheldon, University of New England (ACAPT board liaison)
- Robert Barnhart, Concordia University Wisconsin
- Karen Claunch, University of Alabama at Birmingham (student representative)
- Loretta Dillon, University of Texas El Paso
- David Lehman, Tennessee State University
- Pamela Levangie, MGH Institute of Health Professions
- Emma Wheeler, Virginia Commonwealth University

That the following be adopted:

Whereas, admissions traffic rules for applicants would improve the efficiency of the admissions process for physical therapist education programs by reducing number of applicants who hold multiple acceptances, submit multiple deposits, or withdraw from one program after start of classes to attend another program;

Whereas, admissions traffic rules for applicants would be limited to individuals applying to entry-level, Doctor of Physical Therapy education programs in the United States;

Whereas, the admissions traffic rules for applicants would exclude individuals applying to guaranteed freshmen entry pathways, dual-degree programs, post-professional degree programs, and as PTCAS early decision candidates;

Whereas, the admissions traffic rules for applicants would apply to individuals applying to both PTCAS and non-PTCAS programs;

Whereas, physical therapist education programs must hold applicants accountable to the rules for the common good;

Whereas, the proposed rules would be effective beginning in the 2016-2017 admissions cycle;

Whereas, multiple health profession education associations have successfully adopted admissions traffic rules to protect member institutions and applicants;

Resolved that the American Council of Academic Physical Therapy adopt the following Admissions Traffic Rules for Applicants to Physical Therapist Education Programs:

- 1. Each applicant shall comply with the application, acceptance, and admission procedures at each physical therapist education program to which the applicant has applied, including PTCAS rules and requirements, as appropriate.**



2. Each applicant shall provide accurate and truthful information in all aspects of the application, acceptance, and admission processes for each physical therapist education program to which the applicant has applied.
3. Each applicant is responsible for the collection and timely submission of all application requirements to each physical therapist education program and PTCAS, as appropriate, by or prior to the established deadline dates.
4. Each applicant shall promptly notify the physical therapist education program and PTCAS, as appropriate, of any changes, permanent or temporary, in contact information.
5. Each applicant shall respond promptly to a physical therapist education program's invitation for interview, as required. Any applicant who cannot appear for a previously scheduled interview should notify the physical therapist education program immediately of the cancellation of the appointment in the manner requested by the program.
6. Applicants holding multiple acceptances are expected to immediately withdraw their application from those programs they are no longer considering attending.
7. Following the start of classes, each student ~~will~~ should immediately withdraw his or her application from all other programs at which he or she remains under consideration.

Support Statement:

1. THERE SHOULD BE EVIDENCE THAT THE MOTION IS OF NATIONAL SCOPE OR IMPORTANCE:

- Have you identified the relevance of this concept to the profession?
- Have you indicated the relationship to the objectives and vision of the ACAPT?
- Have you discussed this concept with other representative institutions and if so, is there support from other institutions as evidenced by sponsorship/co-sponsorship?
- Have you referenced other associations or agencies that have identified similar issues?

PURPOSE

The intent of the proposed admissions traffic rules for applicants applying to physical therapist education programs is as follows:

- Allow programs adequate time to collect deposits and commitments from accepted applicants who wish to enroll.
- Reduce the number of deposits forfeited by applicants.
- Minimize the number of deposited applicants who withdraw late in the admissions process.
- Reduce number of applicants holding multiple acceptances for an extended period of time.
- Reduce the likelihood an enrolled student will withdraw from one program to attend another after classes have started.
- Facilitate the ability of applicants applying to multiple programs to make informed deposit decisions.
- Provide consistency across all programs regardless of start date by enabling applicants to make deposit decisions within a common timeframe.



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- Provide applicants with reasonable time frames to make informed decisions about programs and offers of admission.
- Create a more transparent process in terms of timelines and deadline dates.

RELATIONSHIP TO ACAPT OBJECTIVES

The ACAPT Board of Directors formed the Admissions Task Force in 2013 to make recommendations on admissions traffic rules that all physical therapist programs would follow, and PTCAS procedures, including admissions codes. The stated goal of the task force was to improve the admissions process for programs and applicants through increased transparency of admissions decisions and additional processes that would provide timely and accurate information to applicants and programs. The motion is tied to Goal 1, “ACAPT will lead the exploration and creation of best practice standards in academic physical therapy”, Objective D, “Communicate best practices in academic physical therapy”.

NEED FOR ADMISSIONS TRAFFIC RULES

A more unified admissions and enrollment process should benefit programs and applicants. Forty-nine percent of all programs that responded to the Admissions Task Force survey in May 2014 were supportive of the idea of establishing admissions traffic rules, and an additional 37% were undecided. The majority of programs that responded to the survey identified the following issues as concerns in the current admissions process:

- Applicants holding onto multiple acceptances.
- Applicants forfeiting deposits late in the admissions cycle.
- Applicants not notifying programs that they do not intend to matriculate.

Programs currently compensate for these issues by establishing longer wait or alternate lists and by communicating more frequently with accepted applicants to confirm their intent to enroll.

Seventy-six percent of applicants who responded to the PTCAS applicant survey in May 2014 indicated they would prefer “more consistency in the timing of admissions decisions across programs.” Applicants commented that admissions decision timelines and deposit deadlines were currently staggered in such a way that deposits for some programs were due before other programs had started interviewing, resulting in unnecessary deposits for "safety" purposes.

FEEDBACK FROM PT ADMISSIONS COMMUNITY

A previous version of the admissions traffic rules were presented to the ACAPT membership in fall 2014. The motion was defeated. In response to member feedback, the ACAPT board reconvened the task force and charged it with revising the rules incorporating member feedback with the goal of introducing the revised motion at the ACAPT annual business meeting in October 2015. Matthew Nuciforo, chair, presented a revised set of proposed admissions traffic rules during the ACAPT Open Forum at the 2015 APTA NEXT Conference in National Harbor, Maryland on Friday, June 5, 2015. Faculty and staff who were unable to attend the open forum at NEXT were invited via the ACAPT blast-of-the-week and PTCAS to review the rules and provide feedback on the Task Force online discussion forum through July 2015. Feedback from attendees at the 2014 ACAPT annual business meeting and the open forum at 2015 NEXT, and member feedback on the Task Force Discussion Board were considered in the development of the revised set of rules.



ADMISSIONS TRAFFIC RULES FOR OTHER HEALTH PROFESSION INSTITUTIONS

Multiple education associations in the health and other professions, including those listed below, have developed and adopted admissions traffic rules to protect their member institutions from having unfilled positions in their entering classes and enable them to make fair and timely admission decisions. Traffic rules are also intended to help applicants applying to multiple institutions make informed deposit decisions.

- American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM)
- American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine (AACPM)
- American Dental Education Association (ADEA)
- Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)
- Association of Schools of Optometry (ASCO)
- Law School Admission Council (LSAC)
- National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)

Additionally, the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) is exploring the development of admissions traffic rules for academic pharmacy. A comparison of the rules for physical therapy versus other associations is included as an appendix.

2. MOTIONS AND ACCOMPANYING SUPPORT STATEMENTS SHOULD DEMONSTRATE ADEQUATE BACKGROUND RESEARCH OF THE ISSUE, WHICH CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE FOLLOWING RESEARCH AND ACTIVITY:

- Have you identified relevant positions, standards, guidelines, policies, procedures, core documents, and/or white papers?
- Have you considered inclusion of the physical therapist assistant or other stakeholders when appropriate?
- Have you identified previous relevant debate and discussion within the Association or other forums?
- Have you identified any relevant House of Delegates motions?
- Have you identified any relevant Federal law/regulation?
- Have you identified all other relevant information on the topic?

1. Each applicant shall comply with the application, acceptance, and admission procedures at each physical therapist education program to which the applicant has applied, including PTCAS rules and requirements, as appropriate.

SS: The purpose of this rule is to emphasize to applicants the importance of adhering to the policies and procedures adopted by PTCAS and individual institutions. A standard statement may help programs to raise awareness about the rules and result in greater compliance by applicants. The proposed rule is consistent with those for other associations.

2. Each applicant shall provide accurate and truthful information in all aspects of the application, acceptance, and admission processes for each physical therapist education program to which the applicant has applied.

SS: The proposed rule is intended to emphasize to applicants the need for integrity in the PT admissions process beyond the accuracy of information submitted on the PTCAS or institutional application forms. The proposed rule is consistent with those for other associations.



3. Each applicant is responsible for the collection and timely submission of all application requirements to each physical therapist education program and PTCAS, as appropriate, by or prior to the established deadline dates.

SS: The proposed rule will notify applicants that they are responsible for the timely submission of all application materials to PTCAS, including materials submitted on their behalf, such as transcripts, references, signed PT observation hour forms, and documentation for foreign coursework.

4. Each applicant shall promptly notify the physical therapist education program and PTCAS, as appropriate, of any changes, permanent or temporary, in contact information.

SS: The proposed rule is intended to ensure that applicants provide programs with current and accurate contact information at every point in the admissions cycle, so that the program can reliably communicate with them about the admissions process. The proposed rule is consistent with those for other associations.

5. Each applicant shall respond promptly to a physical therapist education program's invitation for interview, as required. Any applicant who cannot appear for a previously scheduled interview should notify the physical therapist education program immediately of the cancellation of the appointment in the manner requested by the program.

SS: Currently, 61% of programs in PTCAS require an interview as part of the admissions process. Programs commented in the survey on the need for applicants to better communicate with programs about interview dates. The proposed rule is intended to address this issue for programs that require an interview.

6. Applicants holding multiple acceptances are expected to immediately withdraw their application from those programs they are no longer considering attending.

SS: The rule is intended to minimize the number of applicants who fail to communicate in a timely manner with programs about decisions to attend other programs. According to the Admissions Task Force survey, 75% of programs indicated that applicants holding onto multiple acceptances was a concern for the institution, and 51% indicated that applicants often do not notify the program that they do not intend to matriculate. In addition, 58% of programs indicated that applicants are forfeiting deposits late in the admissions cycle. The rule will encourage applicants holding multiple acceptances to notify programs of their intent to withdraw a previously accepted offer as soon as they have eliminated a program from consideration in recognition of their responsibility and commitment to the profession. This rule will complement the second proposed admissions traffic rule for PT education programs.

7. Following the start of classes, each student must immediately withdraw his or her application from all other programs at which he or she remains under consideration.

SS: The rule is intended to prevent students from withdrawing from a program after they have started classes and accepting an offer to enroll in another program with a later start date. [This rule protects applicants by helping to prevent abandoned seats which would otherwise remain empty because classes have already begun.](#) Task Force was founded in part in response to multiple reported incidents of newly enrolled students withdrawing to attend another physical therapist education program with a later start date.

3. DETERMINE PROBABLE FISCAL IMPACT OF ADOPTING THE MOTION

- Have you identified budget implications, including amount and relevant description of calculation methods?



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- Have you provided a rationale for budget implications?
- Have you identified financial resources currently being allocated to related activities?

There are no foreseeable budget implications for ACAPT.

RELATIONSHIP TO PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ACAPT:

Goal 1: ACAPT will lead the exploration and creation of best practice standards in academic physical therapy.

Objective D: Communicate best practices in academic physical therapy.

RELEVANT POSITION/STANDARD/GUIDELINE/POLICY/PROCEDURE:

[Include current standard, position, guideline, policy or procedure if applicable]

The ACAPT Board of Directors formed the Admissions Task Force to make recommendations on admissions traffic rules that all physical therapist programs will follow, and make recommendations on PTCAS procedures, including admissions codes. The stated goal of the task force was to improve the admissions process for programs and applicants through increased transparency of admissions decisions and additional processes that would provide timely and accurate information to applicants and programs.