



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 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 would be limited to entry-level, Doctor of Physical Therapy education programs in the United States;

Whereas, the admissions traffic rules would exclude ~~guaranteed freshmen entry~~ [early assurance](#) pathways, dual-degree programs, postprofessional degree programs, and PTCAS early decision applicants;

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

Whereas, physical therapist education programs must be individually and collectively accountable for complying with the rules, and hold applicants accountable, 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 Physical Therapist Education Programs:

- 1) Programs may begin extending offers of admission on applications deemed complete by the program at any time during the admissions cycle.
- 2) Programs cannot require a deposit prior to January 15 of the year of enrollment or January 15 of year prior to enrollment for January and February start programs.



- 3) Programs must indicate to applicants whether deposits are non-refundable, including those voluntarily paid before the deposit deadline.
- 4) The maximum, cumulative deposit amount an entry-level PT education program may require accepted applicants to pay as a commitment to enroll is \$1,500.
- 5) Programs ~~will~~ should not knowingly accept or enroll applicants who have started classes at a competing ~~another~~ program. ~~A program will verify an applicant's matriculation status with the competing program before it denies or revokes admission based on that status.~~

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 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.
- 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. Programs may begin extending offers of admission on applications deemed complete by the program at any time during the admissions cycle.

SS: The traffic rule is intended to clarify that PT education programs can continue to make admission decisions on applications received at any time during the admissions cycle. More than a third of programs begin to make admission decisions on applications before all applications are received or reviewed. Programs in PTCAS are instructed not to make admission decisions on applications until they are processed and verified by PTCAS.

2. Programs cannot require a deposit prior to January 15 of the year of enrollment or January 15 of year prior to enrollment for January and February start programs

SS: The task force recognizes that applicants holding multiple acceptances has a ripple effect on PT education programs across the country and can make it more difficult for programs to fill classes with qualified applicants. The purpose of the proposed rule is to make it easier for applicants applying to multiple programs to make informed deposit decisions and, as a result, reduce the number of applicants who submit multiple deposits and forfeit deposits. The rule would not eliminate applicant uncertainties or multiple deposits, but would move the window of uncertainty up earlier in the admissions cycle and give programs more time to fill opens seats resulting from changes in applicant decisions.

Based on PTCAS data, the application deadlines for programs with spring start dates are similar to those programs with fall and summer start dates. Therefore, a single deposit deadline was selected for all programs. If passed, all programs would agree not to require applicants to pay a deposit before January 15. Deposit deadlines after January 15 would be at the discretion of each program. Programs could give applicants, including those accepted close to the January 15 deposit date, the ability to submit a deposit at later date, as desired. Applicants could also voluntarily choose to submit a deposit to a program before January 15.

The January 15 deposit deadline would benefit programs and applicants in the following ways:

- Applicants will deem it less necessary to submit multiple deposits because they will have already received an admission decision from most or all of their designated programs by January 15, and will be able to make informed decisions without submitting multiple deposits to hold seats.
- Programs would receive firm decisions from accepted applicants earlier in the cycle and have more time to make offers to pending or waitlisted applicants.



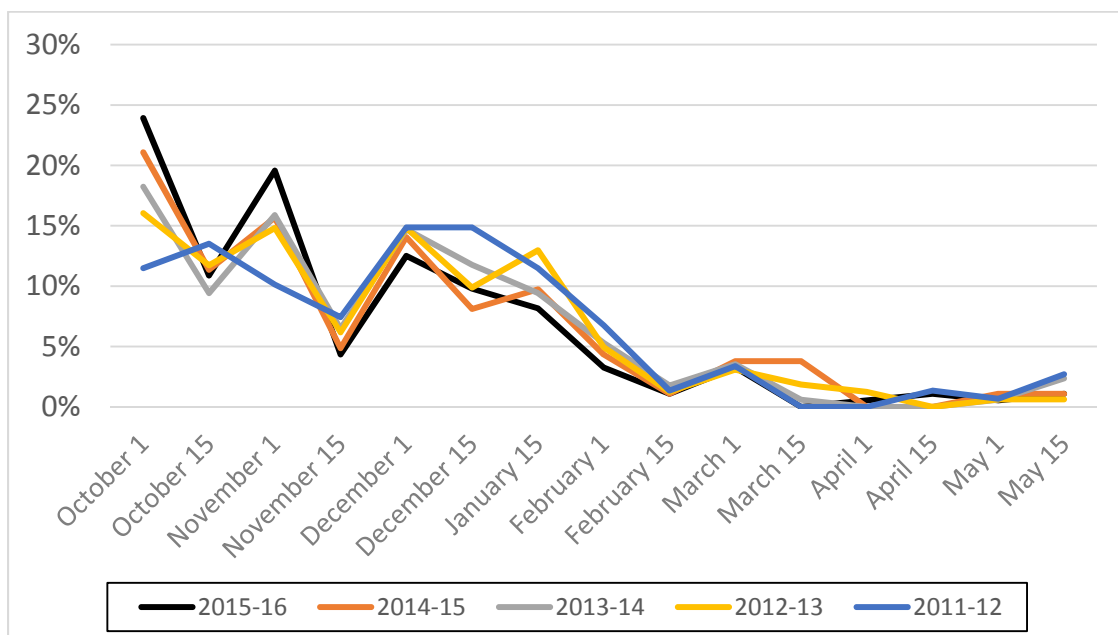
- Programs would spend less time managing processes, communication, and paperwork to deal with applicants who were waiting to receive admission decisions from other programs.
- Programs would spend less time managing applicants who forfeited deposits.

Month of Start Date for Programs in PTCAS for the 2014-2015 Cycle	Percent	Season
May	22%	Summer
June	19%	Summer
July	4%	Summer
August	41%	Fall
September	9%	Fall
January	3%	Spring
February	1%	Spring

There were 144 PT education programs that responded to the Admissions Task Force survey in May 2014. Seventy-five percent had concerns about applicants holding onto multiple acceptances, and 54% had concerns about applicants forfeiting deposits and acceptances late in the admissions cycle.

There were 3,017 applicants representing 18% of the verified applicant pool who responded to the PTCAS applicant survey for the 2013-14 cycle in May 2014. Of those, 76% indicated they would prefer more consistency in the timing of admission decisions across programs, and nearly 1 in 5 responded that they had forfeited a deposit to 1 or more programs. The top 3 reasons deposits were forfeited, as identified in the survey, were as follows: Applicants were (1) unable to consider all of the available PT program options equally, (2) unable to select the PT program of choice, and (3) confused over PT programs' acceptance and deposit policies for applicants.

Application deadlines are already moving earlier cycle without a related rule in place, as shown in the PTCAS application deadline graph below.





Programs are increasingly accelerating their timelines resulting in earlier application deadlines and admissions decisions. Over 60% of PTCAS programs notify the bulk of their applicants of admissions decisions by January. March and April were identified as the most common times for accepted applicants to forfeit deposits to programs.

Bulk of Offers Made to Applicants	Percent
January	19.3%
February	22.3%
March	11.5%
April	2.3%
May	2.0%
June	1.0%
July	0.3%
August	1.0%
September	3.3%
October	7.7%
November	10.5%
December	18.3%

3. Programs must indicate to applicants whether deposits are non-refundable, including those voluntarily paid before the deposit deadline.

SS: The majority of programs (83%) require non-refundable deposits. Programs will continue to have the ability to decide whether a deposit is refundable or non-refundable at any point in the cycle. Programs must publish their related deposit policies in their admissions materials for applicants.

4. The maximum, cumulative deposit amount an entry-level PT education program may require accepted applicants to pay as a commitment to enroll is \$1,500.

SS: The task force recognizes the potential burden increased deposit amounts may pose on applicants. Programs may choose to increase deposit amounts in an attempt to identify an amount that applicants are not willing to forfeit. Deposit amounts required by programs in PTCAS range from \$0 to \$1,500 for the 2015 entering class. Of the programs that require a deposit, the mean amount is \$499.76, and the median is \$500. Three programs currently require a deposit of \$1,500.

The word “cumulative” is included in the rule because some programs require an initial deposit and a subsequent deposit that may total more than \$1,500. The task force discussed that programs with 2 deposit would adjust the amounts so that the total amount did not exceed the maximum. Applicants who do not plan to enroll will not choose to pay a second deposit to a program unnecessarily, regardless of the amount. A second deposit may be deemed by programs to be less necessary to verify an applicant’s intent to matriculate if rule #2 is adopted and applicants are allowed until January 15 to submit a deposit.

5. Programs will not knowingly accept or enroll applicants who have started classes at a competing program. A program will verify an applicant’s matriculation status with the competing program before it denies or revokes admission based on that status.

SS: PTCAS introduced a new “matriculation” admission decision code in the 2015-16 admissions cycle for the 2016 entering class. Beginning in the 2015-16 admissions cycle, programs participating in PTCAS will select the



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“matriculation” admission decision code to indicate an accepted applicant has enrolled and started classes at the program. Programs will not set the matriculation code in WebAdMIT any sooner than the first day of classes. PTCAS will also offer a new report in 2016 that will allow participating programs to view list of shared applicants that have matriculated into another PT education program.

The rule is intended to protect programs against the negative consequences of losing a newly enrolled student after classes begin, including ~~lost tuition revenue for all years of the program~~, disruption to lab group assignments, and issues with clinical education placements. It is also intended to address the concerns expressed about “stolen” students, identified in the 2014 survey as a significant issue concern for programs.

3. DETERMINE PROBABLE FISCAL IMPACT OF ADOPTING THE MOTION

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