



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ACADEMIC PHYSICAL THERAPY

Student Readiness for the First Full-Time Clinical Experience

The following table summarizes the minimal knowledge, skills, abilities, and professional behaviors (KSAs) identified as necessary* for physical therapist students to competently demonstrate prior to entry into the first full-time clinical experience. The KSAs are grouped into 14 themes and the recommended level of competency is indicated below.

Student Readiness Themes and KSAs		Level of Competency
Theme 1	Students should have foundational knowledge to support application and synthesis in the following content areas:	
1.1	Anatomy (i.e. functional anatomy)	At least emerging
1.2	Common diagnoses related to systems review (e.g. medical, physical therapy)	At least emerging
1.3	Kinesiology (i.e. biomechanics, exercise science, movement science)	At least emerging
1.4	Physiology / Pathophysiology (related to general systems review)	At least emerging
1.5	Tissue mechanics (e.g. stages of healing, use/disuse, load/overload)	At least emerging
Theme 2	Students should meet the specific program identified curricular requirements including:	
2.1	achieve minimum GPA	
2.2	meet minimum expectations for practical examinations	
2.3	remediation of any and all safety concerns	
Theme 3	Students should take initiative to apply evidence-based strategies to:	
3.1	generate interventions ideas	At least familiar
3.2	guide decision-making	At least familiar
3.3	measure outcomes	At least familiar
3.4	research unfamiliar information or conditions	At least emerging
Theme 4	Students should engage in self-assessment including:	
4.1	self-assessment of the impact of one's behaviors on others	At least emerging
4.2	the understanding of one's own thought processes (metacognition)	At least emerging
4.3	self-reflection and identification of areas of strength and those needing improvement, development of a plan to improve, and discussion of that plan with instructors	At least emerging
4.4	seeking out resources, including support from others when needed, to assist in implementation of the plan	At least emerging
Theme 5	Students should utilize constructive feedback by:	
5.1	being open and receptive, verbally/non-verbally	At least emerging
5.2	implementing actions to address issues promptly	At least emerging
5.3	reflecting on feedback provided	At least emerging
Theme 6	Students should demonstrate effective communication abilities within the following groups:	
6.1	diverse patient populations	At least familiar
6.2	families and other individuals important to the patients	At least familiar
6.3	healthcare professionals	At least familiar
Theme 7	Students should exhibit effective verbal, non-verbal and written communication abilities to:	
7.1	listen actively	At least emerging
7.2	demonstrate polite, personable, engaging and friendly behaviors	Proficient
7.3	independently seek information from appropriate sources	At least emerging
7.4	build rapport	At least emerging


7.5	seek assistance when needed	At least emerging
7.6	engage in shared decision-making with patients	At least familiar
7.7	demonstrate a level of comfort and respect with patient handling	At least familiar
7.8	demonstrate empathy	At least emerging
7.9	use language and terminology appropriate for the audience	At least emerging
7.10	introduce one's self to CI, clinical staff, and patients	Proficient
Theme 8	Students should be prepared to engage in learning through demonstrating:	
8.1	accountability for actions and behaviors	At least emerging
8.2	resilience/perseverance	At least emerging
8.3	cultural competence and sensitivity	At least emerging
8.4	an eager, optimistic and motivated attitude	At least emerging
8.5	respect for patients, peers, healthcare professionals and community	Proficient
8.6	open-mindedness to alternative ideas	At least emerging
8.7	punctuality with all assignments	Proficient
8.8	self-care to manage stress	At least emerging
8.9	responsibility for learning	At least emerging
8.10	self-organization	At least emerging
8.11	taking action to change when needed	At least emerging
8.12	willingness to adapt to new and changing situations	At least emerging
8.13	appropriate work ethic	At least emerging
8.14	maturity during difficult or awkward situations with patients, families and healthcare professionals	At least emerging
Theme 9	Students should develop the following elements including the documentation of:	
9.1	examination/re-examination (History, systems review, and tests and measures)	At least familiar
9.2	establish and document the problem list	At least familiar
9.3	daily interventions	At least familiar
Theme 10	Student should recognize and address issues related to safe patient care including the ability to:	
10.1	identify contraindications and precautions	At least emerging
10.2	assess and monitor vital signs	At least emerging
10.3	identify and respond to physiologic changes	At least familiar
10.4	assess the environment for safety, including lines, tubes, and other equipment	At least familiar
10.5	appropriately apply infection control procedures including universal precautions	At least emerging
10.6	provide assistance and guarding for patient safety	At least emerging
10.7	utilize appropriate body mechanics to avoid injury to self or patients	At least emerging
10.8	provide appropriate draping during patient care activities	At least emerging
Theme 11	Student should demonstrate the following clinical reasoning skills for a non-complex patient:	
11.1	utilize the elements of the patient-client management model including: address various body systems (cardiopulmonary, integumentary, musculoskeletal, neuromuscular) during the examination	At least familiar
11.2	articulate a clinical rationale in patient evaluation	At least familiar
11.3	develop goals that are linked to the patient's activity limitations and participation restrictions	At least familiar
11.4	determine appropriateness for therapy within scope of PT practice	At least familiar
11.5	interpret examination findings	At least familiar
11.6	screen to rule in/out conditions and concerns	At least familiar
Theme 12	Student should have BOTH the understanding and skill to perform the following examination skills:	
12.1	balance assessment	At least familiar
12.2	chart review to extract relevant history	At least familiar

12.3	dermatome screening	At least familiar
12.4	functional mobility assessment	At least familiar
12.5	gait assessment	At least familiar
12.6	goniometry	At least emerging
12.7	interview / history taking	At least emerging
12.8	lower quadrant screening	At least familiar
12.9	manual muscle testing	At least emerging
12.10	muscle length testing	At least emerging
12.11	myotome screening	At least emerging
12.12	reflex testing	At least emerging
12.13	sensory examination	At least emerging
12.14	medical screening for red flags	At least familiar
12.15	systems review	At least familiar
12.16	upper quadrant screening	At least familiar
Theme 13	Student should have the understanding and skill to perform the following interventions:	
13.1	prescribe, fit, and instruct patients in proper use of assistive devices	At least familiar
13.2	functional training (including bed mobility, transfers, and gait) with appropriate guarding and assistance	At least familiar
13.3	individualized patient education	At least familiar
13.4	therapeutic exercise: specifically strengthening	At least familiar
13.5	therapeutic exercise: specifically stretching	At least familiar
13.6	therapeutic exercise: specifically aerobic exercise	At least familiar
Theme 14	Student should recognize and follow specific professional standards, including:	
14.1	appropriate dress code	Proficient
14.2	core values identified by the APTA as accountability, altruism, compassion/caring, excellence, integrity, professional duty, and social responsibility	At least emerging
14.3	<i>code of ethics identified by the APTA**</i>	
14.4	clinical expectations specific to setting	At least emerging
14.5	HIPAA regulations	At least emerging
14.6	legal aspects related to patient care	At least emerging
14.7	obligations of the patient-provider relationship	At least emerging
14.8	passion for the profession	At least emerging
14.9	patient rights	At least emerging
14.10	maintaining professional boundaries	At least emerging
14.11	understanding physical therapy's role in the healthcare system	At least emerging


*** this item was added by the ACAPT membership*

**This list includes only those items that were identified as necessary by greater than or equal to 80% of participants in a Delphi study involving faculty, directors of clinical education, clinical educators, and recent graduates.*

KSAs identified as "at least" familiar or emerging denote some Delphi Study participants' desire for higher competency but consensus was achieved for "at least" the indicated level of competency.

 **At least familiar**

Student has basic knowledge of the material/skill/behavior and would require guidance to apply it appropriately in the clinical setting.

 **At least emerging**

Student understands how to apply the material/skill/behavior safely and consistently in simple situations and would require guidance to apply the concept or perform the task in more complex situations.

 **Proficient**

Student can integrate the knowledge/skill/behavior safely and independently in all (simple and complex) clinical situations and is able to identify the need for guidance appropriately.

The results in this Table are part of a Delphi Study that has been submitted to PTJ and is currently under review.