Doctor of Physical Therapy Program

Program Mission

The mission of the Department of Physical Therapy is to promote human health and development through:
1. Teaching of theory and practice of physical therapy in classroom and community-based settings by preparing graduates to practice their profession with knowledge, competence, and respect for human well-being.
2. Scholarship in the discovery, application and dissemination of knowledge in physical therapy and health.
3. Public service in partnership with local, regional, and national organizations advancing prevention-based strategies in health.

Program Philosophy

The faculty of the Department of Physical Therapy believes that individuals have intrinsic worth and a right to optimal health and function. Function is defined as those activities identified by an individual as essential to support physical, social, and psychological well being and to create a personal sense of meaningful living.

Physical therapists provide services to patients/clients with impairments, functional limitations, disabilities, or changes in physical function and health status resulting from injury, disease, or other causes. Physical therapists also can prevent the development of impairment, functional limitation, or disability by identifying disablement risk factors and by buffering the disablement process through prevention and wellness strategies.

The physical therapist is professionally educated in a program that synthesizes graduate study with undergraduate knowledge, and experiential learning. The graduate of the Doctor of Physical Therapy program is prepared to function as an ethical and competent practitioner who uses effective clinical decision making and psychomotor skills to provide services to patients/clients. The five elements of patient/client management include examination, evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis, and intervention. The graduate also is prepared to interact and practice in collaboration with a variety of health professionals, provide prevention and wellness services, consult, educate, and engage in critical inquiry. Finally, the graduate is prepared to direct and supervise physical therapy services, including support personnel.

Graduates are expected to assume a leadership role in health care and to practice autonomously and cooperatively in a variety of practice settings such as: hospitals, rehabilitation centers, extended care facilities, schools, sports medicine clinics, community health and private practices, and industrial or workplace settings.

The faculty believes that students are active participants in the educational process. As potential professionals, the relationship between students and faculty is one in which there is mutual respect, understanding, and interchange of ideas. The faculty, as experienced professionals, is resource persons, mentors, and role models for the developing professional. The faculty view themselves as facilitators of the learning process. Students are expected to demonstrate commitment to learning as the basis for continued personal and professional growth, effective interpersonal and communication skills, problem-solving and critical thinking.
skills, and appropriate professional conduct. Effective use of time and resources, feedback, and stress management strategies are also important components of the behaviors of the successful student.

**Expected Student Outcomes**

The Graduate of the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at the University of Massachusetts Lowell will be prepared to:

1. Exhibit attributes, characteristics and behaviors of entry level generic abilities including:
   - commitment to learning
   - interpersonal skills
   - communication skills
   - effective use of time and resources
   - use of constructive feedback
   - problem-solving
   - professionalism
   - responsibility
   - critical thinking
   - stress management

2. Practice physical therapy in a safe, effective, ethical, autonomous, reflective, culturally sensitive and legal manner.
   - Synthesize knowledge from the pure and applied sciences, sociology, psychology, and human values with the professional knowledge, theory and psychomotor skills of physical therapy practice.
   - Perform an initial examination, including patient/client history, relevant systems review, tests and measures.
   - Perform an evaluation based on the information gathered from the examination.
   - Determine a physical therapy diagnosis based on the evaluation, and select the appropriate practice pattern.
   - Determine a prognosis or prediction of the optimal level of improvement in function and amount of time needed to reach that level.
   - Determine an appropriate plan of care, including goals and outcomes, and interventions that include skilled interaction with the patient/client, and various physical therapy procedures and techniques to produce changes in the condition consistent with the diagnosis and prognosis.
   - Provide appropriate case management including communication, coordination of care, discharge planning, and documentation of all elements of patient/client management.
   - Provide appropriate patient/client-related instruction.
   - Provide appropriate consultation services, rendering expert professional or expert opinion or advice, applying highly specialized knowledge and skills to identify problems.
   - Recommend solutions, or produce a specified outcome.

3. Apply the principles of the scientific method and evidence based practice to read and interpret professional literature; participate in, plan, and conduct research; evaluate outcomes; assess new concepts and technologies.

4. Provide skilled planning, direction, organization, and effective management of human technical, environmental, and financial resources.
5. Provide effective direction and supervision of personnel essential to the provision of high quality physical therapy.

6. Provide effective prevention and wellness activities, screening, and the promotion of positive health behavior.

7. Advocate effectively for patient/clients and facilitate necessary change within the health care delivery systems to assure quality health care.

8. Demonstrate commitment to personal and professional development.

9. Successfully complete all courses and the following capstone projects:
   a. research project and presentation
   b. community service project
   c. comprehensive case and design projects.

10. Pass the National Physical Therapy Examination.