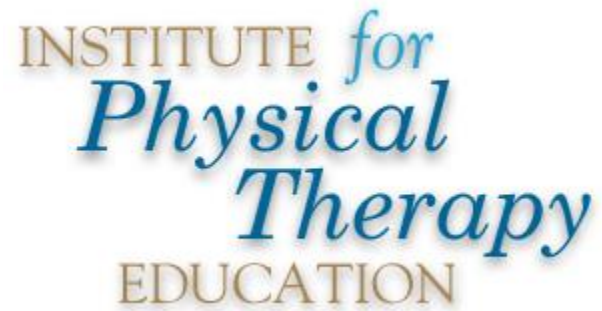




Student Handbook
DPT Program
2026-2027



Widener University

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Preamble

The Institute for Physical Therapy Education (IPTE) was founded in 1993 when it admitted its first class of physical therapy students. The IPTE offered a Master of Science in Physical Therapy degree (MSPT) and graduated its first class in 1996. In that same year the program received full accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) and has earned continued accreditation since that time. In 1999, CAPTE granted permission for the IPTE to offer the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree (DPT). The IPTE was among the first 10 programs in the nation to offer this degree and now all programs nationwide offer the DPT.

The IPTE espouses a philosophy in which practitioners are partners in furthering the health and wellness of our clients, their support network, our communities, and society. The contemporary practitioner uses the best available evidence, client values, and clinical expertise as they collaborate with other professionals to assist clients in realizing their potential, modifying their lifestyles, and renewing personal objectives. To prepare students to be contemporary practitioners, faculty remain active in clinical practice, scholarly inquiry, and professional engagement, serving as role models and mentors for students.

The IPTE holds in high regard the values of professionalism and autonomy within the physical therapy profession. The IPTE is committed to the professional development and socialization of its faculty and student body. The IPTE subscribes to models of education and professional development that prepare clinicians for competent practice, exemplary character, and engaged citizenship. The faculty of the IPTE join with the students in the program to uphold these values on a daily basis. To achieve this goal, both faculty and students have obligations and expectations to fulfill.

Widener DPT Program Values

1. Faculty and program staff establish collegial relationships with students as a method to foster leadership potential and professional responsibility.
2. Students provide an integral part of the learning process, establishing patterns for lifelong acquisition and integration of new knowledge.
3. Faculty emphasize engaged teaching and excellence in clinical practice, both of which are enhanced by scholarly inquiry and professional service.
4. Faculty actively mentor students in ways that foster a commitment to their own professional development and provide positive role models in community and professional engagement.
5. Faculty and students espouse the profession's core values as a meaningful framework for interactions among and between students, faculty, clients, and our communities.
6. Together, faculty, program staff, and students are committed to making a positive difference in the health and wellness of the communities in which we work, live, and learn.

This Student Handbook is meant to be a resource for students and faculty as they fulfill their obligations to the IPTE, to the profession of physical therapy, and to society.

NOTE: Throughout this document students are referred to by their position in the program: first year students = PTI, second year students = PTII, and third year students = PTIII.

University Policies and Resources

Widener University publishes information online that is important to all students. Graduate students in the IPTE should be familiar with policies that will impact their experience on campus as well as resources available to them. In addition to the information presented below, students should review the Student Consumer Information Regulations online at www.widener.edu. From the home page, search the term “consumer information” to obtain a full listing and links to important information online.

Graduate Catalog: The Widener University *Graduate Catalog* is updated each year. This document includes admission guidelines and a description of the curriculum. The catalog can be obtained online via the Widener University web site (www.widener.edu – click “Academics” on the top banner – click on “Catalogs” then select the “*Graduate Catalog*” option).

University Portal and Email: Prior to their first semester of the program, each student will receive information from the Information Technology Services (ITS) office indicating their login, password, and further instructions to access their university email. If a student forgets their login and password, they should contact the ITS department. All departmental communication will come via the university issued email address. Students should adjust as necessary as new systems for email and the campus portal are rolled out.

Course Registration: The University designates dates for students to pre-register online for courses. Students will receive information through Student Planning in myWidener. If students do not register within the pre-registration period, they must see the IPTE Academic Support Specialist for late registration. Late registration requires payment at the Business Office before the student is officially registered for the class.

Drop/Add Process: The University sets the period in which courses can be added or dropped. Due to the lock-step nature of the DPT curriculum, “drop/add” has implications for program completion. Prior to seeking to “drop/add” a course, students should consult with the IPTE Program Director.

Omnilert (campus alert system): Inclement Weather / Safety Alerts: All students are encouraged to sign up for email and text alerts regarding any campus safety emergency or weather issues via the [omnilert system](#), which can be accessed from myWidener. The university policy for snow closings is released each year and is posted on myWidener. If campus will be closed or opening late for any reason, an alert will be posted on www.widener.edu. The IPTE will also communicate any changes to the regular class schedule via email or announcement via Canvas.

University Student Expectations, Rights, and Responsibilities: Students should be aware that Widener University has policies for student behavior which can be found on the university webpage in the University Student Handbook. To access the University Student Handbook, go to www.widener.edu and click “Academics” on the top banner – click on “Catalogs and Handbooks” then select the “*University Student Handbook*” option). The policies outlined in the University Student Handbook encompass activity on campus, which includes the Chester Community Clinic. If a student violates these policies, disciplinary action will be taken.

Health Insurance: The University requires that all full-time students have health insurance. Students have a variety of options for obtaining health insurance. They may be covered under a parent’s or partner’s policy, they can purchase private insurance on their own, or they may purchase coverage via the university. Students must provide proof of insurance to Student Health Services by the date they specify (indicated in a mailing that all students receive prior to the start of each academic year) or they will be charged for the university’s health insurance. The IPTE and many of the clinical facilities that provide clinical education experiences for our students also support the requirement for health insurance. This requirement is included in many of the affiliation contracts between the IPTE and those clinical facilities.

Student Services:

** At the end of this document, all university contact information will be listed in the Appendix.

- **Financial Aid** – A variety of options are available to finance graduate education. Information on those options is available from the Office of Financial Aid for the Main Campus, which is located in the Enrollment Management Center in Lipka Hall, at the corner of 14th and Potter Streets. All forms are downloadable from their website – (www.widener.edu – select “Admissions” from the top menu, then click on the “Graduate Admissions” banner, and then “Financial Aid”). Students who enter the graduate program while they are still undergraduates (3+3 students from Widener or an articulating institution), should contact their financial aid liaison to ensure that their financial aid is packaged correctly. The contact information for this office is listed at the end of this document in the University Phone Numbers section.
- **Bursar** – The Office of the Bursar is housed in Lipka Hall, which is located at the end of 14th Street on the corner between Potter Street and Providence Avenue. The Office of the Bursar at Widener University sends out the semester bills for tuition and fees and credits your account both for the payments you make and any financial aid you receive. The office also manages the repayment portion of Widener University's Perkins Loan program. If you have a Perkins Loan, you will visit their office to sign a promissory note and they will make sure that you understand your rights and responsibilities as a borrower. For more information on hours of operation see their web site (www.sites.widener.edu/bursar/). The contact

information for this office is listed at the end of this document in the University Phone Numbers section.

- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** – CAPS provides Widener University students access to counseling, psychotherapy, education, assessment, and psychiatric services. There may be a nominal fee for most services. Graduate students will incur a fee for testing services. CAPS is located at 522 E. 14th Street. For detailed information on the services provided, see their website (www.widener.edu – search “CAPS.”) The contact information for this office is listed at the end of this document in the University Phone Numbers section.
- **Student Health Services** – Student Health Services is located in Metropolitan Hall at the corner of 17th and Melrose Avenues. It is staffed by nurse practitioners, a part-time physician, and registered nurses. It is open Monday thru Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. A nurse practitioner/physician is on-call for emergencies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Refer to the Student Health Services webpage for a full listing of services offered (www.widener.edu – search “Student Health”).

There is no charge to students for basic medical services provided by University personnel in the Student Health Services. There are charges for prescription medication, lab tests, immunization/injections, women’s health visits, and specific medical equipment. These charges can be either billed to the student's school account or paid for in full by the student. Widener University will not directly bill any third-party insurance company for these charges, but will provide any required information for students and/or parents to submit charges to an insurance company. Services performed outside the Health Center are the financial responsibility of the student.

- **Student Accessibility Services** - In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any student has the right to request a reasonable accommodation of a disability. Accommodations can be requested through Student Accessibility Services (520 E. 14th Street) the office that authorizes all accommodations on campus. Please note that you will need to present documentation of your disability to this office. It is important to make this request as soon as possible so that you can make the necessary arrangements. For detailed information on services provided, see their website (www.sites.widener.edu/sas/). The contact information for this office is listed at the end of this document in the University Phone Numbers section.
- **Writing Center** – The Writing Center is located on the first floor of the Old Main Annex. The Writing Center provides help for any writing assignment regardless of the course. At the Writing Center you will work one-on-one with an instructor whose job is to meet your individual needs. The center will help with the basics of grammar, punctuation, and spelling to brainstorming, organizing, outlining, drafting, and revising. The writing instructors are also trained to work with students for whom English is a second language. See their website (www.widener.edu – search “Writing Center”) for more detailed information. The contact information for this office is listed at the end of this document in the University Phone Numbers section.

- **Security** – Campus Safety is centrally located on the ground level of Old Main and provides 24-hours-per-day, 7-days-a-week service and protection. The Campus Safety Department utilizes highly visible officers on bicycle, vehicle and foot patrols. The department offers: escort service for individual protection; transportation to nearby medical facilities for emergencies; and shuttle bus services. The shuttle also provides transportation to nearby off-campus locations. Additionally, the campus is closely monitored via surveillance cameras and emergency call stations are located throughout the campus. The contact information for this office is listed at the end of this document in the University Phone Numbers section.

All graduate students must obtain picture identification cards (ID) and parking permits from Campus Safety. There is no charge for the ID card while there is a yearly fee for parking permits. Your ID card will be used to gain access to buildings on campus. To learn more about Campus Safety, see their web site <https://www.widener.edu/student-experience/student-success-support/safety>.

- **Career Design and Development** – The Office of Career Design and Development prepares students to embark on a successful and fulfilling career, not just land your first job. Career Design and Development partners with students to offer personalized support that sets the pace for best practices in career development. The office offers engaging events and workshops throughout the year covering a variety of topics ranging from professional development to job satisfaction. Whether you'd like to attend a career fair or strengthen your resume writing skills, you're bound to find a learning and networking opportunity that suits you. Handshake, Widener's premier recruiting tool for students, alumni, and employers, allows you to connect with employers or apply to jobs directly. For more information, please visit the Career Design and Development website: <https://sites.widener.edu/career-design-and-development/>. The contact information for this office is listed at the end of this document in the University Phone Numbers section.
- **Library** – Wolfgram Memorial Library is located centrally on campus and provides a variety of services to Widener University students, faculty and staff. Access to all services requires a valid Widener student account. An instructional librarian assigned to the IPTE is available to assist students. The instructional librarian for the DPT Program is Kristina Dorsett. The contact information for this office is listed at the end of this document in the University Phone Numbers section.
- **Pride Recreation Center** – A state-of-the-art Recreation Center is located adjacent to Schwartz Center and houses cardio and strength training equipment, aerobics rooms, and a climbing wall. Membership is free and students must present their ID to enter. More information is available on the Widener website (www.widener.edu – click the Campus Life tab in the top banner – click on Health and Wellness). The contact information for this office is listed at the end of this document in the University Phone Numbers section.

Institute for Physical Therapy Education Policies & Resources

Vision: The Widener University Institute for Physical Therapy Education aims to produce excellent, diverse, globally-minded physical therapists who lead with integrity and compassion to enhance the health and mobility of all individuals and communities.

Mission: The Widener University Doctor of Physical Therapy Program's mission is to graduate physical therapists who demonstrate clinical competence and exemplary character, while embracing responsibilities of citizenship through evidence-based preparation.

Goals:

- *Goal 1 – Clinical Competency*
Our graduates will apply scientific knowledge, heuristic values, critical analysis, and a systematic approach to provide evidence-based patient care.
- *Goal 2 – Clinical Competency*
Our graduates will make a commitment to the profession, accepting responsibility for life-long professional development.
- *Goal 3 - Character*
Our graduates will address the cultural, social, psychological, and biological factors that contribute to determinants of health, and disability in populations served by physical therapy.
- *Goal 4 - Character*
Our graduates will demonstrate compassion and concern for others and value differences in lived experiences for all consumers of health care.
- *Goal 5 - Citizenship*
Our graduates will participate in the evolving social, economic, legal, and political events that impact healthcare and facilitate system innovation.
- *Goal 6 - Citizenship*
 - a. Our graduates will participate in activities that ensure equitable access to effective quality patient care services.
 - b. Our graduates will involve patients and the members of their care team in the decision-making process; empower clients with information; promote healthy lifestyles; and encourage a sense of responsibility for one's own health.
- *Goal 7 - Citizenship*
Our graduates will collaborate with other professions and community groups to promote optimal health outcomes.

Essential Functions: The *Essential Functions* document outlines the necessary skills required of a physical therapy student. Upon program acceptance, students are provided via email with instructions, the *Essential Functions* document including signature lines, and the applicable link to upload the signed document to the Widener DPT Exxat clinical documentation management platform prior to arriving to new student orientation. All students are given an opportunity to review this document and determine if they are able to meet these expectations with or without reasonable accommodations. Students are also given time to ask questions and voice concerns prior to signing the document. They must upload the signed document to the Widener DPT Exxat clinical documentation management platform prior to arriving to new student orientation at the start of the program.

Academic Integrity Policy and Exam Proctoring Statement: During the summer new student orientation and summer meetings at the start of the program, all students are introduced to the College of Health and Human Services *Academic Integrity Policy Statement*. By the end of new student orientation, all students must sign and return the *Academic Integrity Policy Statement* and a copy is placed in the student's file. Students should be aware that faculty can use software that can identify plagiarism. These resources may be used for all written work to determine originality and that the results of such a review may be used to demonstrate academic dishonesty and/or plagiarism. An extension of the College of Health and Human Services *Academic Integrity Policy Statement* is the *IPTE Exam Proctoring Policy*. This policy and procedures document outlines the conditions under which all exams are administered in order to minimize the temptation and occurrence of academic dishonesty. These documents can be found in the Appendix section at the end of this Student Handbook.

Professional Behaviors: Students of the IPTE are representatives of their class, our academic program, the university, and the profession of physical therapy. The way in which students present themselves to others helps to define themselves as professionals. Students are expected to dress appropriately for classroom and laboratory instruction. Students are expected to be in professional attire whenever possible, this includes anytime they are to visit or attend a clinical experience, anytime a guest lecturer is scheduled, and anytime they are attending a university, community, or professional event. Professional attire is defined as that which would be acceptable in a physical therapy clinical setting AND that which meets the expectations of the IPTE. Students should consult course syllabi, faculty instructions, and clinical site instructions regarding the expectations of professional attire for various clinical, classroom, university, and community events.

In the development of professional behaviors, the faculty and staff of the IPTE strive to facilitate the behaviors and responsibilities that will be expected of new therapists in their first employment experiences. Students are expected to be prompt for all scheduled activities in their role as student in the program. If a student is going to be late or will need to miss class or a scheduled event, the student is to notify the appropriate faculty member. If the student is unable to contact the faculty member, the student should contact the IPTE Academic Support Specialist who will pass the message on to the appropriate faculty member. When completing clinical experiences, students are expected to meet or exceed the

expectations of the clinical setting with regard to professional attire, promptness, and completion of assigned tasks.

Students who exhibit behaviors that are not consistent with the professional expectations of the profession and the program may be required to meet with applicable IPTE faculty member(s) to discuss and document concerns. Students who exhibit behaviors that are not consistent with the professional expectations of the profession and the program may also be required to meet with the IPTE Student Success Committee (SSC), who may recommend or require specific remediation activities and plans. Professionalism concerns are documented by applicable IPTE faculty on the *Performance and Professional Behavior Feedback Form*. The concerns are discussed in meeting(s) with applicable IPTE faculty and/or the SSC, signed by all applicable parties (faculty and student), and stored in the student's electronic department folder. Students who do not comply with required plans of action, who commit egregious acts, or who continue to display a pattern of unprofessional behaviors may be dismissed from the program.

Drug and Alcohol Policy for On and Off-Campus Experiences: In addition to the University's policies and state laws associated with drug and alcohol use, physical therapists and physical therapy students have a professional responsibility to the patients we serve. Students who have contact with patients during community events, site visits, and full-time clinical experiences must be able to exercise sound judgment and be free from the influence of drugs or alcohol. Any student who is believed to be under the influence will be immediately removed from the experience. A student may be asked to consent to an alcohol and/or drug test. Any student who refuses to consent will be considered to be under the influence. The student will be scheduled to meet with the IPTE Student Success Committee for disciplinary action and possible dismissal.

Blood-borne Pathogens Training: The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that all health care workers understand the dangers of blood borne pathogens and how to protect themselves and others. The IPTE and many of our clinical facilities require that students have the same education. This education is provided as part of the orientation program. This content is mandatory and students must sign a declaration that they have received such training. The declaration will be maintained by the Directors of Clinical Education (DCEs). A copy of this declaration may be provided to the student's clinical facility upon request.

Client/Patient Confidentiality: Maintaining client/patient confidentiality is of utmost importance in all patient interactions. This is supported by both the American Physical Therapy Association's (APTA) *Code of Ethics* and most states' licensure. It is also federal law as described in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996. As part of the orientation program, students will attend a mandatory session on patient confidentiality and the implications of HIPAA. Students will be required to sign a declaration that they have received this training. The declaration will be maintained by the Directors of Clinical Education (DCEs). A copy of this declaration may be provided to the

student's clinical facility upon request. It is expected that all students will maintain client/patient confidentiality both in the clinic and in the classroom. A breach of client/patient confidentiality would constitute unprofessional behavior that could result in disciplinary action and/or program dismissal.

Educational Methods and Principles: The program's educational methods are built on the principles of adult education and established around a belief in the learner as a self-directed adult ready to initiate and assume the responsibility for learning. Faculty members guide learning experiences and provide opportunities for a variety of experiential, interactive, and self-directed learning incorporating innovation and technology. Students and faculty develop sustainable relationships and programs with community partners providing a meaningful context for reciprocal learning and engagement.

Curriculum: Information on the entry-level DPT curriculum can be obtained in the IPTE *Graduate Catalog* available at the IPTE web site at www.widener.edu/ipte.

- **Informed Consent for Laboratory Participation:** Laboratory (lab) activities are an integral part of physical therapy education. Students will often be asked to play the roles of therapist, patient, and family member or caregiver while in lab experiences. By agreeing to attend the Widener University DPT program, students accept their responsibility to participate in all roles during lab experiences.

The IPTE recognizes that there may be occasions where a student for medical, religious, or personal reasons cannot participate in a lab experience. In such instances the student should notify the faculty member at the beginning of the semester or immediately upon gaining such knowledge. The student may be asked to provide the reason for not participating. This may be done to ensure that participation in other aspects of the lab is safe. If possible, an alternate lab activity may be provided to accommodate the specific student issue.

All students should become familiar with all contraindications and precautions to the lab activity to be practiced. If there is any medical reason that a student should not participate in the lab, it is imperative that they not participate. The student is also responsible for notifying the primary course instructor if they think that a medical condition may be a precaution and/or contraindication to the procedure to be practiced.

Students are still responsible for all material covered in a lab experience and must demonstrate proficiency in the procedures covered unless specifically excused by the instructor. Failure to successfully demonstrate proficiency in lab procedures can jeopardize the student's ability to meet course requirements and progress through the program.

- **Practical Examinations:** The specific procedures governing the logistics and implementation of all practical examinations are determined by the primary course instructor(s). By IPTE faculty consensus, the following policies shall govern the

practical examination process in all courses. This information is included in every IPTE syllabus in which there are practical examinations associated with the course:

All practical examinations must be passed with a score of 75% or higher on associated rubrics to pass the course. If the student does not successfully pass the first attempt at a practical exam, the student shall undertake a remediation and re-take plan, as advised by the course faculty.

In the event that a re-take is necessary, there will be two faculty examiners present to optimize objective assessment, grading, and feedback. The maximum number of practical re-takes will be determined by the course faculty and be made explicit in the syllabus at the start of the semester.

- **Not Achieving a Passing Score on the Maximum Number of Re-examination Attempts.** If the student is not ultimately successful in passing a practical exam by the end of a course, a grade of “F” (Fail) for both the practical and course will be given. If a failing grade is achieved in a course, the student will not be permitted to move forward in the program in accordance with the academic policies stated elsewhere in this Handbook.
- **Professional Seminar:** Professional Seminars are a series of mandatory cohort meetings, facilitated by an IPTE faculty cohort advisor, dedicated to issues surrounding the profession of physical therapy and student involvement in the DPT program. Topics include, but are not limited to, issues related to the mission of the IPTE; clinical education; pro bono clinic clinical conversations; professional behaviors and expectations in the classroom, lab, and clinical experiences; financial aid and; preparation for licensure and practice. The seminar meets weekly for one hour in the fall and spring semesters and is listed on the course schedule. A schedule of topics to be covered is distributed to students by the faculty cohort advisor at the beginning of each semester. Professional Seminar is a Widener DPT Program requirement and, as such, students are expected to attend all sessions. Absence from a Professional Seminar is handled in the same way as an absence from class; students must notify the faculty cohort advisor in a proactive and timely fashion. Frequent unexcused absences from Professional Seminar will be considered a violation of the Professional Behavior expectations described elsewhere in this Handbook.
- **Electives** - All students will take at least one Advanced Practice elective course to satisfy degree requirements for the entry-level DPT degree. Students may be permitted to audit or take for credit a second Advanced Practice elective with permission of the course instructor. Students who audit Advanced Practice electives should seek out guidance from the course instructor as to the requirements to successfully pass a course that is to be audited.
- **Experiential Learning** – The IPTE curriculum has a strong emphasis on experiential learning. Students will be engaging with community members as part of their Community Health Practicum experiences, the Chester Community Clinic, and other experiential learning activities throughout the curriculum.

- **Interprofessional Learning** – The IPTE curriculum is designed to include interprofessional learning experiences. Students will sometimes be in classes and have lab experiences with students from other professional disciplines.
- **Course Evaluations** - Students are asked to take an important role in providing constructive feedback to their instructors. It is the desire of the faculty of the IPTE to provide students with a confidential method of sharing information and feedback regarding their learning and classroom experiences. Students should understand that faculty use this information to improve their teaching methods and the structure of their courses. Students should also realize that the IPTE uses this information as one part of the evaluation of faculty teaching and in the overall assessment of the curriculum. We ask that students take this responsibility seriously and provide feedback to instructors in a professional manner, the way in which students themselves would prefer to receive constructive feedback. Student individual ratings and comments are confidential. All students are expected to complete course evaluations for all courses taken in a given semester.

Clinical Education: Clinical education experiences are integral to each student's professional development. Three full-time experiences occur in the third year of the program.

- **Clinical Education Manual:** All students will receive access to the IPTE's *Clinical Education Manual* during their first year in the program. This manual is designed for both students and clinical education faculty. Students are expected to understand and follow the policies outlined in the *Clinical Education Manual*. Any questions should be directed to the DCEs.

The manual includes the following –

- Philosophy, Mission and Goals of IPTE
 - Curriculum outline
 - Objectives for all Clinical Practice courses
 - Pass/fail criteria for all Clinical Practice courses
 - Policies related to all Clinical Practice courses
 - Samples of the forms used in clinical education such as the standard affiliation contract, the *Clinical Internship Evaluation Tool*, and the *Student's Evaluation of Clinical Education Experience*.
- **Best-Fit, Sequential Matching Process:** The Institute uses a best-fit, sequential matching process for student selection of full-time clinical education placements. The process is introduced to students during a Professional Seminar in the first year of the program. Please consult with the DCEs for a description of the best-fit, sequential matching process.
 - **Readiness for Full Time Clinical Experience Policy:** The IPTE faculty are required to ensure readiness of all students prior to placement in their full-time clinical education experiences. A policy outlining the conditions under which a

student may be asked to meet with the Student Success Committee (SSC) to review their readiness is provided in the Appendix of this Handbook.

Comprehensive Exam: This course is composed of the preparation and administration of a comprehensive examination. This examination is a culminating experience, which reflects mastery of both the didactic and clinical components of the IPTE curriculum. The academic version of the Practice Exam and Assessment Tool (PEAT) from the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) will be used to determine entry-level competency and readiness for graduation and will be used for the comprehensive examination. The comprehensive exam is taken within the course PT800.

Academic Policies and Standards in Physical Therapy:

- **This DPT program is designed as in-person and lock-step.**
- There is no general policy for attendance in graduate courses. However, with certain courses, it is appropriate for the instructor to make class attendance mandatory. Such policies will be included in the course syllabus.
- **Taking more than 18 credits in any semester will need the approval of the IPTE Program Director and faculty.**
- To graduate from the DPT program, students must achieve an overall GPA of 3.0 on a standard 4.0 system. No student will graduate from the DPT program with an incomplete grade.
- Any student who earns a semester GPA below a 3.0 will automatically be put on academic probation and will be required to meet with the Student Success Committee. Upon meeting, a learning contract may be established. Repeated semesters on probation may likely result in the inability to move forward in the program. This decision is made after careful consideration of the student's overall performance, academic disposition, and mathematical feasibility for achieving the minimum 3.0 GPA by the time of expected graduation.
- A student will not be permitted to move forward in the program when their cumulative grade point average is below 3.0 AND when they receive a grade of C in two courses in the same semester. The student may petition the Student Success Committee for reinstatement. The committee may require the student to repeat those and other foundational program courses. Successful completion of a repeated course will require the student to achieve a grade of no less than a B. Failure to achieve a grade of B will result in dismissal from the program.
- If a student fails a course, that course may be repeated only once with permission of the Student Success Committee. The student may also be prohibited from moving forward in the lock-step program until that course in which the student received a failing grade is repeated successfully. Successful completion of any repeated course requires a grade of B or better. After the student successfully repeats a failed course, both grades are recorded on the transcript but only the most recent grade is used in calculating the GPA.

- When a student is convicted under Widener’s academic fraud policies, that student is prohibited from exercising the repeat-of-course option to remove the F grade (given as a result of fraud) from the GPA calculation.
- If a student fails 2 or more courses, the program may dismiss the student.
- If a student fails to meet the degree requirements in 13 consecutive semesters (150% of the time from matriculation in the 3 semester-per-year program), the program may dismiss the student.
- Once dismissed from the program, a student may no longer participate in IPTE activities or courses.
- Conduct inconsistent with the ethical and professional standards of the discipline, whether it occurs before or after matriculation, is grounds for dismissal from the program.
- The code of responsible conduct for graduate students requires that each student maintain academic integrity and act according to this code in all academic matters. Students are required to read and sign the policy on academic integrity upon entering the program. They are also expected to abide by the *Code of Ethics* and uphold the standards of practice for physical therapy as published by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA).
- Clinical integrity should model academic integrity. Students should refer to standards for clinical behavior published in the program’s *Clinical Education Manual*.
- After acceptance and prior to enrollment in the program, all students will receive the *Essential Functions* document to review and sign. This document outlines the physical, cognitive and behavioral expectations of a physical therapy student at Widener University. Students will attest to their ability to perform these essential functions with or without reasonable accommodations. If the student needs accommodations, more information can be obtained by contacting Student Accessibility Services at 610-499-1266. The office is located at 520 E. 14th St. The Office of Student Accessibility Services is an advocate for students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and psychological disabilities.
- Misconduct outside the program that results in a felony conviction may make a student ineligible for licensure as a physical therapist; hence, students who are convicted of a felony may be dismissed.

Clinical Education Standards in Physical Therapy:

- A student will be allowed to participate in clinical practice courses when all prerequisite course work has been successfully completed. If a grade of Incomplete (I) has been issued for any prerequisite course(s), entry into full-time clinical education experiences may be delayed. The grade in the course at the time of the Incomplete must also meet “Academic Policies and Standards in Physical Therapy,” described above.
- A student whose prior semester GPA is less than a 3.0 in the physical therapy curriculum and/or has failed the maximum amount of practical exams allocated within a course must meet with the Student Success Committee.
- The DCEs are responsible for oversight, implementation and grading of all clinical education experiences. Details of the clinical education process are outlined in the *Clinical Education Manual*.

- If a Fail grade is received for a clinical education experience, the DCEs in collaboration with SSC, will determine if a student is entitled to remediate by completing another clinical education experience, or, if through the assistance of the respective clinical faculty, further time at that particular facility will meet the needs of the student. If the student is required to complete an additional clinical education experience, the DCEs will determine when and where the student will repeat the clinical experience.
- If a student has a total of two Fail grades in any of the clinical practice courses, including repeated attempts, that student will be dismissed from the program.

Grading in the Program: Students are expected to maintain satisfactory progress toward their graduate degree. The graduate record for a student begins with the first course in which they enroll and includes all subsequent courses. All courses in the program are graded using the following grading scale:

Percentage Grade	Letter Grade	Quality Points
94-100	A	4.0 points
90 - < 94	A-	3.7
87 - < 90	B+	3.3
83 - < 87	B	3.0
80 - < 83	B-	2.7
77 - < 80	C+	2.3
75 - < 77	C	2.0
< 75	F**	0.0
	I (Incomplete)	0.0
	W (Withdrawal)	0.0
	P/F (Pass/Fail)***	0.0
	AU (Audit—no credit)	0.0

** Grades below C are not considered passing for the IPTE and result in the inability to progress to the subsequent semester of Widener DPT courses.

*** Pass/Fail—Most graduate courses in physical therapy will give standard letter grades. The special nature of some courses will require that they be graded on a Pass/Fail basis.

Students who elect to withdraw from a required physical therapy course may not continue with the program unless permission is granted following review by the Student Success Committee (SSC).

Role of the Student Success Committee (SSC) regarding the Academic Standards of the Program: This committee will be comprised of at least three IPTE core faculty whose role will be to consider requests, make recommendations, and act related to:

- a) academic standards of the program

- b) violations of student conduct, including professional behaviors
- c) academic appeals
- d) student grievances
- e) probation, dismissal, and reinstatement of students

In some cases, the SSC may request individual students, other faculty members, or outside witnesses to meet with the committee. These meetings are for fact finding, discussion, planning, and decision-making associated with any of the above issues. Recommendations and decisions from the committee are provided verbally to the student, followed by a written record of said decisions. Written record of the meeting and any associated decisions is placed in the student's IPTE electronic file.

Educational Contracts and Remediation: In the situation where students are not or have not demonstrated the competencies and skills required by the IPTE, a formal contract may be employed. Such contracts allow for formal coordination and communication of expectations, responsibilities, and consequences. These contracts may be initiated by students, faculty, the Program Director, the DCEs, and/or the SSC. These plans are typically used in isolation and are not necessarily intended to be used sequentially. Three main types of plans may be used. Descriptions of each follow:

Education Plan – This is a proactive agreement between a student and the faculty addressing areas of concern that could potentially put a student at risk of not achieving future programmatic or curricular expectations. This may outline potential strategies and short-term goals that are a stepwise progression toward successfully completing course or program objectives. The goals and objectives in an educational plan are consistent with those expected from all students.

Action Plan – An action plan will be used or implemented when a student has started, but not completed, a course and is not meeting the expectations of that course. This inability to meet expectations puts the student at significant risk of failing the course. This plan should clearly communicate the student's specific area of difficulty in meeting the course objectives, specific learning objectives to address the identified area of deficiency, and the potential consequences of not meeting the learning objectives outlined in the plan. The goals and objectives in an action plan are consistent with those expected from all students.

Remediation Plan – A remediation plan may be used when a student has failed to meet the course or program objectives. It may include various strategies and responsibilities to address and improve the student's deficits. Since the student has failed to achieve the objectives on the first attempt, this plan may have additional expectations that are beyond general program requirements.

All of the above are possible options for classroom and clinical education experiences. All involved parties (e.g. student, faculty member and/or clinical instructor) will sign the contract/plan. This original will be maintained in the student's electronic departmental file. The specifics of the plan will be shared with all appropriate parties.

Widener University is committed to maintaining academic integrity, fairness, and due process in all graduate programs. Consistent with the Widener University Graduate Catalog and accreditation expectations, graduate students—including those enrolled in the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program—have the right to seek review of academic decisions or raise concerns when they believe university policies or procedures have not been applied appropriately. The university distinguishes between appeals and grievances, each serving a distinct purpose within the academic governance framework.

Academic Appeals

An academic appeal is a formal request for review of a specific academic decision that directly affects a student's academic progress or standing. Appeals are appropriate when a student believes that a decision was made in error or was not consistent with published university, school, or program policies.

At Widener University, academic appeals may apply to matters such as:

- Course grades
- Academic probation or dismissal
- Decisions pertaining to violations of student conduct, including professional behaviors

The burden of proof rests with the student to demonstrate that course faculty or program decisions pertaining to the matters listed above did not follow published policies. Appeals must be initiated within specified timelines and follow the procedures outlined in the Graduate Catalog or Widener DPT Program Student Handbook.

In alignment with CAPTE expectations for due process, DPT students are encouraged to seek informal resolution with course faculty or program leadership before initiating a formal appeal whenever appropriate.

Academic Grievances

An academic grievance is a formal complaint alleging unfair treatment, violation of policy, or failure to follow established academic procedures that adversely affect a student's educational experience. Grievances are distinct from appeals in that they typically address conduct, procedural fairness, or the learning environment rather than the outcome of a specific academic decision.

The academic grievance process exists to:

- Protect academic due process
- Support professional standards of conduct
- Ensure concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation

Examples of issues that may be addressed through a grievance include:

- Inconsistent or inequitable application of academic policies
- Failure to adhere to published program or course procedures
- Concerns related to supervision, advising, or instructional practices
- Actions that impede a student's ability to meet academic requirements

The grievance process typically begins with informal resolution. An informal resolution refers to the initial, non-adversarial process by which a student seeks to address an academic concern through direct communication with the involved faculty member(s), advisor, or program leadership before initiating a formal appeal or grievance. Its purpose is to clarify concerns, resolve misunderstandings, and achieve timely resolution at the lowest appropriate level consistent with institutional policy and due process expectations. If informal efforts are unsuccessful, students may proceed with a formal grievance in accordance with procedures outlined in the Graduate Catalog.

Certain matters—such as allegations of discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct—are addressed through the university’s Title IX policies and office and are not handled through the academic grievance process.

Academic Integrity/Fraud

Allegations pertaining to academic integrity/fraud will be addressed in accordance with procedures outlined in the Graduate Catalog. Students should refer to the IPTE *Academic Integrity Policy* in the Appendix of the Widener DPT Student Handbook.

Guidance for DPT Students

Consistent with CAPTE accreditation standards, Widener University emphasizes transparent policies, timely resolution of concerns, and protection of student rights. DPT students are encouraged to review applicable policies in the Widener University Graduate Catalog and DPT Student Handbook, pursue informal resolution when appropriate, and seek guidance from program leadership or faculty advisors as needed.

Appeals, Grievances & Conflict Resolution

If a student has an appeal and/or grievance concerning a class in which he or she is enrolled, they will first try to resolve the problem with the instructor of the class. If a student has a concern about an academic requirement of the program (e.g., comprehensive examination, clinical placements), they will first try to resolve the problem with the faculty or director of the program. If grievances should arise during a student’s clinical education experiences, the DCEs and the clinical faculty shall seek remediation. Core faculty, including the Program Director, may be consulted as needed. This policy is described in the *Clinical Education Manual*. If it is impossible to resolve the matter at this initial level, the concern must be placed in writing as an appeal or grievance (see above). Then the student may appeal to the IPTE Student Success Committee (SSC). The student should inquire of the Dean of the College of Health & Human Services for the proper appeal and/or grievance procedure if the student’s appeal and/or grievance is not resolved to the student’s satisfaction after initial appeal to the instructor, the program director, or subsequent SSC review.

Students must submit their request to appeal a grade or express a grievance in writing to the course instructor no later than 7 days after the course grades are posted for student review.

Graduate Student Assistance

If you are having a **concern related to a course or faculty member**, the process is as follows:

1. Most challenges can be addressed by speaking with the faculty member directly, and that is recommended as the first step.
2. If you are unable to resolve your concern with the faculty member, or are uncomfortable speaking with them directly, please contact the IPTE Program Director.
3. If you are unable to resolve your concern with the IPTE Program Director, or are uncomfortable speaking with them directly, please contact the Dean of the College of Health & Human Services.

If you have a **mental health concern**:

- Please contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) during business hours at 610-499-1261. CAPS is a resource available to graduate students and provides short-term therapy for students. Off-campus referrals are provided for those who seek long-term therapy.
- If you have signed up for the University Student Health Insurance plan that Widener offers, you have free access to the Student Assistance Program that includes access to a licensed professional 24/7 with no copay.
- If you have your own health insurance, please visit their website directly to determine your benefits and contact information, including their directions for 24/7 access.
- If you do not have the Widener or your own health insurance, and if a mental health emergency should occur outside of CAPS operating hours, please contact the nearest crisis center or hospital emergency room (Crozer Chester Hospital in Chester is the nearest to Campus) or dial #911.

If you have an **accessibility-related concern**: Any student has the right to request reasonable accommodation of a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Student Accessibility Services reviews documentation and student requests for accommodations. Please direct any questions to the Student Accessibility Services office during business hours at 610-690-1266.

If you have a **Title IX or similar concern**: Widener is committed to creating and sustaining a safe environment for all students and employees. Our [Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy](#) prohibits all forms of sexual misconduct and assault on campus. Upon receiving a report of misconduct, we will address the matter as quickly and fairly as possible. To submit a report, please visit https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?WidenerUniv&layout_id=40

Outcomes Process: The Outcomes Committee of the IPTE monitors the process and progress of the goals the program has set forth for its graduates. Student involvement in data collection involves surveys at set time points and focus group participation, as needed. All students will be required to participate in periodic assessment of the program through the completion of surveys. At program completion, all students will engage in an exit process that includes survey data. As alumni, graduates will also be asked to participate in follow up surveys, occasional focus groups, as well as the gathering of data from employers, which will support the outcomes assessment process. Participation of students in the process of

providing and collecting outcomes data is vital to the IPTE and the faculty believes this participation also fosters professionalism and supports evidence-based practice in and outside of the classroom. All students and graduates are expected to participate in the outcomes process.

Graduation Requirements: Widener University confers degrees three times each year – May, August, and December. The University hosts graduation ceremonies only once a year, in May. In order to participate in the Widener University graduation ceremonies, all students must meet the following criteria. All criteria must be met no later than the Monday one week preceding the graduation ceremony.

- a) Complete a petition to graduate and pay graduation fee by November 1st (for May graduation).
- b) Complete all didactic coursework with a GPA of 3.0 or greater.
- c) Successfully pass all clinical education experiences.
- d) Successfully pass the Comprehensive (PEAT) examination.**
- e) Submit all paperwork required for clinical education experiences.
- f) Participate in online IPTE exit surveys
- g) Meet all financial obligations, **including graduation fees.**
- h) Meet all other requirements set forth by the Institute, the College, and the University as noted in official publications.

Please Note: The IPTE faculty, upon consultation with the Program Director and Dean of the College of Health and Human Services, determines student eligibility to participate in the graduation ceremonies. Any student who intends to graduate in May and has not met all of the aforementioned criteria by the specified date for any reason, may not be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremonies.

** Students who are unsuccessful on the Comprehensive Exam (PEAT) prior to the commencement ceremony, but have fulfilled all other graduation requirements outlined above may participate in the Widener University graduation ceremonies. **However, the student's actual DPT degree will not be conferred by the university until the Comprehensive Exam (PEAT) has been successfully passed.** This may mean that a student's degree date may be delayed to August or December, depending on when the Comprehensive Exam (PEAT) is successfully completed.

For students scheduled to graduate in either August or December, all of the above criteria must also be met within one week of the official date by which they are to graduate. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that they have completed all of items listed above. Students will be notified when it is time to petition for graduation.

A description of the process and associated fees is detailed in a letter sent to the students from the university.

National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE): In order to be eligible for licensure, all graduates will need to register, take and pass the NPTE. The IPTE faculty are committed to student readiness for this important exam and have established a variety of supports to help

students prepare for this event. Students are made aware of those supports and informed during Professional Seminar meetings.

Institute for Physical Therapy Education Student Life, Leadership & Professional Development

Orientation: All incoming students will attend several orientation and class meeting sessions prior to and during the first semester of the program (Summer). This will include an orientation with the Program Director and several faculty to be introduced to the program, faculty and staff, mission, curriculum, policies, and culture.

Mentor Program: To aid incoming students in their orientation to the program and the university, the Physical Therapy Student Association (PTSA) sponsors a peer mentor program. The officers of the PTSA, in collaboration with the Program Director, organize a method to collect information from incoming students and returning students willing to participate in the program. The PTSA makes peer mentor “matches” and facilitates the first communication between the two parties. The program encourages incoming students to use currently enrolled students as useful resources as they make their way through the program.

Faculty Cohort Advisor: An IPTE faculty advisor for each cohort is designated by the core faculty and conducts the Professional Seminar sessions for that cohort during the duration of the program. This faculty member also assists the cohort in planning graduation events.

Faculty Advising: All students will be assigned an academic advisor during their first year in the program. Students are expected to seek out their advisor when needed. If a student wishes to be assigned to a different advisor than the one that was originally assigned, they should consult with the IPTE Program Director.

Access and Use of Academic Learning Spaces: We encourage students to study and practice in the academic learning spaces, including Academic Center North (ACN) and Wollman Hall. Students can gain access to the academic learning spaces via their student ID from 7 am – 10 pm. Students may remain after hours but are encouraged to be in pairs or groups during those times. We ask that the students exercise good judgment when using the space and equipment. Please keep the space neat, clean and organized. Please move respectfully in the space and be courteous to one another. Students should report any problems with the space or equipment to the Academic Support Specialist immediately.

Scholarship Application Process: All incoming first-year students are considered for one-time Admissions scholarships based on merit. Each student’s admissions file is reviewed in the Admissions process to determine if the student is eligible for a scholarship. All continuing students, if they desire, **may** apply for any IPTE scholarships that are made available during their enrollment in the Program. No scholarships are automatic or guaranteed from one year to the next. When scholarships are available, students will be notified in writing each year about the application period and asked to complete a form and

a narrative. Scholarships for continuing students are based on both merit and financial need as determined by the financial aid office. Due dates for scholarship applications are outlined in the notice students receive from the IPTE.

Class Officers: Each cohort of students will elect class officers with the assistance of their faculty cohort advisor. The offices consist of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Social Chair. The role of the President and Vice President is to organize student events and to be advocates for their class with the Program Director and faculty. The role of the Secretary is to notify the class of planned meetings and to record the minutes of the meetings. The role of the Treasurer is to work with the Academic Support Specialist and Program Director in order to obtain funds for class activities. A main function of the Class Officers is to plan fundraising activities, organize a licensure review course, and plan any cohort graduation celebration activities. The program reserves Mondays at noon to allow class officers to hold meetings as needed.

Clinic Student Board: The Chester Community Clinic is an interprofessional student-run pro bono clinic. A Student Board consisting of 10-12 positions from each class is appointed to serve. Students learn about the Clinic Board leadership opportunities during summer orientation. Interested students submit applications for positions in early July and are named by the start of first-year fall semester. Clinic Student Board leadership is guided by the Clinic Bylaws.

PT Student Association (PTSA) Leadership Team: The purpose of the PTSA Leadership Team is encourage, promote, and support the involvement of fellow students within the Institute of Physical Therapy Education and within our state-level and national-level professional associations, educating and advocating for key issues impacting physical therapy students, licensed physical therapists, and clients in our communities. The PTSA Team consists of a PTSA Representative-At-Large, a PTSA Secretary (this is a dual appointment as Class Secretary), a PTSA Fundraising Chair, and 1-2 PTSA Committee Members. All of the positions are attained by completion, submission, and acceptance of a PTSA Team application, except for the secretarial position, which is nominated and voted on by the Class.

Student Fundraising: All fundraising done by Class officers, PTSA Leadership Team, or Clinic Student Board must follow the fundraising policy. A copy of the fundraising policy can be found in the appendix at the end of this Student Handbook.

Special Event Participation: During the course of each academic year, the Institute for Physical Therapy Education, the College of Health and Human Services, and Widener University will host special events designed to foster the professional development of its students. Participation of the students from the IPTE is a professional and academic expectation. Special events include but are not limited to the following:

- **Martin Luther King Day of Service** – This occurs on the Friday afternoon before the MLK holiday weekend and requires participation by the PT I cohort.
- **Clinical Site Visits** – Site visits are class and program-specific and are placed on the IPTE semester schedule for both the fall and spring semesters as appropriate. It is the responsibility of the student to keep the scheduled date on the calendar open for site visits. The actual schedule of visits will be published in the appropriate course syllabus or made available to students by the course instructor.

In the case that a student will not be able to attend a listed event, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the faculty member who is responsible for coordinating the event well in advance of the scheduled date.

Professional Conferences: The IPTE encourages students to attend at least one professional conference throughout their professional student experience. Limited funding is available to support student attendance. Students will be made aware of conference opportunities as they arise.

Photo/Video Release and Publicity Material: From time-to-time students may be photographed or videotaped for educational or recruitment/marketing purposes. Photos and videos of non-students may also occur as a part of the educational program (in class or as a part of research activities). When necessary, the faculty member in charge of the activity will gain the consent and release of the photo and/or video for appropriate uses. University Relations can provide a photo or video release that may be used for these purposes. If such a release is connected to a research activity, the appropriate Institutional Review Board approvals are also necessary.

Community Engagement and Volunteer Opportunities: As a part of the mission of the program, students are encouraged to participate in community engagement and volunteer opportunities that are both formal and informal parts of the program. A primary vehicle for community engagement for students is the Chester Community Clinic and the Community Health Practicum occurring throughout the Chester and regional communities. In addition, PTSA and the Class Officers may organize community engagement and volunteer opportunities.

The Pro Bono Network: The Pro Bono Network was founded by IPTE students of Widener University and serves to link fellow students and institutions who are growing or are interested in growing student-run pro bono clinics. All students in the IPTE are considered members of The Pro Bono Network. The Network holds an annual national conference at Widener University. More than 100 PT programs participate in the Network.

The Pro Bono National Honor Society: The Pro Bono National Honor Society was founded by IPTE students of Widener University and serves to recognize those health profession students who demonstrate commitment to providing underserved clients and communities with quality care while maintaining the standards and requirements of their curriculums and professions. The National Honor Society aims to encourage the development of altruism, and social responsibility. IPTE students who reach or exceed the

IPTE criterion number of service hours will be inducted into the honor society and will receive both a certificate and an honor cord to wear at graduation.

IPTE Alumni Connection: The IPTE greatly values the student connection and involvement with IPTE alumni. Students will see alumni welcomed back as guest lecturers, lab assistants, practical examiners, supervisors in the student-run pro bono clinic, and clinical instructors in the field. Alumni serve as valuable resources and mentors for IPTE students. The IPTE maintains contact with alumni through an annual electronic newsletter, social media outlets, and alumni participation in fundraising and networking events.

Professional Development Resources

American Physical Therapy Association: “The APTA is an individual membership professional organization representing approximately 100,000 member physical therapists (PTs), physical therapist assistants (PTAs), and students of physical therapy. APTA seeks to improve the health and quality of life of individuals in society by advancing physical therapist practice, education, and research, and by increasing the awareness and understanding of physical therapy's role in the nation's health care system” (www.apta.org). APTA is a federated model; in addition to belonging to the national organization, membership will also include the state chapter level.

The APTA sponsors professional meetings each year including Combined Sections Meeting in February. The APTA Pennsylvania chapter sponsors several continuing education seminars and holds its annual meeting each October. Students are encouraged to become locally active and to attend conferences with IPTE support.

APTA Student Membership: Students are required to join and maintain membership in the APTA as a student member. Visit <https://www.apta.org/apta-and-you/explore-aptamembership> for more information. As APTA members, you will receive benefits including, but not limited to, scholarship opportunities, access to the peer-reviewed journal *Physical Therapy* and the APTA magazine, as well as access to “members only” sections that will be beneficial to your coursework. APTA membership also affords discounts for conferences and products.

American Physical Therapy Association
APTA Centennial Center
3030 Potomac Ave; Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22305-3085
800/999-APTA (2782)
www.apta.org

APTA Pennsylvania
2400 Ardmore Boulevard, Suite 302
Pittsburgh, PA 15221
412-871-3406
office@aptapa.org
<https://www.aptapa.org/>

Southeastern District (SED) of APTA PA
The SED holds meetings in the Philadelphia area several times between September and May. Several faculty members attend this meeting, and students are encouraged to attend as well. The business meeting is followed by a continuing education presentation.
<https://www.aptapa.org/southeast-district>

Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE): “CAPTE is an accrediting agency that is nationally recognized by the US Department of Education (USDE) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). CAPTE grants specialized accreditation status to qualified entry-level education programs for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants” (www.capteonline.org). Widener University’s IPTE is accredited by CAPTE. CAPTE requires that program accreditation status and outcomes be posted on the program’s webpage at www.widener.edu/ipte, click on the Accreditation and Outcomes link. Any questions or concerns regarding the accreditation of this program can be directed to:

Mary Romanello, PT, PhD (Director, Accreditation)

Phone: 703-706-3241 | Email: maryromanello@apta.org

Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy: The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) is the national organization that is responsible to “develop, maintain, and administer the National Physical Therapy Examinations for Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants.” They can be contacted at:

Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy

124 West Street South, Third Floor

Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: 703-299-3100

Fax: 703-299-3110

www.fsbpt.org

Individual State Boards of Physical Therapy: Each state has a physical therapy board that is responsible for implementing and monitoring the state practice act. This includes, but is not limited to, issuing licenses in that state. Students/alumni are reminded that they must have a license to work as a physical therapist. A list of state boards is available on the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy’s website (see above).

- PT Compact – PT Compact is an alternate way to obtain the privilege to practice physical therapy in a state. Please consult the PT Compact website to determine if this is an option. See - <https://ptcompact.org/>

APPENDIX

Academic Integrity Policy

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT COLLEGE OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES INSTITUTES

Widener University strongly supports the concepts of academic freedom and academic integrity and expects students and all other members of the Widener University community to be honest in all academic endeavors. Cheating, plagiarism, and all other forms of academic fraud are serious and unacceptable violations of university policy, as specified in the Student Handbook. Widener University expects all students to be familiar with university policies on academic honesty and will not accept a claim of ignorance - either of the policy itself or what constitutes academic fraud - as a valid defense against such a charge.

I hereby affirm, as a student in one of the Institutes of the College for Health & Human Services of Widener University, I have read and understand the Academic Integrity Statement, Widener University's Policy Regarding Academic Fraud, and my Professional Association's Code of Ethics. I agree to adhere to the guidelines for conduct presented in these documents during my tenure at Widener University.

I further agree to uphold the principles of the APTA [Code of Ethics](#) and the University's [Internal Review Board](#) during any research performed as a student of Widener University.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

IPTE Exam Proctoring Policy & Procedures

Policy Statement: IPTE faculty will employ a variety of techniques to ensure academic integrity during testing situations.

Procedures:

1. Proctoring is defined as vigilant supervision and monitoring of students during examination situations. Proctors should minimize other work performed during the examination session. The proctor should be in the room for the duration of the examination session. On certain occasions, proctors may initiate an examination session in the room and subsequently continue proctoring via remote means (i.e., live streamed video surveillance of the exam room) for the remainder of the examination session. When remote proctoring is employed, proctors should remain immediately available for technical issues or other difficulties.
2. Whenever possible, proctoring should be performed by a faculty member.
3. When proctoring in the exam room, proctors should sit or stand at location in the room that allows them to effectively view the whole classroom such as the back of the room or out of the direct line of site of the students.
 - a. Proctors may move quietly throughout the room as needed and as set-up allows.
4. When remote proctoring is employed, proctors must position cameras in the exam room to effectively provide a view of the entire group of testers present in the room.
5. Unless approved by the instructor, non-test materials, including but not limited to paper, books, backpacks, and electronic devices are not allowed in the testing environment. If testing in Academic Center North (ACN), students' personal items should be placed in a locker. If testing outside of the ACN building, students' personal items should be placed at the front or back of the room and away from the individual testing stations.
6. Students are not permitted to ask questions during the exam.
7. Students may not wear hats or hoods on their head during the exam.
8. Students may not leave the exam room without permission. Faculty reserve the right to accompany the students while outside the room.
9. For all examinations:
 - a. Faculty will employ the following strategies –
 - i. Arrange classroom seating to maximize space between test takers.
 - ii. Utilize additional proctor(s) when primary instructor(s) is/are involved in psychomotor testing during a written exam.
 - iii. Students should not be left alone in a room with exam materials.

- b. Faculty may employ the following strategies –
 - c. Utilize two (2) classrooms or two (2) test sessions to maximize distance between students.
 - i. If sessions are not run concurrently, students should stay the entire testing period to minimize interactions between test groups.
 - ii. Utilize two (2) proctors.
 - iii. Randomize and assign student seating.
10. For paper-based examinations, faculty may utilize the following:
- a. Testing materials should be copied on one-side only to minimize the possibility that students may view another student's examination when turning pages.
 - b. Use of Version A and Version B examinations
 - i. The different versions may be the same questions re-ordered or
 - ii. The different versions may have different questions that equally represent content.
11. For computer-based examinations:
- a. Faculty will employ the following -
 - i. Program testing software to randomize pages, questions, and/or answers.
 - ii. Collect and dispose of/shred any scrap paper provided to students.
 - b. Faculty may employ the following -
 - i. Use of a lockdown browser, when available, to administer the exam.
 - ii. Use of a password to access exams.
 - iii. Use of laptop screen covers during the exam.
12. As noted in item #1 above, the faculty can also have the right to use remote proctoring via live stream video or video recording in either testing situation.
13. Students who are approved for accommodations from the University's Student Accessibility Services will be tested consistent with approved accommodations. Consideration should be given to having testing occur at Student Accessibility Services.

IPTE Readiness for Full-Time Clinical Education Experience Policy

Purpose: It is the responsibility of the IPTE faculty to ensure that all students are at the appropriate level of readiness to enter full-time clinical education experiences. One important way in which faculty gauge that readiness is competency in clinical courses that require practical exams. Students who repeatedly fail practical exams may lack readiness to enter clinical experiences and require a review of their academic progress.

Another important way in which faculty gauge the readiness for full-time clinical education experiences is through the demonstration of professional behaviors among students throughout the duration of the program leading up to full-time clinical education experiences. Students who demonstrate a pattern of professional behaviors/professionalism concerns and accumulate associated documentation from faculty within the IPTE may lack readiness to enter clinical experiences and require a review of their affective behaviors.

Policy: Any student who has failed the maximum amount of practical exam attempts afforded by instructors in a designated course at any time prior to a full-time clinical experience must meet with the Student Success Committee (SSC) prior to being cleared for progression to full-time clinical education experiences.

Any student who has demonstrated a pattern or collection of professional behavior/professionalism concerns/feedback, and accumulated multiple documented incidences of meetings to address said concerns must meet with the Student Success Committee (SSC) prior to being cleared for progression to full-time clinical education experiences.

Meetings with the SSC regarding repeated practical exam failures and/or repeated professional behavior concerns may result in any of the following outcomes:

- 1) probation with terms for removing probation
- 2) education plan, action plan or remediation plan as appropriate that may include requirements for classroom and/or clinical education
- 3) delayed start of full-time clinical education experience(s)
- 4) repeat/audit of courses before moving on to the clinical education experience
- 5) dismissal from the program

Determination of the outcome of either policy violation will be handled by the SSC on a case-by-case basis upon consideration of all circumstances, documentation, program policies, and university policies associated with the student's situation.

IPTE Short-Term Medical Absence Policy

Introduction: This policy is designated to address student-related medical issues that preclude attendance to and full participation in IPTE course activities (particularly lab sessions) and Chester Community Clinic activities for relatively short-term period. Students who meet the criteria of this policy are in a position whereby the student's matriculation through the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program is not compromised at the time of onset of the medical issue but has the potential to be jeopardized without the interventions set forth in this policy. This policy does not cover a single absence from a lecture or lab. Procedural guidelines for remote attendance to *lectures only* are included in this policy.

* **Remote Attendance Disclaimer:** Students who experience absences outside of the purview of this policy for reasons including, but not limited to, illnesses that are anticipated to last a single absence from a lecture or lab. Additionally, personal scheduling conflicts are not eligible for lecture attendance via remote means. Due to the required human, technological, and logistical resources, remote attendance to live lecture sessions are reserved for students who meet the short-term medical absence criteria included under the purview of this policy. Please refer to the applicable sections below pertaining to remote student attendance to determine best practice for addressing missed class sessions.

** This policy applies to absences anticipated to last 2 or more consecutively missed IPTE class and/or lab sessions. Days with multiple classes, each missed class or lab session counts as an absence. This policy **does not apply** to **interprofessional courses**. **Remote access to interprofessional courses is not provided.**

** Please note that students needing longer-term absences from campus activities and/or needing formal learning accommodations are required to consult with the Institute for Physical Therapy Program Director and/or Widener Student Accessibility Services (<https://www.widener.edu/student-experience/student-success-support/student-accessibility-services>).

Policy & Guidelines for Respiratory Viruses:

Respiratory viruses include, but are not limited to, influenza (Flu), COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). To return to class/lab, students must be improving in symptoms and afebrile without medication for at least 24 hours. Mask-wearing upon return to campus may be required. Please refer to the CDC guidelines for details (<https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/guidance>).

Policy & Guidelines for Short-Term Medical Issues Impacting Physical Function:

Widener University Institute for Physical Therapy Education requires students who have missed any in-person course time (particularly lab sessions) or Chester Community Clinic time due to illness, injury, surgery, pregnancy, child birth, or emergency department/urgent care center visit, to complete the procedures outlined below. When deemed appropriate by a treating medical provider, documentation may be necessary in order to return to full, unrestricted on-campus lab and clinic activities. To return to lab/community clinic, students must be able to perform all of the *Essential Functions for Physical Therapy*. These Essential Functions are the same criteria by which students are cleared to return to in-person lab and

Chester Community Clinic activities. An overview of the *Essential Functions for Physical Therapy* is also provided elsewhere in the Appendix of this Handbook. Both the documentation from the medical provider and an updated signed *Essential Functions for Physical Therapy* document should be approved by the IPTE Program Director.

Questions: Please do not hesitate to contact Widener Student Health Services (<https://sites.widener.edu/studenthealth/covid-19-isolation-and-close-contact-information/>) or the IPTE Program Director with additional questions.

Health Sciences Graduate Interprofessional Course Student Absence & Remote Course Attendance Policy

Introduction: It is acknowledged that this policy may differ from any existing policies pertaining to student absence from campus within a specific College of Health & Human Services (CHHS) program/institute. The differing nature of resources and logistics associated with program courses versus interprofessional courses warrant distinct policies that govern the management of student absences and remote attendance to live course sessions. All students are advised to refer to and follow their respective program/institute's applicable policies and procedures regarding the communication and management of absences from on-campus program classes/labs and Chester Community Clinic activities.

Interprofessional Course Student Absence Policy: We are sensitive to unexpected and late changes to schedules, technology hiccups, and varying Zoom capabilities in various environments on campus that disrupt live class and lab sessions. Due to the required human, technological, and logistical resources, remote attendance to live lecture and lab sessions **for interprofessional courses** will not be made available.

- Students who experience absences from class and/or lab sessions are strongly encouraged to connect with classmates for small group discussion/review, skills practice and problem-solving.
- Upon supplemental studying and/or skills practice with student peers, students who experience absences are encouraged to follow up with applicable course instructors as needed to address any outstanding course content-related questions.

*The Institute Program Directors, in consultation and collaboration with interprofessional course faculty, reserve the right to consider the allowance of remote student attendance to live lecture sessions only in cases of extenuating circumstances of student absence that fall outside of the purview of the policy outlined above. Such cases are determined by Institute Program Directors as potentially jeopardizing student matriculation without the intervention of remote student attendance to live class sessions. It is hereby acknowledged that, even under these circumstances, remote access to live lab sessions will most likely not be afforded due to the significant limitations in student access to lab-focused interactions that facilitate meaningful learning. Students who miss lab should plan to meet with applicable course faculty to determine appropriate means of learning lab skills and making up any associated lab work.

**Students requiring longer-term absences (outside of the purview of this policy) from campus activities and/or needing formal learning accommodations are required to consult with their respective Institute Program Director and Widener Student Accessibility Services.

Widener DPT Program Essential Functions

(updated 1/28/2026)

Introduction

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and the American Council of Academic Physical Therapy (ACAPT) do not have set criteria but rather allow programs to define essential functions and technical standards to determine success within individual programs.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the ADA Amendment Act of 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, this document presents a list of essential functions for students in the Institute for Physical Therapy Education (IPTE) at Widener University.

Essential Functions are defined as those skills that all Physical Therapist students must have the capacity to complete with or without reasonable accommodations. These essential functions are applicable in the educational settings (classroom, laboratories, simulated clinical settings) and clinical settings. Widener University is open to all academically qualified candidates regardless of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability.

The list of Essential Functions is designed to assist students interested in and enrolled in the DPT program to make informed decisions about career options. Additional requirements and competencies are outlined in course syllabi and on the DPT program's clinical performance assessment tool. The Essential Functions must be completed in all settings, which include highly complex environments, and within a time frame that is consistent with actual clinical practice. If it becomes apparent that a student is unable to fulfill each essential function with reasonable accommodation, or if the needed accommodations are beyond what would be considered reasonable, thus causing undue hardship to the university or harm to others, then the student will be unable to proceed within the program and may be counseled to consider pursuing an alternative career path.

Instructions

Please carefully read and sign this Essential Functions document to indicate that you have received, read, understand, and are in compliance with this document. Please upload this signed document to Exxat Prism. A signed copy must be in your electronic file before the start of classes.

If you have questions in completing the Essential Functions document, please contact the IPTE Program Director. If you have any concerns about meeting these Essential Functions with or without reasonable accommodations, please reach out to the IPTE Program Director to discuss. If you have had reasonable accommodations in educational and/or work settings in the past, we highly recommend that you seek reasonable accommodations for this program. Simply contact the Widener University Office of Student Accessibility at 610-499-4179 to initiate the process.

The following are the Essential Functions expected of a DPT student in the Institute for Physical Therapy Education at Widener University.

Safety Essential Functions

The student must:

- Maintain a safe environment for the students, faculty, patients, and self.
- Understand and implement universal precautions.
- Recognize and respond in a timely manner to a medical emergency, maintaining a safe environment for all involved.
- Maintain current CPR certification as a healthcare provider.

Affective Essential Functions

The student must:

- Take responsibility for their own actions and consider the impact of their actions on others, with the intent of engaging in professional growth and lifelong learning.
- Recognize and demonstrate respect for cultural, ethnic, ethical, and value differences among students, faculty, staff, patients, caregivers, and other health care professionals.
- Recognize the impact of lifestyle, age, social support, socioeconomic status, class, race, beliefs, and abilities on patients/clients, caregivers, and the healthcare team.
- Demonstrate cross-cultural humility sufficient to work effectively with a wide variety of diverse groups.
- Consistently display the emotional stability to function effectively under stress and to adapt to an environment that may change rapidly without warning and/or in unpredictable ways.
- Act in an ethical, legal, and responsible manner consistent with the Core Values and Professional Behaviors outlined by the American Physical Therapy Association.
- Comply with federal and state law as well as academic and clinical policies.
- Refrain from the use of illegal drugs and alcoholic beverages in academic and professional settings.
- Maintain personal hygiene at all times and follow designated dress codes in the academic and clinical settings.
- Demonstrate maturity, emotional health, and physical abilities required to fulfill all responsibilities in the academic and clinical settings.
- Adhere to timelines and attendance requirements.
- Attend class or make the course instructor aware of an absence.
- Meet deadlines for all assignments, practical examinations, and written examinations.

Communication Essential Functions

The student must:

- Speak and write effectively in English to convey information to other individuals and groups.
- Read and comprehend information in classroom and clinical environments such as course materials, patient medical records, diagnostic tests, and dials/displays on equipment.
- Receive and respond to verbal and written communication in an appropriate and professional manner.

- Appropriately and effectively complete electronic and/or hand-written documentation in academic and clinical settings.
- Convey findings of the physical therapy evaluation and/or response to interventions to health care providers and other key stakeholders.
- Educate, delegate, and interact effectively with students, faculty, patients, caregivers, and interprofessional colleagues.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Participate effectively in group and community activities.

Cognitive Essential Functions

The student must:

- Receive, measure, calculate, remember, analyze, interpret, and synthesize a large body of information, including literature to support evidence-based practice and medical information related to specific patients.
- Organize information to make critical and effective decisions.
- Attend to multiple tasks throughout the day of scheduled classes.
- Prioritize tasks throughout the day in varied clinical settings.
- Self-assess performance on a continual basis to improve professional skills to achieve defined outcomes.

Psychomotor Essential Functions

The student must:

- Move within the educational (class, clinic, campus, etc.) and clinical environments.
- Possess sufficient mental and physical stamina, postural and neuromuscular control, and eye-hand coordination for extended periods of time in order to perform patient care tasks in a manner that does not compromise patient or therapist safety.
- Perform fine motor skills with adequate hand dexterity.
- Consistently perform safe patient handling and mobility techniques.
- Safely lift, push, and pull according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (<https://www.bls.gov/ors/factsheet/strength.htm>) physical demand levels of a physical therapist.
- Navigate transportation resources to attend classroom and clinical requirements.

I understand that the information provided in this document is intended to serve as a guide regarding the physical, emotional, intellectual and psychosocial expectations placed on a student physical therapist. I also understand that the role of the physical therapist may vary according to the clinical site requirements and that this document cannot include every conceivable action, task, ability or behavior that may be expected of me upon graduation. I understand that the safety of patients, co-workers, and myself is of upmost importance. Therefore, I agree to provide information about any limitations or conditions that may directly or indirectly affect my ability to meet these requirements now or in the foreseeable future.

I understand that I have the responsibility to request a reasonable accommodation in either the educational or clinical environment with reasonable notice to the University. Any reasonable accommodation requested for clinical education experiences must also be

approved by the clinical site. There is no guarantee that a clinical site can meet the accommodation requested.

Having read this document, I believe I have the capacity to perform the above stated Essential Functions required by the Institute for Physical Therapy Education at Widener University with or without reasonable accommodations.

Please sign, scan, and upload this document electronically to Exxat Prism. If you have any questions about this document, please direct them to IPTE Administrative Support Specialist, Izem Uysaler, at Ieuysaler1@widener.edu. She will direct students to the faculty member who can best answer any questions.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Fundraising Policy

Institute for Physical Therapy Education Policy – Student Fundraising

Policy: The IPTE wishes to support fundraising efforts by students to assist in the activities and events related to student life in the program.

Purpose: In order to make the best use of the resources allocated to the department and in an effort to provide equal opportunities for student to engage in approved fundraising.

Scope: This policy is in effect for all fundraising efforts by students. This includes but is not limited to fundraising to support student travel, graduation activities, class gifts, and community engagement initiatives.

Responsibilities and Guidelines:

- Students will coordinate their fundraising efforts based on the calendar established by the program. This calendar will delineate the time frames for fundraising by specific interest groups. This calendar will be established by the program and be open to adjustment with approval of students in leadership in conjunction with the Program Director. The goal is to have only one group fundraising at a time, if possible.

Fall Semester:

September –	PTIII
October –	PT II
November –	PT I
December –	PTSA

Spring Semester:

January –	PT II
February –	PT I
March –	PTSA

Summer Semester:

June –	PT II
July –	All groups eligible, but must communicate with others

- All fundraising efforts must first be approved by the IPTE Program Director (copy to the IPTE Academic Support Specialist) prior to their initiation. This is done so that the Program Director may provide support and guidance and establish which, if any, program resources may be utilized to support the fundraising. Program resources include but are not limited to staff time, use of space on campus, ability to send email blasts, duplicating, and funds. All fundraising efforts, even if approval isn't needed, must be communicated to the

Program Director and Academic Support Specialist so that in case a situation should arise the Program Director is at least aware of the group activity. For fundraisers that involve the sale of items that will bear the name Widener or Physical Therapy in any form, students should seek approval from the IPTE Program Director (copy to the IPTE Academic Support Specialist) prior to planning their fundraising. All fundraising attire planned to be worn when on clinic must bear the official WU logo. When an official logo is desired for use, use of official logos shall conform to the Widener University Graphics Standards and may require additional approval beyond the Program Director. The IPTE Academic Support Specialist should be consulted for obtaining the Widener University Graphics Standards.

- Prior to selecting a vendor or a location for a fundraising activity, students will seek guidance from the Program Director and Academic Support Specialist. The purpose of this consultation is to share any previous experiences with vendors that may assist students in selecting an appropriate vendor or venue for a fundraising activity or event. **Students/student groups are, under no circumstances, allowed to enter into any contractual agreements with vendors.** All vendor relationships must either already be established by the university or must be submitted to the Program Director for consideration and processing through the university's required vendor agreement review and contractual relationship process.
- Once a vendor has been identified they should be made aware of the University's graphic standards prior to making the samples. If the sample needs to be changed once the Program Director has given approval, the new sample must be approved.
- Samples may be placed in the main office so that everyone has access to them. Once the fundraiser is finished, the samples must be removed from the office. Collection of money may be continued in the main office, but the officers of the group must check the boxes on a regular basis so that money does not sit there (especially cash). The main office will not be responsible for payments.

University Phone Numbers

AY 2026 - 2027

Institute for Physical Therapy Education – Faculty and Staff

Dr. Chancellor	610.499.1052	cchancellor@widener.edu
Dr. Dholakia	610.499.1246	khdholakia@widener.edu
Dr. Everett	610.499.1242	tseverett@widener.edu
Dr. McCann	610.499.4270	clmccann@widener.edu
Dr. McDevitt (DCE)	610.499.1276	Mjm0200@widener.edu
Dr. Palombaro	610.499.4270	kpalombaro@widener.edu
Dr. Pinckney (Program Director)	610.499.1277	anpinckney@widener.edu
Dr. Sturgill	610.499.1148	lpsturgill@widener.edu
Dr. Zerhusen (DCE)	610.490.7094	slzerhusen@widener.edu
Miss. Izem Uysaler (Academic Support Specialist)	610.499.1277	Ieuysaler1@widener.edu
Clinical Education Support Specialist		PTClinEd@widener.edu
Chester Community Clinic	610.499.4585	admin@chestercommunityclinic.com

College of Health & Human Services

Dr. Dole (Dean)	610.499.4351	rldole@widener.edu
Dr. Black (Assoc Dean)	610.490.7117	jdblack@widener.edu

University Services

Accessibility Services	610.499.1266	rross@widener.edu
Bookstore	610.499.7012	
Bursar	610.499.4161	busoffmc@widener.edu
Campus Safety	610.499.4200	campussafety@widener.edu
Counseling Center	610.499.1261	jlhorowitz@widener.edu

Enrollment Management Services	610.499.4161	enrollmentservices@widener.edu
Financial Aid	610.499.4161	finaidmc@widener.edu
Health Services	610.499.1183	studenthealth@widener.edu
Library	610.499.4066	
Post Office	610.499.4410	postoffice@widener.edu
Pride Recreation Center	610.499.1323	priderecreation@widener.edu
Provost	610.499.4105	provoffc@widener.edu
Writing Center	610.499.4332	pmdyer@widener.edu