

# **PROFESSIONAL DOCTORAL DEGREES POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

**August 15, 2008**

The College of Allied Health Professions administers two Professional Doctoral Degrees: Doctor of Audiology (AuD) and Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) as well as a WEB-based Doctor of Physical Therapy for licensed practicing physical therapists.

## **DEADLINES FOR APPLICATION:**

The deadline for application to the DPT and AuD programs are January 15 and February 15, respectively. Applications to the WEB-based DPT program are accepted throughout the year. Students admitted to a program must register for the semester for which they are accepted. If they fail to do so, they must reapply for admission during a future application cycle. Admitted students (with the exception of the Web-based DPT) are expected to register in all the courses prescribed in the curriculum with the other members of their class.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR CAMPUS-BASED PROGRAMS**

### **DOCTOR OF AUDIOLOGY (AuD) PROGRAM**

#### **REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION**

- A baccalaureate degree (or equivalent) in the field of communication sciences and disorders from an accredited college or university is required for admission. This includes all prerequisites for admission into the AuD program. Students who do not hold a baccalaureate degree in the field must complete the Prerequisite Program. See section below for information about the Prerequisite Program
- A minimum 3.0 (A=4.0) overall undergraduate GPA to be considered for regular admission, a minimum of 2.5 overall undergraduate GPA for provisional admission
- GRE must have been taken within the last 5 years with a combined score of at least 800 for the Verbal and Quantitative sections.
- Three references from faculty at the undergraduate institution are required. Two of these references must be provided by Ph.D. faculty.
- A Letter of Intent stating the applicant's reasons for pursuing the degree.

### **DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM (DPT)**

In addition to the campus-based DPT program, the Department of Physical Therapy also offers an on-line WEB-based DPT for currently licensed practicing physical therapists wishing to complete the requirements for the doctoral degree. Requirements for admission and policies concerning the WEB-based DPT Program are described later in this document.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION TO THE DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM**

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS TO THE CAMPUS-BASED PROGRAM**

- Applicants must declare “Regular” or “Advanced Undergraduate” category in the application and be able to complete all prerequisite courses by the end of the Summer semester prior to the beginning of the program.
- Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores must be officially reported to the University of South Alabama Office of Admissions by January 15th. The GRE must have been taken within the last 5 years with a combined score of at least 800 for the Verbal and Quantitative sections. The score in the Analytical Writing section may be utilized.
- Regular Graduate applicants must have a minimum 3.0 (A=4.0) overall grade point average (GPA). Advanced Undergraduate applicants must have a minimum 3.5 overall PA. Students whose GPA is below 3.0 will be accepted on a “Provisional” basis providing that their GPA in the last 64 semester hours is at least 2.75.
- All applicants must have a minimum grade of "C" in each of the prerequisite courses
- Observation or work experience in Physical Therapy (50 hours minimum) under the supervision of a licensed Physical Therapist must be documented. A form is available for download from the web site that must be signed by the physical therapist with their license number.
- International applicants must have a TOEFL score  $\geq 600$ , TSE  $\geq 60$  and TWE  $\geq 4.5$  and must apply to the University's [Office of International Services](#), with certified translations of transcripts, by October 15 of the previous year.

### **EARLY ENTRY TO THE DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM**

The “Advanced Undergraduate” category in the Department of Physical Therapy allows students to apply for admission to the DPT program. In order to apply for this advanced undergraduate category, applicants must have completed at least 96 semester hours or 144 quarter hours of prerequisites prior to expected entry to the program and a GPA of 3.5 or higher. Acceptance into this program is on a competitive basis.

The following rules apply to all advanced undergraduates:

- No more than 64 semester hours of transfer credit from a Junior College will be accepted.
- They will be officially classified as an undergraduate for the first 2 semesters of the program but will be taking graduate courses of the DPT program.
- While classified as undergraduate students, any financial aid will be restricted to the types and amounts for which undergraduate students are eligible.
- Tuition will be assessed at the graduate level for the entire 8 semesters of the professional program.
- Upon satisfactory completion (minimum GPA of 3.0 in all course work) of the first 2 semesters of the program, they will be awarded the Bachelor of Science in Preprofessional Health Science degree.
- With this Bachelor’s degree, these students must complete application for reclassification and admission to the College of Allied Health Professions Professional Doctoral program. Upon satisfactory completion of the next 6 semesters of the DPT program, students will be awarded the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree.
- For the entire 8 semesters of the program, these students will be held to the same standards and policies as students enrolled in the graduate school (see the policies of the Graduate School)

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT ADMISSION TO ALL PROFESSIONAL DOCTORAL DEGREES**

A summary of these procedures is included in the flowchart at the end of this document

### **APPLICATION**

Student applications must be sent directly to the appropriate program directors by the established deadlines. The admissions committee in every department will rank qualified applicants and, if appropriate, select those to be invited for an interview. Rejection letters will be sent from the department to those students who do not meet the minimum qualifications. The folders from qualifying applicants will be forwarded to the Director of Graduate/Professional Studies for the College of Allied Health Professions for approval and then to the Office of Admissions to complete data entry.

### **LETTERS OF ACCEPTANCE**

Each department will be responsible for reporting the applicant's status (accepted, waiting list or rejected) to the Office of Admissions in order to complete the applicant's record. The department or the office of Admissions will send letters of acceptance. As students reply to either the results will be recorded in both the department and to the office of Admissions.

## **GRADUATION PROCEDURES**

### **APPLICATION FOR DEGREE**

Each candidate for the Doctor of Audiology or Doctor of Physical Therapy degree must apply for the degree during the semester preceding the semester of graduation. Deadlines are specified in the University Calendar. At the beginning of the semester prior to graduation, the departmental chairs will be asked to complete the check sheets for graduation and to report to the Director of Graduate/Professional Studies whether any student may not be able to graduate on time. Each semester the Chairs will confirm which students will complete all the requirements for graduation, and this information will be reported to the University Registrar in order to prepare the diplomas.

## **ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

### **WITHDRAWAL**

A student who withdraws from the University or from a course will have WD recorded on his permanent record, provided the withdrawal occurs within the time limits listed in the official Calendar. Withdrawal after the time limit can only be approved by the Dean of the College of Allied Health Professions upon the recommendation of the department Chair.

### **GRADE STANDARDS**

The grading system for Professional Doctoral degrees include A, B, C, D and F. Graduate students in the Professional Doctoral programs must maintain a minimum overall Program GPA of 3.0. A maximum of 8 semester credits of courses with the grade of C may be counted toward a degree in all campus based programs (DPT and AuD). For students in the web-based DPT

program for licensed physical therapists only 4 semester credits of courses with the grade of C may be counted toward the degree. Students who exceed the number of acceptable credit hours with a C grade, may request permission from the program director to repeat one of the courses in which a C has been earned. The departmental faculty will decide if a course may be retaken and which course will be retaken. Any grade lower than a C in any course will result in academic dismissal from the program.

### **CHANGE OF GRADE**

Grades reported for Professional degree students by instructors to the Registrar may not be changed except in case of error in records or in evaluation. Grade changes require the approval of the instructor of record, with information regarding the change provided to the department Chair, the Director of Graduate/Professional Studies, and the Dean of the College of Allied Health Professions. Grades on record for one-calendar year may not be changed for any reason.

### **ACADEMIC DISMISSAL-PROBATION STATUS**

Any term in which the Program GPA drops below 3.0, the student is placed on probationary status and has a period of one semester to attain an overall 3.0 GPA or be dismissed from the program.

A student in the status of Provisional Admission who does not have a 3.0 Program GPA upon completing 15 semester hours of graduate credit applied toward the degree, or 6 semester hours for students in the web-based DPT for licensed physical therapists, will be academically dismissed from the program.

As indicated above, any grade lower than a C will result in academic dismissal. Students may appeal a dismissal to the Department Academic Standards Committee no later than 20 days into the succeeding semester. Reinstatement is not automatically granted and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Committee members.

A student who is academically dismissed from a program will not be allowed to re-apply to the same program.

### **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT DISMISSAL**

A student dismissed from a Professional Doctoral program as the result of an academic misconduct penalty will be automatically dismissed from the College and the University of South Alabama and will not be eligible to apply for readmission.

### **FINAL GRADE GRIEVANCE POLICY**

A student may initiate an inquiry under procedures set forth in The Lowdown. Copies are available in the Dean's Office.

### **TRANSFER CREDIT**

A maximum of twenty-five (25) semester hours of approved transfer credit from a regionally accredited university is allowed for the professional doctoral programs. Prior approval by the college director of graduate studies is required. Only courses with "A" or "B" grades are acceptable for transfer.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE WEB-BASED DPT PROGRAM FOR LICENSED PHYSICAL THERAPISTS**

### **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

- Applicants must submit the completed application form and portfolio using the prescribed form. The one-page personal statement should document incorporation of course content and new knowledge into their current clinical practice and other content as specified on the application form.
- Applicants must submit a copy of their current license(s) to practice physical therapy in a US jurisdiction.
- Applicants must have official transcript(s) sent directly from the institution to the PT department, including all undergraduate and graduate coursework attempted (graduates of University of South Alabama do not have to request transcripts).
- Applicants with PT-related certification should submit formal documentation of the credential (a copy of award letter, certificate, etc.). Certification could include clinical specialist certification (ABPTS or others), clinical instructor credentialing or certification from related fields.
- Applicants must submit a current resume or a curriculum vita that includes: continuing education courses attended over at least the recent five years, professional memberships including offices and committees, awards, honors and other contributions to physical therapy.
- Applicants must have two letters of recommendation sent directly to the PT department from the individual writing the letter: one letter of recommendation from their current or most recent employer and the other from a clinical supervisor.

### **PROCEDURE FOR PROCESSING AND REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS**

1. As applications are received, the admissions clerk will log them in, process the application fee, and enter data from the application into the tDPT database, including analysis of all transcripts to identify PT degree credit and potential transfer credit from other related graduate coursework completed.
2. A faculty member will be assigned to review each portfolio to determine credit that will be granted. The faculty member will evaluate the application and portfolio form and supporting documentation to A) confirm "Transfer credits from previous Physical Therapy degree", B) determine "Transfer credits from additional PT-related coursework", and C) determine "Credits granted from portfolio analysis" including, but not limited to, the following portfolio categories:

#### **Clinical PT Practice Experience** (Max of 15 Sem Cr Hr)

*2-6 credits for a twelve-month period of full-time clinical practice depending on the documentation provided regarding incorporation of evidence-based practice.*

#### **Specific Criteria**

- 6 credits: Documents, in the personal statement, evidence of advancement of clinical practice and skills with incorporation of evidence-based practice. Documents CEUs in their clinical area of practice that clearly represent a clinical focus (greater than 50% of CEUs in a focused practice area) beyond the minimum required and also provide evidence of utilization of review of current literature in practice and also dissemination via in-service and extramural education/consultation. Providing pro bono clinical services and other service to the community related to professional practice and expertise

(patient care as well as other professional skills). Also demonstrates advancement to a supervisory position or more responsibility within the facility of practice. Demonstrate a high work ethic based on supervisor's recommendation.

- 2 credits: one year full time clinical practice or equivalent over a period of more than year on a part-time basis without any particular evidence of advancement.

### **Specialization/Fellowship or Expertise (Max of 8 Sem Cr Hr)**

*2-6 credits for each clinical specialist certification (6 credits for APTA American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties certification) or completion of clinical residencies or fellowships.*

#### **Specific Criteria**

- 6 credits: certification that require an exam, CEU annually and form of recertification/portfolio assessment process: successful completion an APTA (or other recognized organization) credentialed clinical residency or fellowship (the applicant will be required to provide proof of each for the certification)
- 2 credits: certification that does not require reexamination/portfolio assessment for recertification

### **Involvement in Clinical Education (Max 4 Sem Cr Hr)**

#### **Specific Criteria**

- 1 credit for APTA credentialing as Credentialed Clinical Instructor.
- 3 credits: 1200 student supervision hours over a 5 year period
- 1 credit: CCCE or 400 student supervision hours or Scholarly Activity

### **Scholarly Activity (Max 6 Sem Cr Hr)**

*1 – 6 credits could be granted for specific examples of scholarly activity or publications, depending on scope and dissemination of the activity.*

#### **Specific Criteria**

- 1 credit for each presentation related to physical therapy to professional organization/group of peers at a local, state, regional, national or international level
- 1 credit for each peer-reviewed publication

### **Other (CEUs, professional service, teaching...) (Maximum 6 Sem Cr Hr)**

#### **Specific Criteria**

- 1 credit for each 20 hours of appropriate and relevant Continuing Education Unit courses attended.
- 1 credit annually for each elected or appointed position in a PT-related professional organizations at a local, state, regional, national or international organization.
- 1 credit for work-related service not addressed in other categories of the portfolio.
- 1 credit trainer for the CI training course
- 1 credit: 5 contact hours of teaching.

3. The Admission Credit Checklist form will be used to document the credits granted in each category. The form must be signed by the Faculty evaluator and the Department Chair.

4. The Department Admission Committee will meet at least monthly to discuss issues that arise and to make admissions decisions.

5. Letters of acceptance will be sent to individuals accepted into the program.

6. Admission coversheet (signed by Department Chair and College Director of Graduate/Professional Studies) will be forwarded to the Registrar to designate on the transcript:

- A) Transfer credits from previous Physical Therapy degree
- B) Transfer credits from additional PT-related coursework
- C) Credits granted from portfolio analysis

## **COMPETITIVE ADMISSIONS**

The department reserves the right to limit class size. If it becomes necessary to institute a competitive application process, a system would be developed with a percentage of the ranking score coming from entry-level GPA and other points for clinical specialist certification, for clinical education experience, for professional development or scholarly activity, etc. Admission may be deferred to a later semester

## **UPDATE OF PORTFOLIO CREDIT**

Students may apply for additional portfolio credit related to significant professional achievements completed following their admission to the program, e.g. ABPTS Clinical Specialist Certification. Following a portfolio review process identical to that described above, a memo would be sent to the Registrar (signed by Department Chair and the College Director of Graduate/Professional Studies) to specify the additional portfolio credit to be added to the transcript.

## **PROMOTION AND GRADUATION PROCESS**

- The Department Academic Standards Committee will make all academic standard and student promotion decisions.
- Students must apply for graduation by the stated deadline during the term prior to expected graduation.
- The following graduation requirements must be met: 1) A total of at least 118 semester credit hours (including transfer credit from previous Physical Therapy degree, transfer credit from additional PT-related coursework, credits granted from portfolio analysis, credits earned from required and elective courses in the web-based DPT program). 2) Minimum 3.0 cumulative Program GPA for all DPT on-line coursework. 3) Less than or equal to 4 semester credits of courses with a grade of C may be applied toward the DPT degree.
- The Graduation Checklist form will be used to evaluate and document a student's progress toward graduation requirements and to specifically identify which courses remain to be completed.
- The Graduation Checklist form will be forwarded to the Department Chair and College Director of Graduate/Professional Studies for signatures and then forwarded to the Registrar's office.

# PROCEDURES FOR ADMISSION OF GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS TO THE COLLEGE OF ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS

