

General Information (Academic Unit Assessment Workspace)



College: College of Health and Behavioral Sciences

Department: Physical Therapy

Program Name: Physical Therapy, Doctor (PhD)

Program Level: Graduate

CIP Code: 42.2899

ADHE Code: 7395

Date of Degree Start: 09/01/1997

External Accrediting Agency: N/A

Date Assessment Plan Submitted: 04/25/2017

College Dean: Jimmy Ishee

Department Chairperson: Nancy Reese

Program Director: Mark Mennemeier

Faculty/Assessment Committee Chair: Mark Mennemeier

College Curriculum Committee Chair: Denise Demers

Department Curriculum Committee Chair: Mark Mennemeier

Department Website: <http://uca.edu/pt/>

Assessment Plan

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The **purpose** of the UCA PhD program in Physical Therapy is to prepare a student to assume the role of a scholar who is capable of discovering, integrating and applying knowledge, as well as communicating and disseminating new knowledge. Additional competencies include the ability to understand and critically evaluate the literature in order to recognize, interpret, and understand the issues and problems associated with research. The primary and overarching **goal** of the program is to assist the scholar in the development of the skills of discovery and application of knowledge in a variety of settings, including college and university teaching, research, administration, and health care service in general. Our specific **objectives** are to prepare students in the following competencies:

- to understand and critically evaluate the relevant literature;
- to be effective and productive researchers; and
- to be effective teachers and leaders in the profession.

The program goals are clearly connected the Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) which are necessary to meet the stated objectives. The five SLOs are to 1) demonstrate skill in original research, providing evidence of an understanding of research design and the ability to implement the scientific method for qualitative or quantitative research, 2) engage in scholarship through dissemination of knowledge to advance understanding of the theoretical principles underlying the framework of the discipline, 3) exhibit a breadth of knowledge of the discipline and the skill to critically evaluate the published literature with respect to evidence-based models, 4) Organize and integrate current evidence and best practice in teaching clinical and didactic physical therapy courses and 5) Display leadership traits that guide the profession in identifying and resolving important questions, issues, and problems.

Regarding **activities**, the curriculum is a combination of 1) core courses that reflect the standards for PhD programs in Physical Therapy, 2) practical research and teaching requirements (artifacts) designed to educate students and demonstrate competency in each area listed above, and 3) focused electives and independent study that allow students to engage in interdisciplinary study while providing the flexibility necessary to build a meaningful doctoral experience for each individual student. A complete list of program activities can be found in the *Curriculum* section.

Owing to its focus on graduate education, the PhD program meets the university mission and strategic goals in the following ways. The mission statement of the University of Central Arkansas states:

“The University of Central Arkansas, a leader in 21st-century higher education, is committed to excellence through the delivery of outstanding undergraduate and graduate education that remains current and responsive to the diverse needs of those it serves. The university’s faculty and staff promote the intellectual, professional, social, and personal development of its students through innovations in learning, scholarship, and creative endeavors. Students, faculty, and staff partner to create strong engagement with the local, national, and global communities. The University of Central Arkansas dedicates itself to academic vitality, integrity, and diversity.”

Both the PhD and DPT programs are central to the university’s mission of “deliver[ing] outstanding... graduate education that remains current and responsive to the diverse needs of those it serves... develop[ing] students through innovations in learning, scholarship, and creative endeavors...partner[ing] to create strong engagement with the local, national, and global communities.” The PhD program in Physical Therapy, in particular, supports these critical aspects of the University’s mission by assisting the university in the accomplishment of the following institutional strategic goals which are taken from the University Strategic Plan.

Goal 1: UCA will support and empower students to succeed. This strategic goal is realized through the opportunities and support provided to students by their respective program’s resources, faculty, and staff. The PhD degree in Physical Therapy serves this goal by providing students an opportunity to earn a degree in physical therapy at all levels –Pre-PT curriculum and advising, and the DPT and the PhD degree options. In fact, the program is one of only four PhD degree programs offered at UCA. Thus, it is critically important to the university’s mission of offering degree programs at the graduate level. In keeping with the university’s strategic goal of empowering students to succeed, the Department of Physical Therapy’s mission is, “develop leaders and scholars in the physical therapy profession who work collaboratively in clinical, education, and research communities.”

Goal 2: Each UCA student will be prepared to effectively compete in the marketplace upon graduation and demonstrate continued involvement in and contribution to the UCA community after graduation. The PhD program serves this goal by providing students with several courses for career development in addition to the development of independent research design and research implementation skills. Professional Leadership in Physical Therapy (PTHY 7310) is a required core course that provides leadership training and fosters student involvement in the physical therapy profession. PhD Faculty model professional involvement at the state, regional, and national levels as shown by their Curriculum Vitae. Evidence of community involvement by PhD students and graduates is provided in the *Program Assessment* section, Table 3.

Context for the PhD program in Physical Therapy.

The Department of Physical Therapy at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) offers two doctoral degrees, the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree that produces physical therapist professionals for the state of Arkansas and beyond, and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Physical Therapy. The PhD degree program is designed to educate individuals who are already physical therapists to become researchers and educators in the field of physical therapy. These two programs are mutually supportive, sharing a variety of resources including financial, facilities, faculty and staff, and (in a limited way) curriculum. Faculty members who teach in the PhD program also have significant teaching assignments in the DPT program, and the same departmental staff members support both programs. Facilities used by the PhD program are the same facilities required by our DPT accreditation agency to be provided for faculty research. Of the 60 semester credit hours required in the PhD program, 15 hours are elective courses shared by the DPT program. Whereas the DPT program renewed its fully accredited status with the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) in 2015, the PhD program is a non-accredited program that requires a separate self-study and existing academic program review (EAPR) by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) every 7-10 years.

Historically, the PhD degree program in Physical Therapy at UCA was first proposed in 1997 to “extend UCA’s role in physical therapy education by offering all degree options”. In keeping with that goal, the degree requirements for a physical therapist have changed over time, moving from a Master’s to a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT). The University of Central Arkansas’s Department of Physical Therapy continues to offer all relevant degree options including the PhD. However, recruitment of new PhD students was suspended between 2004 and 2009 due to a restructuring within the department and a loss of available faculty mentors for PhD students. Recruitment resumed in 2010 after the department obtained a critical quantity of faculty with research programs and mentoring experience. A PhD program coordinator was hired to begin recruiting new students, to organize research efforts within the Physical Therapy department, and to coordinate program activities and evaluate student progress. A restructuring of the PhD program also occurred. For example, a DPT/PhD program option was added to allow students in their second year of the DPT program to apply to the PhD program and to begin taking course electives that count toward completion of the PhD degree. A path for international students to enter the program was also created. ADHE conducted a review of the viability of the PhD program in 2013 and designated it as cognate embedded within the DPT Program. This means that the viability of the PhD program is justified by the combined number of DPT and PhD students. Thus, the enrollment and matriculation tables include student numbers from both programs. The period for the current ADHE review spans 2010-2017.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the UCA Department of Physical Therapy is to develop autonomous physical therapist professionals and scholars who are practicing collaboratively in the global clinical and research communities and to model excellence in education, research, and service. Both the PhD and DPT programs are central to the university’s mission of “deliver[ing] outstanding graduate education that remains current and responsive to the diverse needs of those it serves... develop[ing] students through innovations in learning, scholarship, and creative endeavors...partner[ing] to create strong engagement with the local, national, and global communities.” The PhD program in Physical Therapy, in particular, supports these critical aspects of the University’s mission by assisting the university in the accomplishment of its University Strategic Plan.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Physical Therapy, Doctor (PhD) Outcome Set

SLO 1

Students will demonstrate skill in original research, providing evidence of an understanding of research design and the ability to implement the scientific method for qualitative and quantitative research.

Mapping

No Mapping

SLO 2

Students will engage in scholarship through dissemination of knowledge to advance understanding of the theoretical principles underlying the framework of the discipline.

Mapping

No Mapping

SLO 3

Students will exhibit a breadth of knowledge of the discipline and the skill to critically evaluate the published literature with respect to evidence-based models.

Mapping

No Mapping

SLO 4

Students will organize and integrate current evidence and best practice in teaching clinical and didactic physical therapy courses.

Mapping

No Mapping

SLO 5

Students will display leadership traits that guide the profession in identifying and resolving important questions, issues, and problems.

Mapping

No Mapping

ASSESSMENT CYCLE

The Doctor of Physical Therapy (Ph.D.) will adopt a three year university assessment cycle. However, outcome data will be recorded every year as it occurs. Because of the cohort and individualized nature of the programming, one or more outcomes will not be applicable every single year. The PhD program is a non-accredited program and, therefore, must submit a program assessment to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) according to a 10 year assessment cycle. Our next ADHE report is due in 2026-2027.

CURRICULUM MAP

Active Curriculum Map s

Physical Therapy, Doctor (PhD) - Curriculum Map

Alignment Set Physical Therapy, Doctor (PhD) Outcome Set

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Physical Therapy, Doctor (PhD) - SLO/Artifact Alignment

Alignment Set Physical Therapy, Doctor (PhD) Outcome Set

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METHODS AND MEASURES

SLO	FORMATIVE	BENCHMARK	MIDPOINT	BENCHMARK	SUMMATIVE	BENCHMARK	INDIRECT MEASURES	REPORTING YEAR	REPORT DUE DATE
1	Grant writing project	100% will pass, 90% will score commendable on written proposal and critiques	Qualifying exam for Research Design/ Statistical Analysis	100% will pass the written and/or oral sections for research design and statistical analysis	Dissertaion proposal and defense	100% will pass with a high competence rating for the research design	Relavent course grades, publications, presentations, and faculty positions post graduation	All years when possible	October 15
2	Lecture Teaching Activity	A grade of A on the lecture teaching activity for College Teaching	Professional Presentation or Publication	100% of students will either present or publish work prior to dissertation	Oral presentation of dissertation proposal and defense	100% will pass with a high competence rating for the oral presentation	Relevant course grades, publications, presentations, and faculty positions post graduation	All years when possible	October 15
3	Literature review project in EBP course	100% will pass, 90% will score excellent on anotated biliographies	Qualifying Exam Question for EBP	100% will pass the written and/or oral section for EBP	Coverage of background literature in the dissertation proposal	100% will pass with a high competance rating for the literature review	Relevant course grades, publications, presentations, and faculty positions post graduation	All years when possible	October 15
							Relevant		

4	Annotated bibliography project in College Teaching	A grade of A based on a grading rubric	Qualifying Exam for College Teaching	100% will pass the written and/or oral section for college teaching	Lecture Teaching Activity	A grade of A based on grading rubric	course grades, publications, presentations, and faculty positions post graduation	All years when possible	October 15
5	Leadership Topics Discussion and Change Leadership Project	A grade of B or higher for the Professional Leadership course & score of >90% on the change leadership project	Qualifying Exam for Professional Leadership	100% will pass the written and/or oral exam section for leadership	Dissertation proposal and Defense	100% will pass with a high competence rating for impact	Relevant course grades, publications, presentations, and faculty and service positions post graduation	All years when possible	October 15

DATA COLLECTION AND REVIEW

- The program coordinator is primarily responsible for data collection and management with assistance from course instructors and faculty as described below.
- Data are collected for each student learning outcome by the program coordinator every year the data is available. Course instructors are contacted by the program coordinator to obtain these data or the data are collected by the program coordinator through annual student assessments.
- Benchmarks are established for each student learning outcome by the PhD coordinator, course instructors, and the program assessment committee.
- The PhD program coordinator and faculty review the Continuous Improvement Process and Student Learning Outcomes (in supporting documents) at a faculty retreats to determine the need for any curricular, pedagogic, benchmark, or assessment process changes. A tally of courses and student learning objectives (SLOs) is provided in the assessment of student benchmarks.
- Annual assessments of the SLO outcome measures are performed by the PhD program coordinator.
- Surveys of past and current students are conducted every two to three years by the program coordinator to assess scholarly achievements and research dissemination (e.g., positions, publications, presentations, and grants) and service activities and community involvement.
- Exit surveys of students who graduated from the program are conducted by the program assessment committee to assess job placement and achievements post-graduation.

PROCESS PARTICIPATION

- The PhD program coordinator and faculty review the Continuous Improvement Process and Student Learning Outcomes (in supporting documents) at faculty retreats to determine the need for any curricular, pedagogic, benchmark, or assessment process changes. A tally of courses and student learning objectives (SLOs) is provided in the assessment of student benchmarks.
- Annual assessments of each PhD student are performed by the PhD program coordinator and faculty advisors to ensure that the program is consistently preparing students for successful completion and graduation.
- The PhD program coordinator is responsible for collecting the outcome data used to evaluate whether benchmarks for the SLOs are being met.

DATA ANALYSIS

- The PhD program coordinator collects the outcome data and shares summaries with the PhD Committee in meetings and with the PhD faculty during faculty meetings and retreats. All PhD faculty are ultimately involved in discussions concerning the need for any curricular, pedagogic, benchmark, or assessment process changes.
- Data analysis is completed by the PhD program coordinator and by the PhD program assessment committee.
- Annual assessments of the SLO outcome measures performed by the PhD program coordinator.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Results will be used to complete a comprehensive self study of the program with recommended changes. The self study will be reviewed by an outside committee and the committee may provide additional recommendations on how to improve the program. Additionally, results will be reviewed by faculty during retreats and recommendations for change may occur at that time. Whereas in the past we performed a self study in the year prior to the program assessment for the Arkansas Department of Higher Education; we now aim to have mid-cycle self studies timed with our university review cycle (every three years) to consistently improve both the program and the assessment process. We will review the conclusions and goals of the last self study to assess progress. We will solicit input from both faculty and from current and former PhD students alike. Finally, we will revise our assessment process and program based on feedback if necessary.

POST-GRADUATE SUCCESS

- Surveys of past and current students are conducted periodically to assess scholarly achievements (positions, publications, presentations and grants) and service activities and community involvement. These surveys were originally conducted as part of the self study for the ADHE program accreditation process; however, we now plan to collect these data every three years to coincide with our University assessment cycle.
- Exit surveys of students who graduated from the program are conducted for the self studies to assess job placement and achievements post-graduation.
- Employer surveys are also conducted for the self studies to assess job performance, level of preparation and employer satisfaction.

TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

According to Chapter 3, Section V.A. of the UCA Faculty Handbook, demonstration of effective teaching is “of primary importance in evaluating faculty members for both tenure and promotion.” Department of Physical Therapy criteria for Tenure, Promotion, and Advancement require that each core faculty member demonstrate competent knowledge, attributes, and skills of an effective teacher as evidenced by peer and student course evaluations, and that each core faculty member engage in professional development relevant to the teaching assignment.

Peer evaluations of teaching are performed on a scheduled rotation (summative evaluations) and as requested by the faculty member (formative evaluations). A standardized form, the Peer Teaching Evaluation Form UCA, and process is used for peer evaluations. Also, as part of the faculty evaluation process, the Department Chair meets with each faculty member at the beginning of the year to review the progress each core faculty member has made in maintaining and furthering their expertise in the areas in which they teach, as well as to set goals for the future to assure that this growth continues and competence is maintained.

Student course evaluations are performed using the SmartEval system in each course taught by non-tenured faculty members and at least once per year for tenured faculty members. Student course evaluation results form a significant portion of the faculty member’s portfolio for tenure, promotion, or advancement. Thus, during the tenure, promotion, and advancement process, multiple levels of peer evaluation of the faculty member’s teaching occur as faculty and administrators outside the department review the portfolio.

These processes used to assess the teaching of core faculty are effective and provide mechanisms for continuous improvement,

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both individually and collectively. For example, the peer evaluation process provides a professional environment in which colleagues may discuss effective and ineffective components of a course including guiding documents (i.e. syllabus, schedule) and learning assessments and outcomes. Promotion of this open dialogue supports exploration of various educational methods that further strengthen the abilities of the instructor as well as the overall structure and content of the course. Furthermore, these evaluations set the foundation for further collaboration with the department chair to determine indicators for successful progression toward the identified goals and potential avenues to continue to build expertise. This collaboration allows the PhD faculty to engage in continued growth through professional development opportunities, conference attendance, and independent learning experiences with departmental support, which further supports the strength of the PhD program.

Student evaluations are used to modify course content and course offerings. Based upon student evaluation and feedback, we have allowed alternative courses to be accessed and we have modified the curriculum. For example, the statistics and research design courses that were originally offered through the Psychology Department at UCA have been substituted by courses in biostatistics and research design offered through the Graduate School at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Whereas a scheduling conflict originally prompted this substitution, student feedback indicated that the courses offered at UAMS provided greater breadth in biostatistics than those offered through the Psychology Department at UCA. As a result, the program curriculum allows a substitution of the UAMS biostatistics course for the statistics course offered through psychology. Another example of student feedback leading to a change in course content is provided by the grant writing course. Students originally took grant writing through the Department of Communication Science and Disorders, but this course was no longer available because the instructor left the university. Negative feedback about the course from several of our graduate students prompted a substitute option and revisions to the course content. Students are allowed to achieve the grant writing course through a directed study course in grant writing offered by the PhD program coordinator. A different textbook is being used to teach the course, and the objectives have been modified. Additionally, student interaction (simulation of an NIH study section meeting and critiques of each other's work) is now a key component of the course design.