Policy Development in Physical Therapist Assistant Education

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Objectives

• Understand the role of policies and procedures in PTA education.
• Develop skills to create effective policies and procedures.
• Create ways to assess policies and procedures within a PTA program.
Session Outline

• What is the role of policies and procedures in PTA education?
• How can I develop effective policies and procedures?
• How can I assess my program policies and procedures?
• If time permits, professional/faculty development suggestions will be reviewed.

Policy and Procedure by Definition¹

• “Policies and procedures are designed to influence and determine all major decisions and actions, and all activities take place within the boundaries set by them....Together, policies and procedures ensure that a point of view held by the governing body of an organization is translated into steps that result in an outcome compatible with that view.”
Difference between Policies and Procedures\(^1\)

**Policy**
- “A policy is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent, and is implemented as a procedure or protocol.”
- **CAPTE Definition of Policy:** A general principle by which a program is guided in its management.

**Procedure**
- “Procedures are the specific methods employed to express policies in action in day-to-day operations of the organization.”
- **CAPTE Definition of Procedure:** A description of the methods, activities, or processes used to implement a policy.

Role of Policy and Procedures

- Guidelines for performance and expectation of all parties.
- Guidelines mandated by the government (financial aid policies for example)
- Part of CAPTE program evaluation
Policy and Procedures are Helpful\textsuperscript{2,3}

- Guide decisions and actions
- Should be sufficiently specific to help guide action but flexible enough to accommodate changing conditions
- Should reinforce and be consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the organization

How can I develop effective policies and procedures?

- Use CAPTE Standards
  - Specifically, Standards 2, 3, and 5, but all sections helpful when creating policies, programmatic handbooks, syllabi, etc....
- Review documents so that what your institutional policies say, are consistent with your program policies, and if different that it is consistent in language of where that is and why
  - Also check again program handbook information, clinical education handbook, syllabi, etc...
Standard 2: CAPTE

• 2B5: program policies and procedures, as well as relevant institutional policies and procedures meet program needs. This includes analysis of the extent to which program practices adhere to policies and procedures.

Standard 3: CAPTE

• 3C: Institutional policies related to academic standards and to faculty roles and workload are applied to the program in a manner that recognizes and supports the academic and technical aspects of the physical therapist assistant program, including providing for reduction in teaching load for administrative functions.
• 3D: Policies and procedures exist to facilitate equal opportunity and nondiscrimination for faculty, staff and prospective/enrolled students.
Standard 3 cont.

• 3E: Policies, procedures, and practices that affect the rights, responsibilities, safety, privacy, and dignity of program faculty and staff are written, disseminated, and applied consistently and equitably.

• 3F: Policies, procedures, and practices exist for handling complaints that fall outside the realm of due process, including a prohibition of retaliation following complaint submission. The policies are written, disseminated, and applied consistently and equitably. Records of complaints about the program, including the nature of the complaint and the disposition of the complaint, are maintained by the program.

• 3G: Program specific policies and procedures are compatible with institutional policies and with applicable law.

Standard 3 Cont.

• 3H: Program policies, procedures, and practices provide for compliance with accreditation policies and procedures including:
  – 3H1 maintenance of accurate information, easily accessible to the public, on the program website regarding accreditation status (including CAPTE logo and required accreditation statement) and current student achievement measures;
  – 3H2 timely submission of required fees and documentation, including reports of graduation rates, performance on state licensing examinations, and employment rates;
  – 3H3 following policies and procedures of CAPTE as outlined in the CAPTE Rules of Practice and Procedure;
  – 3H4 timely notification of expected or unexpected substantive change(s) within the program and of any change in institutional accreditation status or legal authority to provide post-secondary education; and
  – 3H5 coming into compliance with accreditation Standards and Required Elements within two years of being determined to be out of compliance.

Easily accessible: Can be accessed by the public without disclosure of identity or contact information and is no more than one “click” away from the program’s home webpage.

This is a USDE requirement.
Standard 4: CAPTE

• 4E: Formal evaluation of each core faculty member occurs in a manner and timeline consistent with applicable institutional policy. The evaluation includes assessments of teaching, service, and any additional responsibilities. The evaluation results in an organized faculty development plan that is linked to the assessment of the individual core faculty member and to program improvement.

Standard 5: CAPTE

• 5A: Program policies, procedures, and practices related to student recruitment and admission are based on appropriate and equitable criteria and applicable law, are written and made available to prospective students, and are applied consistently and equitably. Recruitment practices are designed to enhance diversity of the student body.

• 5D: Policies, procedures, and practices that affect the rights, responsibilities, safety, privacy, and dignity of program students are written and provided to students and applied consistently and equitably.
Standard 5 Cont.

• 5E: Policies, procedures, and practices related to student retention, student progression and dismissal through the program are based on appropriate and equitable criteria and applicable law, are written and provided to students, and are applied consistently and equitably. Retention practices support a diverse student body.

Essential Standards$^4$

• Standard 3: The institution and program operate with integrity.
Syllabus

• 4L: The collective core faculty initiate, adopt, evaluate, and uphold academic regulations specific to the program and compatible with institutional policies, procedures and practices. The regulations address, but are not limited to, admission requirements; the clinical education program; grading policy; minimum performance levels, including those relating to professional and ethical behaviors; and student progression through the program.

• 6E: The curriculum plan includes course syllabi that are comprehensive and inclusive of all CAPTE expectations.

Syllabus Suggestions CAPTE⁴

• Each syllabus must include at least the following:
  – title and number;
  – description;
  – department offering course;
  – credit hours;
  – instructor(s);
  – clock hours (lecture and laboratory) and schedule;
  – course prerequisites;
  – course objectives;
  – outline of content and assigned instructor;
  – description of teaching methods and learning experiences;
  – methods of student evaluation/grading; and
  – textbook and other learning resources.
Program and/or Clinical Handbooks

• 8G: There are effective written agreements between the institution and the clinical education sites that are current and describe the rights and responsibilities of both parties. At a minimum, agreements address the purpose of the agreement; the objectives of the institution and the clinical education site in establishing the agreement; the rights and responsibilities of the institution and the clinical education site, including those related to responsibility for patient/client care and to responsibilities for supervision and evaluation of students; and the procedures to be followed in reviewing, revising, and terminating the agreement.

Group Activity

• From the CAPTE criterion reviewed, select two areas where policies need to be developed or revised.
• In addition select three other areas of your PTA program where policies need be developed or revised.
  – What is driving this need?
    • Institution
    • Accreditation
    • Student
    • Faculty
Development of Policies and Procedures

- Who is the audience?
- What is the purpose?
- Clear list of the methods/action.
- Clearly identify the consequences, if needed.
- Clearly identify timeframes, if needed.

Terms to Think About

- **Practices**: Common actions or activities; customary ways of operation or behavior.
- **Complaint**: A concern about the program, expressed by students or others with a legitimate relationship to the program, the subject of which is not among those that are addressed through the institution's formal due processes.
- **Due process**: Timely, fair, impartial procedures at the program or institutional level for the adjudication of a variety of issues including, but not limited to: (1) faculty, staff, and student violations of published standards of conduct, (2) appeals of decisions related to faculty and staff hiring, retention, merit, tenure, promotion, and dismissal, and (3) appeals of decisions related to student admission, retention, grading, progression, and dismissal. Due process generally requires adequate notice and a meaningful opportunity to be heard.
- **Applicable law**: Those federal and state statutes/regulations relevant to physical therapy education (ADA, OSHA, FERPA, HIPAA, Practice Acts, etc.)
Wording Ideas

Policy Wording
• Omit gender-specific wording
• Avoid contradictions within policy and between policies and their related procedures
• Be succinct and direct
• Policies permit and require interpretation

Procedure Wording
• Describes specific tasks that need to be done
• Timeframe if applicable
• Who is to do the tasks (job title, not name)
• Sequence of events described as well as consequences

Wording Ideas Continued

• Policy: (Wording should outline what the principles, rules and guidelines adopted by the College to reach its long-term goal and are widely accessible and general in purpose and statement)

• Procedure: (Wording should outline the specific methods employed to express policies in action in the day-to-day operations of the organization)

• Responsible Department: (Should be identified as the area of the College who is responsible for the updating, revision and maintenance of the policy)
**Example of Program Policy**

**Attire**

As a student you represent, not only Clarkson College, but also the professional image of the field of physical therapy.

The following are minimal expectations of the personal appearance of a Clarkson College PTA student, which will be met at all times:

- **Hair** – Students must have human colored hair. Extreme looks such as multiple colors; extremes in bleaching, dyeing or tinting; or shaved eyebrows are not appropriate. Beards, and/or moustaches must be clean and trimmed. Hair should be clean and pulled back to not distract from lab/class performance.

- **Make-up** – If worn, is to be conservative and not detract from the attire, uniform or work environment and must reflect a professional image.

- **Nails** – Need to be smooth, of a minimal length, and clean. Artificial nails are an infection control risk and are not to be worn due to the hands-on care provided by students in classroom, lab, service, and community settings.

- **Aftershave, cologne, and perfume** – Will be applied sparingly, as patient’s sensitivity to scents/odors must be considered at all times.

- **Personal cleanliness** – Daily attention to one’s personal hygiene is an extremely important component of each student’s overall image. Students will maintain a high level of personal hygiene. Students’ breath and clothing/lab coats must not smell of smoke.

Students will maintain an appropriate presentation during on and off campus events, including appearance, dress, hygiene, make-up, jewelry and scent.

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**Example of College Policy**

**Family Education Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Education Right and Privacy Act is a federal privacy law that gives students certain protections with regard to their education records such as grades, transcripts, disciplinary records, contact and family information and class schedules. To protect the student’s privacy and the law generally requires schools to ask for a written consent before disclosing personally identifiable information to individuals other than the student.

A Buckley hold is placed on a student’s academic record that prohibits the college from releasing directory information to anyone other than the student, except to school officials with a legitimate educational interest, and in other situations where consent is not required by law, such as a lawful subpoena. Clarkson College hereby designates the following categories of student information as public or “Directory Information.” Such information may be disclosed by the institution for any purpose, at its discretion.

- **Category I:** Name, photograph, current and permanent address, marital status, telephone number, dates of attendance, classification, current class schedule.

- **Category II:** Previous institution(s) attended, major field of study, awards, honors (includes Dean’s List), degree(s) conferred (including dates).

- **Category III:** Past and present participation in officially recognized activities, physical factors, date and place of birth.

Clarkson assumes that failure on the part of any student to specifically request the withholding of categories of “Directory Information” indicates individual approval for disclosure.

**Procedure**

- Currently enrolled students may withhold disclosure of any directory information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. To withhold disclosure, written notification must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office with a Buckley Hold form.
Assessing Policies and Procedures

- CAPTE Standards
- Establish a timeframe for review (institutional review policy and program review)
- Need a team effort (college departments and program staff)
- Review decision flow
Assessment Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Clarkson Objectives</th>
<th>Threshold</th>
<th>Outcomes From Data Collected</th>
<th>Action Plan for Program Enhancement</th>
<th>Data Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2B.5 Institutional policies and procedures</td>
<td>1. The Clarkson College PTA program will have continued involvement with the institutional policies and procedures process.</td>
<td>1. A change of one or more Clarkson College policies and/or procedures will set forth action of the Clarkson College PTA program to review and revise policies and procedures to ensure consistency.</td>
<td>No changes in institutional policies and procedures.</td>
<td>program handbook and webpage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Activity

- Revise/draft one policy and procedure for your program.
- Identify one item from this material you can take back and use in your program.
Professional/Faculty Development
Helpful Hints

• Open discussion for questions, and tips learned
• Yes there is a CAPTE standard for faculty development. 😊 Standard 4E for example.
• Annual goal setting and revisiting/reflection on goals once a semester with colleague or program director is key to professional development.

Questions

• Thank you for your time.
• Safe travels home.
• Please contact me with any further questions at: nebel@clarksoncollege.edu
References

4. PTA Standards with Evidence. Retrieved from http://www.capteonline.org/Faculty/AccreditedPrograms/
5. Additional References
   – Clarkson College/St. Catherines’ PTA Program Examples
   – APTA conferencing
   – Mary Kay Solon, PT, MS: Faculty Development Workshop 2012