

2025-26

**PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

**Western** Technical  
College

**PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Western is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE)  
3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085.  
telephone: 703-706-3245; email: [accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org);  
website: <http://www.capteonline.org>.

If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call 608-785-9598 or  
email [berrys@westerntc.edu](mailto:berrys@westerntc.edu).

## Introduction

Welcome to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program (PTA) at Western Technical College in La Crosse, WI. You are entering a challenging educational experience that will lead you to a rewarding career in physical therapy. This handbook is intended to give you critical information about the program, from success tips to program and college policies. Please keep a copy of it to use as a reference for the entire time you are involved in the program.

The PTA program at Western is a program with a long history of excellence since graduating its first class in 1993. It is currently housed in the Health Science Center at 1300 Badger Street in La Crosse, WI which is a unique building housing many healthcare programs including the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at UW-La Crosse. This unique setting allows for program collaboration to provide opportunities to learn about and practice effective PT/ PTA relationships as well as many other opportunities not often found in a PTA program.

The program also has been fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) since its start in 1991. Graduates of accredited Physical Therapist Assistant Programs may sit for the national licensure exam (NPTE – National Physical Therapy Examination), use the title of Physical Therapist Assistant, and are eligible for licensure in all states.

There is much to learn in a short amount of time so please use this handbook as your guide throughout the program. We encourage you to contact any faculty member if you have questions about the program, policies and procedures, or any concerns regarding your performance in the program. We look forward to being with you on this journey as you make a change in your life and in your community.

All the best,

*Shari Berry*, PT, DPT  
Program Chair of PTA Program

## PTA Professional Information, Mission, Philosophy, and program goals

The physical therapist assistant (PTA) is a licensed healthcare professional who carries out treatment plans under the guidance and supervision of a Physical Therapist. Supervision guidelines and scope of work may vary and are determined by each state's physical therapy practice act. All states require graduates of accredited PTA programs to take and pass the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE) to complete licensure. (Cost is not included in tuition and must be scheduled and paid to the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy -FSBPT).

For additional information on the physical therapy profession and PTA job outlook, please refer to the following sites:

- American Physical Therapy Association <http://www.apta.org>
- Bureau of Labor Statistics <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes312021.htm>.
- Choose PT <https://www.choosept.com/AboutPTsPTAs>
- Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy [www.FSBPT.org](http://www.FSBPT.org)

**Western's PTA Program Mission Statement:** The mission of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Western Technical College is to provide evidence-based, contemporary education in a collaborative environment that results in graduates who are an effective, productive, professional, and valued member of the healthcare team.

**Western's PTA Program Philosophy Statement:** The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Western Technical College values the success of our students and holds ourselves accountable for providing excellence in student learning based on the diverse needs of each student. The program is committed to the safety of future patients and to the quality and integrity of the profession. This commitment is foundational to all program development and decisions.

Revised

**Wisconsin State Aligned PTA Program Outcomes:** As part of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), Western's PTA program shares graduate outcomes with the other WTCS colleges in the state that offer a PTA degree. Specifically, a graduate of the PTA program at Western will be able to:

- 1) Function under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist in a safe, legal, ethical manner consistent with professional standards and values to ensure the safety of patients, self, and others.
- 2) Demonstrate clear, collaborative, and professional communication with patients, families, and health-care team.
- 3) Exhibit behaviors and conduct that optimize inclusive and equitable patient care and patient care environments in alignment with physical therapy practice standards.
- 4) Produce documentation to support the delivery of physical therapy services.
- 5) Demonstrate critical decision making to implement and modify treatment within a plan of care under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist.
- 6) Perform data collection essential for carrying out the plan of care under the direction and supervision of the physical therapist.
- 7) Perform technically competent, evidence-informed physical therapy interventions under the direction and supervision of the physical therapist.
- 8) Educate patients, families, and other health providers incorporating cultural humility and social determinants of health.
- 9) Integrate components of operational and fiscal practices of physical therapy service in a variety of settings.
- 10) Implement a self-directed plan for career development, credentialing, service and leadership skills, and lifelong learning in an ever-changing health care environment.

**Western's PTA Program Goals:** In accordance with the program mission, the program has the following goals:

- 1) The program will meet or exceed the highest level of professional standards for PTA Education as set forth by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE).
- 2) Faculty will demonstrate commitment to high quality, collaborative education for every student while also serving the college, the profession and the community.
- 3) Graduates of the PTA program will be safe, ethical, professional, and effective members of the healthcare team; functioning under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist without bias or racism in an ever-changing healthcare environment.

- 4) Graduates of the PTA program will demonstrate the knowledge, skills and competencies required of the entry level PTA.
- 5) Graduates of the PTA program will be productive members of the healthcare team who demonstrate commitment to evidence-based decision making and lifelong excellence in delivery of quality care.
- 6) Students in the PTA program will demonstrate professional, collaborative communication (verbal and non-verbal) in all interactions at school and in the community.
- 7) Students in the PTA program will demonstrate self-motivation and cultivate passion for excellence in patient care; adhering to professional standards of ethics and behavior.

### **Physical Demands of a PTA Student**

It is the intent of Western Technical College to fully comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. To assist students to successfully complete our program, Western Technical College has developed a set of objective technical standards criteria. Students are asked to review the technical standards for the PTA program listed under the “admission requirement” tab, found on the program webpage at <https://westernnc.edu/physical-therapist-assistant> . Students must follow the college process for requesting accommodations.

### **Other College and Division Policies Not Addressed in This Handbook**

It is expected that a student in the PTA program will adhere to all college, division, clinical, and building policies even if not listed in this handbook. The Student Handbook for Western Technical College contains an all-inclusive list of policies and procedures and can be found at <https://www.westernnc.edu/sites/default/files/student-rights/documents/StudentHandbook.pdf>

The Program Faculty of Western Technical College Associate Physical Therapist Assistant Program reserves the right to make any additions or changes in program policies as deemed necessary at any time throughout the course of the program. Students will be notified of all new policies and/or changes before implementation.

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## An Overview of How to be Successful in the PTA Program

Welcome to the PTA Program where you will spend the better part of two years completing the core courses to become a Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA). The courses are rigorous, but the perception of *intensity* will be influenced by the amount of time you will spend studying the information and by the amount of time spent with your instructors and fellow students. Success will depend on your ability to collaborate with others as you work daily to learn and use the information in the program.

You may be familiar with a traditional educational format where you come to class to sit, listen, and then regurgitate short-term memories on an exam. That will NOT work in the PTA program! You will be exposed to a lot of information, but it is how you *use* the information that will make you a successful PTA. **You will be required to *think, to manipulate information, and to assemble it with information from past units and courses to create solutions to patient problems.*** That is how it is in the clinic. Every patient, every situation is different.

**You CANNOT memorize all the answers!**

Another difference in the program is that you will be educated in and held accountable for your **professional behaviors**. What are professional behaviors? They are the qualities – over and beyond the knowledge you gain and the skills you perform – which are essential for your success in the classroom and clinic. They are aligned with the professional expectations outlined in the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant (published by the APTA at <https://aptawi.org/pdfs/ethics/Standards%20of%20Conduct%20PTA.pdf> ) and with Core Values for the Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant (published by the APTA at <https://www.apta.org/contentassets/1787b4f8873443df9ceae0656f359457/corevaluesptandptahodp09-21-21-09.pdf> ). In broad terms, you are expected to demonstrate respect and integrity in your relationships with others, communicate effectively, follow legal and ethical rules, think critically, and support organization and community needs. For example,

- ✓ You will be held accountable for material from every class and are expected to use this knowledge throughout the program to demonstrate your growth.
- ✓ You will problem solve and use critical thinking in practical exam situations, performing hands on skills safely, with efficiency, and with effectiveness. You will defend your choices instead of performing skills without understanding them.
- ✓ You are responsible for your behaviors, the cornerstones of professional attributes and indicators of your aptitude as a coworker and health care giver.
- ✓ You must be willing to trust, communicate, and become involved in your own growth, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Abundant assistance is available, but it must start with you.
- ✓ You will be expected to act with honesty, integrity, compassion, inclusivity, and with social responsibility in the classroom, the clinic, and in the professional setting.

## Success will take TIME

Learning the required information and behaviors takes **TIME!** One of the number one reasons students are not successful in the program is that they underestimate the time needed to study. ***This program is a FULLTIME job!*** Being employed outside of school for more than 10-20 hours each week will be difficult.

The Department of Education has a formula for outlining the amount of work required in college courses. For every credit of lecture, a student will have one hour of lecture a week and spend two hours outside of class learning the material/ finishing homework, etc. For every credit of lab, a student will have two hours of lab a week and spend two hours outside of class practicing the hands-on skills. If you add the outside hours to the schedule of classroom/ lab hours, you will see the **REAL** time required to be successful. The example below represents “in class time” and “outside of class time” (peach) for the fall semester of the first year of the program.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Program :	PTA 1st year	Section 0100	Session 1	Session 1	Fall 2024	Saturday / Su
Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
8:15-9:20		<b>PTA Patient Interventionist</b>	<b>PTA Patient Interventionist</b> 10524139 Lec/Ror 36397 Kamay H2016	Outside work for Pt Interventionist lecture-2 hours	<b>PTA Patient Interventionist</b> 10524139 Lec/Ror 36397 Kamay H2015	<b>2 hours of reading and for Professional Issue 1- Due Mondays.</b>
9:30-10:35	<b>PTA Professional Lecture 1</b> 10524140 Lec/Ror 36396 Berry H2014	10524139 Lab/Ror 36608 Kamay/Berry H3051 8:15-11:15	<b>PTA Patient Interventionist</b> 10524139 Lab/Ror 36608 Kamay/Zialkaurki H3051		<b>PTA Patient Interventionist</b> 10524139 Lab/Ror 36608 Kamay/Zialkaurki H3051	
10:45-11:50	9:30-11:50		9:30-12:00		9:30-12:30	
12:00-1:05	<b>PTA Patient Interventionist</b> 10524139 Lec/Ror 36397 Kamay H2014	Open Hour		Open Hour		
1:15-2:20	Review material from Prof. Lecture 1 covered today for 2 hours	<b>PTA Patient Interventionist</b> 10524139 Lec/Ror 36397 Kamay H2016	<b>PTA Professional Lecture 1</b> 10524140 Lec/Ror 36396 Berry H2016	Practice skills from Pt Interventionist lab outside of class- 2.5 hours	Outside work for Prof. Lecture 1-1 hour	
2:30-3:35		Practice skills from Pt Interventionist lab- 3 hours outside of class.	1:15-3:35		Practice skills from Pt Interventionist lab- 2.5 hours	
3:45- 4:50	Review material from Pt Interventionist covered today for 2 hours			Outside work for Prof. Lecture 1 lecture - 3 hours		
Other	<b>PTA Patient Interventionist</b> 10524139 0.3 hr/week	<b>PTA Professional Lecture 1</b> 10524140 0.3 hr/week				

## Key Contacts & Resources

### Emergency Contacts

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If someone needs to reach you in an emergency (for example, day care, parent, spouse, kids, etc.), make sure they have a copy of your schedule and some way to contact you. Kat Anderson is an additional point of contact. She can access your schedule and try to get a message to you during the school day if needed.

- **785-9233** for Kat Anderson, Program Assistant

### Program Instructors

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All instructors have **voice mail** and **email for convenient contact**.

Please talk with your instructors. While you are welcome to drop by the faculty offices at any time, you are encouraged to **schedule appointments with your instructor**. Each instructor posts a semester class schedule by his or her office door and each has “office hours” set aside for appointments. If you must cancel a scheduled appointment -- let the instructor know in advance and ask the instructor if you may meet at another time.

Instructor	Office	Phone	E-mail
Shari Berry	HSC 4058	785-9598	<a href="mailto:berrys@westerntc.edu">berrys@westerntc.edu</a>
Jeff Komay	HSC 4057	785-9280	<a href="mailto:komayj@westerntc.edu">komayj@westerntc.edu</a>
Scott Ziolkowski	HSC 4061	789-4742	<a href="mailto:ziolkowskis@westerntc.edu">ziolkowskis@westerntc.edu</a>

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### Clinical Instructors (CIs)

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Clinical Instructors (CIs) supervise PTA students who are completing clinical affiliations. CIs are volunteer physical therapists (PTs) and PTAs with a minimum of 1 year of clinical experience. They give freely of their time and abilities because they believe in the importance of clinical education. A PTA student’s clinical instruction may fall under the supervision of more than one CI, depending on the site. The student PTA (sPTA) is responsible to clarify whom they are to report to and who is supervising them on a day-to-day or treatment-to-treatment basis.

For specific supervision guidelines, refer to the PTA Supervision Guidelines in the ***Clinical Education Manual posted online*** on the PTA program webpage found at: <https://westerntc.edu/physical-therapist-assistant> . The Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) will provide you with necessary CI names and numbers prior to each clinical rotation.

## Program Administrative Assistant

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**Rebecah Neitzel      HSC 4031      Phone: 785-9233**

Becca Neitzel is the Program Assistant. You will want to know her number if, for some reason, you cannot reach an instructor. She can direct you to other persons who may be able to help you with your issue or she can give you an idea of when the instructor may be available. As mentioned already, she is a contact for emergency needs. *It is an expectation that you treat her politely and with respect with any issue that you may have.*

## Western Counselors/ Program Advisor

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**Western Welcome Center      Phone: 785-9200**

If you have a problem not directly related to course material, or a personal problem affecting your ability to be successful in college, the counselors at the Welcome Center can help. If you are concerned about something but cannot put your finger on it, they are also the ones to see.

**Margaret Ho is the PTA program advisor.** She has office hours at the HSC and she can be the person to connect you to any resources needed. Her email is [hom@westerntc.edu](mailto:hom@westerntc.edu). Advisors and counselors can also help you with interest surveys and career planning if you should decide the PTA program is not a good fit for you. Take advantage of this resource if needed!

## Classmates

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During the first week of the program, you will confirm or update contact information that will be shared with all PTA classmates. Contact information should include phone number and E-mail address – and may include street address (your choice). We recommend that you use the contact information to arrange mutual study times, group work, shared rides, etc.

## Peer Tutors

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One or more students serve as peer tutors. The tutor(s) will be able to assist you with learning and practicing patient care techniques. Peer tutors are available within individual courses based on need. If you feel that scheduled assistance would help you succeed and a tutor has not been identified, please contact the course instructor to request this service.

## Learning Commons

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**Found at Western's library on the main campus**

**Assistance is also available at Western's website which is linked in all blackboard courses, or you can input this web address directly -- <https://www.westerntc.edu/learning-commons>**

The Learning Commons offers help in the fundamental Math, Science, and English skills to support you in any class. It is also the place to hone your "student skills" as a reader, note taker, or test taker. In addition, there is an **online writing center** at Western – take advantage of online editing tips from the comfort of your computer!

## Requests for Accommodation Related to a Disability

Please review the syllabus for each course and consider the requirements expected of you in the classroom and labs. See the instructor for clarification if needed. If you find that you need support services or reasonable accommodations for a disability, the PTA Program asks that you maximize our ability to work together by taking the following steps ***within the first week of class***:

1. Make a request of the instructor for suitable academic adjustments. The request is held in confidence!
2. See the staff in **Access Services at the Student Success Center, room 202**. A link is provided in all blackboard courses and **Phone: 785-9524**

Disabilities need to be documented according to the guidelines listed on the Access Service's website:  
<https://www.westerntc.edu/guidelines-professional-reports-documenting-disabilities>

## Program Specific Resources

**Physical Therapy Resources/ Books/ Videos** - Physical Therapy resources are found in the campus Library. The library collection includes a large variety of relevant journals, books, and videotapes. Computer lab, internet access and private study rooms are also available. Library personnel are valuable in helping students take full advantage of the library facilities. The Physical Therapist Assistant Program Guide is a good place to start: <https://westerntc.libguides.com/PTAprogram>

Resource materials are also available in lab rooms in the HSC. Instructors will leave make key materials available for use with each unit of study as well as post relevant online materials for use in your blackboard courses.

**Program Computer Access** – There are two computer lab options available to PTA students:

HSC Computer Lab in room 2058 and Western Computer Labs on main campus.

Each computer lab allows the student access to word processing, PowerPoint presentation programs, internet access, and printing. Students must comply with the specific lab policies related to computer use & printing. Program software for exercise protocols, anatomy software and video editing are available only on select HSC computers.

**Program HSC Building Access-** Due to the rigors of the PTA program, ***students MUST study didactic and practical skills outside of the regularly scheduled course times***. PTA students have access to the HSC building in the evenings and on weekends, with specific access to PTA labs. Students will be given “swipe card” access after reading, discussing, and agreeing to all HSC building policies outlined in the HSC Student Information/ Policy Guide. Any violation of HSC building policies will result in loss of access to the building.

**PTA Program Textbooks-** Textbooks selected for each course have been evaluated and are considered current and relevant to the practice of physical therapy. Before changing textbooks, instructors review new books and consider student feedback about books currently in use. Course textbooks assist the student in learning course material and are valuable reference material during subsequent courses and all clinical rotations. Students need to demonstrate an ability to read critically and use textbooks to support and enhance classroom, lab, and clinical experience.

**All required course textbooks are available for purchase through E-Campus. Whenever possible, open educational resources, including textbooks will be used. See course syllabi for details.**

## Additional College Resources

**College Wide Services:** Western is committed to serving students. There are a number of resources available on campus to assist current and future students. The following is a list of some possible services that may be helpful to you as you work through the program.

- **“Paying for College”** – Go to <https://www.westerntc.edu/paying-for-college> for help with financial aid, scholarships, military connected students, and tuition.
- **“Student Life”**- Go to <https://www.westerntc.edu/student-life> for information on athletics, government clubs and organizations, dining services, and the wellness center.
- **“Welcome Center”**- Go to <https://www.westerntc.edu/student-services> for help with career services, childcare, counseling, disability services, health and wellness and multicultural services.
- **“Western’s Library”**- Go to <https://www.westerntc.edu/western-library> to learn about the help and resources available at the campus library.
- **“Western Campus Shop”**- Go to <http://www.westerntcbooks.com/> to shop for new and used textbooks, Western apparel, school supplies and more. The campus shop is located on the first floor of the Kumm building.
- **“Student Housing”**-Go to <https://www.westerntc.edu/Housing> to learn about Western’s residence hall.
- **“Student Employment Services”** -Go to <https://www.westerntc.edu/handshake> to learn about Handshake, an online employment connection for employers looking to hire you.

## Student Medical Care

- **Student Health Center-** The Student Health Center, located in the Health Science Center, corner of Badger and 13th Streets in La Crosse, provides comprehensive primary care services for Western students with a valid student ID. Services include primary care for illness or injury, care for chronic health problems, minor surgical procedures, digital radiography (x-rays), medical management of mental health concerns, gynecological services, immunization and TB testing, physical exams, reproductive services, basic lab services, allergy injections, HIV testing and counseling, physical therapy services, consultation and referral. Cost of this service is provided by student activity money with the exception of a \$10 per visit co-pay and other services that are billed directly to the students.

For more information, visit the [Student Health Center website](#)

### Eligibility guidelines for Student Health Center Services follow:

- Fall and Spring Semester - Enroll for six credits or more OR enroll for at least one credit and pay a \$100 fee.
- Summer Semester - Enroll for six credits or more OR enroll for at least one credit and pay a \$50 fee; OR enroll for spring semester and fall semester, but not summer semester and pay a \$50 fee.

\*Appointments are recommended; please call (608)785-8558

- **Student Accident Insurance-** Students enrolled in degree classes will be automatically enrolled in the Wisconsin Technical Colleges Mandatory Accident Only Insurance Plan. The cost of this plan will be \$6.00 per term and will automatically be assessed to the student at the beginning of each term. This coverage is secondary to any other insurance coverage students may already have. This Accident Only Insurance Plan covers the student when an accident occurs while on campus, attending a practicum program, or attending a recognized student group activity approved by Western Technical College. Coverage is in place while on school premises when school is in session and during College-approved activities. Coverage is in place to and from a Western Technical College sponsored event within the state of Wisconsin, and up to 2 hours from the Wisconsin state border. The plan offers comprehensive benefits that include hospital room and board, inpatient and outpatient surgical procedures, labs and x-rays, physician office visits, ambulance, durable medical equipment, emergency care, and prescription drugs as related to the accident. There are no deductibles and the maximum benefit allowed for each accident is \$50,000. Students are responsible for processing their own claims.

**To Access Student Accident Only Insurance Plan Information:**

1. Go to [gallagherstudent.com](http://gallagherstudent.com) and select your school from the dropdown menu.
2. On the left hand side of the page you will have the following links to choose from:
  - a. My Benefits and Plan Information – includes a Schedule of Benefits and FAQ
  - b. Other insurance products
  - c. Discount and wellness
  - d. Claims company
  - e. Resources and links

**To Print an Insurance ID Card:**

1. Go to [gallagherstudent.com](http://gallagherstudent.com) and select your school from the dropdown menu.
2. Log in using your existing account information (first time visitors will need to create an account).
3. Select “Authorize Account” located to the left of your screen under Account Information and enter your Student ID number along with your date of birth.
4. Once your account has been authorized, select “Account Home” and click on “Generate ID Card”.

- **Student Health Insurance-** Western Technical College does not carry medical insurance to cover students. This means that you are responsible for your own coverage in case of an injury, accident, or incident that might require medical attention. You can enroll into affordable health coverage through the [Health Insurance Marketplaces](#). The Marketplaces are a revolutionary way to shop for insurance – you can compare costs and benefits and find out if you are eligible for new tax credits.

You can apply for health coverage in the Marketplace four ways: online, with a paper application, by phone, or in person with assistance. [Learn more.](#)

## Find In-person Assistance

Off-campus - [LocalHelp.HealthCare.gov](http://LocalHelp.HealthCare.gov)

## Web Resources

Health Insurance Marketplace - [www.healthcare.gov/](http://www.healthcare.gov/)

Young Invincibles - <http://younginvincibles.org/>

Independent Student's Guide to Healthcare - <http://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/student-healthcare-guide/>

# Key Program Policies and Procedures

## Admission Procedure- General

In accordance with the Admission Policy for Western (E0200), admission to the PTA program is as follows:

- 1) Students must apply to and be accepted to the college. (Application details and requirements are outlined at <https://www.westerntc.edu/apply> )
- 2) Students must apply to the PTA program and meet the following requirements:
  - a. Electronically sign the program's Technical Standards and complete a background check. You can find links to these documents below.  
[Physical Therapist Assistant Technical Standards](#)  
[Background Check](#)
  - b. Students who have successfully completed General Anatomy and Physiology (10806177) or its equivalent at another school are given priority admission to the program.
  - c. If COVID vaccines are required by a clinical partner, you will be notified.
- 3) Students who complete the program admission requirements are placed on a waitlist. In-district residents are given priority followed by in-state residents. Note that residents of Minnesota will be given the same priority as residents of Wisconsin.
- 4) All students are required to attend mandatory college and program orientations in the spring of their designated fall start date. Students will receive information about the program expectations, program rigors, class schedule, building information, and will meet one-on-one with faculty to discuss any personal concerns or answer any questions. Students cannot register for classes until the program orientation is complete.

## Admission Procedure- from another PT/ PTA program

Students may apply to the PTA program at Western after completing core course work in a Physical Therapist or Physical Therapist Assistant program at another school. All admission requirements for the college and program must be completed (see Admission procedure-general).

In addition, the following is also required:

- 1) A syllabus from each course completed with a “C” or better that outlines the competencies covered in each course. The program chair will compare the completed course work to the curriculum content of the PTA program at Western to determine what courses will transfer. Transfer students must compete a minimum of 25% of all professional courses at Western Technical College in order to obtain their Associate Degree of Applied Science in Physical Therapist Assistant.
- 2) If transfer to Western’s PTA program results in a discontinuous completion of the PTA curriculum (one semester or more without being enrolled in core PTA courses), the student may need to pass a competency exam for *each* course in the core curriculum that was completed. Competency exams will test the critical competencies in the completed courses and may have a written or practical component, or both, depending on the course content. Criteria for passing all competency exams will be shared in advance of taking the exam.

***\*\*Admission to the program is contingent upon space and clinical site availability even if all admission criteria and competency exams are completed successfully.***

### **Procedure for Withdrawal from the PTA Program**

**Withdrawal from the PTA Program may result from several causes including:**

1. Desire by the student to drop from the program. This may be due to unforeseen life circumstances, financial difficulties, or the recognition by the student that s/he is not interested in becoming a Physical Therapist Assistant.
2. Excessive absences from scheduled activities (lecture, lab, required meetings).
3. Failure to receive a grade of C or better in any PTA program course (Core classes, Occupational support classes, and General Education coursework)

#### **Withdrawal Procedure:**

If withdrawal from the PTA program becomes necessary, the student is advised to consider the circumstances carefully. Thought should be given to the period for reimbursement of fees from the College. The program faculty, academic advisor, and counselors will assist the student in understanding the intent and procedures for withdrawal. Any of these individuals will also have input into possible future plans for the student. The student is encouraged to meet with program faculty before withdrawing from the program.

### **Procedure for Dismissal from the PTA Program**

Students may be dismissed from the PTA program for a number of reasons:

1. Exceeding the maximum allowed written and/or practical exam failures as outlined in “Minimum Grade Requirements for Written and Practical Exams”.
2. Any unexcused absences from a clinical rotation. Students must attend all clinical experiences, arriving on time and departing on time. Any absences must be arranged in advance and the time made up with approval from the ACCE and clinical instructor.
3. Failure to pass all required clinical education components.
4. Any action that violates the General Health and Public Safety Division Policy (see copy of policy under Division Policies in this handbook).

## **Procedure for Re-entry into the PTA Program**

A student who leaves the PTA program for personal or academic reasons may petition to re-enter the program later. Re-entry is always contingent upon available classroom and clinical space in the program.

### **Students Who Withdraw Before Completion of Any Core Program Courses**

The student may apply for re-entry into the PTA program by completing a re-admission application at the Admissions Office. Upon completion of the application, Admissions will assign the student a new seniority date. The date of the student's re-entry into the PTA program, beginning with the first semester of the program, will be determined by this new seniority date.

### **Withdrawal Any Time After Successful Completion of the First Semester**

Students who have completed any of the core PTA courses who desire to re-enter the program, must follow the Health and Public Safety Division /Program Re-Entry Policy and Process which reads:

Students failing or dismissed from a Health and Public Safety Division program may appeal to the Dean of Health and Public Safety. Students will follow the re-entry process and recognize that the Dean reserves the right to deny the student program re-entry.

Students requesting program re-entry are required to follow the following process:

1. Write a letter of intent requesting re-entry into the program that includes:
  - \* The student's professional goals.
  - \* An examination of the student's choices and behaviors that prevented successful completion of courses/program.
  - \* The student's plan for change and improvement for program success.
  - \* Contact information: name, program, student ID number, address, phone and email.
2. Mail letter of intent to: Dean of Health and Public Safety, Western Technical College, 400 North Seventh Street, PO Box C-0908, La Crosse, WI 54602-0908.
3. The Division will contact student to schedule an appeal meeting with the Dean of Health and Public Safety or their designee.
4. The student will be notified of the Dean's decision by letter (email or USPS).

Program re-entry is always dependent on space availability. In situations where re-entry is granted, the Dean will often refer the student to meet with program faculty to develop a program success plan. The success plan may include (but is not limited to the following):

1. Additional courses for remediation.
2. Competency demonstration.
3. Required meetings with Western faculty or staff.

## Student Grievance Procedure

When a student believes he or she has been subjected to unfair and improper action or denied his/her rights by a member of the Western community (as defined by any person employed by the district), he or she may utilize the Student Grievance Procedure to address the concerns. Students initiating a Student Grievance Procedure shall be free of any retaliation from any faculty or staff person.

In situations where the concern is related to grading, the student must utilize the Grade Appeal Procedure for resolution. In situations where the concern is related to harassment, sexual harassment or misconduct, or discrimination based on gender, the student should immediately contact the Dean of Students/Title IX Coordinator to initiate the process.

For details regarding the procedures, please see the Western Student Handbook, located on the Western Technical College website.

For issues or concerns that do not rise to the level of a Student Grievance Procedure, a student can reach out to the Associate Dean of Health and Public Safety, Dean Jobe, at [jobed@westernnc.edu](mailto:jobed@westernnc.edu) or 608-789-4757.

## External Complaints

Any student enrolled at Western Technical College, or any member of the community at large, may file a complaint that a violation of college policy has been committed. Such a complaint may be submitted in writing to the Dean of Health and Public Safety:

Kevin Dean  
Western Technical College  
400 7th Street North  
P.O. Box C-0908  
La Crosse, WI 54602-0908  
608.789.6080

\*All formal complaints will be investigated within thirty (30) days. All records of complaints will be confidentially maintained in the office of Health and Public Safety Division for a time of five years.

## Professional Behaviors in the PTA Program

Core values defined by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) guide the behaviors of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants to provide the highest quality of physical therapy services. These values imbue the scope of physical therapist and physical therapist assistant activities. The core values retain the physical therapist as the person ultimately responsible for providing safe, accessible, cost-effective, and evidence-based services; and the physical therapist assistant as the only individual who assists the physical therapist in practice, working under the direction and supervision of the physical therapist. ***Experience shows that behaviors demonstrated in the classroom do carry over into clinical practice.*** The following core values are defined by the APTA (found at [www.apta](http://www.apta)). Each definition is followed by examples of how student behaviors are developed in the classroom.

**A. Accountability:** Accountability is active acceptance of the responsibility for the diverse roles, obligations, and actions of the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant including self-regulation and other behaviors that positively influence patient and client outcomes, the profession, and the health needs of society.

- ✓ Seeks and responds to feedback
- ✓ Acknowledges and accepts consequences for actions
- ✓ Meets deadlines, including being on time for class
- ✓ Attends classes/labs for expected times
- ✓ Adheres to code of ethics and policies/procedures
- ✓ Contact instructor (phone, E-mail, or in person) in advance of scheduled activities when unable to attend; in cases of unexpected emergency, contacts instructor as soon as possible

**B. Altruism:** Altruism is the primary regard for, or devotion to the interest of patients and clients, thus assuming the responsibility of placing the needs of patients and clients ahead of the physical therapist's or physical therapist assistant's self-interest.

- ✓ Assists classmates
- ✓ Assists faculty/program chair/staff
- ✓ Participates in program and/or college sponsored events
- ✓ Puts the needs of others ahead of self

**C. Collaboration:** Collaboration is working together with patients and clients, families, communities, and professionals in health and other fields to achieve shared goals. Collaboration within the physical therapist-physical therapist assistant team is working together, within each partner's respective role, to achieve optimal physical therapist services and outcomes for patients and clients.

- ✓ Considers role of the PTA in all situations (stays within scope of work)
- ✓ Resolves dilemmas/problems in a respectful manner
- ✓ Responds during interactions using appropriate verbal and nonverbal style
- ✓ Communicates concerns/ questions for faculty/ supervisors with respect

**D. Compassion/Caring:** Compassion is the desire to identify with or sense something of another's experience, a precursor of caring. Caring is the concern, empathy, and consideration for the needs and values of others.

- ✓ Demonstrates understanding of another person's experiences
- ✓ Considers individual differences when interacting with others (is non-judgmental about others)
- ✓ Advocates for needs and values of others
- ✓ Maintains calm tone in conversation; Avoids use of offensive statements

**E. Duty:** Duty is the commitment to meeting one's obligations to provide effective physical therapist services to patients and clients, to serve the profession, and to positively influence the health of society.

- ✓ Completes all work with effort to meet quality requirements
- ✓ Utilizes resources responsibly in completion of work
- ✓ Acknowledges and accepts responsibility for meeting expectations and attempts to make corrections when feedback is given
- ✓ Dresses appropriately (no hats, appropriate lab attire)
- ✓ Uses correct terminology and expression in verbal and written communication

**F. Excellence:** Excellence in the provision of physical therapist services occurs when the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant consistently use current knowledge and skills while understanding personal limits, integrate the patient or client perspective, embrace advancement, and challenge mediocrity.

- ✓ Integrates concepts from other courses
- ✓ Demonstrates a tolerance for ambiguity
- ✓ Identifies own strengths and personal limitations
- ✓ Strives for more than “just passing” or “mediocrity”
- ✓ Shows commitment to learning
- ✓ Demonstrates flexibility and is adaptable to change

**G. Inclusion:** Inclusion occurs when the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant create a welcoming and equitable environment for all. Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants are inclusive when they commit to providing a safe space, elevating diverse and minority voices, acknowledging personal biases that may impact patient care, and taking a position of anti-discrimination.

- ✓ Contributes to safe spaces, acceptance of all persons
- ✓ Acknowledges personal biases and works to limit them in all cases
- ✓ Attempts to learn more about diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in healthcare
- ✓ Treats everyone with respect despite differences

**H. Integrity:** Integrity is steadfast adherence to high ethical principles or standards, being truthful, ensuring fairness, following through on commitments, and verbalizing to others the rationale for actions.

- ✓ Maintains academic honesty, is truthful/ trustworthy
- ✓ Recognizes own limits and acts accordingly
- ✓ Follows through on commitments; schedules and keeps appointments
- ✓ Verbalizes rationale for choices and actions

**I. Social Responsibility:** Social responsibility is the promotion of mutual trust between the profession and the larger public that necessitates responding to societal needs for health and wellness.

- ✓ Identifies problems for individuals, groups, and society as a whole
- ✓ Identifies resources needed to develop solutions for identified problems
- ✓ Analyzes possible solutions to problems
- ✓ Engages in college and community events
- ✓ Recognizes unique role in promoting wellness in society with movement

## Western SuccessAbilities

Western believes in every student’s potential to positively influence our community. Through extensive research, wide stakeholder involvement, and the stated expectations of the community, the College has refined its focus on student growth and success. To accomplish this, Western has incorporated aspects of soft-skills, employability skills, and college and career readiness skills in the creation of our *SuccessAbilities*. These *SuccessAbilities* are integrated throughout the curriculum with student assessment occurring as appropriate to the technical program.

These skills overlap and are consistent with the core values of the physical therapy profession and are found at (<https://www.westerntc.edu/successabilities>)

**Western prepares students for success in a free-enterprise society through human experiences that integrate:**

### **Living Responsibly**

Challenges you to adapt to change, respect yourself and others, value the environment, accept ownership of your actions, and grow your community.

Students will find success as they learn to:

- **Develop Resilience:** anticipate, prepare for, respond to and recover from disruptive change.
- **Embrace Sustainability:** the act of building, through our daily practices and educational programming, a thriving, resilient, and just community now and in the future.
- **Foster Accountability:** the personal ownership needed for advocacy, involvement, and engagement for achieving desired results.

### **Refining Professionalism**

Challenges you to think and communicate as a professional, value collaboration and diversity, and behave ethically.

Students will find success as they learn to:

- **Improve Critical Thinking:** connect ideas and evaluate information logically.
- **Practice Effective Communication:** actively listen to others and share complex ideas through appropriate interactions.
- **Participate Collaboratively:** contribute as a team member while acknowledging and respecting the diversity of other perspectives.
- **Act Ethically:** behave in a way that reinforces the principles of honesty, equity, empathy and trust.

### **Cultivating Passion**

Challenges you to find your purpose and be curious, practice self-reflection, and genuinely connect with others.

Students will find success as they learn to:

- **Expand a Growth Mindset:** accept imperfections and seek opportunities for perpetual self-improvement.
- **Increase Self-Awareness:** understand personal strengths, weaknesses, traits, and behaviors to better understand yourself and other people.
- **Enhance Personal Connections:** relate to others through kindness and concern.

## **Professional Communication Expectations**

Professional and respectful communication is an expectation in the healthcare field and therefore expected of all students in the program. The following guidelines are to be used with phone and e-mail communication with your course and clinical instructors. Violation of these guidelines is a breach of expected professional behaviors.

### **Phone Etiquette**

- State who you are (if calling someone new, state you are a student radiographer).
- State reason for the call.
- Leave a call back number(s) and/or E-mail.
- State times that you are available for a call back.
- Speak clearly and professionally.

### **Electronic Communication**

- **Check Western student e-mail daily and respond promptly** for requests for information from instructors. Email will be our primary means of offsite communication with you.
- Use complete sentences.
- Use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Avoid slain and “texting” abbreviations.
- Send attachments in Word or pdf. Confirm compatibility with instructor.
- Maintain confidentiality of students, faculty, patients, clients, and clinical instructors.
- Use a title in the subject line.
- Use please, thank you, your welcome, etc.

#### **Cell phone Etiquette**

- ALL PHONES WILL BE STORED DURING CLASS, LAB, and CLINICAL HOURS. You may check your phone during breaks only!
- Occasionally faculty will allow the use of phones for classroom or lab activities or assignments.

***\*\* If there is an emergency that requires you to have your phone on, please speak to the instructor before class***

#### **PTA Program Procedure for Breach of Professional Behaviors**

Students who enter the PTA program are held accountable to policies set forth by the college, the program, and its instructors. Every attempt will be made to ensure that students understand these policies, however, it is the student’s responsibility to ask questions if additional clarification is needed.

Consistent and effective professional behaviors are expected in classroom, labs, and clinical settings at all times. Behaviors that do not conform with the core values of the profession or with Western’s Successabilities will be considered a breach of professional behaviors. When a breach of professional behaviors occurs, it will be brought to the student’s attention and addressed appropriately (see below). It is important to note that behaviors that violate the Health and Public Safety Division’s Program Dismissal policy (e.g violation of the Student Code of Conduct, endangering patient safety, breaching patient confidentiality, jeopardizing relationships with clinical or fieldwork sites, violating specific program or faculty policies, or receiving a total of three or more non-passing grades in a program core and/ or science course) may result in dismissal from the program.

The procedure for handling breaches of professional behaviors is as follows:

**First offense:** The problem is identified, and the student is made aware of the concern.

The breach of professional behavior is documented using any written or verbal form (E-mail, grade book, handout, verbal discussion). This documentation is shared with the student and the student is encouraged to discuss the reasons for the behavior and possible consequences of the behavior. The student is encouraged to remediate the issue with the course instructor.

- The student will be connected with college resources if applicable to help remediate circumstances related to the behavior.
- Other program faculty are informed to determine if the problem requires monitoring across the program or can be identified as an isolated circumstance.

**Second offense:** Repeated or additional breaches in program policy or professional behavior requires development of a formal Student Success/Intervention Plan to help the student take the necessary steps to demonstrate change. In addition, the second offense will directly impact the student's grade.

- A **10% point deduction** is applied to the student's overall course grade in accordance with the grading procedure outlined by the course instructor.
- The student and course instructor identify what course of action must be taken to resolve the concern and to prevent further occurrences. The plan and consequences of a failure to demonstrate improvement are identified in a Student Success Plan which is entered into the student record and shared with the Associate Dean.
- A method of tracking concerns across all program settings (class / lab / clinic) is initiated to ensure that the problem is addressed and corrected by the student in all program settings.
- The student may be required to meet periodically with one or more of -- program instructor, program director, or program counselor, PALS, or other college resources -- to address and document progress or lack of progress related to professional behaviors.
- ***Failure to remedy the behavior as detailed in the Students Success/Intervention plan, failure to meet deadlines and expectations outlined in the Student Success plan, or further breaches in program policies or professional behaviors (same or new behaviors) may result in a recommendation for a change in program status.***

**Third offense or failure to comply with Student Success plan:** Problems are ongoing and have not been resolved. This student has not demonstrated acceptable levels of improvements in the identified behaviors established by the student and program faculty. The program faculty feels the student is not competent, safe or professional (CAPTE standard 4N) to provide therapy services at this time.

- An **additional 10% point** deduction is applied to the summative grade for the course.
- PTA program may recommend the student exit or modify participation at the program level and establish a plan for this change. Participants in this step may include - student, program director, & program counselor, Associate Dean, Dean.
- If the student's status in the program changes, he or she may request re-entry in the PTA program. This petition would follow the Health and Public Safety Division/Program Re-Entry Process. (See earlier section or student handbook provided by the college.)

## **Professional Development in the PTA Program**

In addition to honing your professional behaviors, your participation in **professional development activities** is important to prepare you for your career. You will be employed as a PTA in an ever-changing health care environment. Graduates need to stay current in contemporary and evidence-based practice. Therefore, you will start participating in professional development opportunities with the intent to refine professionalism and cultivate passion (college required Successabilities). You will also develop the habits of and the value for life-long learning. After you graduate, you will participate in continuing education activities, professional and community events as part of our licensure requirements.

### **Professional Activity Expectations**

(Completion of these activities will be a required part of your grade in PTA Professional Issues 2. However, it is expected that you will participate in these hours over the length of the program.)

- All students are expected to participate in a **minimum of 10 total hours** of approved activities during the course of study in the PTA program.
- All students must have a minimum of **3 approved activities** in completing those hours.
  - One activity must be related to a community event/ initiative
  - One activity must be related to healthcare or the physical therapy profession
  - One activity can be of your choice (leadership focus, healthcare disparity focus, etc)
- Each student is required to keep track of his/her own hours. Western's Ugetconnected data base does allow for individual tracking of activities and is recommended.
- Each student must get pre-approval from the instructor to receive credit for the hours.
- Proof of attendance must be provided to the instructor for each activity. (agenda, course schedule, attendance log, course outline/notes/packet, etc.)

### **Grading**

- The professional activities are a requirement to receive points towards the course grade in PTA Professional Issues 2.
- Final grade for these professional activities will be calculated by April 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of graduation.
- The same rules apply as for this as for any assignment. (Must be completed in a satisfactory manner or a grade of incomplete will be given for the course. The activities need to be completed but no points earned if after the deadline)

### **The following are examples of APPROVED activities:**

- West Central District meetings, APTA- Wisconsin fall or spring conference/ Student Conclave/ PTAsig membership or meetings
- APTA National Student Conclave
- APTA – Wisconsin Physical Therapy Legislation Day
- Continuing education or lectures on related topic to physical therapy
- PT related community activity/community volunteer, Assist with Special Olympics
- PT research participant
- Volunteer for local nursing home activities
- Leadership role in a college, local, professional organization

### **The following are examples of UNAPPROVED activities:**

- Activities attended during clinical rotations that are an expectation of your clinical education experience
- Activities required as part of your employment
- Non healthcare or non-educational activities
- Activities as part of a formal PTA course (Service Learning activity or other assignment)

# PTA Course Specific Information

## Uniform Grading Policy

Your final course grade is determined by a compilation of points from written tests, practical testing, projects, assignments, and assessment of professional behaviors. Grading throughout the PTA Program is done on a uniform scale. If your final composite score falls between letter grades, you may be rewarded with the higher grade upon consideration of participation, demonstration of effort, and adherence to proper professional behaviors. The grading scale is shown below. Students must achieve a final grade of C (78%) or higher in order to continue in the program.

A=	90-100%
B=	80-89%
C=	78-79%
D=	50-77%
F=	below 50%

## PTA Course Expectations

Each faculty will outline specific course expectations in the syllabus for each course. The following expectations are general expectations for all program courses.

### Communication

1. ***The primary means of communication with you will be through your Western E-mail. Any messages sent to you via E-mail are considered formal contact and you are responsible for this information. Check E-mail DAILY!***
2. All faculty have voicemail that we check often. You may use this as a means of communicating with us, but please leave a contact number.
3. For specifics on communication expectations please refer to that section of this handbook.

### Assignments

1. All assignments/projects are due at specified times.
2. Assignments due on the day of an absence must be turned in by the start of class on the next day that the student attends classes.
3. All quizzes must be made up by the start of the next class period.
4. "Pop" quizzes and in class assignments/ activities may or may not be made up (faculty dependent- see syllabi for details)
5. **All assignments must be completed (even if late). If all are not completed (and to a satisfactory level) you will receive an incomplete for the course.**
6. Assignments must be written on a college level for terminology, spelling, grammar and overall appearance. All typed assignments must be in "Word" format.
7. Multiple page assignments are to be stapled before handing in with no wrinkles, spills, large scratched out areas, doodling, etc.
8. Assignments may be emailed if the instructor approves (see syllabi for details).
9. It is up to the discretion of the faculty to assign alternative learning activities if a significant classroom activity was missed.

### General rules:

1. No food is to be eaten in the labs.
2. No hats are to be worn.
3. Cell phones must be turned off prior to class (talk to instructor for emergency cases).
4. Students must be seated in a good learning position during class activities (good posture, head up, eye contact made, etc.).

### Attendance

As a future health care provider, you will have a full schedule of patients who are depending on you to be there, to be engaged, to be knowledgeable, and to be skillful. The attendance policies in this program are designed to prepare you for that career expectation.

Class attendance for all scheduled lectures and lab meetings is strongly encouraged. If you are going to miss a class or be late for a class ***you must notify the course instructor as soon as you are aware of the fact that you will not be there for the start of class.*** Failing to do this will be considered a breach of professional behavior (see program Professional Behavior Policy). You are expected to be in your seats and ready to learn at the start of class. Arriving as class is starting is considered tardy.

Missing scheduled classroom meetings may result in you missing:

- critical information not available in the power point, readings, or materials
- clarifying information and activities related to the content
- clinical application of the material with anecdotal information from the instructor
- scheduled and organic learning opportunities that cannot be replicated outside of that classroom meeting (guest speakers, guest patients, classmate questions, etc.)

Missing scheduled lab meetings affects your ability to acquire and hone technical skills. The Western PTA program uses a skill acquisition approach (see pg 28) that allows learning with numerous opportunities for feedback. Missing lab interrupts your learning in this model. **As a result, it is expected that you will make up all missed lab hours with a classmate or peer tutor identified by the faculty.**

Failure to make up for those hours of practice may result in you failing the competency check or practical exam on each unit. Student learning contracts may be used to enforce this concept if the student does not demonstrate an effort to make up missed lab hours or if student has a deficit in the proficiency of one or more skills.

Finally, “the College reserves the right to drop a student for attendance-related concerns at any time during the term if it is felt to be in the best interest of the student or the College.”

Reference: D0107 Attendance

### Minimum Grade Policy on Practical Examination

**\*\*Students are required to perform at a minimum a C grade (78% or better) and meet all critical safety criteria on all practical examinations. One failure (less than 78%) will be allowed in each course. If a student fails a second practical exam in the course, he or she will receive and “F” for that course. Failure of five practical exams in the program will result in program dismissal.**

### Retaking a Practical Examination

The student who is unable to achieve a C grade on a practical examination (or who misses a critical safety component of a practical exam) will have the opportunity to take a second examination of similar style and content. During the time between the initial examination and the “retake,” the student will be required to submit and complete a personal learning plan that may include working with a tutor or classmate, meeting with the instructor, practicing specific scenarios or skills, and meeting with the Learning Commons personnel to assist in preparing for the retake examination. Details of that plan will be created between student and faculty and put in writing in Student Success Plan format.

1. In the case of any examination other than the final, **the retake must occur within two weeks of the return of the initial examination.** \*
2. In the case of the final examination, the retake must within 2 weeks of the end of the term. \* **In the interim period, the student will carry an incomplete grade for the course. This grade will only be removed upon successful completion and passing of the practical examination and course. Failure to retake the practical exam in the allotted time will result in the conversion of the incomplete to a Failed grade.**
3. Students **are only allowed to re-take one practical exam per course.** Upon failure of the second practical examination, **the student will receive an “F” for the course.** Student can remain in the other PTA courses in which he or she is enrolled that semester but will not be able to progress with coursework in the program due to the Division General Policy-“All repeat courses must be successfully completed prior to completing sequential courses in the program.”
4. Students are allowed a total of four practical examination *re-takes* for the entire program. **Upon failure of the fifth practical examination, the student will be dismissed from the program.**

#### **Passing the Retake Practical Examination**

Student must achieve a C grade (78% or better) and meet all critical safety criteria on the practical re-take. Upon successful completion of the practical retake, the student will receive a 78% passing score which indicates competency in the skill. The point value equivalent to 78% will be recorded regardless of points earned in the original or retake attempt.

#### **Failing the Retake Practical Examination**

For the student who fails to complete the retake before the deadline, misses a critical safety criteria, or who does not achieve a C on the retake, all of the following will hold true:

1. **S/he will receive an F for the course.** The student may elect to withdraw immediately or continue until the completion of the course.
2. S/he will not be permitted to continue in the clinic.
3. S/he can remain in the other PTA courses in which he or she is enrolled that semester but will not be able to progress with coursework in the program due to Division General Policy “All repeat courses must be successfully completed prior to completing sequential courses in the program.”

A student may petition the faculty to set up an individualized student success plan to allow the student to enroll in the course again the next time it is offered. Due to the discontinuous nature of completing the program after a failed course, a student success plan will include a competency exam for all of the coursework the student has completed in the program. The student must pass all competency exams prior to enrolling in the petitioned course. This process is to assure that the student has maintained all

of the competencies in the completed courses which is a requirement of CAPTE. Students are **required** to perform at a minimum of C grade (>78%) on all competency examinations.

### **Minimum Grade Policy on Written Examinations**

**\*\*** Students are **required** to achieve a 78% or better (equivalent to the grade of a C) on all written examinations. **Two “failures” (less than 78%) only will be allowed each course.** If a student fails to achieve this grade on a written exam, the faculty may give an alternate activity to allow for demonstration of competence of the material. However, the original grade scored will remain in the cumulative point total for the course. Students who fail multiple written exams will be required to submit a learning plan to improve performance before being allowed to complete competency demonstration. **Upon “failure” of a third written exam (less than 78% grade) in a single course, the student will receive an “F” grade for that course.**

Student will be allowed to continue in other PTA courses in which he or she is enrolled but will not be allowed to enter the clinic or progress in the program as stated in the Division General Policy-“All repeat courses must be successfully completed prior to completing sequential courses in the program.”

A student may petition the faculty to set up an individualized student success plan to allow the student to enroll in the course again the next time it is offered. Due to the discontinuous nature of completing the program after a failed course, a student success plan will include a competency exam for all of the coursework the student has completed in the program. The student must pass all competency exams prior to enrolling in the petitioned course. This process is to assure that the student has maintained all of the competencies in the completed courses which is a requirement of CAPTE. Students are **required** to perform at a minimum of C grade (>78%) on all competency examinations.

Students will be allowed a **total of six written examination failures (less than 78%) for the entire program.** **Upon failure of the sixth written examination, the student will be dismissed from the program.**

### **Photo and Video Use**

During classroom and lab activities in the PTA program, photographs and video clips may be taken to facilitate learning. Photos and video clips taken during a semester may continue to be used by the instructor for educational purposes. At times, students will be asked to volunteer for photos or videotaping that is specifically intended to market the program. Students will have the opportunity to opt out of photo and video use at the beginning of the program in writing.

### **Possible Risks & Discomforts**

Safety in application of interventions will be a primary emphasis in the PTA program as it should be in your future practice. If doubt exists, a conservative treatment approach will be utilized. Remember this maxim:

***Apply the least amount of force or intensity  
to achieve the physical therapy treatment goals.***

As with any intervention, you should understand that there exists the possibility of discomfort, pain, muscle soreness, freezing or burning of tissue, and/or unexpected electrical phenomenon. It is your responsibility as a student to adhere to safety guidelines. Additionally, you should immediately report any problems or feelings of discomfort to your instructor.

## **Pre-existing Conditions**

The purpose of lab is to learn about and practice an array of interventions that you will be expected to administer in the clinic. It is best practice to experience each intervention yourself so that you know what sensations the patient might be feeling. **All students will be required to participate fully in the role of student PTA as well as the role of patient.** **If you have a pre-existing condition (orthopedic or otherwise), please discreetly bring it to the attention of your instructor!** The instructor will work to find possible suitable and safe alternatives that meet the required experience and skills.

## **Infection Control**

In this program, you will learn and use standard precaution procedures at all times in the lab and clinic. You will also be assigned duties for sanitizing the lab after use, in class or on your own. You will be shown the location of first aid kits and told how to prevent the spread of blood-borne pathogens. Your practice of sanitary procedures is the first line of defense in preventing infection!

## **Lab Clothing**

Observation, palpation, assessment, and treatment of the extremities and back may be a component of each lab. Please wear clothing that will preserve modesty but allow access to these areas. There is little space in the lab for changing of clothes, so it is best to come prepared with a sweat suit or other loose clothing over your lab outfit. If you are not wearing the appropriate attire, you may be asked to wear a gown.

## Skill Acquisition & Approval Ladder

You must become proficient in the performance of **many** skills. Contemporary research in education promotes regular opportunities for feedback and correction as well as tiered assessments. The chart below illustrates the steps the program uses for accomplishing this. You are expected to participate in all the steps to give yourself plenty of opportunity to learn, make mistakes, and correct them.

STEP	Description
<b>Read/Prepare</b>	Read assignments & review notes. Watch videos of techniques posted on Blackboard before coming to lab. Attempt to come into the lab prepared with a general understanding of what will be covered that day.
<b>Demonstration</b>	The instructor will demonstrate the skill in the lab.
<b>Lab Practice</b>	You will practice the skill in lab with a partner. Because no two people (clients) will respond alike, <b>it is highly recommended that you switch partners frequently for a different experience.</b> Faculty will give direct feedback.
<b>Practice with Partner</b>	During available times and outside of class, practice the skills with a partner. This is a good time to develop questions for clarification for the instructor. Feedback is primarily from peers at this step.
<b>Peer Check</b>	Have a partner Peer Check you as you perform the skill. <b>Message to the Peer: Be meticulous in your assessment!</b> Feedback should include constructive criticism so that the student learns the correct method.
<b>Competency Check</b>	You will complete a Competency Check on selected skills with the course instructor. <b>Please be fully prepared!</b> If you do not pass, the instructor will indicate what you missed & clarify information. You will need to schedule an appointment for an additional Competency Check on another day.
<b>Practical Exam</b>	Practical Exams will incorporate a number of skills into a single session of testing. <b>You will not be permitted to take the Practical Exam until all related Competency Checks are successfully completed.</b> The instructor will provide deadlines and consequences for failing to meet the deadlines.
<b>Clinical Practice</b>	Once in the clinic, you will arrange with your Clinical Instructor (CI) to perform a specific list of skills. If supervised, you may assist with any skills that you have completed in the PTA curriculum prior to the internship. You may have the opportunity to practice skills not yet learned or not included in the PTA curriculum. The CI is responsible for this instruction and supervision and it may or may not be included in the assessment of skills on the Western Clinical Performance Assessment Tool.

## **Unsupervised Laboratory Setting**

There are many opportunities for PTA students to practice in an unsupervised laboratory setting in order to develop proficiency in program skills as outlined in the Skill Acquisition and Approval Ladder. It is important to note that students are not allowed to turn on or use any electrical equipment without direct supervision from a faculty member. Examples of this equipment include but are not limited to ultrasound machines, electrical stimulation units (portable or free standing), iontophoresis units, TENS units, etc...

It is the responsibility of the student to use the equipment and resources safely and to report any misuse or problems with any of the equipment or resources to faculty. Program faculty will investigate any reported damage to equipment, resources or reported misuse of electrical equipment by students. Consequences may include possible dismissal from the PTA program. Misuse of unsupervised laboratory time (rough housing, napping, etc...) will result in the loss of access to the unsupervised laboratory setting.

***Access to labs is granted only AFTER agreeing to follow all rules/ guidelines for use of the Health Science Center as outlined in the HSC Student Guide.***

## **Laboratory Equipment Safety and Inspection**

Specific medical equipment owned and used by the PTA program will be annually inspected and checked for safety by a qualified biomedical engineer person or service. Annual testing and calibration, labelling that verifies calibration, documentation of testing results and repair will be completed. An outside vendor will be used but the Biomedical Engineering program is also granted access to equipment to practice specific equipment inspection or repairs.

Wheelchairs, non-electrical equipment, and treatment mats are inspected at a minimum annually (in May) by faculty. Repairs are made or arranged for as needed.

Any real or potential safety concerns discovered by a student should be immediately reported to a PTA faculty member and the equipment should be labelled and taken out of use until deemed safe.

## **Storage, Use or Spill of Hazardous Materials**

The PTA program will follow Western's emergency procedures for spills. A copy of the procedures is posted in each lab. Western will also have the MSDS sheets available in the lab for any hazardous materials used. Storage and use will follow the recommendations on the MSDS sheet(s).

## **Clinical Policies and Procedures**

Clinical education is an integral part of the curriculum of the PTA program at Western Technical College. It is during the clinical education component of the program that the student is given the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom/laboratory settings to actual patients. This is done under the supervision of a clinical instructor (CI) who is a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant employed by the clinical site. Through clinical and internship rotations, students will be given an opportunity to work with a variety of patient types. The clinical education portion of the curriculum starts in the fourth semester of the program and warrants its own handbook titled The PTA Clinical Education Manual. Please read the manual posted online for details regarding clinical policies and procedures.

# Key Health and Public Safety Division Policies and Procedures

## General Policy

- Students whose actions significantly endanger patient safety (which includes but is not limited to, alcohol/drug usage or sexual misconduct) will be dismissed from the course, program, and/or clinical/internship site immediately.
- All repeat courses must be successfully completed prior to completing sequential courses in the program.
- Students who receive a total of three (3) or more non-passing grades (“D”, “F”, or “W”) in program core and/or science courses will be dismissed from the program.
- Students who receive a total of two (2) or more withdrawals from the same program core and/or science course will be considered as earning the equivalent of a failing grade leading toward dismissal from the program.
- Students may appeal their dismissal to the Dean of Health and Public Safety for course re-entry and/or program re-entry.
- All re-entry is based on program and/or class capacity.

## Background Check Policy and Procedure

Students applying to Health and Public Safety Division programs are required to complete a Background Check process. Students with an arrest (with charge pending) and/or a conviction as noted in the Background Check record may be barred from engaging in the required clinical placements. Failure to disclose an arrest (with charge pending) and/or a conviction that subsequently appears on the Department of Justice record may also bar the student from clinical placements. It is the clinical sites’ prerogative to accept or deny clinical rotations to students with an arrest (with charge pending) and/or a conviction.

It is the policy of the Health and Public Safety Division to notify a student with an arrest (with charge pending) and/or a conviction that s/he may not be able to complete the required clinical experiences to earn a degree. The student shall be required to read and sign the Disclosure of Possible Bar from Clinical Experiences waiver.

If the student chooses to begin/continue his/her education, the student with a conviction is not guaranteed a clinical site or ability to find employment.

Acceptance for clinical placement during one rotation does not guarantee subsequent clinical placements.

**Arrests or Charges after Background Check Completed.** If a student is arrested or has new charges following the completion of the Background Check, the student must report them to the Associate Dean of the program within five (5) working days. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. If a student has a positive Background Check, the authorized school representative will contact two clinical sites used by the program (or potential clinical sites if rotations occur later in the program).
2. The Associate Dean (for the program the student has applied for admission) or designee will meet with the student to discuss the results of the clinical site(s) decision. The student will be advised as to his/her options.
3. It will be the student's decision whether or not he/she will begin/continue in the program.
4. If the student chooses to continue, or if the program cannot contact at least two clinical sites at the time of program admission, the student and Associate Dean will sign the Disclosure of Possible Bar from Clinical Experiences Waiver.
5. For each clinical rotation, the program will contact up to two clinical sites that meet the program competencies. If the site(s) deny the student for clinical education based upon the results of the background check, the student cannot continue with the clinical education portion of the program or subsequent courses in which clinical education is a prerequisite.

\*For clarification purposes, the term "clinical" can be used interchangeably with the terms "internship", "practicum" or "fieldwork".

**Body Art or Piercing Policy**

In the Health & Public Safety Division, a student may display no body art or piercing that might be considered offensive. Most employment settings have policies that are generally broad; however, they do reserve the right to deny employment and student clinical/practicum/fieldwork placement if body art or piercings are found to be offensive to those in that setting. The wearing and displaying of jewelry in the health care or public safety setting is generally limited to wrist watches and wedding rings or small non-dangling earrings. The purpose of this limitation is related to infection control, safety and public perception of the employees while they are on duty. Education programs (Early Childhood Ed, Instructional Assist), or Human Services Associate programs may allow additional wearing of jewelry as outlined within the program's practicum handbook or guidelines.

If a Western student has significant visible body art and/or piercings, we are unable to guarantee that the student will be able to be placed for the multiple clinical/practicum/fieldwork experiences that most programs require. You may be asked to cover the body art with clothing or dressings or remove the piercings in order to complete your rotation. If your program has a more restrictive policy on body art or piercings, it will be enforced. It is your decision whether or not to enter the program based on the uncertainty of being accepted at those sites.

**Confidentiality Policy**

The clinical/practicum/internship or fieldwork experience requires students to read and use health or educational records of clients, patients or children. All Western Technical College students should hold information concerning the identity, diagnosis, prognosis, condition, family situations, care or treatment of their clients, patients or children in confidence. Information systems may not be used to access confidential information that is not essential for completion of professional/student activities.

This obligation of professional confidentiality must be carefully fulfilled not only regarding the information in the person's charts and records, but also with regard to your activities and behavior outside of your Western course. Do not discuss such information with others unless it is required directly for the treatment or care of the client, patient or child. Discuss the above information within the following parameters:

1. Only in appropriate places (i.e., out of earshot of other clients or staff not caring for the client). Places that are inappropriate are public areas such as the cafeteria, parking ramp, elevators, stairwells, break room, community and your home.
2. Only discuss names, diagnosis, etc., with people directly caring for the client, patient, or child. Examples of inappropriate people would include client family members, facility staff not directly caring for the client, neighbors, your family members, friends, classmates and news reporters.
3. Information transmission must be kept within the facility. Client information may not be copied by you or staff and taken out of any facility. Information should not be transmitted to or from, or stored within, any form of personal technology (e.g., personal computers, laptops, cell phones, cameras, tablets, iPods, Smartwatch, etc.). Use of any social media (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.) which mentions, depicts or photographs clients or clinical sites by name or care/treatment given to any persons will not be tolerated.

Any intentional or accidental violation of these confidentiality provisions, by you or others, must be reported to the faculty member instructing the class or to Health and Public Safety Division administration, Kumm 211, La Crosse campus. Any violation of this confidentiality policy may result in clinical/practicum or fieldwork disciplinary probation, dismissal from the course and/or program or college discipline related to a Student Code of Conduct violation. It may also bring about legal consequences for the student by parties involved.

### **Course Repeat Policy**

Each course drop, withdrawal or failure will count as a course enrollment. A student seeking to enroll in a program course for a second time must initiate a student success plan with program faculty prior to enrollment. Enrollment in a course for a second time is on a space-available basis. Students will not be allowed to enroll in a course more than twice without appealing to the Dean of Health and Public Safety for course re-entry (See Program Re-entry Appeal Process).

General Procedure:

1. The student is required to complete a student re-entry success plan with the course instructor and/or program chair.
2. The faculty member provides the associate dean a copy of the student success plan.
3. If the student is enrolled in a program course for the second time, but has not developed a success plan, the associate dean will direct admissions to drop student from the course.
4. A program may require a student to demonstrate competency skills with a passing grade of a "C" or better prior to re-enrollment in a course.

## **HPS Program Dismissal Policy**

Students may be dismissed from a program for:

- Violation for the Western Student Code of Conduct.
- Actions that significantly endanger patient safety (including, but not limited to, alcohol/drug use or sexual misconduct) will result in immediate dismissal from the course, clinical/internship site and/or program.
- Breaching patient confidentiality.
- Jeopardizing clinical/fieldwork or internship relationships
- Violation of program or facility-specific policies.
- Receiving a total of three or more non-passing grades (“D”, “F”, or “W”) in program core and/or science courses.

Students may appeal their dismissal to the Dean of Health and Public Safety for program re-entry. Please refer to the Program Re-Entry Appeal Process listed in the Western Student Planner and Handbook. The planner can be purchased at Western’s Campus Shop or found on Western’s website at [www.westerntc.edu](http://www.westerntc.edu).

## **Program Re-entry Appeal Process**

Students failing or dismissed from a Health and Public Safety Division program may appeal to the Dean of Health and Public Safety for re-entry. Students will follow the re-entry process and recognize that the Dean reserves the right to deny the student program re-entry.

Process:

Students requesting program re-entry are required to initiate the following process:

1. Write a letter of intent requesting re-entry into the program that includes:
  - The student’s professional goals.
  - An examination of the student’s choices and behaviors that prevented successful completion of courses/program.
  - The student’s plan for change and improvement for program success.
  - Contact information, including name, program, student ID number, address, phone and email.
2. Mail letter of intent to: Dean of Health and Public Safety, Room K211, Western Technical College, 400 North Seventh Street, PO Box C-0908, La Crosse, WI, 54602-0908.
3. The Division will contact student to schedule an appeal meeting with the Dean of Health and Public Safety.
4. The student will be notified of the Dean’s decision by letter (email or USPS).

Program re-entry is always on a space-available basis. In situations where re-entry is granted, the Dean will often refer the student to meet with program faculty to develop a program success plan. The success plan may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Additional courses for remediation
2. Competency demonstration
3. Required meetings with Western faculty or staff

## **HPS TB Policy**

The student must provide negative tuberculosis results as a requirement to attend the clinical or fieldwork portions of the Health and Public Safety Division courses. Students will need to show proof of annual testing for TB or will need to obtain a baseline test using two-step testing with the Mantoux Tuberculin Skin Test (TST).

Procedure:

Prior to beginning the clinical/practicum/ fieldwork/ internship portion of a program, students must provide proof of TB testing. Proof can be provided through two mechanisms:

- \* Annual documentation of TB testing.
  - \* Baseline testing using the two-step testing with the Mantoux Tuberculin Skin Test (TST).
1. If the two-step TB skin test is negative, a one-step skin test is required on an annual basis. If 12 months elapsed since the previous skin test, a two-step will be required.
  2. If the two-step TB skin test is positive, the student must see his/her healthcare provider for follow-up and provide documentation annually of such follow-up. Usually the initial chest x-ray is required to rule out active TB.
  3. Students should seek medical attention if they experience signs and symptoms suggestive of active TB.

## **Immune Status Impact on Clinical Experiences Policy Waiver**

The Health and Public Safety Division has clinical agreements with outside agencies which require students to demonstrate evidence of immunity or vaccination to specific diseases (e.g., Influenza, varicella, tuberculosis, etc.). If a student does not comply with this requirement, they may be denied clinical placements. It is the prerogative of a clinical site to deny students who are unable to demonstrate their immunity or vaccination status. Being denied a clinical rotation will result in the inability to complete the program or failure of the course.

Some sites may allow a student to participate in a clinical experience without an influenza vaccination. At these sites, the student may be required to wear a mask at all times when at the agency. Should an Influenza outbreak occur, students without verification of Influenza vaccination may be immediately denied access by the placement site, which will result in the inability to complete the program or failure of the course.

Procedure:

1. Students will demonstrate their immunity and vaccination status by uploading verification documents to their online medical document manager.
2. If a student cannot submit evidence of immunity or vaccination (due to medical circumstances), the clinical coordinator or the authorized school representative will contact sites used by the program (up to two per rotation) inquiring as to the student's eligibility for clinical placement. Acceptance for clinical placement during one rotation does not guarantee subsequent clinical placements.
3. If after two sites are contacted and are not able to accept the student for placement, the student will be unable to complete the clinical portion of the class/program and will fail the course or not be able to complete the program. The student cannot enroll in subsequent courses in which clinical education is a pre/co-requisite.

\*For clarification purposes, the term "clinical" can be used interchangeably with the terms "internship", "practicum" or "fieldwork".

### **Needlestick Policy**

Student accident insurance covers testing performed on students who are stuck with a needle in a clinical setting. This testing can cost hundreds of dollars. The insurance does not cover testing of the patient who was stuck with the needle. Some organizations cover the cost to test the patient, but some will not. If the patient is not tested, the student must be treated as if they are infected-this treatment is expensive and costs the insurance company more than if the patient had been tested and determined to not be infected with HIV, hepatitis or other diseases.

### QUESTIONS

Do the other Technical Colleges pay to have the patient tested if the organization will not pay? The consensus of the Risk Managers in attendance at the April 2012 DMI Risk Managers meeting was that if the organization refuses to pay, the College will pay for the testing on the patient.

Would the insurance company be willing to pay for the patient testing? No.

### RESOLUTION

In the event of a needlestick involving a Western student, Western will work with the clinical site. If the site is unwilling to pay for the testing, Western will cover the cost.

## **Pregnancy Statement**

It is strongly recommended that students voluntarily inform their instructor if they are pregnant. Our primary concern is the safety of you and your baby. Depending on the program, there may be potential risks you should be aware of, and which you may want to discuss with your healthcare provider in order to determine if you should continue in your program at this time. After discussion with your instructor, some adjustments (if any) might be made in class activities to promote your comfort and safety. The choice of continuing is yours; however, we want to ensure that your choice is fully informed, and that you know we are here to support you during your pregnancy.

## **Program Records Policy**

The Division requires programs and/or courses to maintain program and student records in accordance with the standards required by each accreditation and/or regulatory agencies standards.

## **Social Media Policy**

Social media creates opportunities for students to communicate in a public forum. Just as there are guidelines for respectful face-to-face communication, there are also standards of conduct for the use of internet tools such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and YouTube. All engagement in social media is bound by Western Technical College's Computer Use Policy, Student Code of Conduct and other generally established policies governing student behavior (e.g., program handbooks, course syllabi, clinical training site guidelines, employer policies, etc.), as well as the Terms of Use of the specific social media site being used. Disregard of these standards will be considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Because the technology that drives web communication changes rapidly, this policy may be adjusted to reflect issues that may arise in its management and implementation or for any other reason that supports the College's priorities.

### **Guidelines for Individual Use of Social Media**

These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Students must adhere to the principles of patient/client privacy and confidentiality in safeguarding identifiable patient/client information as it relates to social media.
- Students should represent their own views and be professional and accurate in their communications.
- Students should not misrepresent when they are speaking for themselves or Western, other organizations, educational institutions, clinical sites, or employers.

## **Student Employment at Clinical\* Site Policy**

Any agreement a student may enter into with a clinical affiliate for employment purposes is not a requirement of the program and is a separate agreement between the clinical\* site and the student in an employer/ employee relationship. Any student employed while he/she is still enrolled in a program in the Health and Public Safety Division may not receive payment for his/her clinical\* time. Paid time can NOT count as clinical time.

\*Note: for purpose of this policy, the term “clinical” is interchangeable with the terms fieldwork, internship, and practicum.

## **Latex Exposure Policy**

Western Technical College cannot provide a latex-free environment within classrooms, labs, or clinical settings. Since students may be exposed to various amounts of latex products, students who have a latex sensitivity or latex allergy will be required to provide the instructor with a doctor’s written statement stating they are safe to continue in the program with varying exposure to latex products. As a result, a latex sensitivity or latex allergy may prevent a student from continuing in a Health and Public Safety Division program.

# College Wide Policies and Procedures

## **Student Drug and Alcohol Policy**

Western Technical College is committed to maintaining a safe, drug-free learning and workplace environment ([C0105](#)).

Any student on Western premises or participating in any learning or co-curricular activity, who appears to be impaired, under the influence of alcohol, or a controlled substance may be required to submit to drug and/or alcohol testing.

### **Procedure for Implementing Student Drug and Alcohol Testing**

Controlled Substance Definition: Compounds, in any form, listed under the Uniform Controlled Substances Act, [Chapter 961](#) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Conditions under which the student drug and or alcohol procedure should be initiated:

1. If a College employee has a reasonable objective suspicion to believe a student is impaired or under the influence of a controlled substance(s), abused prescription drug(s), alcohol, or other mind-altering substance(s), and is posing a safety concern, or is disruptive to the learning or community environment; and/or
2. If a student is involved in an accident or incident resulting in injury to a person and or damage to property or equipment, and where safety measures were ignored, or the incident was the result of a careless act.

Reasonable objective suspicion includes but is not limited to a person's actions, behavior, speech patterns, or body odors including indication of chronic and/or withdrawal effects of controlled substances.

If the student admits to being under the influence or provides a satisfactory response to the employee's suspicion, the employee may allow the student to return to the learning environment if they deem the student to be safe to return, or may ask the student to leave the learning environment for the remainder of the day. If the student is under the influence or unable to safely drive a vehicle, the employee can contact the security manager, security coordinator, or dean of students to assist the student with finding safe transportation home.

If the student identifies a medication or medical condition as the source of the observed behavior, the employee may allow the student to return to the learning environment if they deem the student to be safe to return, or may ask the student to leave the learning environment for the remainder of the day. If the student is unable to safely drive a vehicle, the employee can contact the security manager, security coordinator, or dean of students to assist the student with finding safe transportation home.

If the employee is not given a satisfactory response to their reasonable objective suspicion, the employee is to immediately notify the security manager, security coordinator, or designee to respond to the location to assess the situation and implement the drug testing procedure response. Should the responding administrator make the determination drug or alcohol testing is required, the administrator will make arrangements for the transportation of the student to have a drug and/or alcohol test completed (paid for by the College) and returned home as appropriate (i.e. taxi, friend, family member, security officer, etc.).

#### DRUG TESTING PROCEDURES

Western will establish a network for the collection of urine or other types of specimens for drug testing (see below). These collection sites will follow procedures which will respect the student's reasonable expectations of privacy. For each urine specimen, an established chain of custody method will be used. Western will select laboratories which are federally certified. The laboratories will meet all specifics required under the drug testing policy. Anyone taking such drug test shall be given a form to acknowledge that they have been provided a copy of the Student Drug and Alcohol Testing policy and procedure and permitted to provide the medical review officer (MRO) any information relevant to explain any possible positive drug test results.

Drug testing shall include: marijuana, cocaine, opiates, amphetamines, phencyclidine (PCP), or other controlled substances. Western reserves the right to test for additional drugs. All drug tests which come back positive from the initial laboratory testing procedure shall be retested using the gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) testing method.

Western will retain a medical doctor(s) as an MRO who shall be the sole party to review the results of these drug tests. The MRO will be the party who makes the final determination as to whether or not a drug test positively identifies prohibited drug use by a student. The MRO will retain all individual test results and will advise Western whether there is a verified positive and the drug discovered or a verified negative test and will provide other general reports to ~~WESTERN~~ Western, not specific to any individual.

In the situation where the student is a minor, a parent or guardian must sign authorization for testing.

## ALCOHOL TESTING PROCEDURES

Western will establish a network for the collection of breath alcohol specimens from students. In the event such test evidences a breath alcohol of 0.02% BrAc or more, such test result will be evidence of violation of college policy.

In the situation where the student is a minor, a parent or guardian must sign authorization for testing.

## EFFECT OF A VERIFIED POSITIVE DRUG/ALCOHOL TEST

Any student, whose drug and or alcohol test is determined as positive, will be referred to the dean of students for adjudication of an alleged violation of the Student Code of Conduct as set forth in the Student Handbook. Action taken may range from referral for counseling support and restitution for the cost of the drug and or ~~alcohol~~ test, to suspension from the College in situations where serious violations arise. In keeping with the mission of the College, any action taken will reflect an opportunity for the student to learn conduct that is more conducive to a positive learning environment.

## DRUG/ALCOHOL TESTING REFUSAL

Any student who refuses to submit to a drug or alcohol test (or fails to show up for test), or has a parent or guardian refuse to sign the authorization for testing will be considered to refusing to comply with a reasonable directive and referred to the Dean of Students for adjudication on an alleged violation of the Western Student Code of Conduct as set forth in the Western Student Handbook.

## COMPLIANCE WITH STATE LAWS

Western will comply with all applicable state or federal laws in enforcing college policy. Any student is required to notify program faculty, advisor, or student life employee of any drug or alcohol statute conviction immediately.

Any student who is taking prescribed or over-the-counter medications which may adversely affect the student's performance or patient safety must notify the program faculty, advisor, or student life employee of any such legally obtained medication.

## RESPONDING EMPLOYEE PROCEDURE

- A college employee who has reasonable suspicion to believe a student is under influence of alcohol at a regional learning campus will contact the security manager or security coordinator.
- Respond to location, if feasible, or connect via phone to campus administrator or designee.
- If situation cannot easily be contained, contact local law enforcement.
- Obtain information including student name, reason for suspicion, description of incident, and a completed reasonable suspicion checklist from the employee and any witnesses.
- With a college employee witness present, ask the student if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
  - If the student answers yes, inform the student that the incident will be referred to the dean of students for follow-up action and ask the student to leave campus.

- If the student answers no, provide the student with the reasons for the objective suspicion and inform the student they will need to be transported for a drug test at the local medical facility and will not return to the College until notified by the dean or associate dean of their program.
- If the student refuses, notify the student the failure to comply will be noted and the incident will be referred to the dean of students for follow-up action and ask the student to leave campus.
- Give student copy of policy.
- Notify dean of students and complete [online incident report form](#).
- If transporting for drug testing, transport the student to an appropriate medical facility for testing.
- Inform the medical personnel of drug test arranged for Western Technical College.
- If the student does not have an ID, verify for medical personnel that the student is a Western student.
- Have the student sign release provided by hospital.
- Tell the clinic to bill:
 

Western Technical College  
 c/o Shelley McNeely  
 400 North 7<sup>th</sup> St, K100  
 La Crosse, WI 54601
- Responding administrator will work with the student to arrange safe transportation home for student.
- Stay with student until safe transportation arrives.
- Document discussion with the student. Include whether the student stated they were under the influence and whether the student complied with the drug test. Submit summary to the dean of students as soon as possible.

#### **SECURITY OFFICER PROCEDURE**

- Security may be contacted by an employee who has reasonable suspicion to believe a student is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Respond to location.
- If situation needs to be contained, make sure everyone is safe and secure.
- Obtain information including student name, reason for suspicion, and overview of situation.
- Contact Security Manager, Security Coordinator, or designee to initiate responder procedure.

## Smoking Policy

Western Technical College strives to promote student, coworker, and visitor health and wellness. The use of all tobacco products, and vaping devices are prohibited on all property owned by the College, or otherwise controlled by the district.

## Academic Integrity Policy

Western Technical College is committed to upholding academic integrity in all modes of learning. Faculty, students and staff are all responsible for ensuring the integrity, fairness, and honesty of the intellectual environment. Academic integrity violations, include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, falsification and other forms of dishonest or unethical behavior, and are considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

### Academic Dishonesty Definitions:

Violations of academic integrity include, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

Cheating – using or attempting to use materials, information or communications without permission of the instructor. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Copying or allowing another person to copy a test paper, assignment, report or any other graded material
- Using external aids of any kind (e.g. notes, books, electronic devices, and information from others) or a test, quiz or other graded assessment without permission of instructor.
- Taking a test for someone else or having someone else complete a test or graded assessment in one's place
- Using, buying, selling, stealing, soliciting or copying any contents of an examination, quiz or other graded assessment without authorization of instructor

Plagiarism – intentionally or unintentionally representing another person's work as one's own.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing another's work or ideas without properly acknowledging or citing the source of the work
- Submitting another person's work as one's own, including purchasing another's work to submit as one's own

Unauthorized Collaboration – sharing information or aiding another person during an examination or in preparing academic work without prior authorization of instructor

Fabrication – using invented, altered, forged or falsified information in academic work or documentation whether in hard copy or electronic format

Multiple submission – the submission of the same work or substantially the same work to more than one class, and/or submission of prior academic work submitted for credit at a different institution

Academic Misconduct – other forms of dishonesty or inappropriate conduct. Examples included, but are not limited to:

- Requesting an academic benefit such as requesting an extension, excused absence, or other benefit based on false information or deception
- Knowingly and willingly damaging the efforts or work of other students
- Accessing student or faculty records or files without authorization
- Misrepresenting oneself as a student or faculty member to obtain protected information or other academic or personal benefit

**Academic Integrity Procedure:**

To ensure a fair and timely resolution to any academic integrity allegations, the following process shall be implemented:

1. Course level process - Faculty notifies the student of the suspicion of academic dishonesty and offers to discuss the matter in person, by phone or via email
  1. If student accepts responsibility – faculty determines appropriate outcome (see below), notifies student of outcome, and documents via [Academic Integrity Report](#)
  2. If student denies allegation – faculty reviews all information to determine if a violation of academic integrity occurred, determines appropriate outcome (if applicable), notifies student of outcome and right to appeal decision to academic dean (along with appropriate contact information), and documents via [Academic Integrity Report](#)

Upon notification to the student of an allegation of academic dishonesty, the student is prohibited from withdrawing from the course while the allegation is being considered. Students found to be in violation are prohibited from withdrawing from the course at any time. Attempting to withdraw will result in a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and be referred to the Dean of Students office for resolution.

Outcomes will be at the discretion of the instructor and may include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Verbal or written warning to the student
- Student Success Plan
- Deduction of points or assigning a failing grade or score for the work or assessment in question
- Assigning a failing grade for the course (with prior consultation of academic dean)

Students found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy have the right to appeal the process. The appeal is limited to failure to notify student of allegation, failing to provide student opportunity to discuss allegation, failing to follow the published academic integrity process, or

other specific error or omission that may have influenced the outcome.

The appeal for a course level academic integrity allegation must be made in writing to the academic dean or designee within five (5) calendar days of student receiving notification of outcome of violation. The dean or designee will make a final decision after full review and consideration of the process and related information. The student and instructor will be notified in writing of the decision. The decision of the dean or designee is final.

OR

2. College level process - Repeat academic integrity violations and/or allegations that include possible violation of other Student Code of Conduct standards will be referred to the Dean of Students to be addressed through the Student Code of Conduct procedure.

At the college level process, outcomes for allegations referred to the Dean of Students may include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Verbal or written warning
- Non-academic probation
- Community service assignment
- Suspension or dismissal from program (with consultation of academic dean)

The appeal for an academic integrity allegations addressed by the Dean of Students must be made in writing to the Office of the Vice President for Student Services and Engagement within ten (10) calendar days of student receiving notification of outcome of violation. A vice president will make a final decision after full review and consideration of the process and related information. The student and instructor will be notified in writing of the decision. The decision of the vice president is final.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

Western Technical College is committed to fostering a learning environment that values student success, accountability, diversity, learning, teamwork, integrity and respect; and encourages positive behaviors in support of academic and personal development of all students. As such, students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that supports civil, criminal and federal laws and College policies and procedures; does not interfere with the educational process of the College in any manner; or endanger the safety or well-being of other students, staff or faculty.

The Student Code of Conduct and procedures apply to the conduct of individual students as well as all Western recognized student organizations or clubs. For the purpose of this policy, a student is defined as any person who attends and/or is enrolled in any credit or non-credit classes or program at the College.

The Student Code of Conduct applies to behaviors that take place on any Western campus or controlled property, at Western sponsored events, and may apply off-campus when a student's conduct may present a danger or threat to the health or safety of any person, or is detrimental to the educational mission, programs and/or interest of the College. The Student Code of Conduct may be applied to

behavior conducted online, via email or other electronic medium where the behavior is not protected by freedom of expression.

In order to provide the best opportunity for student success for all, students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that complies with all civil and criminal laws, does not interfere with the educational environment, and does not endanger the safety, rights or health of any person. The College will take action to prevent and stop any negative behavior(s) that inhibits learning.

### Scope of Code

The Student Code of Conduct (Code) applies to the conduct of individual students as well as all Western recognized student organizations or clubs. For the purpose of this policy, a student is defined as any person who attends and/or is enrolled in any classes or program at the college. The Code also applies to any misconduct that occurred prior to a student taking a leave of absence, withdrawing or graduating. A student with pending student conduct action is not permitted to withdraw from the College until all allegations are resolved. The student conduct process may continue without the student's voluntary participation, and sanctions or holds regarding a student's ability to enroll may be placed on the student's record until the matter is resolved or sanctions are satisfied.

The Code applies to guests of Western community members. In circumstances where the guest's behavior violates the Code, the Western host may be held accountable for the guest's behavior. Visitors and guests of Western may utilize the Code to report actions committed against them by any Western student.

There is no time limit on reporting of violations of the Code, however the longer someone waits to report an offense, it may impact the ability of Western officials to obtain information, interview persons involved, and make determinations regarding alleged violations. Prompt reporting is strongly encouraged.

Though anonymous reports are permitted, doing so may limit Western's ability to investigate and respond to a complaint. Those who are aware of the misconduct are encouraged to report it as promptly as possible to the Dean of Students and/or Security.

All communication regarding the student conduct process including meeting requests and decision letters will be communicated via the student's student email account.

### Violations of Law:

Alleged violations of federal, state and/or local laws occurring on Western controlled properties or by Western students or student organizations may be investigated under the Student Code of Conduct. Any criminal investigation or process is separate from, and does not take the place of, a Western investigation. The student conduct process can occur prior to, at the same time, or following any criminal process. The outcome of any criminal investigation does not influence the student conduct process or outcome.

### Interim Suspension:

In certain circumstances, Western reserves the right to exercise its authority of interim suspension upon receiving a complaint, and prior to the completion of the student conduct process. An interim suspension may be imposed for the safety and well-being of members of the Western community and/or to ensure the student's own physical or emotional safety and well-being. The Vice President of Student Service and Engagement or designee may interim suspend a student until a hearing can be held, typically within two weeks. This hearing may resolve the allegation, or may be held to determine if the interim suspension should be continued. The interim suspension may be continued if a danger to the community is posed and the College may be delayed or prevented from conducting its own investigation and resolving the allegation due to pending criminal process.

### **Standards of Conduct**

Students are responsible for modeling behavior that represents the core values of Western, and are expected to conduct themselves as responsible members of the Western community. Any student or student organization found to have committed or have attempted to commit any of the following misconduct is subject to the student conduct process:

1. **Abuse of Conduct Process** - abuse, interference with, or failure to comply in, Western student conduct processes, including but not limited to:
  1. Falsification, distortion, or misrepresentation of information;
  2. Failure to provide, destroying or concealing information during an investigation of an alleged policy violation;
  3. Preventing or attempting to prevent an individual's proper participation in, or use of, the student conduct process;
  4. Harassment (verbal or physical) or intimidation of a conduct officer or hearing panel member prior to, during, and/or following a student conduct proceeding;
  5. Failure to comply with the restorative actions or sanctions and deadlines imposed through student conduct process;
  6. Influencing or attempting to influence another person to commit an abuse of the student conduct system
  7. Disrupting the orderly conduct of a student conduct meeting or hearing;
2. **Academic Dishonesty** - violations of the Academic Integrity Policy (see [Academic Integrity Policy](#));
3. **Alcohol** - use, possession, or distribution of alcoholic beverages or paraphernalia, or being under the influence of alcohol while on Western premises, conducting College business, or participating in College-sponsored events or activities except as expressly permitted by Western's alcohol policy (See [C0105 Alcohol and Drug Policy for Employees and Students](#));

4. **Animals** - unauthorized presence of any animal in Western controlled and managed facilities (See [E0710 Animals on Campus Policy](#));
5. **Bullying and Cyberbullying** - repeated and/or severe aggressive behaviors that intimidate or intentionally harm or control another person physically or emotionally, and are not protected by freedom of expression, whether in person or through technological means;
6. **Collusion** - any action or inaction with one or more individual(s) to intentionally violate the Student Code of Conduct or encouraging such violation;
7. **Damage to Property** - intentional, reckless, and/or unauthorized damage to or destruction of Western property or the personal property of another person;
8. **Dating Violence** - sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the impacted party (See [Interpersonal Violence](#));
9. **Discrimination** - any act or failure to act that results in negative or differential treatment or denies the ability to participate in or benefit from services, programs or activities of an individual or group based on actual or perceived status including: sex, gender identity, race, color, age, creed, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, veteran status, pregnancy, religion, gender expression, sexual orientation, or other protected status;
10. **Disruptive Behavior** - any conduct that disrupts any teaching, service, administrative, disciplinary, or other Western activities or process which occurs on campus or within established Western jurisdiction;
11. **Domestic Violence** - misdemeanor and felony crimes of violence committed by an adult person against a spouse, former spouse, an adult with whom the person resides or formerly resided in an intimate relationship, against an adult with whom the person has a child in common, or a minor or incapacitated person subject to the control of the offender, such as, but not limited to (per Wisconsin State Statute) (See [Interpersonal Violence](#)):
  1. Intentional infliction of physical pain, physical injury or illness;
  2. Intentional impairment of physical condition;
  3. First, second, or third degree sexual assault (WI Stat Sec. 940.225 (1), (2) or (3))
  4. Physical act that may cause the other person to reasonably fear imminent engagement in the conduct above;
12. **Drugs** - use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs and other controlled substances or drug paraphernalia, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or other controlled substances while on Western premises, conducting College business, or participating in College-sponsored events or activities except as expressly permitted by Western's drug and alcohol policy (See [C0105 Alcohol and Drug Policy for Employees and Students](#));

13. **Election Tampering** - tampering with the election of any Western recognized student leadership or organization election (minor election code violations are addressed by Student Government);
14. **Failure to Comply** - deliberate noncompliance with the reasonable directives of Western officials during the performance of their duties and/or failure to identify oneself or provide identification when requested to do so by a Western official;
15. **Falsification** - knowingly furnishing or possessing false, falsified or forged materials, documents, accounts, records, identification, or financial instruments;
16. **Fire Safety** - violation of local, state, federal, campus or residence hall fire policies including, but not limited to:
  1. Intentionally or recklessly causing a fire, regardless of whether or not it damages Western or personal property, or causes injury to any person;
  2. Failure to evacuate Western controlled facilities during a fire alarm;
  3. Improper use or possession of fire safety equipment;
  4. Tampering with or improperly engaging a fire alarm or fire detection/control equipment including smoke detectors;
  5. Falsely reporting a fire-related emergency;
17. **Gambling** - unlicensed raffles or lotteries, sports pools, personal or online betting activities, and/or any gambling activities prohibited by the laws of the State of Wisconsin;
18. **Harassment** - unwelcome conduct that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it substantially interferes with, limits or denies the ability of a person or persons to work, learn, live, or participate in, or benefit from services, activities, or opportunities provided by Western (See [E0709 Student Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy](#));
19. **Harm** - physical abuse, verbal abusive or other conduct that intentionally or recklessly causes injury or a reasonable expectation of injury to the physical or mental health or safety of another person(s);
20. **Hazing** - any act that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student, or that destroys or removes public or private property, for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or organization, including failing to intervene, discourage, or report such behavior, regardless of participation or cooperation of person(s) being hazed;
21. **Health and Safety** - participation in or creation of health and/or safety hazards such as, but not limited to, dangerous pranks; hanging out of or climbing from/on/in windows, balconies, roofs or walls; or reckless driving or using excessive speeds in College parking facilities;
22. **Misuse of Intellectual Property** - unapproved download, creation, sale, transfer, access, reproduction or distribution of trademarks or copyright materials, or use of Western Technical College name, images or logos without consent;

23. **Misuse of Technology** - unethical, inappropriate, or illegal use of computers, network or other technology systems (See [B0408 Computer and Telecommunications Usage Policy](#));
24. **Other Policies** - violating other published Western policies or rules, including, but not limited to, those specific to a particular program, department, or activity including all residence hall policies;
25. **Public Exposure** - deliberately exposing intimate parts of the body, urination, defecation, and or participating in sexual acts where the action may be readily observed by others;
26. **Retaliation** - any adverse action (whether physical, verbal or psychological) toward an individual or group who initiated or participated in the investigation of a complaint, civil rights grievance or other protected activity;
27. **Rioting** - causing, inciting or participating in any disturbance that presents a clear and present danger to self or others, causes physical harm to others, or damages and/or destroys property;
28. **Sex Offender Registry** - failure of any student to promptly self-report to the Dean of Students their status as a registrant on any sex offender registry;
29. **Sexual Misconduct** - sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, non-consensual sexual intercourse and/or sexual exploitation. Per Wisconsin law, consent is defined words or overt action by a person who is competent to give informed consent indicating a freely given agreement to have sexual intercourse or sexual contact (See [Sexual Assault/Sexual Violence](#) for more information and definitions);
30. **Stalking** - a course of unwelcome conduct, including harassment, intimidation, or surveillance, directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear or substantial emotional distress, such as but not limited to (See [Wisconsin Statute Definition](#)):
  1. Maintaining a visual or physical proximity to the victim;
  2. Approaching or confronting the victim;
  3. Trespassing;
  4. Repeated unwanted communication through any means including face-to-face, phone, texts, email, social media, unwanted gifts, etc.;
  5. Vandalism;
  6. Threatening or obscene gestures;
31. **Stolen Property** - knowingly taking or maintaining possession of stolen property;
32. **Theft** - taking or attempted taking of property, goods, services, funds or other valuables of Western Technical College or of personal property of any person;
33. **Threatening Behavior** -
  1. **Threat** - written or verbal conduct that causes a reasonable expectation of injury to the health or safety of any person, or damage to any property;

2. **Intimidation** - implied threats or acts that cause a reasonable fear of harm to any person;
34. **Tobacco** - use of tobacco products such as but not limited to cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes or vaping devices in buildings or vehicles owned or leased by Western, and in public spaces controlled by Western (See [F0400 Tobacco Free Environment Policy](#));
35. **Unauthorized Access/Use/Trespass** - unauthorized access to any Western building or unauthorized possession, duplication or use of keys or access cards to any Western facility or failing to timely report a lost Western access card or Western issued key; trespass on College property; or unauthorized use of Western property or facilities;
36. **Unauthorized Entry** - misuse of access privileges to Western premises or unauthorized entry to or use of buildings, including trespassing, propping or unauthorized use of alarmed doors for entry into or exit from a Western facility;
37. **Violations of Law** - any conduct or action that violates any local, state or federal laws, when substantiated through Western's conduct investigative process;
38. **Weapons** - use, concealment, manufacture, or possession of weapons, facsimile firearms, and/or potentially dangerous devices, whether functional or not, in Western owned or leased facilities or buildings; Western-owned vehicles; or at Western sponsored events held on public or private property off-campus (See [C0103 College Violence and Weapon Policy](#) );
39. **Wheeled Devices** - skateboards, inline skates, roller skates, bicycles and similar wheeled devices are not permitted inside Western controlled buildings or residence hall, and may not be ridden on railings, curbs, benches or any such fixtures on Western controlled properties;

### **Student Code of Conduct Process**

Due to not all situations being of the same severity or complexity, the following student conduct procedures are flexible and may not be exactly the same in every situation.

#### **Reporting Concerns:**

Any person may file a complaint against a student for an allegation of violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Reports may be made verbally or in writing, and should be made in a timely manner following the incident. Reports may be made to the Student Life Office (Room 100 in the Kumm Center), Security, or online via the campus reporting system ([Student Conduct Report](#)). Western reserves the right to initiate a student conduct investigation based on available information even without a formal complaint.

Once an incident is reported, the involved parties will be contacted by a campus administrator to set up an initial meeting. Complaints made verbally will be documented and recorded in writing at that time.

Complaints should include:

- Reporting party's name, address, and phone number;
- Name of the person who is alleged to have violated the Code;

- Date and location of alleged incident(s);
- A statement describing, in detail, the alleged incident(s)
- Name and contact information of any witnesses;

In exceptional circumstances, provisions may be made to protect the identity of reporters and witnesses upon request.

#### Initial Investigation and Informal Resolution:

Once a complaint has been received, the Dean of Students or designee will designate an administrator to conduct a preliminary inquiry into the nature of the incident or complaint, the information available, and the parties involved. The administrator may meet with and/or collect written statements from individuals involved including the report party, the respondent and any witnesses. The preliminary inquiry may result in a determination of:

- Closing the complaint without further action due to lack of or insufficient information to pursue the allegation, or the alleged behavior does not violate the Code.
- Proceeding with further investigation and/or referral for an informal or formal resolution process.

If the administrator finds the responding student is not responsible for violating the Code, the student will be found not in violation and the process will end.

If the administrator finds that the responding student is more likely than not in violation, and the responding student accepts this finding, the administrator will determine the sanction(s) for the misconduct. The responding student may accept or reject the sanctions. If accepted, the process ends. If the administrator finds that it is more likely than not the responding student is in violation, and the responding student rejects the finding and/or sanction(s) in whole or in part, the process moves to the Administrative Process.

#### Administrative Process:

The Dean of Students or designee will meet with the reporting party and the respondent separately to review the written complaint, collect or request all relevant information and documents, identify possible witnesses, and review any interim measures, if any. Based on the information collected, the Dean of Students will make the determination if there is sufficient cause found to suggest a conduct violation. If there is not sufficient cause, the Dean or designee will dismiss the allegation and the process will end. If the determination is sufficient cause is present, the Dean or designee will request the responding student participate in a mandatory administrative hearing or will refer the matter to the Student Conduct Hearing Panel.

The responding student will be informed in writing of the allegation(s) against them (including the specific Code alleged to have been violated), and the date, time and location of the required meeting with the Dean of Students or designee. The responding student shall have the right to review the allegation(s), to be given the opportunity to ask questions and present information on their behalf, to be provided the opportunity to admit the allegation(s) and accept responsibility or deny the allegation(s),

and to be informed of the process and possible sanctions that may result. Based upon all the information provided regarding the allegation, the Dean or designee will determine whether it is more likely than not that the student's behavior violated college policies. If the finding is that the responding student is not responsible for violating the Code, the process will end and the finding of not in violation will be documented.

If the finding is the responding student is in violation of the Code, and Dean or designee will impose the appropriate sanction(s) for the misconduct. The responding student will be notified in writing of the decision, any imposed sanctions, and the appeal process with three (3) business days.

If the respondent does not agree with the outcome of the administrative hearing, the student has the right to appeal the decision within three (3) business days of receipt of the decision letter. Delivery is considered to be confirmed when it is sent to the designated student email address.

The appeal must be in writing to the Vice President for Student Service and Engagement or designee. The appeal must outline the reason(s) for the request for a review of the administrative process. Appeals can be made on the grounds of: sanction(s) that is substantially disproportionate to the severity of the violation; failure to follow written student conduct procedures; significant error or omission that could impact the finding and/or sanction outcome; new information unavailable at the time of the administrative meeting that could impact the finding and/or sanction outcome; or evidence of bias by the administrative hearing officer.

If the appeal is not received by the deadline or does not satisfy the grounds for appeal, the original finding and sanction(s) will stand and the decision will be final. If the appeal has standing, the Vice President or designee will make the determination if the appeal is granted or denied, and why. The Vice President or designee will notify the appealing party of the decision within ten (10) business days to the student email address of record, and the decision will be final.

#### Student Code of Conduct Hearing Process:

For complaints in which the health and safety of any members of the Western community are in question, significant issues of high complexity exist, or in which the possible sanctions for the alleged offense could result in suspension or expulsion, the Dean of Students or designee may refer the complaint to the Student Code of Conduct Hearing panel.

The responding student shall be notified in writing of the place, time and date of the conduct hearing to review the allegations. The student shall receive said notification by mail, student email, or personal delivery.

The conduct hearing committee will be assembled by the Dean of Students or designee, and will be composed of an academic dean and two Western staff or faculty members who have no previous knowledge of the allegation(s). Hearing panel members will be chosen from a pool members trained annually by the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students or designee will appoint a non-voting chair of the hearing panel to ensure procedures are followed through the hearing.

The hearing shall commence no less than 48 hours nor more than seven (7) calendar days from the date the responding student receives the above notice. Delivery is considered to be confirmed when it is sent to the designated student email address. Formal rules, such as applied in civil or criminal courts, are not

utilized in conduct hearings. The hearing shall commence at the notified date and time whether or not the responding student is present, and a decision will be made by in absentia. Responding students failing to attend the hearing forfeit their right to present information on their behalf, to ask questions of persons presenting information, and to appeal the outcome.

At the hearing before the panel, the responding student shall have the right to present a statement on their behalf, call witnesses, and to ask questions of any person presenting information at the hearing. If the presenter is uncomfortable with direct questioning, all questions will proceed through the hearing chair. The responding student has the right to be represented in an advisory capacity by legal counsel, if the student chooses. Advisory capacity is defined as the ability to provide advice directly to the student only, and not advocate on behalf of the student to the conduct panel or any persons presenting information. Responding students who choose to be represented by legal counsel are responsible for retaining their own counsel, as well as informing the College in a timely manner about their intent to bring counsel to the hearing. Should a student fail to notify the College in a timely manner, defined as at least two (2) business days prior to the hearing, the College reserves the right to postpone the hearing for up to seven (7) calendar days so that arrangements can be made for legal representation of the College to be present. An advocate, other than legal counsel, (for responding student and/or reporting party) with nonspeaking participation shall be allowed for support. The hearing will be closed to all members of the campus and outside communities except for those directly involved with the complaint. All information presented at the hearing is considered private and subject to FERPA regulations. An audio recording of the hearing will be made to ensure accurate information should the outcome be appealed.

In hearings involving allegations of sexual assault, interpersonal violence or stalking, the reporting party is entitled to the same supports and rights as the responding student.

Based upon all the information provided regarding the allegation, the hearing panel will determine whether it is more likely than not that the student's behavior violated college policies. If it is determined that a violation did occur, the panel will decide as to what, if any, sanctions, suspensions and/or dismissals should be imposed. The panel will issue a written statement to the student informing them of the decision. In hearings regarding sexual assault, interpersonal violence or stalking, the decision will be delivered to both the reporting party and the responding student simultaneously. Student conduct outcomes shall not be changed if any pending related criminal charges are dismissed or altered.

A student shall not be suspended or dismissed prior to the written statement of the panel except by order of one of the Vice Presidents of the College or designee. Immediate suspension, pending the hearing, may be authorized for the safety of the student or for the protection of other students, faculty, staff or college property.

No appeal shall be permitted unless specific allegations are set forth in the appeal alleging a lack of due process or other specific error or omission that could significantly alter the outcome or findings. The appeal is limited to issues related to: sanction(s) that is substantially disproportionate to the severity of the violation; failure to follow written student conduct procedures; significant error or omission that could impact the finding and/or sanction outcome; new information unavailable at the time of the hearing that could impact the finding and/or sanction outcome; or evidence of bias by the any member of the hearing panel. The appealing party may request access to review the recording prior to submitting the written appeal.

The appealing party shall file with the Office of the President a written appeal, setting forth with specificity the grounds on which the appeal is based. The written appeal shall bear the original signature of the appealing party and shall be filed with the Office of the President within ten (10) calendar days of the date the written decision was delivered. Delivery is considered to be confirmed when it is sent to the designated student email address. Appeals received after the appeal deadline will not be considered and the decision and any sanction will stand. In appeals regarding sexual assault, interpersonal violence or stalking, both the reporting party and the responding student shall be informed about the process and outcome of the appeal.

The President or designee shall decide the appeal no later than thirty (30) days after the appeal has been filed with the Office of the President. The President or designee will conduct an initial review to determine if the appeal meets the grounds for appeal.

If the appeal does not meet the grounds for appeal standard, the original finding and sanction will stand, and the decision will be final. If the appeal has standing, the President or designee determines whether to refer the appeal to an Appeals Panel or to remand it to the original hearing panel within five (5) business days. If the referral is made to the Appeals Panel, the President or designee will coordinate with the Dean of Students to select Panel members from the hearing panel pool. Appeal Panel members for consideration must not have served on the original hearing panel or been involved in any aspect of the incident investigation, and must be properly trained in appeals procedures.

The President or designee will provide clear instructions for consideration based solely on the granted appeal grounds, and will not be a full re-hearing of the incident. On reconsideration, the Appeals Panel or original decision-maker may affirm or change the findings and/or sanctions of the original hearing according to the permissible grounds. All decisions by the Appeal Panel or original decision-makers shall be made within five (5) business days of submission to the appeal body, and are final.

### **Sanctions:**

The following sanctions may be imposed upon any student or student organization found responsible for any violation of the Student Code of Conduct. More than one sanction may be imposed for any single Code violation:

1. Warning – an official written notice stating the responding party has violated Western policies and/or rules, and that more severe conduct action will result should the person or organization be involved in other violations while enrolled at Western;
2. Non-academic Probation – a designated period of time in which the respondent is not considered in good standing with the College, and subsequent policy violations may result in more severe student conduct actions, up to an including suspension or expulsion from Western. Additional restrictions on membership in organizations or activities may apply for those on probationary status;
3. Restriction – revocation or restriction of privileges of participation in activities or use of some but not all Western facilities for a specified period of time. The parameters of the restriction will be outlined in the student conduct decision;

4. Restitution – compensation for the loss, damage, or injury caused by the respondent which may take the form of appropriate service, monetary compensation, or material replacement. This is not a fine but, rather, a repayment for labor costs and/or value of property destroyed, damaged, consumed or stolen;
5. Community Service – completion of a specified number of hours of service to a specific Western service or approved community partner;
6. Fines – reasonable fines may be imposed;
7. Behavioral Requirement – formal written agreement regarding behavior and/or interventions;
8. Administrative Referral – a mandatory referral to another campus office/department or off campus resource to address concerns regarding a particular behavior or need and /or assessments;
9. Confiscation of Prohibited Property – items whose possession or presence is a violation of College or residence hall policies may be confiscated. Prohibited items may be returned to the owner at the discretion of the Dean of Students or Student Life Coordinator.
10. Educational Program – requirement to attend, present and/or participate in a program or activity related to the violation;
11. Residence Hall Probation – a designated period of time in which a student that is housed in the Western Residence Hall is considered not in good standing and subsequent policy violations may result in more severe sanctions, up to and including cancellation of housing contract;
12. Housing Reassignment – reassignment to another space within the residence hall;
13. Residence Hall Suspension – removal from Western Residence Hall for a specified period of time after which the student is eligible to return. Conditions for re-admission may be specified and may include restrictions;
14. Cancellation of Housing Contract – permanent removal from Western Residence Hall. This sanction may include a trespass action;
15. Suspension from College – separation from Western for a specified minimum period of time, after which the student is eligible to return. Eligibility may be contingent upon satisfactory completion of specific conditions noted at the time of suspension. This sanction may be enforced with a trespass and/or no contact action;

16. Expulsion – permanent separation from Western Technical College. Respondent is banned from College property and is prohibited from attending any College sponsored activity or event. This sanction may be enforced with a trespass and/or no contact action;
17. Eligibility Restriction - student is deemed "not in good standing" with the College for a specified period of time. The Dean of Students may grant specific limitations or exceptions. Terms of this conduct sanction may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  1. Ineligibility to hold any office in any student organization recognized by Western or hold an elected or appointed office at Western Technical College; or
  2. Ineligibility to represent Western to anyone outside the College community in any way including: participating in the study abroad program, attending conferences, or representing Western at an official function, event or intercollegiate competition as a player, manager or student coach, etc.
18. Other Sanctions - additional or alternate sanctions may be created and designed as deemed appropriate to the offense with the approval of the Dean of Students or designee.

Parental Notification:

Western reserves the right to notify parents or guardians of students when the students have committed serious or repeated violations of College polices, local, state and/or federal laws related to the drug and alcohol codes of conduct. Parental notification may be utilized discretionarily by administrators when permitted by FERPA or consent of the student.

Notification of Outcomes:

Outcomes of any student conduct action is part of the educational record of the responding party and is protected from release under FERPA, except under certain conditions. As allowed by FERPA, Western will inform the impacted party in writing of the results of any action involving allegations that constitute a "crime of violence" or sexual misconduct. Such notifications may include the name of the responding student, the violation committed, and the sanction(s) assigned (if applicable).

The Student Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure is adapted from the NCHERM Group Model Developmental Code of Student Conduct and is used here with permission.

Reference Policy: [E0700 Student Code of Conduct](#)

## Thriving...Not Just Surviving

Making the decision to enter the Physical Therapist Assistant Program took thought and consideration. Many of you waited years for your opportunity to enter the program. The next two years will be filled with challenges, laughter, tears, new friends, stress, and feelings of accomplishment. Our hope is that years from now you will look back at your experience at Western and realize that these were some of the best years of your life.

Our experience has shown that you are more likely to succeed if you:

- ◆ **Remain open to new experiences.** College courses, if done right, will challenge you to expand your horizons.
- ◆ **Have a positive attitude.** It's been proven that the ability to learn is improved with a positive attitude. Having a positive attitude will make it easier for you and your peers/instructors to work together.
- ◆ **Practice good time management.** Get in the habit of using your time wisely and efficiently. Waiting until the night before the test to study is a good way to fail an exam. You will be asked to do many papers and projects during your two-years...take the time to plan and complete the work. The PT skills that you learn will require practice to gain a level of proficiency sufficient to treat patients. Work to balance your time, school, work, and family commitments. Make time to relax too! You are more likely to retain the information you are learning if your stress level is lower.
- ◆ **As best you can, keep stress to a minimum.** Eat...get adequate sleep...take time to do things you enjoy...practice relaxation skills.... practice good time management. Have a support system in place and don't forget about exercising. The Wellness Center is available for student use...or even a walk around the block is helpful.
- ◆ **Study Wisely.** Identify your learning style. Choose your study partners carefully (just because you really like your classmates doesn't mean you are compatible study partners). If your studying doesn't seem to be paying off...be willing to seek assistance of others (faculty/academic success center) for ideas of changes to make.
- ◆ **Take ownership for your behavior and performance.** It is our job as faculty to provide information to you and guide you in the application of the new information. How you choose to receive, study, and practice with the information will be totally up to you. As faculty, we won't take responsibility for the grade you get...but will take responsibility for assisting you in any way we can...provided you are open and responsive.
- ◆ **Communicate.** The more the better. As instructors, we'll strive to let you know what is expected in the course. You should know how you are doing in the course at all times. If you aren't sure...ask! Share information that you think is relevant with instructors.
- ◆ **Seek help before it is too late!** The time to seek help is **before you reach the crisis mode.** Many people on campus are committed to assisting you in successfully completing the program. Use the Learning Commons and remember that counselors are available free of charge for assistance with personal issues. Don't be afraid to seek help!