

**Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education**  
**American Physical Therapy Association**  
**SUMMARY OF ACTION**

Doctor of Physical Therapy Program  
Colorado Mesa University  
1100 North Avenue  
Grand Junction, CO 81501

On April 25, 2023, the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education made the following decision regarding the physical therapy education program at Colorado Mesa University.

**Action Taken:** Grant **CANDIDATE FOR ACCREDITATION**

**Effective Date:** April 25, 2023

**Information Used to Make Decisions:** Application for Candidacy  
Candidacy Visit Report with Institution Response  
Comments from the Program Director  
Comments from the Candidacy Reviewer  
Additional Materials

**Reason for Decision:** The Commission's decision to grant Candidate for Accreditation status is based on the program's demonstration of satisfactory progress, to date, toward achieving compliance with the standards and required elements. The Commission's decision was also based on the belief that the program will bring the areas of deficiency noted in the Summary of Action into compliance.

At this time, the program was judged as not demonstrating satisfactory progress toward compliance with the following elements: **1C4**, and **6G**.

Further, compliance with **all** of the standards and required elements must be appropriately documented in the Self-study Report.

Candidate for Accreditation status has been granted based on the program represented in the Application for Candidacy. Specifically, the decision was made in light of the following information:

One cohort of students per year (per §7.3(b) of CAPTE's *Rules of Practice and Procedure*)

Maximum Number of Students for each Cohort until eligible to seek approval of a substantive change: **24**

Intended Matriculation Date: **August 21, 2023**

Therefore, it is expected that the program will be implemented as guided through this Summary of Action and that no substantive changes will be made. This includes no changes in original cohort size

and that only one cohort will be admitted per year until the program is eligible to seek approval of substantive changes.

**Next Activity:** Progress Report due September 1, 2023

**Accreditation Decision:** Spring 2026 (based on expected graduation May 2026)

## **NOTICES**

### **SCOPE OF COMMISSION REVIEW**

Independent of any long-term plans described, or alluded to, by the program in its Application for Candidacy, the scope of the Commission's review at the time of this decision to grant candidacy was based on actual and verified resources and related considerations, and not on planned or projected program resource levels to address future program changes (e.g., expansion and other program offerings, the number of cohorts admitted annually, etc.). As agreed to when the Application for Candidacy was submitted, the program is limited to enrolling one cohort annually and to maintaining class size at the approved number for the original cohort. Candidate programs are not eligible for substantive changes requiring pre-approval as described in Part 9 of CAPTE Rules of Practice and Procedure.

### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CANDIDACY AND ACCREDITATION**

Achieving Candidate for Accreditation status does not assure the program will become accredited. The Commission's decision to grant accreditation will be based on the program's ability to demonstrate compliance with the standards and required elements. The lack of comment about a specific required element in this Summary of Action does not imply that the program is in compliance with that required element; it only means that satisfactory progress toward compliance has been achieved. Therefore, the step the program must make from demonstrating progress toward compliance with the specific elements addressed in the expectations for candidacy and demonstrating compliance with all of the elements for accreditation is a significant one with programs needing to demonstrate compliance at the time of consideration for accreditation.

### **REQUIRED STATEMENT DESCRIBING THE PROGRAM'S STATUS**

The institution/program is expected to indicate on its website, in its publications, or in correspondence related to recruitment or admissions that Candidacy status has been granted, using the statement provided in §7.22 of CAPTE's *Rules*.

Effective (insert date), (insert Name of Program/Institution) has been granted Candidate for Accreditation status by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085; phone: 703-706-3245; email: [accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org)). If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call [INSERT Direct Program Phone Number] or email [INSERT Direct Program Email Address].

Candidate for Accreditation is an accreditation status of affiliation with the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education that indicates the program may matriculate students in technical/professional courses. Achievement of Candidate for Accreditation status does not assure that the program will be granted Initial Accreditation.

### **IMPLICATIONS OF SUMMER GRADUATION**

If the program plans for the charter class to graduate in July, August or September, the program is required to include information regarding the implications of a summer graduation relative to the timing of graduation and the ability to sit for the licensure exam. The statement provided in §7.8(d)(2)(vi) of CAPTE's *Rules* is to be used for this purpose.

#### **IMPLICATIONS OF [JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER] GRADUATION**

The developing [physical therapy/physical therapist assistant] program at [Institution] is planning for a charter class graduation in [July/August/September], [year]. Initial accreditation decisions are acted upon at the next regularly scheduled Fall Meeting of the Commission following the on-site visit, which must occur during the penultimate term when the charter class is enrolled. CAPTE will not make exceptions to its Rules to accommodate graduation dates that precede regularly scheduled CAPTE meeting dates, e.g., graduation in the summer. A summer graduation does not allow the initial accreditation decision to occur prior to the graduation date. The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) sets the dates for licensing exams. The first sitting for which students with [an/a] [July/August/September] graduation date would be in January. Therefore, the timing of the planned graduation date increases the likelihood of a significant financial disadvantage for students due to an approximate six-month delay in possible employment as a [physical therapist or physical therapist assistant].

### **ACCURATE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF THIS DECISION BY THE INSTITUTION**

The institution and program must make accurate public disclosure of the accreditation or pre-accreditation status awarded to the program. Further, the United States Department of Education (USDE) requires all recognized accrediting agencies to provide for the public correction of incorrect or misleading information an institution or program releases about accreditation or pre-accreditation status, contents of reports of on-site reviews, and accreditation or pre-accreditation actions with respect to the institution or

program [34 CFR 602.23(d) and 602.23(e)]. If the institution or program chooses to disclose any additional information, beyond the accreditation or pre-accreditation status that is within the scope of the USDE rule, such disclosure also must be accurate. Any public disclosure of information within the scope of the rule must include the agency's street address, email address and phone number: Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085; [accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org); (703) 684-2782 or (703) 706-3245. If the Accreditation staff finds that an institution or program has released incorrect or misleading information within the scope of the USDE rule, then, acting on behalf of CAPTE the Accreditation staff will make public correction, and reserves the right to disclose this Summary of Action in its entirety for that purpose.

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE OF DECISIONS BY CAPTE**

Following all decisions, including decisions to place a program on warning, probation or show cause, or to deny candidacy, withdraw candidacy, withhold accreditation, or withdraw accreditation, the Accreditation staff will, within 24 hours of the official notification of the programs and institutions of the decisions, provide notice to the public by placing notice of the decisions on its web site.

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE OF REASONS FOR DECISIONS**

Pursuant to expectations of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, CAPTE provides public notice of the reasons for its decisions to grant candidacy or grant or reaffirm accreditation. These notices are in addition to the notices of reasons for probation and for final adverse actions as required by the US Department of Education. The front page of this Summary of Action will be used for this purpose.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT CHANGE(S)**

The institution and program are responsible for notifying CAPTE of all reportable changes in the program prior to implementation. Unexpected changes are to be reported immediately after they occur. Reportable changes, some of which may require pre-approval, are described in Part 9 of CAPTE's *Rules of Practice and Procedure* (<https://www.capteonline.org/about-capte/policies-and-procedures/accreditation-handbook/rules-of-practice-and-procedure>). **It is the program's responsibility to be familiar with these expectations and to provide notification of program changes as required.**

### **Commission's Findings and Reasons for Decision:**

**The Commission judged the program to be Emerging in the following elements. Emerging indicates that the program's progress toward the expectations for Candidacy for the element is becoming apparent or prominent. The program has policies, processes, and procedures in place that reasonably infer the program is demonstrating progress towards meeting the expectations of full compliance with Candidacy.** These issues **MUST** be addressed during the implementation of the program. All accreditation reports, including Progress Reports, Annual Accreditation Reports, and Self-Study Reports must include a description of how the program is in compliance with each specific element. **Failure to continue developing the program in general or addressing these specific issues will put the program's achievement of initial accreditation in jeopardy.**

**1. 1C4 Students demonstrate entry-level clinical performance during clinical education experiences prior to graduation.**

The program stated in the Application for Candidacy (AFC), the Candidacy Visit Report with Institution Response (CVRIR), and the final rotation's course syllabus that it requires 15 of 18 items on the CPI to be rated entry-level for the student to pass that course and to graduate. The program explained this standard is necessary because entry-level can be challenging to complete in specialty practice settings due to the specialist nature. The Commission would like to remind the program that entry-level clinical performance is for generalist physical therapist practice, not specialty practice.

The program also stated in the AFC and CVRIR that the director of clinical education (DCE) may read CPI comments and look at the CPI ratings from prior clinical experiences to determine if a student is at entry-level. The Commission acknowledges that this meets the expectations for element 5E.

What remains unclear to the Commission is how this process works to ensure that the student is determined, by the clinical instructor (CI) or the DCE, on the CPI to have achieved 18 of 18 entry-level ratings. What also remains unclear to the Commission is that the students receive, via the syllabus, the same expectation of achieving entry-level on 18 of 18 CPI criteria, whether determined by the CI or DCE.

In the Progress Report, describe the formal process that will be used to ensure that each student achieves entry-level clinical performance during clinical education experiences prior to graduation.

### **INSTITUTION RESPONSE:**

The program would like to thank the Commission for clarification regarding evaluating student performance while on specialty rotations which are often completed on the last (i.e. terminal) rotation. In light of this clarification, we strongly agree that students must attain a rating of 'Entry-Level' (EL) on all (currently 18) criteria on the CPI (version 2). The program will transition to the CPI 3.0 and will expect students achieve EL on all criteria for their terminal rotation.

Prior to using the CPI, Clinical Instructors (CIs) will complete the APTA web-based training for the CPI. The CI will be reminded that sources of information to complete the CPI may include but are not limited to the CI themselves (direct observation), other physical therapists, physical therapy assistants, other professionals, patients/clients and students.

Entry-Level performance will be defined using the operational definitions provided within the CPI.

Specifically, the rating of EL will be defined as the student:

- 1) Is capable of functioning without guidance or clinical supervision managing patients with simple or complex conditions;
- 2) Is consistently proficient and skilled in simple and complex tasks for skilled examinations, interventions and clinical reasoning;
- 3) Consults with others and resolves unfamiliar or ambiguous situations and
- 4) Is capable of maintaining 100% of a full-time physical therapist's caseload in a cost-effective manner.

To promote clarity regarding the operational definition of EL, this definition as well as the requirement of attaining EL on 18/18 performance criteria is evident on the PHYT 793 Clinical Education IV syllabus.

Also consistent with instructions in the CPI, the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) will be the individual who formally assigns the grade of Pass ('P') or Fail ('F') for each of the clinical rotations. To make this determination, the DCE may include clinical performance evaluations of students, classroom performance evaluations, student's self-assessments, peer assessments and patient assessments. Likewise, this verbiage has been added to each of the Clinical Education syllabi for clarity and highlighted for ease of identification.

As previously noted in the AFC narrative for 1C4, prior to graduation as part of the course, 'PHYT 693 – Capstone II' which occurs concurrently with 'PHYT 793 – Clinical Education IV', all students will be required to achieve a minimum score of 600 on the Practice Exam & Assessment Tool (PEAT)\*. Should a student not achieve the minimum score, the student will be asked to introspectively analyze in what domain(s) they experienced challenges and develop a written plan to address identified weaknesses (PEAT remediation form). After this critical reflection is completed, the student will meet with their physical therapy faculty advisor to share and discuss their plan. Additional remediation if necessary, will be determined and completed at this juncture. Once the faculty member is satisfied the student has addressed the identified deficits, the student will attempt another version of the PEAT. This process will be repeated until the student obtains a minimum score of 600 on the PEAT.

\*The program director has unpublished data (n = 183) from his prior institution that indicated performance on the PEAT (Test Form 'A') was one of two variables which significantly predicted a passing score on the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE).

**2. 6G The curriculum plan includes course syllabi that are comprehensive and inclusive of all CAPTE expectations.**

In the Candidacy Visit Report with Institution Response, the program stated that updates to the syllabi submitted with the Application for Candidacy were made upon the feedback from the on-site review team. Updates were made to include contact hours, a prerequisite statement, a third-attempt failure statement, and a statement concerning academic probation.

In the Progress Report, provide all updated syllabi with all changes highlighted for ease of review.

**INSTITUTION RESPONSE:**

Updated syllabi with all changes highlighted for ease of review are included in the Appendix. The document (appendix) has been bookmarked to facilitate navigation.