



**RURAL HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM (RHOP)
PROGRAM STANDARDS for the PHYSICAL THERAPIST OPTION**
Participants and Alternates

PHILOSOPHY

The Physical Therapist Option in the Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP) is a cooperative program between Chadron State College (CSC), Peru State College (PSC), Wayne State College (WSC) and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) Physical Therapy (PT) Program. The purpose of the program is to recruit and educate individuals from rural areas of Nebraska who will return to underserved rural areas of the state to practice as physical therapists. The program represents a commitment and dedication to the education of Nebraskans and quality health care for the citizens of the state.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE RHOP PHYSICAL THERAPIST OPTION

The program has two required phases. The first phase is a specifically designed curriculum at the undergraduate level with the goal of preparing students for the UNMC PT Program. It is a four year curriculum and requires obtaining a bachelor's degree. This phase of the program is designated as the "undergraduate phase."

The second phase of the program is the completion of the professional PT program at UNMC. This phase of the program is designated as the "UNMC professional phase." During the clinical education portion of this professional phase, students will be required to complete most of their clinical education in rural areas.

An individual choosing the PT Option is expected to be dedicated to a career in rural medicine, be fully informed as to the role of the physical therapist as a rural health care provider, be highly motivated toward academic achievement and professional competence, and be committed to returning to rural Nebraska to practice. The strategy set forth in these standards is to ensure that students in the RHOP PT Option progress in their professional development during four years of undergraduate education in order to maximize their potential to practice physical therapy consistent with the vision of the entire profession.

COURSE WORK

1. Each participant and alternate (hereafter referred to collectively as "students") must complete the required coursework to earn a bachelor's degree. The current course prerequisites are listed under the general track on the admissions website for UNMC Physical Therapy Education.

2. Students will be required to complete the designated course of study to culminate in a bachelor's degree in four academic years. Any exception to this time schedule must be approved by both the undergraduate Physical Therapy (PT) Option Academic Advisor and the Chair of the UNMC PT RHOP Committee.
3. Students must obtain approval from the undergraduate PT Option Academic Advisor before registering for or dropping any class.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

To remain in good standing and continue in the undergraduate phase of the RHOP PT Option, the following Academic Standards will apply:

1. Students must earn a "C-" or better in the **required courses** (see Division website for current prerequisites).
2. Students must maintain a **cumulative grade point average (GPA) and a semester GPA of 3.0 or higher.**

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Academic probation is recommended and communicated by the designated State College Mentor at the NSC institution responsible for monitoring student performance. The PT Option State College Health Professions Director, in consultation with the Chair of the UNMC PT RHOP Committee, will determine what the student must do to improve their academic performance to be removed from RHOP academic probation. The student will be placed on academic probation if the:

1. Student earns less than a "C-" in any course. The course must be retaken and the student will be placed on RHOP academic probation the following semester.
2. Student does not maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher or a semester GPA of 3.0 or higher.
3. Student withdraws from one or more classes which results in dropping below the required full-time academic enrollment status (defined as 12 credit hours per semester)
4. Student withdraws from all classes without prior approval of the PT Option State College Mentor and the Chair of the UNMC PT RHOP Committee.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal from RHOP constitutes formal action by the UNMC PT RHOP Committee in consultation with the NSC institution. The student will be dismissed from the RHOP Program if the:

1. Student does not comply with the terms of an academic probation.
2. Student does not complete all of the recommendations for improving academic performance.
3. Student does not obtain a grade of "C-" or better in a required course that has been retaken.
4. Student does not raise their cumulative GPA to 3.0 or higher after one semester of remediation.
5. Student does not satisfactorily complete the NSC phase coursework as defined by the academic standards for good standing.
6. Student does not satisfactorily complete the professional development requirements.

Immediate dismissal from RHOP may result from illegal or unprofessional behavior. A copy of the dismissal notice and terms provided to the student by the NSC institution will be shared with the Chair of the PT RHOP Committee.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THE NSC PHASE

A student who chooses the RHOP PT Option is expected to be dedicated to a career in rural practice. To enhance their understanding and knowledge of the field, students are expected to do the following:

1. Write a journal chronicling the professional development activities and perceptions at the end of each semester. The journals must be submitted electronically to the PT Option State College Health Professions Director and the UNMC PT RHOP Committee at the end of each semester. The journal serves as a record of the students' shadowing and other activities that enhance their professional development.
2. Shadow physical therapists. Some of the shadowing experiences must be in rural Nebraska so the student develops significant knowledge of physical therapy practice in rural Nebraska.
3. Attend required events conducted by UNMC for RHOP participants.
4. Visit UNMC at the Omaha or Kearney campus during the regularly scheduled RHOP trips at the designated times.
5. Visit, work, or volunteer to help with patient care in hospitals, clinics, or nursing homes.
6. Participate in on-campus activities that enhance their ability to interact with people. This would include the meetings with the RHOP clinical mentor and other health care providers, participation in RHOP events at the undergraduate level, the health professions club and such things as student government organizations. Off-campus activities are also encouraged.
7. Write a reflection paper summarizing their professional development and submit this as part of the application materials for admission to the UNMC Professional Program.
8. Each RHOP student should return to their high school at least once during their studies at CSC to promote RHOP.

PERSONAL BEHAVIOR REQUIREMENTS

Students must exhibit professional and personal behaviors that reflect positively on them, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and the undergraduate institution. The students must remember that this includes summers and vacations. The students in RHOP are expected to comply with all campus standards of behavior as described in the undergraduate student handbook, as well as RHOP standards which **include attending classes as scheduled, promptness, exhibiting respect towards fellow students and faculty, displaying initiative and leadership skills**. They are also expected to obey all laws and thus, avoid having any criminal charges brought against them. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disciplinary action including dismissal from RHOP. The students must also remember that drug and alcohol offenses, felony convictions, etc. can prevent them from getting a license to practice their profession.

ENTRANCE OF PARTICIPANTS INTO THE PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

While successful completion of the requirements for the NSC phase of the PT option will normally guarantee admission to the UNMC professional phase of the program, students must demonstrate their successful completion by means of a formal application and

interview process during the final year. Prior to matriculation into the professional phase, the student must:

1. Meet all academic and professional development standards and personal behavior requirements according to the RHOP Agreement and Standards.
2. Complete an application through the Physical Therapist Central Application Service (PTCAS) by the designated deadlines of the senior year.
3. Complete the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) no later than September 1 of the senior year and designate the scores to be reported to UNMC. RHOP students are expected to score within a competitive range that is comparable to other applicants.
4. Complete an on-campus interview with the UNMC Physical Therapy Education Admissions Committee to evaluate the student's readiness for professional study at UNMC.
5. Submit a reflection paper before the interview summarizing his/her professional development that has been chronicled in the journals.

Students failing to demonstrate adequate professional development, in the judgment of the UNMC Physical Therapy Education Admissions Committee, will be denied admission to the Professional Program.

ALTERNATE TRANSITION TO PARTICIPANT STATUS

In the event that any of the candidates selected as participants in this class and in this option decide not to accept a position, withdraw after entering the program, or are dismissed from the program, the RHOP admissions interview team from UNMC and the undergraduate institution may select a replacement from among the alternates in that class. Academic accomplishments, progress within the curriculum, and participation in professional development activities as described in the Program Standards will be considered in the selection of an alternate to fill each vacancy. A second interview may be requested.

RESIGNATION PROCEDURE

Should a participant or alternate choose to resign their position in RHOP, a formal letter of resignation must be filed with the PT Option Academic Advisor and the undergraduate RHOP Program Director as well as the professional program at UNMC.

