

Faculty Health Sciences & Medicine

Doctor of Physiotherapy (DPhty) Program

Code of Conduct

2012



Mission

The mission of the Doctor of Physiotherapy (DPhty) Program is to produce work-ready graduates who strive for clinical and research excellence that is underpinned by strong ethical and professional attributes.

Vision Statement

The DPhty Program will prepare graduates to be caring, reflective and evidence based practitioners with an ability to provide client-centred, effective and efficient health care; to be collaborators and work with other health professionals; to be researchers, to be advocates and to be leaders and innovators who serve the public and their profession within local, national and international communities.

Introduction

The information set out in this document has considered the Bond University Code of Conduct, the Medical School Charter and been informed by the Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) Code of Conduct (APA Code of Conduct, September 2008) and the current consultation paper on codes and guidelines for Registered Health Practitioners that has been circulated for consultation by the Physiotherapy Board of Australia (AHPRA, 2010).

The Doctor of Physiotherapy Program recognises that practice as a physiotherapist is underpinned by knowledge, skills and professional behaviours and attitudes. Physiotherapists provide a holistic approach to patient care, with prevention, diagnosis and therapeutic management of conditions directed towards minimising impairments and improving functional movement so that people are able to effectively participate in home, work, educational & recreational environments. Physiotherapists embrace ethical and professional standards that meet community expectations and justify the trust that individuals place in professionals. The Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) has set out a Code of Conduct to assist and support registered health practitioners to deliver effective health services within an ethical framework (p1, The Code of Conduct for Registered Health Practitioners, 2010). There is a clear expectation from the profession that physiotherapy students need to develop an awareness of, adopt and model professional behaviours and attitudes in all clinical settings across their period of training. Physiotherapy students are also required to register and function within a legal framework for practice.

The purpose of this document is to establish the professional behaviours and attitudes that will need to be embraced by physiotherapy students enrolled in the DPhty Program at Bond University. The Doctor of Physiotherapy (DPhty) Program has adopted a Problem Based Learning (PBL) model of education with both the PBL tutorial setting and the skill acquisition (resource) sessions affording staff regular forums in which appropriate professional attitudes and behaviours can be fostered. It is the expectation that professional behaviours and attitudes are adopted and in evidence at all times. 'Being' a physiotherapy student (and subsequently a physiotherapist) is frequently challenging but the professional behaviours and attitudes are essential to embrace, so that you are able to effectively model these behaviours and attributes when you practice as a physiotherapy student in multiple hospital and community clinical settings across the DPhty Program. The expectations of behaviours and attributes will remain consistent across the DPhty Program as well as following graduation, when you will practice as a physiotherapist with first contact practitioner status.

1. The APA Code of Conduct

The APA Code of Conduct provides us with the framework within which we practice and “establishes the basis for ethical and professional conduct which meets community expectations and justifies community trust in the standing, judgement and integrity of APA members” (p1 APA Code of Conduct, Sept 2008). The APA Code of Conduct is reviewed on a regular basis in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including consumer bodies. The current consultation paper on codes and guidelines is thus pertinent to review as this document has been ratified and informs the basis by which your professional practice, behaviours and attitudes will be benchmarked. The revised document is in line with the National Registration of Physiotherapists (1st July 2010) and the compulsory registration of physiotherapy students prior to undertaking clinical experiential learnings as part of the Doctor of Physiotherapy Program. Prior to registering you as a physiotherapy student we need to develop your awareness of the Code of Conduct required by professionals and assist you to inculcate these professional behaviours and attitudes.

There are several ethical principles that underpin the APA Code of Conduct:

- Respect the rights and autonomy of the individual
- Cause no harm
- Advance the common good
- Act fairly

Within the Code of Conduct approved in September, 2008, there are nine (9) principles of the Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) Code of Conduct that members of the APA are required to uphold (APA Code of Conduct, 2008). APA members must:

- Respect the rights, needs and dignity of all individuals
- Comply with the laws and regulations governing the practice of physiotherapy in Australia
- Practice in a safe, competent and accountable manner
- Strive for standards of excellence in physiotherapy
- Respect confidentiality, privacy and security of client information
- Communicate and co-operate with colleagues and relevant agencies in the best interests of their clients and the wider community
- Act in a manner which maintains the good standing of the physiotherapy profession
- Strive to contribute to the development and implementation of health service delivery which embraces the health status of the community and promotes social justice, and
- Comply with the Constitution and Regulations of the APA.

The revised Code seeks to assist and support registered health practitioners - including physiotherapy students – to deliver effective health services within an ethical framework (p2, The Code 2010). The Code summarises the principles that characterise good physiotherapy care and makes explicit the standards of ethical and professional conduct expected of physiotherapists, by the peer group and the community. Physiotherapists have a duty to make the care of patients / clients their primary concern as well as to practice safely and effectively. Maintaining a high level of professional competence and conduct is essential for good care.

The consultation paper on the Code of Conduct clarifies the standards for practitioner behaviour in relation to:

- Providing good care, including shared decision making with clients
- Working in partnership with patients and clients and gaining their consent for management
- Working with other practitioners
- Working within the health care system
- Minimising risk through effective risk management (assessment, treatment, implementation, evaluation)
- Maintaining professional performance
- Professional behaviour and ethical conduct
- Ensuring practitioner health
- Teaching, supervising and assessing

You are required to read, be familiar with and embrace the professional code of conduct for physiotherapy health professionals. The two documents (The APA Code of Conduct, September 2008; Consultation paper on Code of Conduct, Physiotherapy Board of Australia, 2010) have been uploaded on iLearn @ Bond in the Subject - Principles of Physiotherapy.

2. Application of the APA Code of Conduct to the Learning Environment of the DPHTY Program

While knowledge and skills can be progressively developed in different subjects across the DPhty Program, there is a common set of professional behaviours and attitudes that are required for effective learning in the PBL context and resource sessions. Adoption of these professional behaviours and attitudes is critical for successful transition into the clinical practice context and you are required to demonstrate these behaviours and attitudes in all pre-clinical teaching contexts so that we can assure the profession that you are ready for the experiential learning that you will undertake in the varied practice settings. Physiotherapy students need to know what will be expected of them as they learn how to become physiotherapists.

The fundamental behaviours that will be fostered during the PBL and Resource sessions will centre on respect, responsibility, communication skills and self awareness and evaluation. There are specific aspects of these behaviours that are set out for you to consider and embrace.

A. Respect

In the DPhty Program the features of **respect** that are sought from physiotherapy students and modelled by staff include:

- Effective listening with appropriate verbal and non-verbal behaviour that demonstrates understanding of active listening / sustained attention. Modelling of inappropriate verbal and non-verbal behaviour is not acceptable eg inattention / rudeness / arrogance / patronising tone
- Remaining open to all opinions from group members and not denigrating group members for their opinions or information ie develops the capacity to differentiate the value of the information from the value of the person
- Acknowledging contributions from other members of the group
- Refraining from interrupting other members of the group during their presentation

- Participating in discussions with students and staff while respecting differences in cultural / moral values without personal judgement

B. Responsibility

The development of a sense of responsibility is critical for learning and good patient care. In the DPhty Program the features of **responsibility** that are required include:

- i) **Compulsory attendance at all learning activities / opportunities**
- Attendance at all learning activities / opportunities helps you to maximise your preparation / readiness for the clinical phase of learning and enables you to grow as a physiotherapy student.
 - **All absences (planned and unplanned) require the approval of the Subject Convenor.** You are required to complete a “Request for an Approved Absence Form” (copy included in the 2012 Cohort information document and will also be uploaded on iLearn@Bond for each subject) to explain your absence and to demonstrate how you plan to address the coursework that you have missed, or in the case of a planned absence, will miss.
 - The reason for your planned / unplanned absence and your plan to address the missed learning opportunities are to be stated.
 - Supporting documents (e.g. Medical Certificate) should be sighted by your Subject Convenor and then given directly to the Physiotherapy Administration Coordinator for filing – Ms Debbie Lynch. (The approved Bond University Medical Certificate will be uploaded on iLearn@Bond in each subject).
 - It will be the responsibility of the student to seek knowledge and skills from the peer group should specific sessions be missed. Your educator can only be supportive if these guidelines are followed.
 - There are several acceptable grounds for requesting approved absences – these include illness, an accident, family bereavement / funeral attendance, special religious occasions and representative sporting events at a state, national or international level (these reasons align with HSM Policy).
 - When an illness / accident occurs (ie an unplanned absence), you have five (5) calendar days to submit the required documents, including medical certificates which must be completed using the approved Bond University Medical Certificate
 - When a planned absence occurs you are required to give a minimum of ten (10) calendar days notice in advance of the scheduled activity/event.
 - Your subject coordinator will monitor your absence from learning activities / opportunities and if recurrent absences occur, potentially interfering with learning, will raise this issue with the Head of Program for attention.
 - Early departure from any session is not acceptable unless there is an extenuating reason provided to your subject coordinator or the specific educator taking the session (eg Departure to go to a funeral or a specific specialist appointment that is difficult to have scheduled at another time).
 - **leaving early from scheduled timetable sessions for work reasons is not acceptable**
 - **walk in / walk out behaviour is not acceptable**

ii) Punctuality – you are required to present on time for all pre-clinical and clinical learning activities.

- Pre-clinical PBL / Resource sessions
 - An apology needs to be given to your educator and the group should you arrive unexpectedly late. Consistent late arrival is not acceptable.
 - Educators are also expected to be punctual and would offer an appropriate apology should they be late.
- Clinical
 - If you know that you will be late you must contact the clinical educator directly and speak to them, advising when you expect to arrive (please note that clinical educators do not accept recurrent late arrivals and see this as unprofessional behaviour)
 - If you are ill and are unable to attend it is critical that the specific staff member is contacted directly in the practice setting (a family member / or a student colleague may ring if you are too ill to attend to this yourself). Please note that in the **clinical context a TEXT MESSAGE is not acceptable.**
 - You are also required to let the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) know that you are unable to attend clinic due to ill-health – Assistant Professor Nikki Milne – and the relevant clinical subject convenor (Assistant Professor Kathy Doiron for Cardio-Respiratory Physiotherapy; Assistant Professor Allan Abbot or Assistant Professor Penny Thurnwald for Musculo-skeletal Physiotherapy and Assistant Professor Nikki Milne for Chronic Disease and Disability Clinical Practice and Neurological Physiotherapy).

iii) Participation

- Participation in all learning activities and completion of all assigned tasks is required.
- Should you be unable to complete an assigned task allocated by the group, then an appropriate alternative plan needs to be negotiated with the group members.

iv) Initiative is sought and should be evident in discussions with your educators and during group sessions. Appropriate behaviours would be:

- Student advances discussion by responding to or expanding on relevant issues
- Student assists with group dynamics and development of group goals
- Student presents relevant information on the topic and identifies / excludes more irrelevant information to minimise excessively long documentation
- Student seeks additional levels of responsibility on behalf of the group as appropriate

v) Accountability

Each student is responsible for their actions and behaviours

- Prioritises learning activities over personal activities
- Prioritises learning needs of the student group above self interest, being generous in time and effort to meet the needs of the group

- Identifies, acknowledges, and accepts responsibility for actions or errors and takes steps to remedy errors
- Identifies ethical or legal concerns and initiates action to address the concerns
- Abides by the policies of Bond University, the Faculty HSM and the DPhty Program
- Abides by the Bond University Student Code of Conduct and the DPhty Program Code of Conduct.

C. Development of Communication Skills for Enhanced Participation in all Learning Environments

The communication skills sought by students include:

- Speaking clearly and directly to group members / using words that group members understand
- Questioning appropriately using open ended / directed and non-judgemental questions appropriately
- Identifying misunderstanding between self and other members of the group and attempting to resolve the misunderstanding early
- Stating own emotional state in an appropriate manner if required in a specific situation
- Accepting and discussing emotional issues related to the case being studied or other members of the group
- Modelling non-verbal behaviour that is consistent with tone and content of verbal communications
- Modelling verbal / non-verbal behaviour that show that statements have been understood
- Recognising and responding to group members' non-verbal communications
- Providing and receiving formative feedback in a constructive manner
- Growing in communication skills through effective participation in all learning activities (PBL / Resource sessions / Off-Site Visits)
- Communicating sensitively in relation to the cultural context

D. Development of Self Awareness and Self Evaluation as a Basis for Growth as a Professional

The behaviours and communications sought by students include:

- Acknowledging own lack / gaps in knowledge and the likely link to difficulty in understanding information
- Acknowledging own discomfort / difficulty in discussing / dealing with specific issues
- Identifying own strengths and weaknesses
- Seeking and identifying strategies for resolving weaknesses
- Responding positively to constructive feedback without becoming defensive, argumentative or blaming others
- Modifying behaviour in response to constructive feedback and developing reasonable proposals for behavioural change
- Building on positive feedback to further grow as a student physiotherapist

- Identifying circumstances that may impact on emotional / physical state should this be relevant to the group dynamics / functioning of the group.
- Identifying strengths / weaknesses in others and describes these in a supportive manner when outlining these to peers
- Reflecting openly and honestly about being more self aware when it interferes with group dynamics or attainment of goals
- Identifying circumstances that may impact on emotional / physical state should this be relevant to the group dynamics / functioning of the group

Academic staff and PBL Educators involved in the delivery of the DPhty Program have the responsibility of modelling and fostering professional behaviours and attitudes and it is the responsibility of the student to embrace / inculcate these qualities and values and grow as a professional.

3. Evaluation of Professional Behaviours and Attitudes

The Doctor of Physiotherapy Program requires you to grow as a professional person and has set a compulsory pass for professional behaviour and attitudes for all subjects that are delivered using the PBL Learning Model or when independent work is required. For this reason the PBL Educators are required to monitor your growth as a professional and to provide you with regular *formative feedback about this growth, your areas of strength and those that require improvement*. Your willingness and aptitude to grow is critical and a pass in your professional behaviours and attitudes is required to pass each pre-clinical subject.

As part of your growth as a professional you will also be encouraged to provide constructive, formative feedback to each other that could assist with growth in professional behaviour and attitudes. It is essential to demonstrate growth and inculcation of professional behaviour and attributes to pass each subject.

You will be required to model professional behaviours and attitudes in each of your clinical subjects and thus it is critical that you are able to model these behaviours and attributes during your pre-clinical coursework.

The attendance and assessment tool that will be used by Staff of the DPhty Program to monitor professional behaviour and attitudes as well as contributions to group processes and group content is attached. This tool will be used to provide formative and summative feedback. Thus as part of your learning you will receive feedback to affirm appropriate attitude and behaviours, guide more appropriate behaviour and to raise any concerns for the immediate attention of the Subject Convenor. The Subject Convenor has the responsibility to advise the Head of Program of these concerns and a course of action will be determined.

4. Action by the Convenor and Head of Program

The Head of Program is informed of all subject and student learning issues on a regular basis through weekly meetings. One aspect of the meetings is to determine the need for monitoring of an issue or the need for the Head of Program to be directly involved in the management of the issue. The Head of Program will meet with the student(s) and

convenor and determine the type of issue and strategies that should be put in place. Following discussions with the student it may be necessary to report a serious breach to the Head of School. An example of a serious breach would be Plagiarism where a warning or failure in the subject could be an outcome.

There are a number of actions open to the Head of Program that may follow a review of an issue with a student. These are managed in confidence and may include:

- The requirement to change a specific attitude or behaviour through acknowledgement of the behaviour and acceptance of the need to change the behaviour
 - increased self awareness and self-monitoring and more appropriate modelling of the behaviour would be a desirable outcome
 - reinforcement and positive feedback about the more appropriate behaviour in subsequent learning activities by peers and educators should also be evident
- Referral to counselling services for more appropriate management and development of strategies should more negative behaviour be apparent
- An informal warning where a note on the student file is made but is not formally actioned
- Application of a penalty (e.g. marks deducted) that could impact on grades, or
- A formal warning which involves documentation and Head of School being advised.

Referral of an issue to the Head of School of Health Sciences may lead to an informal warning, a formal warning or a formal charge and need for a Discipline Hearing.

Concluding Statement

As the Head of the Doctor of Physiotherapy Program, you will find that my more frequent engagement with you is as an Educator and Research Advisor. I am also available to discuss any issue in confidence. To enable appropriate time to be set aside for discussions with me it is advisable to make an appointment to meet with me although I retain an Open Door policy as available.

I look forward to working with you across the 2 years of the DPhty program and wish you every success as you embark on your studies with us.

Dr Wayne Hing, Professor of Physiotherapy