

**DIVISION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY  
DEPARTMENT OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES  
THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL**

**STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY**

The current and future practices of physical therapy require that we prepare physical therapists with skills in physical therapy diagnosis, treatment, consultation, teaching, administration and research. Our graduates must be critical thinkers, effective communicators, and change agents.

The patient must be maintained as the central focus of all professional activities and therefore must be the central focus of our curriculum. The individual, the family, and the community all must be appreciated as interactive units of health care. Our graduates must be informed about current social, legal, and ethical issues which influence health care. A broad liberal education, therefore, is necessary as a foundation of this professional curriculum. Coursework and incidental learning experiences with the professional curriculum reinforce this philosophical perspective.

The physical therapist must be adept at the continual integration of new knowledge gained from science, theory, and clinical experience. Graduates must function as confident, creative, clinical scientists, able to interpret and apply the results of new research in basic and social sciences. Graduates also must recognize their role as participants in research as a vehicle for quality assurance. We consider an understanding of normal life-span development and change as the foundation for assessment and treatment of dysfunction.

At entry into the profession, our graduates must be skilled generalists with a broad background upon which they may later choose to develop expertise as a specialist. A sound knowledge base, technical skills, and decision making are valued as essential components of the professional curriculum. In addition, our graduates should have gained an appreciation for a life-long career commitment, the need for collaboration and collegial interaction with other health care disciplines, and an obligation to community service.

Each faculty member of the Division of Physical Therapy must be committed to the above stated philosophy and must recognize the inherent obligation to act as a source of knowledge, a mentor, and a professional role model for all students