

**Florida Gulf Coast University**  
**Department of Physical Therapy and Human Performance**  
**Physical Therapy Clinical Education Policies**

## **Introduction**

Clinical education is an important part of the physical therapy curriculum. It is the time for students to apply and expand the knowledge and skills they have learned in class. In order to assure the optimum experience for students and therapeutic and safe examinations and interventions for patients, students must demonstrate competency in all appropriate practical skill checks and practical exams prior to beginning each clinical experience. Students are in clinic at the invitation of the clinic and are expected to follow policies of the facility during any clinical experience.

During clinical experiences, all FGCU, College of Health Professions, and Department of Physical Therapy and Human Performance Policies are applicable. Refer to the FGCU and Physical Therapy Student Guidebooks.

This document contains policies, procedures, and information relevant to the FGCU Department of Physical Therapy and Human Performance clinical education program. It is utilized by students, core faculty, and clinical faculty and serves as a reference and guide in matters related to clinic. It is updated yearly and as needed.

Prior to the first clinical experience students must sign that they have reviewed the clinical policies and agree to follow them.

## **Securing New Clinic Sites**

Any party (faculty, clinician, or student) may identify potential clinic sites. The Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) has the following responsibilities:

- contact the Director of Physical Therapy or Center Coordinator of Clinical Education (CCCE) of the site,
- visit the site,
- determine suitability of the site based on the criteria and needs of the program
- initiate the procurement of the Affiliation Agreements, the Clinical Center Information Form (CCIF), and other pertinent material.

In normal circumstances a site visit is made prior to establishing a clinical agreement and assigning students. When a student is assigned to a clinic prior to a site visit, the ACCE or designee will visit during the first student's clinic assignment.

### **Minimum criteria for clinical site selection\***

Clinical affiliates meet the following minimum criteria prior to being utilized as a clinical site:

- The affiliate practices ethically and legally.
- The affiliate supports physical therapy clinical education.
- The affiliate employs an adequate number of clinical instructors (licensed physical therapists) to provide appropriate supervision, including on-site supervision at all times when student is providing patient/client care. In single physical therapist practices, plans for on-site supervision by licensed physical therapists are in place for those instances where the clinical instructor is absent.
- The affiliate has a variety of learning experiences available to the student.
- The affiliate is willing to follow FGCU policies which will be provided in the Clinical Education Handbook.
- A clinical agreement has been fully executed between the affiliate and FGCU. The agreement will be annually reviewed.
- A Center Coordinator of Clinical Education (CCCE) has been appointed and is responsible for coordinating the assignments and activities of students at the clinical site.
- The affiliate expresses a commitment to clinical faculty development.
- The facility has adequate support personnel to meet the needs of the affiliate.

*\*These criteria are the minimum. Affiliates are encouraged to further develop their clinical education programs.*

### **Minimum criteria for clinical faculty selection\*\***

Clinical faculty (Center Coordinator of Clinical Education and/or Clinical Instructor) meet the following minimum criteria:

- Clinical faculty practice legally and ethically
- Clinical faculty are motivated and willing to serve.
- Clinical instructors have one year clinical experience as a licensed physical therapist. CCCE's have two years clinical experience (as a physical therapist or other appropriate experience).
- Clinical faculty have an understanding of the clinical education/clinical supervision process.
- Clinical faculty are willing to make a commitment to continuing development of clinical teaching skills.
- Clinical faculty have a commitment to timely and effective communication with students and Department of Physical Therapy and Human Performance Faculty.
- Clinical faculty are willing to follow FGCU policies as set forth in the clinical agreement and Physical Therapy Clinical Education Plan.
- These areas include but are not limited to, nondiscrimination, safety,

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confidentiality, student orientation to affiliate, and communication.

**\*\*** *These criteria are the minimum. Clinical Instructors are encouraged to further develop their knowledge and skills in the area of clinical education.*

### **Clinical Affiliation Agreements**

The affiliation agreement process is coordinated through the office of the Dean in the College of Health Professions. A signed affiliation agreement must be on file prior to the beginning of any student clinical experience. Students are responsible for understanding and following the terms of the agreement.

### **Clinic Schedule**

The physical therapy curriculum includes three clinical experiences. The experiences are scheduled as follows:

#### **Class of 2007**

PHT 6946 Clinical Residency                      January 8-April 27, 2007

#### **Class of 2008**

PHT 5822 Clinical Experience I                      November 6-December 19, 2006

PHT 6941 Clinical Experience II                      May 7-June 29, 2007

PHT 6946 Clinical Residency                      January 7-April 25, 2008

**These dates are subject to change. Every effort will be made to keep students informed of changes in a timely manner. The clinic dates are sometimes scheduled outside the normal semester calendar. Students are required to attend the clinics as scheduled.**

### **Procedure for Securing and Assigning Clinic Sites**

During March of each year, the ACCE sends a letter of inquiry to each active facility, requesting a commitment of positions for Florida Gulf Coast University students during the following academic year are requested. These offered positions are reviewed for variety of experience. If there is not sufficient variety, additional positions with current or new sites are solicited well in advance of the clinical experiences.

### **Clinic Site Assignment**

Students are assigned to a variety of facilities in order to assure experiences with patients having a variety of diagnoses/disabilities, ages, and practice parameters. Each student must experience patients with orthopedic, neurological, and medical diagnoses, in the following format (the final residency is generally considered 2 experiences):

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- Two inpatient experiences (one must be acute care in the first or second experience)
- One outpatient orthopedic experience
- One additional outpatient or specialty experience

Each student must see patients through a wide range of ages and experience the implementation of management concepts. Students have the opportunity to examine information about specific clinics prior to submitting a list of top choices. Students will not be assigned more than once to a facility unless the learning experiences are significantly different.

Student assignments are made approximately three months prior to the beginning of the assignment. After assignments are made, the ACCE notifies the clinics, including those not receiving assignments. The assignments not used are released in order to allow the clinic to offer the positions to other Physical Therapy Programs. **The ACCE has the final responsibility for making clinic assignments. Students are not guaranteed placement in their top choices and may be assigned to clinics outside the geographical areas in which they live.**

### **Expenses**

All expenses including, but not limited to, travel, housing, and meals are the responsibility of the student.

### **Communication**

The ACCE is the liaison between Florida Gulf Coast University, the clinical sites, and the students. Communication is maintained by mail, e-mail, telephone, group meetings and individual meetings. Students and clinical faculty are encouraged to initiate communication with the ACCE during clinical internships when any student is having significant difficulty with performance or behavior. Students should communicate with the ACCE if there are issues that have not been resolved after the student has spoken with the Clinical Instructor (CI) and CCCE.

The ACCE, with assistance of core faculty, is responsible for communicating levels of performance and material covered with the CCCE of the facility. This is done through verbal and written means, prior to the beginning of each clinical experience. It includes the student's sharing of the Psychomotor Skills Log with the CI.

Students must communicate with the clinic several weeks prior to the beginning of the internship. In addition, each student must submit a completed

Student Data Form, including the student's own goals, prior to the beginning of the affiliation.

### **Progression to Clinic**

Students must be in good standing in the Physical Therapy Program including following the Professional Behaviors Plan, and have completed the appropriate prerequisite courses prior to participating in clinic assignments.

### **Schedule/Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled clinical experiences. The clinical instructor determines specific schedules, with the student expected to follow a schedule that is similar to physical therapists in the clinic. This might include some evenings, weekends, or holidays. Clinical courses are designed to include at least a 35 hour workweek, using a schedule equivalent to staff therapists. Some clinics may have varied hours. Students are expected to adapt to the clinic schedule. Students who miss clinic are required to make up the time in a manner that is acceptable to the clinical instructor. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a plan for making up clinic time. Students who are absent or late for clinic should inform the clinical instructor at the earliest practical time. Students are expected to follow the policies of the clinic regarding time cards or other means of documenting clinic time. The student should inform the ACCE, by phone or email, if absent for more than one day during the affiliation. Students who are habitually absent or late will be asked to sign and follow a learning contract that addresses the problem. Failure to meet the terms of the contract will result in an Unsatisfactory (U) grade in the course.

### **Orientation**

Each affiliate must provide an orientation to the facility at the beginning of the clinical experience. The orientation must include safety/emergency procedures.

### **Patient Care Responsibilities**

The ultimate responsibility for patient care remains with the assigned physical therapist. Students are expected to discuss with their clinical instructor the mechanism by which patients agree to treatment by the student. Students must always inform the patient of their student status and never lead anyone to believe otherwise. If students are asked to perform examinations or interventions for which the students have inadequate knowledge, students must inform their clinical instructors and request a change of assignment or appropriate instruction and supervision during the activity. Students must not be used in lieu of professional or non-professional staff.

## Ethical/Legal Responsibility

Students are required to follow the APTA Code of Ethics for Physical Therapists, the Physical Therapy Professional Behaviors Plan, and the FGCU Clinical Affiliation Agreement.

## Supervision

Each clinical facility has a Center Coordinator of Clinical Education (CCCE) who is responsible for organizing the clinical experience and assigning clinical instructors. The clinical instructor (CI), who may also be the CCCE, has the primary supervision/education responsibility for the student. The clinical instructor must be a physical therapist. The clinical instructor or another designated physical therapist must be on site at all times when a student is treating patients. The clinical experience may include student observation of other professionals, however, the direct care responsibility for treatment remains with the other professional. The clinical instructor's supervision of the student is close during the initial clinical experience. Supervision decreases as the student becomes more adept in management of patient care. Supervision decisions are always made on an individual basis considering the patient situation, the student's level of knowledge and performance ability, environmental factors, and reimbursement considerations. **The clinical instructor maintains the final responsibility for patient care.** The FGCU ACCE or other Physical Therapy Department faculty members are available for telephone and/or on-site consultation regarding levels of supervision and other situations that might arise.

## Confidentiality

All patient information, patient records, and affiliate information are confidential. Students must make every effort to respect the confidential nature of this information. Students in doubt whether or not an item of information is confidential should consult with their clinical instructors. Students must comply with all HIPAA policies and procedures, as implemented by the affiliate.

## Evaluation

Students will be evaluated using the APTA Physical Therapy Clinical Performance Instrument (CPI). Clinical grades are on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) basis. A Satisfactory grade is required for successful completion of the experience. The clinical instructor has the primary responsibility for conducting the evaluation, based on the course objectives and the evaluation instrument. The ACCE has the responsibility for assigning the course grade, utilizing information provided by the CPI, in accordance with each course syllabus. On a case by case basis, a student may be given the option of extending the time of any clinical experience in order to reach the appropriate level of clinical performance.

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## **Accommodation for Disability**

All reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate students with special needs, following FGCU policy. Students must notify the ACCE of the need at the time site choices are made. The ACCE will work with the CCCE to ensure that the accommodation is appropriate.

## **Personal Health**

Students retain responsibility for their personal health and well being. Students must follow universal precaution guidelines and policies of their facilities. Should students be exposed to any health risk or injury at their clinical facilities, they must complete an incident report following affiliate guidelines and report the incident to the ACCE within one day.

Students must provide documentation of measles and rubella immunizations (or exemption), varicella titer test or immunization, current Tetanus booster, Mantoux TB test within one year of application and yearly thereafter, and Hepatitis B Vaccine series and positive titer or a student signed waiver.

Some affiliates may have additional health requirements. These requirements are indicated in material provided prior to the site selection process. A student choosing a facility is also agreeing to the health stipulations.

The student is responsible for the cost of emergency and other health care during clinical experiences. Affiliates are responsible for assisting students to procure treatment as needed. Some clinical facilities may require proof of health care insurance. The clinical affiliate has the right to require injured or ill students to leave the clinic if they place themselves or others at risk.

## **Criminal Background Checks**

Some facilities may require criminal background checks. Students, at their own expense, are responsible for providing the appropriate documentation. Some background checks take several days/weeks to complete. Students are responsible for initiating the background check in time for it to be complete by the first day of clinic. Many clinics will not allow the student to begin the affiliation until the background check is complete.

## **Personal appearance**

Students must dress conservatively and in good taste in order to protect themselves and their patients and to model professionalism. In some facilities a short white lab coat is worn over street clothes. Closed toe, low heel, shoes are necessary. Examples of inappropriate clothing are sandals, jeans, sweats, gym shorts, midriff tops, T-shirts, or see through clothing. Some clinics may have additional or different dress requirements, including requirements for jewelry, hairstyles, tattoos, and cosmetics. It is the student's responsibility to follow each clinic's personal appearance policy.

### **Name Badges**

Students are required to purchase name badges through the FGCU Bookstore. The name badges are worn at all times when the student is in the clinical setting. The name badges clearly indicate student status. Some facilities require an additional identification badge supplied by the facility.

### **CPR Certification**

Students must be certified in health care provider adult and infant CPR , including use of automated external defibrillator (AED) (American Heart Association BSL Healthcare Provider Course, or equivalent) prior to the clinical experience, and maintain certification at all times while in the clinic.

### **Universal Precautions/OSHA Requirements**

Students must meet facility requirements regarding Universal Precautions and OSHA regulations. Students must complete a 4 hour HIV course prior to the first clinical.

### **Sexual Misconduct**

Students must follow FGCU and clinical facility guidelines regarding sexual misconduct.

### **Liability Insurance**

Students must maintain professional liability insurance in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 per aggregate. Students not submitting documentation of this current insurance are NOT allowed to participate in any clinical experience.

### **Problem Resolution**

If a student has a problem in clinic, he/she should first seek resolution with the clinical instructor. If the issue remains unresolved, the student should discuss the situation with the CCCE. If still unresolved, the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) is available to assist with finding a solution. In rare instances, students may contact the ACCE first. The ACCE may be instrumental in helping the student find ways of appropriately communicating with the clinical instructor. The clinical instructor or CCCE should notify the ACCE by phone if a student is having persistent difficulty and/or is at risk to fail the clinical experience. The ACCE will assist with seeking a solution including counseling with the student and/or clinical instructor or making a site visit. A student who places patients, staff, or self in an unsafe situation can be immediately withdrawn from the clinic by the clinical instructor/CCCE and the ACCE will be notified. See Affiliation Agreement. The ACCE will initiate further discussion/action regarding the situation, in compliance with Department, College, and University policy.

### **Alcohol/Illegal drugs**

The Affiliate has the right to immediately remove a student from the clinic if the student is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The clinical faculty notifies the ACCE who seeks resolution on an individual basis, utilizing Physical Therapy program, College of Health Professions and Florida Gulf Coast University student policy as a guide. A student who attends clinic under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs can be expelled from the program and the University. See [FGCU Student Guidebook](#) for further details.

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**Signature Page**

I acknowledge receipt of the following and understand that it is my responsibility to review the document and follow the guidelines.

Physical Therapy Clinical Policies

I understand that if I have any questions related to information contained in this document, it is my responsibility to seek clarification from the ACCE.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date