

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL THERAPY AND HUMAN MOVEMENT SCIENCES
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY FEINBERG SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

CLINICAL EDUCATION POLICIES
2006-2007

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Attendance

Each student is expected to complete 40 hours of clinical practice for each week scheduled for Clinical Experiences I-IV.

The Department and facilities determine the dates for each clinical experience; the dates are indicated on commitment forms that facilities return to the Department. These dates determine the legal time frame for students to complete clinical experiences and dates for professional liability coverage for Northwestern University students at facilities.

Students are not to negotiate changes in dates of clinical experiences with the assigned facility. If a student anticipates a potential need to alter the dates of a clinical education experience, the student must contact the DCEs. A student who attempts to negotiate a change in dates without notifying the DCEs may be prohibited from participating in a clinical experience at the facility.

The Department has scheduled travel time prior to Clinical Experiences I - IV and after Clinical Experience IV. Students are expected to begin and end each clinical experience on the committed dates. Because students have this scheduled travel time, they should have no need to request time off from any clinical experience for personal business or to travel to the next experience or graduation.

The time spent in clinical practice is valuable to the student's professional development. When unforeseen circumstances occur and the student is unable to complete the expected hours of clinical experience, students and clinical faculty should adhere to the following policy:

If a student is absent from clinical practice for any reason it is expected that, where feasible, arrangements will be made to make up the time missed. Any make-up time should be scheduled when supervision by a licensed physical therapist is available and should only occur within scheduled dates of clinical experiences; options may include extended workdays, weekends, etc. When it is not feasible for the clinical facility to provide opportunities to make up missed time, the school, in consultation with the student, Clinical Instructor (CI) and Center Coordinator of Clinical Education (CCCE), will decide what alternative arrangements will be made.

Illness

If a student becomes ill and is unable to attend any portion of clinical practice, she/he is to notify her/his CI and one of the DCEs as early as possible on each day of absence. During Clinical Experiences I-IV, students are expected to learn how to determine whether their illness requires them NOT to go to a clinical setting. For example, if the student is ill and could pose a threat to patients' or clinicians' health, the student should not go to the clinical setting. Students may be expected to make up time missed.

Other

In the event a student must request time off, she/he must first contact the DCEs. The student is expected to request time off as early as possible and to follow the administrative policy and procedures of each facility in order to obtain permission for time away. It is not advisable for a student to make any plans prior to receiving approval from the DCEs, CCCE, and CI. During Clinical Experiences I - IV, students are expected to learn how to request time off according to the administrative policies of a facility. Students may be expected to make up time missed.

Professional Attire

The following information will assist students in presenting themselves as professionals to the public and healthcare providers and as appropriate representatives of Northwestern University. Students are expected to adhere to these guidelines during field trips and full-time clinical experiences except when superseded by facility policy.

- Students should wear white lab coats with appropriate street clothing. Lab coats may be suit jacket, three-quarter, or full length. Appropriate street clothing includes shirts, blouses or sweaters and khaki or dark slacks. "Jeans" style slacks, hats, sweatsuits, T-shirts, see-through fabrics, and necklines and hemlines that are revealing are unacceptable.
- Shoes are to be closed-toe, closed-heel and low-heeled. Clogs, heels higher than 1", sandals, platform shoes and thongs are unacceptable. Rubber soled shoes are recommended.
- Students must wear a name tag provided by the facility or the University.
- Good personal hygiene and grooming are expected. Makeup and colored nail polish should be used with discretion. Do not wear perfume or cologne.
- Fingernails should not extend beyond the fingertips.
- Jewelry should be worn with discretion and should not endanger the safety of the student or others.

Legal Requirements and Confidentiality

Federal and state laws and facility bylaws, policies, rules and regulations govern clinical practice in each facility. Students are expected to follow the legal guidelines for physical therapy in any state and the policies, rules and regulations of any facility. Students who fail to do so may be prohibited from continuing the clinical experience. Students are expected to hold confidential any information about patients, clinicians, clinical facilities, peers and faculty. Students are also expected to hold confidential any proprietary information acquired at a clinical site.

Graduation Requirements

Because students need experience managing multiple patients who change quickly, responding immediately to patients' needs, triaging patients, making discharge plans, integrating physiology and pathophysiology into patient management, and working closely with multiple on-site team members in the medical management of patients, second year students are required to complete a minimum of 5 weeks of full-time clinical experience working with inpatients who have problems that change abruptly. Because students need experience managing patients who receive services in outpatient settings, second year students are required to complete a minimum of 5 weeks of full-time clinical experience working with outpatients who have a variety of problems. These requirements can be met during Clinical Experiences II, III, IV or any combination of these three experiences.

Across the second year experiences, students are required to work with patients with neurological conditions and patients with musculoskeletal problems in any practice setting. To promote variety in each student's clinical education schedule, second year students may complete no more than 12 weeks of full-time clinical experiences managing patients with similar ages, problems, and levels of acuity.

Professional Liability Insurance

Each agency/facility with whom Northwestern University has a clinical education agreement is issued a Certificate of Insurance confirming the coverage of students. As stated in that Certificate, "Physical Therapy students in the Department of Physical Therapy, Northwestern University are included as additional insureds in the above professional liability insurance for their assigned duties at locations of the certificate holder."

Students are provided with the coverage while at the facility or patient's home for a field trip or clinical experience. However, insurance protection during your travel to and from a site or home would be provided by your personal car or home insurance.

Additional Policies

Additional policies will be distributed as necessary.