Clinical Instructor Responsibilities

The APTA has detailed voluntary guidelines for clinical instructors. The guidelines are divided into six key areas:

- Clinical competence and legal and ethical behavior that meets or exceeds the expectations of members of the profession of physical therapy.
- Effective communication skills.
- Effective behavior, conduct, and skill in interpersonal relationships.
- Effective instructional skills.
- Effective supervisory skills.
- Performance evaluations skills (midterm and final).

Northwestern University expects clinical instructors to:

1. Possess a desire to guide students’ professional development.
2. Manage student’s clinical internship in a collegial manner that demonstrates unconditional positive regard for the student.
3. Maintain an environment that is conducive to effective clinical learning.
5. Familiarize themselves with the student’s goals and expectations for the clinical internship.
6. Prepare for the student’s arrival and determine the starting point of the clinical internship.
7. Provide a structured learning experience by progressing the student’s learning with patients/environments from simple to complex and modifying the supervision/guidance provided to the student.
8. Provide patient care and other learning opportunities that are consistent with the student’s level of preparation.
9. Assist student with developing behavioral objectives appropriate to the setting and student’s level of preparation.
10. Utilize a variety of teaching/coaching strategies to assist the student to meet clinical performance expectations.
11. Provide student supervision that is consistent with facility, legal, and APTA guidelines.
12. Provide timely and effective, balanced formative feedback.
13. Document summative feedback on the PT CPI Web at the midpoint and completion of the clinical internship.
14. When indicated, use adjunct documentation to describe student’s performance, such as weekly/summary planning forms, anecdotal record, critical incident report, student program planning flow chart, and learning development plans.
15. Contact the CCCE and/or DCE when there are concerns with a student’s clinical performance.
16. Participate in planning/modifying the internship when student is not meeting or is exceeding clinical performance expectations.
Clinical Instructor Rights and Privileges

The faculty of the Department of Physical Therapy and Human Movement Sciences highly values the service of clinical educators. To show our appreciation, the Department extends to you the following rights and privileges.

The rights of clinical faculty include:
- the right to dismiss students whose actions are unsafe for patients or themselves,
- the right to dismiss students whose actions are unprofessional, illegal, or unethical,
- the right to give input about the clinical and didactic portions of the curriculum to the Department,
- the right to participate in clinical instructor development activities sponsored by the Department,
- the right to be invited to participate on Department committees and Task Forces, and
- access to the Directors of Clinical Education through site visits, phone calls, or electronic mail.

Privileges and benefits provided to the clinical education faculty are as follows:
- partial support for continuing education courses,
- access to the library facilities at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine,
- partial support for undergraduate/graduate courses offered by Northwestern University,
- selected textbooks or manuals for the facility library,
- partial support for membership in the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) or the Education Section of the APTA.
- partial support to attend clinical faculty development meetings sponsored by the Chicago Area Clinical Educators Forum (CACEF),
- faculty consultation for clinical or research questions, and
- guest speakers for inservices, based on faculty expertise and availability.

If you would like more information about rights and privileges given to clinical faculty, please contact Nora Francis at n-francis@northwestern.edu or 312-908-6796, Chandi Edmonds at chandi.edmonds1@northwestern.edu or 312-908-6783 or Krista Van Der Laan at krista-vanderlaan@northwestern.edu or 312-503-3921. Thank you for assisting us to prepare the next generation of physical therapists.