

**GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL THERAPY & ATHLETIC TRAINING**  
**CLINICAL EDUCATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES HANDBOOK**  
**(UPDATED JULY 2024)**

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## Establishment of a Clinical Affiliation

All potential affiliating sites are initially contacted by the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) to establish whether or not there is an interest by the clinical facility in developing an affiliation with Grand Valley State University (GVSU). If an interest exists, the facility is sent further information and requested to complete information forms. Upon receipt of the completed information forms, the DCE will determine (based upon the American Physical Therapy Association Guidelines for Clinical Education Sites available at <https://www.apta.org/apta-and-you/leadership-and-governance/policies/guidelines-to-promote-excellence-in-clinical-education-partnerships>) if the clinical facility is a viable potential affiliate. If so, a site visit to the clinical facility may be scheduled which allows for a greater exchange of information and ideas between the DCE and Site Coordinator of Clinical Education (SCCE). The process of contract review is initiated. Contract review takes place at both the clinical facility and the academic institution. GVSU provides a standard affiliation agreement and is open to alternative contracts and revisions provided that they meet the approval of the university's legal counsel and insuring agents. A signed and dated Clinical Education Affiliation Agreement is the final and essential step in the establishment of a clinical affiliation site. Affiliation agreements will routinely be reviewed and renewed every five years unless an alternative review and renewal process is specified in the agreement.

### 1. Policy for Student Input into Clinical Site Selection

- a. A list of established clinical sites is on Blackboard PT Clinical Education Organization. Information about these clinical sites is available in electronic format on Blackboard.
- b. Students should not contact a clinical site regarding establishment of a new site or placement opportunities at an existing site. All communication regarding potential clinical sites and opportunities must be through the GVSU DCE.
- c. A student who is interested in exploring the possibility of an affiliation agreement with a site where he/she would like placement should submit a completed Student Proposal for Development of a Clinical Education Site (found at Blackboard-PT Clinical Education Organization-Course Documents) to the DCE at least six months in advance of clinical site selection for a specific experience.
- d. In addition to the requirements for clinical education sites and clinical instructors that are conveyed in other policies, the following guidelines will be used to evaluate out-of-area sites for inclusion in GVSU's clinical education program:
  - 1) The site has an established clinical education program.

- 2) The site provides learning experiences which are not provided or are provided on a limited basis by existing clinical education sites.
  - 3) The site is able to establish an ongoing relationship with GVSU for clinical experiences.
  - 4) The site can be maintained for GVSU students at a reasonable cost to the university.
- e. In general, only one new clinical site partnership will be developed for a student. Additional out-of-state requests may be considered for clinical sites that are associated with an established clinical partner.
  - f. When making a judgment about the suitability of a clinical facility for student placement, the type of experience available, the quality of education available and ethical/legal standards of practice will be considered. Students may be placed in physician-owned physical therapy clinics if the clinic's SCCE is able to ensure autonomy of the physical therapists' decision-making, safeguard against overutilization driven by the self-referral/self-interest of the physician owners, and ensure patient choice in selecting a PT provider.

### Assignment of Students to a Clinical Site

Consistent with the national voluntary mailing dates for physical therapy clinical placement requests, GVSU will e-mail requests each March for all clinical experiences in the following calendar year. If a position is granted by the clinical facility for a GVSU student, the DCE will provide the facility with at least three months advance notice of the assignment of a student. A clinical facility may request more than three months advance notice of student placement, and this should be specified in the affiliation agreement.

At least four weeks prior to the commencement of a clinical experience, the SCCE will receive a completed copy of the Pre-Clinical Student Questionnaire to provide an introduction to the student and to assist in the development of specific objectives for that student. Final information from GVSU also will be sent to the SCCE at this time.

Course	Months of Experience	Student Site Selection Process Initiated	Notice of Student Assignment to Site
PT 636 (1 <sup>st</sup> year)	May-June	January	February
PT 656 (2 <sup>nd</sup> year)	January-February	September	October
PT 675 (3 <sup>rd</sup> year)	August-October	March	May
PT 677 (3 <sup>rd</sup> year)	October-December		
PT 698 (3 <sup>rd</sup> year)	May-July	January	February

## Procedure for Student Clinical Site Assignment

- a. The DCE will provide students with a list of available sites approximately two weeks prior to the date for clinical site selection.
- b. Clinical site information will be available to students for review at this time.
- c. Students should use the following guidelines when choosing clinical sites:
  - 1) Experiences are required in the following clinical settings, which will include the related list of learning experiences/activities (note that Inpatient Rehabilitation opportunities will fulfill the Inpatient Acute Care or the Post-Acute Rehabilitation requirement).
    - a) Outpatient Musculoskeletal Practice
      - Extremity impairments
      - Spinal impairments
    - b) Inpatient Acute Care
      - Medical chart review
      - Critical care and/or post-operative care
      - Interaction with a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary team
      - Discharge planning
    - c) Post-Acute Rehabilitation
      - Care of patients with neuromuscular impairments and/or long-term functional limitations
      - Interaction with a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary team
  - 2) Across all clinical education experiences, students are required to obtain experience managing a variety of patient problems including those of the musculoskeletal, neuromuscular, cardiopulmonary and integumentary systems, and to obtain experience in managing problems across the lifespan.
  - 3) One of the third-year experiences must include outpatient musculoskeletal experience.
  - 4) Decisions regarding appropriate clinical experience selections will be made in consultation with the DCE whose decisions may overrule a student's preferences.
  - 5) Unless unusual circumstances exist, students will not be assigned to a clinical site where he/she is currently employed in Physical Therapy.

During third-year clinical experiences, students will not be assigned to a clinical site where he/she has a commitment for future employment. In addition, unless the planned student experience is significantly different than a past employment experience, students will not be assigned to a clinical site where he/she was previously employed in Physical Therapy. This decision will be made by the DCE in consultation with the SCCE and the student.

- 6) Students will not be assigned to the same organization more than once unless the clinical experiences are in different settings.
  - 7) Unless unusual circumstances exist, during back-to-back third-year clinical experiences (such as PT 675 and PT 677), students will not be assigned more than once to a similar type of clinical setting.
- d. The specific method to be used for clinical site assignment will be determined by the DCE in collaboration with each class of students. Assignments may be made by the DCE based on rank-ordered lists of student clinical site preferences, or an alternative method may be utilized.
  - e. Students should expect to complete some clinical experiences at sites outside of a 50-mile radius from Grand Rapids.
  - f. In the event of the cancellation of a clinical site assignment, the DCE communicates with the student involved. An alternative assignment that meets the learning needs of the student will be sought, initially from sites that offered opportunities to which a GVSU student was not originally assigned. If the list of available sites does not meet the student's learning needs or housing needs, the DCE will attempt to find another clinical site for the student. If an available clinical site meets the learning needs of the student, but the location is not acceptable to the student, the student may choose to delay a clinical experience until an acceptable location is available. However, a delayed clinical experience may delay the student's graduation. If multiple students experience a clinical site cancellation and an available opportunity meets the learning needs of and is desired by more than one student, a lottery system may be used to determine which student receives the available assignment. In the event that students in different cohorts need an available clinical opportunity, the more advanced students would be given priority for an assignment.

## International Clinical Education Experiences

Clinical education experiences outside of the United States can provide students the opportunity to develop knowledge of other health care systems and to develop enhanced skills in cultural competence. The procedures previously described for establishing a clinical affiliation will be used in evaluating international clinical

settings. Clinical settings outside of the United States must have the potential to provide students the opportunity to achieve the course objectives for a given clinical education course.

To be assigned to an international clinical education experience, a student must be in good standing in regard to prior academic and clinical performance and professional behaviors. A student may participate in an international experience during one third-year clinical experience.

## Educational Program Responsibilities

### 1. Instructions to Students Prior to Clinical Experiences

All students and faculty involved in the clinical education curriculum will be informed of applicable rules and regulations at each clinical site as provided to the program by the site. Students will be instructed to abide by applicable rules and regulations of the affiliating clinical site with regard to professional conduct, confidentiality of patient and facility records, and the responsibility and authority of the staff of the site over patient care and facility administration.

All students and faculty will be instructed in the importance of complying with all relevant state and federal confidentiality laws, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). In addition, the University will provide students and faculty training in the requirements of the privacy and security provisions of HIPAA and advise them of the importance of complying with the clinical site's policies and procedures relative to HIPAA. Students and faculty will be instructed that when patients' personal health information is used for educational purposes at the University, such as case studies and presentations, all information must be appropriately de-identified. Students and faculty will be instructed to follow the policies and procedures of the clinical site when obtaining personal health information for educational purposes, and in regard to the use of proprietary information of the site.

Students will be instructed to introduce themselves to patients and clinical staff as physical therapist students, and of the right of patients/clients to decline care from a student.

### 2. Educational Records/Reports

GVSU shall maintain all educational records and reports relating to the educational program at the clinical site. Information that is part of the educational record, including information about academic and clinical performance, is confidential and protected under the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

### 3. Communication During Clinical Experiences

#### a. First- and Second-Year Experiences

The DCE will communicate with all students, SCCEs, and/or clinical instructors (CIs) responsible for GVSU students during the first three weeks of the clinical experience for a progress report and discussion about the experience. This communication may be by phone, e-mail, or virtual meeting. Prior to the beginning of an experience, students and SCCEs will be informed of the specific plan for communication. If a problem arises prior to the standard communication, the SCCE, CI, and/or student should contact the DCE. Virtual meetings will be held or site visits will be made to facilities/students based on needs identified by the DCE, SCCE/CI, and/or student. A visit schedule will be sent to involved facilities approximately one month prior to the start of the clinical experiences.

#### b. Third-Year Experiences

The DCE will contact by phone or email all CIs around the mid-term of each experience unless a site visit is scheduled during that time. If a problem arises prior to the phone call or site visit, the SCCE, CI, and/or student should contact the DCE. Virtual meetings will be held or site visits will be made to facilities/students based on needs identified by the DCE, SCCE/CI, and/or student. A visit schedule will be sent to involved facilities approximately one month prior to the start of the final clinical experiences.

#### c. Site Visits

The DCE will conduct site visits in-person or through a virtual meeting as deemed necessary by the DCE in collaboration with the SCCEs, CIs, or students.

### 4. Processing of Complaints About the Program

Complaints about the academic or clinical education program are documented and placed in an administrative clinical site file maintained by the GVSU department chair. Follow-up on program-related complaints can include discussion and problem solving with clinical educators and physical therapy faculty.

## Clinical Education Faculty Responsibilities

### 1. Planning and Implementation of the Clinical Experience

The clinical site shall identify a person responsible for coordination of clinical education activities (SCCE), and this person will be the primary liaison to the DCE at GVSU. The clinical site also shall identify qualified CIs for the physical therapist students. Typically, the minimum criteria for serving as a CI are:

- a. Interest in serving as a student supervisor/instructor
- b. At least one year of experience as a licensed physical therapist
- c. At least six months of experience at the current clinical facility
- d. Effective interpersonal relations and communication skills
- e. Demonstration of clinical competence and professional behavior consistent with current standards of the physical therapy profession.
- f. Completion of clinical instructor training (including, but not limited to, the APTA Credentialed Clinical Instructor Program – [www.apta.org/Educators/Clinical/EducatorDevelopment](http://www.apta.org/Educators/Clinical/EducatorDevelopment)).

The clinical site shall cooperate with GVSU in the planning and conduct of the student's clinical experience to the end that the clinical experience may be appropriate in light of GVSU's educational objectives. The CI shall provide written evaluations on each student which shall set forth level of performance, progress, and potential as a physical therapist. The site shall follow student evaluation standards established by GVSU and use evaluation tools/forms provided by GVSU (such as the Clinical Performance Instrument [CPI] – see section on student evaluation and recording forms).

## 2. Supervision

Clinical facility staff is responsible for the direct supervision of students at the clinical site. The inexperienced student needs direction, guidance, and assistance to assure the safety of patients and of themselves. At a minimum, GVSU policy requires that a licensed physical therapist be on-site and accessible when a student is involved in direct patient care. In addition, appropriate supervision will be determined by Federal and State laws, reimbursement regulations, student experience, the student's perceived need, and clinical facility policy. Current information about Medicare requirements for student supervision can be found at <https://www.apta.org/your-practice/payment/medicare-payment/supervision-under-medicare>. The DCE should be consulted if questions arise regarding supervision levels.

## 3. Clinical Education Relationships

The primary relationship for supervision, instruction, and evaluation during a clinical education experience is between the student, CI, and SCCE. The role of the DCE is to serve as a resource to facilitate the teaching/learning relationship, and to assist in integrating and synthesizing the clinical education experiences across each student's individualized clinical education sequence.



An effective CI-student relationship is a key element of a successful learning experience, and a collegial model enhances the CI-student relationship and the clinical learning experience. In a collegial model, the student is considered to be a member of the physical therapy profession and to be an active participant in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the clinical learning experience. Open, supportive communication between the student and CI is an essential component of a collegial model and a successful clinical learning experience.

#### 4. Information to be Provided to the Educational Program and Students

At least one month prior to the first student assignment, each clinical site will complete a Clinical Site Information Form (CSIF) to provide students and program faculty with appropriate information about the clinical facility. Clinical sites will be expected to update this form as needed to reflect changes.

The clinical site will provide the program with information regarding policies and procedures of the site that it desires students and faculty to be informed of prior to the start of a clinical experience. These rules and regulations may be regarding, but are not limited to, professional conduct, confidentiality of patient and facility records, HIPAA, use of proprietary information, health compliance, and the responsibility and authority of the staff of the facility over patient care and facility administration. Additionally, students may be informed of relevant policies and procedures of the clinical site during the on-site orientation process.

#### 5. Communication of Concerns About Student Performance

Any significant concerns of a SCCE or CI regarding the performance of a student should be made known to the DCE immediately via phone or e-mail so that resolution of any problems can begin promptly. Agency supervisory personnel may, in an emergency or in certain cases based upon applicable standards of physical therapy practice, temporarily remove a student from a specific assignment or require that such student leave the floor or department pending a final determination of his/her status. The agency must submit a detailed written report of any such action to GVSU within three business days (excluding Saturday, Sunday, and holidays) after its occurrence, and the appropriate parties shall cooperate in an effort to avoid its recurrence.

#### 6. Educational Reports/Records

Staff of the clinical site will recognize the confidential status of student educational records pursuant to the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and will respect the confidential nature of student information about academic and clinical performance.

## Clinical Education Faculty Rights

1. To determine the number, timing, and type of clinical experiences offered to the Program
2. To receive at least 3 months advance notice of student assignment
3. To have access to the DCE prior to and during a clinical experience for consultation via phone, e-mail, or site visit (in-person or through a virtual meeting)
4. To have access to information about the academic and clinical education curriculum
5. To receive information about the types of learning experience desired for the student and outcome expectations for the student
6. To expect that students will be academically prepared for the clinical experience
7. Based upon applicable standards of physical therapy practice, to temporarily remove a student from a specific assignment or the clinical facility pending a final determination of the student's status
8. To communicate concerns or complaints about the program or student to the DCE
9. To receive a student evaluation of the CI and clinical site through the Physical Therapist Student Evaluation (PTSE) prior to completion of a clinical experience
10. To provide input to the program about the didactic and clinical education components of the curriculum

## Benefits to Clinical Education Faculty

1. Attendance at selected program-sponsored clinical education workshops at reduced or no cost
2. Availability of core faculty to provide in-services to clinical education faculty at the clinical education site
3. Transportation to selected regional clinical education meetings
4. GVSU recognizes clinical education faculty by appointing them a gratis academic title of "Affiliated Clinical Faculty". CIs will be required to instruct a minimum of one GVSU student per year to maintain the gratis assignment. Affiliated Clinical Faculty are eligible to enroll in the Preceptor Perks Program. The perks include a GVSU picture ID, a GVSU bookstore coupon, 50% off all GVSU

athletic events, GVSU library privileges, GVSU fieldhouse access, discounted green fees at the Meadows Golf Course, and GVSU faculty community discounts. To gain access to the Preceptor Perks Program and view the most updated list of perks, CIs must register for the program by visiting the Preceptor Perks website, [www.gvsu.edu/preceptorperks/](http://www.gvsu.edu/preceptorperks/).

## Student Responsibilities for Clinical Education

1. Each student must provide his/her own transportation to/from assigned clinical sites.
2. Students are responsible to make any necessary contacts or arrangements for housing during a clinical experience. If free housing is not provided by a clinical site, the student is responsible for this cost.
3. Rules for Students While at the Clinical Site
  - a. Attire: Students are expected to be well-groomed and in appropriate attire. Each clinical facility may specify what is and is not appropriate dress. Students are expected to purchase attire as required by the clinical facility. In the absence of specific facility dress code, the following standards should be followed:
    - 1) Professional casual dress is acceptable attire, consisting of non-jean, non-legging, full-length pants and a polo, button-down, or pull-over shirt without writing or logos.
    - 2) Necklines and shirt lengths should allow for bending and reaching without exposure of the bust or skin between the shirt and pants.
    - 3) Shoes should have non-skid soles, and closed toe and heel. Athletic shoes should not be worn unless approved by the clinical site.
    - 4) Hair should be neat and clean, and should be secured so that it does not cover a student's face or contact a patient. Facial hair must be able to be covered with a face mask.
    - 5) Scented products should not be used as some patients may have allergies or sensitivities.
    - 6) Nail length should not exceed the end of the fingertips.
    - 7) Jewelry should be minimal. Tongue, nose, and eyebrow rings are not acceptable.
    - 8) Tattoos may need to be covered based upon clinical site policies.

- b. Name Tags: Name tags will be acquired by students prior to the start of Clinical Education I. Name tags are to be worn as required by the facility. In some cases, the facility may provide a specific type of name tag. If, however, this is not provided, students will be required to provide one, which clearly designates them as student physical therapists. Students are required to clearly introduce themselves to patients and clinical staff as physical therapist students.
  - c. Professional Conduct: At all times, the student is expected to demonstrate professional behavior. Non-compliance with any of the following will be taken into account in the student's evaluation. Non-compliance can result in dismissal from the clinic, an unsatisfactory grade, and/or dismissal from the Physical Therapy program.
    - 1) Follow the policies and procedures of the GVSU Department of Physical Therapy & Athletic Training and the clinical facility. This requirement includes, but is not limited to, complying with the clinical site's policies and procedures related to confidentiality of patient information and HIPAA. When patients' personal health information is used for educational purposes at the University, such as case studies and presentations, all information must be appropriately de-identified. Students are expected to follow the policies and procedures of the clinical site when obtaining protected health information for educational purposes, and in regard to the use of proprietary information of the site. If desired by the clinical facility, a facility or GVSU release form may be used to obtain patient consent for use of images or records.
    - 2) Comply with the ethical standards of the American Physical Therapy Association, GVSU, and the clinical facility.
    - 3) Conduct themselves in a professional manner in regard to both patients and staff.
4. Sequence of Communication
- a. Prior to beginning the clinical experience and after reviewing the clinical site file at the university, students should contact the SCCE for onboarding details within 2 weeks of the DCE providing contact information.
  - b. Open, timely communication between a student and CI is essential for an effective clinical learning experience.
  - c. The DCE is available at any time if a student has a concern about a clinical experience. However, students are encouraged to first discuss any issues with the CI and/or SCCE.

## 5. Student Self-Evaluation

- a. The student will complete a self-evaluation on the appropriate assessment forms/instruments prior to the formal mid-term and final evaluation meetings.
- b. The results of the self-evaluation will be shared with the CI and compared to the CI's evaluation of the student.

## 6. Student Evaluation of Clinical Experience

- a. The student will formally evaluate the CI at midterm and the CI and clinical site immediately prior to the completion of the experience.
- b. The results of the evaluation will be shared with the CI at midterm and prior to the completion of the experience. The clinical site and CI evaluation form will be returned to the DCE at the completion of the experience.
- c. Students are expected to be honest, objective, and constructive when completing the clinical experience evaluation.

## Health Compliance

Infectious, communicable diseases are common in many clinical education settings. During clinical education activities, students may be exposed to patients or clients with diseases such as, but not limited to, tuberculosis (TB), hepatitis B (HBV), influenza, COVID-19, and other infections.

University policy, state and federal statutory regulations, and accreditation standards for affiliated clinical agencies require that students comply with certain health, safety, and legal requirements. As such, GVSU is contractually mandated to ensure that all students attain and maintain full compliance with each program's set compliance requirements. Students will be required to set-up an account in the appropriate third-party vendor, CastleBranch or Viewpoint Screening. Required training modules will be on Blackboard. The GVSU Health Compliance Office will provide students with directions for creating a CastleBranch or Viewpoint Screening account and submitting documents, as well as with instructions to access the training modules. Detailed information about GVSU health compliance requirements and due dates will be located in CastleBranch and Viewpoint Screening. These requirements encompass vaccinations (including that for COVID), drug screening (including that for medical marijuana), and a criminal background check. Students may need to fulfill additional requirements of clinical education sites and are responsible for any cost associated with fulfilling all compliance requirements. Students will provide their compliance documentation to clinical facilities upon request. Failure to fulfill all health compliance requirements will preclude the student's participation in clinical experiences. If a student is discovered to be out of compliance while participating in

a clinical experience, they will be removed from the clinic, a letter documenting the professional behavior deficit will be placed in their academic file, and their time away from the clinic will have to be made up through direct patient care.

In the event of an illness, injury, or other event that results in questions about a student's readiness to fully participate in a clinical experience, additional documentation may be required from an appropriate health care provider prior to a student beginning or returning to a clinical experience. Students are responsible for the cost of health care during clinical education experiences.

## Insurance Coverage

### 1. Malpractice and Personal Liability Insurance

- a. Upon admission to the Physical Therapy Program, students are enrolled in GVSU's Student Blanket Malpractice and Professional Liability Insurance Program. This policy is renewed annually for the duration of enrollment in the PT program and participation in clinical education activities. Limits of coverage are up to \$2,000,000 per occurrence or up to \$6,000,000 aggregate. Each affiliating facility will receive a certificate of enrollment in the policy prior to the start of each clinical experience.
- b. If a student is involved in any incident during a clinical experience that may potentially result in a malpractice or liability claim, the DCE must be notified and consulted regarding how to proceed. Appropriate contacts with the university's legal counsel and insuring agents will be made through the DCE.

### 2. Health Insurance

Students should have in force, at the commencement of a clinical education experience, a health insurance policy satisfactory to the clinical facility. This policy would routinely include a minimum coverage for emergency medical services and hospitalizations. Upon request, students will provide clinical education sites documentation of enrollment in a health insurance program and outlines of coverages provided by the policy.

### 3. Injury

During clinical experiences, students are not employees of GVSU or clinical education sites. Therefore, GVSU and clinical education facilities are not responsible for the cost of care needed as a result of injury obtained while participating in a clinical experience. The cost of any medical care is the responsibility of the student.

## Attendance

Students are expected to be in attendance at the clinical site during assigned working hours of the facility throughout the clinical experience except in extenuating circumstances (illness, funeral, etc.). A typical full-time clinical education experience consists of 36-40 scheduled hours per week in the clinic. In the role of a developing professional, students will typically need additional time beyond scheduled clinic hours for preparation and for completion of documentation. Any desired alterations from the standard schedule of a given clinical experience, including planned absences, must be approved by the DCE prior to discussion with the SCCE and CI. If these alterations reduce your time in the clinic, the hours will have to be made up.

When participating in clinical experiences, students must consider their health and the health of those with whom they come in contact. If the student feels he/she has an illness that may be harmful to patients, he/she should not participate in the clinical experience for that day. In extenuating circumstances (illness, funeral, etc.), students may be granted an excused absence. The need for make-up time for these excused absences will be determined by the CI in consultation with the SCCE and DCE. Because observation does not replace practice, if a student has a condition which prevents them from performing essential functions of physical therapist practice, they will not be allowed to continue the clinical experience.

Policies regarding notification of the SCCE or CI by the student in the case of an absence for illness should be developed by the clinical site, and the student should be informed of such policies. In general, if students will be absent, they must contact the clinical facility prior to the start of their work day. They also must notify the DCE about the absence within 24 hours of its occurrence. The academic program and/or clinical site may request a physician's report if the student was absent because of illness.

In the event of inclement weather, students may make a decision about clinic attendance in consultation with their SCCE, CI, and DCE. This decision may be based on weather advisories, road conditions, distance from residence to clinic, and clinic schedule. Closure of GVSU due to local weather conditions is not an automatic day off from the clinical site.

Thanksgiving Day, Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, and Labor Day are holidays in which students are excused from the clinic. Students are expected to maintain their clinical schedule on other days, such as Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Fall Break, when classes are not held at GVSU. The Friday after Thanksgiving is not a day off from the clinical site unless the clinic is closed or a day off is requested and granted by the SCCE and CI. The SCCE and CI may make this decision based on student clinical performance, attendance record, and the staffing needs of the department. If the student is granted a day off, make up time must be completed.

If the DCE observes a pattern of repeated absences across clinical experiences that interferes with the objectives for the experiences, the student may be required to make-up missed time or to complete an additional clinical experience.

## COVID-19

Being a healthcare provider involves risk of exposure to COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. During clinical education experiences, students shall participate in the care of patients with infectious diseases if they are wearing PPE, are being appropriately supervised, and do not have health-related conditions that would cause a licensed clinician to be restricted from the same activity. Student safety can be optimized during clinical education experiences by following all related GVSU and clinical site policies, procedures, and protocols. Prior to entering a clinical education site, students must follow any directions related to screening and illness prevention measures, as posted by the University. Each clinical site will determine and provide information regarding the process for submitting required health assessment for students to enter the clinical facility. Students must follow the directions provided by their clinical site.

The Health Compliance COVID vaccine requirement continues to be updated to align with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for health and health-related programs. To be health compliant, students must be “up-to-date” for COVID vaccines. Currently, “up-to-date” status requires students to have had the primary vaccine series (one J&J, two Moderna, or two Pfizer vaccines) and a minimum of one Moderna or Pfizer booster. Individuals who have a recognized medical condition for which the vaccine is contraindicated or not recommended or who have a sincerely held religious belief that prevents them from receiving the vaccine should request an exemption through the Health Compliance Vaccine Exemption Committee. Clinical sites can change their COVID requirements at any time, and it is unreasonable for the clinical education faculty to be aware of each change as it occurs. Therefore, students with exemptions will be assigned to clinical sites in alignment with the current clinical assignment process. The DCE will then investigate whether the clinical site requires a COVID vaccination, accepts the student’s GVSU-approved exemption, or requires the student to apply for an exemption through the clinical site’s health compliance process. If a student cannot be placed at a particular clinical site due to their exemption status, the DCE will make a reasonable effort to find an alternative placement. However, this could cause a delay in the start of a clinical experience, the completion of a clinical experience, and/or the student’s graduation.

If a student is not feeling well, they should not go to their clinical site. They should inform their CI and GVSU primary clinical education faculty member and follow any related directions provided by their clinical site. If the student is directed to obtain COVID testing, they must stay home until the result of testing is obtained. Return to the clinical site will be determined by the results of COVID testing. If a student has a positive test result, they must stay home and self-isolate for the time indicated by the clinical site, the CDC, and/or the local Health Department. If the student has a negative COVID test, they may return to the clinic when they receive approval



from the clinical site. The SCCE and/or CI may defer the return-to-clinic decision to the DCE if they decide to do so.

If a student misses time in the clinic related to illness or the need to self-isolate or quarantine, they will not be required to make-up missed time, as long as they attain the outcome expectation for the clinical experience at the time of final evaluation.

If a student has concerns about clinic practices and their safety, they should communicate their concerns as soon as possible to their primary clinical education faculty member. The faculty member will communicate with the clinical educators and student to attempt to resolve the concerns. If the faculty agree with the student's concerns, the student may be removed from the clinical experience until a resolution is reached that is satisfactory to all parties. If a resolution cannot be reached, an alternative clinical experience will be sought for the student. If completion of the clinical experience is delayed while an alternative clinical site is sought, the student may not need to complete the full number of hours of the clinical experience, as long as they attain the outcome expectation of the experience at the time of final evaluation. If the length of a clinical experience is shortened, the student will not receive tuition reimbursement for the weeks that were not completed.

Students who are immunocompromised, pregnant, or have other health problems should assess safety for participation in clinical experiences and should discuss their participation with their primary clinical education faculty member. Students experiencing fear, grief, or loss impacting their ability to participate in a clinical experience also should discuss their participation with their primary clinical education faculty member. The student may be directed to other resources for assistance. If a decision is made to delay the completion of a clinical experience, this decision will be documented in writing and signed by the student. The DPT clinical education faculty will work with the student to complete the experience at another time, however, a delayed clinical experience could delay graduation from the program.

Clinical site visits will not be conducted on a regular basis for established clinical sites. However, they may be conducted when a student is initially placed into a new clinical site. Clinical experiences will be overseen by the DPT clinical education faculty through Blackboard and email communication with students. Students will be encouraged to initiate communication when questions or concerns arise. A method of communication with CIs will be identified for each clinical education course and CIs will be informed of the method prior to the start of a clinical experience. In addition to the designated means of communication, the DPT clinical education faculty will be available to clinical instructors by phone, email, and/or virtual meeting as needed.

If a clinical site suspends a clinical experience because of COVID-19, they must inform the DPT program of this decision in writing. Student re-entry into the clinic will be dependent upon the healthcare organization's ability to host students. With consideration of the specific circumstances, a decision will be made whether to wait for the clinical site to resume student experiences or to seek an alternative clinical site. The transfer of a

student to an alternative clinical site could result in the need to lengthen a total clinical experience to allow time for orientation to the alternative site and attainment of the outcome objectives for the experience. If the CI for the suspended experience determines that the student has attained the outcome expectations for the clinical experience and this determination is documented on the CPI, and if the student agrees, the clinical experience may be considered complete without the student completing all weeks of the experience. If the length of a clinical experience is shortened, the student will not receive tuition reimbursement for the weeks that were not completed.

Although attendance expectations and experience length may be modified due to extenuating circumstances, all students must complete the minimum number of weeks of clinical education required by CAPTE, the accrediting body for the DPT program, and they must fulfill all DPT program clinical education requirements.

## Clinical Education Standards

1. Clinical Education is an important part of any Physical Therapy professional curriculum. At GVSU, the academic and clinical components of the curriculum are intertwined and build toward attainment of professional competence. To this end, clinical experiences are interspersed throughout the professional curriculum and are sequenced. All students must satisfactorily complete Clinical Education I, II, III, IV and V to fulfill the program requirements. If a student does not satisfactorily complete one course, they may not progress to the next course without satisfactory completion of remedial work. An exception may be made for PT 675, as described below.
2. To ensure academic readiness, faculty approval is required for students to participate in their clinical experiences. This approval will be documented in the department minutes. Students will not be allowed to participate in clinical experiences if there is a reason to believe that they are unprepared for this type of experience. Sufficient reasons include:
  - a. Questions about the student's ability to safely manage patients.
  - b. Failure to meet the academic standards that are detailed in the DPT Student Handbook or a course syllabus may indicate that a student is unprepared to participate in clinical experiences. The clinical faculty assumes a specific level of knowledge and ability in a student who is to treat their patients. A student who has an isolated course deficiency might be allowed to participate in a clinical experience if the faculty determines that other areas of knowledge are appropriate and that the deficiency can be remediated and is not critical to the student's performance in that particular clinical experience.
  - c. Evidence of unethical or illegal behavior.

- d. Medical or psychological conditions which could endanger the safety of the student or the patients entrusted to them or that prevent the student from fully participating in the clinical experience.
  - e. Problems identified with professional behaviors which may result in a student being regarded by faculty as unprepared for clinical assignment. With the guidance of faculty, the student must resolve the problem area prior to the clinical assignment.
3. Interruption of Clinical Education I, II, III, IV, or V
- a. If the student is unable to complete a clinical experience due to illness, injury, pregnancy, or other personal situations, the following steps will be taken:
    - 1) The student (or their representative) will notify the DCE and/or the CI (if the student or representative is unable to notify the CI, the DCE will do so).
    - 2) In the case of illness, injury, or pregnancy, the student must submit documentation from their health care provider of the student's inability to complete the experience.
    - 3) In the case of personal situations, the student should document in writing the extent of the problem.
    - 4) With Physical Therapy program faculty approval, the student may continue to take classroom courses even though they are unable to participate in clinical experiences.
    - 5) The student will meet with the DCE to discuss a time frame for future completion of the clinical education experience. If the student will not complete the clinical experience during the current semester, a grade of incomplete (I) will be assigned.
    - 6) At the appropriate time, the DCE will arrange for the completion of the clinical education experience.
    - 7) If there is a substantial interruption between the time the student finished their classroom coursework and the start of the clinical education experience, at the discretion of the Physical Therapy faculty, the student may be required to demonstrate competency of didactic work.
    - 8) Before resuming a clinical experience, the student will provide the Department with a written statement from a professional provider, such as a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, counselor, etc., stating that they believe the student is able to resume the clinical experiences. If the reason

for interruption of the clinical education experience is personal, the student will submit the written statement on his/her own behalf.

- b. At any time in the processes listed above, university resources for learning and success, such as the Counseling Center, Disability Support Resources, Student Academic Success Center, etc. may be contacted for consultation regarding the completion of the clinical education experience. An academic progress committee may also be convened.

### Unsatisfactory Clinical Performance

1. The following may result in dismissal from and/or unsatisfactory completion of Clinical Education I, II, III, IV, V:
  - a. Unexcused absences.
  - b. Excused absences in excess of 10% of the total affiliation time.
  - c. Unethical and/or unprofessional conduct.
  - d. Misconduct resulting in possible danger to a patient(s).
  - e. Failure to meet course objectives as described in course syllabus.
2. If a student fails to satisfactorily complete a clinical education course, any or all of the following steps can be taken as determined by the DCE, in consultation with the Program Director.
  - a. Make-up time for unexcused or excessive absences/tardiness.
  - b. Additional clinical time in the same or a different facility in order to improve skills to meet course objectives and/or enhance professional and ethical behavior.
  - c. Additional didactic work to be completed prior to further clinical experience.
  - d. The Program Director may convene an Academic Progress Committee (APC) to consider a learning contract, probation, and/or dismissal consistent with the Student Handbook.
3. Detailed procedures for unsatisfactory clinical education course completion.
  - a. If a student does not meet the criteria for satisfactory clinical education course completion at the end of the current semester, a grade of I, or No Credit (NC) will be given. The course grade will be based on the nature and extent of the deficient areas.

- b. If a student receives an I, the following procedure will be followed.
  - 1) The DCE, in consultation with the student, CI and SCCE, and PT faculty, will determine if another clinical experience or remedial experience should be scheduled immediately or if other steps are necessary. The options include:
    - a) Arranging for more didactic work to be completed prior to further clinical experience. Based on the extent of didactic work, the student may be required to register for PT 699 (Independent Study in Physical Therapy). Satisfactory completion of these specific assignments will be necessary before further clinical experience will be scheduled. Additional clinical experience directed towards problem areas will be scheduled following satisfactory completion of the didactic work.
    - b) If more didactic work is not considered necessary, the DCE will schedule additional clinical experience directed towards problem areas, and inform the PT faculty of this decision.
    - c) Except in extreme extenuating circumstances, a student may repeat no more than the equivalent of one experience for remediation of a clinical education course.
  - 2) If additional clinical time is required, the remediation plan will be described in a learning contract to be signed by the student and shared with the SCCE and CI for the scheduled experience.
  - 3) If the student meets the criteria for remediation as described in the remediation plan, the student will receive credit (CR) for the course and will return to good standing in the program.
  - 4) If the student does not meet the criteria for remediation, as described in the remediation plan, the student will receive a grade of NC for the course.
- c. If a student receives NC for a clinical education course, the student will be placed on probation and the following procedure will be followed, in addition to the procedure for academic probation (see Physical Therapy Student Handbook).
  - 1) The student will be required to retake the course in order to continue in the PT Program.
  - 2) The PT faculty will meet to decide what actions will be taken. The options include arranging for more didactic work to be completed prior to further clinical experience. Based on the extent of didactic work, the

student may be required to register for PT 699 (Independent Study in Physical Therapy). Satisfactory completion of these specific assignments will be necessary for further clinical experience to be assigned. Clinical assignment for a course retake will be scheduled by the DCE after satisfactory completion of remedial work.

- 3) If the student meets the objectives and course expectations as described in the course outline during the course retake, the student will receive a grade of CR and will return to good standing in the program.
  - 4) If the student does not meet the objectives and course expectations as described in the outline, the student will receive a grade of NC for the course.
  - 5) Students will be allowed to retake a clinical education course only one time. If the student receives a grade of NC after a retake, the student will be considered for dismissal from the PT Program.
4. Unsatisfactory Completion of Clinical Education III (PT 675)
- a. If the student does not meet the criteria for credit in PT 675, the student may be allowed to proceed on schedule to PT 677 if the areas of deficiency or extent of deficiency are not believed to impact performance at the PT 677 clinical site. The following will occur:
    - 1) The SCCE at the PT 677 site will be informed of the deficient areas.
    - 2) The DCE, in consultation with the student, PT 675 CI and SCCE, and PT faculty, will determine remediation activities needed for PT 675 deficiencies, which may include:
      - a) Content review and application during PT 677
      - b) On-campus remediation during the following semester. Based on the extent of didactic work, the student may be required to register for PT 699 (Independent Study in Physical Therapy).
    - 3) The remediation plan will be described in a learning contract to be signed by the student.
    - 4) A grade of credit for PT 675 will be given after successful completion of remediation.
    - 5) Credit must be earned for PT 675 prior to participation in PT 698.

- b. If the deficient areas or extent of deficiency in PT 675 is such that performance in PT 677 will be impacted, the student's participation in PT 677 will be delayed until remediation of deficiencies is satisfactorily completed. The following will occur:
    - 1) The DCE, in consultation with the student, PT 675 CI and SCCE, and PT faculty, will determine remediation activities needed for PT 675 deficiencies, which may include:
      - a) On-campus remediation. Based on the extent of didactic work, the student may be required to register for PT 699 (Independent Study in Physical Therapy).
      - b) Additional clinical time
    - 2) The remediation plan will be described in a learning contract to be signed by the student.
    - 3) A grade of credit for PT 675 will be given after successful completion of remediation.
    - 4) Credit must be earned for PT 675 prior to participation in PT 677.
    - 5) If remediation is not complete at the end of the fall semester, the student will receive a grade of I or NC for PT 675. The course grade will be based on the nature and extent of deficient areas and remediation progress.
  - c. In either situation described above, if a student is not successful in completing the remediation plan satisfactorily in the defined time frame, a grade of NC will be given for PT 675.
5. At any time in the processes described above, university and/or community resources for learning and success, such as the Counseling Center, Disability Support Resources, Student Academic Success Center, may be contacted for consultation.