

Grand Valley State University

Doctor of Physical Therapy

Clinical Education Policies & Procedures

Handbook

(Updated August 2026)

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook outlines the policies and procedures pertaining to the clinical education component of the GVSU DPT program curriculum. This handbook is used in conjunction with the GVSU [DPT Student Handbook](#).

Clinical Education Overview

Clinical Education is an integral part of the GVSU DPT curriculum. To this end, clinical experiences are interspersed throughout the professional curriculum and are sequenced. To provide students the depth and breadth of clinical experiences necessary for entry-level proficiency, the GVSU DPT program maintains contractual relationships with numerous health care organizations throughout Michigan, nationally, and internationally.

For a student to be placed at any specific site, a contract must be in place, the site must have a qualified clinical instructor available, and the experience must meet the student's needs. The clinical education faculty work diligently to place students at sites that facilitate meaningful clinical and professional development. This process involves consideration of both individual wants and collective needs. Although we can guarantee a fair and transparent placement process that prioritizes learning needs and graduation requirements, we cannot guarantee a student will be placed at a specific site.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A CLINICAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

All potential affiliating clinical education sites are initially vetted by the Director or Associate Director(s) of Clinical Education (DCEs) to establish whether or not there is an interest by the clinical site in developing an affiliation with Grand Valley State University (GVSU) and if the site is in alignment with the DPT program's mission, vision, values, and curriculum. If an interest exists, further information about the site is gathered. Based upon this information, the DCEs will determine if the clinical site is a viable potential affiliate, in accordance with the Guidelines to Promote Excellence in Clinical Education Partnerships. If so, a site visit with the clinical site may be scheduled to allow for a greater exchange of information and ideas between the DCEs and Site Coordinator of Clinical Education (SCCE). Contracts are reviewed by both the clinical education site and the academic institution. Revisions are made as needed to meet requirements of the university's legal counsel, insuring agents, and the clinical site's legal counsel. A signed and fully executed contract is required to establish a clinical education partnership. Contracts will be routinely reviewed, and a renewal process will be followed in accordance with the terms specified in each agreement.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT TO A CLINICAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

Consistent with the national voluntary mailing dates for physical therapy clinical education experience requests, GVSU will send requests to clinical sites each March for all clinical experiences in the following calendar year. If a clinical education experience opportunity (slot) is offered by the clinical site, the DCEs will provide the clinical site with advance notice of the student assignment per the affiliation agreement.

At least four weeks prior to the commencement of a clinical experience, the student will contact the SCCE and/or the Clinical Instructor (CI) with introductory and background information. This will assist the SCCE, CI, and the student in the development of specific learning objectives. Final information (including the course syllabus and objectives) from GVSU also will be sent to the SCCE by this time.

Clinical Education Site Assignment

The DCEs will provide students with a list of available clinical experience slot offers, including pertinent clinical site information, at least 10 days prior to the due date for clinical site selection.

Clinical placement assignments will be made by the DCEs with consideration of the rank-ordered preference list submitted by the student, graduation requirements, and DPT program goals.

Students should expect to complete multiple clinical experiences at sites outside of a 45-mile radius from Cook-DeVos Center for Health Sciences (CHS).

Decisions regarding appropriate clinical experience selections will be made in consultation with the DCEs whose decisions may overrule a student's preferences.

Requirements

Across all clinical education experiences, students are required to obtain experience managing a variety of patient/client presentations, including those of the musculoskeletal, neuromuscular, cardiopulmonary and integumentary systems, and to obtain experience in managing patients/clients across the lifespan.

Students are required to complete at least one clinical experience, including the associated learning experiences and activities, in each of the following three practice settings:

1. Outpatient Musculoskeletal Practice (OP MSK)
 - Students are required to complete their first clinical experience and one of their three third-year clinical experiences within outpatient musculoskeletal practice.
 - Learning experiences/activities within this setting:
 - extremity impairments

- spinal impairments
- 2. Inpatient Acute Care (IP Acute) or Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility (IPR/IRF)*
 - Learning experiences/activities within this setting:
 - medical chart review
 - critical care and/or post-operative care
 - interaction with a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary team
 - discharge planning
- 3. Post-Acute Rehabilitation
 - Learning experiences/activities within this setting:
 - care of patients/clients with neuromuscular impairments and/or long-term functional limitations
 - interaction with a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary team
 - Examples include, but are not limited to, school-based pediatrics, outpatient pediatrics, outpatient neurological care, home health care, skilled nursing/subacute rehabilitation

*Note that Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility (IPR/IRF) opportunities can fulfill the Inpatient Acute Care (IP Acute) or the Post-Acute Rehabilitation requirement.

Conflict of Interest in Clinical Education Site Assignments

Students will not be assigned to a clinical site where they have a previously established personal relationship or close connection, unless unusual circumstances exist. A student is required to disclose any relationship or situation that may present a conflict of interest. Examples include, but are not limited to, prior or current employment, commitment for future employment, extensive volunteer hours, or close personal relationship with someone employed at the clinical site. Determination regarding conflict of interest will be made by the DCEs in consultation with the student and SCCE/CI as appropriate.

Students may interview for future employment during a clinical experience but should not accept or decline an employment offer until the completion of the clinical experience and final assessment.

Students will not be assigned to a clinical education experience within the same organization more than once unless the clinical experiences are in different clinical practice settings or would provide significantly differentiated learning experiences.

Clinical Experience Cancellations by Site

In the event of the cancellation of a clinical experience slot offer, the DCEs communicate with the students involved. An alternative clinical experience assignment that meets the

learning needs of the student will be sought, and the following procedures will be applied:

- Clinical experience slot offers that were not initially utilized by GVSU will be investigated first.
- If the list of available clinical experience slot offers does not meet the student's learning needs, the DCEs will attempt to find another clinical experience for the student.
- If an available clinical experience slot meets the learning needs of the student, but is not acceptable to the student, the student may choose to delay a clinical experience. However, a delayed clinical experience may delay the student's graduation.

If multiple students experience a clinical education slot cancellation, and desire the same available opportunity, the following procedures will be applied::

- learning needs and graduation requirements will be prioritized.
- a lottery system may be used to determine which student receives the available assignment.

In the event that students in different cohorts are in need of the same available clinical experience slot(s), priority will be given to students who are further progressed in the DPT program curriculum.

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 education partnership will be used in evaluating international clinical sites. Clinical education sites 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 and assist students in meeting graduation requirements.

To be assigned to an international clinical education experience, a student must be in good standing regarding prior academic and clinical performance and professional behaviors, at the discretion of the DCEs with consideration of DPT program faculty input and policies outlined in the GVSU [DPT Student Handbook](#). International clinical placements are only available to students as a terminal clinical experience.

STUDENT-INITIATED CLINICAL EDUCATION SITE REQUESTS

A list of established affiliating clinical education sites and additional clinical site information is available electronically via clinical education software.

Students should not contact a clinical education site regarding the establishment of a new partnership or placement opportunities at an existing affiliating site. **All communication regarding potential clinical education sites and opportunities must be conducted through the GVSU DCEs.**

New Clinical Education Site Requests

A student who is interested in exploring the possibility of a new clinical education partnership (in or out of state) must submit a completed proposal to the DCEs by the specified deadline (typically at least six months in advance of clinical education site selection for a specific experience). In general, only one new clinical site partnership will be developed for a student during their time in the DPT program. Once the DCEs make the request on the student's behalf, a student is obligated to complete the clinical education experience should the site grant the request. Except under extraordinary extenuating circumstances, GVSU DCEs will not cancel a student-requested out-of-state clinical placement due to circumstantial life changes (including but not limited to, loss of housing, family events, or change in desire to complete the requested experience).

In addition to the requirements for clinical education sites and clinical instructors, the following guidelines will be used to evaluate new clinical education sites (sites with whom the GVSU DPT program does not yet have a contract) for inclusion in GVSU's clinical education program:

- The site has an established clinical education program.
- The site provides learning experiences which are not provided or are provided on a limited basis by existing clinical partners.
- GVSU and the site are able to establish and foresee maintaining an ongoing clinical education partnership.

When making a judgment about the suitability of a clinical education partnership 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/client choice in selecting a PT provider.

Out-of-State Clinical Education Site Requests (with Established Clinical Education Partners)

A student who is interested in an out-of-state clinical education experience with an established clinical education partner must submit a completed request to the DCEs by the specified deadline. Once the DCEs make the request on the student's behalf, a student is

committed to the clinical education experience should the site grant the request. Except under extraordinary extenuating circumstances, GVSU DCEs will not cancel a student-requested out-of-state clinical placement due to circumstantial life changes (including but not limited to, loss of housing, family events, or change in desire to complete the requested experience).

ACADEMIC PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Instructions to Students Prior to Clinical Experiences

Students will abide by the applicable rules and regulations of each clinical education site including, but not limited to, professional conduct, confidentiality of patient/client and facility records, health compliance requirements, and the authority of the site over clinical and non-clinical operations.

All students and DPT program 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 education 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 education site when obtaining personal health information for educational purposes, and regarding the use of proprietary information of the site.

Students will be instructed of patients'/clients' rights to decline care from a student and that they must introduce themselves as a physical therapist student to patients, families, caregivers, clinical and non-clinical staff.

Educational Records/Reports

All educational records and reports relating to the educational program shall be maintained by GVSU. 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 \(FERPA\)](#).

Communication During Clinical Experiences

First- and Second-Year Experiences

Students and CIs will be informed electronically and/or via class presentation to reach out to the DCEs with any concerns or questions prior to and during the clinical experience. Student assignments completed during the clinical experience provide an additional opportunity for communication, collaboration, mentorship, and problem-solving between the DCEs and students. The DCEs will contact the CIs electronically prior to the midterm of the clinical experience to further facilitate communication, especially regarding questions, concerns, and updates on student performance. In the case of underachieving or exceptional student performance, additional support will be provided. Any concerns will be addressed by the DCEs via a phone call, electronic communication, virtual meeting, or clinical education site visit, as determined by the DCE and CI. The SCCE will be notified as needed.

Third-Year Experiences

Students and CIs will be informed electronically and/or via class presentation to reach out to the DCEs with any concerns or questions prior to and during the clinical experience. Student assignments completed during the clinical experience provide an additional opportunity for communication, collaboration, mentorship, and problem-solving between the DCEs and students. The DCEs will contact the CIs electronically prior to the midterm of the clinical experience to further facilitate communication, especially regarding questions, concerns, and updates on student performance. In the case of underachieving or exceptional student performance, additional support will be provided. A few weeks prior to the final assessment, the DCEs will reach out to CIs to assess student progression toward course objectives and to elicit feedback about the clinical education program. Any concerns will be addressed by the DCEs via a phone call, electronic communication, virtual meeting, or clinical education site visit, as determined by the DCE and CI. The SCCE will be notified as needed.

Clinical Education Site Visits

Virtual, phone, or face-to-face clinical education site visits will be completed dependent upon needs identified by the DCEs, SCCE/CI, and or/student.

Complaints About the GVSU DPT Program

Complaints regarding the GVSU DPT program, including clinical education, will follow the procedures outlined in the [DPT Student Handbook](#).

CLINICAL EDUCATION FACULTY (SCCE & CI) RESPONSIBILITIES

According to the APTA Academy of Education [Physical Therapy Clinical Education Glossary](#), Clinical Education Faculty are the individuals engaged in providing the clinical education components of the curriculum, generally referred to as either Site Coordinators of Clinical Education (SCCEs), preceptors, or Clinical Instructors (CIs). Although the academic institution does not usually employ these individuals, they do agree to certain standards of behavior through contractual arrangements for their services.

Planning and Implementation of Clinical Experiences

The clinical education site shall collaborate with the GVSU in the planning and implementation of each student's clinical education experience to ensure that the experience aligns with the educational objectives of the GVSU DPT Program.

Each clinical education site shall designate an individual to serve as the Site Coordinator of Clinical Education (SCCE), who will function as the primary liaison with the GVSU Directors of Clinical Education (DCEs). Additionally, the site shall identify appropriately qualified Clinical Instructors (CIs) for physical therapist students based upon the criteria below.

Required Criteria for Serving as a CI

The following are the minimum required criteria for serving as a CI:

- Interest in serving as a clinical instructor
- At least one year of full-time experience (or equivalent) as a licensed physical therapist
- Active physical therapy license, in good standing, within the state they are currently practicing
- Disclosure of any prior physical therapy license sanctions to the GVSU DCEs prior to student placement
- Being an effective role model
- Being an effective clinical teacher
- Effective interpersonal relations and communication skills
- Demonstration of clinical competence and professional behavior consistent with current standards of the physical therapy profession
- Engagement with CI training either prior to or during clinical experience
 - Examples include:
 - [APTA Credentialed Clinical Instructor Program \(Preferred\)](#)
 - Site-specific training programs
 - CI mentorship with an effective CI or SCCE
 - Additional resources can be found at APTA's [Physical Therapy Educator Development](#) webpage.

Preferred Criteria for Serving as a CI

The following are preferred criteria for serving as a CI:

- APTA Membership
- Active involvement in service to the profession via professional organization, volunteer work, or clinical site programming
- At least six months of experience at the current clinical site

CI Evaluation of Students

The CI shall complete written evaluations for each student that document the student's level of performance, progress, and readiness for entry-level physical therapy practice. The site shall adhere to the student evaluation requirements established by GVSU and utilize the evaluation tools/forms designated by the DPT program, including the [APTA Clinical Performance Instrument \(CPI\)](#).

Supervision

Clinical Education Faculty are responsible for the direct supervision of students at the clinical education site. Students require direction, guidance, and assistance to assure the safety of patients/clients and of themselves. At a minimum, GVSU policy requires that a licensed physical therapist be physically present and immediately available 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 DCEs should be consulted if questions arise regarding supervision levels.

Clinical Education Relationships

The primary relationship for student supervision, instruction, and evaluation during a clinical education experience is between the student, CI, and SCCE. The role of the DCE(s) is to serve as a resource to support all parties, facilitate the teaching and learning relationship, and to assist in student development across all clinical education experiences throughout their 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.

Information to be Provided to the Academic Program and Students

Clinical education sites will provide accurate and up-to-date information about the site through the designated clinical education software. Clinical education sites are expected to update required information and will receive an annual prompt to review and confirm its accuracy.

The clinical education site shall provide the GVSU DPT program with relevant policies and procedures prior to the start of a clinical education experience, possibly including but not limited to, professional conduct, confidentiality of patient/client and facility records, HIPAA, use of proprietary information, health compliance, technology use, and the responsibility and authority of facility staff over patient/client care and facility administration. Additionally, students may be informed of relevant policies and procedures of the clinical education site during the on-site orientation process.

Communication of Student Performance Concerns

Any SCCE or CI concerns regarding the performance of a student shall be made known to the DCEs immediately via phone, electronic communication, or virtual meeting to ensure timely intervention and resolution.

Removal of Student from a Clinical Education Experience

In an emergency or in certain cases based upon applicable standards of physical therapy practice, clinical site personnel may temporarily remove a student from a specific assignment or area pending a final determination of their eligibility to continue in the clinical education experience. The site must submit a detailed written report of any such action to GVSU DCEs within three business days, excluding weekends and holidays, after its occurrence, and the appropriate parties shall cooperate in an effort to avoid recurrence.

The DCEs also have the right to remove a student from the clinic for reasons including, but not limited to, patient/client safety, student safety, and student deficits in clinical performance and/or professional behavior.

Educational Records/Reports

Clinical education site personnel 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 academic and clinical performance information.

CLINICAL EDUCATION FACULTY (SCCE & CI) RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

Clinical Education Faculty (SCCE & CI) Rights

Clinical Education Faculty have the right to:

- determine the number, timing, and type of clinical experiences offered to the program
- receive at least 3 months advance notice of student assignment
- have access to the DCEs prior to and during a clinical experience for consultation via phone, electronic communication, or clinical education site visit (in-person or through a virtual meeting)
- have access to information about the academic and clinical education curriculum
- receive information about the types of learning experience desired for the student and outcome expectations for the student
- expect that students will be academically prepared for the clinical experience
- temporarily remove a student from a specific assignment or the clinical education site pending a final determination of the student's eligibility to continue in the clinical experience, based upon applicable standards of physical therapy practice,
- communicate concerns about student performance or the clinical education program to the DCEs
- communicate complaints about the program via the procedures outlined in the [DPT Student Handbook](#)
- submit complaints about the program by [contacting the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education](#) (CAPTE)
- receive feedback on CI performance and/or the clinical education site
- provide feedback to the program about the didactic and clinical education components of the curriculum

Benefits to Clinical Education Faculty (SCCE & CI)

Clinical Education Faculty receive the following benefits:

- Attendance at selected program-sponsored clinical education workshops at reduced or no cost
- DPT program faculty may be able to provide in-services to clinical education faculty upon request
- GVSU recognizes clinical education faculty by appointing them a gratis academic title of "Affiliate Clinical Preceptor." CIs will be required to instruct a minimum of one GVSU student per year to maintain the gratis academic title.
 - Affiliated Clinical Preceptors are eligible to enroll in the Preceptor Perks

Program and their recent service as CI will be verified by the DCEs. 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](#) webpage.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Communication

Students are expected to adhere to the following communication requirements and sequencing before and during each clinical education experience:

- Prior to starting the clinical experience, the student will review clinical education site information.
- The student will monitor their GVSU student email for communication, including onboarding information, from the SCCE/CI and respond within 72 hours.
- If the student has not yet been contacted by their SCCE/CI, the student will contact their assigned SCCE when advised by the DCEs.
- The student will complete all onboarding requirements in a timely manner to ensure they can start the clinical experience as scheduled.
- The student will maintain open and timely communication with their CI to support an effective learning experience.
- If issues or concerns arise during the clinical experience, the student is encouraged to first discuss them with their CI and/or SCCE; however, the DCE is available to facilitate communication and resolution.
- If there are ongoing or unresolved issues after addressing concerns with the CI and/or SCCE, the student will notify the DCE(s).

Transportation and Housing

Each student must provide their own transportation to/from assigned clinical education sites. Students are responsible to make any necessary contacts or arrangements for housing and are responsible for all housing costs during a clinical experience.

Professional Expectations at Clinical Education Site

Attire

Students are expected to be well-groomed and in appropriate attire as described below. Each clinical education site may specify the dress code that a student is required to follow. Students are expected to obtain appropriate attire as required by the clinical education site and are responsible for any associated costs.

In the absence of specific site dress code, the following standards should be followed:

- Professional/business casual dress is generally acceptable attire. Often this consists of non-jean, non-legging (without dress or long shirt that covers to mid-thigh), full-length pants for bottoms. Tops can include polos, button-downs, or pullover shirts without writing or logos. Attire should be opaque, as to ensure that clothing items are not transparent.
- Necklines and shirt lengths should allow for bending and reaching without exposure of the bust or skin between the shirt and pants.
- Shoes should be worn with socks, have non-skid soles, and closed toe and heel. Athletic shoes should not be worn unless approved by the clinical education site.
- Hair should be neat, clean, and should be secured so that it does not cover a student's face or contact a patient/client. Facial hair must be able to be covered with a face mask when required.
- Nail length should not exceed the end of the fingertips.
- Jewelry should be minimal. Piercings may need to be covered based upon clinical education site policies.
- Tattoos may need to be covered based upon clinical education site policies.
- Scented products should not be used as some patients/clients may have allergies or sensitivities.

Name Tags

Students are responsible for obtaining their name tags prior to the start of Clinical Education I. Name tags must be worn in accordance with clinical education site requirements. Some facilities may issue their own name tags or badges; if they do not, students are expected to wear their GVSU student name tag. In all cases, the name tag must clearly identify the individual as a *Student Physical Therapist*.

Professional Conduct

At all times, the student must demonstrate professional behavior per the [APTA Core Values for the Physical Therapist](#), [Code of Ethics for the Physical Therapy Profession](#), [DPT Student Handbook](#) and clinical education site expectations. Non-compliance will be documented by the CI, SCCE and/or DCEs, will impact the student's performance evaluation, and may result in dismissal from the clinic, an unsatisfactory grade, and/or dismissal from the PT program.

Student Self-Evaluation

The student will complete a self-evaluation on the Clinical Performance Instrument (CPI) 3.0 or designated GVSU assessment form prior to the formal midterm and final evaluation meetings with their CI.

The results of the self-evaluation will be shared with the CI and compared to the CI's evaluation of the student. It is expected that the student and CI will meet to discuss the independently completed assessments in order to hone reflective skills and foster growth toward course objectives and professional development.

Student Evaluation of Clinical Experience

Students are expected to be honest, objective, and constructive when evaluating a clinical experience utilizing the Physical Therapist Student Evaluation (PTSE) of Clinical Instruction and the PTSE of Site. All PTSEs are shared with and reviewed by the DCEs. The DCEs will gather additional information if questions or concerns are identified.

Midterm

The student will formally evaluate the CI at midterm using the PTSE of Clinical Instruction. The results of the PTSE will be shared with the CI at midterm to provide feedback on clinical instruction and facilitate effective teaching and learning.

Final

The student will formally evaluate the CI and clinical education site immediately prior to the completion of the experience using the PTSE of Clinical Instruction and the PTSE of Site. The results of the PTSEs will be shared with the CI upon completion of the experience.

STUDENT RIGHTS

Nondiscrimination During Clinical Education Experiences

The GVSU DPT Program is committed to providing a clinical education environment that promotes equity, inclusion, mutual respect, and equal educational opportunity for all students. Students participating in clinical education experiences are entitled to an educational environment free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and intimidation. Clinical education experiences shall be conducted in accordance with [GVSU's Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, and Misconduct](#), applicable federal and state laws, and the standards of the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE).

Students can expect their clinical education site to provide appropriate supervision, regular feedback, fair evaluation, and equitable access to learning opportunities throughout their clinical experience. Students will be evaluated on their clinical performance, professional behaviors, and achievement of established learning outcomes without bias or discrimination.

Students who wish to utilize accommodations within the clinic must work with [GVSU's Student Accessibility Resource Center](#) and the DCEs prior to the start of a clinical experience. The DCEs will collaborate with the student and the clinical education site to facilitate reasonable accommodations that enable participation in clinical education while maintaining the essential functions of the curriculum and ensuring patient safety. Clinical education sites retain the authority to determine whether a requested accommodation is reasonable within their specific practice environment, taking into consideration factors such as patient safety, essential functions of the clinical experience, available resources, staffing, workflow, and the nature of the clinical setting. Accommodation decisions are made on an individual basis in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Students who experience or observe discrimination, harassment, retaliation, or other concerns affecting the learning environment are encouraged to report the concern as soon as possible. Concerns may be discussed with the Clinical Education Faculty (SCCE & CI), DCE(s), Program Director, [Office of Civil Rights and Title IX](#), and the [University Counseling Center](#).

All GVSU DPT program faculty are [Mandatory Reporters](#). Mandatory reporters must report all known details of actual or suspected discrimination, harassment, misconduct (including sexual assault, stalking, sexual exploitation, bullying, endangerment, hazing, and retaliation) including, but not limited to, those that occur related to a clinical education experience.

Retaliation against individuals who report concerns in good faith or participate in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

If concerns regarding discrimination or the clinical learning environment are identified, the DPT Program will work collaboratively with the student and clinical education site to resolve the issue whenever appropriate. Depending on the nature and severity of the concern, actions may include additional communication or education, implementation of a corrective action plan, modification of the clinical experience, reassignment of the student, or discontinuation of the affiliation with the clinical site.

Student Concerns

If a student has concerns about their clinical experience, including, but not limited to, clinic practices, discrimination, harassment, misconduct, and/or student safety, they will communicate their concerns as soon as possible to the DCEs. The DCEs will communicate with the clinical education faculty (SCCE and/or CI) and the student to attempt to resolve the 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 education experience will be sought for the student. If completion of the clinical education 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 education experience, as long as they attain the outcome expectation of the experience at the time of final evaluation. If the length of a clinical education experience is shortened, the student will not receive tuition reimbursement for the weeks that were not completed.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to be in attendance at the clinical education site during assigned working hours of the facility throughout the clinical experience except in extenuating circumstances (e.g. illness, funeral, etc.). On average, a full-time clinical education experience consists of 40 scheduled hours per week excluding lunches and breaks. However, a clinical experience must minimally reach an average of 36 hours per week. Students should expect that in the role of a developing professional, they will typically need additional time beyond scheduled clinic hours for preparation and for completion of documentation. Although attendance expectations and experience length may be modified due to extraordinary extenuating circumstances, all students must complete the minimum number of weeks of clinical education required by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) and must fulfill all GVSU DPT program clinical education requirements.

Absences

Planned/Requested Absences or Schedule Alterations

Consistent attendance is an essential component of clinical education and reflects the professional responsibilities expected of a physical therapist. Clinical experiences are designed to provide students with opportunities to develop clinical reasoning, professional behaviors, and patient care skills that cannot be fully replicated through alternative learning activities. Students are expected to prioritize their clinical education experiences and make every reasonable effort to fulfill their scheduled clinical responsibilities. Routine personal appointments, travel, employment obligations, or other discretionary activities should be scheduled outside of assigned clinical hours whenever possible.

Any proposed modification to the established schedule of a clinical education experience, including planned absences, must receive prior approval from the DCEs before being discussed with or requested from the SCCE or CI. Approval of schedule modifications is not guaranteed and will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the educational needs of the student, the impact on the clinical education site, accreditation requirements, and program policies.

If an approved schedule modification results in a reduction of required clinical hours or learning experiences, the student is responsible for completing equivalent make-up time as directed by the DCEs in collaboration with the clinical education site.

Unplanned Absences/Tardiness

Students who have a medical condition, are immunocompromised, are pregnant, or have other circumstances that may affect their ability to safely participate in a clinical education experience are encouraged to discuss their situation with the DCEs as early as possible. Students experiencing personal circumstances, including concerns related to their mental health or emotional well-being, that may impact their ability to safely and effectively participate in a clinical education experience are also encouraged to consult with the DCEs.

The DCEs may refer students to appropriate university resources, including [Student Accessibility Resources \(SAR\)](#), the [Office of Civil Rights and Title IX](#), the [University Counseling Center](#), or other available support services, as appropriate. When necessary, the DCEs will work collaboratively with the student, clinical education site, and relevant university offices to determine next steps, including but not limited to, modifications to current clinical experience, implementation of reasonable accommodations, and/or a temporary delay or postponement of the clinical education experience.

If a decision is made to postpone or interrupt a clinical education experience, the decision and plan will be documented in writing. The DPT Clinical Education faculty will work with the student to identify an appropriate opportunity to complete the clinical experience; however, delaying a clinical education experience may also delay progression in the curriculum and graduation.

Clinical education is intended to provide students with opportunities to develop and demonstrate entry-level clinical competence through direct patient care. Observation alone does not satisfy clinical education requirements. Therefore, students who are unable to perform the Essential Functions and Technical Standards of Physical Therapist Practice, as outlined in the [DPT Student Handbook](#), with or without reasonable accommodation, will not be permitted to continue in the clinical education experience until they can safely meet those requirements.

Notification of Unplanned Absences/Tardiness

Each clinical education site establishes its own policies regarding student notification of absences due to illness. Students are responsible for becoming familiar with and adhering to the clinical education site's procedures for notifying the Site Coordinator of Clinical Education (SCCE), Clinical Instructor (CI), or other designated contact.

If a student is unable to report to the clinical education site because of illness, they must notify the site before the scheduled start of the workday or, in exceptional circumstances, as soon as they are reasonably able to do so. In addition, the student must notify the Director(s) of Clinical Education (DCEs) within 24 hours of the absence.

The clinical education site and/or the academic program reserve the right to request documentation from an appropriate healthcare provider to verify an illness-related absence when deemed necessary.

Pattern of Absences/Tardiness

Repeated absences, tardiness, or other attendance concerns across one or more clinical education experiences may indicate a lapse in professional responsibility or interfere with achievement of clinical learning objectives, and additional action may be required. Potential student outcomes may include, but are not limited to, making up missed time, receiving a Professional Development Letter, receiving an unsatisfactory grade, completing an additional clinical experience, or referral to an Academic Progress Committee (APC).

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, students should consider both their personal safety and professional responsibilities when making a determination about travel to the clinical education site. Students should consider severe weather advisories, road conditions, distance from residence to clinic, and clinical schedule. Weather conditions may differ between GVSU, the student's residence, and the clinical education site. Therefore, closure of the university due to weather does not excuse a student from attending a clinical education experience.

If inclement weather prevents safe travel or results in a delayed arrival or absence, the student must notify the CI or SCCE as soon as possible and inform the DCEs at the earliest reasonable opportunity. The need for make-up time will be determined by the DCE(s) in consultation with the clinical education site, as appropriate.

Holidays

The following are holidays in which students are excused from the clinic and these hours are not required to be made up:

- Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day
- Memorial Day
- United States Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
 - The Friday after Thanksgiving is not a day off from the clinical education experience unless the clinic is closed.

Unless otherwise specified by the DCEs, students will adhere to the clinical education site's holiday observation schedule. Students are expected to maintain their clinical schedule on other days, such as Fall or Spring Breaks, when classes are not held at GVSU.

HEALTH COMPLIANCE

Infectious diseases are common in many clinical settings. During clinical education activities, students may be exposed to patients/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 academic programs and affiliated organizations, require students enrolled in health/health related programs to comply with certain health, safety, and legal requirements.

GVSU is contractually obligated to ensure all students achieve full compliance **prior** to participation in experiential learning (including integrated and full-time clinical experiences) **and through** program completion.

Health Compliance Requirements

Students will be required to set up an account with the appropriate third-party compliance platform, as directed by the DCEs and the [GVSU Health Compliance Office](#). Health compliance requirements are to be completed by the program's identified due date. The GVSU Health Compliance Office provides students with directions related to all health compliance requirements, including, but not limited to, health records, insurance information, background checks and drug screens (when required).

Students are required to submit documentation of health compliance items prior to the due date communicated by the Health Compliance Officer. Detailed information about GVSU health compliance requirements, resources for completion, and due dates will be located within the compliance platform. A full description of each requirement and the most up-to-date information can be found in the [GVSU Health Compliance Policy](#).

It is recommended that students begin submitting health compliance documents as soon as possible as some requirements may take several weeks, or months, to complete.

Requirements may include, but are not limited to:

- Physical exam
- Immunizations and/or titers (bloodwork) to check for immunity
- Tuberculosis screening (annually)
- Influenza vaccine (annually)
- COVID-19 vaccination as required by university policy
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) - Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Providers
- Training modules completed online annually via online learning management system (e.g. Blackboard)

Costs

Students are responsible for the cost of obtaining/maintaining health compliance. Health care costs vary widely, with estimates ranging from \$250 to \$550 depending upon the type of services required and location received. Some services may be covered by health insurance. A resource provided by GVSU's Health Compliance, "[Where to Receive Services and Cost Information](#)" can aid students in finding the most cost-effective options.

Students may need to fulfill additional requirements of clinical education sites and are responsible for any cost associated with fulfilling all compliance requirements. Clinical education sites can change their health requirements for students at any time. 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.

Non-Compliance

Failure to submit required health compliance items on time is considered a breach of professional behaviors, will result in a Professional Development Letter, and will preclude a student's ability to participate in experiential learning, including clinical education, until compliant. Noncompliance could cause a delay in the start of a clinical experience, the completion of a clinical experience, and/or the student's graduation.

Non-Compliance During Clinical Education Experiences

If a student is discovered to be out of compliance while participating in a clinical experience, they will be removed from the clinic, receive a Professional Development Letter, and their time away from the clinic will have to be made up through patient care. The clinical education site has the right to terminate the clinical experience for health compliance violations.

In the event of an illness, injury, or any circumstance that raises concerns about a student's readiness to fully participate in a clinical experience, additional documentation from an appropriate health care provider may be required before the student begins or returns to the clinical experience.

Vaccine Exemptions

Clinical education sites can change their health requirements for students at any time. Therefore, students with GVSU-issued exemptions will be assigned to clinical education sites in alignment with the current clinical education assignment process utilized for their cohort. The DCE(s) will then investigate whether the clinical education site will:

- accept a GVSU-issued exemption
- require the student to apply for a site-specific exemption
- accept a student declination

If a student cannot be placed at a particular clinical education site due to their exemption or choice to decline specific requirements, the DCEs 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.

Insurance Coverage

Malpractice and Personal Liability Insurance

Upon admission to the GVSU DPT Program, students are enrolled in GVSU's Student Malpractice and Professional Liability Insurance Program. This policy is renewed annually for the duration of enrollment in the DPT 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 clinical education site will receive a certificate of enrollment annually as stipulated in the contract or as requested.

If a student is involved in any incident during a clinical experience that may potentially result in a malpractice or liability claim, the DCEs must be notified and consulted regarding how to proceed. If needed, appropriate contacts with the university's legal counsel and insuring agents will be made through the DCEs.

Health Insurance

Students are strongly encouraged to have health insurance, but it is not required by GVSU. However, individual clinical education sites may require proof of health insurance as a condition of participating in a clinical education experience. Students assigned to these sites must have active health insurance in effect at the start of the clinical education experience that meets the site's requirements. Upon request, students are responsible for providing documentation of current and active health insurance coverage to the clinical education site. Failure to maintain or provide proof of required health insurance may affect a student's eligibility to participate in clinical education experiences at sites with this requirement and may limit available placement options.

Students are responsible for all costs associated with personal health care during clinical experiences.

If you require health insurance, please review options for [Student Health Insurance](#) that are available to you.

Injury

During clinical experiences, students are not employees of GVSU or clinical education sites and thus are not covered by worker's compensation. 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.

Clinical Education Standards

Integration of Clinical Education

At GVSU, the didactic and clinical education components of the curriculum are integrated to build toward attainment of professional and clinical competence. To this end, clinical experiences are interspersed throughout the curriculum and are sequenced. All students must satisfactorily and sequentially complete PT 636 Clinical Education I (CE I), PT 656 Clinical Education II (CE II), PT 675 Clinical Education III (CE III), PT 677 Clinical Education IV (CE IV), and PT 698 Clinical Education V (CE 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 (CE III), as described below.

Approval to Participate

GVSU DPT faculty approval is required to ensure student readiness to participate in full-time clinical education experiences. This approval will be documented in the DPT program meeting minutes. Students will not be allowed to participate in clinical education experiences if there is a reason to believe that they are unprepared for this type of experience. Reasons include, but are not limited to:

- Concerns regarding the student's ability to safely engage in clinical practice.
- 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 Education Faculty (SCCEs & CIs) expect that students demonstrate knowledge, skills, abilities, and professional behaviors commensurate with their level of educational preparation when engaging in clinical practice. A student who has an isolated course deficiency may be allowed to participate in a clinical education experience if the DPT program faculty determine that the deficiency can be remediated and is not critical to the student's performance in that particular experience.
- Evidence of unethical or illegal behavior.

- Health conditions which could endanger the safety of the student, endanger the safety of patient/client, or prevent the student from fully participating in the clinical education experience.
- Professional behavior concerns identified by DPT program faculty may result in determination that a student is not prepared to participate in a clinical education experience. In consultation with DPT program faculty, the student must satisfactorily address and remediate identified concerns before beginning the clinical education experience.

Inability to Complete a Clinical Education Experience

If a student is unable to complete a clinical experience due to a health condition or personal situation, the following steps will be taken:

1. The student (or their representative) will notify the DCEs and the CI. If the student or representative is unable to notify the CI, the DCEs will do so on their behalf.
 - *In the case of health conditions*, the student must submit documentation from their health care provider of the student's inability to complete the experience.
 - *In the case of personal situations*, the student should document in writing the extent of the circumstances contributing to their inability to complete the experience.
2. The DCEs will collaborate with the DPT program faculty to determine if an Academic Progress Committee (APC) should be formed or if the student may continue in the didactic portion of the curriculum.
3. The student will collaborate with the DCEs to plan for successful 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.

Reengagement in Clinical Education

Once the student is able to reengage in clinical education experiences, the DCEs will pursue a clinical experience placement to meet specific student needs.

- *In the case of health conditions*, the student must submit documentation from their health care provider attesting to the student's ability to participate in the experience.
- *In the case of personal situations*, the student should document in writing the circumstantial changes contributing to their ability to participate in the experience.

If there is a substantial interruption between the time the student completed their didactic coursework and resuming participation in clinical education experiences, at the discretion of the DPT program faculty and/or an Academic Progress Committee (APC), a learning contract will be enacted that specifies requirements for resumption of the clinical experience.

At any point in the processes listed above, university resources such as the [Student Academic Success Center](#), [Student Accessibility Resources \(SAR\)](#), and the [University Counseling Center](#), or other available support services may be contacted for consultation. An Academic Progress Committee (APC) may also be convened.

Unsatisfactory Clinical Performance

The following may result in dismissal from and/or unsatisfactory completion of PT 636 Clinical Education I, PT 656 Clinical Education II, PT 675 Clinical Education III, PT 677 Clinical Education IV, PT 698 Clinical Education V:

- Unexcused absences
- Excessive excused absences as determined by the DCEs, with potential consultation with the SCCE and CI(s)
- Unethical, illegal, and/or unprofessional conduct
- Misconduct resulting in comprised safety of patients/clients
- Failure to meet course objectives as described in course syllabus

Process Following Unsatisfactory Clinical Performance

If a student fails to satisfactorily complete a clinical education course, any or all of the following steps may be taken as determined by the DCEs:

- Make-up time for unexcused or excessive absences/tardiness
- Additional time in the same or a different clinical education site to improve skills to meet course objectives and/or enhance professional and ethical behavior.
- Additional didactic work to be completed prior to further clinical experience.
- Consultation with the DPT Program Director with the possible formation of an Academic Progress Committee (APC) to consider a learning contract, probation, and/or dismissal consistent with the [DPT Student Handbook](#).

Grading and Subsequent Procedures Following Unsatisfactory Clinical Performance

If a student does not meet the criteria for satisfactory clinical education course completion at the end of the current semester, a grade of Incomplete (I) or No Credit (NC) will be given. The course grade will be dependent on the nature and extent of the deficient areas as determined by the DCEs.

Incomplete (I) Grade

If a student receives an Incomplete (I) for a clinical education course, the following procedure will be applied:

1. The DCEs, in consultation with the student, CI, and SCCE, will determine if another clinical experience should be scheduled immediately, if other remedial steps are necessary, and/or if an Academic Progress Committee (APC) should be convened.

The options could include:

- Requiring the student to complete additional didactic coursework before participating in any further clinical education experiences. Dependent on the extent of didactic work, the student may be required to register for PT 699 Independent Study in Physical Therapy. Satisfactory completion of didactic work will be necessary before participating in any further clinical education experiences. An additional clinical education experience directed toward areas of deficiency will be scheduled following satisfactory completion of the didactic work.
 - If more didactic work is not considered necessary, the DCEs will schedule an additional clinical experience directed toward the areas of deficiency and inform the PT faculty of this decision.
 - Except under extraordinary extenuating circumstances, a student is permitted to repeat no more than the equivalent of one clinical education experience to remediate a clinical education course.
2. If additional time in the clinic 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 learning contract, the student will receive Credit (CR) for the course.
 4. If the student does not meet the criteria for remediation, as described in the learning contract, the student will receive a grade of No Credit (NC) for the course.

No Credit (NC) Grade

If a student receives No Credit (NC) for a clinical education course, the following procedure will be applied:

1. An Academic Progress Committee will be convened to consider appropriate actions. The options may include:
 - Requiring the student to complete additional didactic coursework before participating in any further clinical education experiences. Dependent on the extent of didactic work, the student may be required to register for PT 699 Independent Study in Physical Therapy. Satisfactory completion of didactic work will be necessary before participating in any further clinical education experiences. A retake of the clinical education course directed toward areas of deficiency will be scheduled following satisfactory completion of the didactic work.
 - Retake the clinical education course without additional didactic work
 - Program dismissal
2. If the student meets the objectives and course expectations as described in the syllabus and learning contract during the course retake, the student will receive a grade of Credit (CR).
3. If the student does not meet the objectives and course expectations as described in the course syllabus and learning contract, the student will receive a grade of No

Credit (NC) for the course. Students will be allowed to retake a clinical education course only once. If the student receives a grade of NC after a retake, the Academic Progress Committee (APC) will reconvene, and the student will be considered for dismissal from the DPT Program.

Unsatisfactory Completion of PT 675 Clinical Education III

If the student does not successfully meet course requirements for PT 675 Clinical Education III, the student may or may not be allowed to proceed as sequentially scheduled to PT 677 Clinical Education IV, depending on the areas and extent of deficiency.

At any point in the processes outlined below, university resources such the [Student Academic Success Center](#), [Student Accessibility Resources \(SAR\)](#), the [University Counseling Center](#), or other available support services may be contacted for consultation. An Academic Progress Committee (APC) may also be convened.

Sequential Progression as Scheduled to PT 677 Clinical Education IV

If the student does not successfully meet course requirements for PT 675 Clinical Education III, the student may be allowed to proceed as sequentially scheduled to PT 677 Clinical Education IV if the areas of deficiency or extent of deficiency are not believed to negatively impact the upcoming clinical experience. The following procedure will be applied:

1. The DCEs may delay the start of PT 677 Clinical Education IV if additional time is needed to determine whether the identified deficiencies, or the extent of those deficiencies, are likely to negatively impact the student's success in the upcoming clinical education experience.
2. The SCCE and CI at the PT 677 Clinical Education IV site will be informed of the deficient areas as determined by DCEs.
3. The DCEs, in consultation with the student, CI, and SCCE, will determine if another clinical education experience should be scheduled in the future, if other remedial steps are necessary, and/or if an Academic Progress Committee (APC) should be convened. The options could include:
 - Didactic content review and demonstration of targeted knowledge, skills, abilities and professional behaviors during PT 677 Clinical Education IV
 - On-campus remediation during the following semester; dependent on the extent of didactic work, the student may be required to register for PT 699 Independent Study in Physical Therapy.
 - Additional part-time or full-time clinical education experience to be completed in an upcoming semester.
4. The remediation plan will be described in a learning contract to be signed by the student.
5. If additional time in the clinic 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.
6. If the student meets the objectives and course expectations as described in the

- syllabus and learning contract, the student will receive a grade of Credit (CR).
7. Credit (CR) must be earned for PT 675 prior to participation in PT 698.
 8. If the student is not successful in completing the remediation as outlined in the learning contract, the student will receive a grade of No Credit (NC) for PT 675 Clinical Education II.

Delayed/Out-of-Sequence Progression of PT 677 Clinical Education IV

If the deficient areas or extent of deficiency in PT 675 Clinical Education III is such that performance in PT 677 Clinical Education IV will be negatively impacted, the student's participation in PT 677 Clinical Education IV will be delayed until remediation of deficiencies is satisfactorily completed. The following procedure will be applied:

1. The DCEs, in consultation with the student, CI, and SCCE, will determine if another clinical education experience should be scheduled in the future, if other remedial steps are necessary, and/or an Academic Progress Committee (APC) should be convened. The options could include:
 - Didactic content review
 - On-campus remediation; dependent on the extent of didactic work, the student may be required to register for PT 699 Independent Study in Physical Therapy.
 - Additional part-time or full-time clinical experience
2. The remediation plan will be described in a learning contract to be signed by the student.
3. If additional time in the clinic 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.
4. If the student meets the objectives and course expectations as described in the syllabus and learning contract, the student will receive a grade of Credit (CR).
5. Credit (CR) must be earned for PT 675 Clinical Education III prior to participation in PT 698.
6. If remediation is not complete by the end of the semester in which the course is scheduled, the student will receive a grade of Incomplete (I) or No Credit (NC) for PT 675 Clinical Education III. The course grade will be dependent on the nature and extent of deficient areas and remediation progress.
7. If the student is not successful in completing the remediation as outlined in the learning contract, the student will receive a grade of No Credit (NC) for PT 675 Clinical Education II.