



# **Department of Physical Therapy**

**Clinical Education Handbook**

**2023-2024**

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# **East Carolina University Department of Physical Therapy Doctor of Physical Therapy Program**

This Clinical Education Handbook contains information that is essential to the clinical education portion of your DPT student requirements. After reading this information and reviewing some important parts of this handbook during orientation, you will be asked to read and sign the final page stating that you understand the information contained herein. Any changes made to this handbook while you are a student will be presented to you for an additional signature.

## **Clinical Education Faculty**

Sarah Johnson, DPT, PT, COMT, OCS, Clinical Associate Professor, DCE

## **Overview**

The Department of Physical Therapy affiliates with approximately 300 hospitals, clinics, and facilities. The majority of clinical education sites are in North Carolina with about one-third of the facilities outside North Carolina. Students are assigned to clinical affiliation sites using computer assisted matching software. Students are assigned to clinical affiliations for a total of 32 weeks of full-time clinical experience. Entry-level skills and knowledge needed in the general practice of physical therapy are obtained through working in a variety of settings and with patients of all ages and health conditions. Working in partnership with clinical sites, the goal of the clinical education program is to provide excellent clinical experiences emphasizing patient/client management that incorporates all aspects of professionalism. Students are expected to progress in their skill development and achieve competency commensurate with the level of the affiliation from beginner/advanced beginner, to intermediate/advanced intermediate, entry level, and in some cases, beyond entry level competency.

Students are not permitted to set up their own clinical affiliations. (See Appendix A). Requests to develop new clinical education sites must be submitted in writing to the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) a minimum of 6 months in advance of placements. In the event that a clinical site cancels a clinical affiliation assignment, the DCE in collaboration with the student will reassign the student to another site based on the student's learning needs. This is accomplished with telephone calls and emails to sites.

During fall semester of the first year, all students will complete the Consortium for Clinical Education and Practice (CCEP) Core Orientation at:

<https://www.wakeahec.org/hctriangeclinical.htm>.

CCEP Core Orientation Training is an annual requirement and will be repeated by all students in year two and year three.

In coordination with the DCE, students will provide proof of Eastern CCEP Clinical Passport requirements for student participation in clinical settings. Students will be required to complete criminal background checks, drug screens, and immunization records and upload information on Castle Branch (CB), an online compliance management platform. Initial cost for student profiles

will be approximately **\$103.00**. CB packet includes background check, drug screen, and compliance tracker.

We use Exxat software system for our clinical education placements. This will require each student to establish an account with Exxat. **Cost is \$150** (one-time cost, account is good for the three years of DPT program).

The DCE reviews the evaluations from the clinical instructors, as well as other required course documents, and assigns grades for each affiliation. The DCE has final authority in assigning students to sites for all the clinical education courses. Patient safety, proper professional conduct, and the progressive demonstration of competency and independence as a PT clinician are expected. The DCE, with the approval of the chairman, has the authority to require a student to either stay longer at a clinical site or repeat specific components of a clinical course as deemed necessary to ensure patient safety and the student's expected level of professional development and mastery of clinical skills. The location of repeated clinical experiences will be subject to available sites and at the discretion of the DCE. Students are allowed remediation on only one clinical affiliation. If a student is required to repeat an affiliation, payment of additional tuition and fees, delayed progression in the curriculum, and/or delay of graduation may be necessary. The student who fails to successfully remediate this portion of the curriculum is subject to termination from the program. Prior to starting an affiliation, students are required to contact the Center Coordinator of Clinical Education if any accommodations are requested during a clinical affiliation. The DCE requests permission from a student to share any additional information related to student learning issues in compliance with FERPA and HIPAA.

**Any grossly unsafe behavior, illegal, unethical, or unprofessional performance on a clinical affiliation may result in dismissal of a student from a clinical affiliation site, failure of the course, and dismissal from the program.**

## **Risks**

Students are at risk for exposure to infectious diseases when affiliating in hospitals and clinics. Students are at risk for injury when performing patient transfers, performing sharp wound/burn debridement, and in other patient care activities. A signed waiver before participation in clinical education is required.

Students need to be aware that a patient has the right to refuse treatment by a student during any clinical education experience.

## **Clinical Education Requirements**

Before a student can attend a clinical education site they must:

- Have Student Professional Liability Insurance (provided through the CAHS).
- Maintain personal health insurance.
- Complete training on HIPAA Policies and Practices and OSHA Blood Borne Pathogens.
- Maintain annual certification in CPR through the American Heart Association.
- Have TB skin test (two-step or QuantiFERON Gold) annually.
- Have a complete medical record on file with the university including a physical examination and vaccination record.

- Complete online training to self-assess on PT CPI web.

## Expenses Related to Clinical Education

Students are responsible for all expenses during clinical education affiliations. There are four clinical affiliations for a total of 32 weeks. The expenses will vary according to the assignments, but **you should expect these experiences to cost approximately \$3000 to \$3500 for the four rotations.** Please budget accordingly to cover these expenses, which may include gas/travel, housing and food. See AHEC Housing Policy included in this handbook.

Most health care systems have adopted their own student credentialing programs and processes. If you are assigned to a site that uses a systemwide software program for student onboarding, anticipate additional costs e.g., MyClinicalExchange (mCE) - **\$35.00**

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR): All students are required to be certified in CPR before the first clinical education affiliation in March. Class officers will be responsible for scheduling a course for your class during your first spring semester. The DCE can provide contact information for an instructor. **The fee is approximately \$40.**

Vaccinations/Titers/TB tests: For ECU enrollment, all students must meet ECU requirements (NC State Law Immunization Requirements) and requirements for health care workers per the health care industry standard. All students must either be vaccinated for Hepatitis B or sign a release indicating that they do not desire to be vaccinated. Hepatitis B vaccination is strongly encouraged. The vaccination is a three-shot series with a titer. Arrangements can be made with ECU Student Health for these shots during the 1<sup>st</sup> Fall semester. Students are also required to have current TB skin tests. **The cost is approximately \$150.** Students may be required to demonstrate proof of immunity to varicella (chicken pox). Most hospitals and other facilities require that students have received seasonal flu vaccinations in compliance with requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. Other vaccinations (e.g., COVID) may be required. Religious and medical exemptions are accepted by some but not all facilities. Seasonal flu shots may be available at Student Health Services free of charge. Attend the annual clinic or call Health Sciences Student Health Services at (252) 328-6841 for an appointment.

Emergency health care: The affiliating agency will provide on-premise emergency health care for students at the facility. **Students are financially responsible for health care provided by the facility.** ECU, the UNC system, and clinical sites require students to have health insurance.

Insurance: Students are required to have liability insurance. At this time the coverage of the liability insurance is paid by ECU.

Name tags: Students will be identified as ECU DPT students with the school name tag worn on the shirt or lab coat. In all clinic settings, patients have the right to refuse to be evaluated and/or treated by a student. Name tags are ordered through the department and they **cost \$9.00**, cash or check made out to ECU PT Club. Students will be required to purchase a replacement at the same price if they lose/break their first name tag. Many sites have facility specific name badges that will be issued to students for use while on their premises.

Additional requirements: Some clinical facilities may require students to be fitted with a personal respiratory filter device. Training and fitting of such devices is available in the Office of Prospective Health, ECU Brody School of Medicine, 252-744-2070. Students are responsible for providing the

mask. Also, most sites require criminal background checks and drug screening, both of which require a fee. Criminal background checks will be submitted to clinical sites by the College of Allied Health Sciences Contracts Clerk. Students will sign a Release of Information for immunization records, drug screens, and criminal background checks to be shared with clinical sites.

## **NC AHEC Student Housing**

[NC AHEC Student Housing](#) is short-term lodging for health sciences students who are completing community-based rotations in North Carolina. Students are not required to use NC AHEC housing, and NC AHEC housing is not meant to serve or replace a student's permanent residence. Our goal is to make community-based education at clinical sites more accessible.

We have provided student housing since the 1970s, now providing over 56,000 nights annually. The nine regional AHECs provide housing in 50 counties in approximately 70 towns and cities across the state. The majority of our housing is through rented apartments or AHEC-owned homes/condos, but we also utilize private homeowners, especially in rural areas.

For our primary academic partners or affiliated universities (see list below), the current rate is \$7 night. In compliance with UNC General Administration Board of Governors directives, AHEC does not collect any fees from students of affiliated schools. The NC AHEC Program Office invoices affiliated universities twice yearly for their student's use of housing. Local AHECs collect housing fees directly from students of non-affiliated schools.

Any health sciences student may apply for NC AHEC housing through our online portal at [my.ncahec.net](http://my.ncahec.net). Each AHEC reviews applications taking into account a variety of factors (date of application, length of stay, co-ed status, and school affiliation) and notifies the student as soon as possible. We also implemented an online evaluation process and welcome students' feedback on their stays at NC AHEC housing.

While we are not able to meet every housing request and the demand for student housing continues to grow, NC AHEC student housing is among the largest (if not the largest) student housing system within the National AHEC Organization.

Students requesting NC AHEC housing create a MY AHEC account and submit requests to Student Housing Coordinators. Once approved, the student will notify administrative staff in the CAHS Dean's Office. Students will pay the cost of housing at \$7 per night to ECU CAHS Dean's Office.  
**AHEC Student Housing Process: Effective July 1, 2010**

A student may use AHEC housing, when available, at \$7.00 per day. The college will bill the student's record. Fees are collected from the students by the Cashier's Office.

## **Standard Operating Procedure on Criminal Background Checks and Drug Screening on Students for Clinical Field Site Placement**

**ECU COLLEGE OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES**

**August 20, 2004**

Due to JCAHO regulations that now require students to provide criminal background checks and, in some cases, drug screenings to prospective clinical sites the following standard operating procedure is being established for students in the College of Allied Health Sciences.

It is a student's responsibility, when applying for placement in a clinical site associated with the completion of degree requirements, to obtain and provide required reports/copies of the requested criminal background checks and/or drug screens to the appropriate official(s) at the prospective clinical site for review and consideration in determining acceptance for the clinical field experience placement. Students are responsible for arranging, paying for, and submitting the required documentation to any and all clinical sites where students have been assigned for placement. Academic departments, the College of Allied Health Sciences, the Division of Health Sciences, or East Carolina University are not responsible for arranging, paying for, or submitting the required reports, or determining the student's eligibility for placement at the clinical site as a result of the contents of the required reports. Academic departments, the College of Allied Health Sciences, the Division of Health Sciences, or East Carolina University are not responsible or liable for nor will they intervene in any way in the decision by a clinical site to not accept a student based on the contents of required reports. Decisions by clinical sites are final and have no reflection on or responsibility to the student's academic department.

## **Appendix A**

**\*POSITION STATEMENT: The Clinical Education Special Interest Groups Students Contacting Clinical Sites to Request Clinical Experiences**

Posted February 03, 2018

The Clinical Education Special Interest Group (CESIG) of the Education Section of the APTA serves the interests of individuals from academic programs and clinical facilities.

The CESIG conducts meetings at CSM in February and at ELC in October.

At the October 2016 CESIG meeting there was discussion amongst members related to students contacting clinical sites requesting clinical experiences and the challenges this presents. During the meeting in Phoenix, clinical education representatives from across the country reported widespread acceptance of the position that students would be instructed to not contact clinical sites requesting clinical experiences. This request for clinical placements is to come from DECs/ACCEs. This position is for accredited and developing physical therapist and physical therapist assistant programs.

February 2017

Line to the Article: <http://APTAEducation.org?qvd7ii>

**Please print and sign the following document.**

**This sign document should be turned in to department staff in Room  
2410 by  
Tuesday, June 20, 2023.**



**Verification of Reading Presented Material**

By my signature, I verify that I have received and read the material presented in the document Essential Requirements of Physical Therapy Education at East Carolina University, Department of Physical Therapy: Standards for Admission, Retention and Graduation and understand and in agreement.

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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