



School of Health Profession and Education

Department of Physical Therapy

CLINICAL EDUCATION MANUAL

Updated October, 2021

PREFACE

This manual serves as a resource for the Directors of Clinical Education (DCEs), the academic and clinical faculty, and the physical therapy students involved in the clinical education component of the program.

The contents of this manual represent an official communication of the policies and procedures of the Clinical Education component of the Physical Therapy Program. Students are required to comply with them. This manual is to be used in conjunction with the Physical Therapy Program Handbook, the Utica College Undergraduate Catalog, and the Utica College Graduate Catalog and Student Handbook. Collectively, these materials provide the student with the information necessary to take responsibility for participation and success in the program.

This manual includes essential information, forms, policies, and procedures vital to successfully completing the clinical education portion of the physical therapy curriculum.

Development and Revision of Policies and Procedures

The DCE, in consultation with the Program Chair and faculty members, may revise existing policies as needed. New policies are developed and are established after faculty approval by a simple majority vote. The procedures used to implement clinical education policies are developed and established, and revised, as needed, by the DCE in consultation with the Program Chair. Faculty members are informed of procedural changes, and the DCE documents these changes in the Clinical Education Manual. This will occur at faculty meeting. Students will be promptly informed of any changes or revision to Clinical Education Manual or program policies or procedures.

DISCLAIMER

The Utica College Physical Therapy Program reserves the right to change the policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and information in this Clinical Education Manual and the accompanying handbook at any time. Changes will become effective when the Program publishes them, and the changes will apply to both prospective students and those already enrolled. This handbook is a general information publication only, and it is not intended to nor does it contain all regulations that relate to students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The DCE wishes to acknowledge colleagues, DCEs, Site Coordinators of Clinical Education (SCCEs), and Clinical Instructors (CIs) who shared their resources, time, and expertise as we developed this Clinical Education Manual. In addition, special thanks are extended to members of the NYNJ Physical Therapy Clinical Education Consortium and APTA Academy of Physical Therapy Education.

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CLINICAL EDUCATION OVERVIEW

Clinical education is designed to provide the student with the opportunity to develop clinically based, pre-planned learning activities and develop the competencies required for the provision of physical therapy services. Clinical education provides students the unique experience of working under close supervision of a licensed physical therapist in a clinical facility. This allows the students to apply skills learned in the classroom and laboratory setting; to interact with professionals and patients; and to learn new contemporary techniques.

Students engage in three full-time clinical education, in addition to four integrated clinical education (ICE) experiences. These full time and integrated clinical experiences are designed to help students assimilate theoretical and clinical concepts to care for individuals with multi-system involvement. By the end of the final full-time clinical education experience, students are expected to exhibit practice expectations of entry-level professionals.

State Authorization

Utica College has established contracts with clinical facilities both within as well as outside of New York State. Each state has different rules and regulations for authorization. Therefore, the College must secure approval/clearance from the relevant state agency (e.g., Licensing Board or Department of Education etc.) before placing a student in a host facility within certain states. Utica College may cancel a clinical placement if regulatory approval cannot be secured.

Requirements and Rules

Students must demonstrate the academic and professional standards of the program.

Students must demonstrate competence, enthusiasm, and initiative during the clinical education experiences.

Utica College has entered into contracts with various facilities throughout the country. These facilities agreed to provide appropriate learning experiences through competent supervision and teaching. In order to take advantage of the educational opportunities that have been developed, each student should be prepared to complete some or all of the full-time clinical experiences away from home or current residence. It is the student's responsibility to research and finalize living arrangements and travel plans for each clinical experience.

ALL CONTACTS TO ESTABLISH CLINICAL PLACEMENTS ARE MADE BY THE DCE OR ASSISTANT DCE.

CLINICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Clinical education experiences are designed to expose the student to a variety of practice settings across the lifespan and continuum of care. All clinical education experiences occur following successful completion of the prerequisite professional courses.

Full Time Experiences

Students participate in patient care under the direct supervision of an on-site physical therapist. Opportunities vary to provide experiences across the continuum of care. Three to five¹ different full-time clinical education experiences are incorporated into the graduate program in physical therapy. **At least one**

¹ To optimize the use of available clinical facilities, placements may be arranged as two separate 8 weeks experiences or one continuous placement (12-16 weeks).

of the three full-time experiences must be in an inpatient facility. Upon completion, students exhibit clinical reasoning, skills, and professional behaviors consistent with entry-level practitioners.

DPT 659 Clinical Education I

First of three full-time clinical education experiences. Students will participate in outpatient settings with a musculoskeletal focus for six weeks. Students are introduced to direct patient care and apply basic theoretical concepts central to patient/client management.

DPT 779 Clinical Education II

Second of three full time clinical education experiences. Students apply theoretical concepts central to patient/client management. Students will participate in settings that may include *acute care, inpatient rehabilitation, school settings, home care or outpatient* settings at one or more sites during the 12-16 weeks¹.

DPT 789 Clinical Education III

Third and final full-time clinical education experiences, for 12 -16 weeks at one or more sites¹ in which students integrate the multi-faceted roles of clinician into current practice within the health care system. Students integrate theoretical and clinical concepts for patient/client with multi-system involvement. Students select an area of clinical practice of particular interest.

Integrated Part-Time Experiences (ICE)

Four integrated clinical experiences occur during the academic semesters of the first two years (Fall & Spring). Courses provide experiential learning in a community setting with an emphasis on prevention and wellness. Theory and practice taught in the classroom can be applied to the participants while faculty members supervise students. This series of courses allows the PT program to extend clinical practice into the community, fostering collaboration with community agencies that offer services to populations who might otherwise have limited access.

DPT 589 Caring for the Community I

Students are introduced to prevention and wellness in community settings. Selected elements of assessment and intervention practiced under the supervision of physical therapy program faculty members and Year Two students. Occurs in Fall Year 1.

DPT 599 Caring for the Community II

Students participate in assessment and intervention in local community programs. Students practice selected elements of the client management process under the supervision of physical therapy program faculty members and Year Two students. Occurs in Spring Year 1

DPT 689 Caring for the Community III

Selected elements of assessment and intervention practiced under the supervision of physical therapy program faculty. Students develop supervisory and mentoring skills while working with Year One students. Occurs in Fall Year 2

DPT 699 Caring for the Community IV

Selected elements of assessment and intervention practiced under the supervision of physical therapy program faculty. Students develop supervisory and mentoring skills while working with Year One students. Occurs in Spring Year 2.

In addition to the above courses for ICE, students also have several opportunities to interact with patients who are invited to the academic laboratory setting or visit outside facilities to provide authentic experiences.

CLINICAL EDUCATION FACULTY

Director of Clinical Education

The Director of Clinical Education (DCE) is a full-time core faculty member in the Graduate Physical Therapy Program at Utica College and is under the direct supervision of the Program Chair and Dean of the School of Health Professions and Education. The DCE's primary responsibilities are to manage the full-time and integrated clinical education experiences by planning and coordinating with academic and clinical faculty and integrating clinical education throughout the curriculum. The DCE is also responsible for communication with and disseminating information among the individuals involved in the clinical education process, including the clinical education facilities.

The DCE participates in and represents the program at regional, state, and national clinical education activities and programs. The DCE is in direct and continuous contact with academic faculty members regarding curricular issues related to clinical education. The DCE is responsible for keeping faculty informed of the overall performance of students throughout their clinical education experiences. At the end of each clinical education course, the DCE summarizes information on students' clinical performance and their ability to integrate academic knowledge. The summary is presented to the faculty during the summer meeting.

Assistant Director of Clinical Education

The Assistant DCE is a faculty position in the Graduate Program in Physical Therapy at Utica College who works under the direct supervision of the DCE, Program Chair and the Dean of the School of Health Professions and Education. The primary responsibility is to assist the DCE in administering the clinical education program. Specific job responsibilities are stated above under the description of the DCE. In the remainder of this manual, the DCE and Assistant DCE will collectively be referred to as DCEs.

Clinical Faculty²

The members of the Clinical Faculty include the Site Coordinator of Clinical Education (SCCE) and the Clinical Instructor (CI).

Site Coordinator of Clinical Education (SCCE)

The Site Coordinator of Clinical Education formally represents the clinical facility and serves as the liaison to the college. The SCCE is responsible for coordinating the assignments and activities at the clinical facility. The SCCE is most often a Senior Physical Therapist who has been actively involved in clinical education. The SCCE must demonstrate effective administrative and managerial skills.

² From APTA Guidelines and Self -Assessments for Clinical Education (1999) for Clinical Faculty and Clinical Facilities.

The SCCE manages communication between clinical instructors, students, and DCE. Therefore, it is the SCCE's responsibility to keep the college informed of any changes in the facility that may impact clinical education. This individual keeps information current by submitting/updating the Clinical Site Information Form (CSIF). The SCCE also provides direct supervision to the facility's clinical instructors engaged in clinical education experiences, serving as resources for the students and CIs.

Clinical Instructor (CI)

The Clinical Instructor is a licensed physical therapist responsible for the daily management of the clinical experience while a student is on-site. The CI is assigned to a student for a specified period to act as a role model and guide the learning process. This individual is responsible for providing feedback to the student throughout the clinical experience and completing the midterm and final performance evaluations.

Both SCCEs and CIs will demonstrate:

- Professional and ethical behaviors
- Knowledge of contemporary issues in clinical practice
- Clinical competence
- Effective communication and interpersonal skills
- Effective instructional skills
- Effective supervisory skills
- Performance evaluation skills

CLINICAL EDUCATION POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Students are expected to adhere to all rules and regulations of Utica College and the clinical facilities. Clinical facilities inform students of their responsibilities before and at the beginning of the experience. Information regarding specific facilities requirements is kept on file by the DCEs and available for review by the students. Each student is required to read the Externship Agreement that exists between the College and individual facilities. *Please see the Utica College Student Agreement in (Appendix 1).*

Health Policy

In accordance with New York State Health Department and by the terms of the contractual agreement between the program in physical therapy and host facilities, students must adhere to the regulations regarding specified health policy as outlined throughout this section.

Before any student begins their professional course work and clinical education at any level, it is necessary to fulfill requirements as stated by the New York State Health Department. Students must be prepared to complete any additional state or agency/facility health requirements that may be needed. These requirements promote the protection of students, clinicians and individuals served at the clinical facilities. The Utica College Health Form should be used and completed in full. All health requirements must be current and valid throughout the entire period of the clinical training.

Failure to observe the stated deadlines and requirements may prevent the student from starting the program or participating in clinical education and may delay their progression in the program. EXCEPTIONS WILL NOT BE MADE.

Students are required, at their own expense, to have an **ANNUAL** physical examination and specified immunizations/titers. The Student Health Center personnel may provide information regarding the location of area clinics should the student choose this option.

Physical exams and other health requirements must be submitted directly by the student to BOTH Utica College Student Health portal AND the following health compliance program:

- Class of 2022 & 2023 must also submit and update health requirements to American DataBank
- Class of 2024 and following cohort must also submit and update health requirements to EXXAT.

Students should plan in advance to ensure that the required items are submitted on time and are valid throughout the clinical education experiences. In addition, students **MUST** keep a valid and current copy of their health records at all times.

Health Requirements

1. Each student must submit the following to the Utica College Student Health portal by June 15 before starting the program:
 - Immunization record
 - MMR immunization, proof of immunity³.
 - Meningitis or waiver
2. Each student must submit the following to the American DataBank (c/o 2022 & 2023) or EXXAT (starting with c/o 2024), by August 15th, before the start of the fall semester:
 - Complete annual physical using the Mandatory Physical Exam Form (*Appendix 2*).
 - Mantoux TB skin test or the Quantiferon TB-Gold (annual blood test), with results documented and dated within 3-12 months. Some facilities require students to have TB testing within 3-6 months of beginning the clinical experience. A positive TB result will require further investigation and documentation.
 - Proof of current American Heart Association (AHA) CPR certification for infant, child, adult, and AED before the fall semester each year and are responsible for recertification throughout the program. The students are responsible for obtaining and maintaining this certification. Students must upload the updated training certificate to American DataBank (c/o 2022 & 2023) or EXXAT (c/o 2024).
3. Each student must submit a COVID vaccine certificate to the Utica College’s student health portal.
4. Each student must submit a flu vaccine by October 1st each year of the professional program to participate in all ICE and full-time clinical experiences.
5. Provide documentation of vaccination against Hepatitis B, evidence of adequate antibody titer, or have signed a declination (*Appendix 3*) to receive the Hepatitis B vaccine form before the first clinical experience. A student’s Hepatitis B decision is documented as part of the student health file located in the portal. **Although the Hepatitis B vaccination series is not a requirement, we highly recommend it.**

OSHA Blood Borne Pathogens

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is a United States Department of Labor division. A major responsibility of OSHA is to protect persons in the workplace. Since September 1, 1992, the OSHA policy on Occupational Exposure to blood-borne pathogens has been in effect. This policy mandates education on blood-borne pathogens and availability of the Hepatitis B vaccine to all employees.

Since students affiliate in health care facilities throughout the United States, they must comply with OSHA standards. The graduate program in physical therapy policy requires all students to have annual training on blood-borne pathogens and information provided to them about the Hepatitis B vaccine.

The risk of transmission of pathogenic organisms in health care settings is preventable mainly through strict adherence to barrier precautions and infection control practices that decrease the opportunity of blood to

³ For rubeola, individuals born on or after 1/1/57 must have received two doses of live virus vaccine after 1967, first dose on or after first birthday, second dose on or after 15 months of age and at least 30 days after first dose or phys Before beginning the program, each diagnosis of disease, or laboratory evidence of immunity.

blood exposure for both health care workers and patients. Infection control practices are taught to students within the professional program, and opportunities to practice skills before the first clinical experience occur within the DPT courses. Any student who has exposure to a blood-borne substance that places the student at risk must seek medical care immediately. Students should report any exposure first to the Clinical Instructor, who will direct the student for appropriate care. Each student is responsible for the personal medical care costs accrued.

Students must:

1. Attend a presentation on blood-borne pathogen awareness and precautions given in Year One of the professional program. Student attendance is documented. The DCE reviews this information with the second-year students during the MVHS orientation and before the final year of clinical education; and
2. Upload the annual training form ([Appendix 4](#)) to American DataBank (c/o 2022 & 2023) or EXXAT (c/o 2024).

Predisposing Medical Conditions

Before entering the professional program and BEFORE EACH clinical experience, it is strongly recommended that students inform the DCE of any medical condition or prescription medication that may compromise or place potential safety risk to the student, peers, agency/facility staff, and patients. Such conditions include but are not limited to pregnancy, diabetes, seizure disorder, and medications, which may alter alertness or judgment and impact performance. Clinical education faculty will make every effort to facilitate student progress, in collaboration with students' learning services, when necessary to provide reasonable accommodations. Confidentiality will be maintained.

Latex Allergy

Utica College recognizes that exposure to latex products has the potential to trigger an allergic reaction. Repeated exposure increases the risk and severity of a reaction. Students are asked to report to a program faculty member if they suspect a latex allergic reaction or sensitivity. Students who are allergic to the gloves usually provided in the laboratory will be provided with "powder-free" gloves or a similar alternative. (*Additional information in [Appendix 5](#)*)

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest may affect clinical education when the site/facility and the student have a relationship that could influence the provision of the clinical education experience or evaluate the student's performance. Examples may include, but are not limited to, clinical education sites where the student has been an employee and clinical education sites which are owned by, or employ, an immediate relative of the student.

A student may accept employment positions before completion of the academic curriculum. To avoid potential conflicts of interest, the faculty believes that students should not be placed in clinical facilities where they have accepted employment.

Students must disclose to the DCEs if a facility or setting is a potential conflict of interest.

Other Policies

Health Insurance

Individual health insurance coverage is required throughout the professional program. Students must upload the updated health insurance card to American DataBank (c/o 2022 & 2023) or EXXAT (c/o 2024).

Coverage information is available through the Student Health Center or outside agencies such as APTA for students who do not have health insurance coverage.

Malpractice Insurance

Malpractice insurance is required throughout the professional program. The student is provided with adequate coverage per incidence/occurrence. The cost of this insurance is covered through payment of an annual college fee. The fee is added to DPT 581, DPT 659, and DPT 779. On occasion, a facility may require additional limits on malpractice coverage. The student is responsible for acquiring this coverage.

General Liability Insurance

Utica College carries liability, covering and indemnifies all students, faculty, and employees while engaged in college activities. This coverage includes students who are placed in facilities for clinical education experiences as part of their academic program. The policy does not cover the facility itself; however, it does assure clinical facilities that general liability coverage is in effect for students and faculty involved in program activities such as clinical education experiences.

Privacy Policies (Appendix 6)

In accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 and the associated regulations, students receive education and general training regarding the HIPAA privacy requirements before participating in clinical education experiences. Students complete the Student Acknowledgement of Privacy Policies found in [Appendix 7](#) following this preparation. In addition, facility-specific training may be required as part of the orientation process when a student placement begins. All students are expected to respect confidentiality and patient rights at all times.

Criminal Background Check

Clinical facilities may require a background check, clearance for child abuse, and fingerprinting for placement. If these are facility requirements, the student is responsible for following the specific facility procedure. A student may be denied clinical placement if s/he does not meet the facility's requirement they were assigned.

Alcohol and Other Drug Policy

All students are expected to adhere to the Utica College alcohol and other drug policies as stated in the [Utica College Student Handbook](#). Physical therapy students are prohibited from participating in any aspect of clinical education while under the influence of alcohol or any substance. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in dismissal from the physical therapy program and the College.

Name Tag

Individual photo identification badges are produced at the Office of Campus Safety. A nominal fee is charged. Name Tags must be used during all clinical education and off-site experiences.

Appearance

Although the program requires no uniform, students must observe the dress code of host facilities. The appropriate dress code required by each facility is learned through information provided in the CSIF and communication with the Site Coordinator of Clinical Education before starting the scheduled experience. If a facility does not have a specific dress code policy, professional attire is required. As a representative of Utica College, students are expected to dress appropriately using discretion and respect for the role of a professional.

Travel/Living Expense

The student is responsible for making any housing, travel, and financial arrangements necessary to complete each clinical experience. Students must prepare to complete some or all full-time clinical experiences away from home or their current residence.

Student Attendance

Students are expected to attend all clinical education experiences during regular working hours, as dictated by the clinical site. Students are not permitted to negotiate any change in daily or weekly clinical education experience schedules. The DCEs, CI, and SCCE must approve any schedule change.

The Physical Therapy Program does not grant a specified number of days that a student may be absent from the clinic. In the event of illness or any delay in arrival time, the student must contact the DCE and the SCCE/CI directly before the start of the workday. If a student misses any time during a clinical education experience due to illness or personal reasons, a decision is made by the CI in consultation with the DCEs regarding the additional time required to complete the experience.⁴ Students with extenuating circumstances will be addressed individually in consultation with the DCEs, SCCE, and CI.

Holidays

While engaged in clinical experiences, the student will follow the holiday schedule established by the clinical facility, NOT the academic calendar of Utica College.

Readmission to Clinical Following Illness/Injury

Students are responsible for ensuring their safety and the safety of those they are in contact with throughout the clinical experience. An unexpected absence due to an illness/injury must be immediately communicated to the DCEs, CI, and SCCE. The SCCE, CI, or the DCEs may request a medical release before readmission to the clinical experience if they feel that the student's illness or injury may limit or endanger the safety of self or patients.

CLINICAL SITES

The Physical Therapy Program at Utica College has current affiliations with various facilities throughout the United States. These facilities include hospitals, ambulatory care/outpatient centers, school and developmental settings, rehabilitation centers, long-term care facilities, and home health care agencies. However, each state has different rules and regulations for authorization. Therefore, the College must secure approval/clearance from the relevant state agency before placing a student in a host facility located in other states. It is possible that Utica College may cancel a clinical placement if regulatory approval can't be secured.

Clinical Site Information Form (CSIF)

A Clinical Site Information Form is accessible to registered users at <https://cpi2.amsapps.com>. This online repository is available to academic programs and students. Students will be able to review information on the portal as individual accounts are created. The CSIF provides information about the type of clinical facility, typical age and primary conditions of patient caseload, credentials of supervising therapists, and specific student information such as dress code, hours, parking, etc. Students can request additional information about the site from the DCEs.

⁴ During any clinical education experience, if a student misses time due to illness or for personal reasons AND the CI believes the final competency will not be adversely affected, the request may be granted.

Facility Staffing

For a clinical facility to provide quality learning and appropriate supervision of students, staffing must be adequate. The physical therapy program strongly recommends that a student not be placed in a facility unless at least two physical therapists are practicing in that facility. Having more than one physical therapist employed at the facility is the minimum staffing needed to adequately supervise a student while managing the facility and clinical education responsibilities. In the event of a shortage of clinical placements or cancellations of scheduled assignments, placement of a student with a single CI may be allowed, provided the expectations are addressed upfront and appropriate support mechanisms are in place.

Establishing New Sites

A clinical facility may be considered a potential student placement site if both the academic and clinical parties desire and agree to provide the opportunity for the mutual benefit of the student. The **minimum** requirements for establishing a clinical site include the following:

- The facility must demonstrate an interest and willingness to participate in clinical education.
- The facility must provide learning experiences that meet the expectations of the program.
- State requirements must be met when considering placements outside of New York State.
- The College and clinical facility must establish an active externship agreement before the clinical placement start date.

Site Development Requests

Permission by the DCEs is required **before** a student initiates any contact with potential clinical sites. Students wishing to establish additional clinical site placements must complete and submit the Student Request for Clinical Site Development ([Appendix 8](#)). The request needs a **minimum** of six months before the experience start date to complete all due diligence and sign the appropriate legal contracts. A student may submit a **maximum** of two requests during their enrollment in the DPT program. If a site becomes established because of a student's efforts, the DCE will offer the placement at that site to the student who initiated the request first. Following the initial placement, all qualified candidates in the DPT program will have the opportunity to request placement at the site.

NOTE A student who requests the development of a new site may NOT change the placement after it is confirmed with the facility.

Externship Agreement (Contract)

Utica College has a standard written contract referred to as the Externship/Extended Campus Agreement. See [Appendix 9](#).

A fully executed agreement between Utica College and the facility must be in place before starting any clinical education experience. If the agreement is incomplete or unavailable, a student will not be placed at that facility. Students are required to review and sign off on the externship agreement specific to the facility to which they will complete a full-time clinical education experience before placement.

Benefits for Clinical Faculty

A letter informing clinical faculty and SCCE of the following benefits is sent at the beginning of each full-time clinical education experience.

Remitted Tuition Agreement ([Appendix 10](#))

Utica College grants tuition credits to clinical facilities following completion of a signed agreement and clinical experience. One half (.5) a tuition credit hour is remitted for each 37 - 45 clock hours of clinical education time completed by physical therapy students.

Continuing Education Credit

As of October 19, 2009, the New York State Education Department, Office of the Professions, approved Utica College as a continuing education sponsor for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. One of the activities approved for credit is that of supervision during clinical education experiences. Supervision of a student by a clinical instructor provides .25 hours of continuing education for every two weeks of supervision per student, capped at 6 hours per three-year registration period.

Access to Educational Resources

Clinical faculty have access to the Utica College library and online databases during active student supervision. Access is gained through the use of a Utica College identification username and password.

STUDENT PLACEMENT

In order to maintain a fair and impartial student placement process, a lottery system or EXXAT placement software is used for clinical education selections. The goal is to place each student in a variety of experiences to graduate competent entry-level practitioners. The types of experiences include:

- acute care healthcare centers;
- post-acute; subacute, intensive and long term care rehabilitation centers, and home care;
- outpatient center; or
- pediatric-based care (e.g., school setting, hospital setting, etc.).

Changes in today's health care are prevalent. Quality clinical facilities are experiencing internal and external changes, and a greater demand is placed on practitioners. As a result, it may not be possible for each student to experience each of the specified settings above. Should difficulties occur, the student's clinical education experiences will be reviewed and diversified.

The following process has been established to ensure an ideal placement for each student and provide a variety of clinical education experiences.

Selection Process for Clinical Placement

- A lottery occurs prior to EACH clinical placement. This process is conducted under the supervision of the DCEs. An administrative assistant will also participate.
- As per returned facility reservation forms, a list of available clinical placements is distributed electronically to the class. Updates to the list will be posted online and shared with all students.
- Students will have access to the CSIF for any facility that has completed the form and has a contract with Utica College. Site Evaluation forms completed by former students will also be available for review.
- The Preference Sheet is used to select clinical sites in order of preference, with #1 being the top priority.
- The completed Preference Sheet is submitted via email to the DCE, Assistant DCE, and administrative assistant.

The following items are considered when placing a student:

- draft number,

- student preference sheet,
- previous clinical experience,
- the student’s academic history and clinical education profile,
- clinical facility requirements,
- feedback from the DCE/Assistant DCE and faculty, and
- timely response and availability of clinical placement.

*Alternately, EXXAT placement software will be utilized starting with the class of 2024. EXXAT does not use draft numbers but has a built-in random selection process and incorporates steps 2-6.

Important Notes:

- Students who have not completed prerequisites for clinical education courses are not eligible for preference/assignments.
- All deadlines must be STRICTLY FOLLOWED. Failure to submit a completed preference sheet by the deadline will result in forfeiture of your draft priority. You must then wait and choose from the sites that remain at the end of the class draft.
- It is possible that the clinical site or Utica College may cancel the clinical placement at any time. Examples of reasons the site or College cancel a placement may be include but are not limited to a contract that cannot be secured or a situation where the quality of the experience does not meet program standards. When placements are canceled, PRIORITY is given to the student who lost a placement through no fault of his or her own. The DCEs will make every effort to find a suitable replacement. Students must remain flexible to accommodate unforeseen changes.
- The final decisions on clinical placements are at the discretion of the DCEs and program faculty.

Clinical Education Preparation

Preparation for clinical education begins in Summer Year 1. This process continues throughout the curriculum to discuss expectations of clinical education, roles, and responsibilities of students, academic programs, and clinical facilities. Every semester, students meet with the DCEs to discuss clinical education topics, building on the information from previous semesters. These preparation sessions are a prerequisite to a student’s participation in the clinical education experience.

Communication between students and the DCEs is imperative for their success throughout the program, particularly while enrolled in clinical education courses. The primary method of communication is through Utica College email. Students must check their UC email, at least daily, for updates or announcements regarding Clinical Education and promptly respond to those emails.

Placement Communication Cycle ([Appendix 11](#))

Following formal assignment to a facility for any full-time clinical education experience, the student will receive a confirmation letter from the DCEs ([Appendix 12](#)). The student’s responsibility must initiate a phone or email contact with the SCCE within two weeks of receiving their confirmation letter. The name, email address, and phone number of the SCCE are available on the confirmation letter. The purpose of this initial contact is for students to introduce themselves and to acknowledge receipt of the confirmation letter. The student should make a follow-up call or email contact with the SCCE approximately four weeks before the start of the experience.

The student will send an Introduction Letter to the facility that includes their experience and the Student Affiliation Profile (SAP) ([Appendix 13](#)). The student must then forward a copy of this letter and the SAP to the DCEs.

The students should try the commute and complete any required onboarding paperwork before the first day of clinical to clarify expectations, avoid delays, and better prepare for the first day. At the end of the experience, a verbal or written note of appreciation is highly recommended.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS AND GRADING

Students Assignments

Students must complete all academic assignments as part of all ICE and full-time clinical education courses. Those assignments are detailed in the corresponding syllabi. Students are required to accomplish their assignments without disrupting clinical services or restructuring the clinical education experience.

Student Performance Evaluation

The clinical education faculty determines the final grade of Pass/Fail with feedback from the facility's clinical faculty. Satisfactory performance in each clinical education experience is required for progression in the program. The student and CI must complete the final competency ratings for each clinical education experience using the PT Clinical Performance Instrument (CPI) Web. Additionally, the student and CI must complete a midterm competency rating for DPT 779 and DPT 789.

Guidelines for the use of the CPI are provided for each clinical education experience. Students **MUST** complete the PT CPI Web training during the first fall semester (Year 1). The entire CPI is available using this link ([CPI](#)).

The following table outlines the FINAL expectations for each of the clinical experiences using the rating scale on the PT CPI Web.

PT CPI Criterion	DPT 659	DPT 779	DPT 789
Red Flag items # 1-4;7	Beginner to Advanced Beginner Performance	Advanced Intermediate - Entry level Performance	Entry –level Performance
#5,6; 8-18	Same as above	Intermediate to Advanced Intermediate Performance	Same as above

Student Site Evaluation Form

Students are required to evaluate clinical learning experiences provided by clinical instructors using the PT Student Site Evaluation (PTSE) Form developed by the APTA ([Appendix 14](#)). Both sections of this tool must be completed and submitted by the student at the end of the clinical experience. Section 1 is uploaded to Google Drive and made available for review by future students. Section 2 remains confidential and is formatted to allow student feedback to be provided to clinical instructors at both midterm and final discussion **AFTER** review and completion of the Student Performance Evaluation. The confidentiality of students and clinical instructors is honored. Some facilities also request that students complete a site-specific assessment form.

Clinical Faculty Communication

The DCEs maintain ongoing communication with the SCCE regarding planning and implementing clinical education courses/learning experiences. The SCCE communicates directly with the CI and other staff members about clinical education issues pertinent to their clinical facility. The SCCE also communicates directly with each CI about individual student learning experiences and assists in developing these learning experiences. During the student clinical education experience, the DCEs communicate with the CI and SCCE about the student's progress and assist when needed.

Clinical Site Visits

Site visits are designed to evaluate, monitor, and improve the clinical education experiences for UC students and enhance the continued development of the academic-clinical relationship. To ensure successful completion of the clinical education experience, the DCEs or their designee conduct on-site visits, as appropriate, to meet the needs of all parties, such as assessment, training, remediation, or intervention. Site visits are also used as an opportunity for formal assessment/reassessment of the sites' resources and clinical faculty before the placement of a student for a clinical education experience.

Post-Clinical Meetings

Student feedback regarding clinical education experiences is essential. Student input allows for continued evaluation of the experiential component of the program as well as students' performance. Individual student meetings are scheduled following DPT 659, and all students must complete a clinical education survey following DPT 659/ 779/789.

Problems During an Experience

Problems or issues may arise during a clinical education experience. In this case, the student should first try to resolve the problem with their CI. If this is unsuccessful, the DCEs and SCCE should be made aware of the issue. A student may contact the DCEs directly at any time. The DCEs may visit the facility to mediate the concerns. Additional assistance is available to all graduate students from the Utica College student support services during clinical experiences.

If, at any time during the clinical education experience, a student exhibits unsatisfactory behavior in the red flag areas (safety, professional behaviors, legal & ethical practice), or if the student's potential for achieving the expected competencies by the end of the experience is in question, the CI must contact the DCEs to discuss the appropriate action. When specific concerns occur, the DCEs may use a learning contract to guide the student's actions.

A learning contract ([Appendix 15](#)) is an agreement that represents a collaborative effort between the student, DCEs, CI, and SCCE. A learning contract delineates the expectations for success in the clinical setting. Objectives are identified by assessing the student's current level of performance relative to the expected outcome of the clinical experience. Learning contracts allow students to have an active role in the educational process, practice goal setting, and planning and set the stage for future development as professionals.

The components of the learning contract include the following:

- An established time frame
- Objectives
- Learning resources and strategies
- Evaluation methods
- Criteria for evaluation
- Status/comments
- Signatures of the student and supervisor
- Date contract established

If attempts to resolve the concerns are unsuccessful, the DCEs will complete a Notification of the Potential for Dismissal from a Clinical Site ([Appendix 16](#)). Depending on the area(s) of concern, reasonable efforts will be made to support the student's learning. If, after an opportunity, the student does not meet the criteria for continuation, the student will be dismissed from the clinical site.

Final Grades for Clinical Education Courses

Success or failure in any clinical education experience is a joint decision of the CI and the DCEs. The DCEs ultimately decide with recommendations from the SCCE/CI. In the event of unsatisfactory performance, a student will earn a grade of F and 1) be dismissed from the program, or 2) offered one additional opportunity to complete and pass the clinical experience. The final decision is at the discretion of the DCEs, in consultation with the Department Chair and program faculty. If a student does repeat any full-time clinical education course, the student must complete that course before resuming the remaining courses. This will alter progression in the curriculum and delay graduation.

If a student fails a second full-time clinical education experience, they will be dismissed from the Physical Therapy Program. Details regarding the Procedure for Dismissal are outlined in the Program Handbook.

Student Request to Cancel a Clinical Education Experience:

Due to the nature of the academic-clinical partnership, a student must inform and/or coordinate with the DCEs if they wish to withdraw or change a clinical education experience. Failure to obtain permission **prior** to initiating withdrawal will result in a failure of the clinical education experience.