

## New Clinical Instructor Information

### PURPOSE:

Thank you for agreeing to become a Clinical Instructor (CI) for a student in the MSc. Program from the University of Alberta. You are now contributing to the education and professional development of a potential future colleague in your clinical site.

***“Clinical education is a critical component of physiotherapy education programs and is essential to the future provision of quality physiotherapy health care to Canadians. Physiotherapists perform a vital role in clinical education by sharing their professional and clinical expertise and knowledge with physiotherapy students. As clinical instructors, they facilitate learning and critical thinking, as well as teach and evaluate students’ clinical performance and behaviours. Participating in clinical education also facilitates the recruitment of novice professionals into the workplace.”*** [CPA Position Statement on Clinical Education](#)

We understand that first time clinicians may seek some tools and further support in their roles as CIs, hence, we developed this brief “Instructor Package” where we summarize the role and the resources available to ensure that the partnership between the students and the CI is as successful as possible.

Although this resource was developed for new CIs who are taking students for the first time, this could also be used by those who are considering whether or not to become involved in clinical education, either by directly supervising a student or by co-supervising a student, as it will provide you with the information that you need to take the leap into becoming a CI. If you are still unsure if supervising a student is something that you would like to do, we invite you to review this brief document about [10+1 reasons to consider clinical education](#)

We hope that the resources and links presented here are helpful.

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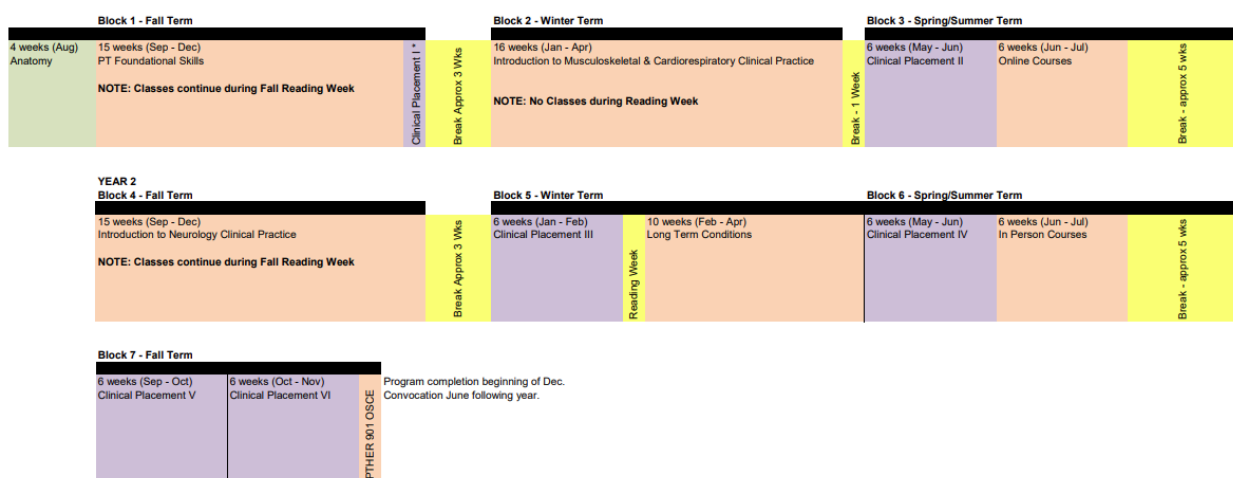
**MScPT PROGRAM OVERVIEW:**

The [Master's of Science in Physical Therapy \(MScPT\) program at the University of Alberta](#) is an accredited, graduate, professional, entry-level physical therapy (PT) program, and is one of the largest in Canada with approximately 110 students admitted per year, using a distributed model of education with 24 students completing their courses in Calgary.

The immediate objective of the program is to provide students with physical therapy skills that meet the workplace demands of diverse and changing healthcare environments, in addition to effective strategies for autonomous practice, evidence informed decision-making and outcome and program evaluation. These skills are acquired not only in the classroom but also during clinical placements, where CIs contribute to student's learning both personally and professionally.

The MScPT Program is a year-round, full-time program and can be completed within 28 months of study. Students are required to complete a minimum of 1200 hours of clinical practice in order to graduate. This is only possible through collaborative partnerships between the University and the clinical community to supervise students during their [clinical placements](#). Placements and course work occurs throughout the program as it allows students to apply into practice what they learn in the classroom.

The Program Flowchart is describe below:

**MScPT Program Flowchart**


The clinical placements consists of six courses. The first course is a one-week introductory placement in the fall of the first year. Other placements are six-weeks in length and are placed in the first, second and third years of the MScPT program.

Each placement has [specific requirements](#) as described below:

**PTHER 517-** Clinical course composed of a ½ day of shadow experience (3h) in a site in either Edmonton or Calgary, and a 1-week introductory placement (40h).

**Placement goals:** the primary goals of the course are to provide orientation to the healthcare environment, expose students to clinical practice and to expand their knowledge of the role of the physical therapist and other healthcare workers.

**Evaluation method:** the CI provides recommendation of Credit or No Credit on this placement based on expected performance from students, as specified in the Course Outline for each.

**PTher 518** - 6-week placement (40h/week)

**Placement goals:** this placement provides students the opportunity to integrate and apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the academic setting within a clinical setting. This requires hands-on practice with communication skills (client, other healthcare providers), documentation, patient handling, assessment and treatment of cardiorespiratory and/or MSK conditions. Students should continue to develop and demonstrate professional behaviour during this placement.

**Evaluation method:** students are evaluated using the Assessment of Clinical Performance. Possible grades on the ACP are Credit, Credit with Exceptional Performance, Credit with Reservation, and No Credit.

**PTher 520** - 6-week placement (40h/wk)

**Placement goals:** this placement provides students the opportunity to further apply hands-on practice, with increasing independence over the six-week period. Students should further develop their communication skills, documentation, patient handling, assessment and treatment of cardiorespiratory and/or MSK conditions, and/or neurological conditions. Students should continue to develop and demonstrate professional behaviour during this placement.

**Evaluation method:** students are evaluated using the Assessment of Clinical Performance. Possible grades on the ACP are Credit, Credit with Exceptional Performance, Credit with Reservation, and No Credit.

**PTher 521** - 6-week placement (40h/wk)

**Placement goals:** this placement provides students the opportunity to further apply hands-on practice, with increasing independence over the six week period in the areas of cardiorespiratory and/or MSK conditions, and/or neurological conditions. Being an intermediate placement, students should have the opportunity to enhance interprofessional collaboration and delegation to support personnel when appropriate. Students should continue to develop and demonstrate professional behaviour during this placement.

**Evaluation method:** students are evaluated using the Assessment of Clinical Performance. Possible grades on the ACP are Credit, Credit with Exceptional Performance, Credit with Reservation, and No Credit.

**PTher 522** - 6-week placement (40h/wk)

**Placement goals:** as an advanced placement, students should further develop hands-on practice, with increasing independence in the areas of cardiorespiratory and/or MSK conditions, and/or neurological

conditions. Students should demonstrate skills related to interprofessional collaboration and delegation to support personnel when appropriate.

**Evaluation method:** *students are evaluated using the Assessment of Clinical Performance. Possible grades on the ACP are Credit, Credit with Exceptional Performance, Credit with Reservation, and No Credit.*

**PTHER 523** - 6-week placement (40h/wk)

**Placement goals:** as the final placement in the program, students should further develop hands-on practice, with focus on independent practice in the areas of cardiorespiratory and/or MSK conditions, and/or neurological conditions. Students are expected to demonstrate skills related to interprofessional collaboration, delegation to support personnel when appropriate, and professionalism.

**Evaluation method:** *students are evaluated using the Assessment of Clinical Performance. Possible grades on the ACP are Credit, Credit with Exceptional Performance, Credit with Reservation, and No Credit.*

#### **CLINICAL PLACEMENT PROCESSES AND CLINICAL REQUIREMENTS:**

Each student is directly supervised by one or more CIs, who is a registered physiotherapist and serves as a mentor and an educator. Multiple CIs can share the supervisory task during a placement period. This is particularly relevant as it allows part-time clinicians to be involved in clinical education. It also ensures continuity of knowledge and expertise in clinical education as more experienced CIs can share a student with more novice CIs. As described in the [Clinical Site Manual](#), the specific roles of the CI are to:

- Act as a mentor and professional role model for the student.
- Provide the student with clinical opportunities to acquire, integrate, and consolidate the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to become a competent entry-level practitioner.
- Provide the student with an environment that is safe and conducive to learning, free of discrimination and harassment.
- Evaluate (both formally and informally) the performance of the student during the placement
- Communicate with the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) any issues related to student performance or behaviour to collaboratively implement solutions during the clinical placement

**Dates:** Placement dates are specified on the University of Alberta Department of Physical Therapy [website](#)

PTHER 517: 1 week Placement Mid December

PTHER 518/521: 6 weeks May to mid June

PTHER 520: 6 weeks January to mid February

PTHER 522: 6 weeks September to mid October

PTHER 523: 6 weeks October to November

**Communication:** once a student is matched with a clinical placement/CI, the student should communicate via email with the CI to introduce themselves and inquire about any specific logistics of the clinical setting (hours, dress code, location, specific policies, etc.). The CI will receive via email important communication regarding the placement from the Clinical Education team. This includes the specific placement Course Outline with detailed information about placement expectations, caseload management, and specific content that have been covered during previous classroom courses.

**Assignments:** For the 5 six-week placements, students are required to complete specific assignments as details below:

**Eportfolio:** students will create, and share with their CI, a Google Site populated with their previous placement assignments and reflections. This allows CIs to understand where each student is at in their learning, their previous placement experiences and population exposure, as well as areas of strength and areas that need further development.

**Start of placement document:** this is a document that will be filled out by the student and discussed with the CI during the first few days of the placement. It will serve as a vehicle for information exchange between the student and the CI, to help share placement expectations and learning/communication styles.

**Minor Project:** The purpose of the Minor Project is for students to apply skills learned related to evidence-based practice, health literacy and patient education, professional communication towards a project that can benefit the clinical site/area of practice and contribute to personal development for the student. Although there is some flexibility regarding the topic and the delivery method/format of the Minor Project, it should represent work that is agreed upon by the clinical instructor and the CI during the placement period. The Minor Project should reflect the careful preparation of the work agreed on, where students demonstrate excellent ability to select, comprehend, summarise and present information that is accurate and relevant to the intended audience. Furthermore, the Minor Project should be presented in a professional, unbiased and non-judgmental manner, particularly when client information is being used as part of the Minor Project.

**Reflection:** Reflective practice is an integral part of professional development, therefore, students must engage in self-reflection after the placement period. By answering specific guiding questions at the conclusion of each placement, students describe and analyze specific aspects or challenges of the placement. They explore how different perspectives or points of view may have contributed to certain situations; identify their role in the event, and the feelings and emotions that contributed to the event. Students also explore possible strategies to avoid similar events in the future, or better strategies to handle those events. The overall goal of the reflection assignment is that students will derive meaning from challenges or specific situations encountered in clinical practice to further develop professionally and personally.

**Specific Policies:** the CI will receive the Course Outline prior to the start of the placement, as well as any new information related to the placement. CIs are encouraged to review the Course Outline for each placement time. However, some specific policies guide all placement.

**Absence:** any absence from placement must be communicated with the CI and the ACCE. Detail information about absences can be found [HERE](#)

**Clinical Requirements:** During their clinical placements, our students are required to fulfill a number of requirements. Two of these are that students have experience with cardiorespiratory and neurological clients to accumulate at least 100h in each area over the course of their placements. As a CI, [you can contribute to students meeting these requirements](#) by creating opportunities in the clinical setting, if appropriate, that will allow students to treat clients with cardiorespiratory and/or neurological conditions. Further information is presented below:

- [What constitutes CR hour](#)
- [What constitutes Neuro hours](#)

### STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS AND PREPARATION FOR PLACEMENTS:

The longer term objective of the MScPT program is to graduate entry-level physical therapists with life-long learning skills who will continually monitor and modify their practice to ensure efficacious, cost effective physical therapy care to people of Alberta, Canada and the global community. Therefore, we hold our students accountable to a high level of professionalism and responsibility during course work and placements.

Students are expected to:

- Abide by the [Code of Ethics of the College of Physiotherapists of Alberta](#)
- Abide by the [Code of Student Behaviour for the University of Alberta](#)
- Be actively involved in their learning, by being prepared to clinical placement, proactively seeking learning opportunities, and demonstrating engagement in the placements and with every interaction with clients
- Formally evaluate their performance during the midterm and final week of the placement and to discuss with the CI. In a case where their performance is not satisfactory at the midterm point, the student is expected to incorporate the feedback received and implement strategies to meet the placement requirements

Furthermore, prior to starting the placements, students complete specific online learning modules on topics relevant to the CI-student relationship and the placement expectations. These [eight online learning modules](#) from Western University were developed for students and CIs (preceptors) and we encourage new CIs to complete them. Each 30 - 45 minute module focuses on specific topics related to mentorship and supervision:

- 1-Preparation and Orientation,
- 2-Anti-oppressive Practice,
- 3-Developing Learning Objectives,
- 4- Developing Clinical Reasoning,
- 5-Reflective Practice,

- 6-Feedback and Evaluation,
- 7-Navigating Conflicts,
- 8-The Virtual Placement.

#### STUDENT'S EVALUATION:

The [evaluation process](#) is often mentioned as a challenging aspect of the supervising task, therefore, we wanted to bring some information about the evaluation process to your attention. In the 5 six-week long placements, CIs must complete two formal evaluations: the midterm (end of week 3) and the final evaluation (at the end of the placement). Both evaluations are completed online using the Assessment of Clinical Performant (ACP) 2.0 Tool. This tool is composed of a specific Rating Scale and Anchor Descriptor to help the CI determine the overall performance in the placement. There are some well-developed resources to help you complete the ACP Tool successfully.

- [Online Learning Module ACP 2.0](#)
- [ACP Grading Resource](#)

We would like to highlight that evaluation is an ongoing process during the placement period and involves several domains of clinical practice. For example, when your student describes their rationale for a specific treatment choice, you will be evaluating their clinical decision skills.

At the midterm and final evaluation time point, students can receive Credit, Credit with exceptional performance, Credit with reservation, or No Credit/Fail. Further description of each grade and specific action to take can be found in the [University of Alberta Clinical Education webpage](#).

**If you determine that a student will receive a grade of No Credit/Fail or Credit with reservation at midterm point or is at risk of failing the placement, please contact the Clinical Education team.**

#### FAQ and FURTHER SUPPORT

[The Clinical Education website](#) has detailed information about common questions that clinicians may have.

At any point in the placement time, please feel free to contact the Clinical Education team if you have any questions about the placement process or concerns about the student's performance.