

## **Department of Physical Therapy Communications Policy**

Defined methods of communication are necessary to facilitate the sharing of information among students, Department faculty and staff, the ACCE and clinical site staff. All communications associated with the MScPT program, whether they be in person, via telephone or electronic (email, e-portfolio posting, etc.), are considered to be professional interactions. Hence the format and language should be respectful and professional in nature, using proper English.

### ***E-Mail and Internet Communications***

1. Students are required to use their University of Alberta E-mail account for all communications related to their University of Alberta education and the MScPT program including emails related to any clinical placement. Likewise any information related to the MScPT program and/or a clinical placement will be communicated to students through their University of Alberta E-mail account only. This could include program/course related activities, placement notifications, policy updates, and meeting notices.
2. The Department of Physical Therapy expects that students normally take a formal, professional approach in E-mail messages sent to professors, instructors, staff members, site coordinators, clinical instructors, other health professionals, patients/ families, or any other person associated with the MScPT program.

This type of E-mail communication can be likened to a business letter and should be written such that it:

- a. Includes complete information about the sender and the purpose of the message,
  - b. Is succinct and to the point,
  - c. Clearly identifies the information that is being requested or responded to
  - d. Is free of grammar, capitalization, punctuation or spelling errors, and
  - e. Is written in a respectful and professional manner.
  - f. Uses an appropriate greeting
  - g. E-mail communications that do not meet this standard may be returned to students for editing and resubmission.
3. When a student makes a request to a professor, instructor, staff member, site coordinator and/or clinical instructor and the request is considered/ addressed by the receiver, it is expected that the student will send a final reply acknowledging the receiver's actions.
  4. In discussing placement experiences in a classroom setting/ePortfolio posting, students should refrain from providing information that might identify the patients involved, generic locations should be provided (e.g large urban hospital, rehab facility) without patient identifiers.
  5. Under no circumstances may students discuss experiences related to clinical placement on internet-based, social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc.



### ***Face-to-Face and Telephone Communications***

1. Students are expected to conduct themselves as professionals during all face-to-face and telephone conversations with professors, instructors, staff members, site coordinators, clinical instructors, other health professionals, patients, or other placement contacts.
  - a. Steps must be taken, as needed, to protect confidentiality of patients.
  - b. Students must demonstrate respect for individuals they are communicating with (as well as those they are discussing) at all times. Proper language and appropriate non-verbal communication are expected.