UMPT Clinical Education Program Overview

General Description and Philosophy

The Clinical Education Program is designed to dovetail with and complement the didactic portion of the Program’s curriculum in developing student knowledge and skills to meet the needs of entry-level practice. The goal is to provide students with a breadth and depth of experiences that allow the student to practice as a competent generalist and begin to develop specialty areas of practice. To that end, we have a clinical education program that consists of a blend of 3 integrated, part-time clinical experiences and 3 full-time clinical experiences. We believe that the implementation of integrated part-time clinical experiences, where didactic material and models taught in the mornings can be reinforced in the clinic in the afternoons, in association with full-time clinical experiences that dove-tail with semesters of didactic/and integrated experiential learning, provide an optimum educational experience for our students. Our clinical education program also requires participation in community outreach and interprofessional interactions to promote professional development outside of traditional physical therapy training. At the conclusion of their clinical education, we aim to have students transition smoothly into professional practice, and become contributing members of their community while continuing to develop as a professional.

Affiliated Clinical Sites

Opportunities for clinical education exist through affiliations with over 200 clinical sites across the nation. Most affiliated clinical sites are located in the northwest and northern Rocky Mountain regions. These clinical sites determine availability for student placement on a year-to-year basis. Students may be able to request a new clinical site affiliation through a formal application process for the final clinical experience. Development of new clinical sites and assessment of existing sites is an ongoing process between the clinical faculty and the clinical sites.

Clinical Program Experiential and Placement Goals

Students enrolled in the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science are required to complete a minimum of 1435 hours of clinical practice. PT 582: 15 hours; PT 587: 320 hours; PT 583: 90 hours; PT 589: 320 hours; PT 584: 90 hours; PT 680: 600 hours. Students’ clinical education consists of three full-time and three integrated/part-time experiences.

Integrated/part-time: Students seek out desired Alternative Clinical Experiences for PT 582 Clinical Clerkship, which may include a traditional physical therapy setting but may also be experiences such as observation of surgery, volunteering with a local non-profit, or shadowing another health care discipline such as OT or SLP for instance. For the 2nd and 3rd part-time integrated clinical experiences, students will be placed in the UMPT Clinic on or off campus, with a focus on a neurologic/complex medical, orthopedic, and/or underserved/complex medical patient population.
Full-time: For the first two full-time clinical experiences each summer, the goal is for students to have clinical experiences in two different settings, typically including one that is in-patient based (i.e. Acute care hospital, SNF, IR, home health, etc.) and the other in an out-patient environment, working with different patient populations. Variations from the above may occur, depending on student interest, availability, and assessment by the DCE or ADCE that determines the placements offer enough diversity to satisfy our goal of a broad, generalist education. Students work with the DCE to clarify professional goals and to be appropriately matched with a clinical site for PT 680, their final, full-time clinical experience.