

**A.T. STILL UNIVERSITY  
ARIZONA SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES  
DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM**

**DPTR7580 Clinical Education Experience I  
Course Syllabus**

**Spring 2026**

**Course Instructors:**

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**Teaching/Lab Assistants:** N/A

**Description:**

The first, full-time clinical education experience is a four-week, full-time clinical experience under the direct supervision of a licensed physical therapist. Over the four weeks, the student will be expected to apply physical therapy principles learned in the first semesters of their classroom work, including gait analysis, patient education, basic therapeutic exercise, documentation, clinical reasoning, basic patient care skills and research.

**Prerequisites:**

Successful completion of the first year curriculum

**Corequisites:** None

**Credit:** 4 semester hours

**Clock Hours and Schedule:** As determined by the clinical site in collaboration with the institution.

**Contact Hours:** Approximately 160 hours across the duration of the experience

**Required and Recommended Readings:** As determined by clinical site.

**Course Goal:**

Revised 06/2025

The student will be able to complete examinations, evaluate findings, develop a plan of care and implement interventions appropriate for a variety of patient populations and settings while abiding by physical therapy practice standards.

### **Course objectives:**

At the completion of this clinical experience the student will be able to:

1. Exhibit professional behaviors consistent with the APTA Code of Ethics, Core Values, and Professional Code of Conduct including the following: (AL3, 7B\_Communication, Ethics and Values, Management, Teaching and Learning, Law, 7D1, 7D4, 7D5, 7D6, 7D8, 7D28, SR3-MZ:abbreviated clinical feedback form, student self-assessment)
  - a. Maintaining patient confidentiality, privacy and modesty
  - b. Managing conflict in positive, professional and constructive ways (IS3-MZ:Clinical Performance Instrument)
  - c. Providing feedback to the clinical instructor to enhance learning
  - d. Initiating action to address ethical or legal concerns
  - e. Maintaining accountability for personal actions
  - f. Communicating professionally and in a timely manner
  - g. Communicating with sensitivity to individual and cultural differences (IS1-MZ:Clinical Performance Instrument)
  - h. Actively listening with attentiveness to the other person (IS2-MZ:Clinical Performance Instrument)
  - i. Recognizing personal biases, both implicit and explicit, when providing patient care
2. Demonstrate adult learner characteristics that include the following: (AL3, 7D5, 7D15)
  - a. Readiness for self-assessment
  - b. Eagerness to learn
  - c. Willingness to seek independent learning opportunities
3. Complete introductory components of documentation with accuracy and appropriate content, adhering to professional guidelines within the physical therapy practice setting and including the following components: (CL3, 7B\_Law, 7D1, 7D32)
  - a. Format and guidelines required by the clinical setting
  - b. Professional terminology that is technically correct
4. Adhere to health, safety and legal policies and regulations in a consistent manner, which include the following: (CL3, 7B\_Law, 7D1, 7D28, 7D37)
  - a. ensure the safety of self, patient and others in the clinic environment
  - b. establish and maintain a safe working environment
5. Demonstrates appropriate relationships with patients, families, and interdisciplinary team members. (AL3, 7B\_Communication, Teaching and Learning, 7D1, 7D5, 7D24, 7D39, IC2-MZ:abbreviated clinical feedback form)
6. Act with compassion, caring, and integrity in all professional relationships. (AL3, 7B\_Ethics and Values, 7D1, 7D5, 7D39, L5) (IS1-MZ: abbreviated clinical feedback form)

7. With guidance by the clinical instructor, the student will conduct patient interview to gather pertinent history. (CL3, 7D17)
8. With guidance by the clinical instructor, the student will perform appropriate assessments, including: (7C\_Cardiovascular, Musculoskeletal, System Interactions, 7D5, 7D18, 7D19, PL3)
  - a. Accurate measurement of range of motion. (7C\_Musculoskeletal, 7D19ks)
  - b. Accurate determination of muscle performance. (7C\_Musculoskeletal, 7D19o)
  - c. Assessment of vital signs to include heart rate, temperature, respiration, and blood pressure at all appropriate times. (7C\_Cardiovascular, System Interactions, 7D19w)
  - d. Safe gait training and transfers if applicable. (7D19im)
9. With guidance by the clinical instructor, the student will correlate examination findings to:
  - a. Identify impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions using the ICF model (CL2, 7B\_Clinical Reasoning, 7D21) (CT2,3-MZ\_Clinical Performance Instrument)
  - b. Develop a diagnosis and a prognosis. (CL3, 7B\_Clinical Reasoning, 7D20, 7D22, 7D23) (CT2,3-MZ\_Clinical Performance Instrument)
  - c. Develop appropriate intervention(s). (CL3, 7B\_Clinical Reasoning, Evidence-Based Practice, 7D20, 7D27a-e) (CT1,2,3-MZ\_Clinical Performance Instrument)
  - d. Modify intervention(s). (CL5, 7B\_Clinical Reasoning, 7D27a-f,i, 7D30) (CT2,3-MZ\_Clinical Performance Instrument)
  - e. Develop short term and long term functional goals (CL4, 7B\_Clinical Reasoning, 7D20, 7D23, 7D24) (CT2,3-MZ\_Clinical Performance Instrument)
  - f. Apply appropriate patient education for problem(s) management. (CL3, 7B\_Communication, Teaching and Learning, 7D7, 7D12) (IS1,3-MZ\_Clinical Performance Instrument)
10. Explain patient and/or caregiver instruction/education regarding the intervention and plan of care (AL3, 7B\_Communication, Teaching and Learning, 7D7, 7D12)
11. Identify the need for reassessment. (CL3, 7B\_Clinical Reasoning, 7D30, 7D31, 7D33)
12. Consider the whole person throughout the episode of care. (CL5, 7B\_Ethics and Values, Management, 7C\_System Interactions, Differential Diagnosis, 7D5, 7D8, 7D34, 7D36)
13. Implement personal/professional growth and development using constructive feedback and self-assessment. (AL5, 7B\_Ethics and Values, 7D5, 7D15, 7D38, CT3-MZ-Clinical Performance Instrument)

**Teaching Methods and Learning Experiences:** As determined by the clinical education facility of each site with guidance by the DCEs.

**Evaluation techniques:**

APTA Clinical Performance Instrument  
Bulletin Board Discussions  
Additional feedback from the clinical instructor as appropriate

**Lab Participation:** N/A

**Additional requirements:**

As determined by the site and per the clinical affiliation agreement for the clinical entity. Could include but is not limited to drug screening, fingerprint card, learning modules, journal articles, immunizations and continuing education courses.

**Grading Policy:**

For the student to receive credit for this course and to receive a passing grade, the following criteria must be met:

- Bulletin Board Participation:
  - A minimum average of 70 percent must be received for this graded category
- Clinical Performance Instrument:
  - Demonstrate a ranking of *Intermediate Performance* or above on each of the following items of the formal evaluation: Professionalism: Ethical Practice, Legal Practice & Professional Growth; Interpersonal: Communication, Inclusivity.
  - Demonstrate a ranking of *Advanced Beginner* or above on each of the following items of the formal evaluation (in relation to extremities): Technical/Procedural: Clinical Reasoning, Examination/Evaluation/Diagnosis, Plan of Care & Case Management, Interventions & Education; Business: Documentation.
  - Have no negative comments about the student's safety in the clinic or about his/her professional behavior.
  - Have no excessive tardiness or absences on the final formal evaluation.

If the student fails to achieve the minimum 70 percent competency for the graded bulletin board component the instructor has the option of assigning alternate remediation work or allowing the failing grade to stand. A failure of this graded component results in overall course failure.

If the student fails to meet competency for the clinical performance, the student may be given a failing grade or granted an incomplete depending on the overall clinical performance as outlined in the Clinical Education Manual. This determination is solely the responsibility of the Co-Directors of Clinical Education (DCE). The DCE may modify the clinical performance criteria based on the specific clinical education placement and/or other factors.

The clinical instructor(s) will evaluate the students' performance on the Clinical Performance Instrument according to the directions and guidance from the DCE. The final grade for this course is pass/fail.

**Grading Categories:**

70%	Student's Clinical Education Evaluation / Performance Evaluation
30%	Bulletin Board Responses and Participation

Completion of site and clinical instructor evaluations required to receive a grade for this course.

**Grading System:** The final grade for this course is pass/fail.

### **Dress Code**

All students are required to dress appropriately for the clinical environment. Students are expected to dress professionally with appropriate footwear and name badge. ASHS/ATSU polos are preferred. Additionally, students will adhere to clinic specific dress code rules and regulations.

### **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

The DPT program recognizes the potential benefits of AI to support student learning and that it may be useful as a supplementary tool. However, the use of AI to generate work that is submitted for a grade or assessment is prohibited unless explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Please see the section on cheating in the ATSU DPT Student Manual for more information.

### **Cheating**

Cheating on any graded component will not be tolerated and will result in failure “F” of this course. Additionally, the course instructor will recommend that the student be dismissed from the program. For additional information about what constitutes cheating please see the ATSU DPT Student Manual.

### **Professional Behaviors:**

Students are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors including, but not limited to, punctuality, attentiveness, participation, professional appearance and attire, interpersonal relations, attitudes, neatness and punctuality of work, and preparation. More specific expectations are outlined in the ATSU Doctor of Physical Therapy Student Manual. Students demonstrating unprofessional behavior in multiple courses or other program activities will be referred to the Physical Therapy Academic Review Board.

### **Late/Missed Assignments:**

Assignments are due at the designated due date and time. Assignments handed in after the due date and time will be graded by the instructor. It is at the discretion of the instructor to close acceptance of an assignment after a specified timeframe based on the nature or purpose of the assignment.

**Attendance:**

*A student is required to attend all scheduled clinical days.* If applicable, a student is permitted a total of three excused absences during their 3rd year upon request and with appropriate documentation. These three days include both anticipated and unexpected absences for the entire 3rd year. A missed day for taking the NPTE early is not counted in this total. The student may be required to make up any missed days by working Saturdays, Sundays, extended hours, or by extending the length of the clinical education experience. The academic program and/or the clinical education site reserves the right to require the student to complete all missed hours. The program may require the student to make up any missed days, even if the clinical education site does not. If the student misses more than three clinical days, the Co-DCE will implement appropriate steps of remediation, additional assignments, and/or grade reduction if necessary. Absences of clinical days will be remediated in the clinic as outlined below in Student Responsibilities.

**Student Responsibilities**

- Anticipated absences must be communicated with the assigned Co-DCE as soon as the student becomes aware. The student must request approval of anticipated absences through the PTAR form located on Canvas in the PT Student Center. Students must include the date(s), details and reasoning for missing; absences are recorded in half and full day increments only. Similar to the didactic portion of the program, this request will then be reviewed by a committee and the student will be notified of the decision. Requests will be reviewed twice a month; at the beginning and approximately halfway through the month (within 2 weeks). Those requests submitted by the 15th will be reviewed and a response given before the 1st of the next month. Requests submitted between the 15th and the 1st will be notified by the 15th of the following month. It is the responsibility of the student to submit their requests with enough time to be processed in advance. If the request is approved, the student will receive confirmation of approval and should then submit a "Leave Request" through EXXAT. Once a final decision is made, the student will communicate with the assigned Co-DCE the designated plan and notify their CI of the absence.
- Unexpected absences must be communicated to both the Co-DCE and clinical site as soon as the student is able to do so. These absences will be recorded through the EXXAT Leave Request Form.

**Academic Program Responsibilities**

- The Co-DCE will monitor the attendance of students during each clinical education experience and will be available to assist the CI in determining the necessity of making up any missed clinical hours. The program will also assist the student and the clinical education site in coordinating the hours to be completed.

- A committee will meet bi-monthly to discuss clinical education absence requests and will notify students by the 1st or 15th of each month, depending on submittal date.

### **Additional course information:**

The course instructor expects all students to come to the clinical environment prepared to engage, discuss, and perform clinical skills. This expectation includes that all assigned readings or activities have been completed prior to clinic time. Resources and assignments are expected to be downloaded and printed if needed by the student prior to the start of the clinical learning.

All assignments and projects handed in become the property of the ATSU Physical Therapy Program and will be returned to students at faculty discretion.

This course must be passed with a minimum grade of “C” in order to be considered for retention and progression in the Physical Therapy Program.

### **University Policies:**

#### **Student Conduct**

ATSU students are expected to abide by two important codes: the Code of Academic Conduct and the Code of Behavioral Standards. The codes establish minimal expectations of students and serve as guidelines for professional behavior. Inappropriate behavior is subject to sanctions. Information on student academic and disciplinary codes and processes can be found in the ATSU University Catalog. For more information visit:

[Link to Code of Academic Conduct](#); [Link to University Student Handbook](#); [Code of Behavioral Standards](#).

#### **Posting of Grades by Faculty**

The public posting of grades either by the student’s name, school identification number, or social security number without the student’s prior written consent is a violation of FERPA. This includes the posting of grades to a class website and applies to any public posting of grades for students taking distance education courses. Instructors who wish to post grades should use a system that ensures that FERPA requirements are met. This can be accomplished by obtaining the student’s written consent or by using a unique identifier known only to the student and the instructor. The order of posting **should not** be alphabetic. For more information visit: Link to ATSU Policies re: [Student Records](#), [FERPA](#); Link to ATSU Policies re: [Grading](#).

#### **Students with Disabilities**

Accommodation Services supports ATSU students with disabilities by determining eligibility and coordinating necessary accommodations, while maintaining the standards of the University. Any student seeking accommodations due to a documented disability is required to register with Accommodation

Services. ATSU faculty will not provide disability-related accommodations without referral to and notice from Accommodation Services.

To register, or to discuss accommodations as they may apply to your individual situation, please contact Accommodation Services at [accommodations@atsu.edu](mailto:accommodations@atsu.edu), 660.626.2774 Missouri campus, or 480.245.6248 Arizona and California campuses. For more information, visit [atsu.edu/lras](https://atsu.edu/lras).

### **Title IX Reporting: Discrimination, Harassment, Trauma, Stress**

ATSU supports you in pursuing your academic goals free from harassment, discrimination, violence, or retaliation. If you should experience discrimination, harassment, violence, or retaliation, please contact the ATSU Title IX office, Student Affairs, or Human Resources for assistance. Title IX also protects students who are pregnant or need assistance for pregnancy related conditions. If you are pregnant, please contact the ATSU Title IX office for assistance, resources, and to understand your rights. ATSU does not tolerate discrimination or harassment (including sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking) based on protected characteristics (e.g., race, disability, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, pregnancy, etc.) or related retaliation. Under ATSU Policy No. 90-210: Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation, all faculty and staff are required to report any knowledge of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation to the ATSU Title IX office.

A range of resources are available within the University to assist any student struggling with trauma or stress. The Student Affairs website includes information about resources such as Behavioral Health and Wellness, self-help, student handbook, catalogs, etc.

For assistance or more information contact:

HUMAN RESOURCES - 660.626.2790 ([hr@atsu.edu](mailto:hr@atsu.edu) )

STUDENT AFFAIRS - 660.626.2236(<https://www.atstu.edu/student-affairs/contact>)

TITLE IX OFFICE - 660.626.2113 ([titleix@atsu.edu](mailto:titleix@atsu.edu) )

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