

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Student Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Carrington College Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program. The faculty and staff are looking forward to being a partner in helping you achieve your dream of being a vital part of the healthcare team. The PTA standard plan of study follows a hierarchical progression from foundational to complex academic and clinical experiences with the primary goal of graduating an entry-level PTA that is well educated, ethical, professional, and compassionate.

The PTA program handbook is to serve as a guide and it contains information regarding the program's mission and philosophy, policies and procedures specific to the PTA program, and our requirements and expectations of you. Together with the Carrington College Academic catalog and Carrington College Student Handbook, it will help answer questions about the program and college. It is your responsibility to know and understand the information contained in this handbook, the Carrington College [Academic Catalog](#) and the Carrington College [Student Handbook](#).

The PTA faculty recognizes that the PTA curriculum is time consuming and challenging and requires a significant time commitment. We strongly recommend that students minimize outside work commitments while completing the curriculum to maximize success.

PTA PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Graduates of the Carrington College PTA program will:

1. Demonstrate competency in administering therapeutic interventions under the supervision and within the plan of care of a physical therapist.

Objectives:

- Provide physical therapy interventions effectively to progress the individual patient throughout the plan of care.
- Modify intervention(s) within the plan of care established by the physical therapist.
- Correctly identify any precautions or contraindications of physical therapy interventions and communicate with the supervising physical therapist.

2. Demonstrate behaviors that adhere to the practice standards established by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) including integrity, ethical behavior, compassion, understanding cultural diversity and social responsibility.

Objectives:

- Exhibit conduct that reflects a commitment to meet or exceed the expectations of members of society receiving healthcare services.
- Exhibit conduct that reflects a commitment to meet or to exceed the expectations of members of the profession of physical therapy.
- Adhere to appropriate legal standards.
- Adhere to the [Standard of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant](#).
- Adhere to institutional policies and procedures when working as a PTA.
- Responsibly provide directed interventions in a safe manner that minimizes risk to patients, self, and others.
- Take appropriate action in an emergency in any practice setting.

3. Demonstrate competence in performing specific data collection techniques as directed by the supervising physical therapist.

Objectives:

- Demonstrate ability to interview patients/clients and obtain pertinent history of illness and subsequently the ability to communicate information gathered to the supervising physical therapist.
- Demonstrate ability to measure and document functional mobility, functional limitations in movement, strength, flexibility, balance, and function, as well as document the patient response to physical therapy interventions, under the supervision of the physical therapist.

4. Demonstrate appropriate clinical problem solving and critical thinking within the scope of work as a PTA under the supervision of a physical therapist.

Objectives:

- Select appropriate patient care interventions within the plan of care established by the physical therapist.
- Recognize when an intervention is inappropriate due to changes in the patient's status and respond appropriately by communicating with the physical therapist and adjusting the intervention as directed.
- Report changes in patient status to the supervising physical therapist.
- Utilize information from data collection to progress patient interventions within the plan of care established by the physical therapist, and report changes to the supervising physical therapist.

5. Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively and appropriately.

Objectives:

- Educate patients, families, caregivers and members of the healthcare team using effective instructional methods.
- Complete thorough, accurate, logical, concise, timely, and legible documentation supporting physical therapy services.
- Collaborate with members of the healthcare team.

6. Demonstrate a pattern of professional growth and lifelong learning for the advancement of self and the physical therapy profession through membership in the APTA, attending conferences and continuing education.

Objectives:

- Participate in organizations and activities that promote physical therapy.
- Educate others about the role of the PTA.
- Participate in career development based upon self-assessment, performance appraisals, work setting and special interests.
- Monitor and implement changes in physical therapy practice based upon ongoing clinical research.

7. Successfully complete the NPTE for the PTA, seek, and gain employment in the physical therapy profession following graduation.

Objectives:

- Demonstrate competence on an examination for licensure as a PTA.
- Achieve employment as a PTA.
- Display a commitment to serving the healthcare needs of the local community.

COMMON TERMS USED IN CLINICAL EDUCATION

Director of Clinical Education (DCE) - The core faculty member who has responsibility in the program for coordinating the clinical education portion of the curriculum.

Center Coordinator of Clinical Education (CCCE) - the clinical education manager/ organizer at each clinic for student rotations.

Program Director (PD) - The core faculty member who is designated as and has responsibility for the management of the PTA program. The Program Director is employed full-time by the college that houses the PTA program and typically has a faculty appointment.

Clinical Affiliation - Three specific clinical education rotations. Students are supervised by a licensed physical therapist or physical therapist assistant and required to travel to the facility where the Clinical Instructor is employed.

Clinical Education -The portion of the PTA curriculum where the student develops clinical skills by applying didactic information in a clinical setting.

Clinical Instructor (CI) - Licensed Physical Therapist or Physical Therapist Assistant who provides direct supervision of the PTA student during the clinical learning experience. The CI is responsible for providing an environment that fosters learning, supervision, and constructive feedback.

Clinical Affiliation Evaluation Tool (CAET) - The standardized instrument that assesses student performance during the clinical education experience and is used to evaluate the student in PTA 199, Clinical Education I (where applicable).

Clinical Performance Instrument (CPI) - The APTA's *Clinical Performance Instrument (CPI)* will be used to evaluate the student's performance in PTA259 and PTA289 Clinical Education II and III. The student will complete the *Evaluation of Clinical Experience and Clinical Instruction*. The CI and the student will complete and review the *CPI* at midterm and at completion of the clinical rotation.

Competency - The minimum level of knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to progress in the PTA program, and to participate in clinical education.

Proficiencies - Psychomotor skills that are taught and assessed for minimal competency.

On Site Supervision: The supervising licensed physical therapist (PT) is on site and is present in the facility or on the campus where assistive personnel or a holder of an interim permit is performing services, is immediately available to assist the person being supervised in the services being performed and maintains continued involvement in appropriate aspects of each treatment session in which a component of treatment is delegated.

PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Essential functions are those skills recognized as necessary for students to demonstrate to be successful in the PTA program. The student PTA required essential functions are listed below. It is the expectation that each student has carefully reviewed the essential functions and recognizes the importance of demonstrating each of these functions. Inability to demonstrate one or more of these essential functions may impact a student's ability to successfully complete the PTA program. These standards must be met with reasonable accommodations.

To meet program objectives and perform job duties required in the profession, PTA students must:

- Be able to demonstrate critical, logical, and analytical thinking.
- Be able to work professionally with people with varied cultural backgrounds and disabilities.
- Be able to teach manual skills and have the ability to motivate patients to learn and perform.
- Possess motor and visual skills that enable the student to meet program objectives and perform job duties required in the profession.

Specifically, PTA students must:

- Have sufficient hearing ability to respond appropriately to patients, physicians, and co-workers.
- Be able to communicate verbally and in writing in order to communicate effectively with patients, their families, co-workers, and the general public.
- Be physically able to transfer patients to and from wheelchairs, beds, mats, etc., and effectively provide patient care.
- Have sufficient visual acuity to read English in regular to extra fine print on goniometers and other measuring devices.
- Have sufficient manual dexterity to allow them to handle small objects, palpate muscles and/or bony prominences, and monitor patients.
- Be able to complete tasks/examinations within required time limits in the classroom, laboratory, and in the clinical areas.
- Demonstrate emotional health required for utilization of intellectual abilities and exercise of good judgment.

STUDENT COMMITMENT TO PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

At Carrington College, we maintain a professional environment similar to what you will encounter in your new career. We have a responsibility to employers to uphold the high level of professionalism expected in the workplace. You are expected to conduct yourself in the most professional manner at all times and be aware of the following guidelines in addition to the General Standards, HIPAA and Privacy Expectations outlined in the Carrington College Student Handbook.

- The student will attend each class promptly as scheduled.
- The student will complete and submit all assignments on time. This includes completing the designated competencies for each course in the time frame established.
- The student will uphold the [APTA Standards of Ethical Conduct for the PTA](#).

- The student will obtain all required immunizations and health clearances by the posted deadlines.
- The student will complete all required forms for clinical affiliations by the posted deadlines.
- The student will follow appropriate chain of command when reporting concerns.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

In addition to the college's Attendance Policy, if a PTA student is unable to attend class, he/she is to report his/her absence each day stating his/her name and the reason for missing that day prior to the beginning of the scheduled class. The student also accepts the responsibility for getting any missed materials. Students who are approaching a 15% absence rate in any course or cumulative term will be required to meet with the faculty and/or Program Director to develop a Student Success Plan (SSP) to identify any factors that may improve the student's attendance.

LATE ASSIGNMENT and ASSESSMENT RETAKE POLICY

In addition to the college's Late Assignment Policy the following are the PTA program's policies regarding late assignments:

- All homework and assignments are mandatory.
- Late assignments will NOT be accepted.
- Students will NOT be allowed to make-up classroom work unless the faculty receives notification and arrangements are made to make-up work prior to the absence.
- Students will NOT be allowed to make-up quizzes.
- If a student is going to be absent on a day of an examination the student must notify the course faculty prior to examination time of their absence. Students will NOT be allowed to make-up a missed exam unless the faculty has been notified of the absence prior to the start of the class.
- The student accepts the responsibility for arranging a schedule for completion of any make-up work.
- Make up work is up to the discretion of the faculty and Program Director.

SKILL COMPETENCY AND PRACTICAL EXAM POLICY

Skill Competency Check-Off Process

Skill competency assessments have been incorporated into the program with the purpose of ensuring that students have achieved the minimum entry-level skill and knowledge base for all procedures and therapeutic interventions, including all critical safety and communication elements.

It is recognized that not every skill can be evaluated in a test format. The skill competency checklist is a measurement tool utilized by the faculty to assess clinical proficiency during laboratory classroom sessions. Skill competency checklists are used as a formative assessment in each laboratory course. The skill competencies encompass the same five components that are included in the practical examinations. Students receive skill competency checklists with all the required skill competencies for each course containing a lab component. The students have access to all required skill competencies and their associated rubric for the necessary criteria that need to be successfully met. Students must successfully meet 100% of the skill competency components and critical elements to have the competency 'checked-off.' A student must have 100% of the skill competency checklists checked-off for the skills learned up to

the midterm point in the course prior to taking the midterm skills assessment. A student must have 100% of the skill competency checklists in a course checked-off prior to taking the final practical examination.

During each scheduled lab session, students are made aware of the skill(s) they need to perform. Students practice the skills in groups alternating who is the PTA and who is the patient. Students are allowed to refuse to participate if the skill(s) being performed would be contraindicated for them. Any student refusing to participate in the skill(s) being performed will, at a minimum, be required to observe the skill(s) being performed and engage in discussion. Students must complete 100% of the skill competencies in each class in order to graduate from the PTA program.

Students will be afforded the opportunity to practice newly learned skills. There will be scheduled open lab times when students will have access to the PTA lab classroom and may independently practice skills (See Open Lab policy). Once the student feels that he/she has reached an adequate level of competency, the student will then demonstrate the skill to the faculty or peer reviewers. If the student successfully demonstrates the competency, the faculty or peer reviewer will document completion of the skill in the gradebook. If the student is not successful at demonstrating competency the student must meet with the faculty independently to practice and review the skill. Following this, the student may have an additional attempt to demonstrate the competency to a faculty member. Continued meetings will occur at the discretion of the faculty until the student has successfully demonstrated understanding of the competency.

Critical safety elements are those which, if not correctly carried out, may present a risk to the patient or the student. Safety elements typically involve but are not limited to: identifying and adhering to precautions and contraindications; adhering to standard precautions; obtaining informed consent; explaining procedures and interventions to the patient; cleaning and checking the functioning of equipment prior to treatment; following generally accepted safety guidelines; using safe body mechanics; and monitoring the patient for safety and comfort.

Skill Competency Assessment

Skill competencies are assessed at midterm and at the end of each PTA core course with a lab component. The intent of skill competency assessments, Midterm skills assessment and final practical examination, are to assess the level of students' clinical skills and knowledge, and to determine if students have achieved entry-level competency prior to participating in clinical education or prior to graduating.

Patient safety and communication are vital; therefore, students must successfully demonstrate all the critical safety elements in order to pass a skill competency assessment. Examples of critical safety elements include locking and unlocking the wheel locks on a wheelchair, utilizing a gait belt during gait training or transfers, contraindications for specific interventions, and safe body mechanics. On skill competency assessment students are required to successfully achieve 100% on critical safety elements and a minimum of 80% of the criteria for each skill. The midterm skills assessment assesses students on skills learned and practiced up to that point in the course. The final practical examination assesses students on all skills learned and practiced in the course. Students must pass all practical examinations in order to advance through the program.

Skill competency assessments grading rubrics are divided into five components:

1. Patient/equipment preparation
 - Examples include but are not limited to: Reviewing the patient record prior to treatment; asking screening questions; giving instructions to patient; positioning patient correctly for intervention; checking equipment for safety; adjusting equipment to meet patient needs.
2. Implementation
 - Examples include, but are not limited to: Administration of intervention; taking measurements; communicating with patient during intervention; adjusting intervention, as necessary; communicating with the supervising physical therapist when appropriate; etc.
3. Demonstration of fundamental knowledge
 - Answering questions specific to the intervention requiring the student to demonstrate a broad scope of knowledge of the intervention.
4. Critical elements
 - Encompass patient and assistant safety and communication.
5. Follow-Up
 - Offers rationales and explanations for given findings and reports whether these are within the expected normal ranges for that skill.

Final Practical Examination

The final practical examination requires students to incorporate the skills they have learned into a simulated comprehensive treatment session based on physical therapy plans of care and includes at least two skills learned in the course. The purpose of the final practical examination is to assess the student's skills, professionalism, critical safety, and clinical problem solving.

The final practical examination is graded as 'Pass/Fail'. Each component of the practical exam has a one-point value. Each component is an objective statement, describing a step in the process of carrying out the treatment. The student will be marked as either carrying out this step competently or not. If they are marked as carrying out this step competently, the student will receive one point. If not, no point will be given. Students are notified of their grade after all students have completed the testing process. If a student fails a practical examination, they must re-test the skill(s) failed during the examination. Failure to successfully achieve 100% on critical safety elements and a minimum of 80% of the criteria for each skill on the second attempt will result in failure of the course.

A student may only re-take a total of two final practical examinations across all courses within a given semester. A student may only re-take a practical examination in a single course once. If a student is not able to pass all final practical examinations within the maximum number of attempts allowed, the student will fail the course(s) and be withdrawn from the program. Students may not participate in clinical education courses until all final practical examinations scheduled prior to the start of the clinical education course have been passed.

LAB SAFETY POLICY

Safety of self and others is the primary concern in the laboratory setting. Safe and appropriate conduct in the lab is expected at all times. Students must adhere to the following:

- As the physical therapy lab is considered a patient treatment area, food, or drink (other than water in a closable container) is prohibited at all times.

- Students must report any unsafe situations to staff or faculty immediately.
- Though every effort is made to ensure that all equipment is functioning properly, students must notify the faculty of any broken or malfunctioning equipment.
- Students shall inform the faculty of any medical condition or change in medical condition that would prevent safe participation in laboratory activities.
- Students shall inform the faculty if they feel that participation in laboratory activities would in any way be harmful to their health.
- To prevent the spread of illness or disease, students must wash their hands using an approved anti-microbial hand cleanser prior to performing patient interventions in the lab.
- Students shall utilize safe body mechanics during all lab activities. Instruction on safe body mechanics will be provided to students during the course of the program.
- Students shall immediately notify the faculty of any discomfort or adverse effect(s) caused by the laboratory activities.
- Students shall immediately request that the faculty assist in the application of a laboratory activity if there is any concern about the skill or procedures used by a student practitioner.
- Students shall immediately report to the faculty any injury subsequent to laboratory or classroom activities.
- Students shall disinfect and dispose of all biological material in the appropriate Biohazard container.
- Students shall dispose of all needles or other sharp objects in the appropriate Biohazard 'Sharps' container.
- Physical therapy equipment and treatment areas shall be cleaned following each use with an approved antimicrobial cleanser.
- Students should adhere to the hazardous materials safety precautions while using chemical cleansers. MSDS and hazardous materials information is located the MSDS notebook in each PTA lab.

OPEN LAB POLICY

Open laboratory times, outside of scheduled class times, will be posted by faculty and students are encouraged to attend. Faculty will establish guidelines for lab activities that students may practice. Students are encouraged to utilize the PTA lab to study and practice skills learned in class. Students must be supervised on-site by a faculty member. Students shall notify the faculty member of their presence in the lab. They shall also indicate what equipment they intend to use and what skills they intend to practice. Failure to adhere to guidelines established by the faculty member for open lab time may result in disciplinary action.

LAB DRESS CODE

Due to the nature of physical therapy interventions, it is often necessary to palpate and visualize the specific body part being treated. Specific lab attire is necessary for students to be able to identify and treat specific areas of the body, while at the same time maintaining professionalism, confidentiality, and patient modesty. While in the laboratory students will be expected to have appropriate lab attire to expose the area being studied. This may include shorts, tank top, t-shirt, leggings / exercise attire. Faculty determine the lab attire for their course, which is detailed on the course syllabus or course schedule for lab activities. Students must always have lab attire available. While in lab attire, the student

is always required to wear their student identification lanyard when outside of the lab and in student areas on campus.

FIELDTRIPS/OFF CAMPUS LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Fieldtrips are used to enhance the curricular contents and are relevant to the subject areas being taught.

- All safety policies that apply to the classroom or laboratory also apply to students participating in field trip activities away from campus.
- Students must submit a completed and signed Student Authorization Form for fieldtrips prior to engaging in any field trip activities. This form will be provided by the faculty.
- Students shall inform faculty of any medical condition or safety concern that would preclude them from participating in the fieldtrip.
- Students must immediately report to the faculty any injuries or adverse effects sustained due to fieldtrip activities.
- Students will be informed of any potential safety issues prior to the fieldtrip.
- Students may decline to participate in fieldtrip activities without fear of reprisal. Students who do not attend the activity will be given an alternate assignment to complete.
- Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from fieldtrips. Transportation of students by Carrington College faculty or employees is strictly prohibited.

AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

The APTA is a national organization dedicated to the promotion of physical therapy. The PTA program at Carrington College encourages membership in the APTA during the technical/core coursework portion of the program. The APTA is the only national organization that represents Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants in the United States. Membership benefits include but are not limited to:

- Current and in-depth practice management information, resources, and tools
- Advocacy on legislative, regulatory, and payment issues critical to PT/PTA practice and the profession
- Savings-discounts up to 40% on publications, products, services, conferences, and events
- Free subscriptions to the most widely respected periodicals in physical therapy
- Tools and resources to help you share the benefits of physical therapy with consumers
- Access to and networking with other PT/PTA's within the local area and nationally
- Access to evidence-based research, the latest news on changes in the physical therapy profession, marketing and branding ideas and consumer resources

Prior to the beginning of the PTA technical courses, all PTA students will be given an application to complete for an APTA student membership. The program pays for the cost of this membership, which lasts for one calendar year. Additional information about membership can be accessed on the website at <http://www.apta.org/Membership/>, by phone at: 800/999-2782, ext. 3395, or by e-mail at: memberservices@apta.org.

CLINICAL EDUCATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Clinical education is an integral part of the education of the PTA student. While each clinical affiliation has its own specific objectives, the overall objective of clinical education remains the successful application and integration of knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom and lab to a hands-on patient situation. The clinical experience is designed to provide student learning experiences with

patients, promote coordination with other healthcare providers, develop a better understanding of common healthcare practices, improve communication, and develop time-management skills. Clinical education continues to be the preferred opportunity for PTA students to experience the reality of the clinic. Although competence can be achieved in the laboratory setting, true mastery can only be developed in clinical practice. Finally, clinical education provides each student with the opportunity to develop and validate their approach as a practitioner by having the ability to practice and apply new skills and concepts, expand the academic knowledge base, develop clinical competencies, and develop communication and interpersonal skills needed to function as a health care team member under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist.

Students will participate in three clinical experiences throughout the course of the program. Clinical Education I is sequentially placed within semester 4 of the technical phase of the PTA program and is therefore integrated into the didactic portion of the program. Students must have successfully completed all PTA prerequisite coursework and be in good standing in the PTA program in order to be scheduled for clinical education courses. The student must be functioning at the developing level of academic professional behaviors prior to beginning all full-time clinical coursework. The faculty reserves the right to require additional learning experiences as deemed necessary to promote a successful clinical learning experience. Clinical Education II and III are full-time terminal experiences during the entire final semester of the program. Each student will be supervised by a licensed physical therapist at a facility affiliated with Carrington College.

Each clinical education course has course student learning outcomes, which are published to the students in the course syllabus. Each clinical facility will be provided a copy of the course syllabus. Students are expected to generate individualized learning objectives and goals for each clinical education experience. Each clinical instructor is encouraged to develop learning experiences for students at their facility. The developed learning experiences can address the facility's learning objectives and physical therapy techniques unique to that facility.

Students are responsible for their own transportation to attend all assigned clinical rotations. Clinical education experiences will not be scheduled in physical therapy departments in which a student is or was employed, volunteered, or completed pre-admission observation hours. Because clinical education experiences are learning experience, the facility may not compensate the student in any way.

Goals of Clinical Education

- Allow the student to practice and apply new skills and concepts.
- Expand the student's academic knowledge base.
- Provide the student the opportunity to gain confidence with clinical skills and interpersonal communication.
- Develop effective communication, collaboration, and interpersonal skills needed to function as a professional educator and health care team member.
- Develop and refine the student's clinical proficiency within the scope of physical therapy practice.
- Promote development of professional behaviors.
- Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Identify role models and an understanding of working under the supervision of a physical therapist.

- Identify personal areas of interest and/or need.
- Afford the student a wide variety of clinical environments and patient experiences so that the student may become a well-rounded, generalist health care provider.

American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) policy on Student Provision of Services

[Student PT and PTA Provision of Services](#)

On-site supervision is required for all clinical education experiences and vary by state. Students should consult the PT practice act where their clinical education experience is taking place for the student supervision requirements. Specific requirements include:

- PTA students must be always supervised via on-site supervision during patient care. This includes being supervised by the PT alone or the PT and PTA working as a team, the PT or the PTA is physically present and immediately available at all times.
- The PT or the PTA will have direct contact with the patient/client during each visit as visit is defined in the [Guide to Physical Therapist Practice](#).
- All patient treatment notes should be read, approved, and countersigned by the CI. All treatment notes should be signed by the student with the words “Student Physical Therapist Assistant” or, if within state regulations, the abbreviated credentials “SPTA”.

Assignment of Clinical Sites

In addition to the Externships and/or Clinical Rotation policy in the Academic Catalog, Carrington College is committed to following the APTA Uniform Mailing Date, when possible, to inquire about the availability of clinical sites for the upcoming student cohort. The DCE will send out clinical requests to affiliating clinical sites. The DCE will document all clinical request responses received, and the status of the written agreement and the CI selection criteria will be reviewed.

The DCE is responsible for determining the clinical assignments for each student. Clinical sites are chosen in the PTA program to meet the student’s need for a comprehensive education and to meet the mission and goals of the program, and ensure the appropriate opportunities were provided to all the PTA student to achieve entry level PTA competency. To provide the variety, depth, and breadth expected for the clinical experiences, students will typically be placed in at least two different settings, based on clinical site availability. The DCE will track the student placement variety by setting type (outpatient facility, inpatient facility, home health) and patient population type via a clinical education tracking document. Student preferences may be considered, but the determining factor for clinical placement is to ensure that the student can meet all clinical educational outcomes. The DCE makes the final determination.

The DCE will only place a student at a clinical site where:

- The college has a current clinical affiliation agreement with the site.
- The CI meets all CI selection criteria.
- The site can provide appropriate supervision within the laws and regulations of supervision of a student PTA.

The DCE will begin assigning students to clinical sites at least six weeks prior to the start of the clinical education experience. Under special circumstances, such as cancelled clinical sites, students will be assigned as early as possible for continuity of the clinical education experience. Should one of the clinical facilities cancel their affiliation slot, the student who is involved in the cancellation will be notified and

the DCE will call additional facilities and request a slot. Graduation could be delayed based on availability of clinical sites.

Once a clinical site has been confirmed, changes to the assignment will not be made other than in emergency situations. Any refusal to take an assignment without just cause will put the student at risk of being withdrawn from the PTA program. A student's request for a change in assignments will be considered only if a situation warrants, which will be determined by the DCE and the Program Director. The rescheduling of the clinical education experience is contingent upon clinical resources. The student needs to understand that finding alternative placements are not always possible once assignments have been made, and request for change may be denied. Any questions or comments regarding clinical site placement should be directed to the DCE.

Clinical affiliations are available in the local metropolitan areas as well as throughout the states. Students may request a clinical site in states other than where they are enrolled to their DCE. In Boise only, all students will need to commit to one out of town affiliation while in the PTA program.

The DCE will provide each student with their clinical education assignment. The DCE will direct the student to contact their clinical site prior to starting the clinical education experience. The purpose of the call is for the student to introduce themselves, confirm the clinic hours, expected arrival time on the first day, dress code, directions to the department, any specific parking requirements, etc.

The student is required to adhere to his or her assigned clinical schedule. Any adjustment to expected clinical schedule must be made between the DCE and the CI. No personal adjustments may be made without notification and approval by the DCE.

Clinical Attendance Policy

PTA students are expected to be present for all clinical experiences and to abide by the hours and policies of the assigned clinical facility. Clinical hours may vary and are full-time commitments. Students are expected to be in their assigned clinical area prepared to engage in patient care a minimum of 10 minutes before the start of their "shift." Failure to meet this requirement constitutes tardiness. Chronic tardiness will affect the student's performance evaluation for the course and may result in disciplinary action.

Before leaving the clinical site, the student must report to the CI.

Students will be allowed one sick day of clinical absence during Clinical Education I and three sick days of absence during Clinical Education II and III. If a student is unable to attend, the clinical facility and DCE must be notified each day of an absence prior to the start of their "shift". The student will submit a "Clinical Education Absence Form" with the timesheet indicating the date, total hours missed, and reason for the absence. Absences must be due to illness or emergency. Absences due to illness may require a physician's note. Otherwise, those missed hours will need to be made up. A release from a physician is required to return to clinical following three (3) or more consecutive days of absence due to illness/injury.

Changes in the clinical schedule, including make-up days must be approved by and are at the discretion of the DCE, CI, and/or CCCE. If a student is unable to attend and does not report the absence, the CI and the DCE will counsel the student and this absence will be considered unexcused.

All holidays observed by Carrington College may be considered holidays for students. Clinical sites that observe holidays that coincide with scheduled clinical days will also be regarded as holidays by those students assigned to that facility.

Students unable to comply with attendance requirements may fail the course and be recommended for dismissal from the program.

Student Liability

All students are covered by Carrington College's liability insurance while on their clinical rotations.

Patient Informed Consent

Students are made aware that patients have the right to refuse to participate in the student's clinical education, without repercussion. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the CI of the patient's request.

Incident Reporting

Students are to immediately report any incident or injury to the DCE

Failure of a Clinical Education Course or Dismissal from of a Clinical Site

Failing to meet clinical course objectives and evaluative criteria as outlined in the course syllabus can result in dismissal from the clinical site and failure of that course. Violating the Code of Ethics of the American Physical Therapy Association and the Carrington College Code of Conduct standards may result in dismissal from the clinical site and failure of that course and code of conduct hearing. Failure of a clinical education course will result in program withdrawal. Students who fail a course may not be able to progress in the program. Re-entry/re-enrollment is contingent upon clinical resources and seat availability.

If a student fails a clinical education course, for reasons other than a critical incident per the CPI or Code of Conduct violation, remediation and re-scheduling of another clinical education course may be considered. If the student requires a remedial clinical education experience and is unsuccessful the Program Director will conduct a review of the student's clinical education experiences and can result in program withdrawal. In the case of irreparable issues at that clinical site, the PTA Program Director, in collaboration with the DCE, CCCE, and CI, may make the determination that the student requires a remedial clinical experience (procedure described below) or fails the clinical education course.

If a student's ability to successfully complete their clinical education experience by the end of the term is inhibited by performance, then the DCE may extend the clinical education experience by one week to allow time for the student to demonstrate improvement in performance. This determination is made by the DCE in collaboration with the CI. However, the need to extend beyond one week may result in assignment of a failing grade. If a student's ability to successfully complete their clinical education experience by the end of the term is inhibited by medical or personal emergency reasons, then the DCE may issue a grade of "Incomplete" for the course. The rescheduling of the clinical education experience is contingent upon clinical resources and seat availability.

Criteria for remediation or failure:

- Failure to consistently demonstrate safe standards of practice as it affects patient care, healthcare providers, and/or self.
- Non-compliance with institutional, program, or facility policies.
- Inability to consistently apply theoretical knowledge, skills and procedures based upon the specified objectives of the clinical education course.
- Absenteeism.

Remediation Procedure:

- A SSP will be developed and implemented for the remedial clinical education experience.
- Requirements for remediation will be determined by the Program Director and DCE. Attendance to all remediation sessions is mandatory.
- Facility assignment is determined by the DCE. The student, and the facility's CCCE and CI will be provided specific learning objectives for the clinical education experience.
- Successfully course completion is based on the course specific requirements outlined in the course syllabus. If this threshold is not met, the student will be removed from the rotation, fail the course, and withdrawn from the program.

Criteria for an Incomplete Grade in a Clinical Education Course

If students are having difficulty with the clinical education requirements, the students will be advised to discuss this with their CI and DCE as soon as possible. Appropriate student support including tutoring and guidance may be considered.