

Clinical Education in the DPT Curriculum

Our unique clinical education curriculum includes 38 weeks of clinical education prior to graduation. The first two years include one and two week integrated clinical education, as well as 8 and 10-week full time clinical experiences. In year three, the final clinical experience is a paid yearlong internship, with pre- and post-graduation phases at the same site. Until the Program has a full cohort of sites who offer the internship, some students complete the Program with Clinical Education III, a full-time 16-week clinical experience.

Year 1

Integrated Clinical Education I (“ICE I”) 2 weeks in Fall Semester

- Provides an initial foundation and understanding of clinical practice
- Integrates classroom and clinical learning while working in a student team

Clinical Education I 8 weeks - begins in Spring Semester

- Emphasizes patient management from examination to discharge
- Examines the role of the physical therapist within the healthcare team

Year 2

Integrated Clinical Education II (“ICE II”) 2 weeks in Fall Semester

- Integrates classroom/clinical knowledge to a new clinical setting
- Provides opportunities to engage in advanced clinical problem solving

Clinical Education II 10 weeks in Spring Semester

- Emphasizes independence in all aspects of patient management
- Integrates concepts from online Clinical Reasoning course

Year 3: Internship

Clinical Education III 16 weeks in Fall Semester

- Focuses on achieving entry-level competency in PT Practice
- Emphasizes development of one’s professional identity as a DPT

Continuation of Internship: 36 weeks post-graduation

- Offers ongoing mentorship during transition from student to new professional
- Provides opportunity to develop deeper proficiency of clinical skills and clinical reasoning

Students gain a variety of experiences throughout the clinical education curriculum to prepare them as generalist physical therapists. All students are required to complete at least one experience in a rural/underserved area. Many of these sites are outside the Denver area, and students should be prepared to travel for this type of clinical experience, which includes any associated costs. The CU PT Program values building strong relationships with its affiliate clinical sites throughout Colorado and the United States. Establishing new clinical sites will only be considered according to Program need and at the discretion of the Clinical Education team.