

PASSED: [AC-2-13](#): Terminology for Clinical Education Experiences Proposed by Academic Council Board of Directors-Terry Nordstrom

That the following be adopted:

Clinical education experiences: That aspect of the curriculum in which students' learning occurs directly as a function of being immersed within physical therapy practice. These experiences comprise all of the formal and practical "real-life" learning experiences provided for students to apply classroom knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors in the clinical environment. These experiences include care of patients/clients across the lifespan and practice settings.

The following standardized language is used to describe these clinical education experiences.

Integrated Clinical Experience

An *Integrated Clinical Experience* (ICE) is a clinical education experience that occurs during an academic term in a coordinated fashion concurrent with didactic courses.

Full-Time Clinical Experience

A *Full-Time Clinical Experience* is one in which student physical therapists are in clinical environments for a minimum of 32 hours per week. Students will return to additional didactic coursework.

Clinical Internship

Clinical internships are the extended full-time clinical education experience(s) that typically follow the completion of the didactic coursework for the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree

Support Statement (as per 2012 Academic Council Meeting)

Currently, evaluative criteria for accreditation of physical therapist education and the Normative Model of Physical Therapist Education provide a definition for clinical education experiences. Those definitions provide a description of how clinical learning experiences differ from those that occur in the classroom and laboratory on campus. The definition in the proposed motion is adopted from these definitions. However, the Criteria from the Commission for Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) and the Normative Model of Physical Therapist Education do not describe the specific types of clinical education experiences used in physical therapist education.

The House of Delegates adopted "Education for Physical Therapists: Terminology Used to Describe" that provides differentiation between entry-level professional education and post-professional education. In 2000, the APTA Board of Directors adopted the policy, "Clinical Experience Terminology for Physical Therapists." That policy defines and differentiates among the terms internship, residency and fellowship as different types of clinical learning experiences. Those definitions are used by the APTA in publications and the website to provide a standard definition of these three terms. The Board policy does provide a definition for the internship, one important type of clinical education experience in physical therapist professional education. However, other types of clinical education experiences are not addressed.

The APTA sponsored several consensus conferences that concerned physical therapist professional education over the past several years. While those consensus conferences provided important guidance for physical therapist education, they did not provide standard definitions for those terms.

The document, *Physical Therapist Clinical Education Principles*, that summarizes the results of a series of forums in 2008 and 2009 provides some guidance for common terminology (pp 48-49). That document describes early, integrated learning experiences, but does not provide a concise, standard definition of those types of experiences. That document describes internships as longer experiences at the end of the didactic program that require 10-12 weeks to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

The Private Practice Section of the APTA implemented a task force to expand a one-year internship model within private practices in the United States. That task force developed a definition of the one-year internship that was a modification of the APTA Board of Director's Policy and differentiated it from residency and fellowship programs. That task force also asked the Academic Council to consider for adoption that definition of the internship.

The proposed definitions use language similar to what is currently available from CAPTE and the Normative Model of Physical Therapist Education for the definition of Clinical Education Experiences and from the Board position for the definition of "Internship." The proposed definitions use language from the Physical Therapist Clinical Education Principles document to describe early, part-time experiences and full-time integrated experiences.

These standard definitions can be used by academic institutions in course titles or course descriptions. They also provide standard terminology for use in contractual arrangements between clinical agencies and academic institutions who collaborate to provide clinical education experiences. Researchers and authors could choose to use these definitions in journal articles and other publications about clinical education experiences in physical therapist education. These definitions would hopefully provide for common language that can be used among all of the stakeholders in physical therapist education, including students, academic faculty, clinical educators, and administrators.

DEFEATED: V2 Request to amend by substitution:

That the following be adopted:

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Final Clinical Experience

A FCE is an extended full time clinical education experience that typically follows the completion of the didactic course work for the DPT degree.

Clinical Internship is defined as a final clinical experience with a continuous progression of a structured curriculum, typically across 9-12 months, intended to advance the student beyond entry level, and to foster the transition from student to novice clinician.