

SECTION 19

INDEPENDENT STUDIES

19.1 Guidelines for Independent Studies

Independent studies can be used to fulfill elective requirements for the DScPT degree. There may be a limit imposed on how many credits are allowed to be completed by this process. This will be up to the discretion of the program director. The assistant program director will serve as the advisor for most independent studies undertaken as part of the DScPT degree. For independent studies outside their area of expertise, a third person will be consulted.

The first step is to decide what topic area the independent study will address along with how many credits the course will be awarded. Students must register for an Independent Study Topics course PTH 690 for the desired number of credits and name the topic. The academic guidelines for time spent reading, doing literature reviews, writing papers or some other related work is 48 hours per (1) credit awarded. For any portion of the course that includes “lab” work such as working with another practitioner to improve clinical skills, the time associated with those activities is 2x the time related to reading, researching, etc.

The second step is to develop a detailed list of learning objectives that are to be achieved during the course. These objectives should reflect not only a lower level of learning (written using words such as: understand, know, learn, memorize, etc.) but must also reflect higher levels of learning (written using words such as: synthesize, integrate, apply, extrapolate, analyze, etc.) The learning objectives must clearly cover the breadth and depth of information and skill expected to be attained through the independent study. Obviously the larger the number of credits, the more learning objectives will need to be included in this list.

The third step is to relate outcome measures to the learning objectives so that the advisor has an objective method by which to assess whether or not the learning objective was satisfied. For example; if one of the learning objectives is to understand a given topic and show how certain dysfunctions could cause injuries, a well referenced paper reviewing the literature on this topic could be written. Resources for papers like this can include textbooks written about the given topic which are read as part of the course, but should also include current research findings as well. The total length of the paper depends on the topic and the number of course credits. Here is a good resource regarding how to develop learning objectives, activities and outcome measures according to Bloom’s taxonomy:

<http://teaching.uncc.edu/learning-resources/articles-books/best-practice/goals-objectives/writing-objectives> .

Other examples of activities that can be used to demonstrate basic knowledge acquisition can include development of teaching materials to be used in teaching others about the topic such as PowerPoint presentations and course notes. If this activity was chosen, the student would also be required to actually deliver the lecture(s) to a “test” audience or real audience and an evaluation of the lecture/ course would need to be administered to the attendees. Subsequent to that, the student would need to tabulate the average scores they receive on the evaluation and all comments written to turn into Dr. Berglund. Lastly, the student is asked to write a reflection paper summarizing the strengths of the presentation (based on the attendees evaluation and the student’s personal feelings) as well as, addressing any constructive comments or personal assessments of what to change to do it even better the next time.

If the topic includes acquisition of clinical skills related to the topic, another course activity may include working with another clinician who is skilled in this topic. Prior to this occurring, there needs to be a contract in place between the facility that the student is going to and Andrews University for liability purposes. Once that contract is signed by both parties, the student can go work with that clinician for however many hours has been determined as adequate by the student and the advisor. The student must take notes on all patients that were seen during the time spent and at the end of the clinical, must write a paper detailing the patients seen. This write up would include the patient’s history, diagnosis, evaluation results, differential diagnosis, and the PT interventions. IF the patient was seen on subsequent days, progress or lack thereof should be noted. Clinical reasoning should be included in all

cases. The write up should also include the students perspective on what was learned during the clinical hours and a comparison between what was actually learned and done in the clinic as opposed to the textbook or research approach should be written.

The student will work with the advisor to refine the list of proposed learning objectives, activities, and outcome measures to make sure they adequately reflect the appropriate amount of work for credits being awarded. The student must then develop a time line as to when each of the learning objectives will be accomplished and when the assignments will be completed by. Once these documents have been approved by the advisor, the student can begin the independent study and is expected to adhere to the planned time frame. The advisor will provide grading rubrics for each outcome measure so that the student understands the amount and quality of work needed to achieve a given grade. Failure to adhere to the time line for non-emergent reasons results in a lower grade being given at the discretion of the advisor.

Proposals

The following elements must be included in an Independent Study proposal:

- Student Name and ID number
- Proposal for Independent Study
- PTH 690 Topics in _____, _____ credits
- A brief introductory statement about why you have chosen this topic and what it means to you and your practice.
- Learning Objectives
- Learning Activities (include a time estimate for each activity; 48-60 hours of learning activities per credit, may include time spent creating outcome measures)
- Outcome Measures (items to be turned in for assessment; tied to specific learning objectives)
- Estimated timeline and completion date.
- Grading rubrics provided by the advisor for each outcome measure.