

Preceptor Opportunities in Community-based Clinical Courses

Practice of Medicine (Year 1)

Participating disciplines

Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, and Pediatrics, utilizing preceptors in the Houston-Galveston area

Description

This required course provides students with repeated half-day sessions with preceptors between October –April. A typical preceptor picks one afternoon per week, and works with 1-2 students per session.

Goals

Expose students to the practice environment of community-based primary care physicians, and allow them to practice the interview and examination skills they are learning during the on-campus components of the course. While students might function initially in an observation/shadowing role, the interviewing and physical examination skills they are learning during the on-campus component of the Practice of Medicine course usually allow them to advance to a more participatory role with the physician's patients.

Summer Preceptorships (Between Year 1 and Year 2)

Participating disciplines

All disciplines, utilizing preceptors throughout the state and internationally

Description

This elective course allows students to select a discipline of their course, perhaps one they are considering for their career, and complete a 4-week rotation between April-June. A typical preceptor accepts one student at a time and works with them daily in the office.

Goals

Provide students an early, but intense daily exposure to the practice environment of a practitioner in the discipline of their choice. While students might function initially in an observation/shadowing role, the interviewing and physical examination skills they learned during Year 1 usually allow them to advance to a more participatory role with the physician's patients. Exposure to other aspects of a preceptor's practice, such as hospital rounds, office staff activities, or community involvement, is also encouraged.

Preceptor Opportunities in Community-based Clinical Courses

Clinical Clerkships (Year 3)

Participating disciplines

Family Medicine, Internal Medicine (Austin only), Pediatrics

Description

These disciplines include an ambulatory community-based component to their required clerkship experiences, conducted throughout the year except December. The Internal Medicine and Pediatric clerkships also include an inpatient component that is conducted in either Galveston or Austin. A typical preceptor works with one student at a time on a full-time daily basis for a 4-week period, and may choose to repeat this cycle multiple times during the year.

Goals

Provide students with an office-based exposure as part of their core clerkship experience in these disciplines. Students at this level have typically acquired basic skills in patient interviewing and physical examination, and should be given as many opportunities for patient contact and skills practice as possible.

Ambulatory Community Selectives (Year 4)

Participating disciplines

All disciplines, utilizing preceptors throughout the state

Description

This elective course allows students to select a discipline of their course, perhaps one they are considering for their career, and complete a 4-week rotation at any time during the year. A typical preceptor works with one student at a time on a full-time daily basis for a 4-week period, and may choose to repeat this cycle multiple times during the year.

Goals

Provide students with an office-based exposure in the discipline of their choice. Students at this level have typically completed their required Year 3 clerkships, and should be capable of conducting independent patient encounters, followed by review and oversight by the preceptor.

Preceptor Opportunities in Community-based Clinical Courses

Electives (Year 3 and 4)

Participating disciplines

All disciplines; may be sponsored through UTMB clinical departments, or designed individually by students and preceptors

Description

This elective course allows students to select a discipline of their course, perhaps one they are considering for their career, and complete a 4-week rotation at any time during the year. A typical preceptor works with one student at a time on a full-time daily basis for a 4-week period, and may choose to repeat this cycle multiple times during the year.

Goals

Provide students with an office-based exposure in the discipline of their choice. Students at this level have completed one or more of their required Year 3 clerkships, and should be capable of conducting independent patient encounters, followed by review and oversight by the preceptor.

Preceptor Opportunities in Community-based Clinical Courses

Frequently Asked Questions For Community Preceptors

1. What expectations should I have of a student in terms of clinical skills? How much responsibility are they ready for, and how much independence is appropriate?

We suggest you initially relate the student's activities and independence to their level of training.

BEGINNER

The student is prepared to observe and discuss patients with you.

This is an appropriate starting point for most Year 1 students; allow students to progress to intermediate or advanced levels depending on practice environment and student ability. Students receive substantial clinical skills training in Year 1 and Year 2, so advancement beyond a shadowing role is generally expected, and should be offered whenever possible.

INTERMEDIATE

The student is prepared to conduct part or all of a patient encounter; you should strive to allow students to conduct encounters (perhaps while you are seeing another patient); then join the student, and listen to their summary, as you review and confirm details of the encounter.

This is an appropriate starting point for most Year 3 (clerkship) students; allow students to progress to the advanced level depending on practice environment and student ability.

ADVANCED

The student conducts independent patient encounters and presents a summary and conclusions to you; you return to the patient with the student to review/confirm.

This is an appropriate level of activity for most Year 4 students.

Allowing students to complete patient notes is desirable if practical for your office environment.

2. Do students have professional liability coverage when they work in my office?

All students officially enrolled in courses are covered by UTMB's professional liability (malpractice) insurance program, including students working off-campus with community-based preceptors.

Preceptor Opportunities in Community-based Clinical Courses
Frequently Asked Questions For Community Preceptors

3. What is expected of me for student evaluation and feedback?

You will be expected to complete a clinical evaluation form on the student's performance. Although you may not always assign an actual grade, you will typically rate students on clinical skills such as interviewing, physical examination, problem solving, communication and professional behavior. You are also expected to provide students feedback on strengths and weaknesses. This is particularly critical for students who you believe are not performing up to expectations.

4. What do I do when a student is having problems?

When a student has problems, it is critical that both the student and course be informed as soon as possible. This is particularly important if you find the student's professional behavior is substandard. This might include a student who arrives late, does not fulfill responsibilities reliably, or fails to maintain a professional appearance or level of interaction with you, your staff, or your patients.

5. What are the qualifications for community-based preceptors?

Preceptors must have an unrestricted license to practice medicine in Texas, and have no current disciplinary sanctions from the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners. The preceptor will be expected to provide basic demographic information and sign a letter of agreement with UTMB. In some courses, specialty-specific board certification is required, and a site visit to the practice may be requested to assess the office environment and patient volume for first-time preceptors.

6. Are there resources available to help me develop my skills as a student preceptor?

Yes. We include preceptor teaching guidance for all new preceptors.

We also offer a range of workshops and other CME activities. If you have an interest in either, please see the Office of Regional Medical Education Website at: <http://meded.utmb.edu/orme/> or call the ORME office at (409) 772-6905.