



MIDWESTERN
CAREER COLLEGE



Clinical Externship Handbook

2023-2024



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Dear MCC Student,

Welcome to another important milestone of your education! Externship course is an exciting way for you to gain hands-on experience by applying what you learned in the classroom in a real-life patient-care setting. Midwestern Career College's Externship Department is here to guide you throughout this process.

The Externship Department facilitates student externship placement at MCC affiliated clinical sites, monitors student's progress during the externship period and performs clinical site visits and evaluations.

My advice to you is to be open-minded and welcome any feedback that you will get during your externship assignment. Be sure to make the most out of your externship experience. Healthcare is often described as "the smallest largest occupational field." It is an extensive network of hospitals and clinics, but professionals who work in the healthcare industry know each other well and talk to each other frequently. Therefore, use this time wisely and make sure to network, so that you can make connections that will last throughout your career.

I am looking forward to working with you and congratulate you on taking the next step towards your new career!

Best Regards,
Franklin Mays

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Part I: Externship Terminology, Roles, and Responsibilities

Externship Definition

Externship (Clinical) course is a work-based, non-paid, hands-on learning activity that provides students with the opportunity to earn academic credit while gaining essential clinical experience in the field. Students work in a supervised patient care environment to apply theoretical knowledge and skills learned in the classroom setting.

In the healthcare or hospital environment, externship activities are normally referred to as “clinical”. Throughout the handbook, both terms will be used interchangeably.

Clinical Environment

There are many differences between the college classroom environment and the clinical environment which is new and unfamiliar to many students. While many of the differences are exciting and stimulating, some can be frustrating and aggravating. Academic success in the classroom does not always translate into successful performance in the externship. How successfully students function and learn in the clinical setting depends in part on how they approach and deal with these differences.

Compared to learning activities conducted on campus in the classroom setting, the learning activities in the clinical setting are much less structured. Students must take a more active and responsible role for integrating the academic preparation they had with the specific procedures they are observing and performing during their externship assignment.

Unlike the classroom, the clinical site is a patient-centric environment, not a student-centric one. In the clinical setting students must pursue their educational goals within the overall goals of the clinical site to deliver quality patient-care services.

It is important to remember that externship assignment is a work-based activity, meaning, it takes place at somebody else’s place of work (clinical site). The site’s top priority is to deliver optimal patient service and care through efficient and effective operation of its clinical departments. This means that the patient’s welfare is considered first.

Externship Department Responsibilities

The Externship Department guides the student’s transition from classroom to clinical site setting. Some of the key responsibilities of the Externship Department are:

- Facilitate student externship placement process;
- Approve clinical rotation and forward student information to the clinical site;
- Review the externship guidelines with the clinical site coordinator/preceptor;
- Communicate regularly with the clinical site coordinator/preceptor;
- Monitor student’s progress during the externship assignment;
- Perform periodic clinical site visits and evaluations;
- Coordinate initiation, approval, and maintenance of clinical site affiliation agreements.

Student Responsibilities at the Externship Site:

Externship experience is critical for a student to reach his or her educational and career goals. The student responsibilities at the externship site include, but are not limited to:

- Respect patients, property, staff, technologists, and other personnel of the assigned clinical site;
- Attend clinicals according to an assigned schedule;
- Follow College and site policies, procedures, and standards of patient care;
- Meet the competencies and program clinical outcomes;
- Complete all required documentations in a timely manner;
- Be open to feedback, progress reviews and constructive criticism;
- Respond promptly to any communication from the clinical instructor, program director, site staff and administration, externship department;
- Communicate any changes, problems or concerns to the clinical instructor and externship department in a timely and professional manner.

Part II: Prerequisites to Externship Placement

Externship Course(s) Registration Deadline

Students enrolled in the programs that require the completion of the externship course or courses for meeting graduation requirements are automatically pre-registered for the externship course(s) at the start of their program enrollment. Pre-registered course(s) will show on the student record, typically, in the last term of the program. Pre-registration does not guarantee clinical placement in the scheduled term or any term. Rather, it is used as a “placeholder” on the student’s record to signify that the externship course(s) are mandatory for their program completion.

To be cleared for and assigned on the clinical rotation students must meet the registration requirements for the externship course(s) by the deadline defined for their program’s cohort.

Each program cohort has an established deadline for externship course(s) registration. The deadline date is announced to students during their New Student Orientation.

The registration deadline typically falls on the start of the 2nd term for Electroneurodiagnostic (END) Technologist, Medical Assisting, Associate of Applied Science in Surgical Technology, and Dialysis Technologist Training programs; and on the start of the 3rd term for Associate of Applied Science in Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Technology, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, and Non-Invasive Cardiovascular Sonography programs.

Students are responsible for meeting the externship course(s) registration requirements by the deadline. Students who do not meet externship registration requirements by the deadline will be un-registered from the externship course(s) and will need to re-apply for course registration with the next program cohort. Missing the registration deadline will delay student’s program completion by a term, several terms, or a full academic year. It may also lead to the student being withdrawn from their program cohort and having to apply for re-enrollment with the next program cohort.

Externship Course(s) Registration Requirements

Students must meet the following externship course registration requirements before becoming eligible for a clinical assignment:

- Complete Clinical 101 course by the deadline;
- Submit Externship Course Registration Packet by the deadline;
- Pass all the coursework and have a CGPA of 2.0 or higher at the time of externship placement;
- Be in good academic standing at the time of externship placement;
- Have a program attendance percentage of 70% or higher;
- Be available for at least 24 hours per week for clinical attendance;
- Pass all skill and competency evaluations as required per program curriculum;
- Have no active student conduct violations (Students placed on conduct probation will not be assigned to the externship site until the probation period is over and the student is in good conduct standing with the College);
- Participate in at least one professional development workshop conducted by the Career Services Department;
- Students must be current with their payments or the pre-approved payment plan;
- Meet the financial aid requirements for the upcoming semester;
- Have no administrative holds with the College.

Students enrolled in a program with optional clinical externship experience and who are interested in registering for the externship course, are required to complete Clinical 101 course and meet all other externship registration requirements by the published deadlines.

Clinical 101 Course

All Allied Health students are automatically enrolled in the Clinical 101 course. Clinical 101 is a self-paced online course used as a pre-externship orientation tool to prepare students for the clinical portion of their program. The course does not focus on any specific allied health discipline, but rather emphasizes the aspects of professional behavior necessary for a successful externship experience in any of MCC's allied health programs. The Clinical 101 consists of 3 modules, a final exam, and the end of course survey. Students also submit their externship registration packet through Clinical 101 course shell. Students are required to pass the Clinical 101 final exam and the Externship handbook quiz with a 90% or higher to receive Clinical 101 course completion certificate. The course completion certificate is one of the required documents in the externship registration packet, which needs to be included along with other supporting documents listed in the packet.

Externship Course Registration and Health Forms Documentation Deadlines

Each program cohort has an established due date for externship packet submission. The due date is announced to students during the New Student Orientation.

A complete externship packet containing all the documentation listed below must be submitted by the due date. Students who fail to submit a complete externship packet by the established due date will be unregistered from the externship course. Partial or incomplete packet submissions will not be accepted.

Externship Packet consists of:

- Current Student Resume (Must list Midwestern Career College under Education section);

- Valid CPR card;
- Physical Exam within 6 months of Externship Packet submission due date;
- Proof of the following vaccinations:
 - TB step 1 and step 2
 - MMR
 - Varicella
 - Hepatitis B shot series (must be completed)
 - *Other vaccinations, including proof of COVID-19 vaccination or seasonal vaccinations like flu shot if required by the program or the site;
- Clear background check;
- Valid photo identification;
- Signed Release of Medical Record and Information Form;
- Signed Statement of Confidentiality Form;
- Completed Emergency Contact Form.

In addition to the documents listed above, after the externship site has been assigned, the students will need to provide proof of liability insurance.

Additional documents may be required by the Externship Site. These documents may include COVID-19 vaccination, Tdap, Fit test, Flu shot, health insurance, drug test, etc.

All documents submitted for review will become the property of Midwestern Career College. Photocopies must be legible, and photographs of the documents will not be accepted.

All costs associated with obtaining any documents required for externship placement will be the sole responsibility of the student.

Background Check

Students must complete a background check as part of the MCC admission process. A felony on student record will not necessarily disqualify the student from consideration for admission. However, it can adversely affect the student's ability to complete the Externship course and meet program completion requirements, find employment in the field related to their education, or take professional certification exams in the medical professions. MCC encourages students to consider their personal history to make the appropriate education and career choices.

The majority of MCC's affiliated sites will accept a background check completed within a year of assignment at the clinical site. However, some sites may require a more recent background check completed before the start of clinical rotation.

Any expenses incurred for the additional background check will be the responsibility of the student.

Drug Screening Policy

Consistent with its mission as an institution of higher education, Midwestern Career College (MCC) is committed to educating students, faculty, and staff on the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse, and to maintaining an environment in which such behavior is prohibited.

Some of MCC's affiliated sites require students to obtain and pass a drug screening before placement. If problems arise with a student's drug screening, the student will not be permitted to attend the Externship course which will result in program withdrawal.

Authorized Use of Prescribed Medicine for Student-Externs.

Students undergoing prescribed medical treatment with any drug or controlled substance which may interfere with student clinical activity must report such treatment to the Externship Department before the start of the clinical rotation, or right away, if the medication is newly prescribed during the rotation. The Externship Department is required to share this information with the student's prospective or assigned clinical site(s). Documentation from a healthcare provider might be required to clear the student to participate in the clinical activities. In some circumstances, the site may decline the rotation due to risks associated with the use of some medications.

Transportation

Students are responsible for securing their transportation to and from the externship site. Any costs associated with parking fees and/or tolls will be the students' responsibility.

Part III: Externship Site Assignment

MCC prides itself on its growing network of hospitals and clinics throughout the Chicagoland area and parts of Indiana that accept MCC students for clinical rotations. The list of affiliated externship sites is subject to change without notice.

Students must be approved by the Externship Department to contact, visit or attend an MCC affiliated clinical site.

Externship Assignment Policy

The College reserves the right to assign students to any available affiliated clinical site within 75 miles from their campus. The Externship Department with the recommendation from the Program Director makes the final decision on the selection of the site placement.

Student's personal preferences, including distance and/or transportation preferences, will not be taken into account when determining the location of the clinical assignment. Students may be required to rotate through multiple externship sites during the duration of their clinical course(s). Under normal circumstances, a student cannot request to change his or her clinical site assignment as determined by the College.

Site Assignment Refusal

Although it is not recommended, students may choose to decline their externship site assignment.

Declining the clinical site assignment for the first time, will result in the student being placed at the end of the externship placement waiting list for their program of study across all campuses. Declining the clinical site assignment will most likely delay student's program completion by a term, several terms or a

full academic year. It may also lead to the student being withdrawn from their program cohort and having to apply for re-enrollment with the next program cohort.

Students who decline their clinical assignment for the second time will not be offered another assignment and will need to secure their own externship site placement. (See requirements for student-developed clinical sites.)

Students who accept the assignment but fail to start or continue attendance at their assigned site will be unregistered or withdrawn from the externship course which may result in withdrawal from their program of study.

Students who would like to decline their clinical site assignment must complete a Site Refusal Form and submit the form to externship@mccollege.edu before the deadline listed in Externship Clinical Details letter.

Student-developed Clinical Sites

Students interested in securing their own externship site, have an opportunity to do so provided the prospective site meets all the requirements listed below and the student follows the established process.

To be approved for a clinical rotation a student-developed site:

- Must not be one of MCC affiliated sites;
- Must provide opportunities for direct, supervised, hands-on patient care consistent with program objectives;
- Must allow the student to meet the required program competencies as defined in the competency checklist;
- Must have an affiliation agreement signed before the start of the student's clinical rotation.

The process for approving a student-developed site for the clinical rotation:

- The student must notify in writing the Externship Department about their intention to secure their own site;
- The student must receive a written confirmation from the Externship Department that the prospective site is not one of MCC affiliated clinical sites;
- The student must provide MCC with the full contact information for the prospective site. At a minimum, the contact information must include site name, address, site contact person's name and title, and their phone number and email address;
- The MCC Externship department will review the site to determine if it meets the requirements for an externship and if so, seek to sign the contract and add them to the approved list of sites. Students will be required to facilitate communication between the site and the Externship Department;
- The Site Affiliation Agreement must be signed before the student can start his or her clinical assignment. Any attendance hours or competencies completed at an unaffiliated site will not count towards externship course completion;

- Students may be required to postpone their rotation pending completion of academic and administrative requirements set by the College;
- The student cannot make arrangements for another student to attend the same site without written approval from the Externship Department.

Paid Externship Assignment

Under normal circumstances, externship assignments are conducted on the unpaid basis. If a student is hired in his or her respective field before completing the required externship hours, the student may be eligible to apply his or her work hours towards the completion of the externship course. To receive academic credit for a paid externship assignment a student must:

- Notify Externship Department before starting the job;
- Receive approval from the Externship Department to leave their current assigned externship site (if applicable);
- Receive written approval from their employer;
- Continue submitting attendance records of the remaining hours to complete the program requirements;
- Complete Career Services exit interview survey.

Paid clinical assignments are not allowed for Associate of Applied Science in Surgical Technology program.

Part IV: During Externship

Externship Schedule and Attendance Policy

Externship schedule is set before the start of each clinical rotation. The set schedule cannot be changed without both the Externship Department's and the site's approval.

Externship hours cannot overlap with the student's scheduled class hours. Evening and weekend externship schedules are not typical.

Students are required to attend all scheduled externship hours. Clinical assignments at MCC affiliated site average at 24 hours per week. If the scheduled clinical rotation falls during the term break, the externship attendance must continue without interruption. Students must plan accordingly when starting a clinical rotation. Pre-scheduled vacations, trips, and other personal matters will not be considered a valid reason for interrupting the rotation and will result in a withdrawal from the externship course.

Students are required to arrive at least 15 minutes early to the site. Leaving the daily rotation early without site's request is not allowed. Repeated tardiness or unauthorized change in externship schedule will lead to a withdrawal from the externship course.

Clinical attendance during MCC observed Holidays

Although not typical, students may have to attend externship during the holidays observed by the College if required to do so by the site. Students should confirm the holiday schedule with the site ahead of time. The list of holidays observed by MCC can be found in the Catalog.

Excused Absences

Consistent and reliable attendance is considered an industry standard in a healthcare setting. Therefore, students must do their best to avoid absences during their clinical rotation period.

Although there are certain emergencies that cannot be avoided, excessive tardiness or absences during the clinical rotation, even if caused by a valid documented reason, will result in withdrawal from the externship course.

Examples of reasons that qualify for an excused absence:

- Medical illness or emergency with the student or immediate family (immediate family consists of parents, grandparents, spouse, children, siblings);
- Death in the immediate family;
- Jury duty;
- Military service.

The following reasons will not be accepted for an excused absence:

- Lack of childcare;
- Conflicting work schedule;
- Lack of transportation to and from the site;
- Routine doctor appointments.

Students who have a pre-planned excused absence must email the Externship Department (externship@mccollege.edu) and inform the clinical site well in advance so that alternative scheduling arrangements can be made by the site. All excused absences require documentation.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences will result in the termination of the externship assignment.

Externship Attendance Records

Students must submit their signed Externship Attendance Sheets weekly. Attendance sheets can be submitted only to the dedicated fax or email listed below:

- Fax: 847-531-9611
- Email: externship@mccollege.edu

Photocopies must be legible. Partially filled out or unsigned attendance records will not be accepted.

Students who fail to submit externship attendance records for 14 consecutive days after the submission due date will be withdrawn from the externship course and, if not simultaneously enrolled in any other courses, from their program of study.

Students are not allowed to use another student's time sheet or ask another student to have their time sheet signed for them. Doing so is considered a violation of standards of student conduct and will result in corrective action up to and including dismissal from the program of study.

Termination of Externship Assignment

The reasons for termination of an externship assignment include, but are not limited to:

- No call, no show to the clinical rotation;
- Excessive tardiness;
- Multiple documented or undocumented absences;
- Unprofessional student behavior reported by the site;
- Unsatisfactory student performance or failure to progress as reported by the site;
- Violations of site-specific policies and procedures;
- Failure to follow HIPPA requirements;
- Violations of the standards of student conduct as defined by the site or the college's catalog.

Students whose externship assignment is terminated will be withdrawn from the externship course and, if not simultaneously enrolled in any other courses, from their program of study.

Re-enrollment in the externship course will require the approval of the Externship Department and the Program Director and is subjected to clinical site availability. Students whose externship was terminated due to unsatisfactory performance at the externship site will be required to repeat a portion of the program before restarting their clinical rotation. Students whose externship was terminated due to conduct violations or unsatisfactory attendance will not be eligible for re-enrollment.

Gifts and Gratuities Policy

Students may not solicit or accept gifts, money (including tips and gratuities), business or personal courtesies, and services from patients, physicians, technologists, healthcare personnel, instructors, and fellow students placed at the same clinical site. Doing so may create an actual or perceived conflict of interest and therefore is not permitted. Thank you cards and notes are allowed. If a clinical site has a different policy in place, students are required to follow the college's policy.

Failure to comply with the policy, whether or not intentional, may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of the clinical assignment and/or withdrawal from the program of study.

Skill Evaluation/Competency Assessment

Each program has a Skill Evaluation/Competency Checklist that must be submitted to the Externship Department. The Externship Department will provide the program Skill/Competency Checklist to the students before the start of the clinical rotation.

The Skill Evaluation/Competency Checklist must be submitted to a Program Director's MCC email and the dedicated fax or email listed below:

- Fax: 847-531-9611
- Email: externship@mccollege.edu

Privacy, Confidentiality, and HIPAA

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) is the legislation that provides data privacy and security provisions for safeguarding medical information.

It is of critical importance that any information a student receives about the patients at the site remains confidential. It is an ethical, legally regulated requirement that students cannot violate. When discussing and documenting their clinical experiences, students must take extra caution not to violate HIPAA. Documenting and sharing any part of the clinical experience on the social media without written authorization from the college is strictly prohibited.

Failure to follow HIPAA requirements while at the clinical rotation will be considered a violation of standards of student conduct and will result in termination of the externship assignment.

Students can be sued for invasion of privacy if they breach the rules of confidentiality, and face criminal penalties stemming from violations of the HIPAA privacy and security rules.

Pregnancy during Externship Assignment

Certain medical procedures and environments carry inherent risks to pregnancy. Therefore, MCC affiliated sites reserve the right to refuse externship assignment to students for the duration of pregnancy.

Any student who becomes pregnant before or at the time of externship placement must notify the Externship Department. The student will be informed of all the available options for externship assignment completion.

In case the student becomes pregnant during her clinical rotation, she must notify the Externship Department immediately.

By not disclosing pregnancy in a timely manner, the student assumes all responsibilities for the potential risks associated with continuing the clinical rotation.

Professionalism

Students must adhere to the following professionalism standards at all times while at the externship assignment:

- Display a courteous attitude when interacting with patients, physicians, technologists, healthcare personnel, instructors, and fellow students;
- Demonstrate attentiveness, motivation, responsibility, positive attitude, maturity, and pleasantness of personality while performing duties at the externship assignment;
- Refrain from making or receiving any personal telephone calls, texts, IMs, etc. while clocked in, except in the cases of emergency;
- Display ability to accept constructive criticism with a positive attitude.

Dress Code and Professional Appearance

Appearance is an important indication of professionalism. The College reserves the right to advise any student that his or her appearance is immodest, offensive, or otherwise distracting in the clinical environment. Students are required to take immediate steps to comply with dress code expectations as defined by the clinical site or the College. Failure to comply with dress code requirements will result in the disciplinary action up to and including termination of the externship assignment.

- Dress code: unless the site has a specific uniform required, the blue scrubs with the Midwestern Career College logo, and closed toe and heel shoes must be worn at all times;
- Perfume: no perfume or cologne is allowed at the site;
- Hair: hair must be a natural color (no blue or green, etc.,) neatly combed, clean and pulled back.
- Head coverings: no hats, caps, or hair coverings of any kind are allowed at the clinical site, except those approved for medical or religious reasons or those required by the medical setting;
- Facial hair: facial hair must be kept short and neat in appearance;
- Hands and nails: hands must always be clean. The nails should be clean and kept at the appropriate length. No fake nails and or nail polish are allowed at the site.
- Makeup: makeup should be kept to the minimum and must look natural. No fake lashes or eyelash extensions are allowed;
- Jewelry and piercings: jewelry is not allowed at the clinical sites. Body piercings (other than ear piercings) should not be visible. Oral and facial jewelry is not permitted. Clear spacers to keep piercings open are permitted;
- Tattoos: tattoos should be covered whenever possible. The visibility of tattoos should be kept to a minimum. Any tattoo that contains offensive language or symbols must be covered;
- Overall Hygiene: good body and oral hygiene is required at all times.
- Site-specific Requirements: the site may have a specific dress code or hygiene requirements that students are expected to follow during their clinical rotation.

Social Media Use

Documenting and sharing any part of the clinical experience on the social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Wikis, blogs, as well as other social networks and collaboration tools such as text messages and Facetime without written authorization from the College is strictly prohibited. The prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Taking and posting pictures, video or recording of any kind while at the clinical site;
- disclosing and/or discussing the confidential information obtained from the electronic health records;
- saving and storing patient information on personal portable devices;
- revealing patient health information or describing patient care events on social media, even if the patient names or other personally identifiable information are omitted;
- interacting with patients on social media in any way that may violate the privacy and confidentiality of patient care (including identifying them as patients) or be deemed unprofessional and or hostile.

Students who are found in violation of the social media use guidelines will be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal from their program of study.

Email Communication Guidelines

In the age of social media, many students approach emailing similar to texting and other forms of digital communication. But most college instructors, administrators, and healthcare industry professionals consider emails closer to letters than to text messages. This style of writing is more formal and requires

adhering to the rules of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and syntax. Students who have an active mcc student email account, should use it for all college and externship related email communication.

The guidelines below will help you show that you care about how you present yourself in writing to your instructor, college administrator or clinical staff.

- Use a clear and informative subject line.

Subject line is not a salutation line, so do not write something like "hey" in the subject line of an email. Instead, it is a good idea to write a few words indicating the purpose of your message: "Request for a meeting," for example.

- Use a salutation and signature.

Begin you email with a formal greeting like "Hello" or "Good afternoon," and then address your instructor, college administrator, or clinical site staff by name. For emails addressed to doctors, title and last name greeting is more appropriate, such as "Dr. Jones." Remember to end your email with a signature, such as "Best" or "Sincerely," followed by your first and last name.

- Use standard punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar.

Proofread. Use the spelling checker. Do not use smiley faces or other emoticons, internet acronyms, abbreviations, all capital letters, and shortened spellings (e.g., LOL, or "U" for "you").

- Consider the length of your email.

Very long emails with no paragraphs, no capital letters, and no sentence breaks are hard to read. Use paragraph breaks to help organize your message. On the other hand, a very short, terse message may simply be meaningless. Be sure to include enough information so that your reader can understand what you are requesting. Provide a bit of background or context if necessary. State your request clearly.

- Do not expect an instant response.

Allow at least two business days for a response. Follow up with another polite email if you have not heard back in three business days.

Part V: Externship Course Completion Requirements

Externship Course Completion Requirements

Students must meet the following requirements to receive a passing grade for the externship course:

Within 14 calendar days of completing the clinical rotation

- Submit documentation showing completion of all externship hours required by the program;
- Submit skills/competencies checklist showing completion of the required competencies;
- Complete site evaluation survey.

Externship Department will review the submitted documentation and notify the student in writing about the completion of externship assignment.

Students who fail to timely submit documentation showing completion of the required hours and competencies will receive a failing grade for the externship course.