

Preceptor FAQs

What is the role of a clinical preceptor?

A preceptor acts as a supervisor and teacher to a third- or fourth-year medical student in the clinical setting. Through a one-on-one relationship, the student gains skills and knowledge from your expertise and modelling. A key aspect of being a preceptor is giving the student feedback on their performance (this includes both verbal and written feedback - in the form of an evaluation at the end of the rotation).

What is the time commitment?

A clinical rotation is usually 2-4 weeks in duration. Most preceptors take one student in any given rotation block, but it is completely up to you (and/or your site) how many rotations and students you accept.

Does completing this online form bind me to taking students?

No, certainly not. You (and/or your site) will always be given the opportunity to accept or decline a request to serve as a preceptor for a specific rotation or timeframe. In addition, you always have the option to provide more or less time than originally indicated.

Are there specific requirements to be a preceptor?

Preceptors must be state-licensed and board-certified or board-eligible in the specialty they wish to serve as a preceptor for. Preceptors must be practicing nearly full-time, providing a minimum of 36 hours of student engagement per week.

What are the responsibilities of a preceptor?

- Prior to the start of the rotation, familiarize yourself with the rotation-specific teaching objectives (if applicable), as well as the evaluation you'll be required to complete at the end of the student's rotation with you.
- Provide a brief orientation to your practice at the beginning of the rotation, and supervise the student at all times while at your site. In addition, establishing what the student will be doing during the timeframe is always appreciated (i.e. seeing some patients before you do and then presenting them to you; rounding on any patients in the hospital (prior to your rounds), etc.).
- Assess the student's skill level and experience, and then work with the student to become competent in the key, basic areas of patient care.
- Provide consistent feedback – *throughout the rotation* – with areas of strength, but particularly, areas needing improvement and growth.
- Identify and engage in “teachable moments” throughout the rotation, and work with the student to help him/her meet course requirements.
- Encourage the student to read, review, and research topics relevant to the rotation, as well as required learning objectives for the rotation.
- Complete a student evaluation at the end of the rotation, discuss it with the student, and then submit it to the student's clerkship coordinator.

What are the benefits of being a preceptor?

- [You can earn CME credits.](#)
- You get the opportunity to share *your* clinical knowledge, experience, and style of patient and colleague interaction with tomorrow's physicians.
- Professional stimulation; you will undoubtedly expand your knowledge and skills as you teach someone else.
- You will find that students are often good teachers themselves, as they share didactic knowledge learned during their pre-clinical years.
- It gives you and your site the opportunity to recruit future physicians.
- DMU Library access may be given to preceptors who request it and precept a minimum of 16 weeks annually.
- Adjunct Faculty appointments may be awarded to preceptors who request it and precept a minimum of 12 weeks annually.

What is the difference between serving as a preceptor for a student rotation and hosting a student shadow?

- Preceptors host student(s) in a formal clinical rotation (where the student will receive credit towards their degree) for 2-4 weeks and are actively involved with the preceptor. Hosting a student for shadowing entails a strictly observational event which is typically confined to one or two days maximum.
- Student rotations are completed by our third- and fourth-year clinical students. Student shadowing is primarily utilized by our first- and second-year pre-clinical students (but sometimes our clinical students as they try to decide on their career path and specialty determination).

Once I complete the online form, what happens?

First, your medical license and board-certification will be primary-source verified. Then your information will be reviewed by DMU's Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs. Once that is complete, you will be notified that you are on-record in our system as a Verified Affiliate, and if you are brand new to our system, we will follow-up with you to inquire about your availability and possibly start working on a site affiliation agreement*. When a preceptor agrees to take students for clinical rotations they are initially considered a Verified Affiliate (this is the status signifying a completed application and check process). You are ready to start taking students (when you decide you are ready). If you meet additional criteria, you will be eligible to apply for Adjunct Faculty status.

*A site affiliation agreement is a legal document that stipulates requirements for both the clinical site and DMU; we have a master agreement that we typically send to sites, but also utilize the AAMC Uniform agreement and at times, a site's agreement.

I would like to be considered for an Adjunct Faculty appointment with DMU; how do I go about that?

DMU Adjunct Faculty appointments are awarded to those who spend a great deal of time and energy mentoring our students. Adjunct appointments are generally awarded to preceptors who request it and provide availability for a minimum of 12 rotation weeks for DMU students annually, or physicians who regularly host DMU student shadows. If you feel your involvement with the students of Des Moines University is such that you would like to apply for an Adjunct Faculty appointment, please email COMAffiliations@dmu.edu.