

Perceptions and Attitudes of RFU Physical Therapy Students Regarding Onsite Clinical Site Visits



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Purpose & Hypothesis

The purpose of this study is to investigate the degree to which students and recent graduates value in-person clinical site visits. The secondary purpose is to provide preliminary data that can be used for further research into a cost-benefit analysis of site visits.

We hypothesize students' and recent RFU graduates will have a **positive** perceived value of in-person clinical site visits using a four-point Likert Scale.

Methods

- **Mixed methods survey** on Qualtrics sent out to 200 RFU DPT students and recent graduates from the classes 2018-2021 via email
- Inclusion criteria: respondents in target population with 2 or more clerkships
- 32-question survey consisting of demographics, 4-point Likert scale, and free response questions
- Utilization of Qualtrics and SPSS for data analysis
- Cross-analysis with demographic and likert scale questions using Mann Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis
- Categories: performance, communication & expectations, feedback & interaction, method of site visit

Results

- 53% **disagreed** that in-person site visits helped them understand the expectations of the CI
- 59% **disagreed** that an in-person site visit improved the student's clinical performance.
- 97% **agreed** that in-person site visits can improve communication between the student and the academic program
- 95% **agreed** that in-person site visits can be important in resolving communication issues between them and the CI.
- 11 out of 15 Likert questions had a majority **positive response**
- No significance between class year and perceived benefit of site visits

Graduation Year	2018	2019	2020	2021
	8	5	8	18
Question	Range		Mean	
How many clerkship experiences have you participated in?	2-5 clerkships		3.05 clerkships	
How many in-person site visits have you had during your clerkship experience?	1-5 in-person site visits		1.77 in-person site visits	

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Results

Response Rate	19.6%		
Are you:	Male	Female	Prefer not to specify
	38.46%	58.97%	2.56%
Are you an APTA member?	Yes		No
	51.28%		48.72%

Table 2: Additional Demographic questions



Figure 1: Preferred Site Visit Type

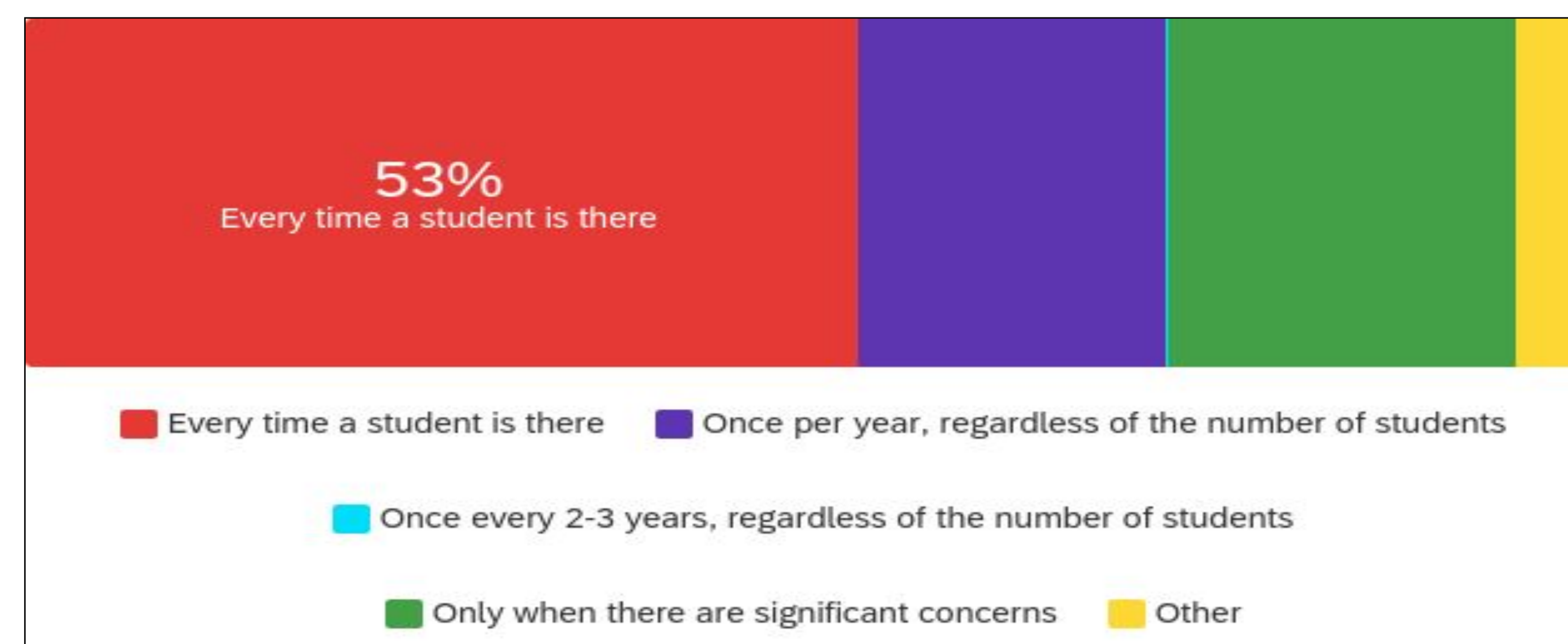


Figure 2: Preferred Frequency of Site Visits

Question #14) In which setting is your preferred method of site visit?					
Likert Scale Questions	Q11.1: It is important for me to interact with the academic faculty from my program during clerkships.	Q11.2: A site maintains the relationship between the DPT student and the academic institution.	Q11.3: A faculty member should perform site visits in-person as opposed to over the phone or on web-video.	Q12.2: A site visit helps me better understand the program's expectations of students during a clerkship experience.	Q12.7: A site visit has a positive influence on my clerkship experience.
P-value	0.028	0.009	0.012	0.033	0.003
Group Response That Differed	In-person vs telephone	In-person vs other & In-person vs telephone	In-person vs Email & In-person vs telephone	In-person vs Other	In-person vs telephone & In-person vs telephone

Table 3. Kruskal-Wallis test analysis with Likert Scale Questions and Question 14

Results

Open-ended question themes:

- Q-24: Additional experiences or information as a student in a site visit
 - Communication: reiteration of concerns at clinical site, reconnecting with RFU community, enhancing relationship with CI
 - Clarity/ reinforcement of expectations
 - Preference of in-person over telephone site visits
- Q-21: Survey feedback
 - Neutral option preferred
 - Include question about student conflicts with CIs

Discussion

- Overall, positive perceived value of in-person site visits
- In person site visits almost unanimously favored over other forms of site visits (79%)
- Significant data:
 - Q14: Found the differences were mainly between **in-person site visits** versus **telephone** and other
- Implications:
 - In-person site visits **aid in communication** between the student and the university & CI
 - Strong preference for in-person site visits during **every** clerkship experience
 - Strong indication they are worth the resources invested
 - Greater student satisfaction
- Limitations include:
 - Lack of a neutral option
 - Lack of variability in cohorts
 - Response attrition

Clinical Relevance

The results of this survey may be used to guide further research looking into the optimal method to facilitate communication during a student's clinical rotation. In-person site visits aid in communication between the student and the university and may lead to **greater student performance** during clerkship.

Future Research

- Analysis of the **cost-benefit ratio** of conducting in-person site visits
- Are the resources - time, money, energy, yielding an equal or greater result?
- Investigation into the comparison of student grades that experienced an in-person clinical site visit to those students' that did not

Conclusion

- RFU students and recent graduates had a greater positive perceived value of in-person site visits compared to other forms **supporting** our hypothesis
- Results may be generalizable to other DPT programs that conduct site visits
- Future research aimed at evaluating cost-benefit ratio