

RADIATION THERAPY DISTANCE EDUCATION STEPS

Steps to identify a clinical shadow and affiliation site:

1. Identify and secure one or two clinics for shadowing.
 - a. Identify Clinics
 - b. Contact Clinics
2. Complete a total of 16 shadowing hours.
 - a. Review Shadowing Expectations and Guidelines
3. Request that supervising therapist(s) complete the required shadowing documentation.
4. Inquire whether the clinic is willing to serve as a clinical internship site.
5. Complete the Radiation Therapy Distance Education Questionnaire.
6. Apply to the Radiation Therapy program

Step 1: Identify and secure a clinic for shadowing

People interested in the Northwestern Health Sciences University Radiation Therapy Distance Education program must complete 16 hours of shadowing before completing an application for admission. This requirement consists of two eight-hour shadowing experiences; however, you may complete your shadows at multiple clinics if the clinic cannot accommodate a full eight-hour session during a single visit.

Students are responsible for identifying one or two clinical sites and coordinating these shadowing experiences. When selecting sites, we strongly recommend considering locations where you may wish to complete your future clinical education. This approach provides valuable insight into the clinical environment and helps determine whether the site is an appropriate fit for your internship.

Identifying Clinics

1. Make a list of applicable clinics in your area.
2. **Consider the distance from your home** and how far you are willing to commute each day for the duration of your training (no more than a 50 min commute, for approximately 9 months).
3. **Types of Clinics & Hospitals:**
 - a. **Cancer centers that focus on photon therapy with the use of Linear Accelerators.**
 - b. **Do not include Proton Clinics**, as they do not meet NWHHSU's curriculum needs.
 - c. Acceptable locations can be free-standing radiation oncology departments or larger hospital settings.
 - d. If you are unsure of the clinics in your area, please contact Jessica Donahue – Program Chair at jdonahue@nwhealth.edu

4. Accreditation

- a. Clinical sites must have enough patient volume for students to meet all their required guidelines for graduation. Approximately 20 patients a day, with a variety of cases.
- b. Clinical sites must have a CT simulator, and departments such as nursing, physics, and dosimetry to complete rotations in these areas.

Contact Clinics

- To initiate contact with clinics, consider calling and requesting to speak with the clinic manager or obtaining appropriate contact information, such as an email address, from the clinic's website.
- Introduce yourself as someone interested in pursuing radiation therapy and considering Northwestern Health Sciences University's distance education program.
- Be professional and courteous of their time.

We strongly recommend that you contact more than one clinic in your area. It is beneficial to have options and to experience different clinics and sizes.

Please use this sample email when reaching out to clinics to arrange a shadow.

Step 2: Complete a total of 16 shadowing hours

- Review the following Shadow Expectations and Guidelines document.
- Be sure to review the Expectations for Shadowing in Radiation Oncology guide.
- Document the recommended questions to ask your Radiation Therapist(s) when shadowing.
 - Document the questions you asked and what answers you received.
 - Document what you learned that may be relevant to your potential placement with the clinic.
- Keep a record of your conversations:
 - Document the name, title, and phone number of the people you speak with.
 - Be sure to take notes on your experiences during your shadow. You will need to reflect on your experiences in your admissions essay.

Step 3: Request that supervising therapist(s) complete the required shadowing documentation

Ask the clinic coordinator to complete an evaluation of your performance during the shadow, which is part of the admissions process. Please act professionally and respectfully.

Share the link and/or QR Code below with the clinic for your shadow evaluation.

- [NWHSU Radiation Therapy Shadowing Evaluation](#)



Step 4: Inquire whether the clinic is willing to serve as a clinical internship site

At the end of your shadow experience, ask the following questions:

1. Do you offer clinical education opportunities for radiation therapy students?
2. Would you be willing to consider a student from Northwestern Health Sciences University, which is accredited by JRCERT, for a clinical education placement?
 - a. **If the clinic responds yes:** Ask your clinic contact to share the [Radiation Therapy Clinical Site - Acknowledgment of Interest](#) form with the clinical site representatives to express their interest in participating in NWHSU's Radiation Therapy Distance Education program as an affiliate clinic. You may also share the QR code below.



- b. **If the clinic responds no:** ask, "Do you know of any other clinics in the area that may accept clinical education placements?"

Step 5: Complete the Radiation Therapy Distance Education Questionnaire

- Complete the [Radiation Therapy Distance Education Questionnaire](#), including the clinical placement site name and contact information.
- Upon completion of the questionnaire, your Admissions Counselor will review your responses.
- An admissions counselor will reach out to you with the next steps and any questions they have regarding your responses.
- Contact Admissions with any questions you may have.
- You may need to meet with Jessica Donahue, program chair of the Radiation Therapy program at NWHSU, to discuss your clinical options.

Step 6: Apply to the Radiation Therapy program:

- Ensure you meet the [admissions requirements](#) (admission is highly competitive, as spaces are limited in our two entry terms per year)
- Complete the [online application](#) for admission to the Radiation Therapy program
- Submit the following required documents
 - Transcripts from all educational institutions attended
 - Professional Recommendations
 - Personal essay following the completion of your shadow experiences
 - Admissions must also receive your shadow evaluation form submissions from the clinics where you completed your 16 hours of shadowing
 - *We highly recommend completing 13 or more college-level credits, including Pre-Calculus and Anatomy & Physiology 1 and 2, prior to applying.*