



Higher Education Faculty / Lecturer

Starter Guide for Clinicians Interested
in Teaching at Colleges or Universities

Role Snapshot

Higher education faculty and lecturers teach, mentor, and develop curriculum for students in undergraduate or graduate healthcare programs. These roles may be part-time adjunct positions or full-time academic appointments, often within departments such as physical therapy, nursing, public health, exercise science, or healthcare administration.

Responsibilities include delivering lectures, facilitating labs, advising students, evaluating coursework, and contributing to program development or accreditation. Many institutions value practical clinical experience, especially in programs with a hands-on or licensure component.

Why It's A Good Fit

If you've mentored students, supervised interns, or led in-services or CE sessions, you already have experience translating clinical knowledge into teachable concepts. Clinicians bring real-world examples, practical reasoning, and credibility to the classroom - all of which are qualities that academic programs often look for when hiring teaching faculty.

Teaching in higher ed can be a great fit if you enjoy guiding others, thinking critically about your field, and contributing to the next wave of healthcare professionals. It offers more structure than clinical care, a steady rhythm to your year, and the chance to stay close to the work without being on the floor. If you're the kind of person who naturally ends up coaching others or loves sharing what you've learned, this path might feel like a good match.

Action Plan

1) Start with Adjunct Roles

Adjunct or part-time lecturer positions are common entry points, especially in community colleges or smaller private universities.

Look for courses related to:

- Clinical reasoning
- Anatomy and physiology
- Kinesiology or pathophysiology
- Ethics, documentation, or patient care across the lifespan

These positions often require only a master's or doctorate in a related field and professional licensure.

2) Build an Academic Resume

Highlight your teaching, mentoring, and leadership experience – even informal settings like student supervision or CE presentations.

Include:

- Guest lectures or workshops you've led
- Student or staff mentoring
- Curriculum you've developed or evaluated
- Evidence-based practice implementation

You may also need to prepare a teaching philosophy statement. Focus on clarity, student-centered learning, and practical application.

Action Plan

3) Understand Accreditation Standards

Most healthcare programs follow accreditation standards (e.g., CAPTE, CCNE, CAHME) that dictate who can teach specific courses. Instructors for clinical courses often need a graduate degree and a minimum number of years of experience.

Example preparation resources:

- The Chronicle of Higher Education – Job Boards and Career Advice
- Inside Higher Ed – Academic hiring trends
- LinkedIn Learning – Course on Adult Learning Principles
- Community College Faculty Job Search Guide – American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)

4) Network with Academic Faculty

Reach out to program directors at your alma mater or local colleges. Ask to guest lecture or join advisory committees. This builds visibility and often leads to adjunct or full-time opportunities.

Transferrable Skills

- Clinical reasoning and case-based teaching
- Ability to simplify complex topics for learners
- Curriculum planning and outcome-based education
- Mentoring and feedback delivery
- Public speaking and classroom facilitation

Typical Salary Range

- Adjunct (per course): \$2,000 to \$6,000
- Full-time non-tenure faculty: \$60,000 to \$85,000
- Tenure-track or doctoral-level: \$80,000 to \$120,000+
- Department chair or academic leadership: \$100,000+

Note: Salaries vary widely based on degree level, institution type, and region.

Example Resume Bullets

Use or adapt these examples:

- “Developed and delivered curriculum for undergraduate kinesiology course focused on injury prevention and functional movement.”
- “Supervised graduate students in clinical reasoning labs, emphasizing patient-centered care and differential diagnosis.”
- “Served as a guest lecturer on musculoskeletal rehabilitation across three local DPT programs.”
- “Created assessment rubrics aligned with CAPTE accreditation outcomes.”
- “Mentored students on research projects and case presentations for state conference.”

Common Interview Questions

- How do you engage students with different learning styles?
- Describe a time you adapted your teaching approach based on student feedback.
- How do you integrate real-world clinical experience into your instruction?
- How familiar are you with accreditation or licensure exam requirements?
- What's your approach to developing assessments or evaluating competency?

Key Insights

- Clinicians are often more qualified than they think for teaching roles, especially if they've mentored students or led training
- Adjunct teaching can be a side income or a stepping stone to full-time academia
- Teaching in higher education gives you stability, schedule control, and intellectual fulfillment; but may require additional credentialing long-term
- Academic careers can be political and slow-moving; those seeking fast impact may prefer freelance education or private teaching

Who This Role Is For

- Clinicians who enjoy teaching, mentoring, or speaking
- Those looking for structured hours with less physical demand
- People comfortable in formal educational settings and academic processes
- Anyone considering long-term leadership in health education

Who This Role Is Not For

- Clinicians looking for fast-paced change or immediate financial growth
- Those who dislike structured environments or academic red tape
- People who want to avoid meetings, committees, or bureaucracy
- Anyone unwilling to adjust to formal feedback and teaching evaluation

Disclaimer

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