**International Clinical Internships in Trinidad**

# General Information about the ICDR-Trinidad Group

Occupational therapy internships have been running at the Immortelle Children’s Centre and Prevocational Centre since 2001. To date, there have been over 80 occupational therapy students who have participated in this internship. Recently, speech language pathology and physical therapy students have also completed internships at the Immortelle Children’s Centre.

# Partners

Immortelle Children’s Centre and Prevocational Centre is the main partner involved in this internship. Immortelle is a privately run school for children and adults with special needs. (For OT, PT, and SLP students)

Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex is a general health hospital located in Mount Hope, just outside of Port-of‐Spain. (For PT students only)

San Fernando General Hospital is located in San Fernando on the west coast of Trinidad, south of Port-of‐Spain. (For PT students only)

# Disclaimers/Precautions (If any)

* Not mandatory to have specific vaccinations prior to travelling to Trinidad, though students should ensure their routine vaccinations are up to date
* Students with allergies or dietary restrictions should ensure they will have appropriate food choices while in Trinidad
* Certain areas of Trinidad can be unsafe to enter. It is strongly advised that these areas be avoided at all times. Please refer to the student handbook for more information.

# Immortelle Children's Centre and Prevocational Centre – Occupational Therapy

**General Info about the Internship**

A 6-7 week international clinical internship opportunity for occupational therapy students from the University of Toronto is offered twice a year (in November and April). The internship takes place at the Immortelle Children’s Centre and Prevocational Centre in the city of Port of Spain.

# Population

The population at the Immortelle Children’s Centre consists of young preschool and school aged children with a range of developmental delays including cognitive, physical and sensory motor delays. The age range of students at the Prevocational Centre is pre-teen up to adult ages. These students have a range of disabilities as well including psychosocial, cognitive and physical delays.

# Costs

Students are typically responsible for all costs. Students and supervisors typically share accommodations close to the school. They will have access to a car during their stay. Students are required to split the cost of accommodation, which can range from US$500-$700 each. The average cost of airfare to travel to Trinidad is in the CAN$600-$700 range. Students are responsible for paying for their food and the average grocery prices are similar to what you would find in Canadian grocery stores. Prospective supervisors should note that they do not get paid while supervising students in Trinidad; however the cost of their flight, their portion of the accommodation, and their food is covered by a generous donor.

# Supervision

Two to three occupational therapy students and one occupational therapy supervisor are selected to take part in this internship. The supervisor is generally present for the first 3‐4 weeks of the internship and the students complete the remainder of the internship independently. As a result, prospective students are required to demonstrate strong motivation and self-initiation skills.

# Type of Practice/Typical Day

Students will be expected at the school at 8:30 each morning. The classes usually run until about 1:30pm. Students will likely spend time in particular classrooms, working to support specific teachers as well as work one on one with individual students. They will have the opportunity to complete assessment and treatment plans for individual students and they will provide consultation services for teachers. Students will work together to offer workshops to students, teachers and parents, that include topics such as sensory motor functioning, building handwriting/computer skills, social skills and personal hygiene functioning, as well as preparation for on the job training and assertiveness building.

# Immortelle Children's Centre and Prevocational Centre – Physical Therapy

In the fall of 2014, a physical therapy internship took place at the Immortelle Centre for the first time.  Under the clinical supervision of a Toronto-based physiotherapist, two physical therapy students from the University of Toronto assessed and addressed the physiotherapy needs of the Immortelle students, their families, and the school.  In addition to providing one-to-one physiotherapy sessions, the students designed and piloted a ‘daily physical activity’ (DPA) program at the Christmas day camp, and worked with Immortelle staff and caregivers to implement recommendations related to mobility, exercise, gross motor skill development and participation in physical activities.  During the internship, the students worked with the occupational therapy students to accomplish interprofessional therapy goals.  The physical therapy team also visited local rehabilitation professionals to learn more about community resources and service delivery in Trinidad.

# Immortelle Children's Centre and Prevocational Centre – Speech Language Pathology (SLP)

In 2010, the first group of 4 SLP students and an SLP travelled to Trinidad to complete an 8 week placement at Immortelle Children’s Centre. Now, 3-4 SLP students participate annually in the first placement unit, Unit 3. Following one week of Toronto-based clinical learning, the student clinicians are co-supervised for 7 weeks by an Ontario-based SLP (on site full time for the first three weeks and then by distance part time from Ontario) and local SLPs (on site part time for the last four weeks). The SLP students provide assessments as well as individual and group intervention to students with a wide range of developmental disabilities, the most common being Down Syndrome and Autism. In addition, students may hold a two-week SLP camp over the Easter Holidays, offer a parent information session in collaboration with SLP students from the University of West Indies, and participate in an interprofessional assessment with occupational therapy Students.

# For more information

For more information about the internship opportunities at the Immortelle Children's Centre and Prevocational Centre, please contact Shelley Vaisberg at [shelley.vaisberg@gmail.com](mailto:shelley.vaisberg@gmail.com) or Sandy Steinwender at [sandsmilett@gmail.com](mailto:sandsmilett@gmail.com)

Vice Chairs of Education of ICDR‐ Trinidad.

**Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex – Physical Therapy**

# General Information about the Internship

Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex (EWMSC) is a general health hospital located in Mount Hope, just outside of Port-of‐Spain. This internship is the second site to be supported by the Trinidad Group. Currently, there are four full-time physiotherapists and three physiotherapy interns (residents). The physiotherapy outpatient department is well equipped with several private treatment rooms and modalities such as ultrasound, IFC, TENS, cervical and lumbar traction machines. There are also two therapy gyms with several large and small pieces of equipment. A separate hand therapy room is also located in the physiotherapy department and is well stocked with many familiar items including a splinting area. The hospital has two bank machines, a cafeteria, and a coffee shop. It should also be mentioned that there are few OTs and SLPs in Trinidad. There are neither OTs nor SLPs working at EWMSC, which allows for several transprofessional learning opportunities.

**Population**

EWMSC has upwards of 300 inpatient beds among various wards for patients from pediatric to geriatric populations. Mornings are spent working in the outpatient department while afternoons are spent on the inpatient wards. There are multiple wards including a 10-bed ICU and 6-bed NICU. There is an orthopedic surgery unit and students may have the opportunity to observe a surgery while on internship.

# Costs

While students have the option of seeking rental options independently, student lodging may be available in the medical student dormitories on site. These dormitories have standard amenities including a kitchenette. At the time of writing the approximate cost was $300 per month. Students are responsible for purchasing their own groceries and meal preparation.

Food costs are generally comparable to Canada. Alternatively, students may have the opportunity to rent a room with a staff member in the physiotherapy department.

With regards to transportation, it can be difficult to walk in some neighbourhoods in Trinidad due to the absence of sidewalks. Additionally, transport by public bus can also prove challenging due to safety concerns and limited routes therefore hospital or staff accommodation may be better.

# Supervision and Practical Exams

Supervision is provided by a staff physiotherapist. Students who complete their internships at EWMSC are expected to complete midterm and final practical exams in preparation for their licensing exam. These are short OSCEs consisting of short and/or long cases.

# Professional Conduct and Dress Code

In general, this writer observed the healthcare system to be more traditional and more formal than in Canada. EWMSC physiotherapists are very warm and friendly, however it is expected that physiotherapy staff dress in pastel or neutral colours and wear fairly traditional clothing. For example, stylized scrubs and running shoes were observed, and polo shirts were stated as being inappropriately informal. A lab coat should be brought for use on inpatient wards.

For more information please contact Ellen Leung at: [ellen.leung@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:ellen.leung@mail.utoronto.ca)

**San Fernando General Hospital – Physical Therapy**

# General Information about the Internship

San Fernando General Hospital located in San Fernando on the west coast of Trinidad, south of Port-of-Spain. Currently, there are seven full-time physiotherapists for approximately over 600 inpatient beds. The hospital is an older building with several new wings/expansions. The physiotherapy outpatient department is equipped with several private treatment cubicles and several modalities identical to those found in Canada. SFGH is accustomed to hosting physiotherapy students from the program in Jamaica. Supervision is provided by a staff physiotherapist.

# Population

There are over 16 different wards at SFGH for patients from pediatric to geriatric populations. Mornings are spent working in the outpatient department while afternoons are spent on the inpatient wards. There are multiple wards including an ICU and NICU. Other wards include orthopedic, medical/surgical, obstetrics, psychology, HIV, burns, oncology, hand therapy, and nephrology.

# Costs

Students may seek out their own rental accommodations in San Fernando, or rent a room with a staff member in the physiotherapy department for increased safety. Rates are to be determined, however may include transportation and breakfast.

# Professional Conduct and Dress Code

In general, this writer observed the healthcare system to be more traditional and more formal than in Canada. It is expected that physiotherapy staff dress in more formal clothing such as dress pant and a blouse. More details regarding dress code can be garnered through further communications with the physiotherapy department. A lab coat should be brought for use on inpatient wards.

For more information please contact Ellen Leung at: [ellen.leung@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:ellen.leung@mail.utoronto.ca)