

What is a Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)?

A PTA is a licensed professional health care provider that works under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist. PTAs may provide treatment to individuals of all ages, from newborns to the very oldest, with various medical and health related conditions that limit their mobility and daily function.

Where do PTAs work?

PTAs may work in a variety of settings including hospitals, outpatient clinics, home health agencies, rehabilitation centers, schools, nursing homes, and sports/fitness facilities.

Why become a PTA?

If you are interested in a health care field where you can make a difference in people's lives, physical therapist assistant may be the career for you. PTAs are able to teach patients/clients exercises for improved mobility, strength, and coordination; provide training for walking and balance using devices such as canes, crutches, or walkers; and provide soft tissue mobilization/massage or apply physical agents and electrotherapy such as ultrasound or electrical stimulation. You can also enjoy job security as a PTA. Nationally, employment of PTAs is projected to grow 41% from 2014 to 2024 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). They report the median annual wages for PTAs to range from \$52,210 to \$64,030 annually.

How do I become a PTA?

In order to practice as a PTA, one must graduate from a CAPTE accredited PTA program. The PTA program at PHCC is anticipating a start date in August 2019 (PHCC is pending Candidate for Accreditation from CAPTE.). The program is a full-time commitment, five semesters in length (68 credits), and successful graduates will receive an Associates of Applied Science (AAS) in Physical Therapist Assistant. Upon graduation, students must achieve a passing score on the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE) administered by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) in order to obtain licensure in their state of practice. <https://www.fsbpt.org/>

Expectations PTA candidates

In addition to academic standards, certain behavioral expectations exist for the successful PTA Program candidate. Applicants should review these expectations thoroughly and discuss any concerns with the PTA faculty advisors.

- The decision to work in a health care profession should be based on an understanding of various health care settings. The candidate must be willing to provide care to patients in all settings who are critically or terminally ill, or severely injured or disabled.
- The candidate must feel comfortable providing treatment to all individuals without discrimination, regardless of gender, age, race, cultural background, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, or personal lifestyle choices.
- The candidate must have a basic understanding of and agree with the philosophy and practice of physical therapy and the role of the physical therapist assistant.
- Practicing health care professionals must demonstrate personal responsibility for their actions and must be willing to accept constructive criticism both in the classroom and the clinical environment.
- Significant physical demands are placed on the physical therapist assistant student and practicing PTA, including lifting, bending reaching, and manipulating equipment. The requirements and other abilities are outlined in the document "Essential Functions of the Physical Therapist Assistant Student" included on page 12 of this packet. The candidate will be asked to acknowledge understanding of these standards of physical and cognitive performance as part of the application
- The candidate must abide by the guidelines governing the use of social media relative to his/her experiences in the PTA Program.
- The candidate must comply with the policies of the College and the PTA Program.
- The candidate must abide by dress code, appearance, personal behavior, and hygiene guidelines befitting a member of the health care professions.