

## Physical Therapist Assistant

## PTA

A.S. – Physical Therapist Assistant Degree:

Division of Science and Allied Health  
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### Physical Therapist Assistant

#### Associate of Science Degree

#### Program Information

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program is at the Associate in Science Degree level, which requires completion of the required program plus general education requirements. These include prerequisite courses (14.5 units), PTA courses (36.5 units), Allied Health courses (3 units), and specific general education courses required for the program (9 units). Students must also take additional courses to meet graduation requirements of the college (10-19 units). PTA and Allied Health courses are offered Monday through Thursday in the evening and are scheduled sequentially for four semesters and one summer session. Supervised clinical experiences are integrated throughout the program. Introduction to Clinical Practice (PTA 122) is a 3-week full-time clinical practicum during the summer session. Clinical Practicum I and II (PTA 142 and 152) are each full-time 6-week clinical experiences at the end of fall and spring semesters of the second year. Clinical sites are located throughout the greater Sacramento and Northern California region.

#### Career Opportunities

This program prepares the student for employment as a physical therapist assistant. Physical therapist assistants work under the supervision of physical therapists in a wide variety of health care settings. These include hospitals, rehabilitation centers, private practices, and skilled nursing and extended care facilities. Physical therapist assistants treat clients with mobility, strength, and coordination disorders in order to improve function, decrease pain, and increase independence. Physical therapist assistants perform interventions that include therapeutic exercise, therapeutic techniques, physical agents, and mechanical and electrotherapeutic modalities. They assist patients in performing transfers, ambulation, and other types of functional activities. Physical therapist assistants collect and document data in order to assess whether patients are progressing appropriately within the plan of care determined by the physical therapist.

High school college preparatory courses including algebra, biology, chemistry, and physiology are recommended. Volunteer work or observational experience in a physical therapy facility is recommended in order to assist students in making a career decision. Medical Language (AH 110) is advised prior to enrollment in the program.

#### Additional Information

Informational meetings are held several times each semester and provide prospective students with information on program prerequisites, enrollment processes, and other facts about the program and the field of physical therapy. Current information on program policies and procedures, clinical sites, and data on graduation rates, licensure, and employment may be obtained through the program coordinator. Call (916) 558-2298 or visit the PTA program website at <https://www.scc.losrios.edu/pta> for more information.

Licensure: Graduates of this program are eligible for the National Physical Therapist Assistant Examination and the California Physical Therapy Laws and Regulations Exam. After successful completion of the examinations and all requirements of the Physical Therapy Board of California, graduates may be licensed to work as physical therapist assistants in California.

Cost of the Program: The cost of the program includes enrollment fees, which are subject to change. Other estimated costs include: books and supplies \$1200.00; physical examination, immunizations, drug screen, background check, and other clinical requirements \$500.00;

malpractice insurance \$30.00; uniforms \$50.00; and application for licensure after graduation \$900.00. Students must also plan for travel costs to and from the clinical facilities, many of which are outside the Sacramento area. Some students may need to arrange for housing during full time clinical experiences.

Accreditation: The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Sacramento City College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314; telephone: 703-706-3245; email: [accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org); website: <http://www.capteonline.org>.

Transfer Students: Students from other accredited PTA programs may apply to transfer to the Sacramento City College PTA program. Enrollment depends upon evidence of completion of equivalent academic and clinical course work and on space available in the program.

#### Enrollment Eligibility

To be eligible for enrollment in the program, the student must meet the following criteria:

- Enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant program is based on completion of prerequisite courses. Grades of “C” or better and a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 are required in the prerequisite courses. Credit earned for courses taken as Pass/No Pass will be calculated into the GPA as “C” grades. Applicants must submit applications online and official transcripts to the Office of Admissions & Records. Approximately 30 students are enrolled in the program annually. Prerequisite courses include:
- PTA 100 (Introduction to Physical Therapist Assistant) with a grade of “C” or better
- BIOL 430 and 431 (Anatomy and Physiology), or equivalent courses, with grades of “C” or better within 10 years. If students have completed all other prerequisites, but have BIOL 431 (or equivalent) in progress at the time of application, they will be considered eligible, pending receipt of final grade report.
- ENGWR 300 (College Composition) or ENGWR 488 (Honors College Composition and Research) or ESLW 340 (Advanced Composition) with a grade of “C” or better

#### Enrollment Process

Eligible students are selected for the program according to the following steps:

- Students apply for enrollment to the Physical Therapist Assistant program during each spring semester for entry in the following fall semester. Students wishing to apply for enrollment must submit an online application to the PTA program during the application period. The application form and the dates of the application period can be accessed via the PTA program website at <https://www.scc.losrios.edu/pta>.
- In the event there are more applicants than spaces available, students who meet the enrollment eligibility requirements will be entered into a random selection pool.
- Students accepted for enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant program will be required to provide documentation of a) capability to perform essential job-related functions of a physical therapist assistant; b) completed physical examination and immunizations; c) TB test; d) current professional level CPR certification; e) first aid certification, f) blood-borne pathogen certification, and g) HIPAA training certification. Prior to assignment to a clinical experience, students will be required to undergo a criminal background check and an 8-panel drug screen test.

**Upon completion of this program, the student will be able to:**

- perform the duties of a physical therapist assistant in a safe manner that minimizes risk to patients, self, and others.
- demonstrate professional behavior.
- practice under the supervision of a physical therapist in a manner consistent with legal standards, ethical guidelines, and standards of the profession.
- perform interventions of therapeutic exercise, therapeutic techniques, physical agents, mechanical modalities, electrotherapeutic modalities, and functional training in a competent manner consistent with the plan of care established by the physical therapist.
- gather data effectively to measure and report patient response to treatment.
- demonstrate clinical problem-solving skills.
- demonstrate effective verbal and non-verbal communication with patients, family, staff, other health care providers, and members of the community.
- adapt delivery of care with recognition and respect for individual differences within the plan of care established by the physical therapist.
- produce quality documentation in a timely manner to support the delivery of physical therapy services, and that adheres to standards of state practice acts, the practice setting, and other regulatory agencies.
- use resources effectively for the efficient delivery of physical therapy services.
- demonstrate preparation for employment in a variety of settings to meet the health care resource needs of the community.
- assess own performance and engage in self-directed learning activities to enhance clinical performance.

**Required Program Units**

**Prerequisite Courses:**

BIOL 430 Anatomy and Physiology.....	5
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ENGWR 300 College Composition (3).....	3 – 4
or ESLW 340 Advanced Composition (4)	
or ENGWR 488 Honors College Composition and Research (4)	
PTA 100 Introduction to Physical Therapist Assistant.....	1.5

**First Year, Fall Semester:**

AH 100 Professional Ethics of Health Team Members.....	1
PTA 110 Kinesiology for PTA Students.....	3
PTA 111 Kinesiology Laboratory for PTA Students.....	2
First Year, Spring Semester:	
PTA 120 Beginning Procedures – Physical Therapy Modalities and Procedures.....	3.5
PTA 121 Disorders I – Selected Disorders Commonly Seen in Physical Therapy.....	3

**Summer Session:**

AH 106 Communication for Allied Health Careers.....	2
PTA 122 Introduction to Clinical Practice.....	3
PTA 130 Intermediate Procedures, Physical Therapy Modalities and Procedures.....	1

**Second Year, Fall Semester:**

PTA 140 Therapeutic Exercise – Exercise Programs, Protocols and Procedures.....	3
PTA 141 Disorders II – Nervous System Disorders.....	2
PTA 142 Clinical Practicum I.....	4.5

**Second Year, Spring Semester:**

PTA 150 Functional Activities & Gait – Activities of Daily Living and Gait Training Techniques.....	3
PTA 151 Advanced Procedures-Advanced Modalities and Treatment Procedures.....	1
PTA 152 Clinical Practicum II.....	4.5
PTA 153 Professional Issues in Physical Therapy.....	1
General Education Courses:	
NUTRI 300 Nutrition (3).....	3
or NUTRI 480 Nutrition Honors (3)	
or HEED 300 Health Science (3)	

PSYC 370 Human Development: A Life Span (3).....	3
or FCS 324 Human Development: A Life Span (3)	
SOC 300 Introductory Sociology (3).....	3
or SOC 480 Introductory Sociology – Honors (3)	
or ANTH 310 Cultural Anthropology (3)	
or ANTH 481 Honors Cultural Anthropology (3)	

**Total Required Units**

**61-62**

**Associate in Science (A.S.) Degree**

The Associate in Science Degree may be obtained by completion of all components of the required program, plus general education requirements. See SCC graduation requirements.

**Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)**

**PTA 100 Introduction to Physical Therapist Assistant 1.5 Assistant Units**

*Prerequisite: None.*

*Advisory: ENGWR 300 or ESLW 340 with a grade of “C” or better*

*Hours: 27 hours LEC*

This course provides an introduction to the field of physical therapy and the role of the physical therapist assistant within the health care delivery system. Definitions of physical therapy, history and development of the profession, and the diverse types of clinical practice and employment settings are explored. The mission and goals of the professional organization, standards of practice, laws and regulations, and licensure requirements are introduced. Students observe examples of physical therapy practice using on-line media resources and submit a written report.

**PTA 110 Kinesiology for PTA Students 3 Units**

*Prerequisite: See enrollment limitations.*

*Advisory: AH 110 and LIBR 318 with grades of “C” or better*

*Enrollment Limitation: Enrollment into the Physical Therapist Assistant Program and completion of PTA 100, BIOL 430 & 431, and ENGWR 300 (or ESLW 340) with grades of “C” or better, and a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in these courses. Completion of ENGRD 110 with a grade of “C” or better (or eligibility for ENGRD 310, as determined by the reading assessment process) for all applicants who do not have an A.A. Degree or higher.*

*Hours: 54 hours LEC*

This course involves developing and utilizing knowledge of the skeletal, articular, muscular, and nervous systems to analyze human posture and movement. Components of joint structure and function, muscle action, balance mechanisms, and sensory influence are applied to analysis of spinal and extremity motions, as well as common functional activities. Kinesiological principles are presented as they apply to the practice of physical therapy and the roles and responsibilities of the physical therapist assistant. A paper and project are required.

**PTA 111 Kinesiology Laboratory for PTA Students 2 Units**

*Prerequisite:* See enrollment limitations.

*Corequisite:* PTA 110

*Enrollment Limitation:* Enrollment into the Physical Therapist Assistant Program and completion of PTA 100, BIOL 430 & 431, and ENGR 300 (or ESLW 340) with grades of "C" or better, and a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in these courses. Completion of ENGRD 110 with a grade of "C" or better (or eligibility for ENGRD 310, as determined by the reading assessment process) for all applicants who do not have an A.A. Degree or higher.

*Hours:* 108 hours LAB

This course utilizes a problem solving approach to analysis of human movement emphasizing application of kinesiological principles to the field of physical therapy and the role of the physical therapist assistant. Students practice procedures for performing and recording results of palpation, goniometry, tests for flexibility/muscle length, body dimensions, muscle performance, sensation, coordination, balance, and analysis of posture and gait. Physical therapy procedures such as range of motion, positioning and draping, and body mechanics are introduced. Students practice skills and activities with each other in a laboratory setting under instructor supervision. A project and class presentation are required.

**PTA 120 Beginning Procedures – Physical Therapy Modalities and Procedures 3.5 Units**

*Prerequisite:* PTA 110 and 111 with grades of "C" or better

*Enrollment Limitation:* Enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program

*Hours:* 45 hours LEC; 54 hours LAB

This course introduces the theory and application of physical therapy modalities and procedures to include thermal agents, hydrotherapy, external compression, wound management, transfers and gait training, wheelchair fitting and mobility, and utilization of infection control procedures. Students develop skills in gathering data regarding vital signs, functional ability in gait and transfers, pain status, and integumentary integrity. Documentation procedures, including use of medical abbreviations and terminology, are practiced. Through laboratory activities and problem-solving with case studies, students develop skills in utilizing modalities and procedures in comprehensive implementation of the physical therapy plan of care. Class activities may include a field trip.

**PTA 121 Disorders I – Selected Disorders Commonly Seen in Physical Therapy 3 Units**

*Prerequisite:* PTA 110 and 111 with grades of "C" or better

*Enrollment Limitation:* Enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

*Hours:* 54 hours LEC

This course is designed as an overview of musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, respiratory, renal, endocrine, immune, gastrointestinal, genital and reproductive, hematologic, hepatic and biliary, lymphatic, and integumentary disorders relevant to the practice of physical therapy. Additional topics include: infectious disease, genetic disorders, neoplasms, peripheral nerve injury, and the effect of developmental, psychosocial, and cultural factors. Etiology, signs and symptoms, prognosis, and medical/surgical interventions for disorders are surveyed. Approaches to data collection and physical therapy interventions are introduced. Emphasis is placed on utilization of knowledge of medical disorders by physical therapist assistants within the context of implementing a comprehensive plan of care.

**PTA 122 Introduction to Clinical Practice 3 Units**

*Prerequisite:* PTA 120, 121, and 130 with grades of "C" or better

*Enrollment Limitation:* Enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

*Hours:* 18 hours LEC; 112 hours LAB

This course provides students with the initial opportunity to observe physical therapy practice and perform selected delegated responsibilities with guidance, direction, and supervision. Students complete 112 hours in an assigned clinical setting. Assignments are determined by the program faculty and may be in acute, sub-acute, outpatient, skilled nursing and rehabilitation, or other type of physical therapy practice. Seminar, individual meeting, and online discussion topics include orientation to the clinical practice setting, discussion of clinical experiences and clinical practice issues, and self-assessment of performance. The course is graded on a Pass/No Pass basis.

**PTA 130 Intermediate Procedures, Physical Therapy Modalities and Procedures 1 Unit**

*Prerequisite:* PTA 120 and 121 with grades of "C" or better

*Enrollment Limitation:* Enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program

*Hours:* 9 hours LEC; 27 hours LAB

This course introduces theory and application of traction and electrotherapeutic modalities utilized by physical therapist assistants. Topics include the use of traction for pain relief and tissue healing, as well as electrical stimulation for pain management, muscle re-education, and tissue healing. Through case-based learning activities students integrate skills in data collection, traction, electrotherapeutic modalities, and other interventions for implementation of a comprehensive physical therapy plan of care.

**PTA 140 Therapeutic Exercise – Exercise Programs, Protocols and Procedures 3 Units**

*Prerequisite:* PTA 122 and 130 with grades of "C" or better

*Enrollment Limitation:* Enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

*Hours:* 36 hours LEC; 54 hours LAB

This course presents the basic principles of therapeutic exercise and implementation of therapeutic exercise procedures in physical therapy. Approaches to improve range of motion, strength, muscular endurance, balance, coordination, and functional limitations are included. Theories of motor control and motor learning are introduced. Knowledge of kinesiology, medical disorders, and documentation is integrated as students apply therapeutic exercise principles to case-based learning activities that emphasize the role of the physical therapist assistant in implementing a comprehensive physical therapy plan of care. Class activities may include a field trip.

**PTA 141 Disorders II – Nervous System Disorders 2 Units**

*Prerequisite:* PTA 122 and 130 with grades of "C" or better

*Enrollment Limitation:* Enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

*Hours:* 36 hours LEC

This course is designed as an overview of central and peripheral nervous system disorders relevant to the practice of physical therapy. Etiology, signs and symptoms, prognosis, and medical/surgical interventions are surveyed. Approaches to physical therapy data collection and interventions are introduced. Emphasis is placed on utilization of knowledge of medical disorders by physical therapist assistants within the context of implementing a comprehensive plan of care.

**PTA 142 Clinical Practicum I 4.5 Units**

*Prerequisite:* AH 100, AH 106, PTA 140, and PTA 141 with grades of "C" or better

*Enrollment Limitation:* Enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

*Hours:* 243 hours LAB

This course provides students with the opportunity to perform supervised delegated patient care responsibilities in a physical therapy clinical setting. Students complete a clinical practicum of six weeks (40 hours per week) at a facility assigned by the program faculty. The placement may be in an acute, sub-acute, out-patient, skilled nursing and rehabilitation, or other type of physical therapy practice. Additionally, weekly on-line discussion board participation is required. The course is graded on a Pass/No Pass basis.

**PTA 150 Functional Activities & Gait – Activities of Daily Living and Gait Training Techniques 3 Units**

*Prerequisite:* PTA 140, 141, and 142 with grades of "C" or better  
*Enrollment Limitation:* Enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

*Hours:* 36 hours LEC; 54 hours LAB

This course presents the application of functional exercise and gait activities, with emphasis on the physical therapist assistant's role in comprehensive treatment of patients with cardiopulmonary disorders, adult or pediatric neurological disorders, and amputation. Data collection activities related to assessing cardiopulmonary status, functional abilities, gait, equipment and assistive devices, and home and community environment are included. Students practice implementation of interventions to include aerobic exercise principles, endurance training for patients with cardio-pulmonary disorders, pulmonary hygiene techniques, functional activities and gait, activities of daily living, developmental activities, management of prosthetics and orthotics, management of wheelchairs and other equipment, and client/family education.

**PTA 151 Advanced Procedures-Advanced Modalities and Treatment Procedures 1 Unit**

*Prerequisite:* PTA 140, 141, and 142 with grades of "C" or better  
*Enrollment Limitation:* Enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

*Hours:* 9 hours LEC; 27 hours LAB

This course introduces the theory and application of massage, soft tissue mobilization techniques, and biofeedback by physical therapist assistants. Through laboratory practice and case-based learning activities, students develop skills in utilizing these modalities and procedures in comprehensive implementation of the physical therapy plan of care.

**PTA 152 Clinical Practicum II 4.5 Units**

*Prerequisite:* PTA 150, 151, and 153 with grades of "C" or better  
*Enrollment Limitation:* Enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

*Hours:* 243 hours LAB

This course provides students with the opportunity to perform supervised delegated patient care in a physical therapy clinical setting. This is the final clinical assignment during the program. Students complete a clinical practicum of six weeks (40 hours per week) at a facility assigned by the program faculty. The placement may be in an acute, sub-acute, out-patient, skilled nursing and rehabilitation, or other type of physical therapy practice. This assignment will be at a facility which differs from previous clinical assignments. Additionally, weekly online discussion board participation is required. The course is graded on a Pass/No Pass basis.

**PTA 153 Professional Issues in Physical Therapy 1 Unit**

*Prerequisite:* PTA 140, 141, and 142 with grades of "C" or better

*Enrollment Limitation:* Enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

*Hours:* 18 hours LEC

This course addresses professional practice issues in physical therapy to include organizational structure, budget, time management, and social responsibility. Students review and integrate information on physical therapy practice and laws and regulations in preparation for the national examination and the California jurisprudence examination.

**PTA 295 Independent Studies in Physical Therapist Assistant 1-3 Units**

*Prerequisite:* None.

*Hours:* 162 hours LAB

This course involves an individual student or small groups of students in study, research, or activities beyond the scope of regularly offered courses, pursuant to an agreement among faculty and students.

**PTA 299 Experimental Offering in Physical Therapist Assistant .5-4 Units**

*Prerequisite:* None

*Hours:* 48 hours LEC; 72 hours LAB

This course will be an experimental offering on topics not yet covered by current Physical Therapist Assistant courses or an offering that addresses topics as they arise, such as those which relate to new physical therapy modalities, procedures, or professional issues. This course can be repeated for credit four times as long as there is no duplication of topics.