Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program
Sacramento City College

The PTA Program at SCC is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education of the American Physical Therapy Association.
This handout summarizes key points presented at program information meetings. Please be sure to check the program website regularly and/or attend information meetings in-person to obtain the most current information.

Physical Therapist Assistant Program website:
http://www.scc.losrios.edu/Academics/Science_and_Allied_Health_Division/Physical_Therapist_Assistant.htm
Physical Therapist Assistant Program Mission

To help meet the health care needs of the community the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Sacramento City College provides a comprehensive educational program that prepares a diverse student population for practice as licensed physical therapist assistants.

Sacramento City College
PTA program faculty

- Scott Thompson, PT, MPT, EdD
  Program Coordinator
  thompss@scc.losrios.edu

- David Doron, PT, DPT (clinical education)

- Adjunct faculty members (represent various practice areas)
Learn more about careers in Physical Therapy by visiting the American Physical Therapy Association and California Physical Therapy Association websites:

Watch the video
““You Can Be Me: A Career in Physical Therapy”

http://www.apta.org/YouCanBeMe/
Visit these websites:

**Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy**

https://www.fsbpt.org/index.asp

The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy develops and administers the National Physical Therapy Examination for PTs and PTAs.

**Physical Therapy Board of California**

http://www.ptbc.ca.gov/index.shtml

The PTBC is a California State government agency which licenses physical therapists and physical therapist assistants, and serves to protect consumers.
Roles in Physical Therapy:

- Physical Therapist
- Physical Therapist Assistant
- Physical Therapist Aide

Physical therapy interventions help clients regain movement and function.
Physical Therapist (PT)

- PTs are licensed to practice.
- PTs now earn entry-level doctoral degrees (DPT).
- PTs perform the examination and evaluation of the client, establish the plan of care, provide interventions, document, and monitor patient progress.
- The PT supervises the PTA (state laws vary regarding amount and type of supervision) and the Aide.
Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)

- PTAs are licensed to practice in California and most states.
- PTAs earn an associate degree.
- PTAs implement the plan of care by providing interventions, documenting progress, and communicating with the PT and other team members.
- The PTA must be able to communicate with the PT of record at all times during patient treatment; the PT does not need to be physically present.
Physical Therapist Aide

- PT Aides are unlicensed personnel; there are no formal education requirements.
- PT Aides must work under the direct and immediate supervision of a physical therapist if they perform any patient-related task.
- PT Aides perform non patient-related tasks such as housekeeping and clerical duties, transport of patients, and providing an extra hand for physical support during gait or transfer training.
Physical therapist assistants work in a variety of settings.

The two biggest employment settings for recent SCC PTA graduates are outpatient physical therapy practices and skilled nursing and rehabilitation facilities.
Private practice
Skilled Nursing
Hospitals
Hospital-based outpatient clinics
Specialty practices
What does a PTA do?

- Implements the physical therapy plan of care as determined by the PT
- Helps patients decrease pain, improve function & increase independence
- Assists and instructs patients in performing transfers, ambulation, and functional activities
- Performs therapeutic exercise for stretching, strengthening, balance and coordination
- Applies adjunct modalities such as heat, cold and electricity
- Documents progress toward goals
- Communicates with the health care team
- Educates patients, caregivers, staff and the community about physical therapy
What skills does a PTA need?

Motor Capability
- Transfer, guard and assist patients
- Squat, bend, reach, maneuver in small spaces
- Use manual dexterity
- Lift and carry up to 50 pounds and exert up to 100 # for push/pull

Sensory Capability
- Coordinate verbal and manual cues
- Respond effectively to patient needs including emergencies
- Monitor vital signs
- Auditory, visual and tactile abilities to observe and assess patient status and provide treatment

Communication Ability
- Communicate effectively in English
- Adapt communication as needed
- Interact effectively with individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds
- Function effectively under supervision

Problem-Solving Ability
- Apply understanding of the rationale for the plan of care in implementing treatment
- Use sound judgment and safety precautions
- Function effectively under stress
- Organize and prioritize tasks
What is the PTA program at Sacramento City College like?

- A.S. degree program requiring 70-76 units total
- Academic courses are scheduled in a part-time evening format
- 30 students are accepted each year
- Takes two years to complete after enrollment
- PTA courses must be taken in sequence
- Prerequisites are required for eligibility
- Special program application process
- Students who are diverse in age, gender, and educational background attend the program

The pass rate for graduates of the PTA Program at SCC on the National Physical Therapist Assistant Examination has averaged over 95% during the years 2016 - 2018.
Required Prerequisites

1. PTA 100 - Introduction to PTA
2. Biol 430 AND Biol 431 - Anatomy and Physiology
3. ENGWR 300 or ESLW 340 - College Composition
4. Eligibility for ENGRD 310 -
   - ENGRD 110/ESLR 340 OR
   - SCC Reading Assessment OR
   - AA/AS degree or higher

- Students must earn a “C” grade or higher in each prerequisite course
- GPA of 3.0 or higher is required in prerequisite courses
- BIOL 430 and 431 must have been taken within 10 years
- Equivalent courses from other colleges are acceptable – a grid of equivalent courses is available on the program website
- The final semester of anatomy/physiology may be in progress at the time of application
- NOTE: Consult program website and college catalog for full details.
Application Procedure

- Applications to the program are accepted throughout the year, with an April 15 deadline for fall enrollment.
- The application is available on the program website.
- Students must submit a program application, official transcripts, and results of a reading assessment test (if applicable).
- Students who have met program prerequisite requirements are considered eligible.
- The class is selected from the eligible applicant pool via random selection.
- In Spring 2018 there were 184 applicants.
Planning ahead: Required courses for graduation

In addition to prerequisite courses, in order to graduate from the PTA Program students will need to demonstrate completion of:

- technical courses in the program (PTA 110, 111, 120, 121, 122, 130, 140, 141, 142, 150, 151, 152, & 153)
- specific general education courses required for the program (Psych 370, Soc 300 or Anth 310, & Nutri 300 or HEED 300)
- allied health courses (AH 100 & 106)
- courses to fulfill college graduation requirements (students should consult a counselor)

Students planning to apply to the PTA program may want to look ahead and start taking general education courses as well as prerequisites.
Planning ahead: Clinical Education

The PTA Program includes courses where students are assigned to clinical facilities to observe and practice physical therapy interventions with supervision.

- In PTA 122 students spend three weeks full-time at an assigned clinical setting.
- PTA 142 & 152 are each 6-week full-time clinical assignments.
- The program has contractual agreements with more than 700 clinical sites in California.
- Students are placed at sites with consideration of both location and learning needs.
- Students need to plan for transportation to clinical sites.
Planning ahead: Financial considerations

- College enrollment fees ($46 per unit in 2013)
- Books and supplies $1200
- Physical exam and immunizations $40
- Background check, drug screen, & immunization tracker $135
- CPR and First Aid training $100
- Malpractice insurance $30
- Uniforms $50
- Travel costs to and from clinical facilities
- Access to computer, internet, printer, ink, paper
- Post-graduation licensure and examination costs $955
Financial aid

- Students with a bachelor’s degree or 120 units are no longer eligible for financial aid
- Consult the SCC Financial Aid website for the FAFSA application and more details on financial aid options: http://www.scc.losrios.edu/Current_Students/From_Enrollment_to_Graduation/Financial_Aid.htm
More questions?

- Review information in the college catalog and on the Physical Therapist Assistant Program website:
  http://www.scc.losrios.edu/Academics/Science_and_Allied_Health_Division/Physical_Therapist_Assistant.htm

- Attend a program information meeting. No reservation is required. Dates and times are listed on the program website.

- Meet with a counselor:
  http://www.scc.losrios.edu/Current_Students/From_Enrollment_to_Graduation/Counseling.htm