



Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do I go about getting the optional observation hours?

All applicants must complete a minimum of 24 hours of clinical observation and submit documentation to Health Sciences office (forms on the website) by the deadline. 12 hours must be in an outpatient setting and 12 hours must be in an in-patient setting. This is designed to give the applicant a better understanding of the role of the physical therapist assistant. Applicants who currently work in a physical therapy setting may complete 12 hours at that facility, however, they must be directly under the PT or PTA and observing patient care and not part of the front office or clerical staff.

Q: Will the college assist me in obtaining my observation hours?

Obtaining observations sites is not a service performed by the college; the applicant must independently seek out a physical therapy setting and speak with the appropriate staff/personnel regarding observational hours. There are many physical therapy providers to choose from, check out your local yellow pages. Call clinical sites in your area; explain that you are applying to a PTA Program and that you would like to observe either a PT or a PTA at their facility.

Q: Can I count hours that I have worked as a Physical Therapy Aide toward my observation hours?

Yes, you can.

Q: If I did 12 observation hours at a Pediatric Hippotherapy facility and 12 hours at an Aquatic facility, will that count for my two settings?

No. Even though it may seem like the type of patients they see are different, they are both still *outpatient* facilities. One of your settings must be an *inpatient* facility. See the website for the PTA Observation Hours Instructions if you need further clarification on this.

Q: Will my observation hours expire?

Applicants who have submitted forms verifying observation/work experiences during a previous application year may use those hours in a subsequent application year. Previously submitted forms are kept in the applicant's file in the Health Science office and will expire after 3 years. Any observation hours not submitted but recorded on a previous year's form (starting with 2013) will be accepted, also with a 3 year expiration.

Q: Can I work and still go through the program?

It is possible for a student to work part-time while in the program, however it is not advised due to the intense nature of the program. Each semester, the student will carry a full load and a grade of 75 or higher must be achieved in order to pass each class. Some courses require an offsite activity which may occur during the week or on a Saturday. This along with the clinical work that is off-campus (possibly out of town) will not be changed to accommodate a work schedule.

Q: What are the typical hours while in the program?

The PTA program classes are full-time and vary on days and times each semester. During the first 3 semesters of the technical program, expect to be in class Monday thru Thursday. Typical hours during the first 3 semesters vary and may start as early as 8:00am and end by 5:30. Times vary per semester, however the last semester the student must attend off-campus clinical rotations that require Monday thru Friday, 40 hours per week for 12 weeks.

Q: Can I be guaranteed that all of my clinical rotation sites will be in my hometown?

Unfortunately, the answer is no. Each student will have 3 clinical rotations. All are full time days. Your schedule may be traditional Monday-Friday or a more non-traditional Wednesday-Sunday depending on the site. The first clinical experience will occur at the end of the Spring Semester. The last two are back to back clinical rotations completed in the Fall Semester prior to graduation (one 4-week and one 8-week). Sites are chosen for students based on a variety of reasons (including but not limited to geography). We do our best to limit travel time to no greater than 1.5 hours; often it is significantly less than this.

Q: Are the costs incurred during clinical rotations covered in our tuition?

Again, the answer is no. Each student is obligated to cover the expenses out of pocket. However, the clinical coordinator will work with each student on an individual basis to try to place the student in an area that will require the least expense. (i.e. This may be in a town where the individual has relatives or friends and the cost would be minimal to the student)

Q: How long is the program?

Pre-requisites can be taken on any schedule/timeframe that is appropriate for the student. Once accepted into the PTA program, 4 semesters of the professional phase beginning Fall of every year and ending the following Fall Semester for graduation in December must be taken in sequence.

Q: I already have a degree; do I have to complete all of the prerequisites?

Yes, all of the prerequisites must be completed. Chances are, you have already completed many of the pre-requisites, and those classes may be transferred into CTC to count toward the degree. Suitability for transfer will only be decided by the Registrar of CTC. In order to determine if your previous college coursework is eligible for transfer, you must complete an application to become a student at CTC and have all of your previous coursework in the form of a transcript sent from the other institution to the CTC Registrar.

Q: I want to eventually become a PT. Will the PTA program be a stepping-stone to achieving this goal?

No, the PTA program is NOT a stepping-stone to PT school. Students wishing to become a Physical Therapist must first complete a 4-yr. B.S. degree and then apply for admission to a Doctoral-level Physical Therapy Program. Obtaining an Associate Degree in PTA first is not a shortcut to obtaining a PT degree and is neither necessary nor common.

Q: I have observed under an athletic trainer or other health professional. Can I include these hours and have them count toward the PTA observational hours?

No. The required observation hours must be done with a PT or PTA only. Although the hours observing other healthcare professions may assist the student in discerning between the paths of physical therapy vs. other health care fields, no hours outside of physical therapy will count towards your application.

Q: Where can I learn more about physical therapy?

The American Physical Therapy Association (www.apta.org) has a wealth of information about the field of physical therapy.

Q: Since I have a degree, can I exempt the ATI TEAS requirement?

No one is exempt from any admissions requirements, including the ATI TEAS.

Q: After completing the program does the college provide job placement?

The college does not provide specific job placement. However, the college does have a career services department which frequently receives PTA job announcements and has other services to assist you in your job search. In addition, the program hosts a job fair for each graduating class. This has led to employment for many of our students.

Q: I have a friend who is a Physical Therapist. Can I do my clinicals at their facility?

PTA Program policy prevents a student from being assigned to a clinical facility where they have worked, volunteered or has friends or relatives.

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