



PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT DEPARTMENT

Middletown, New York 10940

**Information Packet for Prospective PTA Students**

This packet serves to provide students interested in the Physical Therapist Assistant A.A.S Degree Program with pertinent information regarding the program; it’s mission, role of the PTA, program requirements, academic coursework, costs, attendance policy, student support services, and important phone numbers.

**Accreditation Status:** The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Orange County Community College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085; telephone: 703-706-3245; email: [accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org); website: <http://www.capteonline.org>. If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call (845)341-4291 or email [mariaharjes@sunyorange.edu](mailto:mariaharjes@sunyorange.edu).

**Program Mission:**

Orange County Community College Physical Therapist Assistant Program strives to provide each student with an enriching educational experience; to enhance and to deepen the appreciation of our diversified culture. Our faculty seeks to instill personal commitment of the students to graduate, ready their ability to obtain employment, and establish their place within the health care system.

Orange County Community College is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution. In accordance with Federal regulations, the New York State Human Rights Law & Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Orange County Community College does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, religion, creed, disability, marital status, veteran status, national origin, race, gender or sexual orientation in employment or in the educational programs and activities which it operates.

**Program Statistics:** Orange County Community College Physical Therapist Assistant Program maintains statistical information over the course of several years to provide prospective students with a general perspective of the Program. Statistical information with regards to direct employment rates has not been successfully tracked as several of our more recent graduates (within the past several years) have returned to college to pursue their DPT (Doctoral in Physical Therapy); however, is garnished through multiple surveys and permit/licensure information. Employment opportunities are maintained by the Office of Career and Internship Services of Orange County Community College. The following depicts statistical information pertaining to Graduation, Pass Rates for the National Physical Therapy Examination for PTAs and Employment Data;

**Graduation Rate**

**The Graduation Rate for Students Graduating in 2022, 2023 was 67.57%.**

**The Federation for State Boards of Physical Therapy National Physical Therapy Examination for PTAs:**

Graduation Year	Group	Number of Exams	Number of Passing Candidates	Percentage Passing Rate for the Graduating Year(s)
2022	First Time	12	10	83.3%
	Ultimate	12	11	91.7%
2023	First Time	15	10	66.7%
	Ultimate	15	13	86.7%
2 Year Average	First Time	27	20	74.0%
	Ultimate	27	24	88.9%

## Employment Data

Year	Employment Rate	Two Year Employment Rate
2022	100%	100%
2023	100%	

## OUTCOMES & GOALS

### Students will:

Possess entry-level skills as determined by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.

1. Be able to work under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist in an ethical, legal, safe, and effective manner becoming an integral member of the healthcare team.
2. Demonstrate appropriate clinical judgment, critical thinking and problem-solving skills in their role as a Physical Therapist Assistant.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the New York State Education Law as it relates to the provision of Physical Therapy services.
4. Develop the skills necessary for personal and professional growth to pursue lifelong learning, be aware of professional responsibility through membership in the APTA attending local and national meetings and conferences, and participation in community events.
5. Successfully complete the National Physical Therapy Exam for PTAs.

### Program Goals:

1. Provide role modeling for relationships of PT/PTA and PTA/PTA;
2. Provide role modeling by full-time faculty/instructors in the pursuit of lifelong learning for personal and professional growth including but not limited to membership in the APTA, attending local and national meetings and conferences, and participation in community events;
3. Encourage faculty members' development in both teaching and professional skills, so that they can continue to revise their courses and help in program evaluation and revisions;
4. Provide the student with a variety of clinical experiences in order that he/she may have an opportunity to practice the complete range/variations of competencies/skills included in our curriculum;
5. Provide the student with the opportunity to gain additional information on professional topics by making resources, on hand, readily available;
6. Continual ongoing program assessment to insure that all aspects of the program are kept up to date and appropriate.

### Role of the PTA:

PTs/PTAs provide a wide variety of physical therapy services to people of all ages who have limitations in their ability to move and perform functional activities in their daily lives, due to medical problems or other health-related conditions. The PT/PTA relationship is one in which the PT provides supervision and role modeling with an emphasis of continual communication. The physical therapist evaluates the patient/client and establishes a plan of care in which selected interventions are designated. These interventions are applied and progressed by the physical therapist assistant. Through on-going monitoring and data collection of patient/client responses, the PTA recognizes if and when treatments should not be administered secondary to the patient/client status or condition and thus communicates same to the PT. Moreover, the PTA must possess the ability to distinguish whether an intervention procedure is outside of his/her scope of practice and will pursue clarification with the physical therapist.

Potential interventions provided by a PTA may include training techniques and education to improve strength, coordination, and balance; exercises to improve activities of daily living and mobility, for example, walking with devices such as crutches, walkers or canes; manual techniques to reduce pain and increase range of motion; the use of modalities or physical agents and various forms of electrical stimulation. Intervention is not limited to the application of physical treatment alternatives, but the PTA also affords education to patients/ clients, family members, caregivers and other health care professionals including PTA students.

The PTA relates information with regard to treatments, responses, education, and billing in the form of verbal and/or non-verbal communication and documentation.

### **Admission's Requirements for the Physical Therapist Assistant Program:**

The Physical Therapist Assistant program is a selective program requiring specific prerequisites for consideration in the admission process. Students who meet the following criteria are eligible to apply for admission to the program:

#### **Academic Requirements:**

1. High school diploma or GED
2. Eligible to take Freshman English 1(ENG 101)
3. Eligible to take Intermediate Algebra (MAT 102)
4. Completed Intro to Biology (BIO 110), Anatomy & Physiology I (BIO 111), or Anatomy & Physiology II (BIO 112), with a grade of 2.0 or better; High School AP Biology (score of 3, 4, or 5), or a passing grade on the Introduction to Biology Challenge Exam, or Biology CLEP examination within 5 years of applying
5. Minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0

#### **Department Specific Requirements:**

1. Submit Physical Therapy practitioner observation form with essay (48-hour minimum with documentation). Directions and information regarding scheduling, dress, etc... located within the Physical Therapist Assistant Pre-Admission Orientation (see below).
2. Completion of an online quiz. Print the completed quiz and submit it to the Admission's Department with the Observations forms and essay. The online orientation link can be located at [www.sunyorange.edu/pta/preadmission.shtml](http://www.sunyorange.edu/pta/preadmission.shtml) .
3. Observation forms are available online at [SUNY Orange: Admissions - Health Forms & Resources](#) .

#### **Selection Process:**

Students will be considered for admission in the program based on the completion of all academic and program specific requirements, highest combination of cumulative GPA and credits completed towards the program, quality of observation and essay and seats available. Students must meet all of the above requirements to be considered for admission into the program.

All Physical Therapist Assistant Admissions Requirements must be completed before February 1<sup>st</sup> in order to be considered for acceptance into the program for the fall semester. If seats remain available after February 1<sup>st</sup>, students will be assessed as they apply.

Students may take the following non-core courses prior to entering the PTA core curriculum: Freshman English I and II, Anatomy and Physiology I and II, Intro to Psychology, and Developmental Psychology. These courses must not be confused with pre-requisites as they are co-requisites/general education requirements and may be taken within the course curriculum. Once enrolled in the PTA curriculum, all courses must be completed in sequence as courses within each semester relate together, and courses build from semester to semester.

## PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM

### CURRICULUM SEQUENCE

<b><i>First Semester</i></b>	<b>Fall - 1<sup>st</sup> year</b>	<b>CREDITS</b>
ENG 101	Freshman English 1	3
BIO 111	Anatomy & Physiology 1	4
PTA 101	PTA 1	4
PTA 103	Introduction to Physical Therapy	2
PTA 105	Medical Conditions for the PTA	3
COM 100	Oral Communication	1
<b>First Semester Total</b>		<b>17</b>
<b><i>Second Semester</i></b>	<b>Spring - 1<sup>st</sup> year</b>	
ENG 102	Freshman English 2	3
BIO 112	Anatomy & Physiology 2	4
PTA 102	PTA 2	4
PTA 104	Kinesiology	4
PED 226	Theory and application of exercise principles, fitness modalities, and wellness concepts	3
<b>Second Semester Total</b>		<b>18</b>
<b><i>Third Semester</i></b>	<b>Fall - 1<sup>st</sup> year</b>	
PSY 111	Introduction to Psychology	3
MAT 102 or MAT 120	Intermediate Algebra or Statistics	3
PTA 201	PTA 3	4
PTA 205	Clinical Education 1	3
PTA 207	Tests and Measurements for the PTA	4
<b>Third Semester Total</b>		<b>17</b>
<b><i>Fourth Semester</i></b>	<b>Spring - 2<sup>nd</sup> year</b>	
PSY 220	Developmental Psychology	3
PTA 202	PTA 4	4
PTA 206	Clinical Education 2	3
PTA 208	Contemporary Practice for the PTA	3
<b>Fourth Semester Total</b>		<b>13</b>
<b><i>Summer Clinical</i></b>	<b>Summer session - 2<sup>nd</sup> year</b>	
PTA 220	Clinical Education 3	3
<b>Total program credits</b>		<b>68</b>

### Program Requirements:

The field of Physical Therapy is demanding. Physical Therapist Assistant students are required to fulfill all program requirements, which are guided by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education. In order to meet these requirements, the Physical Therapist Assistant Department has identified the following essential functions which students must possess. These functions are not all-inclusive nor do they reflect what may be required for employment of the graduate PTA.

### Observation Skills:

1. Possesses the visual ability to observe a patient's response to treatment, read or set parameters on physical therapy equipment, observe and assess the environment, gather information from medical records and

- professional literature.
2. Possesses the auditory ability to recognize and respond to a patient's or co-workers voice, equipment timers, and alarms.
  3. Able to use equipment to assess blood pressure, pulse rate, and breath sounds.
  4. Possesses the tactile ability to palpate surface anatomy, palpate pulses, detect skin temperature, and adjust physical therapy equipment.

#### Communication Skills:

1. Able to communicate in English in both written and oral fashion with faculty, patients, fellow co-workers and family members using appropriate terminology, accuracy, and efficiency.
2. Possesses the ability to recognize, interpret, and respond to nonverbal behavior of self and others.

#### Motor Skills:

1. Has the motor control necessary to safely transfer a 150 lb. patient from the bed to the wheelchair with maximal assist.
2. Has the motor control necessary to safely walk with patients and provide gait training with and without assistive devices.
3. Has the ability to lift 50 lbs. and carry 25 lbs.
4. Has the motor control necessary to adjust knobs on physical therapy equipment, perform manual therapy techniques, adjust equipment such as wheelchairs, and utilize physical therapy equipment such as goniometers, grip gauges, and free weights.
5. Able to obtain and maintain CPR certification for the Professional Rescuer.
6. Able to use proper body mechanics for all skills related to physical therapy.
7. Able to demonstrate the ability to apply universal precautions when rendering physical therapy treatment.
8. Has the motor control necessary to provide for the patient's safety in all physical therapy activities.
9. Possesses the endurance necessary to perform 40-hour work week during their clinical education courses.

#### Intellectual Conceptual Skills:

1. Able to attain a 75% (C) or better in all Physical Therapist Assistant core courses as well as a "C" in Anatomy and Physiology I and II, and Basic Exercise Physiology.
2. Able to prioritize multiple tasks, integrate information, and make decisions.
3. Able to collect, interpret, and assess data about patients.

#### Behavioral Social Skills:

1. Able to interact appropriately with individuals of all ages, genders, races, socio-economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.
2. Able to cope with heavy workloads, patient demands, changes in schedule, and patients who may be terminally ill.
3. Able to recognize and respond appropriately to potentially dangerous situations.
4. Adheres to the Orange County Community College Student Code of Conduct in all academic and clinical settings.
5. Maintains patient confidentiality.
6. Possesses the emotional health and stability required to fully utilize intellectual capabilities, demonstrate good judgment, and render physical therapy treatment.

Program requirements are not altered. Instead, it is the policy of Orange County Community College and the Physical Therapist Assistant Program to provide reasonable accommodations to students with special needs who request them so that they can meet the program requirements. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Accessibility Services to arrange for an assessment of his/her needs. Students are encouraged to contact the Department Chair as early as possible to discuss their particular situation.

**Physical Examinations:**

Students must undergo a complete physical, including a 9 panel urine drug screen with synthetics prior to taking a seat within the program. Following the initial physical and urine drug screen, the student will be required to have annual physicals until the core program is completed. Failure to successfully complete the Physical will result in removal from PTA classes and clinics.

**CPR:**

Students must maintain certification in "CPR for the Professional Rescuer," or equivalent, while enrolled in all clinical education courses. This can be taken for credit or in a non-credit fashion. Students who fail to maintain on-going certification will be removed from clinic with a grade of "F."

**Student Conduct:**

The students in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct as stated in the SUNY Orange Student Handbook. This code applies for both academic and fieldwork experiences. The faculty and students are also expected to follow the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Physical Therapist Assistants, APTA Standards of Practice for Physical Therapy, New York State Education Law, and the New York State Practice Act. Failure to adhere to these principles will result in immediate removal from the program.

**Grades:**

An overall C average (2.0 CQPA) is required for graduation. A minimum grade of 75 (C) is also required in all PTA core courses. A grade of "C" is also required in Anatomy & Physiology I & II and Basic Exercise Physiology. Students who have not received a "C" will be required to repeat these courses as part of the curriculum sequence. A numerical average between 60%-74% is **NOT** passing for any PTA core course. Failure to receive a 75% in any core PTA course will prevent you from progressing to the next course in the PTA curriculum sequence. For Non-Core courses, receiving a failing grade in sequential courses will prevent you from progressing to the next course in that particular sequence. For example, a failure in Anatomy & Physiology I will prevent you from going on to the second semester program as the material in these courses is based on an understanding of the material covered in Anatomy & Physiology I.

**Repeat Policy:**

Departments in the Health Professions curricula may, with the approval of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, designate courses with an (R-1) at the end of the course description in the College Catalog, meaning that they may be repeated only once. All courses in the core Physical Therapist Assistant curriculum are designated as such. If a student withdraws from a course for any reason or fails to attain at least a C (75%), the student may petition to retake a course. These procedures are detailed in the PTA Department Student Handbook. Please note: the core Physical Therapist Assistant courses must be completed within three years of beginning the core curriculum.

\* Repeating and auditing courses may have financial aid implications.

**Classes:**

Academic classes take place on the Middletown campus. All classes are scheduled in the day time, usually between the hours of 8am and 5pm. Non-core classes (English, Psychology, etc.) may also be taken at night. PTA classes are only offered in one-time period, so there is no choice of time slots. Due to the nature of the program, students are required to attend classes and/or clinic five days per week.

**Clinical Education Courses:**

Beginning in the third semester, students attend clinical education courses in local physical therapy settings such as hospitals, private offices, pediatric settings, nursing homes, etc. These affiliations/internships are assigned by the Academic Coordinator for Clinical Education. During the third and fourth semester, students work two full days per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) in the clinical setting and attend classes in Middletown on the other three days. Upon completion of four semesters of academic work, students are required to attend a six-week full time clinical education course which takes place during Summer Session 1 and is dependent on the available facilities. Hours in clinic vary, and are determined by the clinical setting. For example, clinics may be open 7-3, 8-4, 9-5, 12-8, etc. Students do not receive payment for any of the field work experiences.

## **Attendance Policy:**

It is the philosophy of the PTA Department faculty and our clinical instructors that good attendance is crucial in order to obtain all didactic material, observe and practice laboratory skills, demonstrate knowledge of course components, and implement skills/knowledge in the clinical environment. Attendance in all lecture classes and laboratory sessions is expected. Faculty is authorized by the college to lower grades for poor attendance. This is clearly outlined in the PTA Department Student Handbook which students receive at orientation as well as in all course syllabi.

## **Costs:**

Students will be responsible for tuition, lab fees, activity fees, accident/health insurance and any and all additional costs including: APTA Student Membership fees, all transportation to clinics, shoes, uniforms, pins, name tags, patches, etc.

- Textbooks-Approximately \$450 for 1<sup>st</sup> semester, \$300 for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, \$275 for 3<sup>rd</sup> semester and \$100 for 4<sup>th</sup> semester for PTA core courses, non-core courses may run an additional \$100-300 per semester.
- APTA Membership - \$85 annually
- PTA Pin - \$52
- Transportation Costs - students must pay for all costs associated with attending clinic. This includes gas, tolls, parking, meals, etc. At some clinical sites, parking could range up to \$200.
- Uniform shirt - \$27.00 each – each student must purchase at least 2
- Lab Coats - some clinics require that students wear these (\$30-40 each).
- Name Tags - \$8
- Analog wrist watch - \$25.00
- BP cuff and stethoscope – \$50.00
- Additional study materials – CD-ROMs, review books (\$64), etc.
- Physicals, Testing, and Immunizations - \$425.00 – 590.00 for 2 year program (this includes each annual physical and a total of 3 PPDs); there is an optional Hepatitis B vaccination series at an additional cost of approximately \$210.00. These prices are approximated from a local emergent care facility. Students may choose to have their physicals performed by their family physicians accessing their family insurance.
- Drug Testing - \$65.00
- Criminal Background Check - \$65.00
- Practice Exam & Assessment Tool (PEAT) - \$79.00
- Subject to Change (Cost of Certification & National Physical Therapy Exam for PTAs):
  - \$103 application fee for Certification
  - \$50 limited permit fee
  - \$485 National Physical Therapy Exam for PTAs plus additional \$82.60 sitting fee

\*Please note that costs are approximate and are subject to change without prior notification\*

## **Student Support Services:**

- Department Resources - The PTA Department maintains an extensive in-house library of texts, journals, videos, and CD-ROMs. A student computer with Internet access is available in the PTA Lab. Students may also access the BAT CAVERN which is a computer aided learning facility maintained by the Biology Department, located in the Center for Science and Engineering.
- Tutoring - Tutoring is available through the College's Tutoring Center, located in the LRC and is available through Net Tutor, an online tutorial service.
- The Advising & Counseling Center - Numerous programs and services are available through this center, which is located in the George Shepherd Center. These include academic advising, counseling, testing services, career services, Student Support Services Program, Office of Special Services, Veteran's Affairs, Center for Adult Lifelong Learning, and the Educational Opportunity Program.
- Financial Aid Office - A variety of programs, loans, and scholarships are available to students. Eligibility is based on academic progress, family income, and/or assets.

**Important Department Contacts:**

Dr. Maria Harjes, PT  
Department Chair

341-4290  
[mariaharjes@sunyorange.edu](mailto:mariaharjes@sunyorange.edu)

Jacqueline Davis, PTA  
Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education

341-4773  
[jacquelinedavis@sunyorange.edu](mailto:jacquelinedavis@sunyorange.edu)

REVISED: May 10, 2024