

## **Physical Therapist Assistant Technology Program** **Most Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who are Physical Therapist Assistants?**

Physical Therapist Assistants, or PTA's, are skilled health care providers who work with and under the supervision of a physical therapist to provide physical therapy services. In order for an individual to practice as a PTA, they must graduate from an accredited PTA program and successfully pass a licensing/certification exam. PTA's play an integral role in providing physical therapy services for people with various disabilities. When a patient seeks or is referred for physical therapy services, the physical therapist performs an initial evaluation and outlines a plan of care. The PTA can then carry out all or part of the treatment plan as instructed by the physical therapist. The American Physical Therapy Association recognizes the PTA as the only individual who assists the physical therapist in the delivery of selected physical therapy interventions.

### **I have not taken any classes at Delaware Technical & Community College. How do I start taking classes?**

You can download a Delaware Technical & Community College Application at <http://www.dtcc.edu/all/forms/> . You should schedule to speak to an allied health counselor to discuss classes. Typically students need to take a computer placement test to determine which general education classes are needed to begin. You can schedule an appointment to speak with an allied health counselor at 302-571-5343.

### **How long does it take to complete the program?**

The Associate Degree program can be taken in 6 semesters (4 full time:2 part time), however many times students choose to take longer in order to obtain the general education courses before taking the physical therapist assistant courses.

### **Can the courses be taken in the evening?**

All of the PTA program's general education required courses are offered every semester in various formats including online, day, evening, and telecourse. Please contact the admissions department to receive a course schedule to determine times and locations at 302-571-5343. General Education courses are bolded on the course sequence sheet and do not have to be taken in sequence. A course sequence sheet can be obtained at <http://www.dtcc.edu/wilmington/ah/pta.html>. We advise students to take as many of these courses prior to entering the PTA Program as this will lighten an already heavy course load.

Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) courses are only offered once a year and typically during the day. PTA courses are only offered in the semester listed on the course sequence sheet.

### **Can I complete the PTA Program part-time?**

Although you can complete the general education classes part-time, semester 3, 5, and 6 (see course sequence sheet) are full time semesters. You can expect to be in class 20-25 hours a week. Once clinicals begin (PTA 211, 212, 213), students will be in the clinical setting 40 hours per week.

## **What are the clinicals /internships?**

There are three full-time (40 hrs. /wk) internships during the second year of the program. The first internship ([PTA 211](#)) is a five-week internship which occurs at the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the Fall semester. The second ([PTA 212](#)) is a five-week internship and the third ([PTA 213](#)) is seven-week internship. Both occur in the final Spring semester. All students in the PTA program will have clinicals available to them.

## **Can I transfer credits from a previous college experience?**

Courses from other colleges may be considered for transfer if they are within the past 10 years and have earned a 'C' or better. Math and Science courses must have been completed within the past 5 years. Please contact the admission department at 302-571-5343 to learn more about transferring courses. Typically courses are not transferred in for PTA courses, however if you have a particular question regarding PTA specific courses, please contact Doug Huisenga MPT, ATC at [dhuisenga@christianacare.org](mailto:dhuisenga@christianacare.org).

## **When do I apply for the PTA program?**

Like all of the Allied Health Programs at DTCC Wilmington, application to the PTA program is required by Feb 1<sup>st</sup> for Fall admission. Please contact the Admission Department at 302-571-5343 for an Allied Health Application. You must attend an Allied Health Information Session prior to application. These sessions typically are held on the first Monday of each month at 5:30pm sharp in the SE building of the Wilmington Campus. To receive exact dates and times please call 302-571-5343. In order to be eligible to apply to the PTA program, you must have taken a Chemistry, Biology, and a Mathematics class within the previous 5 years. High School classes may be eligible for this criteria. An allied health counselor can answer additional questions regarding admissions questions.

## **How do I fulfill the volunteer/observation requirement?**

There are 20 hours of observation hours required for the PTA program; 10 in an inpatient setting (hospital or nursing home) and 10 in an outpatient setting. A student may include this documentation with the program application submission, however they are not required until August 1<sup>st</sup> of the acceptance year. A student may obtain a volunteer form by going to <http://www.dtcc.edu/wilmington/ah/pta.html>. The PTA program does not have approved facilities to receive volunteer hours. Please make arrangements on your own to obtain these hours. If you work in a physical therapy facility, you may use these hours for the appropriate portion of your required hours. For example: If you work in an outpatient PT facility you can use your work hours for your 10 outpatient hours, however you will still need to obtain your 10 inpatient hours.

## **Can I become a Physical Therapist after the PTA program?**

Yes. In fact several DTCC PTA graduates have recently obtained their Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree. One must have a bachelor's degree and meet a Physical Therapy Program's prerequisites before applying for the DPT graduate program. Several local colleges and universities offer our students a bachelor's degree completion program that allows the transfer of most PTA credits to apply toward a bachelor's degree. Widener University, Wilmington University, and Neumann College are examples of these programs.

## **What is the PTA Program's Employment Rate after graduation?**

100% of PTA students in the past 5 years who have taken the National Board Examination have received a job within 6 months after graduating. The Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor, projects employment rates for the PTA to increase much faster than average through 2014 (<http://www.bls.gov>). For additional information regarding the Department of Labor's PTA outlook go to <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos167.htm#outlook>.

## **What is the starting salary of Delaware Technical & Community College's past graduates?**

Typically the starting salary range of recent graduates has been between \$36,000 to \$40,000. Salary varies among regions and places of employment. More information regarding the salary of PTA's at a national level can be found at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos167.htm#outlook>.

## **How can I obtain more information regarding the field of Physical Therapy and Physical Therapist Assistants?**

Although there are various websites dedicated to physical therapy, The American Physical Therapy Association website is an excellent resource for physical therapy related information. For more information go to [www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org).

## **Are PTA's required to sit for a licensure/certification examination? How do your graduates do on the national PTA licensure examination?**

Yes, in order to be licensed in the State of Delaware you must pass the National Physical Therapist Examination (NPTE). Delaware Technical & Community College–Wilmington Campus has an excellent record with passing the NPTE. Although the NPTE first time pass rate is approximately 72%, 100% of the Class of 2006 and 2007 who took the NPTE passed it on their first attempt.

## **I want to pursue this degree. What do I need to do first?**

Contact the admissions department at Delaware Technical & Community College at 302-571-5343 and ask to speak to an allied health counselor.