

Murray State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated May 2015

This is a list of frequently asked questions along with answers that we hope will help you. If you have other questions not listed here, don't hesitate to contact the program.

Q: Is this program accredited?

A: The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Murray State 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; website: <http://www.capteonline.org>.

Q: If I am still in high school, what courses should I take now to prepare myself for a career as a Physical Therapist Assistant?

A: Science courses including: Physical Science, Biology, Anatomy/Physiology, Chemistry, Algebra, Physics, Public Speaking, Computer Science, etc. Basically all of the hard ones, but it is worth it!

Q: What course do I need to take to get into the PTA program?

A: The program curriculum link on the program web page provides a list of courses that are required prior to admission into the core PTA program classes. There is also a one page printable version that provides the list of prerequisite courses. If you did not have high school chemistry, then you will also need to take college chemistry or biology depending on your science ACT performance. It is our desire to help you succeed and if you are not prepared to take the Anatomy & Physiology courses at MSC then you may need to take courses to help you be prepared to succeed.

Q: When can I apply to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program?

A: Prospective students begin the application process in September. Students must have completed the first semester courses or be in the process of completing these courses in order to be prepared to apply. Applications are due by the third Friday of November of each year. Students must attend an application class during September or October. The dates for these classes are posted on the MSC PTA program web page by September 1st of the year. It is during the application orientation class that prospective applicants receive information on how to complete the application process. All application materials are due in the PTA Program office by the due date in November.

Q: How long will it take me to complete this program?

A: The program is completed in 78 academic weeks. The first year includes two full-time semesters of prerequisite courses with students who are accepted into the PTA program beginning two PTA courses in the spring of that first year. The second year is two full-time semesters of PTA core courses and is followed by two 6 week clinical courses that conclude in August. The second year or technical portion of the program requires full-time enrollment. The program can be completed in 5 semesters which is 78 weeks.

Q: I must work while going to school. What is the maximum number of hours suggested that I should work during a semester?

A: The program's curriculum is strenuous, so students should try to minimize all other demands on their time so they will have more time to study. It is suggested that students with part-time jobs work no more than 16 hours a week in the second year or technical phase of the program. We recognize that this is not always possible and exceptional students have been successful in the program and worked, however the program does require significant out-of-class time to be successful.

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Q: I have taken some of the prerequisite courses at another college or university. Will these courses transfer, and will I get credit for them for this program?

A: Most courses taken at accredited colleges and universities will transfer to Murray State College. Applicants who have questions about the transferability of a course may submit their transcript for review. You may contact the Registrar's office at MSC for further information. You are also encouraged to email the Program Director if you have a question about a course that has a different name taken from another school. A review of the course's description and syllabus may be needed to complete the determination.

Q: How is selection made for this program?

A: Selection is based on a point system that is reviewed by a selection committee. The program director does not have a vote on the committee. The committee members are made up of MSC faculty, clinical faculty, and advisory committee members. The committee is "blinded" to the application and determination is made solely on the point system. A detailed description of the selection process is provided during the application orientation class sessions held in September and October of each year. Students are required to take have had an ACT and they also take an application exam (TEAS V). There is a fee for the application exam (\$40) but this subject to change. Students should be aware that a higher GPA, higher grades in the prerequisite courses, higher score on admission exam, and a higher ACT score result in more points. Points are also earned by observation of physical therapy in various settings and for volunteering or working with PTs or PTAs in clinical settings.

Q: What are the grade requirements if I am accepted to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program?

A: Student must have a "C" (73% or higher) or greater in all required courses to remain in the PTA program.

Q: Is clinical experience included in the program?

A: Yes, clinical practice is scheduled for PTA students during their training in the program. This clinical experience will be provided in a variety of physical therapy settings and sites. The program affiliates with numerous sites throughout this area and across Oklahoma and surrounding states. Students participate in 16 weeks of full time clinical experience during the second year of the program. Students are assigned clinical sites by the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) who is the faculty member in charge of the clinical education component of the program. Clinical instructors who volunteer their time to supervise students during the clinical experiences. ***Students are responsible for the cost of travel and housing during these clinical experiences. Students may be assigned to clinical sites away from their home area.***

Q: Is transportation provided from the college to the clinical settings?

A: No, students are responsible for their own transportation to and from classes and clinical experiences. During clinical internships, students are responsible for their own housing if and when the clinical assignment is away from their home. Some sites do offer assistance in locating housing; however the cost of the housing is the responsibility of the student.

Q: When I finish this program, will I be a Physical Therapist Assistant?

A: Students who finish the program will receive an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree from Murray State College. When the student has completed all program requirements they are eligible to take the licensure exam (NPTE for PTAs). The exam is prepared through the FSBPT and is part of the licensing requirement for all states that license PTAs. The success rate of our program graduates for first time passage of the licensure exam is above the national average; however each individual student is responsible for their own performance on this exam.

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Q: Will I be a licensed PTA upon successful completion of this program?

A: No, you must make an application to the Oklahoma State Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision to take the licensure exam and then upon successful completion of the exam, the graduate is granted a license as a PTA in Oklahoma. If you choose to seek licensure in another state, you will be required to apply for licensure using the procedure required by the state in which you are seeking license. There is a substantial cost to take the licensure exam and to acquire a license. These fees are estimated in the cost of program section of the PTA program web page, however the student should understand that these fees are subject to change and are not controlled by MSC.

Q: Will the college find a job for me upon graduation?

A: No, however program graduates have consistently reported higher than 90% success in finding jobs within the first three months. The program can be a resource and has posted jobs information, however a formal jobs program is not provided.

Q: What if I want to get my PT degree after PTA school, how many of the PTA required courses will apply towards the prerequisites for Physical Therapy training?

A: The physical therapist assistant is a much-needed member of the physical therapy team. If an individual desires to be a PT then they should pursue the requirements for PT school rather than PTA school. None of the courses required in the PTA curriculum will transfer as prerequisites to a traditional PT school at this time. General education courses will transfer depending on the requirements of the school to which the student may desire to transfer. You will need additional prerequisite classes in order to apply to any or PT program.

Q: Do I get any holiday time during the year of PTA school?

A: Yes, most holidays that the college observes while in the academic component and any days observed by the clinical site.

Q: Do we get any training or practice in Physical Therapy departments during the program?

A: Yes, this is what we call clinical experience. Prior to any "real life" experience you will practice in lab simulations and with your classmates under the supervision of the faculty. You will have scheduled and open lab practices. In addition, you will spend 4 weeks (40 hours/wk) at a clinical site at the beginning of the second spring semester. During the summer months following the second year, you will spend 6 weeks (40 hours/wk) at two different clinical sites. The total clinical education time is 16 full time weeks.

Q: Do I receive any pay for clinical time?

A: No, your clinical education is part of the curriculum, not employment. The clinical experience is a class that is facilitated by the program Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE). You will be learning and have a clinical instructor who is supervising your clinical education during all clinical experiences. Tuition and fees apply to all classes including clinical rotations. There is a substantial fee (\$630) attached to each of three clinical courses.

Q: May I choose the physical therapy department at which I want to spend my clinical time?

A: No, however you are encouraged to specify first and second choices, but assignments will be made based on your educational needs as determined by the faculty. You could be assigned to any of the clinical facilities used by this program. Every effort will be made to accommodate the student needs; however it is the student's responsibility to provide their own travel and housing during these clinical experiences.

Q: Do I need to have professional liability insurance while working in the clinicals?

A: Yes and the program will coordinate this insurance coverage and collect the cost of this from the student. The cost of professional liability insurance is outlined in the Cost of the Program web page. Fees are subject to change.

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Q: As a student, can I be a member of the professional organization?

A: Student membership in the Oklahoma Physical Therapy Association and APTA is required. On-line resources available to members are required of the student. The APTA and OPTA are vital to profession. Membership will help you in access to information, staying current with professional issues, access to continuing education meetings and is a positive asset when searching for a job.

Q: Who can I contact to get more information about the program?

A: You can contact the program office: (580) 387-7440

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