Program Description

A physical therapist assistant (PTA) is a health care provider who works under the supervision of a physical therapist (PT). They do hands-on care for people who need to recover from injuries to the bones and joints, brain and nerves, problems with pain, developmental complications, and other movement problems. Their main purpose is to assist people with reaching their maximum level of health and function. They help people to recover their ability to walk, to heal from wounds, and to learn to work and live with the effects of injuries and other health problems.

Physical therapists (PTs) are responsible for evaluating and treating people who need physical therapy care. They identify problems that physical therapy can address, create goals, and decide what treatment the person will receive. PTs supervise all care given by the PTA. PTAs usually work in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, outpatient clinics, skilled nursing facilities, schools, home health – actually, anywhere that physical therapists work. They only work with physical therapists – this is exclusive and required by professional ethics, codes of conduct, and by law.

Licensure

PTA licensure is required for all practicing assistants in Utah. In order to receive a license to practice, an individual must graduate from an accredited PTA program and pass the State license examination.

Accreditation

The Dixie State University of Utah Physical Therapist Assistant Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). The Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education may be contacted at:

CAPTE
1111 North Fairfax St.
Alexandria VA 22314
(703) 706-3245
accreditation@apta.org
http://www.capteonline.org

Course Prefixes

- PTA

Degrees

- Associate of Applied Science in Physical Therapist Assistant (catalog.dixie.edu/programs/physicaltherapy/associate_of_applied_science_in_physical_therapist_assistant)
Admission

To be considered for admission to the PTA program, an applicant must first be accepted as a Dixie State University student. Then, the applicant must complete a separate application to the PTA program.

Application information, including deadlines (http://www.dixie.edu/health/physical_therapist_assistant/admissions.php). Each cohort is limited to 16 students; therefore, admission is competitive. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered. Students are accepted into a “cohort” – a group of students who start the program at the same time, enroll and complete the same program courses, perform clinical education at the same time, and graduate together as a group. The program cannot be taken part-time; it is a full time commitment. Admission requirements include:

- Be admitted to Dixie State University
- Minimum GPA of 2.7 in prerequisite courses (no grade below “C”):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTA 1010</td>
<td>Introduction to Physical Therapy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BIOL 2320 &amp;</td>
<td>Human Anatomy</td>
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<td>BIOL 2325</td>
<td>and Human Anatomy Lab</td>
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<td>BIOL 2420 &amp;</td>
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<td>BIOL 2425</td>
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<td>HLOC 1000</td>
<td>Medical Terminology</td>
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- Minimum “C” grade in each required General Education course
- Observation or work experience (16 hours minimum)
- Official college transcripts
- PSB Health Occupations Aptitude Exam
- Criminal background check
- Health requirements

Once an applicant is accepted into the program but before enrollment, additional health requirements, including selected immunizations, CPR certification, and drug screening, will be required.

Career Information

Career Opportunities*

Physical therapist assistants work under the director of physical therapists helping patients recover from injuries, illness, and surgeries to regain movement and manage pain. PTAs generally work in ambulatory health care service settings, hospitals, and nursing and residential care facilities.

Job Outlook*

Job growth for PTAs is expected to have extraordinary growth in the period from 2014 to 2024, with a 40% increase; much faster than the average for all occupations. This growth is attributed to an increased demand for physical therapy services in response to the health needs of an aging population who are staying more active later in life.

Salary Range*

The median annual wage of Physical Therapist Assistants in 2015 was $55,170. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $32,640 and top 10 percent earned more than $76,940.

* From the Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2015