Physical Therapist Assistant Program

208 Taylor Health Science Center  
(435) 879-4862  
http://dixie.edu/health/physical_therapist_assistant

To find faculty & staff phone numbers and email addresses, please consult the University Directory (http://www.dixie.edu/directory/directory.php).

Program Chair  
William Patterson, DPT

Instructor  
Drew Wilcox, BS

Health Science Advisor  
Esther Pugmire

Interim Dean  
Patricia Wintch MSDH

Administrative Specialist  
Julie Goodsell

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”):
  - PTA 1010 Introduction to Physical Therapy 2
  - BIOL 2320 Human Anatomy 5
  & BIOL 2325 Human Anatomy Lab
  - BIOL 2420 Human Physiology 4
  & BIOL 2425 Human Physiology Lab
  - HLOC 1000 Medical Terminology 2
- 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 2010 to 2020, with a 46% increase, which is 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 2012 was $52,160. The lowest 10% earned less than $32,420 and top 10% earned more than $72,720.

* From the Occupational Outlook Handbook

**Courses**

**PTA 1010. Introduction to Physical Therapy. 2 Hours.**

This course introduces students to the field of physical therapy through the history and definition of the profession. Other topics include medical terminology and documentation. Health care for a diverse population begins its thread in this course. PTA 1010 is prerequisite to acceptance into the technical phase of the PTA program and is an open-enrollment course. Note: You are responsible for content/dates/announcements posted on Canvas. SP.

**PTA 2000. Practice Issues. 2 Hours.**

Discussions include the health care team, the rehabilitation-specific team, the roles and scopes of practice of the physical therapist and the physical therapist assistant, and the physical therapist/assistant interaction. Also covers the rehabilitation patient, communication in health care, patient care settings, reimbursement issues, the “Patient’s Bill of Rights,” and HIPAA. This course reviews the “Ethics & Jurisprudence” of physical therapist assistant practice. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. SP.

**PTA 2010. Kinesiology. 2 Hours.**

Students develop competencies in identifying anatomical landmarks and symmetry, joint mechanics and function, posture, an introduction to gait, and neurological control. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. FA.
PTA 2011. Kinesiology Lab. 2 Hours.
Students develop competencies in identifying anatomical landmarks and symmetry, joint mechanics and function, posture, an introduction to gait, and neurological control. Lab fee required. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. FA.

PTA 2110. Fundamentals Physical Therapy. 2 Hours.
This course includes those fundamental skills required for successful patient treatment and care. Topics covered include patient draping and preparation, vital signs, body mechanics, bed mobility, transfers, gait training, wheelchair fitting and repair, tilt table, activities of daily living, architectural barriers, documentation, basic skills for patient/family education, safety, cultural sensitivity, and age related considerations. Lab fee required. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. FA SP.

PTA 2111. Fundamentals Physical Therapy Lab. 2 Hours.
This course includes those fundamental skills required for successful patient treatment and care. Topics covered include patient draping and preparation, bed mobility, transfers, gait training, wheelchair fitting and repair, tilt table, activities of daily living, architectural barriers, documentation, basic skills for patient/family education, safety, cultural sensitivity, and age related considerations. Lab fee required. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. FA.

PTA 2200. Physical Agents. 2 Hours.
Students develop competence in the correct application of therapeutic modalities including heat, cold, electrotherapy, intermittent compression, massage, traction, and ultrasound. Evidenced based practice and indications/contraindications are emphasized. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. SP.

PTA 2201. Physical Agents Lab. 2 Hours.
Students develop competence in the correct application of therapeutic modalities including heat, cold, electrotherapy, intermittent compression, massage, traction, and ultrasound. Evidenced based practice and indications/contraindications are emphasized. Lab fee required. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. SP.

PTA 2210. Observation & Measurement. 2 Hours.
This is a course that covers the bases for recognizing movement and other dysfunctions and the tools used for problem solving in physical therapy. These include goniometry, manual muscle testing, posture, vital signs, sensation, gait and balance, etc. Students are instructed in the role and scope of the PTA in regard to these measures. Patient progress and accurate reporting to the physical therapist are emphasized. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. FA, SP.

PTA 2211. Observation & Measurement Lab. 2 Hours.
Students develop competence in the skills of measurements used in physical therapy. Students will become familiar with the use of goniometers, blood pressure cuffs, grip meters, and other tools of measurement. The skills of analyzing gait and posture will be included. Lab assessments will include the reporting of observable and measureable data and their significance to patient progress. Lab fee required. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. SP.

PTA 2300. Orthopedic Rehabilitation. 2 Hours.
This course includes development of therapeutic exercise and other treatment practices for patients with musculoskeletal pathologies. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. SP.

PTA 2301. Orthopedic Rehabilitation Lab. 2 Hours.
Students practice and gain competence in the application of therapeutic exercise, the rationale for its use, safety principles involved in, and its application across the lifespan. Lab fee required. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. SP.

PTA 2400. Clinical Pathology. 2 Hours.
An overview of basic disease progression and classification with special emphasis in musculoskeletal and nervous system pathologies treated with physical therapy interventions. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. FA.

PTA 2410. Special Clientele. 2 Hours.
Students are introduced to the therapeutic principles underlying the treatment of patients with burns, amputations, cardiopulmonary pathologies and considerations, women's health issues, and selected age-specific disorders. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. FA.

PTA 2411. Special Clientele Lab. 1 Hour.
Students review anatomical and physiological aspects of the cardiopulmonary system and are introduced to the cardiac rehabilitation program. Orthotic and prosthetic devices are presented, rationale for their use, fitting, and adjustments are reviewed. Students will review physical therapy techniques for women's health, and age-related pathologies and practice appropriate techniques. Lab fee required. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. FA.

PTA 2520. Neuromuscular Rehabilitation. 2 Hours.
This course is intended to discover and develop a working knowledge of patients with neurological pathologies and their treatment. Age-related, injury, and disease processes are considered. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. FA, SP.

PTA 2521. Neuromuscular Rehabilitation Lab. 2 Hours.
Students are introduced to and develop competencies in the application of specific treatment procedures used with patients exhibiting neuromuscular pathologies. Treatment modifications, best practices, and current concepts are practiced. Lab fee required. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. FA.
PTA 2530. Seminar. 4 Hours.
This course is divided into 3 main learning modules: Module I: Psychosocial considerations with application to cultural/gender/aging/family dynamics in relation to death and dying and the grieving process are presented and discussed. In addition, caregiver self-care, assertive communication, and clinical burnout are presented. Students will be introduced to emotional intelligence and what part it plays in physical therapy. Module II: An introduction to effective administration of physical therapy environments, including management techniques, fiscal considerations, continuous quality assurance, voluntary accreditation, and other relevant topics related to the business and delivery of physical therapy care. Students will also have the opportunity to create a descriptive resume, practice interview strategies, and discuss other topics in preparation for entering the physical therapy workplace. Module III: A review of the required text with an emphasis in board exam study and test-taking strategies. Some review of previous PTA course content will occur in this module. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. FA.

PTA 2605. Clinical Practicum. 4 Hours.
A three-week, full-time clinical experience in a physical therapy workplace setting. Students will have opportunities to apply the thinking processes and skills learned from previous courses. Supervision is provided by physical therapists and physical therapist assistants employed by the host facility. Course fee required. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. SU.

PTA 2705. Clinical Affiliation I. 6 Hours.
A six-week, full-time clinical experience in a physical therapy workplace setting. Students will have opportunities to apply the thinking processes and skills learned from previous courses. Supervision is provided by physical therapists and physical therapist assistants employed by the host facility. Course fee required. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. SP.

PTA 2805. Clinical Affiliation II. 6 Hours.
A six-week, full-time clinical experience in a physical therapy workplace setting. Students will have opportunities to apply the thinking processes and skills learned from previous courses. Supervision is provided by physical therapists and physical therapist assistants employed by the host facility. Course fee required. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. SP.