Physical Therapist Assistant

Taylor Health Science Building, 2nd Floor
1526 South Medical Center Drive
St. George, UT 84790
435-879-4861
https://health.dixie.edu/physical-therapist-assistant/

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

Program Director
Drew Wilcox, PTA, MHA

Health Sciences Advisor
Rachel Harris

Dean
Eliezer Bermúdez, PhD

Department Chair
Drew Wilcox, PTA, MHA

Administrative Assistant
Kathryn Preiss

Program Description
A physical therapist assistant (PTA) is licensed to practice physical therapy under the supervision of a physical therapist (PT). They perform hands-on treatments 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. 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
If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call 435-879-4861 or email wilcox@dixie.edu. The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Dixie State University 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.

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)

Program 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](http://www.dixie.edu/health/physical-therapist-assistant/admissions). 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”):

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<td>Introduction to Physical Therapy</td>
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<td>BIOL 2320 &amp; BIOL 2325</td>
<td>Human Anatomy and Human Anatomy Lab</td>
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- Minimum “C” grade in each required General Education course
- Observation or work experience (16 hours minimum)
- Official college transcripts

Upon conditional acceptance:

- Criminal background check
- Health/immunization 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**

Physical therapist assistants work under the direction 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***

Overall employment of physical therapist assistants and aides is projected to grow 30 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations. Demand for physical therapy is expected to increase in response to the healthcare needs of an older population and individuals with chronic conditions, such as diabetes and obesity.

**Salary Range***

The median annual wage for physical therapist assistants was $56,610 in May 2016. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $34,640, and the highest 10 percent earned more than $79,040.


**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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs)** At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Distinguish members of the health care team including their role(s) within the team. 2. Explain the purpose and intent of the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the PTA and The Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant. 3. Define HIPAA and give examples of its application to the rehabilitation team. 4. Discuss specialty areas within the field of physical therapy. 5. Identify basic components of SOAP note documentation. 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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs) At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Define the role of the physical therapist assistant in the provision of interventions. 2. Describe the importance of involvement in organizations such as APTA to further career development. 3. Demonstrate responsibility for addressing ethical and/or legal conflicts. 4. Provide classroom participation on relevant health care and physical therapy issues. 5. Explain the role of the physical therapist assistant in the promotion of healthy lifestyles, wellness, and injury prevention. 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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs) At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Locate and describe anatomical structures using descriptive terminology. 2. Identify selected bones and bony landmarks of the axial & appendicular skeleton by visual recognition on a skeletal model and diagram and by palpation. 3. Demonstrate competency in palpation techniques including correct positioning, appropriate draping, effective communication, appropriate pressure/handling skill and exhibiting professional behavior during palpation procedures. 4. Identify on a skeletal model and diagram and by palpation on human subjects selected bones and body landmarks of the human body. 5. Observe the gait cycle and identify each phase. Course 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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs) At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Describe safe posture and body mechanics to assure safety for self and patients. 2. Define the stages in the development of dermal ulcers, methods of prevention, and methods of treatment. 3. Explain the methods of data collection for documentation of wound care. 4. Describe the best practice of hand washing and explain its rationale. 5. Give examples of activities of daily living that are amenable to physical therapy treatment intervention. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant Program. FA.

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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs) At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Demonstrate safe posture and body mechanics to assure safety for self and patients. 2. Demonstrate the operations of a wheelchair including removal and replacement of various parts, safety in use, placement, and mobility. 3. Demonstrate the application of wound dressings after identifying appropriate dressings or agents. 4. Demonstrate the best practice of hand washing and explain its rationale. 5. Demonstrate examples of activities of daily living that are amenable to physical therapy treatment intervention. Course 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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs) At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. List the indications and contraindications for the interventions. 2. List the precautions and safety considerations for the interventions. 3. List the precautions and safety considerations for the interventions. 4. Discuss the evidence-based literature on selected interventions. 5. Describe appropriate modifications to the intervention in response to adverse changes in the patient's status for a given intervention 6. Discuss the role of the intervention as related to the achievement of goals in the plan of care. 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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs) At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Demonstrate understanding, through lab practical exams, of the precautions and safety considerations for the interventions listed below. 2. Demonstrate understanding, through lab practical exams, of the indications and contraindications for the interventions listed below. 3. Present an in-service on evidence-based literature on selected interventions. 4. Modify a given intervention in response to adverse changes in the patient's status. 5. Perform appropriate tests and measures to determine patient response to the intervention. Course 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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs) At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Explain variations in muscle tone regarding normal, denervated, deconditioned, and other pathologies affecting muscle contractility. 2. Demonstrate proper and established technique during palpation, goniometry, manual muscle testing, gait, posture, sensory and vital signs procedures. 3. Describe specific data collection techniques used by the physical therapist assistant to monitor patient/client status. 4. Demonstrate proper recording and documentation of assessment results. 5. Complete data collection during the performance of directed interventions using established tools. 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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs) At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Perform data collection in an accurate and timely manner. 2. Demonstrate measurement of functional range of motion for the major upper and lower extremity joints. 3. Demonstrate data collection of muscle performance through measurement of strength using manual muscle testing procedures. 4. Select and perform the correct data collection technique for the related directed intervention for a given case example. 5. Demonstrate proper recording and documentation of assessment results. Course 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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs) At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Explain the stages of healing and the parameters regarding therapeutic exercise for each stage. 2. Explain psychosocial implications that determine patient motivation, compliance with exercise regimes, and the methods of communication that block or enhance these issues. 3. Distinguish between isometric, isotonic, and isokinetic exercise procedures and implement them into a treatment program for selected musculoskeletal disorders. 4. Discuss the methods of stretching soft tissue structures and implement this into a treatment program. 5. Research and present various musculoskeletal pathologies with their etiology, clinical signs and symptoms, and therapeutic exercise programs. 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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs) At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Demonstrate an understanding of positioning and therapeutic exercise for the amputee, emphasizing the residual limb by implementing an appropriate program. 2. Identify and define the goals of chest physical therapy. 3. Identify and describe data collection techniques relative to the cardiac patient. 4. Identify treatment components and precautions for working with the obstetric patient. 5. Identify the role of physical therapy in a burn patient. 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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs) At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Develop and provide instruction of a therapeutic exercise program appropriate for a patient with a lower extremity amputation. 2. Demonstrate breathing strategies used for airway clearance in pulmonary pathologies. 3. Demonstrate and explain positioning and postural drainage techniques for the pulmonary patient. 4. Demonstrate clear instructions on bed mobility, transfer and gait training skills for a cardiac patient with cardiac precautions. 5. Demonstrate competent instruction in a home exercise program emphasizing body mechanic training and postural awareness training for an obstetric patient. Course 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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs) At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Describe the major components of the central nervous system including the brain, cerebellum, brain stem and spinal cord. 2. Explain why and how motor patterns continue to change throughout the lifespan. 3. Identify the general guidelines and tools (FIM Scoring) for functional assessment. 4. Describe specific treatment interventions to facilitate functional movement in a patient with a TBI. 5. Describe balance reactions and treatment for balance disorders. 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. **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs)** At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Demonstrate the components of the developmental sequence. 2. Demonstrate data collection techniques used to test balance and vestibular responses. 3. Plan and demonstrate appropriate transfer techniques of a hemiplegic patient. 4. Describe and perform various mat and exercise activities typically prescribed to the patient with traumatic brain injury. 5. Demonstrate the ability to implement a comprehensive treatment plan established by the PT for a neurological dysfunction, including functional training, balance, gait, developmental activities, patient/family education, postural training, and therapeutic exercise. Course 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 LEARNING OUTCOMES (CLOs)** At the successful conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1. Demonstrate ability to self-assess and report student progress in clinical education and competence through weekly journal entries. 2. Demonstrate ability to present an inservice to professional colleagues relevant to clinical experience using pertinent and current research. 3. Demonstrate developing performance and behavioral expectations by earning at least "Entry Level" on the rating scale for each of the "red flag" performance criteria (1-3, 5, 7), and "advanced Intermediate" in all other performance criteria if applicable within the clinical setting within the Student Clinical Performance Instrument. This is to be accomplished by meeting the objectives relative to each performance criteria (PC) as outlined in the CPI. Course fee required. Prerequisite: Admission to the Dixie State University Physical Therapist Assistant program. SP.