

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

St. Catherine University's Physical Therapist Assistant department promotes a supportive yet challenging environment that encourages reflective thinking, questioning, decision-making and personal growth. Consideration is given to individual differences in learning style through varied learning methodologies. The PTA program faculty are committed to the concept of adult learning where instructors serve as facilitators of the process of learning, not solely as dispensers of knowledge. The PTA department affirms that is the instructor's responsibility to create an environment that stimulates student learning, provides timely feedback, and seeks to support students to realize their full potential. Within this environment, students are expected to accept the responsibility to be an active participant in the learning experience.

Associate degree students receive an educational foundation in the liberal arts and sciences as well as in the professional discipline to become effective entry-level physical therapist assistants. The bachelor's degree PTA completion program enhances the clinician's ability to work at the top of their PTA license through its focus on leadership development, advanced intervention techniques, health and wellness, and clinical management skills. Within both degree levels, the department prepares students to master complex intervention and assessment skills while viewing themselves and the people with whom they work as multi-faceted human beings affected by spiritual, physical, psychological and sociological influences. This perspective encourages students to broaden their understanding of themselves, the profession of physical therapy and the world in which they live.

Graduates of St. Catherine University's PTA programs utilize clinical problem-solving, critical thinking and the influences of Catholic Social Teaching and social justice to maximize the delivery of individualized physical therapy interventions. They demonstrate capability for lifelong learning and service to others as contributing members and leaders within the physical therapy profession and their community.

Associate

- Physical Therapist Assistant - AAS (<http://catalog.stkate.edu/undergraduate/health/physical-therapist-assistant/aas/>)

Baccalaureate Major

- Physical Therapist Assistant - BS (<http://catalog.stkate.edu/undergraduate/health/physical-therapist-assistant/bs/>)

PTA 1400 Physical Therapy Foundations – 3 credits

This course introduces students to the foundational concepts of physical therapy as a profession within the health care system and the roles of the physical therapist (PT) and physical therapist assistant (PTA) within that system. Students will learn about the history of physical therapy, the responsibilities of the PT and PTA as members of a professional team, the use of communication, documentation, and evidence-based practice in physical therapy, the various entities and regulations that have influence over PT, and the psychosocial/affective elements that are essential to the delivery of high-quality patient care. Students will then be introduced to principles of normal movement and patient/caregiver safety, and will apply that knowledge in the performance of basic patient handling techniques.

Corequisite: BIOL 2400.

PTA 1500 Musculoskeletal System and Techniques I – 4 credits

This course offers the learner opportunities to learn the depth of musculoskeletal anatomy and apply this to interventions and measurements for physical therapy. Students will learn the fundamental skills of measurement including goniometry and manual muscle testing. Students will demonstrate competency in technical skills for common techniques in physical therapy such as anatomical palpation skill. Basic tissue pathology in orthopedic and musculoskeletal physical therapy will be introduced. At the end of the course, a three (3) day clinical experience allows students to apply course content and practice physical therapy skills learned thus far. By course end, students will have the foundational understanding of the application of musculoskeletal anatomy to apply in the field of physical therapy.

Prerequisite: PTA 1400.

PTA 1550 Neuromuscular Systems and Techniques I – 3 credits

This course provides the student with foundational knowledge of the Neuromuscular system needed for safe and effective PTA practice. Core topics include: clinical neuroanatomy, nerve injury and healing, neuroplasticity, normal and abnormal muscle tone, normal motor development, and primitive reflexes. Motor control theories and principles used in physical therapy practice will be introduced and applied. Functional task analysis will be applied to human movement across the lifespan. The student will learn these foundational concepts and begin to apply them to patients with impaired functional movement. Offered within the College for Adults.

PTA 1600 Physical Therapy Interventions – 4 credits

The learner will apply concepts of kinesiology, biomechanics and physics to the delivery of therapeutic exercise, manual therapy and various physical agents used to promote pain relief and tissue healing. Students are exposed to the theoretical principles and evidence for these physical therapy interventions and are expected to demonstrate understanding of these principles while communicating appropriate information about them to the patient/client (e.g. rationale/purpose related to diagnosis, physiological effects, and contraindications). Students will demonstrate competency in the application of various interventions, including exercises and physical agents. Competency includes proper positioning, selecting appropriate parameters and dosing based on desired outcomes and the plan of care, proper use/adjustment of equipment, and modifying a given intervention, based on patient response.

Prerequisite: PTA 1500.

PTA 1650 Movement System Integration – 2 credits

In this course students will study of the principles and techniques related to ambulation including measurement and fitting of ambulation aids; pre-ambulation exercise and mat programs; gait patterns and drills; study of normal posture and gait, and commonly treated mobility disorders. Students will also build on previous course content focused on the musculoskeletal and neuromuscular systems by integrating information on additional body systems involved with movement including the integumentary, immune, cardiovascular, and respiratory systems. Students will examine the movement system, or integration of all body systems, across the lifespan and will be encouraged to consider social, environmental, and personal factors that may impact the movement system. Prerequisite(s): PTA 1600.

PTA 1700 Professional, Practice, and Societal Health Considerations – 4 credits

A second, three-day introductory clinical experience will start this course and allow students to apply concepts and skills learned in previous courses via supervised interaction with patients, physical therapy clinicians, and other health care providers. This course will then expand the students' understanding of how individual health behaviors are affected by and have an effect on one's social environment by analyzing the American health care system. Students will examine the social, political, economic, and environmental forces that continue to shape health and health care today. Course components include the basic structure of the health care system, recent initiatives for health care reform, billing and payment for physical therapy services, assessment of quality in health care, the environmental causes of behavior, and environmental interventions. Students will be exposed to an intradisciplinary experience with the participating doctor of physical therapy students with a focus on experiential learning in community settings that include vulnerable or underserved populations and/or lack of access to comprehensive health care services. Students will participate in preparatory and reflection activities prior to, during and following the immersion experience. Offered in the College for Adults.

Prerequisite: PTA 1600.

PTA 2500 Musculoskeletal Systems and Interventions II – 3 credits

This course offers the learner opportunities to advance their knowledge of the musculoskeletal system and to the application of foundational physical therapy interventions. Building upon the content introduced in PTA 1500, students will continue to develop their knowledge base related to the structure, function, and pathology of the spine, upper extremities, and lower extremities. They will then apply that knowledge to the delivery of essential interventions related to those joints, and will demonstrate competence in application of selected concepts and skills for orthopedic conditions. **Prerequisite(s):** PTA 1700.

PTA 2550 Movement System Integration – 2 credits

In this course students will study of the principles and techniques related to ambulation including measurement and fitting of ambulation aids; pre-ambulation exercise and mat programs; gait patterns and drills; study of normal posture and gait, and commonly treated mobility disorders. Students will also build on previous course content focused on the musculoskeletal and neuromuscular systems by integrating information on additional body systems involved with movement including the integumentary, immune, cardiovascular, and respiratory systems. Students will examine the movement system, or integration of all body systems, across the lifespan and will be encouraged to consider social, environmental, and personal factors that may impact the movement system. **Prerequisite(s):** PTA 2500.

PTA 2600 Neuromuscular System and Techniques II – 4 credits

This course provides the student with knowledge, integration and application of physical therapy practice with a focus on: neuromuscular system pathology, acute and ICU care, and other clinical considerations needed for safe and effective PTA practice for patients with neurologic and other medically complex conditions. The student will develop skill in reviewing PT evaluation/plan of care data to determine appropriate intervention delivery and progression within the plan of care for patients with CVA, TBI, Spinal Cord Injury, Multiple Sclerosis, Guillain Barre Syndrome, Parkinson's, ALS, respiratory dysfunction, and others. Core topics include: foundational neurological PT interventional paradigms (i.e., NDT, PNF, Rood), functional mobility, balance assessment and treatment, clinical gait assessment and progression, orthotics, bracing, body-weight support, NMES and other augmented clinical interventions for this population. All content is taught within the context of the ICF model, interprofessional clinical practice, and considering the patient's social determinants of health. **Prerequisite(s):** PTA 2500.

PTA 2681 Directed Study – 1 credit

Directed study is provided for students whose unusual circumstances prohibit taking a regularly scheduled course but who need the material of that course to satisfy a requirement. Availability of this faculty-directed learning experience depends on faculty time and may be limited in any given term and restricted to certain courses.

Prerequisites: Faculty, department chair and dean approval.

PTA 2682 Directed Study – 2 credits**PTA 2683 Directed Study – 3 credits****PTA 2700 Clinical Integration I – 4 credits**

Clinical Integration I will occur during November and December of the second year in the PTA program and includes eight weeks of full days in the clinical setting, using skills acquired throughout the program. Clinical experiences will be performed in a variety of settings under the direction of clinical instructors (CIs) representing a diverse range of knowledge and experience. The purpose of this course is to solidify the data collection techniques and technical intervention skills learned in the summer and fall semesters of the second year, in addition to building upon those skills learned in the first year. This clinical provides the student with full-time hands-on practice in a physical therapy department, encouraging integration of previous classroom knowledge. It promotes the student's understanding of the health-care system, allows the student to participate as an active, cooperative member of the health care team, and encourages development of an ethical, holistic practitioner with regard for the whole person in all interactions. Given the student will have completed much of their didactic coursework prior to this course, in addition to two three-day integrated introductory clinical experiences, they are expected to actively participate in patient/client care conferences, PT staff meetings and in-service opportunities at their clinical sites. Students are expected to learn about and participate appropriately in the facilities' reimbursement and documentation systems. Students will also engage in collecting data for a case study to be presented in PTA 2800. **Prerequisite(s):** PTA 2600.

PTA 2800 Inter-Clinical Seminar – 2 credits

This course provides a capstone experience for students to demonstrate readiness to enter the physical therapy profession, via reflection, demonstration and application of the common elements of the PTA program's curriculum: ethical decision-making, critical-thinking, understanding the patient/client as a whole, collaborative and applied learning, and leadership. Students will demonstrate their ability to apply these elements to patient care via the development and delivery of a patient case study presentation, based on data collected in a previous clinical experience. The course will provide instruction in procedures required to enter the profession, including procedures for obtaining state licensure, registering for the national PTA licensure exam, and developing a resume' and interviewing skills. Academic readiness for the profession is assessed by the student's ability to successfully pass a retired version of the national PTA licensure exam. Finally, students' behavioral readiness for the profession will be reinforced through review of Catholic social teaching, the Core Values of physical therapy, ethics, leadership and other key behaviors and attitudes that are hallmarks of a St. Catherine University PTA graduate. Prerequisite(s): PTA 2600.

PTA 2900 Clinical Integration II – 4 credits

Clinical Integration II will occur during February and March of the second year in the PTA program and includes eight weeks of full days in the clinical setting, using skills acquired throughout the program. Clinical experiences will be performed in a variety of settings under the direction of clinical instructors (CIs) representing a diverse range of knowledge and experience. The purpose of this course is to solidify and synthesize the data collection techniques and technical intervention skills learned in the summer, fall, and spring semesters of the second year, in addition to building upon those skills learned in the first year. This clinical provides the student with full-time hands-on practice in a physical therapy department, encouraging integration and synthesis of previous classroom knowledge. It promotes the student's understanding of the health-care system, allows the student to participate as an active, cooperative member of the health care team, and encourages development of an ethical, holistic practitioner with regard for the whole person in all interactions. Given the student will have completed all of their didactic coursework prior to this course, in addition to a previous 8-week full time clinical experience, they are expected to actively participate in patient/client care conferences, PT staff meetings and in-service opportunities at their clinical sites. Students are expected to learn about and participate appropriately in the facilities' reimbursement and documentation systems. Prerequisite(s): PTA 2700.

PTA 3000 Physical Therapy Leadership – 1 credit

This course is the first PTA-specific course to be taken in the BSPTA program, and allows the PTA to explore their motivation for pursuing the degree, the changing role of the PTA in the clinical environment, the expectations for PTA leadership as a member of the physical therapy profession, and their current strengths and opportunities for growth as they prepare themselves to fulfill those expectations. Students will apply results of standardized leadership assessment tools and feedback from a chosen mentor to a final reflective paper which identifies their current leadership traits, goals within the BSPTA program, areas of tension and congruence between their personal and professional identity and their expectations for how the program will impact their career path.

Prerequisite: Admission to the major.

PTA 3150 Pharmacology for the Physical Therapist Assistant – 1 credit

Pathopharmacology introduces the principles and properties of drugs frequently encountered by the PTA. This course presents basic concepts, terminology, and clinical application. Also, we discuss how therapeutic drugs positively and negatively impact rehabilitation. Students relate drug action – both desirable and adverse – to comprehensive patient care. This course reviews patient medications. The content focuses on mechanisms of action, side effects, and uses of selected drugs and drug classes.

Prerequisite: Admission to the BS PTA program.

PTA 3800 Movement System Analysis and Intervention – 3 credits

This course enhances the PTA's familiarity with the concept of the movement system and the physical therapist's/physical therapist assistant's role as movement experts. Learners will be challenged to further develop their observational, psychomotor, and cognitive skills in order to improve their functional movement analysis skills. They will also develop stronger critical thinking and decision-making skills for selecting the most appropriate interventions to improve movement dysfunctions. The course will emphasize the use of manual therapy as an intervention for movement restrictions and will provide opportunities to practice/demonstrate/receive feedback on multiple manual therapy techniques.

Prerequisites: Admission to the major, PTA 3000.

PTA 4000W Rehab Administration Capstone – 3 credits

This writing-intensive course provides the PTA with insight into the role of the department manager. Administrative responsibilities addressed in the course include budgeting, hiring and staffing, quality assurance, risk management and outcomes reporting. Discussion and activities will highlight the changing healthcare landscape and the influence of regulation on payment for PT services and the rehab manager's role as a member of the facility administrative team. The PTA will complete a final project that focuses on systems improvement and/or personnel development within the PTA's workplace or their community. The writing assignments in this course will allow the student to develop skills in measuring and articulating the needs/assets of their physical therapy department to staff, supervisors, other health care providers, and to the general public. The PTA will also perform written reassessment of their own strengths and their progress toward the goals established in their PTA 3000 leadership growth plan.

Prerequisite: PTA 3000.

PTA 4684 Directed Study – 4 credits

Directed study is provided for students whose unusual circumstances prohibit taking a regularly scheduled course but who need the material of that course to satisfy a requirement. Availability of this faculty-directed learning experience depends on faculty time and may be limited in any given term and restricted to certain courses.

Prerequisites: Faculty, department chair and dean approval.

PTA ELEC Physical Therapy Assist Elec – 1-6 credits