

Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Frequently Asked Questions

This is a list of frequently asked questions. If these questions do not provide the answer you are searching for, please contact the Program Director.

Q: When do I apply to the PTA Program?

A: Applications become available in November each year and can be downloaded from the OCCC PTA Program website at www.occc.edu/health/pta.html. The applications are due in March by 12:00 p.m. on the specified date. They will not be accepted past the deadline. A list of the application procedures is available on the website. The candidates are notified in late April, early May for the fall class.

Q: What is the process to apply?

- A: 1.) Apply to OCCC, include the \$30.00 application fee and official transcripts from all institutions attended.
- 2.) Apply to the PTA Program, pay the \$20.00 fee, submit official transcripts from all institutions attended (including OCCC) and required test scores (Reading and Math).

Q: How long will it take to complete the program?

A: The program will be complete in five semesters after starting the program. The students will have two semesters of didactic coursework and then a four-week clinical assessment in the summer semester. The second year of the program has the fall semester of didactic work and the spring semester consists of two seven-week clinical assignments.

Q: Is this program accredited?

A: The program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). 1111 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria, VA 22314, Phone Number: 703-684-2782, Email: accreditation@apta.org, Website Address: <http://www.capteonline.org>.

Q: Can a student continue to work while they attend college?

A: The OCCC PTA Program offers most classes in the evening and late afternoon 2-3 nights per week. There is a two-week January intercession course during the day from 8 am to 2 pm. The clinical aspect involves full-time work from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or the equivalent of a full day, five days per week. During the clinical assignments, it may be difficult to continue working regular hours.

Q: How are the candidates selected for the program?

A: Selection is based on a point system. A detailed description of the preference point system is available in the special admissions procedures and the application. Points are gained through grade point average, test scores, work/observation in the clinical setting, and by taking Medical Terminology, math and science courses with a grade of an A or B.

Q: Does OCCC have any minimum grade requirements?

A: A student in the PTA Program must have a “C” or better in all required PTA coursework. These classes are designated in the College Catalog and in the PTA Student Handbook and the student must maintain a 2.5 GPA throughout the PTA Program.

Q: Is clinical Experience a part of this program?

A: The PTA student will have one four-week clinical rotation after the first year in the program. During the spring semester of the second year, the student will have two seven-week clinical experiences. The clinical sites are located off campus, around the metro, and the surrounding Oklahoma City area and will require transportation. This experience allows students a chance to apply their knowledge.

Q: After completing the program, will I be able to work as a Physical Therapist Assistant?

A: Students who complete the PTA program at OCCC will earn the Associate in Applied Science Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant and will be eligible to sit for the licensing examination. After receiving a passing score, the graduate will be able to practice as a licensed PTA in the state of Oklahoma.

Q: Why is the background check and drug test a part of this program?

A: The clinical sites require the background checks and drug tests as a prerequisite to working with direct patient care under the supervision of the clinical instructors. Clinical practicums occur three times in the PTA Program.

Q: What if I have committed a crime, can I still become a PTA?

A: Please contact the Oklahoma Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision with any questions about previous acts. They will be able to tell you if you are eligible to be licensed.

Q: Do PTAs eventually become physical therapist?

A: A physical therapist assistant is a very important member of the healthcare team. A PTA is a licensed professional who works under the general supervision of a PT in the state of Oklahoma. The education process is different for physical therapists, and the PTA program courses at Oklahoma City Community College do not transfer as prerequisites to physical therapist coursework. Many of the general education courses will transfer. Students interested in becoming a PT should contact schools that offer that degree to obtain requirements for the doctoral degree.

Q: Does the student get paid to work during the clinical experience?

A: No, the clinical education is part of the PTA Program curriculum and tuition and fees still apply. The student will work with a clinical instructor who is part of the extended clinical faculty and has a contact with Oklahoma City Community College to provide the clinical education experience.

Q: Will the student need professional liability to participate in the program?

A: Yes, the student insurance is required to be paid prior to the first day of classes and must be renewed annually. The insurance will protect the student during lab activities and clinical rotations.

Q: Does the student get to participate in any organization on campus or off campus?

A: The PTA students participate on campus in the Student Physical Therapist Assistant Organization (SPTAO) and may become student members in the Oklahoma Physical Therapy Association and the American Physical Therapy Association. Membership to these organizations will grant access to a variety of resources that include current professional information, continuing education opportunities, employment opportunities, and full-text articles. Membership is highly encouraged.

Q: Are there any prerequisites required for the PTA Program at OCCC?

A: No prerequisites for admission, but it is required for the candidate to complete BIO 1314 Human Anatomy and Physiology I with a grade of "C" or better prior to beginning the first fall semester in the program. This course is offered at Oklahoma City Community College during the summer semesters.

Q: Is it hard to get a job as a PTA?

A: PTA is listed in the top 5 best careers. There is an excellent job market in a variety of settings. The OCCC program can report 97-100% employment for the PTAs who seek physical therapy jobs. Many graduates choose to work at sites where they completed clinical practicums.