

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

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The goal of the Physical Therapist Assistant program is to prepare students to provide skilled, direct patient care under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist in a variety of health care settings. Courses at the Des Plaines campus include classroom and laboratory instruction in such therapeutic interventions as heat and cold applications, electrotherapy, and therapeutic exercise. Planned clinical experience is provided in off-campus medical facilities.

This degree program requires a minimum of 70.5 semester credit hours in general education and sequential program courses offered over two years. This curriculum is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education of the American Physical Therapy Association, 1111 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

Students in this curriculum are required to pay laboratory fees, provide proof of health insurance, purchase uniforms, provide their own transportation to four assigned clinical facilities, and participate in laboratory activities which require applications of physical therapy treatments. Laboratory classes also require students to wear appropriate clothing that exposes selected body areas necessary for the teaching and learning of physical therapy assessments, treatments, and interventions. Graduates are eligible to take the National Physical Therapy Exam for Physical Therapist Assistants and become licensed PTAs in Illinois.

This is a limited enrollment curriculum. Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission to the PTA program.

Minimum Requirements for Admission:

Submission of proof of all the following constitutes a complete application file. Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission to the PTA program.

All prerequisite courses, science courses and major program requirements (PTA and HIT courses) must be completed with a minimum grade of C.

- High school graduation or High School Equivalency Certificate¹ if less than 20 credit hours of U.S. College credit.
- Weighted cumulative college GPA of 2.50 or higher within the last five years (or high school GPA for those with fewer than 12 college credits).
- Limited Enrollment Health Career Accuplacer® reading placement test, taken at Oakton's Testing Center, with a minimum score of 250. Results expire after three years. (Scores from more than two attempts will be averaged).
- One year of high school or one semester of college biology (Oakton's equivalents of BIO 101 or BIO 121) completed within five calendar years of starting the PTA program, with a minimum grade of C.
- One year of high school or one semester of college physics (Oakton's PHY 101 or equivalent four semester credit hour course with lab) completed within five calendar years of starting the PTA program, with a minimum grade of C.

Course content must be equivalent to Oakton's PHY 101; otherwise, two semesters of higher-level physics are required.

- Placement into Oakton EGL 101 through Oakton's accepted placement measures or completion of Oakton's EGL 101 or equivalent course taken in college. Proof of completion must be demonstrated by sending an official transcript for evaluation. (EGL 102 or higher does not prove completion of EGL 101. Assessment tests or AP credit from other colleges are not accepted).
- ACT score of 18 or higher (within the last three years), SAT score of 960 or higher (within the last three years), or 12 hours of college credit with at least four semester credit hours of laboratory science.

After starting the application, the observation essay form and recommendation links are available in the student application portal.

- Student observation essay after completing a 10-hour observation at a Physical Therapy facility.
- Letter of Recommendation: One recommendation from a licensed physical therapist (PT) or a licensed physical therapist assistant (PTA) at the observation site. A minimum of 10 hours of observation must be spent with the licensed PT or PTA.

Applicants who meet all minimum requirements are ranked for acceptance to the program. **Ranking is determined by a numerical point system based on the above-stated admission minimum requirements.**

All students admitted to the program must submit a current and complete physical examination record and proof of medical insurance before registration for PTA clinical courses.

¹ *As of January 1, 2023, the High School Equivalency Certificate became the State of Illinois High School Diploma. High School Equivalency credentials received prior to that date remain valid.*

Health Career curricula are governed by specific objectives, rules and regulations formulated by the College, accrediting bodies and participating clinical facilities. Students should familiarize themselves with these standards. Students should also be aware that failure to maintain satisfactory progress in technical courses may significantly delay completion of the curriculum or may result in the student being dropped from the curriculum. Each student's right to participation in the clinical portion of the curriculum is also contingent upon compliance with the rules of the clinical facility. The clinical facility has sole discretion to determine when its rules have been violated.

Clinical placements require a health assessment, certain immunizations, yearly vaccines, substance abuse testing, criminal background check, specific skill certification (i.e., CPR/BLS) and health insurance. The requirements represent an additional cost to the student.

All Oakton College Health Career students in a program with a clinical component must have "clear" criminal background checks and drug screens in order to participate in any and all clinical components of any health career program courses.

To comply with state statutes and clinical affiliation agreements, and to provide a safe environment for students, employees, and patients cared for by students, those accepted into Oakton's health career programs will be required to complete a criminal background check and drug screening through a company contracted by the College. Health Career students will be charged a fee for this service.

Timelines for completing criminal background checks and drug screens may vary among the various programs. Deadline dates for each program will be provided by the individual department chairs at the time of a student's acceptance into a health career program.

Students without a clear criminal background check and/or clear drug screen will not be allowed to enroll in clinical practicum courses or attend clinical programs. This would further necessitate that the student withdraws from the health career program at that time.

Students who refuse a criminal background check and/or drug screen will not be considered "clear" and will not be authorized to participate in the clinical component of the health career program, necessitating withdrawal from the program at that time. Individual results of student background checks and drug screens are considered confidential.

Determination of whether or not a student can participate in the clinical component of a particular health career program will be communicated to the respective department chairs by the Background Check/Drug Screen vendor. Students may view their personal results on the vendor's website.

Note: Persons with a criminal felony conviction may have difficulty obtaining a license to practice PTA in Illinois. Individuals may refer questions to the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, Springfield, IL, www.idfpr.com.

Physical Therapist Assistant A.A.S.

70.5 Semester Credit Hours; Curriculum: 0360

Note: Refer to IAI General Education Courses page for guidelines on General Education course selection.

Code	Title	Hours
General Education Requirements		
<i>Area A — Communications</i>		
EGL 101	Composition I	3
Select one of the following:		3
EGL 102	Composition II	
EGL 111	Introduction to Business and Technical Writing	
EGL 212	Technical Writing Applications	
SPE 103	Effective Speech (recommended)	
<i>Area B — Mathematics</i>		
No course needed		0
<i>Area C — Science</i>		
BIO 231	Human Anatomy and Physiology I	4
BIO 232	Human Anatomy and Physiology II	4
<i>Area D — Social and Behavioral Sciences</i>		
PSY 101	Introduction to Psychology	3
<i>Area E — Humanities/Fine Arts</i>		
Select one course from a humanities or fine arts discipline		3
<i>Area F — Global Studies</i> ¹		
Select one course that satisfies Global Studies requirement		0-3
<i>Area G — U.S. Diversity Studies</i> ²		
Select one course that satisfies U.S. Diversity Studies requirement		0-3
Total Hours		20

¹ Students may take a Global Studies course that satisfies both Area F and another Area requirement.

² Students may take a U.S. Diversity Studies course that satisfies both Area G and another Area requirement.

Code	Title	Hours
Major Requirements		
HIT 104	Medical Terminology	3
PTA 100	Orientation to Physical Therapist Assistant	2
PTA 103	Communication and Interpersonal Skills for PTA	2
PTA 105	Basic Health Skills for the PTA	5
PTA 107	Physical Agents I	3
PTA 110	Therapeutic Exercise I	4
PTA 114	Basic Professional Reading Skills	1
PTA 161	Clinical Practicum I	1.5
PTA 162	Clinical Practicum II	3
PTA 207	Physical Agents II	3
PTA 210	Therapeutic Exercise II	4
PTA 211	Neurology for the PTA	2
PTA 218	Clinical Applications in PTA	2
PTA 220	Topics in Pathology for the PTA	3
PTA 230	Advanced Procedures for the PTA	3
PTA 241	Workplace Issues in Physical Therapy	1
PTA 242	Career Strategies for the PTA	1
PTA 261	Clinical Practicum III	1
PTA 262	Clinical Practicum IV	3
Select PTA or other elective courses to total a minimum of three semester credit hours; contact an academic advisor for a list of acceptable courses		3
Total Hours		50.5

Physical Therapist Assistant Pathway

The following Pathway is recommended for students pursuing an Associate in Applied Science degree in Physical Therapist Assistant. **General Education courses should be selected from the list of IAI General Education Courses.**

For more information on recommended courses or program specific advising, contact the health career specialist at 847.635.1844, or the Division of Health Careers at 847.635.1684.

First Year		
Semester One (Fall)		Hours
BIO 231	Human Anatomy and Physiology I	4
HIT 104	Medical Terminology	3
PTA 100	Orientation to Physical Therapist Assistant	2
PTA 103	Communication and Interpersonal Skills for PTA	2
PTA 105	Basic Health Skills for the PTA	5
Hours		16
Semester Two (Spring)		
BIO 232	Human Anatomy and Physiology II	4
EGL 101	Composition I	3
PTA 107	Physical Agents I	3
PTA 110	Therapeutic Exercise I	4
PTA 114	Basic Professional Reading Skills	1
PTA 161	Clinical Practicum I	1.5
Hours		16.5
Semester Three (Summer)		
PSY 101	Introduction to Psychology	3

PTA 162	Clinical Practicum II	3
Hours		6
Second Year		
Semester One (Fall)		
PTA 207	Physical Agents II	3
PTA 210	Therapeutic Exercise II	4
PTA 211	Neurology for the PTA	2
PTA 241	Workplace Issues in Physical Therapy	1
PTA 261	Clinical Practicum III	1
Select one of the following:		3
EGL 102	Composition II	
EGL 111	Introduction to Business and Technical Writing	
EGL 212	Technical Writing Applications	
SPE 103	Effective Speech	
Select one of the following:		0-3
EGL 135	Introduction to Native American Literature ¹	
SOC 101	Introduction to Sociology ²	
SPE 115	Interpersonal Communication Across Cultures ¹	
SSC 105	Introduction to Ethnic Studies ²	
or other U.S. Diversity Studies course		
Hours		14-17
Semester Two (Spring)		
PTA 218	Clinical Applications in PTA	2
PTA 220	Topics in Pathology for the PTA	3
PTA 230	Advanced Procedures for the PTA	3
PTA 242	Career Strategies for the PTA	1
Select one of the following:		3
HUM 161	Global Cinema ³	
HUM 165	Introduction to World Music ³	
PHL 180	Medical Ethics	
PHL 205	World Religions ³	
PHL 240	Philosophy of Religion ³	
or other Humanities course		
Select one of the following:		3
ANT 102	Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology ¹	
ART 114	Art History: Art of the Non-Western World ³	
HIS 113	History of Native Americans ¹	
Modern Language course (202 or higher) ³		
or other Global Studies course		
Hours		15
Semester Three (Summer)		
PTA 262	Clinical Practicum IV	3
Hours		3
Total Hours		70.5-73.5

¹ Course fulfills both, the Global Studies and U.S. Diversity Studies requirements.

² Course fulfills the U.S. Diversity Studies requirement. At least one U.S. Diversity Studies course is required for degree completion.

³ Course fulfills the Global Studies requirement. At least one Global Studies course is required for degree completion.

Note: Pathway is a recommended sequence of courses. Part-time students should contact the health career specialist to discuss a part-time pathway as well as course prerequisites and recommendations.

Program Learning Outcomes

1. Adhere to legal practice standards, including all federal, state, and institutional regulations related to patient/client care and fiscal management.

2. Report to appropriate authorities suspected cases of abuse of vulnerable populations.
3. Report to appropriate authorities suspected cases of fraud and abuse related to the utilization of and payment for physical therapy and other health care services.
4. Perform duties in a manner consistent with the Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant (APTA) and Standards of Ethical Conduct (APTA) to meet the expectations of patients, members of the physical therapy profession, and other providers as necessary.
5. Perform duties in a manner consistent with APTA's Values Based Behaviors for the Physical Therapist Assistant.
6. Implement, in response to an ethical situation, a plan of action that demonstrates sound moral reasoning congruent with core professional and values.
7. Communicate effectively with all stakeholders, including patients/clients, family members, caregivers, practitioners, interprofessional team members, consumers, payers, and policymakers.
8. Identify, respect, and act with consideration for patients'/clients' differences, values, preferences, and expressed needs in all work-related activities.
9. Apply current knowledge, theory, and clinical judgment while considering the patient/client perspective and the environment, based on the plan of care established by the physical therapist.
10. Identify basic concepts in professional literature including, but not limited to, validity, reliability and level of statistical significance.
11. Identify and integrate appropriate evidence based resources to support clinical decision-making for progression of the patient within the plan of care established by the physical therapist.
12. Effectively educate others using teaching methods that are commensurate with the needs of the patient caregiver or healthcare personnel.
13. Participate in professional and community organizations that provide opportunities for volunteerism, advocacy and leadership.
14. Identify career development and lifelong learning opportunities, including the role of the physical therapist assistant in the clinical education of physical therapist assistant students.
15. Interview patients/clients, caregivers, and family to obtain current information related to prior and current level of function and general health status (e.g., fatigue, fever, malaise, unexplained weight change).
16. Use the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) to describe a patient's/client's impairments, activity and participation limitations.
17. Communicate an understanding of the plan of care developed by the physical therapist to achieve short and long term goals and intended outcomes.
18. Review health records (e.g., lab values, diagnostic tests, specialty reports, narrative, consults, and physical therapy documentation) prior to carrying out the PT plan of care.
19. Monitor and adjust interventions in the plan of care in response to patient/client status and clinical indications.
20. Report any changes in patient/client status or progress to the supervising physical therapist.
21. Determine when an intervention should not be performed due to clinical indications or when the direction to perform the intervention is beyond that which is appropriate for the physical therapist assistant.
22. Contribute to the discontinuation of episode of care planning and follow-up processes as directed by the supervising physical therapist.

23. Demonstrate competence in implementing selected components of interventions identified in the plan of care established by the physical therapist.
24. Demonstrate competence in performing components of data collection skills essential for carrying out the plan of care by administering appropriate tests and measures (before, during and after interventions).
25. Complete accurate documentation that follows guidelines and specific documentation formats required by state practice acts, the practice setting, and other regulatory agencies.
26. Respond effectively to patient/client and environmental emergencies that commonly occur in the clinical setting.
27. Contribute to efforts to increase patient and healthcare provider safety.
28. Participate in the provision of patient-centered interprofessional collaborative care.
29. Participate in performance improvement activities (quality assurance).
30. Describe aspects of organizational and operation of the physical therapy service.
31. Describe accurate and timely information for billing and payment purposes.