San Diego Mesa College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program

General Information Page

Job Title
Physical Therapist Assistant

Program website
http://www.sdmesa.edu/physical-therapy

Job Description
The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) is an integral member of the health care team. The PTA assists the Physical Therapist (PT) in providing patient care by applying a variety of therapy treatments including, but not limited to, heat, cold, soft tissue mobilization, electrical stimulation, mechanical traction, hydrotherapy, therapeutic exercise, and gait training. PTAs work in a variety of settings including hospitals, private practices, outpatient clinics, home health, skilled nursing facilities, adult day care centers, schools, and sports facilities.

Program Description
Physical Therapist Assistant students complete a full-time (4 semester) program of professional education that combines in-depth academic study on campus with clinical experience in physical therapy practices affiliated with the program. Students graduate with an Associate of Science degree in Physical Therapist Assistant. Graduates may apply for state licensure with the Physical Therapy Board of California.

Mission Statement
The primary mission of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at San Diego Mesa College is to provide excellence in the education and development of competent physical therapist assistants that provide high quality patient care through evidence based practice to diverse populations and become leaders within the health care community and profession.

Program Objectives
1. Select and perform safe and effective interventions within the:
   a. PTA scope of practice.
   b. Physical Therapist’s plan of care.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the CA physical therapy laws and regulations.
3. Demonstrate ethical and professional behaviors consistent with professional standards and practice.
4. Communicate effectively both verbally and in writing, as appropriate for a PTA.
5. Participate in self-assessment and develop plans to improve knowledge, skills, and behavior as appropriate for a PTA.
6. Incorporate an understanding of the implications of individual and cultural differences, and adapt behavior and delivery of care accordingly to all aspects of physical therapy services with respect to patients’ values, preferences, and needs.

Attitudes and Characteristics of the PTA
The successful PTA is:
- interested in the physical and biological sciences; pursues opportunities for life long learning; and possesses a knowledge of the breadth of the profession
- flexible; reliable; versatile; timely
- exhibits manual dexterity, visual and auditory acuity and motor coordination necessary to deliver treatments in a safe and complete manner; able to withstand strenuous physical activity
- patient and emotionally stable; demonstrates sound judgment, tact and self control even when presented with demanding patients or the presence of strong odors and open wounds
- able to work directly with a diverse population of patients of all ages, sizes, genders, cultures, and disabilities without discrimination
- able to work directly under a Physical Therapist’s direction following written and verbal orders accepting responsibility for the results of his/her actions
- a team player who works within the parameters of the PTA job description in an ethical manner and who is able to communicate with health team members, patients, and patients’ families
- able to accept constructive criticism and perform self evaluation activities which result in personal and professional growth
- able to apply his/her knowledge base to situations which arise, arriving at a reasonable conclusion which promotes patient progress and safety
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- an effective communicator who is able to instruct patients using clear, concise language
- able to meet PTA technical standards (see page 10)

**Employment Outlook**
The employment outlook for PTA's is generally good in San Diego County and the United States at the present time. The PTA is qualified to seek employment in any setting that offers Physical Therapy such as: hospitals; long term care facilities; rehabilitation facilities; private offices; adult day care centers; schools; and homes.

**Probable Salary Range for the San Diego Area**
Starting Range: Staff PTA $40,000-45,000/year

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acting Program Director</th>
<th>Academic Counselor</th>
<th>Special Admissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Johnston, PTA, MEd</td>
<td>Nick DeMeo</td>
<td>Dulce Lopez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(619) 388-2229</td>
<td>(619) 388-2668</td>
<td>(619) 388-2684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:ajohnsto@sdccd.edu">ajohnsto@sdccd.edu</a></td>
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**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **What can I do to gain more knowledge about the Physical Therapist Assistant Program?**
   Because of the numerous inquiries from prospective students, general information sessions regarding the program are provided at Mesa College on a regular basis throughout the fall and spring semesters (dates and locations are on the Allied Health website which should be checked again just prior to attendance for any scheduling changes that may occur – [www.sdmesa.edu/allied-health](http://www.sdmesa.edu/allied-health)). To gain firsthand knowledge of the scope of the profession and duties and limitations of the PTA, you should plan on observing, volunteering, or interviewing therapy personnel, or work in a variety of PT settings. Observation hours are a requirement for entrance into the program. See forms within application packet.

2. **What courses must I take to earn this degree and with whom should I speak?**
   The core courses required for the Associate in Science degree are listed on page 8 of this packet. It is recommended that you meet with an academic counselor to determine the general education requirements for the degree and to address any specific questions. The core courses listed for the degree are subject to change based on accreditation requirements.

3. **How can I find out if the courses I have taken outside of the San Diego Community College District will transfer or meet the prerequisite course requirements?**
   You will find general information on the prerequisite courses later within this packet. All coursework must be completed at a regionally-accredited college. It is recommended that you meet with an academic counselor with specific questions regarding prerequisites and general education requirements.

4. **Can I submit transcripts electronically?**
   At this point in time, San Diego Community College District will not accept electronic transcripts. Hard copies of official transcripts need to be mailed directly to Special Admissions at San Diego Mesa College.
Can you give me a list of facilities where I can complete my observation hours?
We do not have a list of facilities that can be sent to you. It is recommended that you contact facilities close to where you live and ask if they will allow you to observe physical therapists and physical therapists assistants while they work. Some facilities have waiting lists for people to observe so you should contact facilities as soon as possible. Information about potential sites will only be given at Information Sessions. Dates and times of information sessions may be found on the Allied Health website page.

How are applicants chosen for admission?
Applicants who complete the academic prerequisites and submit a completed online application with supportive documentation by the application deadline will be given consideration for enrollment in program. When the application packet is complete, the applicant’s name will be placed on a “Qualified Applicants” list. It is the responsibility of the applicant to assure that all supportive documentation is in their file – incomplete applications will NOT be considered. The program will admit up to 30 students per year. A computerized random lottery will be performed to determine those accepted and create an alternate list. It is the applicant’s responsibility to maintain a current e-mail address with the college’s Special Admissions Office and return all mailings in a timely manner. Failure to return necessary paperwork will result in the person being removed from the current list. Each year, a new qualified applicant list is generated from the completed applications submitted for that given year.

Program Information
1. Can I complete the program in less than two years? No, the program cannot be completed in less than two years since the technical courses are taught sequentially and require two full years for completion.

2. Are these courses transferable for a PT degree?
The courses currently are not usually transferable to institutions of higher learning. The curriculum has been redesigned and is currently going through the approval process. If approved, the curriculum will transfer towards a bachelor’s degree. The credit will not transfer towards a doctoral degree in Physical Therapy.

3. When I receive my A.S. degree for the program, what does that mean?
This A.S. degree program is fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), American Physical Therapy Association, 1111 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria, VA 22314: 1 (800) 999-APTA. Graduates of accredited programs are eligible to take the board examination for licensure as a PTA in those states requiring it. The fees required for the examination in California exceed $600.00. The program graduates have had a 100% ultimate pass rate on the National Board Examination over the past several years.

4. Are there any limitations to making an application for state licensure that I need to be aware of or does graduation from an accredited program suffice?
Those states requiring licensure to practice as a PTA require the completion of a background check that includes the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). Any discrepancies between information received from the DOJ, the FBI, and the applicant’s information may result in denial of the application. The licensing Board reviews whether the violation of code, crime, or act is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a licensee. Other factors that are considered are: the nature and severity of the acts or crime; the time that has elapsed since the commission of the acts/crimes; and the extent to which the applicant has complied with any terms or condition of probation imposed.

5. While I am in the program, will any malpractice insurance fees be required?
A nominal fee is assessed during the semesters that the student is participating in the directed clinical practice courses. The fee enrolls the student in a blanket program of professional liability insurance coverage for one million dollars per District policy.
What other program-specific costs are there for me to consider?

While in the program, the student will be required to complete and pay for a physical exam, tuberculosis skin test (or equivalent), required immunizations, background check/drug screening required by the clinical sites (cost is approximately $100), and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) prior to beginning clinical experiences. The CPR must be through the American Heart Association Healthcare Provider (eight hour course that includes testing on mannequins). The student will also need to purchase a uniform, name badge, books, and supplies. To decrease the cost of textbooks for the two years, books can be purchased in bundles at the bookstore just prior to the 1st semester for approximately $840. Class supplies total approximately $70 throughout the two year. Total cost of the program including resident tuition is approximately $5,000. There is an additional non-resident charge for students coming in from out of state. Please refer to the college website for non-resident fees. A reliable means of transportation is necessary while in the program.

Application Process

- Submit your online application and load all supportive documentation (official transcripts verifying completion of the above prerequisites) January 26th, 2018 at 12:00 pm – April 16th, 2017 at 4:00 pm. Complete applicants will be stamped with the date and time received – an application is not complete until all requires supportive documentation has been uploaded and received. Applications received before the January 29th 12:00 pm or after the April 16th, 4:00 pm period will not be considered.

- It is the responsibility of the student to assure their application is complete. It is not the responsibility of the college or program to contact applicants regarding the complete or incomplete status of program application materials submitted. Prospective students need to understand the information given and ask questions of the appropriate person in the appropriate timeframe if they need further clarification.

- Applications will be reviewed for completeness after the April 16th deadline by the admissions committee. The Special Admissions office may respond to application (or application item) inquiries as “received” or “not received.”

- Completion of all designated prerequisites does not guarantee admission to the Physical Therapist Assistant program. Applications are reviewed each year; there is no waitlist. Applications will be put into a pool from which a computerized, random selection process will select those to be admitted.

- Acceptance letters for the Physical Therapist Assistant Program will be sent out via e-mail to the e-mail address listed on the application (regardless of any e-mail addresses used by the student to communicate to the program; printing your e-mail address carefully on the application is very important). Applicants must confirm acceptance via e-mail (as directed) by the stipulated date to maintain the admission status (postmarks are not considered).

- Any candidate wishing to withdraw or cancel their application must provide immediate written communication to the college’s Special Admissions office.

- All applicants are responsible for maintaining their current and accurate contact information (address, telephone and e-mail) with the Special Admissions office.

- Applicants are responsible for understanding the application and admission procedures, as well as for obtaining timely clarification on any matter related to their application, admission, and eligibility status.
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- Applications that are not selected for program admission will be purged from the online system. A new application must be submitted during the next application cycle for consideration in the next cohort.

*****STUDENTS SHOULD KEEP COPIES OF ALL THEIR APPLICATION MATERIALS SUBMITTED*****

### DISCLAIMER

“The San Diego Community College District is governed by its Board of Trustees. No oral or written representation by any employee of the College is binding on the San Diego Community College District without the express approval of the Board of Trustees.”

### COURSE SEQUENCING

The following is a listing of the core curriculum by semester.

#### SEMESTER I (FALL) TOTAL UNITS 13

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<td>GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT, &amp; AGING</td>
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**SUMMER TOTAL UNITS 1**

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<td>PHYR 275</td>
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#### SEMESTER IV (SPRING) TOTAL UNITS 12

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**TOTAL: 46 UNITS**
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Important Notes:
Students who require 12-units per semester for financial aid qualification (or other reasons) may need to add other general education courses.

The Physical Therapist Assistant program classes run primarily Monday through Friday with daytime hours that typically fluctuate between 7am to 7pm, with clinical rotations that may require Saturdays and Sundays. Students must adhere to an assigned schedule by their clinical affiliate.

There is no advanced placement in this program for individuals with previous related education or work experience.

ASSOCIATE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS:
IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THIS PTA PROGRAM, THE STUDENT MUST FULFILL THE NECESSARY A.S. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS. IN THIS TYPE OF INTENSIVE PROGRAM, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE STUDENT COMPLETE ALL, OR PART, OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES BEFORE ENTERING. IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT ALL G.E. COURSES BE COMPLETED BY THE BEGINNING OF THE CURRICULUM’S THIRD SEMESTER.

Total units for Associate of Science Degree = 60.5 units (depending on catalog year; health education requirement is waived for PTA students)