San Diego Mesa College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program
Information/Application Packet for Fall 2016

Application Deadline:  June 23, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.
Submit to Special Admissions – Room I4-102

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
To prepare qualified Physical Therapist Assistants (PTA) who practice ethical, safe, and effective patient
care.

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. Knowledge of the CA physical therapy laws and regulations.
3. Ethical and professional behaviors consistent with professional standards and practice.
4. Communicate effectively both verbally and in writing.

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
• 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

Program Director
Tina Recalde, DPT, MS, ATC, CSCS
(619) 388-2229
trecalde@sdccd.edu
Allied Health, S-315

Academic Counselor
Nick DeMeo
(619) 388-2668
nderemo@sdccd.edu
Student Services, I-400

Special Admissions
Cathy Sullivan
(619) 388-2684
cmsulliv@sdccd.edu
Student Services, I-400

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.
5. **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.

6. **How are applicants chosen for admission?**

Applicants who complete the academic prerequisites and submit a completed application with its 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.
6. **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. 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.

**Information Sessions**

To assist you with your planning and to gain information related to the admission process, the following information sessions will be offered on Mesa campus in Building S – the Allied Health Building, Room S-207, unless otherwise posted. Check the Allied Health Department website ([www.sdmesa.edu/allied-health](http://www.sdmesa.edu/allied-health)) for dates. RSVP’s are **not required** for attendance at the one-hour information session. However, please check the website just prior to attendance for any scheduling changes that may occur and be sure to observe parking policies on campus.

**Dates and Deadlines for Fall 2016**

Completed Application Packets will be accepted between:

**March 1st – June 23rd, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.**

Completed Application Packets must include:
- Completed application
- Official Transcripts verifying completion of prerequisites
- English Skills Assessment, if needed to meet requirement
- Observation Verification/Performance Evaluation Form
- Applicant Reaction to Observation Experience
- PTA Essential Functions Acknowledgement

*Packets must be received in Special Admissions, Room I4-102, during the application period. Packets received after the application period and postmarks will not be considered.*

Acceptance invitations will begin being sent on: **July 11th**

Confirmation of Acceptance **must be returned with 2 weeks of receipt**.

Notification of alternates and those not accepted: **July 25th**

**Entrance Requirements – Fall 2016**

The process for entrance requires the completion of steps A and B before the application can be considered complete. Once the application is complete the applicant’s name will be entered on the “Qualified Applicant’s” list. Please fill out and submit all pages of the application (pages 9-17). If completing observation hours at more than two facilities, please attach additional copies of pages 11-12.

**A. Prerequisite Courses**

Completion of the following prerequisites (or equivalent) with a minimum grade of “C” or better is required. These prerequisites are designed to meet the general education curriculum requirements for the Associate’s of Science degree. If taking prerequisite courses at another institution, please verify with a counselor before enrollment that they will articulate with these courses at Mesa College.
1. **Human Anatomy & Physiology (4 semester units, including a lab, within the last five years), Bio 160 or equivalent.**
   If another college divides this into two courses, both courses must be taken. The course must cover all the body systems. Completion of 8 units Anatomy & Physiology is highly recommended.

2. **Math – Intermediate Algebra or higher (3 units) – Math 96 or equivalent.**

3. **Communication Studies 135 preferred.** Communication Studies 103 will also be accepted.

4. **English Assessment Skill Levels R5 and W5**
   or **English Composition (3 semester units) – Eng 101, Eng 105, Eng 205 or equivalent.**

B. **Documented Exposure to the Profession of Physical Therapy:**
Applicants may complete this requirement by selecting one of the two options below:

**Option 1** - Complete of a minimum of 24 hours of directly observing a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant performing patient care ("job shadowing"). Eight of the hours must be performed in either an in-patient (acute) or skilled nursing facility setting. The remaining hours may be in either in-patient or out-patient physical therapy settings.

Please plan ahead as you may have to be on a waiting list for a couple of months to get into an acute care or skilled nursing facility. *Do not wait until the last minute.* Information about potential sites in the area will *only* be given at information sessions.

**Option 2** - Complete of a minimum of 100 hours of directly observing a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant performing patient care ("job shadowing"). The hours may be completed in a setting of your choice.

**Forms to be completed and submitted with your application to meet this requirement:**

**Observation Verification/Performance Evaluation**
This form is included as part of the application packet for the physical therapist or physical therapist assistant to sign verifying that the observation hours have been completed and to rate your performance. The purpose of having your performance rated is to provide you with feedback regarding areas that you may want to improve as you enter the program and prepare to enter the profession. The information will not be used to qualify or disqualify you from the program.

The documented exposure does not need to be repeated for re-application to the program, but documentation must be submitted with each application. It is recommended that students keep copies for their records.

**Applicant Reaction to Observation Experience**
This form is included as part of the application packet. You must write an essay addressing the following three points for each facility in which observation hours were completed:

- Describe a situation or experience during your observation hours that stands out to you as good physical therapy.
- What did you observe that makes you want to pursue a career in physical therapy?
- Based on your observation experience, what challenges do you foresee for physical therapist assistants in the future?

The essay must be typed, a minimum of 500 words, and address all three points to be considered complete.
All prerequisites must be completed at colleges accredited by one of the six regional accrediting bodies in order to qualify. These agencies include:

- New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)
- North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA)
- Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges (MSA)
- Southern Association of Schools and Colleges (SACS)
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NWCCU)

Students are responsible for confirming the accreditation type and transferability of credits before they enroll in any institution. Resources to consult are college catalogs and academic counselors.

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

- Submit your application and all its supportive documentation (official transcripts verifying completion of the above prerequisites) to Special Admissions between March 1st, 2016 – June 23rd, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. Complete applications will be stamped with the date received – an application is not complete until all required supportive documentation has been received. Applications received before the March 1st or after the June 23rd period will not be considered. The application must be received by 4:00 p.m. on the last business day of the application window; postmarks 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 June 23rd 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 in writing or 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.

*****APPLICATIONS THAT ARE NOT SELECTED FOR PROGRAM ADMISSION WILL BE PURGED FROM THE SYSTEM WITHOUT NOTICE ONE YEAR FROM THE MOST RECENT APPLICATION DATE*****
TRANSCRIPT INFORMATION

Official transcripts from each college you have attended, even Mesa College, are a critical component of a complete application. Ideally, transcripts should be sent directly to the applicant to include with the program application. They must be official and unopened in the original sealed envelope.

If a college will not send official transcripts to you, applicants must:

1. Apply online to the College
2. Request transcripts be sent directly to Special Admissions at Mesa College, specifically addressed as follows:

   San Diego Mesa College
   Attention: Special Admissions/Physical Therapist Assistant
   7250 Mesa College Drive
   San Diego, CA 92111

3. Indicate on your application that transcripts are being sent directly from a college(s) and list them.
4. Include an unofficial copy of the transcripts with the application
5. Electronic transcripts will not be accepted.

Transcripts sent to Mesa College without designation to Special Admissions will end up in a different department and will not be reviewed. It is the student's responsibility to assure their transcripts are sent properly and confirm their receipt with our Special Admissions department before the application deadline.

Computer printouts of grades are not accepted and will not be considered. Students are advised to proceed carefully in situations where spring classes end near the program application deadline; the application process will not altered for late grade postings. Students should plan accordingly.

Students with foreign transcripts should consult an academic counselor before submitting an application, since such transcripts will need to be evaluated by an independent service prior to being accepted.

RE-APPLICATION

Applicants who submitted a complete application for Fall 2015 and were not selected, may request Special Admissions to pull their previous application and consider it for Fall 2016 acceptance. However, the application requirements for Fall 2016 have been revised. Please ensure that required new documentation of observation hours (2 forms) is submitted and that transcripts show proof of successful completion of all prerequisites.

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.”
PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT CURRICULUM SEQUENCE

Subject to change. Curriculum is currently being revised to meet new accreditation standards. If approved, an updated curriculum sequence will be sent to those accepted into the program.

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<th>Units</th>
<th>THIRD SEMESTER (FALL)</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHYR 050 – Intro to Physical Therapy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>PHYR 077/077L – Orthopedic Exer &amp; Rehab</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHYR 056/056L - Physical Therapy Techn I</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>PHYR 078/078L – Topics in Neuro &amp; Rehab</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHYR 054 – Intro to Human Movement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PHYR 070 – Directed Clinical Practice</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>8.5</td>
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<th>Units</th>
<th>FOURTH SEMESTER (SPRING)</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>PHYR 080 – Directed Clinical Prac</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHYR 063 – Intro to Ther Ex</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PHYR 081 – Organization of PT</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHYR 066/066L - Physical Therapy Techn II</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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TECHNICAL COURSES MUST BE TAKEN IN SEQUENCE

**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 6pm, 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)
San Diego Mesa College
PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Program Application Form for Fall 2016   Application Deadline – June 23rd, 2016, 4:00 pm

Instructions: Print or type the requested information. Submit the application with the required supportive documentation to: Special Admissions at Mesa College. Letters of recommendation will not be accepted.

1. NAME: ____________________________  Last    First    Middle

2. OTHER NAME USED: _______________________    CSID ________________________

3. ADDRESS: ____________________________  Street   Apt#   City   State   Zip

4. Email Address: ____________________________

5. Phone #: (   ) ________________________  6. Birth date: ________________________

7. In case of an emergency notify: ____________________________  Name    Phone #

COURSE COMPLETION & SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTATION

Course completion must be verified by official transcripts or assessment skills testing verification (including transcripts from San Diego Community College District, if the courses were completed at Mesa, City, or Miramar colleges).

A. Human Anatomy & Physiology (refer to page 4 of this packet)

   Institution: ____________________________

   Date of Completion: ________________  Units: ____________  Grade: ________________

B. Math (refer to page 4 of this packet)

   Course completed or skill level achieved on the Assessment test – College Level:

   Institution: ____________________________

   Date of Completion: ________________  Units: ____________  Grade/Skill Level: ____________

C. Communication Studies (refer to page 4 of this packet)

   Institution: ____________________________

   Date of Completion: ________________  Units: ____________  Grade/Skill Level: ____________
D. **English Assessment Skill Levels R5 and W5** with supporting documentation  
   or **English Composition** (refer to page 4 of this packet)

   Institution: ____________________________

   Date of Completion: ____________  Units: ________  Grade/Skill Level: ______

E. **Documented Exposure to the Profession of Physical Therapy**  
   (Submit forms for each facility at which observation hours were completed.)

   - Observation Verification/Performance Evaluation
   - Applicant Reaction to Observation Experience

Completed applications with supporting documentation should be mailed to:

   Special Admissions  
   San Diego Mesa College  
   7250 Mesa College Dr.  
   San Diego, CA  92111
San Diego Mesa College  
Physical Therapist Assistant Program  

Observation Verification/Performance Evaluation Form

**Instructions:** This form is to be completed by a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant and will be reviewed as part of our admission process. Applicants are required to observe a minimum of 24 hours in a professional setting (at least 8 hours in an inpatient setting or skilled nursing facility) to be eligible for admission into our program. Your evaluation and comments regarding this applicant’s performance provide the applicant with important feedback regarding areas they should attempt to improve as they attempt to enter the profession. Thank you for your willingness to promote the practice of Physical Therapy by mentoring our prospective students.

Please give the completed form to the applicant for their review and consideration.

**Applicant’s Name:** ________________________________

**Hours completed:** Inpatient _______  Outpatient _______

**Facility:** ________________________________  **Department:** ________________________________

**Address:** ________________________________  **Work Phone/Email:** ________________________________

**Supervising Therapist’s Name Printed:** ________________________________

**Supervising Therapist’s Signature:** ________________________________  **Title:** ________________________________

Please check the appropriate rating boxes below for each item. **N/A** = Not Applicable or Unable to observe.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social skills (staff, clients, families, other disciplines)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timeliness/punctuality/time management</td>
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<td>Safety judgment, alertness to environment</td>
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<td>Follows policies and regulations (attire, respect for rules, confidentiality)</td>
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<td>Responds to feedback and modifies behaviors accordingly</td>
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<td>Demonstrates interest in the profession, asks appropriate questions.</td>
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Additional Comments:
San Diego Mesa College  
Physical Therapist Assistant Program  

Applicant Reaction to Observation Experience

This form is to be completed by the applicant who is interested in pursuing a degree in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

Instructions: At the end of your observation experiences, write an essay summarizing what you learned about the practice of Physical Therapy at this facility. Submit one summary for each facility in which you observe. Please complete this form by filing in the blanks. Mail the completed form with your application to: San Diego Mesa College, Special Admissions, 7250 Mesa College Drive, San Diego, CA, 92111.

Applicant Name: ____________________________________________

Facility Name: ____________________________________________ Date(s) of Observation: ____________

Supervising Therapist’s Name: ____________________________ Phone: ____________________________

Type of setting: Inpatient (Hospital/Skilled Nursing) _____ Outpatient (Clinic/Office) _______

Age of clients: Pediatric _____ Adult _____ Geriatric _____ All Ages _____

Total hours completed at this facility: Inpatient _____ Outpatient ______

On a separate sheet of paper write an essay summarizing what you learned about the practice of physical therapy at this facility. Your essay must be typed with a minimum of 500 words. You must also address the following three points:

• Describe a situation or experience during your observation hours that stands out to you as good physical therapy.

• What did you observe that makes you want to pursue a career in physical therapy?

• Based on your observation experience, what challenges do you foresee for physical therapist assistants in the future?

The essay must be typed, a minimum of 500 words, and address all three points to be considered complete.
San Diego Mesa College
PTA Essential Functions

Background:
The PTA student must be able to apply the knowledge and skills necessary to function in a broad variety of clinical situations while providing the spectrum of physical therapy treatments. The list of Essential Functions reflects reasonable expectations of the PTA student for the performance of common physical therapy functions in a safe and competent manner.

Policy:
A student must be capable of performing the following list of essential functions in a timely manner while enrolled in the Physical Therapist Assistant program, with or without reasonable accommodations. The PTA program fully supports the provision of reasonable accommodations to students with special needs in order to achieve program objectives. All adaptive equipment and associated cost is the responsibility of the student.

Motor Skills
A student must be able to:

- Sit or stand in class or clinic for up to 10 hours per day.
- Move or position patients and equipment, which involves lifting, carrying, pulling, and guiding weights up to and including 100 pounds.
- Demonstrate proper postures, body mechanics, ergonomics, and lifting techniques.
- Comfortably touch or be touched by another person in an appropriate and professional way.
- Palpate anatomical structures and handle injured body parts without causing injury to the patient.
- Give manual resistance to a patient’s arm, leg, or trunk during exercise.
- Move with adequate agility and speed to ensure patient safety.
- Walk and balance well enough to help patients walk and transfer with or without equipment, while preventing injury to patient and self.
- Safely grasp and manipulate small objects and set dials on electrical equipment.
- Use equipment that emits electrical, ultrasonic, and thermal energy in the safe and competent treatment of patients.
• Competently perform and supervise cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillation (AED) using guidelines issued by the American Heart Association.

**Observational and Sensory Skills**

A student must be able to:

• Demonstrate appropriate observations skills that will enable the student to discern normal from abnormal in order to determine a safe and appropriate course of action.

• Observe demonstrations, equipment, and patients at a distance and up close for the purpose of quick, appropriate assessment and treatment.

• Use visual, auditory, and tactile senses to observe patients and collect and interpret data.

• Read and interpret equipment dials, patient charts, professional literature, and notes from patients, physicians, and other health professionals.

• Respond to warning sounds, machine alarms, and calls for help.

• Have the ability to identify and respond immediately to patients’ non-verbal cues (facial expressions and grimaces) by taking quick, decisive action.

**Communication Skills**

A student must be able to:

• Demonstrate excellent communication skills in English in verbal and written (including electronic) formats with faculty, peers, patients, families, and other health professionals.

• Recognize and respond to verbal communication, auditory timers and equipment alarms immediately and appropriately in an environment with a moderate level of background noise.

• Initiate conversations, stay on topic and on task with patient treatment in a clinical setting with a moderate level of distraction.

• Record thoughts legibly and clearly for written assignments and tests.

• Legibly record/document patient care notes and communications in standard medical charts (including electronic medical records) in hospital/clinical settings in a timely manner and consistent with the acceptable norms of clinical settings.
**Intellectual and Conceptual Skills**

A student must be able to:

- Measure, calculate, reason, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize complex information.
- Demonstrate good cognitive, memory, and problem solving skills in the classroom and clinical settings in an efficient and timely manner.
- Comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures.
- Meet class standards for successful course completion.
- Collect, interpret, prioritize, and integrate data about patients.
- Stay focused on a specific task for a minimum of one hour.
- Think abstractly.
- Have the ability to generalize information from one task to another and apply it appropriately.

**Behavioral and Social Attitudes**

A student must be able to:

- Recognize and respond appropriately to individuals of all ages, genders, and races, and from all socio-economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.
- Effectively cope with the stress of heavy workloads, demanding patients, and life-threatening clinical situations.
- Exercise sound, professional judgment and flexibility to meet the demands of changing educational and clinical environments.
- Utilize common sense, compassion, integrity, honesty, sincere concern and respect for others, interpersonal skills, and self-motivation.
- Must possess coping skills to accept constructive criticism, talk in front of groups of varying sizes, and use effective time management strategies.
- Recognize and respond appropriately to potentially hazardous situations.
- Demonstrate the physical and emotional capacity to work a 40-hour week while on clinical affiliations.
- Behave in an ethically sound, competent, compassionate, and professional manner in the classroom and in the clinic as outlined in the Standards of Ethical Conduct of the American Physical Therapy Association.
Procedure:

The Essential Functions Policy is posted on the PTA program website and located in the PTA Policy Manual. Students will be given the Essential Functions for PTA Students form as part of their documentation upon acceptance into the program and will sign the associated acknowledgement form.

Students who have concerns about the ability to perform any of the essential functions should contact the PTA program director and Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS).

Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. (See Allied Health Policy Manual, Section K) Students who cannot meet the essential functions with reasonable accommodations will receive career counseling.

I have read through this document and understand that it is my responsibility to contact the Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) office upon acceptance into the program if reasonable accommodations may be necessary for me to be successful in the program.

______________________________  ________________
Signature                           Date

______________________________
Print Name
APPLICATION CONFIRMATION CHECKLIST

Instructions:
Read each item of information, then place a check mark confirming notification. Retain a copy for your records.

___ I have read all of the material contained in the Physical Therapist Assistant application packet and understand the application and selection process.

___ I understand that my application will not be considered if it is incomplete, or does not meet application/program requirements.

Completed Application Packets must include:
• Completed application
• Official Transcripts verifying completion of prerequisites
• English Skills Assessment, if needed to meet requirement
• Observation Verification/Performance Evaluation Form
• Applicant Reaction to Observation Experience
• PTA Essential Functions Acknowledgement
• Application Confirmation Checklist

___ I understand that after my application is accepted and verified, it is my responsibility to notify the Mesa College Special Admissions Office at (619) 388-2684 of any changes in my address, telephone number, or status.

___ I understand it is my responsibility to follow proper application procedures, provide transcripts in the required time line, keep informed on revisions regarding degree requirements, program requirements and selection process, and ensure course equivalency by contacting the college Evaluations office for verification.

___ I understand that the general education requirements for the A.S. Degree are subject to change with the publication of each year’s Mesa College catalog.

___ I understand that if I am notified of being admitted into the program, my failure to submit “Confirmation of Acceptance” or continued interest letter with Special Admissions in the allotted time frame constitutes grounds to withdraw my name from the eligibility list.

___ I understand that the PTA program admission policies are based on published college policies; program admission is an equal opportunity process and persons are not excluded based on ethnicity, age, gender, religion or other legally protected statuses.

___ I understand that San Diego Mesa College reserves the right to make revisions in the PTA program requirements and/or selection procedures, and I am aware that these will be posted on the program website.

___ I have read and understand the Allied Health Department Policy Manual accessible through the link at http://www.sdmesa.edu/students/school/school2/allied-health/. I must adhere to its terms and conditions if admitted to the program.

Signature ___________________________________________ Date _______________________

Print Name __________________________________________