

# PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

2009 – 2010

20 Months

Credits Required for Graduation: 80

Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) Degree

## An Important Part of the Health Care Team

Physical Therapist Assistants are skilled health care providers who, under the supervision of a Physical Therapist, assist in the treatment and prevention of physical disabilities, movement dysfunction and pain resulting from injury, disease, disability, or other health-related conditions. PTA's perform a variety of functions as part of the overall health care team for a patient.

## And There's Plenty of Variety

Services performed by a PTA may include preparing patients, preparing treatment areas and equipment, and implementing treatment programs, which may include the implementation of therapeutic exercises, gait training, activities of daily living, therapeutic heat and cold, ultrasound, electric current, ultraviolet, traction, and various other treatment procedures.

Physical Therapist Assistants identify architectural barriers and assist in teaching other professionals, patients, and families to perform treatment procedures, exercises, and functional activities. They recognize the psychosocial effects of illness and injury and know how to interact appropriately with patients and the patients' families.

Upon successful completion of required courses, graduates will be awarded an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree and will be eligible to take the national certification exam.

## Who Can Be a Physical Therapist Assistant?

A Physical Therapist Assistant should be someone who enjoys working with people and has a sincere interest in helping others. PTA's must be willing to take directions from others, to be part of an overall health care team, and to promote maximum recovery for their patients.

Individuals interested in the PTA program should have a strong academic background in the biological sciences, anatomy, and people skills. Potential students also should be physically fit because the physical demands placed on a PTA include moderate to heavy lifting.

## Job Opportunities

As medicine and technology is becoming more advanced and the overall population is growing older and living longer, the need for PTA's will continue to climb over the next decade.

Physical Therapist Assistants can locate jobs in hospitals, long-term care facilities, rehabilitation centers, schools, and private practice clinics.

## Application Process

Acceptance into the PTA program is limited to 24 students. Applicants are evaluated based on G.P.A., scholastic aptitude, and essay questions. Detailed information regarding the application process can be received by contacting the LATI Admissions Office or following the Application Process link on this website.

## Accreditation

The Physical Therapist Assistant program at Lake Area Technical Institute is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). Contact information for CAPTE:

The Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education  
Department of Accreditation  
American Physical Therapy Association  
1111 North Fairfax Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Telephone: 703-706-3245 Website: [www.apta.org/CAPTE](http://www.apta.org/CAPTE)

## Recommended Background Courses

Although not required, the following courses would be beneficial to this course of study prior to attending Lake Area Technical Institute: Health, Communications, Anatomy, Biology, English, Math, and Computer.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**AED 100 – Automated External Defibrillator (.5 credit)** To prepare individuals in the workplace to provide care for breathing emergencies, perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and use an automated external defibrillator (AED) for victims of sudden cardiac arrest.

\* **ANAT 142 – Anatomy (3 credits)** A study of cells, tissues and organs making up the Integumentary, Muscular, Skeletal, Nervous, Endocrine, Digestive, Respiratory, Lymphatic, and Urinary systems of the body. Emphasis is on structure and function of the systems and the relationship of the body structures (anatomy) to their function (physiology.)

\* **CSC 100 – Computer Concepts (1 credit)** Using a Windows-based microcomputer and related software, you will gain an understanding and basic operational knowledge about the Windows XP operating system, Microsoft Office word processing, and spreadsheets. You will demonstrate this knowledge by scoring at least 80% on assignments, related objective, and performance tests.

\* **ENGL 101 – Composition (3 credits)** This course concentrates on all phases of the writing/communication process. Prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing are used to help students develop clear, concise, and unified writing styles that will serve them well in their chosen career areas.

**MA 115 – Medical Terminology (1.5 credits)** This is a programmed course of study which includes spelling, building words using prefixes, suffixes, word roots and combining forms, defining and recognizing words used in the health field. Course will also include application to a medical record.

\* **MATH 100 – Applied General Math (3 credits)** Emphasis on the ability to understand and apply math skills to solve problems in the world of work.

\* **PHYG 210 – Human Physiology (4 credits)** Lecture, lab work, and demonstrations of human physiological processes both normal and abnormal.

\* **PSYC 101 – General Psychology (3 credits)** This course is an introduction survey of the field of psychology with consideration of the biological bases of behavior, sensory and perceptual processes, learning and memory, human growth and development, social behavior, and normal and abnormal behavior.

**PTA 100 – Introduction to Physical Therapist Assisting (2 credits)** This course will introduce students to the field of physical therapy. Lecture topics and discussion will include history of the physical therapy profession, role and scope of PT/PTA, professional organization, educational and job opportunities, career decisions, confidentiality, licensure, physical therapy terminology, basic research procedures, multi-disciplinary team approach, communication within the health-care fields, as well as current issues affecting the field of physical therapy.

**PTA 106 – Kinesiology (3 credits)** This course includes classroom instruction on basic kinesiological and biomechanical principles related to normal movement and their importance in understanding and implementing treatment programs. The course will provide an in-depth anatomy review with emphasis placed on musculoskeletal and neuromuscular relationships and function.

**PTA 110 – Fundamentals of Physical Therapist Assisting (4 credits)** This course will include lecture and classroom instruction on the fundamental skills of physical therapist assisting required for patient care and treatment. These skills include documentation of patient care; aseptic/sterile techniques as well as a review of universal precautions; preparation of the patient, treatment areas, and equipment; passive range of motion in the traditional planes as well as the diagonal; posture and body mechanics; patient transfers; gait training with or without assistive devices; wheelchairs and wheelchair mobility; architectural barriers, and activities of daily living. The primary focus of this class will be the lab; most of the skills are hands-on.

**PTA 116 – Ethics and Issues in Physical Therapy (2 credits)** This course includes classroom instruction and discussion in ethics and important issues facing the physical therapy profession and health care in general. Topics will include medical law and ethics, multi-disciplinary team approach, standards for practice and ethical conduct, professional liability, medical malpractice, confidentiality, quality assurance, employment issues, fiscal considerations, and third-party payers.

**PTA 120 – Observation and Measurement (4 credits)** This course will include classroom and laboratory instruction on the basic assessment skills necessary for monitoring patient progress and safety, and for making recommendations for treatment modification. Assessment techniques include vital signs, goniometry, manual muscle testing, posture, gait, segmental length, girth and volume, skin and sensory assessment and environmental assessment.

**PTA 125 – Physical Agents and Massage (4 credits)** This course will include classroom and laboratory instruction on the theory and techniques of applying physical therapy modalities including therapeutic heat and cold, ultrasound, hydrotherapy, phototherapy, and intermittent compression pump, and traction. Students will also be exposed to proper positioning and draping techniques for treatment to various body regions. This course will also introduce the topics of universal precautions, sterile techniques, wound care, burn care, dressings, and bandaging of burns and wounds.

**PTA 136 – Electrotherapy (2 ½ weeks) (3 credits)** This course will include classroom and laboratory instruction on the theory and application of therapeutic electrical current and biofeedback for pain modulation and neuromuscular facilitation and re-education as well as the use of electrical stimulation in combination with other therapeutic agents.

**PTA 141 – Clinical Affiliation I (6 weeks) (4 credits)** Designated Clinical Instructor from the community-based physical therapy setting, who has a minimum of 2 years of clinical experience and LATI Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education.

**PTA 145 – Theories of Therapeutic Exercise (1 credit)** This course will include classroom and laboratory instruction on the theory and technique of basic therapeutic exercises. Students will receive instruction in theories, stretching, strengthening, and total joint replacement.

**PTA 150 – Pathology for the PTA (2 credits)** This course will provide students with the basic knowledge of diseases of the human body. Emphasis will be put on the description, etiology, signs and symptoms, diagnostic procedures, treatment, prognosis and prevention of pathologies most commonly treated in physical therapy.

**PTA 216 – Applications in Therapeutic Exercise (2 credits)** This course will consist of classroom and laboratory instruction on the technique of basic therapeutic exercise used for the treatment of musculoskeletal and cardiovascular disorders.

**PTA 220 – Musculoskeletal Disorders and Treatment (4 credits)** This course will consist of classroom and laboratory instruction on the management of common musculoskeletal disorders with emphasis on physical therapy treatment protocols. This course will also include a review of basic assessment and treatment procedures.

**PTA 225 – Psychosocial Considerations in Patient Care (2 credits)** This course will consist of classroom instruction and discussion on topics such as therapist/patient/family response to illness/disability, cultural and age related considerations, death and dying, the grieving process, and appropriate interaction between the PTA and the patient/family.

**PTA 228 – Neuroanatomy and Neurological Dysfunction (3 credits)** This course includes classroom instruction in basic neuroanatomy, review of sensory, motor systems, higher cognitive processes, neurodevelopmental sequences, reflexes, and autonomic nervous systems.

**PTA 229 – Human Development and Pediatric Disorders (1 credit)** This course includes classroom instruction on: embryology, neurodevelopmental sequences, reflexes, critical competencies, and pediatric disability. Students will become familiar with normal and abnormal development. This course will give students an opportunity to interact with children and understand the importance of play.

**PTA 231 – Special Topics (2 credits)** This course will include classroom and laboratory instruction in a variety of topics considered specialties in the practice of physical therapy. Students will be exposed to the following: orthotics, sport bandaging and taping, geriatric disease processes and PT management, cardiopulmonary disease processes and PT management, and alternative medicine.

**PTA 242 – Rehabilitation Procedures (4 credits)** This course includes classroom and laboratory instruction on rehabilitation procedures used in treating neurological disorders such as Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, brain tumors, cerebellar disorders, Guillian Barre', peripheral neuropathies, head injury and spinal cord injury. Amputee rehabilitation and prosthetics will also be discussed.

**PTA 245 – Clinical Affiliation II (6 weeks) (4 credits)** This course is a clinical practicum learning experience that takes place in a community-based physical therapy setting over a period of six consecutive weeks. It occurs after the completion of the first and second year of coursework and the Clinical Affiliation I. The student attends the clinic setting each day for a full workday. While in the clinic setting, the student practices physical therapist assistant procedures necessary for patient care. The clinical instructor provides opportunities for the student to observe and implement physical therapist assistant standards of practice.

**PTA 250 – Clinical Affiliation III (6 weeks) (4 credits)** This course is a clinical practicum learning experience that takes place in a community-based physical therapy setting over a period of six consecutive weeks. It occurs after the completion of the first and second year of coursework and Clinical Affiliations I and II. The student attends the clinic setting each day for a full workday. While in the clinic setting, the student practices physical therapist assistant procedures necessary for patient care. The clinical instructor provides opportunities for the student to observe and implement physical therapist assistant standards of practice.

**\* SOC 100 – Introduction to Sociology (3 credits)** Comprehensive study of society, with analysis of group life, and other forces shaping human behavior.

**\* SPCM 101 – Oral Communications (3 credits)** Introduces the study of speech fundamentals and critical thinking through frequent public speaking practice, including setting, purpose, audience, and subject.

**\* Classes based on college model where 16 credit hours equal one credit. All others based on technical education model where 28 clock hours equal one credit with the exception of clinical affiliation where 60 hours equal one credit.**