

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

The Physical Therapist Assistant program at Mount Wachusett Community College provides students with the opportunity to earn an Associate Degree and prepare to sit for the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE) as a physical therapist assistant. Upon completion of the program, students are prepared to work under the direct supervision of a physical therapist in a variety of settings, including acute care and rehabilitation hospitals, long-term care facilities, private practices, school systems, and home care/VNA settings. During the course of study, students will develop skills and competencies in patient positioning and transfers; range of motion; therapeutic exercise; the safe application of therapeutic modalities such as heat, cold, electricity, and ultrasound; measurement, adjustment, and instruction in the use of ambulatory aids; improving cardiopulmonary function and endurance; and measuring of joint range of motion, muscle strength, length, girth, and vital signs. Upon successful completion of the PTA program, students will be able to demonstrate full understanding of the role of the PTA in the profession.

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT DEGREE (PTA) (SELECTIVE)

Physical therapist assistants implement treatment procedures in the rehabilitation of injured, ill, or debilitated individuals. The Physical Therapist Assistant Degree program prepares individuals to work in the healthcare field under the direct supervision of a physical therapist in a variety of settings. The program also prepares the student for the PTA licensure examination in the student's respective state of practice. The program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education. For more information, please call 978-630-9287. Students applying after established deadlines will be considered for acceptance if seats are available. This selective enrollment program requires additional application components. The selection process is competitive and space is limited. (See Selective Program Requirements for Physical Therapist Assistant Degree (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/admissions/selectiveprogramrequirements/physicaltherapistassistantdegree/>)).

Prerequisite Semester

		Credits
Fall		
ENG 101	College Writing I	3
BIO 152	Essentials of Anatomy and Physiology ¹	4
MAT 143	Statistics (or higher)	3
Year 1		
Fall		
PTA 103	Introduction to Physical Therapist Assisting	4
PSY 105	Introduction To Psychology	3
PTA 104	Applied Anatomy And Kinesiology	4
PTA 120	Integrated Clinical Experience I	2
Spring		
ENG 102	College Writing II	3
PTA 121	Integrated Clinical Experience II	1
PTA 111	Clinical Orthopedics for the PTA	7
PTA 134	Clinical Assessments	3
PTA 139	Human Disease And Pathology ²	4
Year 2		
Fall		
PSY 110	Human Growth And Development	3
PTA 112	Therapeutic Modalities	4
PTA 113	Advanced Rehabilitation Techniques	4
PTA 114	Neurophysiological Techniques	4
Spring		
Cycle 1		
PTA 116	Clinical Practicum I	6
Cycle 2		
PTA 119	Clinical Practicum II	6
Full Semester		
PTA 118	Clinical Management And Healthcare Issues	1
Humanities Elective ³		3
Total Credits:		72

- ¹ BIO 203 Anatomy and Physiology I (formerly BIO 199) and BIO 204 Anatomy and Physiology II may be taken in place of BIO 152 Essentials of Anatomy and Physiology. Grade must be a C+ or better.
- ² PTA majors, consult advisor.
- ³ Humanities Electives: See Elective Courses by Abbreviation (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/electivecoursesbyabbreviation/>).

See Physical Therapist Assistant program student learning outcomes and technical requirements.

Campus

Offered at the Gardner campus.

Requirements for Consideration

Applicants must meet certain academic standards. See Selective Program Requirements for Physical Therapist Assistant Degree (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/admissions/selectiveprogramrequirements/physicaltherapistassistantdegree/>) for specific details or refer to the program application available on our website or through the admissions office.

Student Success Tips

Interested applicants are encouraged to declare the Allied Health Concentration as their program of study, so they can take courses needed to meet requirements for consideration for the PTA program. Once these requirements are completed, students can then apply for acceptance into the PTA program.

Students are expected to have proficient computer skills and the ability to access the internet via desktop/laptop computer or tablet. Internet access may be from home or through a public site such as a local public library, public college or at any Mount Wachusett Community College campus.

Transfer Options

For transfer options, please click here (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/academicresources/#transferinformationtext>). It is recommended that you also consult with your academic advisor.

Special Requirements

PTA students are required to keep pace with the incoming class and must take courses in sequential order. Applicants must meet all requirements for consideration before entering the program.

Students seeking to participate in the Physical Therapist Assistant program may be subject to meeting additional technical standards and requirements which may include immunizations, CPR certification, liability insurance and health insurance.

As part of the coursework in the PTA program, students are required to complete practical hours in clinical facilities working with patients/clients under the supervision of licensed providers. Some clinical sites require the student obtain certain background checks (state/federal criminal or sexual offender), fingerprinting and/or drug testing before participating in clinical experiences. Costs for certain criminal background checks and drug testing are the responsibility of the student. All screenings and background checks are completed AFTER admission/acceptance into the PTA program.

The prospective student is encouraged to discuss any concerns with the program director. A positive background check, positive drug screen or refusal to comply in these background checks or drug testing will result in the inability to participate in clinical experiences required in the program. (See Selective Program Requirements for Physical Therapist Assistant Degree (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/admissions/selectiveprogramrequirements/physicaltherapistassistantdegree/>)).

Please note: Marijuana, though legal in Massachusetts, is recognized as a controlled substance by the federal government. Marijuana use whether for medicinal or recreational purposes will lead to a positive drug test; making the student ineligible to attend a practicum site.

BIO 152 Essentials of Anatomy and Physiology or BIO 203 Anatomy and Physiology I (formerly BIO 199) and BIO 204 Anatomy and Physiology II must be completed no more than ten years prior to the program's application deadline or concurrently with PTA coursework in semesters I and II. Please note that all BIO and PTA courses require a grade of C+ or better in order to be eligible for promotion to the next level.

Career options/Earning potential

For career options, please click here (<https://mwcc.lightcastcc.com/programs/physical-therapist-assistant-associate-degree/166957/?region=North%20Central%20MA/Southwest%20NH&radius=>).

PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR PTA

Upon graduation from this program, students shall have demonstrated the ability to:

- Consistently demonstrate appropriate role utilization of the physical therapist assistant in the application of established treatment interventions as directed by the primary physical therapist.
- Integrate into practice the Guidelines of Ethical Conduct/Standards of Practice for PTAs in an effort to assure safe and proper conduct for all interactions within the profession.
- Demonstrate entry-level competence and skill in the implementation of a comprehensive treatment plan including appropriate modifications according to patient response, patient practitioner interactions, and participation in discharge planning and follow-up.
- Report and communicate regularly with supervising physical therapists regarding patient progress and treatment modifications in accordance with changes in patient status.
- Perform with entry-level competence data collection procedures, integrating the findings of such procedures to the patient's plan of care.
- Identify and demonstrate consistent behavior of interactions and teaching with healthcare professionals, patients, and their families while providing the desired psycho-social support among diverse populations.
- Demonstrate effective and accurate written and verbal communication skills in documenting the relevant aspects of patient care, including patient response and progress.
- Integrate information obtained from professional literature review into clinical practice as evidenced-based practitioners of physical therapy interventions in keeping with the intent of the APTA's Vision 2020 statement.
- Demonstrate consistent commitment to lifelong learning through regular participation in continuing education.
- Demonstrate successful performance on state licensure examination.
- Obtain employment as entry-level physical therapist assistant.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS¹ FOR PTA

¹ For general information about technical standards and accommodation, see Technical Standards. (<http://catalog.mwcc.edu/admissions/selectiveprogramrequirements/physicaltherapistassistantdegree/>)

Students entering this program must be able to demonstrate the ability to:

1. Comprehend textbook material at the 11th grade level.
2. Communicate and assimilate information either in spoken, printed, signed, or computer voice format.
3. Gather, analyze and, draw conclusions from data.
4. Stand for a minimum of two hours.
5. Walk for a minimum of six hours without device or apparatus, not necessarily consecutively.
6. Stoop, bend, and twist for a minimum of 30 minutes at a time and be able to repeat this activity at frequent intervals.
7. Lift a 40-pound person or assist with a larger person and transfer the person from one location to another.
8. Determine by touch: hotness/coldness, wetness/dryness, and hardness/softness.
9. Use the small muscle dexterity necessary to do such tasks as gloving, gowning, and operating controls on machinery.
10. Read measurement units with or without corrective lenses.
11. Respond to spoken words, monitor signals, call bells, and vital sign assessment equipment with or without corrective devices.
12. Identify behaviors that would endanger a person's life or safety and intervene quickly in a crisis situation with an appropriate solution.
13. Remain calm, rational, decisive, and in control at all times, especially during emergency situations.
14. Exhibit social skills appropriate to professional interactions.

15. Maintain cleanliness and personal grooming consistent with close personal contact.
16. Function without causing harm to self or others if under the influence of prescription or over-the-counter medications.

PTA 103. Introduction to Physical Therapist Assisting. 4 Credits.

This course is designed to provide the student with an introduction to Basic Patient Care Skills: Preparation for Patient Care, Aseptic Techniques, Turning & Positioning, Wheelchairs, Vital Signs & Anthropometrics, Transfer Activities, Gait Training with Ambulatory Assistive Devices, and Introduction to Documentation, the Medical Record and Clinical Communication. Adherence to the attendance policy and completion of this course with a final grade of C+ (77%) or better must be achieved in order to advance in the PTA program. Prerequisites: ENG 098, FYE 101, MAT 092, RDG 098 or placement; BIO 152 or BIO 203 and BIO 204, Enrollment in PTA; Corequisites: PTA 120. Fall.

PTA 104. Applied Anatomy And Kinesiology. 4 Credits.

Identification and detailed palpation of the bones and muscles of the human skeleton will be correlated with joint and muscle function. Introductory concepts concerning tissue organization, basic biomechanics, and the nervous system will be studied. Basic concepts of musculoskeletal structure and function will be applied to a more complex analysis of human movement and skill. Adherence to the attendance policy and completion of this course with a final grade of C+ (77%) or better must be achieved in order to advance in the PTA program. Prerequisite: BIO 152 or BIO 203 and BIO 204 with a C+ or better. Fall.

PTA 111. Clinical Orthopedics for the PTA. 7 Credits.

This course covers the intervention strategies that are applicable to an orthopedic patient that are part of entry-level practice as a PTA. Normal and pathomechanics of the neuromusculoskeletal systems are covered in detail via regional analysis of the major articulations of the extremities and spine. Etiology and physical therapy management of clinical dysfunctions commonly encountered in a general orthopedic patient population will be studied. Normal and pathological gait will be analyzed. This course also presents the theory and application of traditional therapeutic exercise including ROM, stretching, resistive exercise, balance and coordination and cardiovascular/aerobic activity. Evidence-based practice guidelines regarding traditional exercise suggestions for selected musculoskeletal diagnoses and home exercise program instruction will also be covered. Adherence to the attendance policy and completion of this course with a final grade of C+ (77%) or better must be achieved in order to advance in the PTA program. Prerequisite: PTA 103, PTA 104, PTA 120. Spring.

PTA 112. Therapeutic Modalities. 4 Credits.

This course is designed to present the physiological basis, clinical application and specific techniques of administration for the following modalities: infrared heating and cooling, ultraviolet light, deep heating, intermittent compression, mechanical traction, electrical stimulation for analgesia, muscle contraction and specialized currents, iontophoresis, biofeedback, and LASER. Emphasis will be placed on the indications and precautions and contraindications of each to assure patient safety and treatment effectiveness. Adherence to the attendance policy and completion of this course with a final grade of C+ (77%) or better must be achieved in order to advance in the PTA program. Prerequisite: PTA 111, PTA 121, PTA 134, PTA 139. Fall.

PTA 113. Advanced Rehabilitation Techniques. 4 Credits.

This course presents an advanced view of rehabilitation. Specific patient populations and techniques associated with the treatment of these populations will be addressed. Topics include but will not be limited to pathological gait, cardiac rehabilitation, advanced soft tissue approaches to the spine and extremities, an introduction to extremity joint mobilization, aquatics, geriatrics and, amputees and prosthetics, CPT and Integumentary Care. A problem based oriented approach using specific case studies representing targeted patient population will be utilized. An evidence-based practice research project is required. Students will also complete an evidence-based practice research project which will include both a written and oral presentation that satisfies the MWCC institutional outcomes for competency in reading, writing, speaking and computer literacy. The theory and clinical application of chest physical therapy techniques will also be presented and practiced in this course. This course also covers data collection, the diseases and conditions that impact effective treatment, and interventions specific to the entry-level practice of Integumentary care as a PTA, including, but not limited to burns and wounds. Adherence to the attendance policy and completion of this course with a final grade of C+ (77%) or better must be achieved in order to advance in the PTA program. Prerequisite: PTA 121. Fall.

PTA 114. Neurophysiological Techniques. 4 Credits.

This course presents the theoretical framework of neurodevelopmental and neurophysiological approaches to therapeutic exercise. Normal movement, motor development, and motor learning are emphasized. Sensorimotor dysfunctions, characteristic limitations, and abnormal motor movements are discussed. The basic approaches to neurophysiological techniques and their rationale are included. These traditional approaches will be compared to contemporary theories of motor development, motor learning, and motor control. Adherence to the attendance policy and completion of this course with a final grade of C+ (77%) or better must be achieved in order to advance in the PTA program. Prerequisite: PTA 111, PTA 121, PTA 134, PTA 139. Fall.

PTA 116. Clinical Practicum I. 6 Credits.

Clinical Practicum I is the third clinical experience in a physical therapy setting. The purpose of this intermediate experience is to apply, integrate, and perform learned clinical skills on patients under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist and/or licensed physical therapist assistant. The emphasis of this experience is to integrate previously learned and practiced PTA skills, therapeutic modalities, advanced therapeutic techniques, and neurophysiological techniques into an established physical therapy program. Typical practice settings may include acute care hospitals, private practice, sports developmental centers, skilled nursing centers, geriatrics, pediatrics, VNA, inpatient rehabilitation centers, VA hospitals, and psychiatric centers. Adherence to the attendance policy and completion of this course with a final grade of C+ (77%) or better must be achieved in order to advance in the PTA program. Prerequisites: PTA 112, PTA 113, PTA 114, PTA 121. Spring.

PTA 118. Clinical Management And Healthcare Issues. 1 Credit.

Key non-patient care-related topics are presented concerning issues of importance to the physical therapist assistant. Course topics include PTA licensure, job search (cover letter, resume writing, and interviewing), the ADA, insurance regulations, supervision/delegation issues for the PTA, quality assurance, and risk management. Adherence to the attendance policy and completion of this course with a final grade of C+ (77%) or better must be achieved in order to advance in the PTA program. Prerequisites: PTA 112, PTA 113, PTA 114. Spring.

PTA 119. Clinical Practicum II. 6 Credits.

This course is the fourth clinical experience in a physical therapy setting. The purpose of this final experience is to apply, integrate, and perform learned clinical skills on patients under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist and/or licensed physical therapist assistant. The emphasis of this experience is to integrate previously learned and practiced PTA skills, special topics, and clinical management and health care issues into the delivery of a comprehensive physical therapy treatment program. Typical practice settings may include acute care hospitals, private practice, sports developmental centers, skilled nursing centers, geriatrics, pediatrics, VNA, inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation centers, VA hospitals, and psychiatric centers. Adherence to the attendance policy and completion of this course with a final grade of C+ (77%) or better must be achieved in order to advance in the PTA program. Prerequisites: PTA 116. Spring.

PTA 120. Integrated Clinical Experience I. 2 Credits.

This integrated clinical experience (ICE) provides students the opportunity for clinical observations and to enhance skill acquisition of the techniques learned in PTA 103 and PTA 104. The students will be exposed to early patient interaction, physical therapy professionals, and other healthcare professionals. Classroom activities will require student self-reflection on clinical and professional skills. Additional classroom topics include an introduction to Evidenced-Based PT Practice, Ethics and Professionalism, PTA Licensure, Cultural Sensitivity, the APTA and Stress Management. Adherence to the attendance policy and completion of this course with a final grade of C+ (77%) or better must be achieved in order to advance in the PTA program. Prerequisites: Enrollment in PTA; RDG 098, MAT 092, ENG 098, FYE 101, or placement; Corequisites: PTA 103, PTA 104. Fall.

PTA 121. Integrated Clinical Experience II. 1 Credit.

This integrated clinical experience (ICE) provides students the opportunity for clinical observations and to enhance skill acquisition of the techniques learned in PTA 111 and PTA 139. The students will be exposed to early patient interaction, physical therapy professionals, and other healthcare professionals. Classroom activities will require student self-reflection on clinical and professional skills. Adherence to the attendance policy and completion of this course with a final grade of C+ (77%) or better must be achieved in order to advance in the PTA program. Prerequisites: Enrollment in PTA; BIO 152, PTA 103, PTA 104, PTA 120. Corequisites: PTA 111, PTA 139. Spring.

PTA 134. Clinical Assessments. 3 Credits.

This course covers the role of the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) in collecting subjective data and performing tests and measures to collect objective data to entry-level competency. Data that is collected utilizing the assessment skills covered in this course will support the rationale for rehabilitative techniques, modalities and therapeutic exercises that will be employed in current companion and subsequent courses in the curriculum. Data collection from direct examination may include, but not be limited to; Patient Communication & Subjective Data Collection, Goniometry and Manual Muscle Testing, Cardiovascular & Pulmonary Examination, Global Observation, Mental Function, and Components of Mobility & Function, Integumentary Examination, Functional Outcomes & Assessments, Ergonomics & Workstation Analysis, ADA Environment & Architectural Barriers, Neuromuscular Examination, and Integumentary Examination. Adherence to the attendance policy and completion of this course with a final grade of C+ (77%) or better must be achieved in order to advance in the PTA program. Prerequisites: PTA 103, PTA 104, PTA 120. Spring.

PTA 139. Human Disease And Pathology. 4 Credits.

This course will cover the etiology, natural course, and termination of disease in order to assist the student in understanding the cause and effect relationship between disease and disability. Emphasis will be placed on the most common diseases and disabilities which the student will likely encounter in the practice of physical therapy and/or massage therapy. Adherence to the attendance policy

and completion of this course with a final grade of C+ (77%) or better must be achieved in order to advance in the PTA program.
Prerequisites: BIO 152 or BIO 203 and BIO 204 (or corequisite). Spring.