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 Exam (NPTE). Successful completion of this exam allows the graduate to be licensed as a PTA within the graduate’s respective state of practice. 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](http://catalog.mwcc.edu/admissions/selectiveprogramrequirements/physicaltherapistassistantdegree) for Physical Therapist Assistant Degree).  

**Prerequisite Semester**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENG 101</th>
<th>College Writing I</th>
<th>3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSY 105</td>
<td>Introduction To Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS 127</td>
<td>Computer Technologies (or Business Elective)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanities Elective</td>
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**Year 1**

**Fall**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PTA 101</th>
<th>Introduction To Physical Therapist Assisting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTA 102</td>
<td>Basic Therapeutic Techniques</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA 104</td>
<td>Applied Anatomy And Kinesiology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIO 199</td>
<td>Anatomy and Physiology I (formerly BIO203)</td>
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**Intercession**

| PTA 105 | Assessment Techniques | 3 |

**Spring**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIO 204</th>
<th>Anatomy and Physiology II</th>
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<tr>
<td>ENG 102</td>
<td>College Writing II</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTA 111</td>
<td>Clinical Orthopedics for the PTA</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA 139</td>
<td>Human Disease And Pathology</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>

**Summer**

| PTA 110 | Clinical Practicum I  | 3 |

**Year 2**

**Fall**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSY 110</th>
<th>Human Growth And Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTA 112</td>
<td>Therapeutic Modalities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA 113</td>
<td>Advanced Rehabilitation Techniques</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA 114</td>
<td>Neurophysiological Techniques</td>
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**Spring**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PTA 116</th>
<th>Clinical Practicum II</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTA 117</td>
<td>Special Topics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA 118</td>
<td>Clinical Management And Healthcare Issues</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA 119</td>
<td>Clinical Practicum III</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Total Credits: 78

1. A grade of C+ or better is required
2. Business Electives: ACC, BUS, CIS, ECO, FIN, MGT, MKT, PLS
3. Humanities Electives: ART, ASL, DAN, ENG, FRE, HUM, MUS, PHL, SPA, SPC, THE
4. Must be taken concurrently or prior to: PTA 111 Clinical Orthopedics for the PTA and PTA 139 Human Disease And Pathology
5. PTA majors, consult advisor

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

**Campus**
Offered at Gardner campus.

**Requirements for consideration**
Applicants must meet certain academic standards. See Selective Program Requirements for Physical Therapist Assistant Degree for specific details or refer to the program application available on our website or through the admissions office.

**Helpful hints**
Interested applicants are encouraged to register in the Allied Health Concentration so they can take courses needed to meet requirements for consideration. They can then apply for acceptance.

Technology is integrated into all aspects of attending college in the 21st century. 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. 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 Physical Therapist Assistant program may be subject to meeting additional technical standards and requirements which may include immunizations, CPR certification, liability insurance, health insurance, a Criminal/Sexual Offender Records Information (CORI/SORI) check, fingerprinting and drug testing. Some of these may be done at the student’s expense. (See Selective Program Requirements for Physical Therapist Assistant Degree for specific details or refer to the program application available on our website or through the admissions office.) BIO 199 Anatomy and Physiology I (formerly BIO203) 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.

**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 STANDARDS FOR PTA**

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.
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.

**Courses**

**PTA 101. Introduction To Physical Therapist Assisting. 1 Credit.**
This course provides students with an introduction to the profession of physical therapy and the role and utilization of the physical therapist assistant. Professional and ethical behaviors are emphasized throughout various course topics including documentation, patient/healthcare provider interaction, legal issues, death and dying, and stress management. Prerequisites: ENG 098, FYE 101, MAT 096, RDG 098, or placement.

**PTA 102. Basic Therapeutic Techniques. 4 Credits.**
This course is designed to provide the student with an introduction to basic patient care skills such as: Patient and environment preparation, aseptic technique (standard/universal precautions, infection control, and hand sanitation), body mechanics, verbal commands, patient turning and positioning, wheelchair prescription and management, transfer techniques, ambulation with assistive
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. Prerequisite: BIO 199 (or corequisite) with a C+ or better. Fall.

PTA 105. Assessment Techniques. 3 Credits.
This course covers the theory and application of the assessment skills that are required to ensure entry-level competence for physical therapist assistants. Data that is collected using the assessment skills covered in this course will support the rationale for rehabilitative techniques, modalities, and exercises that will be employed in subsequent courses in the curriculum. Prerequisites: PTA 101, PTA 102, PTA 104. Intersession.

PTA 110. Clinical Practicum I. 3 Credits.
This course is the first of three comprehensive clinical experiences in a physical therapy setting. The purpose of this initial 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. Basic patient care skills, anatomy/biomechanics, therapeutic exercise, selected assessment techniques, and human disease and pathology will be emphasized. Typical practice settings may include acute care hospitals, private practice, skilled nursing centers, and outpatient rehabilitation centers. Prerequisites: BIO 204, PTA 111, PTA 139. Summer.

PTA 111. Clinical Orthopedics for the PTA. 8 Credits.
This course covers the assessment and treatment 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. The assessment skills of goniometry, manual muscle testing, and tests for muscle length including instructor demonstrations of special tests for the spine and extremities will be covered in the laboratory component of this course. 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. Prerequisite: Enrollment in PTA; PTA 105; BIO 199 and BIO 204 (or corequisite). 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. Prerequisite: PTA 110. Fall.

PTA 113. Advanced Rehabilitation Techniques. 3 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 (non-laboratory), aquatics and geriatrics. A problem based oriented approach using specific case studies representing targeted patient population will be utilized. An evidence-based practice research project is required. Prerequisite: PTA 110. 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. Prerequisite: PTA 110. Fall.

PTA 116. Clinical Practicum II. 5 Credits.
This is the second of three comprehensive clinical experiences 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. Prerequisites: PTA 112, PTA 113, PTA 114. Spring.

**PTA 117. Special Topics. 3 Credits.**
This course covers specialty topic areas in the profession. Students will gain an introductory exposure to the theory and application of, women’s health issues, pediatrics, burn rehabilitation, chest physical therapy, amputation & prosthetics, and wound care. Key non-patient care-related topics concerning issues of importance to the physical therapist assistant are also presented including: Evidence-Based Research Project Presentation, basic study techniques/licensure examination preparation and a mock licensure examination are also included utilizing the Online Advantage software materials. Prerequisites: PTA 112, PTA 113, PTA 114. 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. Prerequisites: PTA 112, PTA 113, PTA 114. Spring.

**PTA 119. Clinical Practicum III. 5 Credits.**
This course is the third of three comprehensive clinical experiences 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. Prerequisites: PTA 116, PTA 117, PTA 118. 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. Prerequisites: BIO 199 and BIO 204 (or corequisite). Spring.