

Murray State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Information in this document is subject to change.

Updated June 2024

This is a list of frequently asked questions along with answers that we hope will help you. If you have other questions not listed here, don't hesitate to contact the program.

Q: Is the MSC – PTA program accredited?

A: The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Murray State College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085; telephone: (703) 706-3245; email: accreditation@apta.org; website: www.capteonline.org. If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call 580-387-7440 or email grobinson@mscok.edu

Q: If I complete this program will I be a licensed physical therapist assistant?

A: Each state has specific requirements to be a PTA. This program qualifies the graduate to apply for and take the NPTE license examination. This exam is a nationally prepared exam that is developed through the [Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy](#). Passing this exam is one part of becoming a licensed PTA in every state that licenses PTAs. Graduation from this or any PTA program does not provide a license to be a PTA automatically. The graduate seeking license in Oklahoma, must first apply to the Oklahoma State Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision to take the licensure exam and then upon successful completion of the exam and completing the application process, the graduate is granted a license as a PTA in Oklahoma. If you choose to seek licensure in another state, you will be required to apply for licensure using the procedure required by the state in which you are seeking license. There is a substantial cost to take the licensure exam and to acquire a license. These fees are estimated in the "Cost of Program" section of the PTA program website, however the student should understand that these fees are subject to change and are not controlled by MSC or the program.

Q: If I am still in high school, what courses should I take now to prepare myself for a career as a Physical Therapist Assistant?

A: Science courses including: Physical Science, Biology, Anatomy/Physiology, Chemistry, Algebra, Physics, Public Speaking, Computer Science, etc. Students may be eligible to take concurrent college courses and can check on this through their high school and through the MSC website under Academics and Concurrent enrollment.

Q: What courses do I need to take to get into the PTA program?

A: The program curriculum can be viewed at the [PTA Program Website](#) in the menu below Program Overview. You can access a curriculum sheet that has a list of prerequisite courses. If you are prepared for college, then you will be able to follow the suggested course sequence listed in the curriculum. If you are not prepared to take the Anatomy & Physiology courses at MSC then you may need to take courses to help you be prepared to succeed.

Q: When can I apply to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program?

A: Prospective students begin the application process in September after the publication of the application links on the program website. Students must have completed the first semester courses or be in the process of completing these courses in order to be prepared to apply. Applications are due by the third Thursday of November of each year. Students must complete application materials and view an on-line Application Orientation video which provides information about the application process. All application materials are due in the PTA Program office by the due date in November.

Q: How long will it take me to complete this program?

A: The program is completed in 78 academic weeks. The first year includes two full-time semesters of prerequisite courses with students who are accepted into the PTA program beginning two PTA courses in the spring of that first year. The second year is two full-time semesters of PTA core courses and is followed by two clinical courses that conclude in August. Full time clinical courses are typically 8:00 to 5:00, forty hours per week. The second year or technical portion of the program requires full-time enrollment. The program can be completed in 5 semesters which is 78 weeks.

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Q: I must work while going to school to make a living, what is the maximum number of hours suggested that I should work during a semester?

A: The program's curriculum is strenuous, so students should try to minimize all other demands on their time in order to have sufficient time to prepare and study. It is suggested that students with part-time jobs work no more than 16 hours a week in the second year or technical phase of the program. We recognize that this is not always possible and exceptional students have been successful in the program and worked more, however the program does require significant out-of-class time to be successful.

Q: I have taken some of the prerequisite courses at another college or university. Will these courses transfer, and will I get credit for them for this program?

A: Courses taken at accredited colleges and universities will transfer to Murray State College. Applicants who have questions about the transferability of a course may submit their transcript for review. You may contact the Registrar's office at MSC for further information. You are also encouraged to email the Program Director if you have a question about a course that has a different name taken from another school. A review of the course's description and syllabus may be needed to complete the determination.

Q: How is the class selection made for this program?

A: Each class selection is made from the applicants who apply to the program. Selection is based on a point system that is reviewed by a selection committee. The program director or program secretary do not vote on the committee. The committee members are made up of MSC faculty, clinical faculty, and advisory committee members. The committee is "blinded" to the application and determination is made solely on the point system. This means that the committee members do not know identified information such as name, age, race, or gender. A description of the selection process is provided in the Application Orientation video that is required prior to application.

For students who have taken the ACT, the reading subscore is used. If they haven't taken the ACT, they may take the Accuplacer Reading test given in the MSC Testing Center. In addition, applicants take the ATI TEAS exam through the MSC Testing Center. There is a fee for the application exam which is subject to change. Students should be aware that a higher GPA, higher grades in the prerequisite courses, higher score on admission exam, and a higher ACT score result in more points. Points are also earned by becoming more aware of the profession of physical therapy by completing career reading, observation of physical therapy in various settings, and for volunteering or working with PTs or PTAs in clinical settings.

Q: What are the grade requirements if I am accepted to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program?

A: Student must have at least a "C" (73% or higher) in all required courses to remain and progress in the PTA program.

Q: Is clinical experience included in the program?

A: Yes, clinical practice is scheduled for PTA students during their training in the program. This clinical experience will be provided in a variety of physical therapy settings and sites. The program affiliates with numerous sites throughout this area and across Oklahoma and surrounding states. Students participate in fourteen (14) weeks of full time clinical experience during the second year of the program. Students are assigned to clinical sites by the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) who is the faculty member in charge of the clinical education component of the program. Clinical instructors who volunteer their time to supervise students during the clinical experiences. Each clinical course includes an additional clinical education fee that is explained in the "Cost of Program" information available on the program website. ***Students are responsible for the cost of travel and housing during these clinical experiences. Students may be assigned to clinical sites away from their home area.***

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Q: Is transportation provided from the college to the clinical settings?

A: No, students are responsible for their own transportation to and from classes and clinical experiences. During clinical internships, students are responsible for their own housing if and when the clinical assignment is away from their home. A few sites may offer assistance in locating housing; however the cost of the housing is the responsibility of the student.

Q: When I finish this program, will I be a Physical Therapist Assistant?

A: Students who finish the program will receive an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree from Murray State College. When the student has completed all program requirements they are eligible to take the licensure exam (NPTE for PTAs). Information about this exam is located the FSBPT website. www.fsbpt.org. This organization is responsible for the development and administration of the exam. The FSBPT and is part of the licensing requirement for all states that license PTAs.

Q: Will the college find a job for me upon graduation?

A: No, however program does post job opportunities through social medial links and helps to connect interested graduates to potential job opportunities when those are made available to the program. The program graduates have consistently reported higher than 90% success in finding jobs within the first six months. The job market varies by location and type of physical therapy facility. Links to the Department of Labor provide both state and national job projections: [Click here](#) for information or go to the Prospective Students Links on the PTA Program webpage.

Q: What if I want to get my PT degree after PTA school, how many of the PTA required courses will apply towards the prerequisites for Physical Therapy training?

A: The physical therapist assistant is a valuable member of the physical therapy team. If an individual desires to be a PT then they should pursue the requirements for PT school rather that PTA school. There are currently only two PTA to DPT “Bridge” programs. None of the technical courses required in the PTA curriculum will transfer as prerequisites to a traditional PT school at this time. General education courses will transfer depending on the requirements of the school to which the student may desire to transfer. You will need additional prerequisite classes in order to apply to any or PT program. It is advised that you seek additional information prior to applying to the PTA program if you desire to eventually become a physical therapist.

Q: Do I get any holiday or break time during the year of PTA school?

A: Yes, most holidays that the college observes while in the academic component and any days observed by the clinical site.

Q: Do we get any training or practice in Physical Therapy departments during the program?

A: Yes, this is what we call clinical experience. Prior to any “real life” experience you will practice in lab simulations and with your classmates under the supervision of the faculty. You will have scheduled and open lab practices. In addition, you will spend 4 weeks (40 hours/wk) at a clinical site at the beginning of the second spring semester. During the summer months following the second year, you will spend 5 weeks (40 hours/wk) at two different clinical sites. The total clinical education time is 14 full time weeks.

Q: Do I receive any pay for clinical time?

A: No, your clinical education is part of the curriculum, not employment. The clinical experience is a class that is facilitated by the program Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE). You will be learning and have a clinical instructor who is supervising your clinical education during all clinical experiences. Tuition and fees apply to all classes including clinical rotations. There is a substantial fee (\$685) attached to each of three clinical courses.

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Q: May I choose the physical therapy department or location at which I want to spend my clinical time?

A: No, however you are encouraged to specify first and second choices, but assignments will be made based on your educational needs and site availability as determined by the faculty. You could be assigned to any of the clinical facilities used by this program. Effort will be made to accommodate the student needs; however it is the student's responsibility to provide their own travel and housing during these clinical experiences. Students should understand going into the program that they may need to be away for home during the clinical experience.

Q: Do I need to have professional liability insurance while in the program and clinicals?

A: Yes and the program will coordinate this insurance coverage and collect the cost of this from the student. The cost of professional liability insurance is outlined in the "Cost of the Program" area of the program website. Fees are subject to change.

Q: As a student, can I be a member of the professional organization?

A: Student membership in the Oklahoma Physical Therapy Association and APTA is required. On-line resources available to members are required of the student. The APTA and OPTA are vital to profession and to the future on-going education of the graduate. Membership will help you in access to information, staying current with professional issues, access to continuing education meetings and is a positive asset when searching for a job.

Q: How did the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the MSC PTA Program?

A: During the spring of 2020, many things changed but we learned from that experience. The program was able to shift to distance learning and change the model of delivery. Clinical experiences were challenging but no student missed class time or clinical time. In the event of outbreaks, the program follows the guidelines set out by the college. Information will be provided linked to the MSC Home Page. As healthcare providers, PTs and PTAs are frontline workers in many acute care facilities so it is critical that the program prepare students to support the needs of patients and to protect patients and themselves. During times of restrictions, the program adapted course work and increased distance learning to meet needs of students. Following CDC guidelines and being fully vaccinated is recommended. Students are informed of clinical site requirements, many of which require vaccination. A vaccine awareness form is provided at the beginning of the program to ensure students are aware.

Q: Who can I contact to get more information about the program?

A: You can contact the program office: (580) 387-7440 to reach Ms. Young or you can contact the program director, Mr. Robinson.

Sharon Young –Secretary – PTA & OTA
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