

# **TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE LOWCOUNTRY PTA PROGRAM INFORMATION**

## **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program at Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL) is a two-year, five-semester program leading to an Associate Degree in Health Sciences. Course work in the program consists of classes in general education, health-related sciences and physical therapist assisting. While formal clinical education courses are scheduled at the end of the third, fourth and fifth semesters, students are introduced early in the curriculum to patient care through participation in select laboratory sessions as part of various laboratory courses. It is the belief of the TCL PTA Program that these early “hands-on” learning experiences facilitate student learning and help to bridge the gap between the classroom and the “real-world” of the clinic environment.

## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

The philosophy of the PTA Program is congruent with the mission of TCL. The PTA Program faculty serves the profession, community and society. Both TCL and the PTA Program strive to create an atmosphere of excellence in teaching and learning. Within the College’s open atmosphere of shared values, the PTA Program encourages creativity, innovation and resourcefulness among its students and faculty. These commitments create a positive, student-centered environment that empowers individuals to learn and develop throughout their lifetimes.

Physical therapy is at once both a science and an art. Only through a careful blending of these two components is optimal patient care provided. For this reason, the PTA Program strives to instill professionalism, critical-thinking skills and technical skills into a strong framework of ethics and compassion. Theory and research drive the science of physical therapy while caring serves to promote dignity and creates a climate of support that is respectful and accepting of each person’s beliefs, culture and lifestyles. With these values in mind, the PTA Program at TCL was created to prepare individuals to come into the healthcare arena with confidence and competence as entry-level practitioners.

Education is a lifelong, interactive process of teaching and learning. Teaching is a goal-directed, facilitative process based on the needs of the learners. An educational climate that fosters self-direction, self-esteem, and critical thinking enhances learning. The learner is expected to be involved, responsible, and committed to ongoing and life long learning.

Physical therapy education uses biological, behavioral, and physical therapy sciences to provide students with the opportunities to meet their learning needs. It is the responsibility of the faculty to develop, implement, and evaluate the program of learning and to promote an environment that fosters mutual respect and the development of self-initiated personal and professional goals. It is the responsibility of the student to be an active, committed partner in the educational process by critically examining information and reflecting upon concepts, beliefs and ideas. Only through this partnership will both student and program outcomes be achieved.

## PROGRAM FUNDAMENTALS

While supporting the mission and goals of the College, the mission of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Technical College of the Lowcountry is to provide the community with highly trained, competent Physical Therapist Assistants.

To support this mission, the goal of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program is to provide a comprehensive curriculum to prepare the Physical Therapist Assistant student with the knowledge and abilities necessary for entry-level practice and to provide eligibility to successfully sit for the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE) for Physical Therapist Assistants.

Curricular concepts and program outcomes were developed based upon *A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Assistant Education: Version 2007*.

Curricular Concept and Definition	Program Outcomes
<p><b>Clinical Competence</b></p> <p>Clinical competence is the provision of safe and effective physical therapy intervention within the scope of practice for a physical therapist assistant. It is the product of theory, research, knowledge and learned intervention skills.</p>	<p>Graduates of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program are able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist in an ethical, legal, safe, and effective manner.</li> <li>2. Implement selected components and interventions in a plan of care developed by a licensed physical therapist.</li> <li>3. Comprehend the basis for the physical therapy treatment plans established by the licensed physical therapist.</li> <li>4. Collaborate with the supervising licensed physical therapist regarding patient progress and goal achievement.</li> <li>5. Utilize critical thinking and problem solving strategies within the knowledge and limits of practice to achieve patient outcomes as directed by the licensed physical therapist.</li> <li>6. Interact with patients and families in a manner that provides the desired psychosocial support including the recognition of cultural, developmental and socioeconomic differences.</li> <li>7. Communicate verbally and non-verbally with physical therapists and other health care professionals in a positive and effective manner.</li> <li>8. Participate in teaching other health care providers, patients, families and community groups.</li> <li>9. Demonstrate the professional behaviors that reflect a commitment to the profession of physical therapy.</li> <li>10. Identify career development and lifelong learning opportunities.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Acceptance</b></p> <p>Acceptance is an attitude of openness and respect for the beliefs and practices of others. It is the product of awareness, self-reflection, compassion and education.</p>	
<p><b>Professionalism</b></p> <p>Professionalism relates to characteristics and conduct that conform to a standard of expected behaviors. It is the product of self-reflection, modeling, mentoring and guidance.</p>	
<p><b>Ethics</b></p> <p>Ethics relate to a set of moral values and principles that govern physical therapy practice. It is the product of knowledge, judgment and personal growth.</p>	

## PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The PTA Program at TCL is a rigorous and challenging curriculum. Each day, students learn new information, develop new abilities, and gain valuable insights into themselves and their future patients. The curriculum is designed as a progression of increasing complexity. Pre-requisites and co-requisites exist for each technical course within the program. All PTA courses (indicated with the course abbreviation PTH) must be completed in the semester indicated below:

### FALL SEMESTER

Hours			Lect	Lab	Credits
BIO	210	Anatomy & Physiology I	3	3	4
ENG	101	English Composition I	3	0	3
PSY	201	General Psychology	3	0	3
MAT	120	Probability & Statistics	3	0	3
PTH	101	Physical Therapy Professional Prep.	1	3	2
					<b>15</b>

### SPRING SEMESTER

BIO	211	Anatomy & Physiology II	3	3	4
ENG	102	English Composition II	3	0	3
PTH	202	Physical Therapy Modalities	3	3	4
PTH	205	Physical Therapy Functional Anatomy	3	3	4
					<b>15</b>

### SUMMER SEMESTER

PTH	242	Orthopedic Management	4	0	4
PTH	240	Therapeutic Exercises/Application	4	3	5
PTH	252	Clinical Practice	0	6	2
					<b>11</b>

### FALL SEMESTER

PTH	115	Pathology for PTA	3	0	2
PTH	235	Interpersonal Dynamics	2	0	2
PTH	246	Rehabilitation	3	6	5
PTH	228	Manual Therapy	1	3	2
PTH	253	Clinical Practice II	0	9	3
					<b>15</b>

### SPRING SEMESTER

PTH	270	Special Topics in Physical Therapy	3	0	3
PTH	266	Physical Therapy Practicum I	0	18	6
PTH	275	Advanced Professional Preparation	1	0	1
		Humanities Elective	3	0	3
					<b>13</b>
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM CREDITS</b>					<b>69</b>

The following is a brief description of each of the above PTA courses (indicated with the course abbreviation PTH):

**PTH 101: Physical Therapy Professional Preparation:** This course is an introductory study of the purpose, philosophy, history and current scope of physical therapy. An introduction to medical and legal documentation within the profession of physical therapy is provided. The roles and responsibilities of the physical therapist assistant within the profession of physical therapy are presented and discussed within the context of the Physical Therapy Practice Act for the State of South Carolina. Training in Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Guidelines is also completed and the applications of such Guidelines are discussed within the safe practice of physical therapy. Training regarding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is also completed and discussed as related to the ethical and legal practice of physical therapy. Expectations regarding student performance and behaviors in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program are outlined and discussed. College Policies, Procedures and Resources designed to assist students in successful academic performance are also presented. Concepts related to professional behaviors are presented and discussed.

**PTH 115: Pathology for PTA:** This course is an introductory study of the basic pathophysiology of the body with emphasis on the body's reaction to disease and injury. Concepts related to pathological conditions, risk factors, incidence, etiological factors, pathogenesis, clinical manifestations and prognosis of various medical conditions are presented. The impact of these conditions on physical therapy intervention as directed by a licensed physical therapist is presented.

**PTH 202: Physical Therapy Modalities:** This course introduces patient care techniques, including patient preparation and therapeutic hot and cold modalities. The use of selected modalities by the physical therapist assistant is presented and practiced within the context of the plan of care as developed by a licensed physical therapist. The appropriate use of infection control procedures in the provision of physical therapy interventions is presented and discussed. Proper body mechanics are practiced. Patient care techniques including gait training and transfer training are presented and practiced within the school laboratory setting. Students are introduced to concepts of patient education as directed by the plan of care developed by a licensed physical therapist. Appropriate communication and documentation of patient care activities and status is examined and practiced.

**PTH 205: Physical Therapy Functional Anatomy:** This course introduces the basic concepts and principles of muscles, joints and motion, including traditional testing procedures. Concepts related to arthrology of the upper and lower extremity joints are presented and discussed. The attachments, action and innervation of upper and lower extremity muscles groups are learned within the context of physical therapy services that are directed by the plan of care developed by a licensed physical therapist.

**PTH 235: Interpersonal Dynamics:** This course introduces the dynamics of the health professional/patient relationship and includes communication and principles of respectful interaction throughout the life cycle. Self-reflective activities will be used to assist the student in recognizing his/her own potential barriers to effective communication. The relationship between the physical therapist and the physical therapist assistant is explored in depth with an emphasis on the need for professional collaboration within the supervisory relationship. The need for professional demeanor is discussed and studied through self-reflection. The importance of life long learning is discussed with students developing professional development plans related to their individual growth needs.

**PTH 240: Therapeutic Exercises/Application:** This course provides the practical application of therapeutic exercise, goniometry and manual muscle testing. The use of various therapeutic exercise techniques by the physical therapist assistant is presented and practiced within the context of the plan of care developed by a licensed physical therapist. The role of the physical therapist assistant in data collection procedures is discussed and the data collection techniques of manual muscle testing and goniometric measurement are presented and practiced. Appropriate communication and documentation of patient care activities and status is examined and practiced.

**PTH 252: Clinical Practice:** This course is the first formal, fulltime Clinical Education experience for TCL PTA students. It is a two-week (80 hour) experience designed to introduce the student to elementary clinical procedures in the patient care setting. All patient care activities performed by students in clinical education courses are directed by the plan of care developed by the licensed physical therapist and are supervised by a licensed physical therapist or licensed physical therapist assistant.

**PTH 242: Orthopedic Management:** This course introduces basic orthopedic assessment skills and application of treatment techniques for the trunk and extremities. The use of various orthopedic management techniques by the physical therapist assistant is presented and practiced within the context of the plan of care as developed by a licensed physical therapist. Concepts related to posture and postural alignment are discussed as is the functional anatomy of the spine. Students practice concepts related to patient education as directed by the plan of care developed by a licensed physical therapist. Appropriate communication and documentation of patient care activities and status is examined and practiced.

**PTH 246: Neurorehabilitation:** This course introduces neurological principles, pathology and specialized rehabilitation techniques for pediatric and adult care. The use of various rehabilitation techniques by the physical therapist assistant is presented and practiced within the context of the plan of care as developed by a licensed physical therapist. Students practice concepts related to patient education as directed by the plan of care developed by a licensed physical therapist. Appropriate communication and documentation of patient care activities and status is examined and practiced.

**PTH 228: Manual Therapy:** This course introduces the basics of joint mobilization for the trunk and extremities. Orthopedic management of the spine and lymphedema

management is presented and practiced within the context of the plan of care as developed by a licensed physical therapist. Concepts related to posture and postural alignment are discussed as is the functional anatomy of the spine. Students practice concepts related to patient education as directed by the plan of care developed by a licensed physical therapist. Appropriate communication and documentation of patient care activities and status is examined and practiced.

**PTH 253: Clinical Practice II:** This course is the second formal Clinical Education experience for the TCL PTA students. It is a four-week (160 hour) experience designed to allow students to build upon the clinical procedures practiced in class and in the first clinical experience. All patient care activities performed by students in clinical education courses are directed by the plan of care developed by the licensed physical therapist and are supervised by a licensed physical therapist and physical therapist assistant.

**PTH 270: Special Topics in Physical Therapy:** This course presents topics related to current trends related to physical therapy practice. Information regarding reimbursement guidelines and current issues regarding the profession are also presented.

**PTH 266: Physical Therapy Practicum I:** This course is the third and final formal Clinical Education experience for the TCL PTA student. It is an eight-week (320 hour) experience designed to allow students to progress to an entry-level of competence in patient care and professional skills. All patient care activities performed by students in clinical education courses are directed by the plan of care developed by the licensed physical therapist and are supervised by a licensed physical therapist or licensed physical therapist assistant.

**PTH 275: Advanced Professional Preparation:** This course is the study of skills needed to enter the professional arena including resume writing, interviewing, professional decision making, and preparation for the PTA National Board Examination. Application process and procedures related to licensure in South Carolina are presented and discussed. The importance of planning for personal and professional development is emphasized through the creation of professional development plans.