



Physical Therapist Assistant Program

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION MANUAL, UPDATED JUNE 2024

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Welcome in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Welcome to the profession of physical therapy and the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program. Awaiting you is an exciting, creative and rewarding career, with many different types of employment opportunities. When you graduate from a program accredited by Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), the licensing board allows you to sit for the licensing exam. Licensing exams are required in every state.

Accreditation

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at El Paso Community College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave, Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305; telephone:800-999-2782; email: accreditation@apta.org; website: <http://www.capteonline.org>.

Our next re-accreditation site visit is Spring 2027.

Faculty

The program currently employs three full time faculty:

- Professor Debra Tomacelli-Brock, PT, DPT, MS
Instructional Coordinator, 831-4172, dtomacel@epcc.edu
- Full time faculty, Alisia Juarez, PTA,
Coordinator of Clinical Education, 831-4090, alewis8@epcc.edu
- Full time faculty, Israel Roman, 831-4174, iroman2@epcc.edu
- Part time faculty, Dr. Moraga, DPT
- Part time faculty, Ms. Raquel Cueto, PTA
- Part time faculty, Ms. Kristen Lawson, PTA

The Program Counselor is Ricardo Lopez De Lara, 831-4447, rlopezde@epcc.edu

Our Divisions Dean is Dr.Souraya Hajjar, 831-4030, Room 240 RG

Program website

The [program website](#) is an important place for important information and updates:

- Current Degree plan
- Salary information

- Career ladder mobility
- Accreditation information
- Program fees
- Program procedure handbook
- Graduate outcomes
- Links to the programs' [PTAP Libguide](#)
 - Articles and Data Bases
 - Access PhysioTherapy
 - Short term access to program textbooks as e-books
 - Any many other useful things

The [curricular design](#) includes four long semesters and one summer session. Classes are offered primarily full-time during the day and are sequentially organized. Course offerings are available for students upon formal admission into the program from the Office of Specialized Admissions. Prior to formal admissions, students should be taking all of the general education courses listed in the degree plan, AND work on the requirements for *Specialized Admissions*. Included in this comprehensive program are educational components, which meet the minimum competencies outlined in the **APTA Minimum PTA Competencies and the current accreditation Standards of Evidence** documents. Some classes are offered in a hybrid format, with lab time face to face. This is not a fully online curriculum.

Course hours: Most courses are taught between 6 AM and 6 PM, however, there are several part-time instructors, some of whom teach at night or on the weekends. The final semester includes a capstone course on professional development and licensure preparation (PTHA 2239: Professional Issues) and a final full-time clinical experience (PTHA 2267).

After graduation, students must pass the [National Physical Therapy Examination](#) (NPTE) for Physical Therapist Assistants in order to work as a PTA. This exam is offered four times a year by the [Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy](#) (FSBPT). The FSBPT will only allow an individual to take the examination a [maximum of three times in any 12-month period](#). Effective January 2016, there will be a [6-time lifetime limit on NPTE attempts](#). The application process to take the licensure exam, includes [the licensure application](#) to Texas. This process requires a

Jurisprudence Exam, a Fingerprinting requirement and online course work in Human trafficking prevention.

Please take time to explore the [licensure web site](#) for Texas PTA application process and legal documents that guide the practice of physical therapy for both the physical therapist and the physical therapist assistant. [Chapter 329: Licensing Procedure](#) of the Rules contains the requirements for licensure.

There are a variety of fees associated with the application and retention of your license to practice as a Physical Therapist Assistant. These fees are published in [The Rules and the Practice Act](#).

Some of the fees include:

TX State licensure application fee: \$125 (good for one year)

Passport photo ~\$15.00

Exam fee: \$485.00 (each time)

Sitting fee at Prometric ~\$100

Important websites

[Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy](#).

[American Physical Therapy Association](#). The American Physical Therapy Association is your go-to for [ethical guidelines](#), continuing education, networking for various specialties.

[PT Compact](#) This website has information about multistate licensure privileges.

[PTAP](#) program website

[PTA Student Honor Society](#) The Phi Tau Alpha Honor Society recognizes physical therapist assistant students who have not only demonstrated high academic standards, but have embodied the core values of the physical therapy profession. See website for application criteria.

Professional responsibility and ethics to work in a Health Profession

Working in health care is regulated by many agencies; accreditation entities, regulatory agencies and professional associations. Both accreditation and regulatory agencies dictate policies, procedures, ethical practice and conduct, consequences for violations of the [practice act](#) and reimbursement which guide the everyday activities of delivering and managing healthcare delivery to a patient. Background checks, periodic drug screenings and current immunizations are

required of all students and employees and are required by hospitals, the college and the State of Texas.

The Physical Therapist Assistant works under the direct supervision of a Physical Therapist and is a valuable member of the physical therapy department. Your contribution to the physical therapy team, regardless of the work setting, will directly reflect your competency in technical skills, your ability to work as a team member, your ability to develop and nurture positive interpersonal relationships, your ability to apply the theories of rehabilitation to your patients, and your ability to efficiently implement an evidence-based treatment plan developed by your supervising physical therapist.

Your education as a physical therapist assistant is your lifelong responsibility. It does not end at graduation. The State of Texas, like many states, requires you to be licensed prior to working, and also requires annual or biennial re-licensure. [Renewal](#) of your Texas license, currently involves evidence of 1) attendance in 20 hours of continuing competence approved by the Physical Therapy Licensing Board each biennium, 2) successful completion of the Jurisprudence exam and specific trainings and 3) a biennial re-licensing fee.

What is Physical Therapy?

Physical Therapy is a health care profession concerned with: 1) the promotion of health and wellness to reduce the potential for disease, 2) the prevention of pain, movement impairments and disability, 3) the restoration of function secondary to injury, and 4) the improvement of function secondary to congenital defects in adults and children. The Physical Therapist accomplishes these goals through the use of evaluation, evidenced based interventions and patient/community education. Disabilities and impairments, whether acquired or congenital, are treated by Physical Therapist Assistants under the supervision of a licensed Physical Therapist. They include: sport injuries, head trauma, spinal cord injuries, cancer, orthopedic disorders, pain, burns, wounds, arthritis, and disorders of the nervous system, cardio-vascular systems, respiratory system, nutritional/digestive systems, and metabolic system which cause a large variety of physical impairments.

What is the Physical Therapist Assistant?

A career as a Physical Therapist Assistant provides rewarding and challenging opportunities for the person who is interested in helping others to maintain or regain their physical mobility. The Physical Therapist Assistant is a *licensed by the board, who assists and works under the*

supervision of a physical therapist and whose activities require an understanding of physical therapy.

The PTA is an important member of the physical rehabilitation team. Other members of the team include: physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, and other medical specialists.

In the state of Texas, as in many other states in the U.S.A., the law states that the PTA is supervised by and must report to a Physical Therapist. **You may not** work under or be supervised or report to any other health care professionals, such as doctors, chiropractors, nurses, occupational therapists or athletic trainers.

What is a Physical Therapy Technician?

A physical therapy technician is very different from a Physical Therapist Assistant, including education level, salary level, and legal accountability and responsibility. The Texas State Physical Therapy Practice Act and the Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners Rules outline those legalities. In Texas, as in many states:

A physical therapy aide or technician is a person:

1. not licensed by this Board [Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners] who
2. has on-the-job training and
3. aids in the provision of physical therapy services only with onsite supervision of a PT or PTA. (Texas PT Practice Act, Sec. 453.001)

According to the Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners Rules (TBPTE Rules), June 2017 Edition, [Title 3, Subtitle H, Chapter 453, Occupations Code]

Sub-section (c) of §321.2 Role delineation, defines the role of the PT aide and states:

The role of the physical therapy aide.

- (1) All rules governing the services provided by a PTA are further modified for the physical therapy aide.
- (2) A physical therapy aide may be assigned responsibilities by the supervising PT or PTA to provide services as specified in the physical therapy plan of care within the scope of on-the-job training with

supervision by a PT or PTA who is on the premises and readily available to respond in person.

AND,

(3) A physical therapy aide may not:

(A) perform any evaluative or assessment activities;

(B) initiate physical therapy treatment, to include exercise instruction;

or

(C) write or sign physical therapy documents in the permanent record, except as provided for in §322.1(e) of this title (relating to Documentation of treatment).

On site supervision is defined as “on the premises and readily available to respond” (Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners Rules (TBPTE Rules), June 2017 Edition, [Title 3, Subtitle H, Chapter 453, Occupations Code] §321.1. Definitions.)

§322.3 Supervision, subsection (c) states that:

(1) A supervising PT or PTA is responsible for the supervision of, and the physical therapy services provided by, the PT aide.

(2) A PT or PTA must provide onsite supervision of a physical therapy aide, and remain within reasonable proximity during the aide's interaction with the patient.

There are State Laws that also describes conditions under which a PT or a PTA is §322.4. Practicing in a manner detrimental to the Public Health and Welfare. These behaviors include:

(3) failing to supervise and maintain the supervision of supportive personnel, licensed or unlicensed, in compliance with the Act and rule requirements;

(4) aiding, abetting, authorizing, condoning, or allowing the practice of physical therapy by any person not licensed to practice physical therapy;

There are consequences defined by the TBPTE Rules that can affect the supervising PT/PTA:

§343.2. Denial of a License and Disciplinary Actions by the Board.

The board has the authority to deny an applicant a license or to suspend or revoke a license, to reprimand or otherwise discipline a licensee, or to place on probation a licensee whose license has been suspended. If a license is suspended, the licensee is placed on probation for the duration of the suspension.

As mentioned earlier there are significant and legal differences between a technician and a Physical Therapist Assistant.

The Roles of the Physical Therapist Assistant

Educator: In this role, you will teach the patient and the family members how to carry out a home exercise program designed by the physical therapist. You will assist/instruct patients on how to use mobility equipment. You will give in-services to your peers or to the community on treatment procedures. You may be assigned the duties of a clinical instructor for physical therapist assistant students, after a few years of experience. You may teach in a Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

Clinician: In the clinician role, and under the supervision of the Physical Therapist, you will find yourself delivering patient exercise programs, fabricating adaptive equipment, implementing exercise programs, performing wound care, conducting therapeutic pool programs, or utilizing high-tech computer programmed exercise machines. You will find yourself documenting patient-related activities in the medical chart and sharing patient information with the physical therapist and other members of the health care team. You will find yourself working with therapeutic equipment such as hot packs, cold packs, ultrasound, electrical stimulation, isokinetic, neurorehabilitation and cardiovascular rehabilitation equipment.

Manager: In the management role, you will find yourself responsible for evaluating the performance of physical therapy aides, writing department manuals, and participating in the selection and ordering of equipment for the physical therapy department.

Leadership: Being a member of a profession comes with responsibility to your patients and involvement in your profession. There is both a state and national physical therapy association, a minority PT association, and a world association for PT's. These four physical therapy associations provide many leadership opportunities for PTA to develop leadership skills, make a difference for the PTA and for the patient, and for the services provided by physical therapist/physical therapist assistants. Leadership opportunities begin in the program through club membership and participation and within the city of El Paso through attendance, participation and volunteerism in the local *Greater El Paso District PT Association*.

The Regulatory Responsibilities of a Physical Therapist Assistant

During the course of the program the rules, regulations, ethical principles and legal responsibilities of being a Physical Therapist Assistant will be presented to the student. Students will graduate knowing the licensure laws of Texas related to the PTA and passing the state mandated Jurisprudence Exam. To be eligible for employment as a PTA, the PTA must

- 1) graduate from a CAPTE accredited program and
- 2) be licensed in the state in which they seek employment.

This program prepares the student for the Physical Therapist Assistant licensing exam, but it is the graduate's responsibility to pass the licensing exam.

The external agencies the program is responsible to.

- 1) CAPTE (Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education); this entity accredits this program. Without it, you cannot sit for any state PTA licensing exam.
- 2) Texas State Higher Education Coordinating Board: without a status of at least "good standing", we would lose our accreditation from CAPTE.
- 3) SAC's (Southern Association of Colleges): this entity accredits the college. Without it our program would lose its accreditation from CAPTE and the Coordinating Board.
- 4) The community of PT's and PTA's in the greater El Paso area. Without the above three things, they cannot or will not hire you.

Thus, the program has standards that it must achieve, maintain and strive for in order that it maintains its status of accreditation, and the student has many standards that he/she must achieve in order to graduate from this program, which qualifies him/her to sit for the state licensing exam. If you pass the exam, you are then eligible to work as a PTA.

"The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor." Vince Lombardi

Employment Opportunities for the Physical Therapist Assistant

Graduates of the PTA program enjoy 100% employability upon passing the national licensing exam. Many graduates are offered jobs in their last semester of the program. There are numerous and varied employment opportunities available in El Paso, Las Cruces, and communities across Texas, New Mexico and in every state. The most popular opportunities exist in hospitals; however, other work environments may include: out-patient clinics, physical

therapist owned private practices, rehabilitation centers, school systems, home health settings, medical supply sales and wellness centers.

Employment opportunities are posted on the Texas Physical Therapy Association web site, on the inside door of the PTA lab, through the college's career center, and emailed to graduates of the PTA program. The college also has a Career Center where additional postings can be found.

Salaries in the Field of Physical Therapy

Salaries are highly competitive with Nursing and other high demand health care providers. Sign-on bonuses are common locally and nationally. You can find national salary statistics at <http://www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm>. Local salaries vary depending on the work environment, benefits paid, experience and additional credentialing. Median salaries for a new graduate working in El Paso is approximately \$64,000. Learn more at [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

Highlights of The Program

- 18-month program
- Transportability of course work to any Texas PTA program
- Core courses which transfer to UTEP
- Accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Physical Therapy Education through 2027.
- Full time students are eligible for [financial aid](#)
- Enrolled students are eligible for selected scholarships
- Students must meet specialized admissions requirements to be eligible for program admission
- Program taught by faculty with over 75 years of experience
- Home to the only Texas Community College level faculty practice pro bono clinic
- A course designed to train physical therapy aides for the workforce. This course (PTHA 1309: Introduction to Physical Therapy) can be taken without program admission.
- Graduates who meet specific criteria can apply to several PTA to DPT bridge programs.
- Gen education courses transfer to special AAS to BS degree plans (UTEP, Texas Tech, Texas A&M)

Gaining Admission and Staying in the Program

General information that every student **needs to know** about gaining information to a health occupations course can be found in the online catalog. To gain admission to the program, and to stay in the program, the student is advised to **meet regularly with the program counselor**, whose office is on the Rio Grande Campus, Student Services, 103 Montana Street. The counselor will then discuss with you the general requirements necessary to be ready for successful ranking by the deadline. Ranking from the applicant pool is in early June for fall admission. To be eligible for the applicant pool, you must first:

- Attend a Health Careers Orientation Session.
- Pay a one-time Health Occupations admissions fee.
- Complete the TSI-2 college placement exam with a score at or above the program's cut-off score. (See current program information guide for specific scores)
- Complete mandatory courses with specified minimum grades.
- Complete pre-admission program requirements.
- Submit high school/GED transcripts to the admissions office

While in the program, students need to stay in touch with the program counselor especially if there are financial issues, or issues related to progression within the program such as failing grades or needing to take a semester off. Students who are having personal problems at home, or academic issues related to study skills and test taking should address these issues with both the counselor and the program coordinator at the **earliest possible time**.

International Students

All international students should remain in contact with the International Student Office (831-2031).

Transfer Students

Students transferring from another institution should follow the admissions criteria to include sending official high school and college transcripts to the Admissions Department. Students transferring from other accredited programs for the Physical Therapist Assistant may be able to matriculate into the program with advanced standing. These students will need to meet with the program coordinator.

Students transferring from higher education institutions should contact the program coordinator for more information regarding syllabi from their transferring institution.

Progression within the program

The program has a progressively rigorous curriculum that requires students to manage their study time, balance their personal life, and manage the requirements of the curriculum, including community service, and Student PTA Club activities. The program begins with didactic classroom work which leads up to three different clinical experiences. Students must successfully pass these PTHA courses with a **grade of B** or better to progress into the next semester, and into the next clinical practicum course.

Many of the courses are taught in a hybrid fashion. The expectation is that students will use BlackBoard as their management learning system to access reading assignments, homework assignments, projects, lectures and other instructional components. Most didactic courses have a laboratory component, a dress code, and provide supervised instruction and practice in technical skills. These technical skills are assessed through a variety of methods including skills check-off sheets and practical examinations. Students who fail critical safety elements identified on practical exams will have one opportunity to retake the exam. Failure upon the second assessment will result in removal from the program.

The course [syllabi Part 2](#) are posted on the college website, and the Instructors requirements (part 1) are posted in BlackBoard. Both documents contain essential information related to student success including:

- The Grading Scale
- Criteria for progression from didactic course work to clinical coursework
- The course calendar
- Requirements/expectations for graded assignments, quizzes, examinations etc.
- Dress code
- Use of electronic media in the classroom
- Expected behaviors of students
- Grounds for dismissal from the course and program
- Skills to be formally assessed

Program Philosophy

The vision of the El Paso Community College Physical Therapist Assistant Program and its curriculum evolves from the needs of the: El Paso community of Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants; the Standards of Accreditation set forth by the Commission on Accreditation of Physical Therapy Education; the requirements for academic programs set forth by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; and the community college's commitment to provide programs which meet the growing and changing demand for rehabilitative health care within the multicultural society of El Paso.

Mission

The mission of the Physical Therapist Assistant program and its faculty is to provide quality didactic and clinical education and mentorship in professional responsibility and behavior to its students, so that its graduates acquire gainful employment, exhibit contemporary practice within the legal framework of our jurisdiction, the ethical framework of our professional association, and engage in leadership activities within our community.

PROGRAM GOALS 2021-2026

1. Program faculty will have contemporary expertise in their assigned teaching content and meet the qualifications for employment. Standard 4
2. The program will provide a competency based clinical training program utilizing clinical education faculty who are effective role models and clinical instructors. Standard 4N
3. The program will have the financial resources to achieve the program's stated mission, goals, and expected program outcomes and to support the academic integrity and continuing viability of the program. Standard 4H
4. The program will graduate students who are employable and meet the workforce needs of the geographic region of West Texas and Southern New Mexico. Standard 2D2
5. The program faculty will provide learning experiences to develop service and leadership skills in our students. Standard 7B2

Succeeding in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program

What entities influence our curricular content?

Designing courses is not just selecting a textbook, writing course objectives and giving exams. In a program where passing a state licensing exam is the culmination of years of work for a student, it is critical that the student enter our program with essential academic skills, and basic knowledge that will lay a solid foundation for the course work they will receive in the Physical

Therapist Assistant Program. It is equally critical that the faculty of the program teach content that is current and used in clinical practice and evaluate student knowledge and skills at a level of excellence expected by external accrediting agencies, and the health care system.

What does the student need to know before enrolling in PTHA courses?

- A) A solid foundation in English grammar and research paper writing
- B) Public and digital communication skills as well as interpersonal communication skills
- C) Solid foundation in math (college algebra) and science (anatomy and physiology)
- D) A foundation in the social sciences.
- E) College readiness and college success skills: How to study, take notes, think critically, problem solve independently, use of computer software and navigating the Internet.
- F) Read college level books
- G) Stress management and test taking skills
- H) Demonstrate a foundation in ethical and professional behaviors.

This program is designed not so much to teach you Physical Therapy as it is to teach you about the profession of physical therapy; to understand the impact of our profession's services on the life of your patients; to assist you in synthesizing the foundations of physical therapy and developing critical thinking skills; to develop judgement and apply the evidence of physical therapy research to the interventions provided to your patients. ***The essence of this program is to develop your commitment to excellence as a Physical Therapist Assistant.***

The primary emphasis of learning in this program is student directed learning and is **your personal responsibility**. The program has been transitioning to hybrid courses with lectures and reading assignments posted on BlackBoard. The students are expected to be independent learners. That means that the responsibility of learning the material presented in class is the students' **not** the instructors'. The instructors will provide you with guided learning. However, it is the responsibility of the student to organize the material in a manner which is useful. Often times the student will need to read supplementary information from textbooks or journal articles, search the Internet for additional information or spend extra time in lab practicing technical skills. The library is a useful resource in physical therapy education. A computer and computer skills are recommended tools for you to accomplish these activities. While the library at the Rio Grande and Valle Verde campuses has computers with Internet access, only the **Rio Grande library** has the Physical Therapy resources on the bookshelves.

Critical thinking is the key to solving a patient's movement problem. In class you will be asked to solve your patients' problems. Often times it will require using a multitude of strategies. Among those useful strategies are group work, library work, group discussions, discussion boards, and reviewing the literature.

Group work is a popular method of exploring possible answers to patient problems. Frequently you will find that this methodology is employed in the clinical setting and that there are no right or wrong answers. That is frequently true of questions asked in the classroom setting too. That is

not to say that any answer is correct, but rather that some response provided better answer the questions than others. Your participation in class and group discussions is essential to your success in solving patient problems. *Join in* on the class discussions! Contribute to the success of your group. Ask questions and offer your opinions and ideas, respectfully. If you do not understand, ask for more clarification. You have freedom to respectfully disagree with the instructor. The instructors will have the same freedom to request that you substantiate your answer if it is different than ours and provide documented proof.

Exams, quizzes, projects and research papers follow a similar format, and require critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The quizzes are designed to help you monitor your learning and carry a format similar to the exams: patient problems in essay or multiple-choice formats. The projects and research papers are designed to help you familiarize yourself with the current research information that is on the Internet and in the journals. The class presentations are frequent and are designed to give you practice teaching and defending your rationale for your fact-based information in front of your classmates prior to going into the clinical setting, where you will have to do a similar activity in front of strangers.

Journals may be required each semester. These journals are a mechanism by which you can reflect on changes you are experiencing about your learning and communicate your classroom experience with the instructor.

Professionalism/ Ethical Student Conduct: As students enrolled in EPCC, you are expected to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in the “Student Code of Conduct”, which can be found online on the college website and in the current college catalog. As students enrolled in the PTA Program you are expected to abide to the policies and procedures of the PTA program and the behaviors outlined in the APTA Standards of Ethical conduct for the PTA. Infraction of college, division or program policies may result in your dismissal from the PTA Program and/or college.

Miscellaneous but Important

EMAIL

Program faculty frequently use Black Board in course messaging as the preferred method of communication to update you on assignments, last minute changes affecting you the next day, emailing you course syllabi, homework, etc. Although every student is assigned as college e-mail account, we recognize that not all students will use it. Please keep your preferred **e-mail** current with the program coordinator, who will forward it to all faculty. Additionally, your personal email is the primary method of communicating with you once you graduate; keeping you informed of GEPD meetings, employment opportunities and soliciting requests for guest presentations in your area of expertise.

Technology that you need:

- A laptop or desk computer (MAC, PC) with a web-camera, headphones with a mic, and a good internet service.
- Competence with MS products (WORD, PowerPoint, Excel, TEAMS)
- Internet literacy, as we communicate email.
- Blackboard for online learning.

Some success strategies

Know your learning style

- auditory learner
- visual learner
- kinesthetic/psychomotor learner

Know your study style

- group study
- individual study

Know your interpersonal interaction style/personality type

Learn how to manage your time

- use a personal planner
- download the BlackBoard Learn app from [EPCC](#)

Learn how to manage your stress

- stick to an exercise program
- make time for your family/friends
- don't procrastinate on school homework, readings and projects
- visit with the program counselor who can help with stress
- attend program offered retention/tutoring activities

Come prepared for class

- pay attention to the course syllabus calendar
- pay attention to due dates for Blackboard or instructor assignments.
- read the assigned chapter or other reading
- utilize the publisher's online students' resources for your book.
- review the study questions at the end of the chapter
- write in the course laboratory guidebooks

Dress codes for clinical and lab

Students are expected to come appropriately dressed to lab. Students not prepared for lab will be given paper gowns. There are dress codes for “clinic” and for “lab”.

Clinical Uniform: Each student who is enrolled in a clinical practicum course is required to dress in the PTAP clinic uniform as assigned by the Academic Clinic Coordinator of Education. The **clinic uniform** consists of *khaki or black dress slacks, an official program selected shirt embroidered with the program name, non-skid closed toed shoes and a college approved name tag*. While this clinic uniform is the official clinic uniform some affiliation sites may require a modification to meet their dress code policy. Details and requirements for your clinical site dress code will be shared with you prior to your first clinical course.

Day to day dress code is scrubs. We will be providing details regarding the color and style during the first week of school.

Lab uniform includes black loose-fitting shorts with an elastic waist, and an EPCC T- shirt, goggles, and face masks. Modifications to the lab attire may occur and students will be notified in advance.

Assessment of skill competency in the PTA program.

Skill assessment varies depending upon the course; however, all require demonstrate at a specified level of competency

Skill check off sheets are provided to students to assist them in identifying and demonstrating critical *safety elements*, *essential elements of patient interaction* and competency of technical skills for selected physical therapy interventions.

For the purposes of practical examination standardized patients or written scenarios are used. Standardization can include the use of simulation technology, standardized paper patients and human patients. Students may also be asked to role play a scenario during an assessment condition. Enrollment in the PTHA course is considered *implicit consent* for assessment of knowledge and skill taught in the program.

Providing information about any content related to written or practical assessment is a form of cheating and is cause for academic probation and/or disciplinary action. Students are referred to the EPCC [student Code of Conduct](#) for further information.

Examinations of Didactic and Clinical Skills

Periodically you will be assessed on didactic coursework and skill competency through 1) written examination, 2) skill check off sheets and 3) practical exams.

Both the written and practical examinations test your knowledge of the following:

- a. Basic science and clinical theory (the rationale for why you do a treatment a certain way)
- b. Procedures and applications of physical therapy interventions (your ability to perform the intervention effectively and safely)
- c. Patient/care provide/interprofessional interaction (your ability to demonstrate appropriate therapeutic communications skills, professional communication and professional ethics.)
- d. Documentation (your ability to document what you did with the patient.)
- e. The ethical and legal standards of safe physical therapy interventions.
- f. Use of clinical judgment and evidence-based practice.

Professionalism and the Physical Therapist Assistant

The American Physical Therapy Association provides guidance to both physical therapists and physical therapist assistance in the area of professional behavior. It is the expectation of the profession that its members will adhere to the values that provide the foundation for profession behavior. Below are the definitions of the values presented in the APTA document [Core Values for the Physical Therapist and the Physical Therapist Assistant](#) (12/2021). During the program, the faculty will help you to assist you in the development of professional behaviors.

Value	Definition
1. Accountability	Accountability is active acceptance of the responsibility for the diverse roles, obligations, and actions of the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant including self-regulation and other behaviors that positively influence patient and client outcomes, the profession, and the health needs of society.
2. Altruism	Altruism is the primary regard for or devotion to the interest of patients and clients, thus assuming the responsibility of placing the needs of patients and clients ahead of the physical therapist's or physical therapist assistant's self-interest.
3. Collaboration	Collaboration is working together with patients and clients, families, communities, and professionals in health and other fields to achieve shared goals. Collaboration within the physical therapist-physical therapist assistant team is working together, within each partner's respective role, to achieve optimal physical therapist services and outcomes for patients and clients.
4. Compassion and Caring	Compassion is the desire to identify with or sense something of another's experience, a precursor of caring. Caring is the concern, empathy, and consideration for the needs and values of others.
5. Duty	Duty is the commitment to meeting one's obligations to provide effective physical therapist services to patients and clients, to serve the profession, and to positively influence the health of society.
6. Excellence	Excellence in the provision of physical therapist services occurs when the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant consistently use current knowledge and skills while understanding personal limits, integrate the patient or client perspective, embrace advancement, and challenge mediocrity.
7. Inclusion	Inclusion occurs when the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant create a welcoming and equitable environment for all. Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants are inclusive when they commit to providing a safe space, elevating diverse and minority voices, acknowledging personal biases that may impact patient care, and taking a position of anti-discrimination.
8. Integrity	Integrity is steadfast adherence to high ethical principles or standards, being truthful, ensuring fairness, following through on commitments, and verbalizing to others the rationale for actions.
9. Social Responsibility	Social responsibility is the promotion of a mutual trust between the profession and the larger public that necessitates responding to societal needs for health and wellness.

CLINICAL EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Clinical education is an important phase of physical therapy education for it is the clinical setting where students learn to synthesize and apply knowledge, work as a team member and develop clinical judgment. Clinical education provides the avenue for transition from student to practitioner. Clinical education emphasizes analysis of movement impairments and the application of principles of rehabilitation as they learn to manage the patient's diseases and conditions across the life span and the continuum of care. In the clinical setting, students learn to assess the patient within their environment and to make clinical judgments concerning interventions. A student who functions at this high level of performance not only must have acquired basic knowledge but must be open to constructive feedback from mentors who guide the student in the application of evidence-based practice. Through the clinical education process, students develop attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviors which support their ethical and professional development.

PURPOSES OF CLINICAL EDUCATION

I. EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

The clinical education program is a planned, organized, sequential and integrated process designed to facilitate achievement of expected student outcomes which prepare students to provide physical therapy care to individuals with disease/disorders involving the major systems. Students are prepared to manage patients with multiple system disorders and chronic illnesses across the life span and the continuum of care. The Clinical Education program at EPCC provides up to 720 hours of supervised experience, using Clinical Education Instructors who are employed in physical therapy settings, for both integrated and full-time terminal experiences (CAPTE Standard 6D).

While enrolled in the clinical practicum courses students will demonstrate competence in:

- A. Managing patients/clients with disease and conditions representative of those commonly seen in practice across the life span and the continuum of care.
- B. Working in a variety of practice settings representative of those in which physical therapy is commonly practiced;
- C. Be involved in inter-professional practice
- D. Demonstrate effective participation as a member of the PT and PTA team; and
- E. Participate in other experiences that lead to the achievement of the programs defined expected student outcomes.

Clinical competence is objectively measured using the most current edition of the Texas Alliance of Physical Therapist Assistant Educators *PTA Manual for the Assessment of Clinical Skills*. This manual or its on-line version identifies the minimal competencies of the entry level PTA and is used to evaluate the achievement of data collection skills, intervention skills and professional behaviors expected of the Physical Therapist Assistant upon graduation. Additionally, this manual describes safe and effective clinical treatment, provides a mechanism for students to self-assess, and is a formative and summative assessment of student skills across a variety of clinical practice settings. The “Student Clinical Patient Tracking Form” will be submitted weekly for each patient the student has provided treatment for in each rotation. This will identify the ages, ICD codes, practice patterns and interventions. This will ensure all students are managing patients/clients with diseases and conditions representative of those commonly seen in practice across the life span and continuum of care.

While enrolled in clinical course work, students are formally assessed a minimum of one time at mid-term and again at the end of the clinical experience. The clinical instructor (CI) provides written feedback identifying the student’s strengths and weaknesses related to that specific work environment and the management of interventions provided to patient types within that work environment. It is expected that through frequent and planned CI-Student meetings, the student will gain clinical competence which is documented in the PTA MACs.

As part of this clinical experience students enrolled in the PTA program will also engage in the management of the patient supported by evidence in the literature for the efficacy of selected treatment interventions. The grade the student receives in each clinical practicum course is a formula outlined in the course syllabus and based on both the clinical instructor and the academic clinical instructor’s objective measures of competency.

II. DESCRIPTION OF CLINICAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCES (updated 7/2022)

During the 18 months of the didactic education program, the physical therapist assistant student gains competency in the classroom with specific skill sets. These skills are refined during the clinical experience through rotations at different clinical sites and mentorship by different clinical instructors. An attempt is made to ensure that all students receive equivalent clinical experiences. In order to best achieve this objective, the formal clinical education component of the curriculum is divided into three (4) phases.

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>SEMESTER</u>	<u>CLINIC HOURS</u>	<u>CREDITS</u>
PTHA 1166	Practicum (or Field Experience) Physical Therapist Assistant I	Second Semester (1st Year)	112	1
PTHA 1167	Practicum (or Field Experience) Physical Therapist Assistant II	Summer Session	160	1
PTHA 2166	Practicum (or Field Experience) Physical Therapist Assistant III	Summer Session	160	1
PTHA 2266	Practicum (or Field Experience) Physical Therapist Assistant III	Second Semester (2nd Year)	288	2

The *Physical Therapist Assistant Manual for the Assessment of Clinical Skills* is the clinical evaluation tool used to assess mastery of skills at “entry level” competency. This manual can assist the clinical instructor to plan appropriate levels of clinical experience, reassess the competency of previous assessed skills and assess the mastery of new skills within the respective rotation.

The first clinical rotation, PTHA 1166 – Practicum (or Field Experience) Physical Therapist Assistant I, occurs during the second half of the spring semester following the first academic semester of the Physical Therapist Assistant coursework. This rotation includes a variety of experiences to clinical practice including observation in specific practice settings to a full time (35-40 hour/week) experience. Upon entering this first rotation, students will have a satisfactory working knowledge of pathological processes, professional behaviors, effective interpersonal communication, manual and electronic documentation. These skills assess a patient’s response to physiological changes, gait and transfer training, joint range of motion, muscle strength, posture, functional abilities, and balance. They also assess the application of the following interventions: a variety of physical agents/modalities, massage, basic strengthening and stretching program for general debilitation, and orthopedic impairments across the life span. There is instruction in gait training with/without assistive devices, patient transfer education, and personal protection strategies. Students enrolled in this clinical experience are expected to be competent at entry level in the demonstration of professional behavior.

The second clinical rotation: PTHA 1167 – Practicum (or Field Experience) Physical Therapist Assistant II, is a full-time (35-40 hours/week) (up to 6) weeks clinical experience in the summer following successful completion of the first year in the program. Students entering the second rotation will continue to refine the above behaviors and intervention skills. At the conclusion of the second affiliation, students should continue to progress in competency in professional behaviors and the use of evidence-based practice to guide the application of interventions in a variety of practice settings. The clinical syllabi identifies three categories in the PTA MACS that students are expected to achieve prior to the end of final clinical experience. Category I: Professional Behaviors, category II: Data Collection and Interventions and category III: Site Specific Skills. Students are expected to achieve a minimum of 80% from both categories I and II. Category III may or may not be available at the facilities they are placed.

The third clinical rotation: PTHA 2166 – Practicum (or Field Experience) Physical Therapist Assistant III, is a full-time (35-40 hours/week) (up to 6) weeks clinical experience in the summer following successful completion of course PTHA 1167. Students entering the third rotation will continue to refine the above behaviors and intervention skills. At the conclusion of the third affiliation, students should continue to progress in competency in professional behaviors and the use of evidence-based practice to guide the application of interventions in a variety of practice settings. The clinical syllabi identify three categories in the PTA MACS that students are expected to achieve prior to the end of final clinical experience. Category I: Professional Behaviors, category II: Data Collection and Interventions and category III: Site Specific Skills. Students are expected to achieve a minimum of 80% from both categories I and II. Category III may or may not be available at the facilities they are placed.

The final clinical rotation, PTHA 2266 – Practicum (or Field Experience) Physical Therapist Assistant IV, occurs during the Spring Semester of the final academic year. The semester is preceded by the fall semester in which student's complete coursework in Neurology (PTHA 2305; Management of Neurological Disorders (PTHA 2431) and Special Topics in Clinical Practice for the PTA (PTHA 1491). Content area for these courses include data collection, patient management concepts across the lifespan and interventions for pediatric and geriatric patient with neurological and selected orthopedic conditions. Students will also complete PTHA 2435 – Rehabilitation Techniques. In the Rehabilitation Technique courses, students carry out advanced study and review of evidence-based practice focusing on patients with vertebral dysfunction, cardiopulmonary impairments, integumentary system as it relates to wound management, women's health issues and discharge planning. In addition, they practice advanced interventions utilizing aquatic therapy, prosthetic and orthotic rehabilitation, spinal rehabilitation, and myofascial release techniques.

During the final semester students complete their final two courses: PTHA 2339 – Professional Issues and PTHA 2266 – Practicum (or Field Experience) Physical Therapist Assistant IV. This final full-time clinical experience (35-40 hours per week) provides the student with the opportunity to demonstrate entry level competency in all identified skills required to work independently under the direction of a supervising Physical Therapist.

By the completion of the program, the student Physical Therapist Assistant has completed 720 hours of clinical experiences. The varied experiences help to prepare well-educated, adaptable, and proficient physical therapist assistants to be able to work in a variety of health care settings.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR (CI)

The Clinical Instructor is the licensed physical therapist or physical therapist assistant employed by the clinical education site and designated by the CCCE, who directly organizes, supervises, and evaluates the individual student's clinical education experiences during the clinical rotation. Responsibilities of the CI include:

1. Maintain an active partnership with the ACCE by providing input into the curriculum or other related aspects.
2. Understands the clinical education process.
3. Recognizes the need to modify the clinical experience according to the needs of the student and academic objectives.
4. Is familiar with the academic policy and procedures regarding the clinical experience.
5. Identifies the general types of learning opportunities available for the student.
6. Provides opportunities for other clinicians to teach during the clinical education experience.
7. Uses student information profile.
8. Reviews student self-assessment of knowledge, skills and attitudes.
9. Understands the student and clinical site evaluation tools, curriculum requirements, goals/objectives, clinical education agreement, policy and procedure manual and clinical education structure.
10. Participates in training, mentors others to become CIs, and participates in self-assessment.
11. Uses various learning strategies to accommodate the learner's needs.
12. Provides scheduled times to give students feedback.
13. Provides documentation justifying reasons for and processes used to terminate the clinical experience.
14. Acts as a role model and assesses the student's ability to model demonstrated actions.
15. Aware of sexual harassment, ADA and other workplace issues.
16. Creates opportunities to expose the students to the continuum of care that reflects a typical patient population and changes in health care trends. Also exposes students to non-patient care activities such as continuous performance improvement and administrative issues.
17. During patient care responsibilities, emphasizes the role of the PTA considering the trends in health care.
18. Develops opportunities for the student to achieve goals.
19. Continuously assesses students' performance, documents feedback of performance and facilitates communication regarding results with student and CCCE.

20. Identifies specific behaviors requiring remediation and informs ACCE when indicated.
21. Monitors safety and encourages supervision which is appropriate to the student's ability.
22. Provides opportunity for the student to participate in journal article and case study review as well as in-services.
23. Provides opportunity for the student to educate the patient, family, and other personnel.
24. Identifies factors in the clinical environment that interfere with learning experiences and notifies the CCCE.
25. Following a discussion of student and CI performance takes action to address deficiencies.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

The student is responsible for their learning experience. To ensure an optimal experience, the student's role and responsibility will include:

1. Is an active participant and partner in the planning and preparation for the clinical experience.
2. Identifies specific needs and interests in preparation for collaborative design of learning experiences with the CI.
3. Is aware that a legal and binding contract exists between the academic program and clinical site.
4. Understands information about the structure, philosophy and objectives of the clinical education program.
5. Reviews objectives and resources of available clinical center and determine which are congruent with student's needs.
6. Completes and maintains student information in a timely manner.
7. Completes self-assessment forms in a timely manner and communicates to CI preferred learning styles.
8. Initiates contact with the clinical site after receiving assignment and maintains contact.
9. Develops an understanding of the clinical site/student evaluation tools, curriculum requirements, clinical education goals/objectives, and reviews the clinical education agreement.
10. Initiates timely communication for optimal problem solving.
11. Demonstrates behavior that acknowledges respect for individual diversity.
12. Participate in establishing learning objectives.
13. Takes responsibility for regularly self-assessing performance relative to learning objectives.
14. Evaluates the clinical teaching of the CI and provides this for his/her review.

15. Communicates with all parties his/her wish to terminate the clinical experience.
16. Accepts responsibility for own learning and assists in the planning of the learning experience.
17. Seeks to learn how the PTA functions as part of the physical therapy team and discusses trends in patient care.
18. Communicates with the CI to develop strategies and modify performance based on CI evaluation and the self-assessment.
19. Seeks learning opportunities outside of direct patient care and participates in all patient care experiences.
20. Sets objectives to progressively increase patient volume, variety and complexity.
21. Act as a bridge between academic program and site.
22. Provides feedback regarding clinical experience to CI/CCCE/ACCE.
23. Following a discussion of student evaluation; takes action to address deficiencies highlighted during the clinical experience.
24. Develops a plan in conjunction with ACCE to ensure readiness for next clinical experience.

CRITERIA FOR CLINICAL FACILITY SELECTION

The ACCE in collaboration with the other members of the academic faculty has developed the criteria for the selection of sites. The Guidelines for Clinical Education Sites (APTA's GUIDELINES: BOD G03-04-22-55), Guidelines and Self-Assessments for Clinical Education. (Alexandria, VA: American Physical Therapy Association; 2004) and the 1999 and 2006 versions of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Normative Model of Physical Therapist Education were used as resources.

Clinical facilities are carefully evaluated and chosen. Although no one criteria in itself is able to satisfy the overall objectives of attaining qualified clinical settings for our students, we feel that the following criteria are vital to the success of our program. They include:

1. Type of facility, e.g. general hospital, rehabilitation center, school, its accreditation status and compatibility with academic program.
2. Types/varieties of clinical education rotations offered, e.g. acute, orthopedic, general rehabilitation or specialty areas.
3. Diverse patient population in terms of diagnosis, age and lifestyle.
4. Adequate volume and variety of clinical procedures.
5. Clinical competence of staff and quality of physical therapy services, plus a willingness of the staff to share their expertise with students.

6. Adequate numbers of physical therapy staff to meet patient care needs as well as the additional responsibility of carrying a student program.
7. Strong administrative support for all aspects of the clinical education program.
8. Clinical education experience of CCCE and evidence of active staff development through in-services, Continuing Education courses, etc.
9. Stimulating environment and variety of learning opportunities available.
10. Services of sufficient quality to provide a valuable model for students.
11. Adequate departmental physical space and equipment.
12. Convenient geographic proximity to the college.
13. Potential utilization of site by El Paso Community College Physical Therapy Assistant Program students over time.
14. Established clinical education program with prepared materials, e.g. educational philosophy, clinical education objectives, student handbook. References from ACCE's of other physical therapy programs.
15. Commitment to equal access for student participation in the clinical education program including race, creed, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, and disability.
16. When considering the development of new sites, all criteria will be assessed. Current and active clinical sites are continuously reassessed through student feedback and site visits.

SELECTION OF CLINICAL INSTRUCTORS

The following criteria are based on A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Assistant Education: Version 2007(APTA) and The Guidelines for Clinical Instructors (APTA's GUIDELINES: BOD G03-04-22-56). These guidelines were reviewed by the Education Committee and felt to be standards guidelines used by the clinical sites.

Students are assigned to area clinical sites by the ACCE. The CCCE of each facility is then responsible for assigning the student to their respective clinical instructor. Each CCCE utilizes criteria to determine whether or not the physical therapy practitioner is qualified to become a clinical instructor.

The preferred clinical educator (PT or PTA) in a PTA education program will give evidence of and/or demonstrate (in no specific order):

1. Licensure as a Physical Therapist or Physical Therapist Assistant
2. A minimum of one (1) year of clinical experience in the practice setting in which the person serves as the clinical educator or significant comparable experience.
3. Competence by demonstrating knowledge, skills, safety and effectiveness in the delivery of care, professional skills and ethical behavior. CCCE's use a number of methods to

- assess this, including review of formal performance evaluations, discussions with clinical supervisors and direct observation as well as through self-evaluation by the CI.
4. Effective interpersonal and communication skills with students by clearly articulating expectations, providing and receiving constructive feedback and actively listening.
 5. Ethical and legal conduct.
 6. Organization and time-management skills by setting priorities, planning student clinical learning experiences for the student.
 7. An openness to serve as a clinical educator.
 8. An ability to apply teaching methods in the clinical environment (as evidenced by planning, organizing, managing, implementing and assessing) in collaboration with student's learning experience.
 9. Supervisory skills commensurate with the learner's needs and the patient's acuity (e.g., illness, impairment, disability).
 10. The ability to accurately evaluate students' performance as it relates to safe and unsafe clinical skills, ethical and legal behaviors and the achievement of specific clinical performance objectives.

CRITERIA FOR ASSIGNING STUDENTS TO CLINICAL FACILITIES

1. Clinical placement throughout the clinical course work will be divided into three (3) categories*:
 - A. General Acute Care Hospitals or Sub-acute Facilities
 - B. General Out-Patient Clinics
 - C. Geriatric Care and Pediatric Care

*Specialty Areas including rehabilitation centers, schools or other facility types as available within the above placements.

Each Student must complete a clinical rotation in categories A, and B

2. First clinical assignments are made based on availability of sites.
3. The remaining clinical assignments are also based on site availability and student desired placement. However, achievement of professional skills is considered before the student's personal needs. For example, when determining assignment for a final clinical rotation, the ACCE will review the skills which need to be mastered in the Student's PTA MACS. If a student desires placement in an out-patient setting but does not have mastery of clinical skills used in the in-patient setting (i.e., transfer training, gait training, ability to utilize medical

records, etc.) then the student will be placed at the appropriate clinical setting to accomplish such goals. This decision will be discussed with all academic faculty members and the final decision of clinical site placement rests with the ACCE.

4. Assignment of students to the various facility types is based upon satisfactory completion of classroom lecture/laboratory material.
5. Students must pass all prerequisite courses for each clinical prior to entry into the clinical setting, as stated in the course descriptions and course syllabi.
6. An attempt is made not to assign a student to a clinical site where they have previously been employed, are presently employed or have accepted a scholarship for future employment. There will be no stipends paid by either college or clinical affiliates.
7. Clinical site information forms are available containing general information about sites, including number of beds, sizes of physical therapy staff and types of patients treated. All students are given the opportunity to develop priority lists and to define specific clinical education objectives in advising sessions with the ACCE.
8. Since some clinical sites are not located in the El Paso area, each student should expect to drive up to 90 minutes from the Rio Grande campus of EPCC to a clinical site for a maximum of 2 sites. The PTA program at El Paso Community College must compete with PT as well as other PTA programs for CI educational opportunities.

Information about Program Re-entry

All students wishing to transfer or re-enter into the PTA program must meet all specialized and program admission requirements in place at the time of application.

Students who are currently enrolled in another PTA program should contact any health occupations counselor on the Rio Grande campus (915-831-4636). These counselors can assist you with the admissions requirements to El Paso Community College and transcript evaluation.

Texas PTA programs enjoy common course numbering, and common content, making the transfer process even easier.

Students who are coming from the military with physical therapist assistant training should contact the Department of Admission, Evaluation Office (831-3124) for further information on the process of advanced standing admissions.

Students who have graduated from a PTA program and who are wishing to go on to a four-year institution for a physical therapy degree should speak with an EPCC Health Occupation Counselor. Physical therapist assistant course work usually does not transfer to any entry-level program for Physical Therapy anywhere in the United States. However, there are transition programs for licensed PTA's who want to become PT's. Additional information on these schools

can be found on the web site of the American Physical Therapy Association (www.APTA.org) under Education.

Courses in the degree plan offered at EPCC are easily transferable within Texas via the common course numbering system at both the community college level and the university level.

Program Specifics and the Texas Core

1. Courses in the degree plan that are part of the Texas Core:

- ENGL 1301 Expository English Composition
- PSYC 2301 Human Growth and Development
- PHIL 2306 Ethics
- BIOL 2101 Anatomy and Physiology 1
- BIOL 2402 Anatomy and Physiology 2

Graduating from the PTA Program and State Licensure

The PTA program at EPCC is an integrated education program. Information about admission, tuition, financial aid, graduation and the degree plan can all be found in the on-line college catalogue at WWW.EPCC.EDU.

Successful graduation from the Physical Therapist Assistant Program requires a 1) minimum of a “B” in each PTAP course 2) a minimum of a 3.0 in the degree plan, and 3) successful completion of a computerized on-line mock exam at the end of the program in the last didactic course. The minimum passing grade for progression in the PTA program is a grade of 80 in any course in the degree plan which has a PTHA prefix.

Prior to graduation the Texas state licensing board or state you are registered in will receive confirmation that you have graduated from the program, from the [Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy](#). Once the State has received this confirmation, you will be allowed to register for the computerized National Physical Therapist Assistant licensing examination in any state. You may take this exam locally and indicate the state in which you wish to be licensed. The state exam has approximately 200 computerized questions and takes about 4 hours. To sit for the licensing exam, you must meet at a minimum the following criteria:

- Graduate from a PTA program accredited by the Commission on the

Accreditation of Physical Therapy Education

- Apply for PTA Licensure in the state you intend to work in
- Apply to the FSBPT to take the licensing exam

The four fixed testing dates for the licensure exam can be found at: www.fsbpt.org

Real time in PTAP classes based on 2022-23 degree plan		
Semester	contact hrs. per week (PTAP classes only)	Comments
First Fall	256	The easiest of the semesters, but plan on an extra 10 hours to practice a week with a partner, on campus.
First Spring	480	Extremely difficulty, plan on additional 20 hours a week for practice with partner in the classroom
First summer	320 (Fulltime, two 5 -6-week, clinical experiences)	Car will be necessary
Second Fall	416	Extremely difficult, add an extra 20 hours for practice with a partner
Second Spring	368 this is a blended semester of clinical and course work.	Challenges time management skills. Car will be necessary. Most stressful semester, must pass mock exam to graduate.

Courses Recommended To Complete Prior to Entering the PTAP Program

All general education courses listed in the degree plan

Courses Required To Complete Prior to Ranking for the PTAP Program

BIOL 2401 – Anatomy and Physiology I

BIOL 2402 – Anatomy and Physiology II (used as a tie breaker)

PHIL 2306 – Ethics

MATH 1314 – Pre-Calculus

PTHA 1309 – Introduction to Physical Therapy

Estimated Annual Expenses for Students Enrolled in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program: \$12,063.50

**Textbooks and applications:
Equipment: ***

The textbook list is published on the EPCC website.	\$2000/ for the
Online physical therapy applications used in courses:	program.
Gait belt, BP cuff, stethoscope, tape measure, clip board	\$80.00
12” Plastic Goniometer	\$20.00
Lab Uniform	\$50.00
Clinic Uniform (2 pants) minimum	\$70.00
(2 shirts) minimum	\$70.00
Shoes for Clinic	\$90.00
Everyday uniform (2) minimum	\$140.00
Name tag	\$10.00
	<u>\$90.00</u>
Physical Therapy Guide to Clinical Practice (included with APTA Membership)	
Mock exam books	\$ 150.00
Office supplies	6 pocket folders, three 3” binders, three 10 pack of dividers, USB drive (1st semester)

Graduation Expenses*

Graduation Application Fee	\$0.00
Cap and Gown	\$70.00

Licensure Examination Expenses*

Prep Course Tuition	\$150.00
Licensure Application	\$195.00
Temporary License Fee	\$60.00
Licensure Exam Fee	\$550.00
Passport Photo Fee	<u>\$20.00</u>

* Prices are subject to change

Financial Assistance

Texas Alliance of Physical Therapist Assistant Educators

Contact:	PTAP Program coordinator
Type:	Scholarship
Amount:	+\$600
Pays for:	Reimburses for Licensure applications and Licensing exam fees
Qualifications:	Final semester of the Physical Therapist Assistant program, Member of APTA
Deadline:	February 1

American Physical Therapy Association: Minority Scholarship Award for Academic Excellence

Contact:	APTA Dept. of Minority /International Affairs
Type:	Scholarship
Amount:	Minimum of \$750.00
Pays for:	Unspecified
Qualifications:	Final year of Physical Therapist Assistant Program, Member of APTA
Deadline:	December 1

Las Palmas Medical Center West Auxiliary

Contact:	Counseling department
Type:	Scholarship
Amount:	Variable
Pays for:	Unspecified
Qualifications:	Unspecified
Deadline:	None specified

Texas Physical Therapy Association: George Scofield Student Award

Contact: PTAP Program coordinator
Type: Scholarship
Amount: \$150.00
Qualifications: Final year of Physical Therapist Assistant program
Pays for: Licensure fees
Deadline: June 1

Texas Physical Therapy Association: Dennis Cole Award

Contact: PTAP Program coordinator
Type: Scholarship
Amount: \$250.00
Qualifications: Final year of Physical Therapist Assistant program, Student
Affiliate Member of APTA
Pays for: Unspecified
Deadline: June 1

El Paso Community College: Financial Aid Office

Contact: EPCC Financial Aid Office
Type: Scholarship
Amount: Variable
Qualifications: Community and EPCC involvement
Pays for: Tuition and books, miscellaneous
Deadline: Variable

Project Arriba www.projectarriba.org

Greater El Paso District Physical Therapy Association/ PTA program scholarship

Contact: District chair
Type: Scholarship
Amount: \$250
Qualifications: Active involvement with Greater El Paso District Physical Therapy
Association
Pays for: Tuition and books, miscellaneous
Deadline: Early spring

Border Therapy Family Scholarship

Contact: Program Director
Type: Scholarship
Amount: \$500.00
Qualifications: Raising a family while enrolled in the program
Deadline: Early Spring

Foundation for EPCC/ Student Physical Therapist Scholarship

Contact:	Program Director
Type:	Scholarship
Amount:	Minimum of \$200
Qualifications:	To be determined
Deadline:	To be determined

UMC Employee Cares Benefits

Employees must have three months of prior work experience and complete the 90-day trial period successfully. They can attend undergrad/ grad, health care or relevant subject matter. Benefits include:

- **Cares Pull-ops program**
 - One-year full time employment
 - Part time (20hr/week) with full pay
 - Designed for “techs”
 - Must be accepted into the program
 - Required to attend college full time
- **Cares Student Loan repayment program \$5000/yr.**
 - 1-2 Year Commitment
- **Home ownership program up to \$8000**
- **Tuition reimbursement program \$2000/yr. (sept to Oct)**
 - Must work full time while attending college

Entrance Exams

The Texas Success Initiative (TSI) is the entrance exam required of all EPCC students. To qualify for admissions into the PTA program you must have the following minimum scores:

Minimum EPCC Cumulative GPA	Minimum Math Test Score PTSM	Minimum Reading Test Score PTSR	Minimum Writing Test Score PTSW	Minimum Essay Test Score PTSE
3.0	955	950	950	6

General College Policies

The following is a partial list of college policies which impact students enrolled in the PTA program. Students are referred to the programs website for the current copy of the programs policy manual and the College website for policies related to [students](#) and for [instruction](#). Students will be provided with updates as needed.

1. **FFAA-1 [Immunization](#)**
[FFAA-1](#)(Immunization, Tuberculosis Testing and Physical Examination Requirements for Health Career and Nursing Students)
2. **[FB-7 Specialized Admissions Requirements for Programs in health Careers and Nursing](#)**
3. **[FB-11 Student Re-entry into a Health Career Program](#)**
4. **FB-9 [Substance Abuse Testing for Health Occupations Students](#)**
5. **FLB-1 [Student Code of Conduct](#)**
6. **ECC-1 [Criteria for Determining Course Pursuit](#)**
7. FC-1 [Student Absences for the Observation of Religious Holy Days](#)
8. EGA-4 [Grading System](#)
9. FJ-5 [Health Information Privacy for Instructional](#) Programs

Program policies

I. Grading policy

All PTHA courses use the following grading scale:

90-100	= A
80-89	= B
70-79	= C
60-69	= D
59 and below	= F

II. Practical Exam policy

A practical exam is an exam in which the student demonstrates specific technical skills. Although the form of each practical varies depending on the course, the typical exam will have a real person, and the student is expected to demonstrate specific skills. Students are expected to demonstrate minimum competency on this exam. The practical exam policy of each instructor is stated in the "Instructors Requirements" Syllabus Part 1.

III. Written Exam policy

If a student must miss an exam, he/she must notify the instructor prior to the exam. Failure to notify the instructor in advance that a student will be absent for the exam, for any reason, will result in a grade of "0" for that exam. Make-up exams may be given at the discretion of the instructor. The make-up exam must be taken within the time frame stipulated by the instructor. Failure to take any make-up exam will result in a grade of "0." Students who fail a unit exam will be redirected back to the particular unit or units for additional reading and homework assignments. Students may not bring anything into the testing area other than a #2 pencil. Books, coats, book-bags, back-packs are to be placed neatly away from the testing area. Students should take care of any personal needs prior to the beginning of the examination. **No electronic media devices** are allowed in the testing area during an examination. Course instructors are required to turn in all written exams to the PTAP Program Coordinator.

IV. Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be prepared and present for each class/lab session. Homework is due at the beginning of the class. Students who are absent from class are responsible for all material. Attendance will be taken for each lecture and lab class. You are considered “late” after class is officially scheduled to begin. Students who have more than three

unexcused absences in a course will receive a formal counseling session and will have 1 point deducted from the final course grade. Students are expected to contact the instructor prior to being absent by contacting the faculty via the method stated in the syllabus. This usually means calling on our office phones and leaving a message, informing us in person prior to the expected absence, texting us.

V. Progression in the program

Students must maintain a “B” or better in all program courses and must remain in good academic standing with the college or its department to progress in the program. Students not meeting the criteria may be in-eligible for readmission. Students who receive grade less than a “B” will not be allowed to register for subsequent course in the degree plan and will be moved from “admitted status” to “non-progression” status in the program.

Students who are in “non-progression” status must meet specific criteria to be considered for “re-admission”. Students who violate program policies may be administratively withdrawn from a PTA course, may not be allowed to progress in the program.

VII. Reentry into the program

Reentry into the PTA program is on a space available basis, and students must follow the guidelines in order to be considered for readmission.

Students are referred to the program document titled “Guidelines for Progression and Re-admission the PTA program”, and the college policy “Student Reentry into the Health Career Program” for more information. College policies are available on the college’s website.

VIII. Informed consent

- a. Videotaping: there are numerous situations in which students may be part of a media assignment. All students will be provided with the appropriate consent form. The college has a specific “Talent Release” form for this purpose.
- b. Use of Human subjects/simulators; Students may be asked to simulate the role of the patient in the program. Additionally, outside persons may be in the classroom in which they would be simulating or performing in the role of the patient.
- c. Sharing personal information: It is expected that students will share at a minimum their names, telephone numbers and college email accounts in order to facilitate communication between faculty, clinical instructors and students, for programmatic and PTA club activities. It is the policy of the program, to not share students’ personal information with sources outside of the college.

IX. Pre-testing for Substance Abuse:

Substance abuse testing is required for students enrolled in selected health related courses/programs. This requirement is mandated by external agencies. Failure to submit to substance abuse testing will result in denial of admission or enrollment, and placement in clinical rotations.

X. Grievances

The college has a Student Grievance Procedure. Students are referred to the college website for that procedure. Students with grievances related to a PTA course should start with the course instructor. If no agreement can be reached, the Program coordinator would be the next person to voice your grievance to, followed by the Dean then the VP of Instruction.

XI. Code of Conduct

The college has a code of conduct, which is published in a variety of media, and can be found on the college’s web site. Each student is expected to adhere to this Code of Conduct. In addition, the Physical Therapy profession has a published Guide of conduct for the PTA. The colleges’ code of conduct is available on-line.

XII. HIPPA

Students and faculty are expected to comply with the HIPPA policies of the college and affiliates with which the college conducts business. Students and faculty are to complete the HIPPA online training, annually, and prior to the beginning of clinical courses.

XIII. Student Clinician Handbook

The student clinician handbook is available on the program's website. Students should be familiar with the procedures contained within the handbook.

XIV. Program Procedures

The 2024 program procedures can be found on the program's website. Students should be familiar with the program's procedures.

Receipt of PTA program Manual

I, _____, acknowledge, that I have read this manual, and understand its contents, and have had an opportunity to ask questions. I understand that program procedures and guidelines **may be changed** at the discretion of the Program Coordinator, and that I will be notified in advance of such a change. By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this manual at an orientation session or have downloaded it from the internet.

Printed Signature

Date

Written signature