

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT, A.S.

Seven Penn State campuses are scheduled for closure after Spring 2027: DuBois, Fayette, New Kensington, Mont Alto, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre, and York. New students are not being admitted at these campuses.

Begin Campus: Fayette, Hazleton, Mont Alto, Shenango

End Campus: Fayette, Hazleton, Mont Alto, Shenango

Program Description

This major helps prepare individuals to provide physical therapy services under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist in an ethical, safe, and effective manner. Students develop knowledge and skills in data collection and the appropriate use of equipment and exercise associated with various physical therapy treatment modalities. To accomplish these tasks, the major utilizes a combination of basic science and non-science course work coupled with courses specifically designed for the physical therapist assistant student. Students must progress through the program as prescribed by the suggested academic plan for their campus of admission. The program culminates with a full semester of clinical experience.

The size of each entering class is limited so that optimal clinical experiences and practical application situations can be maintained. Clinical affiliations are maintained over a wide geographical area, and students may be required to make special housing and transportation arrangements for the clinical phase. Prior to the beginning of the clinical experiences, PTA students are required to complete clinical requirements that may include, but are not limited to: health examination, immunizations, FBI fingerprint check, child abuse clearance, state background check and drug screening. Students will be responsible for completion and purchase of the necessary checks/clearances through a University approved vendor and providing results to the clinical sites.

In addition to a PTA certification/licensure, many state licensing boards and clinical facilities require a criminal background check, child abuse clearance, and a drug screening. Students with criminal records should contact the physical therapy licensing board in the state they plan to practice prior to applying for admission to the PTA Program to inquire about potential restrictions for licensure.

What is a Physical Therapist Assistant?

Physical Therapist Assistants (PTAs) work as part of a team providing physical therapy services under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist. PTAs implement interventions outlined in the physical therapist's plan of care, collect data related to interventions, and modify selected interventions to progress patients towards their individual goals. These goals are designed to reduce pain, restore function, improve mobility and prevent disability. An Associate in Science Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant requires 5-semesters of study, including three full-time clinical practicums. The PTA Program prepares graduates to take the national examination for certification/licensure as a PTA.

You Might Like This Program If...

You are interested in working with people of all ages who have health-related conditions that cause pain or limit their ability to move or perform functional activities in their daily lives. PTAs work under the direction

and supervision of a licensed physical therapist to provide meaningful interventions, such as exercise, training for walking and other activities, manual therapy and interventions, and the use of physical agents and electrotherapy.