PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

St. Catherine University’s Physical Therapy Assistant department promotes a supportive yet challenging environment that encourages reflective thinking, questioning, decision-making and personal growth. Consideration is given to individual differences in learning style through varied learning methodologies. The PTA program faculty are committed to the concept of adult learning where instructors serve as facilitators of the process of learning, not solely as dispensers of knowledge. The PTA department affirms that the instructor’s responsibility to create an environment that stimulates student learning, provides timely feedback, and seeks to support students to realize their full potential. Within this environment, students are expected to accept the responsibility to be an active participant in the learning experience.

Students receive an educational foundation in the liberal arts and sciences as well as in the professional discipline to become effective physical therapy assistants. The department prepares students to master complex intervention and assessment skills while viewing themselves and the people with whom they work as multi-faceted human beings affected by spiritual, physical, psychological and sociological influences. This perspective encourages students to broaden their understanding of themselves, the profession of physical therapy and the world in which they live.

Graduates of St. Catherine University’s PTA program will be competent generalists and continuing learners, capable of being contributing members and leaders within the physical therapy profession and their community.

Associate

• Physical Therapist Assistant - AAS (catalog.stkate.edu/undergraduate/health/physical-therapist-assistant/aas)

PTA 1010 Patient Handling Techniques — 2 credits
This course offers the learner opportunities to build a base of knowledge of normal joint motion and positions as a basis for application of patient handling techniques such as manual and mechanical lifting, wheelchair transfers, ace wrapping, and passive range of motion exercises. The concepts related to the delivery of a physical therapy intervention are proposed to the learner to incorporate into their approach to delivery of care. The principles of assuring patient and care giver safety are put forward to provide the learner guidance; these principles include infection control, wheelchairs (prescription and accessibility), aseptic technique, body mechanics, wound care and the monitoring of vital signs. The application of principles and techniques occur in lecture and laboratory settings. Offered in the College for Adults.

PTA 1020 Physical Therapy Intervention Techniques — 2 credits
This course offers the learner opportunities to build a base of knowledge of the physical and physiological principles related to thermotherapy, cryotherapy, hydrotherapy, mechanical pressure, radiant therapy and massage. The principles related to the delivery of the physical therapy interventions in all of these categories are proposed to the learner to incorporate into their approach to delivery of care with emphasis on communication of appropriate information to the patient/client (i.e. rationale related to diagnosis, physiological effects, contraindications). Students are provided the support necessary to learn and demonstrate competency including the delivery of hydrocollator packs, cold packs and ice massage, paraffin bath, whirlpool for the treatment of a wound, ultrasound, diathermy, and massage. The application of principles and techniques occur in lecture and laboratory settings. Offered in the College for Adults.

Prerequisite: PTA 1010.

PTA 1040 Musculoskeletal Anatomy and Measurement Techniques — 3 credits
Throughout this course, students will be invited to delve into the world of bones and muscles and learn how they function in the human body. Included in this content are bony landmarks, basic neuroanatomy as it relates to muscle function, muscle attachments, innervation and actions. Specific skills taught and evaluated for competency include palpation of muscles, ligaments and bony landmarks, goniometry and manual muscle testing. By course end, students will have the foundation needed to understand how the body musculature and bones move and how that information is necessary to know and apply in the field of physical therapy. The application of principles and techniques occur in lecture and laboratory settings. Offered in the College for Adults.

PTA 1050 Orientation To Physical Therapy/Role Of The Physical Therapist Assistant — 2 credits
This course introduces students to the health care system and the roles of the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant within that system. Students will learn about the responsibilities of the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant as members of a professional team, the use of communication, documentation and evidence-based practice in physical therapy, and an overview of the ethical and legal framework in which physical therapy is provided. In this course, students will develop a greater awareness of the philosophical and psychosocial aspects of delivering physical therapy interventions, and an understanding of how values, culture, attitudes and expectations impact the relationships between PTs and PTAs, and between PTs/PTAs and patients. A three-day introductory clinical experience will allow students to apply these concepts via supervised interaction with patients, physical therapy clinicians and other health care providers. The class will involve class discussions, small group exercises and role plays, with a minimum amount of content delivered in a traditional lecture format. Offered in the College for Adults.
PTA 1170 Foundation, Pathology and Application of Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy — 6 credits
This course offers the learner opportunities to advance their knowledge of the musculoskeletal system, movement as it applies to the major joint complexes of the upper and lower extremities and spine, and the relationship between normal musculoskeletal movement and pathology/injury. Students are introduced to the foundational principles for therapeutic exercise and physical therapy intervention techniques for typical musculoskeletal conditions. A focus is placed on developing the ability to choose, teach and implement appropriate exercises. The students will become competent in the technical skills of electrotherapy modalities, mechanical spinal traction, soft tissue mobilization, and ambulation. Additional interventions discussed include joint mobilization, aquatic therapy, and lymphedema interventions. The application of principles and techniques occur in lecture and laboratory settings.
Prerequisites: PTA 1020, PTA 1040, PTA 1050.

PTA 1310 Clinical Experience I — 2 credits
This course is a six week (20 hours per week) experience in the clinical setting which provides opportunity for the student to begin development of observation, communication and reporting skills and to apply, under the supervision of a physical therapist, the principles and techniques that have been learned in the curriculum to this point. Clinical experiences will be performed in a variety of settings under the direction of clinical instructors (CIs) representing a diverse range of knowledge and experience. Students will have an opportunity to utilize the skills, techniques and modalities learned in the first year under the supervision and critique of a physical therapist or PT/PTA team in the clinical setting. Students are expected to demonstrate competency on all skills learned in the first year curriculum and utilize appropriate interpersonal communication skills. Offered in the College for Adults.
Prerequisite: PTA 1350.

PTA 1350 Healthcare Delivery System — 1 credit
This course expands the students’ understanding of the American health care system, and the social, political, and economic forces that continue to shape health care today. Course components include the basic structure of the health care system, recent initiatives for health care reform, billing and payment for physical therapy services, and assessment of quality in health care. Emphasis is on linking these components to the daily practice environment of health practitioners. Using the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, the Core Values of physical therapy, and the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant, students will more clearly define their role as care providers and as advocates for patients and the profession. Offered in the College for Adults.
Prerequisite: PTA 1160.

PTA 2000 Physical Therapy Intervention Techniques III — 8 credits
This course offers the learner opportunities to build a base of knowledge of principles related to: therapeutic exercise including the basic physiology of techniques and their application; equipment utilization, specific techniques and their application to patients with various disabilities; integration of manual muscle testing and goniometry relating to the PTA role in assisting with, recording and reading the results of these evaluation processes; study of the principles and techniques related to ambulation including measurement and fitting of ambulation aids; pre-ambulation exercise and mat programs; gait patterns and drills; study of normal posture and gait, commonly treated mobility disorders; implication of sensory and motor impairment on ambulation; study of the rationale for and specific techniques employed in the rehabilitation of persons with long term disabilities, i.e. hemiplegia, spinal cord injury, amputation, multiple sclerosis, traumatic injury and respiratory disease; study of the roles and goals of the "rehabilitation team" as individual specialists and team members; and introduction to orthotics and prosthetics. The application of principles and techniques occur in lecture and laboratory settings. Offered in the College for Adults.
Prerequisites: PTA 1310, PTA 2020.

PTA 2010 Introductory Concepts in Pediatric Physical Therapy — 1 credit
This is an optional second year course in the PTA Program and is a prerequisite for special clinical experiences in pediatric physical therapy. Direct observation of pediatric clinical settings will be incorporated. Common pediatric disorders will be discussed and include the effects of the disorder and current rehabilitative management. The study of pediatric concepts will include optimal development as compared to non-optimal development. A knowledge base for intervention will be provided and will include handling techniques and physical management. Discussion of modulation of states, signs of self-regulation and distress will be included. The effect of disability on psychosocial status and communication skills used in interacting and teaching parents and children will be studied. Discussion of family, health and education issues, as well as payer sources, community resources and the need for referral will be incorporated. Discussion with a parent of a non-optimally developing child will also be included. Offered in the College for Adults.
Prerequisites: PTA 1310, PTA 2020, program director approval.

PTA 2020 Concepts in Geriatric Physical Therapy — 1 credit
This blended course (combination of in-class sessions and online activity) is designed to give students more in-depth knowledge of the physiological and psychological aspects of normal and pathological aging. In addition, the socioeconomic and cultural aspects of aging and their impact on rehabilitation will be discussed. The primary goal of this course is to help PTA students recognize how and why physical therapy practice may need modification when working with geriatric clients and to assist the student in eliminating biases about working with this group of clients, especially those who live in the skilled nursing facility setting. The course utilizes lecture, discussion, audiovisual materials, guest speakers, reading assignments, worksheets and group presentations to promote learning. It is expected that students will share their own experiences of interacting with the elderly, both in and out of health care, to help broaden the experience of their classmates. Offered in the College for Adults.
Prerequisite: PTA 1350.
PTA 2100 Clinical Experience II — 3 credits
Clinical Experience II occurs during January and February of the second year in the PTA program and includes six weeks of full days (40 hours per week) in the clinical setting, using skills acquired throughout the program. Clinical experiences will be performed in a variety of settings under the direction of clinical instructors (CIs) representing a diverse range of knowledge and experience. The purpose of this course is to solidify the data collection techniques and technical intervention skills learned in the fall semester of the second year, in addition to building upon those skills learned in the first year and practiced in PTA 1310. This clinical provides the student with full-time hands-on practice in a physical therapy department, encouraging integration of previous classroom knowledge. It promotes the student’s understanding of the health-care system, allows the student to participate as an active, cooperative member of the health care team, and encourages development of an ethical, holistic practitioner with regard for the whole person in all interactions. Because this is a full-time commitment, students are expected to actively participate in patient/client care conferences, PT staff meetings and in-service opportunities at their clinical sites. Students are expected to learn about and participate appropriately in the facilities’ reimbursement and documentation systems. Offered in the College for Adults.
Prerequisite: PTA 2000.

PTA 2210 Clinical Experience III — 3 credits
Clinical Experience III occurs immediately after Clinical Experience II, from late February to early April of the second year. It consists of six weeks of full-time (40 hours per week) hands-on practice in a physical therapy department, encouraging further integration and refinement of knowledge, techniques and interpersonal skills acquired throughout their two-year PTA educational program. Clinical experiences will be performed in a variety of settings under the direction of clinical instructors (CIs) representing a diverse range of knowledge and experience. Students are expected to utilize clinical decision-making strategies, problem-solving skills and effective communication toward the goal of functioning as an entry-level member of the health care team. Students are expected to demonstrate clinical decision-making strategies and problem-solving skills of increasing frequency and complexity. Just as importantly, they must consistently demonstrate professionalism, confidence, initiative and effective interpersonal skills at levels that allow them to function as an effective member of the health-care team. This clinical provides the student’s understanding of the health-care system, allows the student to participate as an active, cooperative member of the health care team, and encourages development of an ethical, holistic practitioner with regard for the whole person in all interactions. Students are expected to actively participate in patient/client care conferences, PT staff meetings and in-service opportunities at their clinical sites. Students are expected to learn about and participate appropriately in the facilities’ reimbursement and documentation systems. Objectives are designed to evaluate the student’s ability to function competently, utilizing the competencies specified for an entry-level physical therapist assistant. Offered in the College for Adults.
Prerequisite: PTA 2000.

PTA 2260 Learning and Service Through Immersion — 1 credit
This is a three week elective clinical experience is designed for students who have a strong interest in expanding their knowledge base and/or pursuing future career opportunities in a specialized clinical setting. The purpose of this clinical experience is for students to gain a greater familiarity with how their previously-mastered skills, techniques and professional behaviors are utilized in working with a unique focus and/or clientele. Through observation and participation in direct hands-on patient care, documentation and discussion with physical therapy staff, students will increase their understanding of the unique nature of the particular setting. They will also gain a greater self-awareness of their individual ability to be successful in that chosen specialty area. Offered in the College for Adults.
Prerequisite: PTA 2210 or instructor approval.

PTA 2270 Specialized Clinical Experience — 1 credit
This three-week, full-time elective clinical experience is designed for students who have a strong interest in expanding their knowledge base and/or pursuing future career opportunities in a specialized clinical setting. The purpose of this course is to provide an interdisciplinary experience with the participating doctor of physical therapy students. Students will participate in preparatory and reflection activities prior to, during and following the immersion experience. Offered in the College for Adults.
Prerequisite: PTA 2210 or approval of instructor. Additional prerequisite if clinical experience is in a pediatric setting: PTA 2010.

PTA 2410 Capstone Seminar and Project — 2 credits
This course provides a capstone experience for students to reflect and explore the application of the common elements of the PTA program’s curriculum: ethical decision-making, critical-thinking, understanding the patient/client as a whole, collaborative and applied learning, and leadership. Special emphasis is placed on ethical frameworks, spirituality and its role in healing, principles of Catholic social teaching and the Physical Therapy Core Values. Preparation for entering the physical therapy clinical community includes preparation for the licensure exam and emphasis on professionalism, leadership behaviors and life-long learning. The completion and presentation of a case study project and a final program comprehensive exam are included in this course.
Prerequisite: PTA 2000.

PTA 2681 Directed Study — 1 credit
Directed study is provided for students whose unusual circumstances prohibit taking a regularly scheduled course but who need the material of that course to satisfy a requirement. Availability of this faculty-directed learning experience depends on faculty time and may be limited in any given term and restricted to certain courses.
Prerequisites: Faculty, department chair and dean approval.

PTA 2684 Directed Study — 4 credits
Directed study is provided for students whose unusual circumstances prohibit taking a regularly scheduled course but who need the material of that course to satisfy a requirement. Availability of this faculty-directed learning experience depends on faculty time and may be limited in any given term and restricted to certain courses.
Prerequisites: Faculty, program director and dean approval.