



Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program

2023-2024 Information Packet



“Physical therapist assistants (PTAs) provide physical therapy services under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist. PTAs help people of all ages who have medical problems, or other health-related conditions that limit their ability to move and perform functional activities in their daily lives. PTAs work in a variety of settings including hospitals, private practices, outpatient clinics, home health, nursing homes, schools, sports facilities, and more. PTAs may also measure changes in the patient's performance as a result of the physical therapy provided.

Care provided by a PTA may include teaching patients/clients exercise for mobility, strength and coordination, training for activities such as walking with crutches, canes, or walkers, massage, and the use of physical agents and electrotherapy such as ultrasound and electrical stimulation.”



**Mercer County Community College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program**

**Information Packet
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INFORMATION IN THIS PACKET SUPERCEDES ALL PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED INFORMATION.

Changes in the curriculum and admission requirements for the PTA program may occur between the time the applicant applies to the College and the time of acceptance into the PTA program. Students should check periodically to see if materials have been updated. Applicants must meet the requirements in place for the PTA program at the time that acceptance into the program is offered.

Mercer County Community College Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Dear Prospective Student,

Thank you for your interest in the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program at Mercer County Community College. Physical therapy is an exciting career with many opportunities both professionally and personally. The primary goal of physical therapy is to help patients maximize function. Mercer's PTA curriculum will prepare you for this career path.

Physical Therapist Assistant students take 26 credits of general education courses and 41 credits in the professional phase. Graduates from the PTA program earn an Associate in Applied Science Degree (AAS). Prior to applying for acceptance into the professional phase of the PTA program, students must complete a mandatory PTA program Information Session on the PTA program website. Admission to the professional phase of the PTA program is by Application and each incoming class is limited to 28 students. Applications for the professional phase are accepted during the month of April each year and applicants will be notified of acceptance status by the Fourth of July. Accepted students will commence the professional phase of the curriculum during the fall session each year. The professional phase includes four semesters (fall I, spring I, summer, fall II and spring II semesters).

While the professional phase of the PTA program was designed as a full-time day program, course times do vary depending on the instructor. Therefore, students accepted into the professional phase may be enrolled in one evening course during fall and spring semesters in addition to other day-time courses.

While in the professional phase of the program, students are required to complete three clinical education courses. Clinical affiliations are provided in various settings that provide physical therapy services throughout New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Upon graduation, students are prepared to take the National Physical Therapy Examination for Physical Therapist Assistants, which is administered by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy. Although many courses may be transferred for college credit, the Physical Therapist Assistant program is not intended to prepare students to enter a masters-level or doctorate-level physical therapy program.

PTA program outcome data is located on the program website: <http://www.mccc.edu/pta/>

If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Professor Holly Beinert, PT, DPT

NJ License # 40QA01114200

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Coordinator

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PTA Program Description

Students can complete the pre-professional courses at their own pace. Once accepted into the professional phase of the program, students move through the curriculum as a cohort and complete professional phase courses in the exact sequence in which they are outlined on the Degree Requirements form.

Teaching methods throughout the professional phase of the PTA program vary and may include, but are not limited to the following: PowerPoint lectures, large class discussions, small group discussions, case studies, guest speakers, active learning activities, non-graded classroom assessment techniques, worksheets, videos, inter-professional collaborative learning experiences, student presentations, on-campus “field trips”, off campus learning experiences, debates, online discussion posts, written assignments and lab activities.

All PTA Courses have course objectives that fall into one of three domains of learning:

1. Cognitive: Course objectives in the cognitive domain pertain to *knowledge* that the student will gain during the course. Cognitive objectives answer the question: “What will the student know at the end of the course that he/she did not know when the course started?” Objectives listed in the cognitive domain are assessed via written exams, quizzes and assignments.
2. Psychomotor: Course objectives in the psychomotor domain pertain to *skills* that the student will gain during the course. Psychomotor objectives answer the question: “What will the student be able to demonstrate at the end of the course that he/she was not able to when the course started?” Objectives listed in the psychomotor domain are assessed via competency tests and practical examinations. Please review the “Psychomotor Assessment” section of this Information Packet for more information about competency tests and practical examinations.
3. Affective: Course objectives in the affective domain pertain to professional behavior and communication skills that the student will gain during the course. Objectives listed in the affective domain are assessed via written assignments.

In addition to the lectures and labs that take place on campus, students are also required to complete clinical education courses within the PTA program. Clinical education courses are incorporated into the curriculum and begin during the summer semester of the professional phase. Students are involved in a total of three separate clinical education experiences that are assigned based upon a variety of factors. Clinical education courses occur throughout the program starting with 4 weeks in the summer semester, 5 weeks in the fall II semester and the final clinical experience is 6 weeks during the spring II semester. Physical therapist assistant students provide physical therapy interventions in clinical settings under the direction and supervision of physical therapists. Students must arrange their personal schedule and have the ability to complete 40-45 hours/week for each of these clinical courses. Students are assigned a Clinical Instructor (CI), who is either a PTA or a physical therapist and the students are required to maintain the same work schedule as the assigned CI throughout the clinical affiliation.

Students graduating from the PTA Program officially graduate in March and walk in the May commencement ceremony. Graduates are eligible to take the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE) for Physical Therapist Assistants, which is administered by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy. Information about the NPTE can be found at www.fsbpt.org.

Successful completion of the NPTE allows graduates to apply for state licensure as a PTA.

Resources for Pre-Professional PTA Students

1. The PTA Program Website

The PTA program website is accessible from the college's website at www.mccc.edu under degree programs, Physical Therapist Assistant, PTA Program Website. The direct link for the PTA Program Website is <http://www.mccc.edu/pta/>

The PTA program website is comprehensive and provides answers to many student questions.

2. Your PTA Program Academic Advisor

PTA program faculty advisors are determined based upon the student's last name:

Students whose last name begins with A-L are advised by Professor Rachel Cordasco.

Students whose last name begins with M-Z, are advised by Professor Holly Beinert.

FACULTY ADVISORS SHOULD BE EVERY STUDENT'S PRIMARY METHOD OF RECEIVING ADVISEMENT AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE PTA PROGRAM.

**Professor Holly Beinert, PT, DPT
Program Coordinator**

Office: HS 137 (WWC)

Phone: (609) 570-3478 Fax: (609) 570-3831

BeinertH@mccc.edu

**Professor Rachel Cordasco, PT, DPT, CSCS
Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education**

Office: HS 128 (WWC)

Phone: (609) 570-3385 Fax: (609) 570-3831

CordascR@mccc.edu

3. The Health Professions Success Coach

The Health Professions Success Coach works with students one-on-one or during group workshops to develop skills in test taking, studying, stress management and organization.

Ed Griffith

(609) 570-3166

Griffith@mccc.edu

PTA Program Accreditation

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program (PTA) at Mercer County Community College (MCCC) is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314; telephone: 703-706-3245; email: accreditation@apta.org; website: <http://www.capteonline.org>. If needing to contact the PTA Program at MCCC directly, please call Program Coordinator Holly Beinert at 609-570-3478 or email her at BeinertH@mccc.edu.

Application & Graduation Requirements At-A-Glance

Application Requirements	Graduation Requirements
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completed MCCC application 2. "Health Science PTA" indicated as major 3. Official High School transcript or GED transcript sent directly to the Registrar, <i>if applicable</i> 4. Official transcripts from all academic institutions for which transfer credit review is requested, <i>if applicable</i> 5. Completion of ENG 101 & ENG 102 with earned grades of C or higher 6. Completion of PSY 101 with an earned grade of C or higher, completed within 10 years of submission of the Application for the Professional Phase 7. Completion of a PTA program accepted MATH course with an earned grade of C or higher (if completed prior to the Spring 2020 semester) and a grade of C+ or higher (if completed during the Spring 2020 semester or later) 8. Completion of BIO 103 and BIO 104, with earned grades of C+ or higher, completed at the same academic institution within 5 years of submission of the Application for the Professional Phase 9. Completion of PTA 105 with an earned grade of C+ or higher, completed within 5 years of submission of the Application for the Professional Phase 10. Minimum cumulative Mercer GPA of 2.5 (out of a 4.0 scale) 11. Attend a mandatory PTA program Information Session 12. Submission of a fully completed PTA program Application during the month of April, including completion of a writing skills assessment in the West Windsor Testing Center 13. Submission of Criminal Background Check according to the Health Professions Division Procedure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students may receive transfer credit for general education courses. 2. No professional phase courses will be accepted for transfer credit from another institution. 3. Complete the PTA Program mandatory Orientation prior to the fall I semester 4. Attend all Clinical Education mandatory preparation meetings 5. Submit all required health records requirements by the deadline provided 6. Complete any and all additional requirements set forth by assigned clinical affiliations by the facility-provided deadlines 7. Comply with PTA program dress codes and professional behavior standards 8. Complete all professional phase PTA courses with earned grades of C+ or higher. PTA courses may only be attempted twice and there are no exceptions. 9. Complete all professional phase PTA courses in the sequence and semester in which they are offered 10. Adhere to all PTA program policies and procedures as outlined in the "PTA Learner Handbook" and "Clinical Education Handbook for Learners" 11. Adhere to the college's Student Code of Conduct and all college policies and procedures

The program has determined that its curriculum meets the state educational requirements for licensure or certification in all states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands secondary to its accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, based on the following:

CAPTE accreditation of a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant program satisfies state educational requirements in all states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Thus, students graduating from CAPTE-accredited physical therapist and physical therapist assistant education programs are eligible to take the National Physical Therapy Examination and apply for licensure in all states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. For more information regarding state qualifications and licensure requirements, refer to the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy website at www.fspt.org.

Mercer County Community College Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Degree Requirements- Associate in Applied Science

The courses listed below constitute the requirements for the AAS degree in Physical Therapist Assistant. This information is provided for **course requirement**/advisory purposes only. Hard copies of this Degree Requirements form are available outside of HS 137. Electronic copies are located on the PTA program website.

All students are strongly urged to consult the **Essential Functions of a Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)**.

Pre-Professional Phase Courses

Semester I Pre-Professional Phase (14 weeks)

ENG 101	English Composition I	(3/0)	3
PSY 101	Intro to Psychology	(3/0)	3
MAT *	Mathematics Elective	(3/0)	3
BIO 103	Anatomy & Physiology I	(3/3)	4

Semester II Pre-Professional Phase (14 weeks)

ENG 102	English Composition II	(3/0)	3
BIO 104	Anatomy & Physiology II	(3/3)	4
XXX XXX	General Education Elective &	(3/0)	3
PTA 105	Kinesiology °	(3/0)	3

Start of the Professional Phase

Fall I Professional Phase (14 Weeks)

PTA 112	Pathology for Health Prof	(3/0)	3
PTA 222	Clinical Orthopedics	(3/2)	4
PTA 227	PTA Seminar I	(3/0)	3
PTA 107	Therapeutic Measurement	(1/2)	2

Continuation of the Professional Phase

Spring I Professional Phase (14 weeks)

PTA 114	Applied Kinesiology	(1/2)	2
PTA 210	PTA Techniques	(3/2)	4
PTA 214	Physical Agents	(2/2)	3
PTA 232	Professional Development	(2/0)	2

Summer I Professional Phase (4 weeks)

PTA 224	Clin Ed I 40-45 hr/wk x 4 wks	160hrs	3
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Fall II Professional Phase (14 weeks)

PTA 206	Motor Development	(2/0)	2
PTA 217	Therapy Clinic	(3/2)	4
PTA 235	Clin Ed II 40-45 hr/wk x 5 wks	200hrs	4

Spring II Professional Phase (6 Weeks)

PTA 240	Clin Ed III 40-45 hr/wk x 6wks	240hrs	5
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Completion of the Professional Phase

KEY:

- * MAT 115 Algebra & Trig I, MAT 125 Intro to Statistics, MAT 140 Applied College Algebra, MAT 200 Statistics for Social & Health Sciences I, **or** higher level math courses
- & The General Education course must be categorized as Social Science, Humanities, Historical Perspective or Diversity & Global Perspective.
- ° Registration in Kinesiology requires completion of BIO 103 within the past 5 years, with a minimum earned grade of C located on the MCCC transcript.

NOTES:

- The PTA program utilizes a proctoring service when administering written exams. These services may include Mercer's Academic Testing Center on campus or electronic exams through Blackboard or ExamSoft. This enables the PTA Program to administer written exams outside of regularly scheduled class times.
- Lab courses involve Competency Testing which takes place outside of class time. This may be up to 6 hours per lab course.
- **Health Records Requirements:** Detailed information regarding health records requirements can be found on the PTA Program website and will be provided during the mandatory Orientation to the Professional Phase of the PTA Program meeting. *Other than the medical insurance coverage*, students are strongly advised to wait until after the Orientation meeting to begin fulfilling these health records requirements.
- **All PTA program, science & math courses** must be passed with a grade of C+ or higher to be considered eligible for acceptance in the professional phase of the PTA Program. PTA Program courses may only be attempted twice. Please note that some courses have expiration dates, which are provided on the PTA Program Application. Students who completed the math requirement prior to Spring 2020 have a minimum grade requirement of "C".
- **Eligibility Requirements:** Please refer to the PTA Program Application and the PTA Program Information Packet (located at www.mccc.edu/pta) for all criteria required for eligibility for acceptance into the professional phase of the PTA Program.

Example course plans for completing *PRE-REQUISITE* courses:

* apply for the professional phase during the month of April

FALL START:

Fall	Spring*
ENG 101	ENG 102
PSY 101	BIO 104
Math	GenEd
BIO 103	PTA 105

FALL START (expanded):

Fall	Spring*	Summer
ENG 101	ENG 102	GenEd
PSY 101	BIO 104	
Math	PTA 105	
BIO 103		

FALL START (expanded further):

Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring*
ENG 101	ENG 102	BIO 103	BIO 104
PSY 101	Math	GenEd	PTA 105

SPRING START: *Unable to begin pre-requisites in the spring semester & apply for professional phase the following fall semester

Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring*	Summer
ENG 101	PSY 101	ENG 102	PTA 105	GenEd
BIO 103		BIO 104	Math	

SPRING START: *Unable to begin pre-requisites in the spring semester & apply for professional phase the following fall semester

Spring	Fall	Spring*
ENG 101	ENG 102	BIO 104
PSY 101	BIO 103	PTA 105
Math	GenEd	

The examples above are only five possibilities. Students can spread pre-requisite coursework out to meet their needs, but need to be aware of course expirations (located on the application and in the PTA Program Information Packet). When creating course plans, students are encouraged to talk to a PTA program faculty advisor or the Health Professions Success Coach. Course plans will depend on numerous factors including, but not limited to, financial aid requirements and time available to invest in coursework each semester.

When creating a course plan, remember:

1. ENG 101 must be taken before ENG 102
2. BIO 103 must be taken before BIO 104
3. BIO 103 must be taken before PTA 105
4. If taking an A&P course (BIO 103 or BIO 104) during the summer, it should be the only course taken at that time

Required Courses	Exp. &	Min. Grade Requirement
English (ENG 101)	N/A	C
English (ENG 102)	N/A	C
Psychology (PSY 101)	10yr	C
Mathematics Elective (MAT115, 140, 125 or 200)	N/A	C+ °
Anatomy & Physiology I (BIO 103)✓	5yr	C+
Anatomy & Physiology II (BIO 104)✓	5yr	C+
Kinesiology (PTA 105)	5yr	C+

Complaints Outside of Due Process

General concerns or complaints pertaining to the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program at Mercer County Community College that fall outside the realm of Mercer's due process should be directed to pta@mccc.edu. All complaints received will be reviewed by both the PTA Program Coordinator and the Academic Dean.

Recent PTA Program Curriculum Changes

Change to Minimum Math Grade Requirement:

The college's Curriculum Committee approved of a change to the Degree Requirements for the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program at their September 20, 2018 meeting. It is important that everyone who is planning on applying for the PTA program be aware of these changes moving forward. (If you are not planning to apply for acceptance into the professional phase of the PTA Program in the future, please disregard this email.)

Starting in the Spring of 2020, the minimum grade requirement for the math pre-requisite course will be a "C+."

This change will go into effect for the Spring 2020 PTA application process. Therefore, any student who took a pre-requisite math course *prior to* the Spring of 2020 will be "grandfathered" and a minimum grade of "C" will be accepted for those students only. All students who take the math pre-requisite in the Spring of 2020 or thereafter, will be required to earn a minimum grade of "C+" for acceptance.

If you have any questions about the changes that have taken place, please feel free to contact the PTA Program Coordinator: BeinertH@mccc.edu

PTA 105 Pre-Requisite:

The pre-requisite for PTA 105 is now BIO 103 (A&P I) taken within the previous 5 years, with a minimum earned grade of "C" (instead of a C+). This is due to the fact that PTA 105 is taken by both PTA and Exercise Science majors. Although the pre-requisite for PTA 105 has changed, the requirement that applicants earn a minimum grade of "C+" in A&P I (and A&P II) for acceptance into the professional phase of the PTA Program HAS NOT CHANGED.

2023 Curriculum Restructure

The following changes will be implemented in 2023:

- The professional phase will begin with the fall 2023 semester (instead of summer 2023)
- The professional phase will include one additional term (fall I, spring I, summer, fall II, spring II)
- The entire program (pre-professional + professional) will increase from 68 to 80 academic weeks
- The number of academic weeks of didactic preparation will increase from 25 to 37
- Professional phase students will begin in fall 2023 and complete the program in March 2025
- Graduates of the Class of 2025 will be eligible to take the April 2025 board exam and participate in the May commencement ceremony
- Course sequencing within the professional phase has been updated. Refer to the Degree Requirements page (PTA Class of 2025)
- This has resulted in new course numbers, changes to course credits, and changes to pre-requisites

A Step-by-step Guide for Pre-Professional PTA Students

1. Apply for General Admission to Mercer County Community College

Applying to become a student at Mercer County Community College is the first step. Mercer County Community College is an open enrollment institution. All applicants are accepted into the college and there is no application fee.

Application for admission to Mercer County Community College can be found on the college's website:

http://www.mccc.edu/admissions_application.shtml

2. Establish the Correct Major

It is imperative that students pursuing the PTA Program choose "Health Science: PTA" as his/her major.

3. Send Official Transcripts to Mercer

Official transcripts from all other academic institutions in which the student has completed college courses must be sent to the Student Records Office at the address below. Students are responsible for tracking receipt of official transcripts sent to Mercer by logging into their MyMercer online portal at www.mccc.edu. Transcripts are evaluated by the Registrar's office and take approximately 2 weeks from when a student's transcript is received to when their transfer credits are posted.

Student Records Office

Mercer County Community College

P.O. Box 17202

Trenton, NJ 08690

4. Complete Pre-Requisite Courses

Students must complete the following courses before or during the spring semester in which they submit an Application for the Professional phase of the PTA program:

ENG 101	English Composition I	BIO 103	Anatomy & Physiology I
ENG 102	English Composition II	BIO 104	Anatomy & Physiology II
PSY 101	Intro to Psychology	PTA 105	Kinesiology
MATH	(MAT 115 Algebra & Tri I, MAT 125 Elementary Statistics I, MAT 140 Applied College Algebra, MAT 200 Statistics for Social & Health Sciences I, or higher level math)		

Important Notes:

- Date of Matriculation (which is defined as the first semester in which a student takes a course at Mercer *with* "Health Science PTA" listed as his/her major) is part of the admissions criteria. Students with earlier "dates of matriculation" receive more points during the admissions process. Therefore, once a student has decided to pursue a PTA degree, it is in his/her best interest to complete a course at Mercer as soon as he or she is able.
- The courses listed above have various expiration dates and minimum grade requirements.
- It is wise to communicate with your PTA Faculty Advisor at least once per semester while taking pre-requisite courses. PTA Faculty Advisors can answer questions, assist with course planning and ensure that all requirements are met.
- The first course that you take at Mercer must be registered for in person. The Registrar's office is located on the second floor of the Student Center on the West Windsor Campus. All subsequent pre-professional courses may be registered for online.
- While the General Education (GenEd) course is not required for *acceptance* into the professional phase of the PTA program, it is required to *graduate* with an A.A.S. degree in the PTA program. Therefore, while not required, it is highly recommended that students complete the General Education course prior to the start of the professional phase. Due to the high demands of the professional phase, students find it extremely difficult to complete GenEd *during* the professional phase. Waiting to take this course until after the professional phase is complete may delay graduation. Starting with the Class of 2025, CSW 100 will no longer be required.
- Only general education courses from the categories of Social Science, Humanities, Historical Perspective and Diversity & Global Perspectives will be considered for the PTA program. http://www.mccc.edu/pdf/general-ed_courses

- G. Please review the "Taking Pre-Requisites at Another College" section of this Information Packet if you plan to take pre-requisite courses at colleges other than Mercer County Community College.
- H. College Level Examination Program (CLEP): For completed courses that have expired, students have the option to take a test to demonstrate that his/her knowledge is current. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that CLEP results are transferred to the college, as per the protocols for transfer credit. Email pta@mccc.edu for details.
- I. If you completed PSY 101 more than ten years ago, you can fulfill the PSY 101 requirement with a higher level psychology course that utilizes PSY 101 as a pre-requisite. This higher level psychology course cannot *also* fulfill the general education requirement. The general education requirement will need to be fulfilled by a separate course.

5. Attend a Mandatory PTA Program Information Session

To be eligible to apply for acceptance into the professional phase of the PTA program, all students must attend a mandatory PTA program information session. Information and registration for these sessions are located on the PTA program website: <http://www.mccc.edu/pta/>

Attendance at only one Information Session is required, regardless of the number of Applications submitted by the student. It is the students' responsibility to periodically check for updates to the PTA Program.

6. Submit an Application for the Professional Phase of the PTA Program

- A. Ensure that you meet all of the application requirements.
- B. Submit the Application online (www.mccc.edu/pta) during the month of April of the year in which you are applying for acceptance.
- C. Complete a Writing Skills Assessment at the West Windsor Testing Center during the month of April of the year in which you are applying for acceptance.
- D. Check your Mercer email for an email notification that your Application has been received. This email notification will contain a preliminary status for your Application. If you have not received an email notification within 7 business days of submitting your Application, email pta@mccc.edu for the status.
- E. Students receive letters of acceptance/regret/temporary wait list via US Postal Services by July 4th.
- F. Acceptance into the Professional Phase of the PTA program is NOT guaranteed to any individual.

Statement of Students' Rights & Responsibilities Access to Higher Education

(source = MCCC Student Handbook)

Access to Higher Education While the College maintains an open admissions policy, making educational programs accessible to all who can benefit, and invests in special efforts to enroll students who otherwise might not aspire to higher education, the College ensures students equal access to all college programs, facilities, and events regardless of their race, color, religion, or disability that is unrelated to job or program requirements, national origin, age, gender, affectional or sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States, political views, or any other characteristic protected by law. All acts denying students equal access to College programs are strictly prohibited and will not be condoned.

APPLICATION TO COMMENCE THE PROFESSIONAL PHASE OF THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT (PTA) PROGRAM

Applications for the PTA Program will be accepted between **during the month of April** of each year. Applications will not be accepted before or after the application period.

To be eligible for acceptance into the professional phase, applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Earned a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher
2. Completed all pre-requisite courses within their listed timeframes (refer to expiration dates)
3. Earned the minimum grade required for each pre-requisite course
4. All required pre-requisite courses must be completed and located on the MCCC transcript by the end of the spring semester in which an application was submitted
5. Attended a mandatory PTA Program Information Session prior to submitting an application
6. Submitted a fully completed application prior to the deadline
7. Not have been suspended or expelled from Mercer County Community College or dismissed from a Health Professions program at Mercer.

Acceptance into the PTA Program is offered without regard to political views, religion, national or ethnic origin, race, color, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, veteran status, or disability unrelated to job or program requirements. MCCC's PTA Program uses a rubric for admission consideration to ensure fairness and objectivity in the acceptance process. Point values are assigned to applicants based on:

1. GPA for all required prerequisite courses listed on this application (*Higher GPAs earn more points*)
 - a. For courses earned through Advanced Placement exams, the course grades will be used as follows: A for 5, B for 4, and C for 3.
2. Writing Skills Assessment (*Higher scores earn more points*)
3. Semester of first matriculation as a Health Science AAS: PTA Major at Mercer: (*Earlier dates earn more points*)
4. Institution where pre-requisite courses were completed (*one additional point will be added to the total grade points for each required pre-requisite course completed at Mercer with an A or A-*)

An application rubric example is available for review on the PTA Program's website at www.mccc.edu/pta
The application itself will be submitted online through the PTA Program website: www.mccc.edu/pta

All required pre-requisite courses must be completed and located on your MCCC transcript by the end of the spring semester in which an application was submitted. Applicants completing a required pre-requisite during the spring semester at another academic institution, must ensure that an official transcript with the earned grades is sent to the Student Records Office and an unofficial transcript is sent to the PTA Program Coordinator (BeinertH@mccc.edu) by June 1st. Though the General Education elective is not required for acceptance into the professional phase, it is required for graduation. It is strongly recommended that students plan to complete the general education elective prior to the start of the professional phase.

Notification to Students:

Within one week of submission of an application, applicants will receive an email notification **to their Mercer email address** indicating receipt of the application and a preliminary status. In late May, all applications are reviewed and prioritized by applicant score. Applicants who do not receive a "receipt" within 5 business days should email pta@mccc.edu. Up to twenty-eight applicants with the highest applicant scores will receive a provisional acceptance letter mailed to the home address on record, in early June. All other applicants will receive a non-acceptance letter during the same timeframe. Verify that your correct mailing address is indicated on the application form.

Provisional Acceptance:

Once an applicant is selected for admission to the professional phase of the PTA Program, the initial acceptance is provisional and based upon attendance of a mandatory program orientation and submission (and results of) a criminal background check. Additional health and other requirements must be completed by the end of the fall I semester. The orientation date and location will be announced after acceptance is confirmed.

Application to the Professional Phase: Writing Skills Assessment

Purpose: Writing skills and reading comprehension are important factors for success in the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program and the Physical Therapy profession. The ability to understand written instructions and questions impact learners' ability to succeed in exams and assignments, as well as for practicing PTAs to communicate with other healthcare providers and safely manage patient care responsibilities.

Process: As a component of the PTA Program application, each applicant is required to complete a Writing Skills Assessment at the West Windsor Testing Center during the month of April. You will be provided with three question options. Applicants will choose one of the questions and provide a written one-paragraph answer. The Testing Center will keep a list of which applicant completed each response and the nameless (blind) responses will be provided to PTA program faculty for scoring (using the rubric below). After *all* writing skills assessments have been scored, the Testing Center will provide the names associated with each response to the Health Professions administrative assistant and then the writing skills score will be added to the applicant score. Applicants can bring their choice of writing utensil, pencil or pen.

NOTE:

1. You must be a registered MCCC student prior to taking the Writing Skills Assessment with a student ID number. Make sure that you have a student ID number prior to going to the West Windsor Campus Testing Center (LB 215) during the month of April. The Testing Center is located on the second floor of the Student Center, above the library.
2. You must make an appointment with the Testing Center through their online appointment request form at: https://www.mccc.edu/student_services_testing.shtml, Click [HERE](#) for the Student Course Testing Request Form.
3. If you have any issues with using the Testing Center Appointment form, email academicsupport@mccc.edu. More information about the West Windsor Testing Center is here: https://www.mccc.edu/student_services_testing.shtml
4. When you arrive to the Testing Center, request the "PTA Writing Skills Assessment".
5. When you receive the packet, it will say "Writing Skills Assessment Packet for Prospective Students Applying for the Professional Phase of the PTA Program". If it does not say this, you have the wrong packet and need to inform the Testing Center.

Grading Rubric:

The writing skills component is worth ten points.

1	Did the writer answer the question chosen? (reading comprehension)	Yes = 1 point No = 0 points
2	Did the writer follow all directions?	Yes = 1 point No = 0 points
3	Was a message clearly conveyed?	Yes = 1 point No = 0 points
4	Did the writer use complete sentences and proper sentence structure utilized throughout the response? (relationship between/among clauses, placement of modifiers, shifts in construction)?	Yes = 1 point No = 0 points
5	Did each sentence begin with a word (not a number, abbreviation or acronym) and a capital letter?	Yes = 1 point No = 0 points
6	Is grammar utilized correctly throughout the response? (use of adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, agreement between subject and verbs and between pronouns and their antecedents)	Yes = 1 point No = 0 points
7	Is punctuation correctly used and placed throughout the response?	Yes = 1 point No = 0 points
8	Does the tense (past, present, future) remain constant throughout the response?	Yes = 1 point No = 0 points
9	Was the response well organized? (order, coherence, unity)	Yes = 0 points No = 1 points
10	Were there any spelling errors or jargon in the response?	Yes = 0 points No = 1 points

PTA Program Policies Pertinent to Prospective Students

Mercer County Community College Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Policy: Impact of Pass/Fail Grades

Purpose: To ensure transparency for PTA program applicants and current students

Audience: PTA program professional phase learners and pre-professional students

Pre-Professional

When applying for acceptance into the professional phase of the programs listed above, pre-requisite grades are utilized during the application process. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many academic institutions have initiated a “pass/fail” grading option for the spring 2020 semester.

To be eligible for acceptance into the professional phase of the PTA program, applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5. If an applicant has a “P” grade listed on his/her transcript, the “P” grade does not impact cumulative GPA. The PTA program will not recalculate the cumulative GPA using the actual earned letter grade. The cumulative GPA listed on the applicant’s transcript will be used to determine eligibility.

An applicant score is calculated for each applicant to the professional phase. Earned grades for seven courses are utilized in this calculation. For these seven courses, a “P” grade will only be accepted if the following criteria are met:

1. The academic institution where the “P” was earned has clearly defined and published the letter grade equivalent for the “P” grade. Applicants are responsible for providing this information with the application to the professional phase.
2. The letter grade equivalent for the “P” grade is equal to or higher than the minimum grade required by the PTA program for that course.
 - a. For example, if the academic institution defines “P” as an earned grade of “C” or higher, that “P” grade can be used for ENG 101, ENG 102, PSY 101, and the general education elective because the PTA program requires a minimum grade of “C”. It cannot be used for BIO 103, BIO 104, or PTA 105 because the PTA program requires a minimum grade of “C+”. However, if the academic institution defined the “P” as an earned grade of “C+” or higher, it could then be used for all pre-requisites.

When calculating the application score, any “P” grades that meet the criteria above will be calculated with the letter grade that equates to the lowest letter grade equivalent.

- a. For example, if the grade for PSY 101 is listed as a “P” and the academic institution defines “P” as an earned grade of “C” or higher, a grade of “C” will be utilized for PSY 101.

The PTA program will accept the “P” grade (with parameters outlined above) for pre-requisite courses completed during the following semester:

Spring 2020

Please note that this does not represent a change in our admissions policies. The acceptance of alternate grading formats is a necessary exception due to extraordinary circumstances.

Professional Phase

Learners enrolled in professional phase PTA courses may not utilize the “pass/fail” grading option provided during the spring 2020 semester (or any other semester). Only learners who earn letter grades in all professional phase courses are eligible to graduate with an AAS degree from the PTA program.

Effective Date: April 2020

Revised Date:

Reviewed Date:

Location: PTAP P&P HB, Info Packet

Mercer County Community College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Policy: Transfer Credit Evaluation
Purpose: To ensure that appropriate and equitable criteria pertaining to transfer credit is applied consistently and equitably
Audience: PTAP Program Coordinator and Learners

PTAP Transfer Credit Policy:

- Courses that do not begin with the prefix “PTA” may be eligible for transfer credit, if all criteria outlined below are met.
- PTA 105 – Kinesiology is the only “PTA”-prefixed course that *may* be considered for transfer under the following conditions: the student earned a Bachelor’s Degree (or higher) in Kinesiology, earned a minimum grade of C+ and completed the degree within five years

Criteria:

1. Official transcripts are provided to Mercer County Community College, as per college policies
2. Transfer credit is considered only from US institutions that are recognized by a regional accrediting agency
3. Transcripts from international institutions must be evaluated by either the World Education Service (WES) or another international transcript evaluation service (FCCPT, etc.) prior to being considered for transfer credit
 - a. Science courses must have been completed in English to be considered for transfer credit
4. Transfer credit will only be considered for institutional credit
5. Only those courses in which the student has earned a grade of C or higher will be considered for potential transfer credit. Minimum grade exceptions are as follows:
 - a. BIO 103 (Anatomy & Physiology I) – must earn a C+ or higher
 - b. BIO 104 (Anatomy & Physiology II) – must earn a C+ or higher
 - c. PTA 105 (Kinesiology) – must earn a C+ or higher
 - d. MAT - must earn a C+ or higher
6. Course must have been completed within specified timelines. Expiration dates are as follows:
 - a. No expiration date: ENG 101, ENG 102, MAT, General Education course, CSW/HPE
 - b. Ten years: PSY 101
 - c. Five years: BIO 103, BIO 104, PTA 105
7. The credit value of the course at the other academic institution must be equivalent or higher than the credit value of the equivalent course at Mercer County Community College
 - a. If the transfer course has a higher credit value than the equivalent course at Mercer, the student will be awarded the credit allotment of the Mercer course
8. Anatomy & Physiology criteria are as follows:
 - a. Must be taken in English
 - b. Must earn a minimum grade of C+ in each course, and in both lecture and lab if separate grades are earned
 - c. Must complete within five years of application to the professional phase of the PTAP
 - d. BIO 103 & BIO 104 must be completed at the same academic institution
9. General education courses must be considered a “general education elective” by Mercer County Community College and be from one of the following categories: Social Science, Humanities, Historical Perspective or Diversity & Global Perspective
10. Psychology criteria are as follows:
 - a. Psychology must be completed within ten years of application to the PTAP’s professional phase
 - b. A higher level psychology course that requires PSY 101 (Introduction to Psychology) as a pre-requisite may be substituted for PSY 101 if a minimum grade “C” has been earned and it does not exceed the time limitation of ten years
11. When evaluating transcripts, it is necessary for the coursework from the previous institution to be equated to the proper equivalent course at MCCC. Occasionally, credits may be awarded for a course that is not a pre-

requisite course and the program coordinator will then complete a course substitution, to ensure that the pre-requisite has been fulfilled.

Transcript Review Process*

1. The Student Records Office:
 - a. Receives the official transcript
 - i. A hard copy *sealed* envelope can be sent directly from the institution or provided by the student.
 - ii. Electronic copies must be sent directly from the academic institution.
 - b. Verifies the official transcript
 - c. Forwards the transcript to the PTAP Coordinator with a “credit evaluation form”
2. The PTAP Coordinator:
 - a. Reviews the transcript in accordance with PTAP degree requirements. (This means that a change of major *after* review of the transcript by the PTAP Coordinator will require that the transcript(s) be re-evaluated by the coordinator of the *new* major.)
 - b. Reviews the transcript in accordance with the “PTAP Acceptance of Transfer Credit Policy”
 - c. Utilizes the most recent PTAP Course Equivalency Chart, where applicable
 - d. With the exception of CSW/HPE and the General Education course, accepts the most recent course(s) completed
 - e. Completes the “credit evaluation form”
 - f. Places a “note” in the student’s Student Planner **OR** sends the student an email, indicating which courses have been accepted for transfer
 - g. Returns the “credit evaluation form” to the Student Records Office
 - h. When hard copies are provided by the Student Records Office, maintains a copy of the transcript and credit evaluation form on file in the PTAP Coordinator’s office.
 - i. When electronic copies are provided by the Student Records Office, maintains an electronic copy of the credit evaluation form on the PTAP Coordinator’s computer.
3. The Student Records Office:
 - a. Posts the transfer credits into the student record
4. The student:
 - a. Reviews the communication from the PTAP Coordinator and responds with any questions
 - b. Follows up (by viewing Student Planner) to confirm that transfer credits have been posted on his/her Mercer transcript

*This process can take a varying amount of time depending on the time of year. All questions pertaining to transcripts should be directed to Holly Beinert, PTAP Coordinator at BeinertH@mccc.edu.

Effective Date: Aug 2019

Revised Date: Oct 2019, Jan 2022

Reviewed Date:

Location: PTAP P&P Handbook; PTAP Information Packet

Mercer County Community College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Policy: Professional Phase PTAP Grading Policy
Purpose: To provide a consistent grading format for all courses in the PTAP
Audience: PTAP full faculty (full and part time), PTAP learners

1. Prior to the start of each semester, the Course Coordinator will determine the percent value for each assessment component of the course. This information is to be included in the course handbook that is available to learners.
2. Grades earned by learners follow the college grading system as follows:

A 93-100	B 83-86	C 70-76
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	D 60-69
B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	

3. Learners must earn a C+ (77%) or better in order to successfully complete any PTA-prefixed courses and remain in the professional phase. This standard is higher than that of the college, but better aligned with external standards for the National Physical Therapy Examination, in which the minimum passing score is higher than the minimum passing grade at MCCC. Consistent with PTAP policies that state that a learner must be deemed competent and safe to proceed with clinical education courses, successful completion of all PTAP courses requires that learners separately pass both the psychomotor and cognitive portions of all courses that have laboratory components (PTA 107, PTA 201, PTA 210, PTA 211, PTA 213 and PTA 216).

Psychomotor components for courses may include the following graded activities:

- SOAP note assignments
- Competency Tests
- Practical Examinations

Cognitive components for courses may include the following graded activities:

- Written exams
- Quizzes
- Paper Assignments
- Presentations
- Written paperwork and/or homework assignments

4. If a learner has not earned a minimum grade of 77 for either or both the Psychomotor AND Cognitive domains of a lab course *separately*, then he or she will earn the lower grade of the two domains as the final course grade and will not be able to proceed to the next course in the Professional Phase of the PTAP.
5. Written exams taken in the Testing Center that utilize a Scantron sheet will generate a "Testing Center Report Form". Exam grades will be based upon the "Testing Center Report Form", not what the learner circles on the hard copy of the exam. Scantron sheets are unavailable for review.
6. All grades determined by the Course Coordinator are considered final.
7. Grade books must be turned into the PTAP Coordinator, along with a copy to the Division Office within one week of the conclusion of each course.

Effective Date: Sept 2017

Revised Date: July 2019, Oct 2019, Jan 2022

Reviewed Date:

Location: PTAP P&P Handbook; PTA Program Information Packet

Tuition and Fee Estimates 2023-2024*

Mercer County, New Jersey	Per-credit	Tuition	Lab Supplies	PTA Textbooks	Other	TOTAL
In county [#]	\$211.75	\$14,187.25	\$115	\$1,000	\$1,325	\$16,627.25
Out of county [^]	\$268.05	\$17,959.35	\$115	\$1,000	\$1,325	\$20,399.35
Out of state	\$372.60	\$24,964.20	\$115	\$1,000	\$1,325	\$27,404.20

These figures represent estimates that are subject to change and should be used only for planning purposes.

Details:

- Tuition is based upon 67 credits in the curriculum and represents estimates that are subject to change and should be used only for planning purposes. Bucks County PA residents have been granted an “out of county” rate by special arrangement between MCCC and Bucks County Community College.
- Lab supplies include a lab coat, name-tag, patch, a lab uniform (shorts and shirt), 2 goniometers, face masks (based upon current college requirements), and possibly a face shield (based upon current college/program requirements).
Together, these items cost approximately **\$95.00 - \$115.00**.
- Textbooks: estimate based upon the cost of *new* required textbooks for PTA specific courses. Textbook costs can be reduced by choosing to purchase used textbooks, when available.
- Tuition: includes credit fees and technology fees
- Other: includes lab course fees for lab courses and clinical liability insurance for clinical courses
- All learners are required to be an APTA member. The annual fee for PTA Student membership is \$95. Proof of membership is due upon the first day of the fall semester.
- Other than clinical education courses, all PTA-prefix courses can be taught in a traditional face-to-face format, an online format, or a hybrid format. The format of instruction may change each semester and/or year due to the assigned instructor’s preference, curriculum decisions, or external needs. This may affect associated course fees, as online courses incur an additional fee.
- Pre-requisite course textbooks typically range from \$600 - \$900 (depending on digital vs. hard copy options)

Lab Coats & Lab Uniform

Lab Coats are required for Competency Testing, Practical Exams and Clinical Education courses. The lab coat must have a patch on the Left shoulder that indicates the learner is a Mercer County Community College PTA Student, and learners must also wear a name tag that includes their full name and title “PTA Student”. The mandatory lab uniform consists of shorts and a shirt. These items are available through an outside vendor and information is provided after acceptance into the professional phase of the program. Specific information is provided during orientation.

Fees are subject to change. This is an estimate. Mercer County Community College is not responsible for changes that might occur in any of the amounts that have been stated which have been provided for advisory purposes only.

Updated May 2023

Health Records Information for Pre-professional PTA Students

To successfully complete the PTA Program, all students must participate in and earn passing grades for three clinical education courses throughout the curriculum.

Summer: PTA 224, 4- week clinical education course

Fall II: PTA 235, 5- week clinical education course

Spring II: PTA 240, 6- week clinical education course

A clinical education course consists of each student being assigned to a facility that provides physical therapy services. The students work with real patients under the supervision and guidance of a practicing physical therapist or physical therapist assistant who is working under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist.

Eligibility to participate in the three clinical education courses throughout the curriculum is dependent on the student fulfilling all the eligibility requirements as outlined in the Clinical Education Handbook. One of those requirements is the submission of health records. Students are required to submit hard copies of all health records requirements directly to the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) as requested, **by the last day of the fall I semester**, to ensure that all clinical sites receive their required confirmations of compliance. Some health records will need to be updated annually.

Health records requirements include:

- 1) attestation of medical insurance coverage
- 2) CPR certification for the healthcare provider (must include AED)*
- 3) First Aid certification*
- 4) a physical examination form completed and signed by a doctor[^]
 - a) If you are non-immune to Rubella & Rubeola, then you must provide proof that you received an MMR vaccination.
 - b) Mantoux Requirements, one of the following items must be provided:
 - i) Lab results showing a negative IGRA blood test (such as QuantiFERON-TB[®])
 - ii) A negative chest X-ray (required if you have received a BCG in another country)
 - iii) a negative 2-step PPD
- 5) lab results
- 6) declination of Hepatitis B if applicable[^]
- 7) medical malpractice insurance*
- 8) criminal background check application and proof of payment[^]
- 9) submit hard copies of any *additional* facility-specific requirements to both the facility and the ACCE prior to the first day of the clinical course (e.g. drug test, flu shot, extra criminal background check, etc.)

EXEMPTION FROM ANY OF THESE REQUIREMENTS IS NOT PERMITTED.

* Please note that these health records must be current for all three clinical courses. Therefore, some health records will need to be updated annually.

[^] Please note that these forms will be provided during the mandatory Orientation to the Professional Phase of the PTA Program meeting prior to the fall I semester. Please review the "Additional Information pertaining to Criminal Background Checks" section of this Information Packet for more information.

Additional detailed information regarding the health records requirements will be provided during the mandatory Orientation to the Professional Phase of the PTA Program meeting. Other than the medical insurance coverage, students are strongly advised to wait until after that Orientation meeting to begin fulfilling these health records requirements.

Deadlines are in place to ensure that clinical sites receive the confirmation documents in time to secure clinical education placements for each student. Documentation for all health records requirements must be submitted to the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) for the PTA program by the last day of the fall I semester to guarantee a clinical education placement.

Any students who have not provided all health records requirements by the last day of the fall I semester will not be able to participate in the clinical education portion of the PTA program.

Any student who is unable to participate in the clinical education portion of the PTA program must then:

- 1) Decelerate his or her progression within the PTA program by following the steps outlined in the PTA Program Learner Handbook.
 - a) Deceleration means that:
 - i) The student will need to withdraw from all PTA program courses and re-apply for a seat during the next cycle when applications are being accepted into the Professional Phase of the PTA program.
 - (1) All academic and college timelines for course expiration dates are active and should be considered by the student as they may adversely affect the re-application process
 - (2) All costs involved in re-applying are at the expense of the student
 - (3) Dependent on the point in the program in which a student decelerates, a Re-Entry Practical Exam may be required for re-entry.
 - ii) Graduation from the PTA program will be delayed until all the required documents have been provided and all the coursework has been completed
- 2) Meet with the ACCE to discuss exactly what steps must be taken to ensure that the proper paperwork is completed.
- 3) Meet with the PTA program coordinator to discuss the implications of deceleration from the Professional Phase of the PTA program

PTA 105 (Kinesiology) Registration Information

PTA 105 (Kinesiology) is available in both the fall and spring semesters and BIO 103 Anatomy & Physiology I is a pre-requisite. It is not offered during summer semesters. There are a limited number of seats available in PTA 105 each semester.

Registration for PTA 105 is open to all students and is not restricted.

To register for PTA 105, students should complete the following steps:

1. Ensure that credit for A&P I (the pre-requisite for PTA 105) is listed on your Mercer transcript (by logging into your MyMercer online portal) and that a minimum grade of C was earned within the past 5 years. Note: while only a grade of "C" in A&P I is required to take PTA 105, a minimum grade of "C+" is required for acceptance into the professional phase of the PTA Program.
2. Register for PTA 105 as you would for all other courses at Mercer.

Taking Pre-Requisites at another College

1. Students who plan to take pre-requisite courses at another college should plan to take at least one course at Mercer as soon as possible to establish a **Date of Matriculation**. Please refer to the previous section titled "A step-by-step guide for pre-professional PTA students" to learn more about the importance of establishing a date of matriculation.
2. Refer to the course equivalency list on the PTA Program website, to ensure that you are taking the appropriate course: <http://www.mccc.edu/pta/>
3. It is highly recommended that you have official transcripts sent to Mercer at the end of each semester (as opposed to waiting until completing all courses at another college).
4. Please note that PTA 105 must be taken at Mercer. If you are enrolled in a pre-requisite course during the spring semester, you will be ineligible to apply for acceptance into the professional phase for that year.
5. If after taking your first course at Mercer (to establish a **Date of Matriculation**), you plan on taking all subsequent courses elsewhere, you will need to fill out a Leave of Absence (LOA) form, located at the Registrar's office in the Student Center. The LOA form is required when any student will not be taking classes for two consecutive years at MCCC. *Failure to do so would result in loss of his or her date of first matriculation.*
6. The PTA Program at Mercer County Community College no longer has a maximum 23 credit transfer limit. PTA-prefix courses will NOT be accepted for transfer credit from another institution. (Exceptions are granted on a case-by-case basis as per PTA program policy.) Students may receive transfer credit for general education courses.

Risks of PT Education and Clinical Practice

Risks a PTA may encounter during PTA education and clinical practice include back injuries and musculoskeletal pain associated with lifting and patient handling, which may be limited by using proper body mechanics and lifting techniques. Additional risks inherent in the healthcare industry include exposure to bloodborne pathogens and infectious diseases, respiratory hazards, ergonomic hazards from lifting and repetitive tasks, psychological strain, and workplace violence.

Additional Information Pertaining to Criminal Background Checks

Mercer's PTA program adheres to the legally binding contracts between the college and its clinical sites. These contracts require that students submit criminal background checks prior to placement in clinical facilities.

- Prior conviction may disqualify someone from participating in a clinical affiliation. Students may be unable to complete graduate requirements based on the results of his/her criminal background check.
- The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT), the entity that oversees the administration of the national board exam or "licensure examination", requires that applicants disclose prior criminal convictions as part of the application process for licensure.
- A criminal conviction may prohibit the applicant from eligibility for licensure. Licensure is granted or denied at the discretion of the state board of physical therapy where the potential licensee is applying for licensure.
- The college uses a specific company for this service and cannot accept other reports that an employer might have had done. All students are responsible for the costs associated with the criminal background check.
- The criminal background check includes a sex offender check.

Acceptance into the Professional Phase of the PTA Program is provisional and dependent upon the submission and results of the Criminal Background Check. See the "Background Check Procedure" below.

Mercer County Community College *Division Health Professions* **Background Check Procedure**

Purpose: To define a fair, consistent process in criminal background check procedures across the health professions

Procedure:

1. All students who are accepted into the professional phase of health profession program with a clinical component are required to undergo a criminal background check which may include a check of sex offender registries and Medicare exclusion program. This may also apply to non-application based health profession programs with a field component.
2. Students will not be asked to submit to the background check until after they have been accepted to the program and/or registered for class.
3. The health profession program will designate a time frame and process for completion of the background check.
4. The student is responsible for any fees associated with conducting the background check.

5. Background checks may be required annually, as part of the student's continued participation in a health profession program.
6. The Vice President for Student Services will review all background checks, based on a list provided by the health profession program coordinators.
7. Any misdemeanor or felony offenses within the past seven years will make the student ineligible to participate in the health professions program. Misdemeanor traffic offences are excluded, with the exception of driving under the influence.
8. Felony charges older than seven years may make the student ineligible to participate in the health professions program. Cases will be evaluated on an individual basis by the Vice President for Student Services and the Dean of the Health Professions. Students may be asked to submit additional documentation for evaluation. The outcome of all individual reviews will be made known to the health profession program coordinator.
9. Pending charges on a background check may make the student ineligible to participate in the health professions program. It is preferred that students defer their admission to an application based program until the charges are resolved. Cases will be evaluated on an individual basis by the Vice President for Student Services and the Dean of the Health Professions. Students may be asked to submit additional documentation for evaluation. The outcome of all individual reviews will be made known to the health profession program coordinator.
10. If a student has been identified as ineligible to participate in the health professions program, The Vice President for Student Services will contact and inform the student that he or she is ineligible to participate in the health professions program at this time.
11. The Vice President for Student Services will notify the health profession program coordinator in writing, with the names of the students ineligible to participate in the health professions program, without revealing the nature of the infraction.
12. In the event that a repeat background check has new information, it will be evaluated on a case by case basis by the Vice President for Student Services and the Dean of the Health Professions. Depending on the nature of the offense, the student may not be able to continue in the health profession program. The outcome of all individual reviews will be made known to the health profession program coordinator.

Effective Date: January 3, 2019

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth A. Mizerek', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Elizabeth A. Mizerek, MSN, RN, FN-CSA, CNE, CEN, CPEN, FAEN
Interim Dean, Health Professions

Psychomotor Assessments

Mercer's PTA program adheres to the legally binding contracts between the college and its clinical sites. These contracts require that the college ensures students demonstrate a minimum level of safety and competence prior to placement in clinical facilities, where students have access to real patients. To ensure that students demonstrate a minimum level of safety and competence prior to participation in clinical education courses, competency tests and practical examinations are administered in all lab courses.

These are scheduled **outside of regularly scheduled class times.**

Competency Tests:

Competency tests are primarily proctored by adjunct faculty, who are practicing physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. Therefore, competency tests are typically scheduled during weekday evenings and Saturdays. Each lab course averages four competency tests each semester. This number may vary from course to course and year to year. Competency tests require that students demonstrate hands-on skills in front of a proctor. Passing a competency test requires that the student demonstrate both safety and competence. Failure to successfully pass all competency tests precludes continuation in the professional phase.

Practical Exams:

While there are numerous competency tests each semester, there is only one practical exam, which is scheduled on a weekday prior to the start of the clinical education course each semester. Failure to successfully pass a practical exam will require remediation prior to the next clinical education course, as long as the failure did not result in overall course failure.

Essential Functions of a PTA Student

The Essential Functions listed below are the basic duties that a student must be able to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation, to be successful in the PTA Program. These Essential Functions are specific to the PTA Program. An inability to perform or demonstrate one or more of these Essential Functions may negatively impact the student's ability to successfully complete the PTA Program. These Essential Functions are separate from the admissions criteria and from the academic requirements for acceptance into and progression through the professional phase of the PTA Program.

Mercer County Community College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in all activities, programs and services. Some of the essential functions listed below may be accomplished with the use of assistive technology or other reasonable accommodations. Students who have a documented differing ability or think they may have a differing ability that is protected under the American with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or college policy, should contact Arlene Stinson of the Center for Inclusion, Transition, and Accessibility at stinsona@mccc.edu for information regarding support services.

Anyone with questions about these Essential Functions are encouraged to contact the PTA Program Coordinator, Professor Holly Beinert via email: BeinertH@mccc.edu

COGNITIVE:

Cognitive abilities are required to remember, understand, apply, analyze, and synthesize in the context of physical therapy practice. Such cognitive abilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Understand that work in a healthcare related environment and performance of physical therapy tasks and procedures involves risk of exposure to blood, body fluids, and other bio-hazardous materials by direct predictable or unpredictable exposures. This includes risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens and other infectious pathogens.
- Understand that PTA students are expected to treat any and all patient populations, including those that may have infectious pathogens.
- Make appropriate rapid decisions in stressful or emergency situations.
- Manage multiple priorities and function effectively in stressful situations.
- Remember multiple messages and information.
- Maintain concentration and focus in professional care setting.
- Adapt rapidly to environmental changes and multiple task demands.
- Effectively use short term and long term memory abilities.
- Solves problems using a logical systematic process.
- Establish priorities among several tasks and pieces of data.
- Ability to collect, interpret and analyze written, verbal and observed data about patients. This requires basic math and algebra computation skills.
- Ability to prioritize multiple tasks, integrate information and make appropriate decisions. Able to do this with just verbal instructions/directions if necessary.
- Ability to act safely and ethically in the physical therapy classroom, lab, and clinical settings.
- Ability to communicate the rationale or reasoning to justify decisions made.
- Ability to consult with others to clarify information and to problem solve.
- Ability to recognize potentially unsafe situations and react in an appropriate and timely manner.
- Ability to apply knowledge of principles, indications, and contraindications for physical therapy interventions.
- Ability to educate PTA students, aides, volunteers, patients, families, and caregivers.

- Comprehend, retain, retrieve, and apply complex information from the liberal arts, basic sciences, mathematics, psychological sciences and clinical sciences to professional course work.
- Participate in the process of scientific inquiry.
- Procure evidence-based information and apply it to the practice of physical therapy.
- Comprehend, synthesize and integrate information from written materials, demonstrations, lectures, class discussions, laboratory practice sessions, and real and simulated patients.
- Apply information obtained from classroom, laboratory and written materials to the examination, assessment and intervention of real and simulated patients.

PSYCHOMOTOR:

Sufficient physical function is required to provide physical therapy interventions to patients in all healthcare settings. Such functions may include, but are not limited to:

MOBILITY:

- Ability to move or position patients and equipment, which involves bending or stooping freely to floor level and reaching above the head
- Ability to exert 25-50 pounds of force when lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling
- Ability to move or adjust patients and equipment which involves lifting, carrying, pulling, pushing, and guiding weights up to and including 50 lb
- Ability to bend, twist, stoop, and balance safely
- Ability to safely and efficiently transfer a 150 lb. patient from the bed to the wheelchair using maximal assistance
- Coordination, speed and agility to assist and safely guard (protect) a patient who is walking, exercising or performing other rehabilitation activities
- Ability to guide, resist, and assist a patient or to provide emergency care, which may involve the activities of standing, kneeling, sitting, walking or crawling, for 90 minutes with no rest
- Appropriate body mechanics for all skills related to physical therapy and react safely and appropriate to sudden and unexpected movements of patients/classmates
- Ability to endure and successfully complete a 40-45 hour work week during clinical education courses, which includes standing, walking and stair climbing
- Ability to provide for the patient's safety in all physical therapy activities
- Manipulate and operate PTA equipment and demonstrate the ability and dexterity to manipulate the devices used in physical therapy which involves adjusting gauges, dials, small nuts/bolts, goniometers, equipment settings, tape measures, printouts, etc.
- Ability to administer/perform CPR and emergency first aid safely and reliably without assistance.
- Ability to observe and practice standard precautions
- Ability to work in an environment that requires significant physical activity and mobility throughout the workday in a way that does not compromise patient, classmate or therapist safety

SENSORY:

- Visual ability (corrected as necessary) to recognize and interpret facial expressions and body language, identify normal and abnormal patterns of movement, read or set parameters on physical therapy equipment, discriminate color changes, and to interpret and access the environment
- Visual ability (corrected as necessary) to gather information from medical records and professional literature

- Auditory ability (corrected as necessary) to recognize and respond to soft voices, auditory timers, call bells, equipment alarms, and to effectively use devices for measurement of blood pressure and breath sounds
- Ability to effectively use a telephone
- Ability to palpate a pulse and to detect changes or abnormalities of surface skin texture, skin temperature, body segment contour, muscle tone, and joint movement
- Adequate and functional positional, movement, and balance sensations to assist and safely guard (protect) patients who are walking, exercising, or performing other rehabilitation activities

AFFECTIVE:

Communication skills, behavioral skills, and professional conduct are a few essentials to the practice of physical therapy. Such attributes may include, but are not limited to:

COMMUNICATION:

- Ability to communicate effectively using standard English (interpret and express) both verbally and in writing. Able to correctly follow and interpret verbal instructions.
- Ability to communicate effectively (interpret and express) information regarding the status, safety and rehabilitation of patients verbally and in writing
- Ability to effectively and efficiently communicate verbally and in documentation with patients, families, health care professionals, community, and with reimbursement payers. Correct spelling required.
- Ability to communicate and document effectively via computer or paper.
- Ability to recognize, interpret and respond appropriately to nonverbal communications from patients, self and others. .
- Ability to modify communications (verbal and written) to meet the needs of different audiences such as patients, families, peers, physicians and other health care personnel.
- Ability to work effectively as part of an interdisciplinary team.
- Ability to prepare medical documentation using prescribed format and conforming to all the rules of English punctuation, grammar, diction and style.
- Ability to effectively use a computer and operate other software programs for billing, documentation or scheduling.
- Ability to apply and communicate principles of logical or scientific thinking to define problems, establish facts and draw valid conclusions.
- Ability to manage several abstract and concrete variables.
- Ability to engage in respectful, non-judgmental interactions with individuals from various lifestyles, cultures, beliefs, races, socioeconomic classes and abilities.
- Ability to develop and maintain effective, respectful working relationships with colleagues, peers, patients, families, and the general public.
- Ability to establish professional relationships with individuals from a variety of backgrounds, ages and needs.
- Ability to apply teaching and learning theories and methods in the healthcare and community environments.
- Ability to engage in a face-to-face verbal conversation, making eye-contact and using appropriate body language

BEHAVIORAL:

- Ability to recognize and respond appropriately to potentially dangerous situations.
- Ability to simultaneously work with multiple patients, families, and colleagues.
- Ability to work with lab partners, patients, families, and others during stressful conditions, including but not limited to medically or emotionally unstable individuals, and providing CPR or other emergency interventions.
- Ability to encourage cooperation and collegial relationships with classmates, instructors, other health care providers, patients, and families.
- Ability to prioritize multiple tasks integrates information and makes appropriate decisions.
- Ability to cope with heavy workloads, patient demands, and changes in schedules.
- Ability to demonstrate professional physical touch across all patient populations.
- Ability to maintain professional demeanor in all clinical interactions.
- Ability to interact appropriately with individuals of all ages, genders, ethnicity, socio-economic, religious and cultural backgrounds.
- Ability to motivate and positively influence patients and others.
- Ability to work effectively with patients across the lifespan.
- Ability to delegate appropriately to others.
- Ability to appropriately receive direction from and collaborate with supervisors, academic and clinical instructors, physicians and other designated health professionals.
- Ability to handle stresses of competency testing, practical examinations, and clinical affiliations.
- Demonstrate empathy toward others
- Ability to cooperate and work effectively with other individuals
- Ability to initiate or self-start projects, tasks and communication, searching out answers using appropriate resources
- Utilize organizational and time management skills necessary to coordinate class, study, and clinical responsibilities
- Ability to give and receive constructive feedback and to modify behavior accordingly
- Ability to present oneself in a manner (dress, body language, personal hygiene, verbal style) that is accepted by peers, clients, and employers
- Possess the emotional health required to complete all academic and clinical requirements and to follow appropriate classroom, testing and clinical protocols.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:

- Demonstrate the application of the American Physical Therapy Association's Code of Conduct for PTAs to clinical practice
- Adhere to the practice standards of the profession
- Reflect the values of the physical therapy profession in practice
- Demonstrate ethical and professional attitudes and conduct
- Ability to reason morally
- Demonstrate the ability to maintain patient confidentiality

Support Services for Differing Abilities

Mercer County Community College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented differing ability, or think that you may have a differing ability that is protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact Arlene Stinson in LB 212 at StinsonA@mccc.edu for information regarding support services. If you do not have a documented differing ability, other support services are available to all students on campus, including the Learning Center located in LB 214.

Computer Skill Expectations for PTA Students

As a member of the health care team and a member of a society that is placing a greater reliance on technology, students in the PTA program will be expected to be able to demonstrate competence with a limited number of competency skills. Although the faculty do not expect that students will be completely computer savvy, there are some basic skills that all PTA program students are expected to be able to do, or learn to do. These include:

- Basic use of a word processor and the ability to save a file either to a flash/thumb drive, hard drive or cloud drive (and the ability to retrieve that file).
- Accessing one's email from a location other than a home address
 - Opening an email from a remote location
 - Sending an email from a remote location
- Opening a file that has been attached to an email
- Saving a file to be attached to an email in one of the following formats:
 - .pdf file
 - .rtf file
 - Word document (.doc, .docx)
 - .html
- Performing an Internet search using key terms
 - Saving a site address from the Internet and pasting it into an email
 - Opening a web address within an email and exiting back to the email
 - Working with bookmarks

Skills that are considered "nice to have" that should be learned:

- PowerPoint or a similar form of presentation software

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Suspension/Expulsion Policy

Purpose: To ensure that opportunities within each health profession program are afforded to those students who have not violated college or health profession program policies

Audience: Nursing, Medical Laboratory Technology, Radiography, & Physical Therapist Assistant Programs

1. Students who have been suspended or expelled from Mercer County Community College due to violations of either the Student Conduct Code OMB 501B or for Academic Integrity Violations, will no longer be eligible to participate in any of the Health Professions programs listed above, either as a re-admission or initial admission.
2. Students who have been dismissed from any of the Health Professions programs listed above will no longer be eligible to participate in any of the Health Professions programs listed above, either as a re-admission or initial admission.

Financial Aid Application / Scholarships

Financial Aid

It is recommended that students complete an application for financial aid to determine eligibility for financial assistance. The application is FREE and available online at www.fafsa.gov. The federal school code for Mercer is 002641. To ensure that financial aid services arrive before tuition and fees are due, applications and supporting documents should be submitted before May 1 for the full academic year or the Fall semester, and before October 1 for the Spring semester only. The FAFSA must be RECEIVED by the federal processor (not postmarked) by the dates listed on the Mercer website to be considered for the Tuition Aid Grant (TAG), Governor's Urban Scholarship, NJ STARS and NJ STARS II programs.

Scholarships

Students who are interested in MCCC Foundation scholarships are expected to complete an application as well. Scholarships are payments to support a student's education that do not need to be repaid. Through the generosity of our donors and community organizations, Mercer County Community College and the MCCC Foundation award over \$300,000 in scholarship funds annually to current and graduating students. Individuals and businesses in the community establish these scholarships to support a special purpose, honor someone, recognize an achievement, or remember a loved one through a memorial fund. Please visit: http://www.mccc.edu/foundation_scholarships_available.shtml

Academic Restart

Students who have had a previous academic experience at Mercer and have a QPA of less than 2.0 may apply for an Academic Restart at any time after a period of non-enrollment of at least three (3) years.

If an Academic Restart is approved, all previous MCCC course credits and grades remain on the student's transcript, but courses taken prior to the period of non-enrollment are no longer counted in the student's quality point average and the QPA will be reset at zero.

Up to four courses in which credit was earned with a grade of "C" or better prior to the period of non-enrollment may be counted toward graduation requirements and included in the QPA.

A suitable message on the transcript will designate the point at which the Academic Restart became effective. Students are allowed only one (1) Academic Restart. Once approved, it is irrevocable. Contact the Student Records office for further details.

Non-Required Course Suggestions

The following list of courses would be helpful for anyone interested in the Health Professions and specifically physical therapy. These courses are NOT REQUIRED for the PTA degree program. Those with an asterisk will fulfill the General Education course requirement. Courses highlighted are the primary additional course suggestion.

Course Number	Credits	Course Title
<i>ASL 101*</i>	3	<i>American Sign Language I</i>
<i>ASL 102*</i>	3	<i>American Sign Language II</i>
CHE 107	4	General & Physiological Chemistry
IST 140	3	The Internet & Computer Technology
CMN 111	3	Speech: Human Communication
CMN 112	3	Public Speaking
<i>CMN 214*</i>	3	<i>Issues in Intercultural Communication in the US</i>
<i>CMN 215*</i>	3	<i>Gender and Communication</i>
HPE 101	3	Nutrition
HPE 113	3	Medical Terminology
HPE 175	1	Health Through Stress Management
MAT 200	3	Statistics for Social & Health Sciences
MUS 103	3	Intro to Music
MUS 105	3	Fundamentals of Music Theory
<i>PHI 204 *</i>	3	<i>Ethics</i>
<i>PHI 205 *</i>	3	<i>Moral Choices</i>
<i>PSY 206 *</i>	3	<i>Child Development</i>
PSY 217	3	The Psychology of Stress
<i>SPA 101/102*</i>	3	<i>Beginning Spanish I or II</i>

* indicates courses that would also satisfy the General Education course requirement

Support Services Contact Information

Support Services for Differing Abilities

Arlene Stinson
609-570-3525
StinsonA@mccc.edu
LB 212

Tutoring

MCCC offers comprehensive free tutoring services. Contact the Academic Learning Center in LB 128 on the West Windsor campus or call 609-570-3422. The Academic Learning Center offers reading, writing, math, study skills tutoring and more.

The PTA Program offers free tutoring for *professional* phase learners. Flyers containing dates/times/location and tutor are available in the PTA Lab (MS 352).

Health Professions Student Success Center

The Health Professions Student Success Center is located in HS 140 in the Math & Science building on the West Windsor campus. Learners are required to sign in and follow all posted rules. The success center contains study tables, computers, a treatment table, assistive devices, white boards and anatomical models and posters.

Library Services

MCCC offers library services in the Student Center on the West Windsor campus and at the James Kerney Campus. Library services include books, databases, ebooks, citation guides and more. Library@mccc.edu

Success Coaching

MCCC has Success Coaches located within each academic division. Success Coaches can assist learners with a variety of academic and non-academic concerns. The Health Professions Division Success Coach is Ed Griffith. He can be reached via phone at 609-570-3166 or via email at Griffith@mccc.edu.

Counseling Services

MCCC offers free, confidential counseling services for learners. Counselors can assist with stress, anxiety, grief, depression, domestic issues and more. Call 609-588-4800, ext. 3423 or ext. 3410 or email couns@mccc.edu.

Veteran Services

The goal of the Mercer County Community College Veterans Services Office is to ensure that veteran, military, and dependent students are successful at MCCC and able to take fully advantage of the broad range of educational and cultural activities offered by MCCC while being able to share their diverse experiences with the college community. For more information, Veterans Services is located in SC 212 or contact Eric Testerman at Testerman@mccc.edu or 609-570-3240.

Contact Information

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Dean Kevin Duffy, ABD, MS, ATC, CSCS, CES, PES, NSCA-NPT

Dean of Health Professions

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DuffyK@mccc.edu

PTA Program Website

www.mccc.edu/pta/

Ed Griffith

Health Professions Success Coach

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Arlene Stinson

Support Services for Differing Abilities

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