



## FAQS

### **Who Is A Physical Therapist Assistant?**

A physical therapist assistant (PTA) is a health care provider who works under the supervision of a physical therapist (PT). They do hands-on care for people who need to recover from injuries to the bones and joints, brain and nerves, problems with pain, developmental complications, and other movement problems. Their main purpose is to assist people with reaching their maximum level of health and function. They help people to recover their ability to walk, to heal from wounds, and to learn to work and live with the effects of injuries and other health problems.

Physical therapists are responsible for evaluating and treating people who need physical therapy care. They identify problems that physical therapy can address, create goals, and decide what treatment the person will receive. PTs supervise all care given by the PTA.

### **How Does PTA Education Differ From PT Education?**

It is important to understand that achieving a physical therapist assistant A.A.S. degree does not prepare students to become physical therapists. These are two separate careers and the degree requirements are not the same.

The physical therapist degree is now rapidly becoming a Doctorate. Most schools in the U.S. have made the change, or are in the process of changing to the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree or its equivalent. Colleges and universities that offer physical therapist degrees are the best sources for more information. A listing of schools that offer the DPT degree can be found at [www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org).

### **What Is The Demand For PTAs? What Will I Earn When I'm Done?**

As with all professions, health care worker demand goes up and down. The Bureau of Labor Statistics states, however that the PTA profession is to, "...increase much faster than average..." and that job prospects are, "...very good." The median wage throughout the country is approximately \$54,000.00/year.

### **Where Does A PTA Work?**

PTAs usually work in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, outpatient clinics, skilled nursing facilities, schools, home health – actually, anywhere that physical therapists work. They only work with physical therapists – this is exclusive and required by professional ethics, codes of conduct, and by law.

### **What Degree Will I Earn?**

Once the PTA program is accredited, students will earn the Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree. The degree will allow graduates to sit for the state board examination and become licensed to practice.

### **Is There Licensure For PTAs In Idaho?**

Yes. In order to receive a license to practice, an individual must graduate from an accredited PTA program and pass the State license examination.

### **The PTA Program Is A "Consortium" Program. What Does That Mean?**

The College of Southern Idaho (CSI), the College of Western Idaho (CWI), Lewis Clark State College (LCSC), and North Idaho College (NIC) have come together to form a single PTA program offered at all campuses – the Physical Therapist Assistant Program, Idaho Consortium for Physical Therapist Assistant Education. Classes are taught through inter-video conferencing and by part-time instructors in labs on each campus. Clinical education will take place in various places but will occur mainly near a student's "home campus".

### **Is The Consortium Program Accredited?**

Yes. The Idaho Consortium for Physical Therapist Assistant Education at the College of Southern Idaho, the College of Western Idaho, Lewis-Clark State College, and North Idaho College **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](mailto:accreditation@apta.org); website: <http://www.capteonline.org>.

### **Is the PTA Program A “Selective Admissions” Program?**

Yes. Students must apply to the program to be considered for admission. Just like medicine, nursing, and other health care programs, there are prerequisite courses (see below), minimum grades, and other criteria that determine who gets into the program.

PTA courses cannot be taken a little at a time according to a student’s desires. It is important to understand that students are accepted as a group into a program. The group is accepted and starts at the same time, stays together for all courses, and graduates together when all courses have been taken and passed.

Students may apply to the program in the spring semester – check the website for specific dates. The program currently begins each fall (applies to CWI, LCSC, and NIC. CSI accepts a new class every other fall).

### **What Courses Must Be Completed Prior To Acceptance Into The PTA Consortium Program?**

- Human Anatomy and Physiology I (with lab) – *must have been taken within the past 7 years but exceptions can be made for students how can demonstrate relevant additional course work or work experience. See the program application form for more information.*
- English Composition
- Math (MATH 123 or higher)
- Medical Terminology

### **Are Observation Or Work Hours Required For Admission?**

Yes. There is a requirement for observation of physical therapy or work experience in and/or around physical therapy. Students who have never been exposed to physical therapy patient care must arrange for at least 16 hours of observation in a physical therapy care setting. The consortium colleges do not arrange this; it is the responsibility of the student. Students who have worked as a physical therapy aide, CNA, etc., or have been a physical therapy patient *may* have this requirement reduced or waived. Proof of observation or work hours is required.

### **In Addition to the Prerequisites, What Are Other Requirements For The Program?**

Once accepted into the program, students will need to complete CPR certification and immunizations. Drug screens *may be required* by the program and its clinical education sites. These may be randomly administered while students are performing clinical education experiences or while enrolled in coursework.

*Be aware that a criminal background check will be required upon acceptance. If there is a history of criminal activity (including, but not limited to, felony convictions) students will not be able to complete the program.*

Once students are accepted into the program, further discussion including deadlines for the other requirements, will occur at the program’s new student orientation.

### **General Education Courses**

*Note: The following courses may be taken prior to acceptance into the program or may be integrated while taking the PTA courses. Please see your advisor for help in planning your educational path:* It is recommended that you complete these co-requisite courses prior to entering the program.

- Human Anatomy and Physiology II (with lab) – *must have been taken within the past 7 years years but exceptions can be made for students how can demonstrate relevant additional course work or work experience. See the program application form for more information.*
- Communication (e.g. COMM 101)
- Psychology 101, or 205, or 211

### **What if I choose not to complete the immunizations?**

The program has two components of learning. The first is classroom learning which includes lectures and labs. The second component is clinical education. You will be placed one-on-one with a therapist who is working in a hospital or clinic treating patients. The program has two clinical placement requirements and one of them must be in an inpatient setting. Without the listed immunizations complete you may not be able to be placed in an inpatient site and complete the program.

**Information:**

Consortium Program Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/idhigheredconsortiumpta/>

CSI: [http://hshs.csi.edu/physical\\_therapist\\_assistant/](http://hshs.csi.edu/physical_therapist_assistant/)

CWI: <http://cwidaho.cc/program/physical-therapist-assistant>

LCSC: <http://www.lcsc.edu/career-technical-education/physical-therapist-assistant-program/>

NIC: <http://www.nic.edu/pta>

**Non-Discrimination**

The Idaho Consortium for Physical Therapist Assistant Education abides by each member college's practice of non-discrimination and therefore will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, pregnancy, sexual orientation, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran.