Amarillo College
PTA Curriculum Plan
Faculty of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program have created a comprehensive curriculum plan to provide students with the skills, values, and behaviors necessary for the role of a Physical Therapist Assistant.

Communities of Interest

The following are examples of ways the communities of interest participate in evaluation of the curriculum plan:

- Program faculty assess student learning and the ability of students to meet established course objectives while also evaluating the program’s curriculum plan.
- Clinical Faculty evaluate student performance, communicate with academic faculty and document student evaluations to assist with assessment of the clinical education portion of the curriculum plan.
- Advisory committees communicate with academic faculty during advisory committee meetings to provide information about contemporary practice and help monitor trends in contemporary practice.
- Employers complete employer surveys of hired program graduates.
- Graduates complete graduate surveys to evaluate the curriculum and provide feedback regarding contemporary clinical practice.
- Program students evaluate the curriculum through course/instructor evaluations.
- The Health Science Dean provides administrative and decision-making support.

Using feedback provided by these groups, faculty members are able to recommend modifications to the curriculum to maximize attainment of program goals and objectives.

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Mission

The mission of the Amarillo College PTA Program is “To provide the student with positive learning experiences within an atmosphere of academic excellence and to assure that the student acquires the knowledge, skills, and other abilities required of the entry-level physical therapist assistant to enhance the service area.”

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Philosophy

The philosophy of the Amarillo College PTA Program is "A career in health is chosen and prepared for with a dedication of the individual to the dignity and mental and physical well-being of the patient. Immediately upon entering the program, the student assumes an obligation of service to the patient, Amarillo College, and the community-at-large."

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the Physical Therapist Assistant program are as follows:

1. Monitor program effectiveness
   a. Program will assess graduate satisfaction
   b. Program will assess employer satisfaction
   c. Program will assess employment rate
   d. Program will assess licensure pass rates
   e. Program will assess retention rates
2. Produce clinically competent graduates
a. Students will achieve a clinical instructor ranking of “meets” level of performance compared to an entry-level PTA or higher after completion of final clinical experience on the PTA MACs progress report.
b. Students will receive clinical instructor approval and/or re-approval of all skills in the Professional Behaviors, Data Collection, and Interventions sections of the PTA MACs Progress Report by completion of the final clinical experience
c. Graduates will receive employer survey ratings of 3 or higher on the area of clinical competence for employer surveys

3. Produce graduates who can exhibit effective critical thinking and problem solving skills
   a. Students will receive clinical instructor approval or re-approval on all components of PTA MACs skills #6 critical thinking and #9 problem solving by the end of the final clinical experience
   b. Graduates will receive employer survey ratings of 3 or higher on the areas of critical thinking and problem solving

4. Produce graduates who can express effective communication skills
   a. Students will receive clinical instructor approval or re-approval on all components of PTA MACs skills #3 Communication Skills: Oral and Written by the end of the final clinical experience
   b. Graduates will receive an employer rating of 3 or higher on the area of verbal communication skills
   c. Graduates will receive an employer rating of 3 or higher on the area of written communication skills

5. Promote health and wellness within the community
   a. Students will participate in at least one health and wellness event within the community annually

Program Design

As an integrated two-year format, students are admitted to the Physical Therapist Assistant program in the fall semester after completing any developmental course requirements. Many students enter the program having completed all general education coursework. Year one consists of technical education courses until the summer semester, during which students take technical and clinical education courses. Learning experiences include classroom presentations, discussions, demonstrations, and supervised practice planned to develop clinical skill competencies necessary for graduation.

The first fall semester begins with the Profession of Physical Therapy course which provides an overview of the physical therapy profession with emphasis on the role of the physical therapist assistant. Students are presented with discussions including legal and ethical aspects of the profession and communication. They also take the Basic Patient Care Skills course which introduces skills such as transfers, patient positioning, and gait training with assistive devices along with the Pathophysiology course which provides an introduction to diseases/pathological conditions.

During the first spring semester students enroll in the Essentials of Data Collection course which introduces them to goniometric measurement, manual muscle testing, and special test procedures. They are introduced to kinesiology principles as well as a more in-depth view of
anatomical principles and palpation skills in the Functional Anatomy course. They learn exercise principles and techniques in the Therapeutic Exercise course.

In the summer semester, students take Clinical I, a full-time, integrated clinical rotation that allows them to utilize skills learned in the technical components of the program. They also take the Neurology course which introduces them to neuroanatomy and applies principles of neuroscience to rehabilitation.

In the second fall semester, students enroll in the Physical Agents course which teaches them to indications/contraindications/precautions and physical agents interventions techniques. Management of Neurological Disorders takes previously taught skills/interventions and adds diagnosis specific treatment techniques for treatment of patients with neurological diseases/conditions. In the Rehabilitation Techniques course, students apply previously learned skills/interventions as well as diagnosis specific treatment techniques for patients with conditions such as cardiopulmonary diseases, burns, and amputations. During this semester, students complete the integrated part-time clinical, Clinical II.

In the second spring semester, students enroll in the Issues in Health Care course which allows them to examine and apply current healthcare issues to their clinical experiences. They also enroll in Practicum I which provides them two seven-week full-time terminal clinical experiences.

General Education Philosophy

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program uses a traditional curriculum model which allows students to first learn basic sciences, followed by clinical science, and then by clinical experience.

Two educational principles used by the program include Cognitive Structure Theory and Behaviorist Theory. Cognitive Structure Theory is a hierarchical approach to education that states that facts precede concepts which precede principles which precede problem solving. The Behaviorist Theory allows for assessment of behavioral change and allows learners to adapt more quickly to the learning environment.

Using this curriculum model and educational principles, the Physical Therapist Assistant Program curriculum includes organized sequences of learning experiences that prepare students to provide physical therapy care to individuals with diseases/disorders involving the major systems, individuals with multiple system disorders, and individuals across the lifespan and continuum of care. The clinical education component provides organized and sequential experiences coordinated with the didactic component of the curriculum. Clinical education includes both part and full-time, integrated and full-time clinicals.

In planning and implementing the curriculum, courses progress from:

- Easier to harder
- General to specific
- Limited time observing to full time practicing

The program focuses on adult education concepts of self-directed learning, an increasing responsibility in one’s own learning, as well as establishing one’s own learning goals and objectives.
Physical Therapist Assistant Core Faculty will provide advisement to students enrolled in the program. In addition, program faculty will provide continual assessment of student progress through tests, practical examinations, finals, and other assignments.

**Distance Education**

Although no courses in the PTA program are delivered 100% via distance education, all PTA courses are required by the college to have an online presence in the Blackboard online learning management system. Minimum requirements are posting of the syllabus and posting of course grades. In addition to the grades and syllabi, the PTA program utilizes the online management system for emails, discussion boards, journaling, and the course calendar. Only one PTA course is defined as a hybrid (half on-line, half on campus) course. This course requires submission of weekly online assignments as well as two open-book tests taken through Blackboard.

Students registering in Amarillo College distance courses are provided with a secure login username and password for accessing their academic resources. The secure login username is called the ACNetID. Annually, students are required to review and accept the AC Appropriate Use Policy for Information Technology within their personal myACcount maintentance portal.

**Clinical Experiences**

Students enrolled in the PTA program are required to complete an integrated two week full-time clinical in the summer semester of the freshman year, an integrated part-time clinical in the fall semester of the second year, and two full-time terminal clinicals during the final spring semester of the program. Completing clinical education at this number of facilities ensures that students are introduced to and learn to manage patients/clients with disease and conditions representative of those commonly seen in practice across the lifespan and the continuum of care and in settings representative of those in which physical therapy is commonly practiced. The majority of clinical settings provide involvement in interprofessional practice, participation as a member of the PT/PTA team, and additional site-specific skills such as aerobic conditioning/endurance, airway clearance, and aquatic therapy.

**Curriculum Outcomes**

Expected outcomes of the Amarillo College Physical Therapist Assistant Program are available online to all prospective and current students, clinical faculty, academic faculty, Advisory Committee members, and employers in the PTA Student Handbook, Clinical Education Handbook, and Policies and Procedure Manual.

**Curriculum Objectives**

Course syllabi objectives are stated in terms of what the student will be able to do or demonstrate upon successful completion of each course or experience. In general, breadth of content by noting the number of objectives for each content area while depth of learning objectives, as stated using Bloom’s Taxonomy, increases in each progressive semester of the program.
Curriculum Methodologies

Course content in the program is delivered primarily through classroom instructional methods. Classroom instruction is supported by the Blackboard online learning management system. Teaching methods include lecture, lecture with PowerPoint, student prepared presentations, direct faculty guided hands-on learning and practice of techniques followed by decreasing faculty guidelines with increasing student directed hands on learning. In addition, the PTA program utilizes guest presentations, problem-based learning opportunities, development of PTA interventions from case studies, and off-site clinical based experiences. The overall goal of all learning experiences is to select methods that promote student engagement in the learning process.

Tests and Measures

Program faculty use a variety of tests, measures, and evaluation processes to determine whether students have achieved learning objectives. Testing in the cognitive domain utilizes written multiple choice examinations, written practical examinations, quizzes, and case studies. Testing in the psychomotor domain involves skill checks as well as skills practicals for lab courses. Testing in the affective domain occurs primarily at the midterm and final for each full-time clinical experience as students receive feedback about profession behaviors.

To provide formative assessment, students take quizzes designed to help guide them through the material and are required to complete skills checks in the lab classes. Additional formative assessment is provided as students receive feedback after submission of case studies. Summative assessment is provided through major examinations, major written practicals, major skills practicals, and the final examination for each course.

Expected Completion

The PTA program curriculum is designed to be completed in 86 weeks. The program lasts for four spring and fall sixteen week sessions and one six week summer session. The total number of contact hours allotted for clinical education is 688 hours with 48 hours allotted for integrated part-time clinicals, 80 hours allotted for integrated full-time clinicals, and 560 hours allotted for terminal full-time clinical rotations.

After Completion of the PTA program

The PTA program results in a terminal degree, the Associate of Applied Science in Physical Therapist Assistant, that prepares students for employment in the field of physical therapy. Completion of the full time program enables students to apply for licensure as a Physical Therapist Assistant.
AMARILLO COLLEGE PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM
DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The Associate in Applied Science in Physical Therapist Assistant (A.A.S. PTA) is awarded to students who successfully complete listed courses with a minimum grade of “C” and comply with Amarillo College regulations.

I. Program Design

The AC PTA program is an integrated 2 year model which requires completion of 688 hours of clinical education courses.

Length of Program

The program lasts five semesters.

II. Required Courses:

General Education: 20 hours

Technical Education: 46 hours

66 hours

III. General Education Courses:

- BIOL 2401: Anatomy and Physiology I 4 hours
- BIOL 2402: Anatomy and Physiology II 4 hours
- ENGL 1301: Composition I 3 hours
- SPCH: Speech 3 hours
- PSYC 2314: Lifespan Developmental Psychology 3 hours
- Language/Philosophy/Culture/Creative Arts 3 hours

IV. Technical Education Courses:

- PTHA 1301: Profession of Physical Therapy 3 hours
- PTHA 1405: Basic Patient Care Skills 4 hours
- PTHA 1321: Pathophysiology 3 hours
- PTHA 2409: Therapeutic Exercise 4 hours
- PTHA 2301: Essentials of Data Collection 3 hours
- PTHA 1413: Functional Anatomy 4 hours
- PTHA 1160: Clinical I 1 hour
- PTHA 2305: Neurology 3 hours
- PTHA 2431: Management of Neurological Disorders 4 hours
- PTHA 2435: Rehabilitation Techniques 4 hours
- PTHA 1161: Clinical II 1 hour
Plan of Study

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