



Physical Therapist Assistant Program Multi-Criterion Screening Process Application Packet

Please review all information in this packet prior to submitting your application.

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San Diego Mesa College Physical Therapist Assistant Program Information

Accreditation

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at San Diego Mesa College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave. Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085; telephone 703-706-3245; email: accreditation@apta.org; website: <http://www.capteonline.org>. If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call 619-388-2229 or email ajohnsto@sdccd.edu

PTA Program Mission Statement

The primary mission of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at San Diego Mesa College is to provide excellence in the education and development of competent physical therapist assistants that provide high quality patient care through evidence-based practice to diverse populations and become leaders within the health care community and profession.

PTA Program Philosophy & Goals

The students will be educated in a manner which will enable them to perform all aspects of the profession of physical therapy relevant to their level of responsibility in the profession; to perform those activities in a safe, legal, ethical and empathetic manner with a heightened self-awareness as a caregiver; to exhibit an ability to develop critical thought; to complete and continue activities which indicate the development and pursuance of personal growth.

1. Consider, select and advance those students who meet academic qualifications established by the college and the program.
2. Design, implement, revise and evaluate an educational program which enables the student to acquire sound foundations in knowledge, skills and attitudes essential to providing optimum patient care.
3. Select, coordinate and evaluate a broad range of clinical experience as part of the learning experiences.
4. Engender professional and ethical conduct stipulated by the American Physical Therapy Association Code of Ethics and the State of California Physical Therapy Practice Act.
5. Support diversity, equity and inclusion within the profession by providing an equitable opportunity of entry and support congruent with successful completion of the PTA program, to best serve the community and advance the profession to improve the health of society.

PTA Program Outcomes

At the completion of the physical therapist assistant program's curriculum, the graduate will be able to:

- Select and perform safe and effective interventions within the:
 - Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) scope of practice.
 - Physical therapist's plan of care.
- Demonstrate knowledge of California physical therapy laws and regulations.
- Demonstrate ethical and professional behaviors consistent with professional standards and practice.
- Communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, as appropriate for a PTA.
- Participate in self-assessment and develop plans to improve knowledge, skills, and behavior as appropriate for a PTA.
- Incorporate an understanding of the implications of individual and cultural differences, and adapt behavior and delivery of care accordingly in all aspects of physical therapy services with respect to patients' values, preferences, and needs.

Information Sessions

Information sessions for the PTA Program are mandatory and will be held in two formats. Applicants must either attend a Zoom Information Session or watch the pre-recorded Information Session posted on the website.

Zoom Information Sessions will be held 2-3 times in each Fall and Spring semester and are free to attend. RSVP's are not required for attendance. Please check the website regularly for any updates to the information session schedule and Zoom link [PTA Program Website](#)

The pre-recorded Information Session is posted on the website.

Attendance at a Zoom Information Session or viewing of the pre-recorded Information Session is required to ensure the applicant is prepared and completed the application process correctly. Applicants will confirm completion of this requirement in the online application.

Transcript Information

Applicants are required to upload unofficial transcripts for **ALL** prerequisite courses and language verification when they submit their online application. This includes uploading unofficial transcripts for any course completed in the district (Mesa, City or Miramar) and any in-progress prerequisite course.

Additionally, applicants are required to submit **official transcripts** to SDCCD for any courses that were not completed within the district (Mesa, City or Miramar). Please view the [Transcript Webpage](#) for up to date directions on how to submit your official transcripts.

Contact Information

Prerequisite questions: Contact Mesa College Counseling

Website: [Counseling Services | Student Services | San Diego Mesa College](#)

General Counseling Phone Number: 619-388-2672

Location: I4- 303

General Email: sdmesafollowup@gmail.com

Allied Health Counseling:

Nick DeMeo ndemeo@sdccd.edu or Kari Parker kparker@sdccd.edu

Admissions questions: Contact Mesa College Special Admissions:

Website: [Admissions | San Diego Mesa College](#)

General Admissions Phone Number: 619-388-2682

Location: I4 – 102

Special Admissions: Francisco Blas fblas@sdccd.edu

PTA Program Contact:

Program Director: Amanda Johnston ajohnsto@sdccd.edu

Multi-Criterion Screening Process & Rubric

The PTA Program at San Diego Mesa College utilizes a Multi-Criterion Screening Process. All applications will be submitted online and must be submitted within the posted application period. The Application Period is posted on the [PTA Program Website](#)

Completed applications must include responses for each area within the application*:

- General Information
- Academic Degree, College Diplomas or Relevant Certificates
- Prerequisite Courses
- Unofficial Transcripts for Prerequisite Courses
- PTA Essential Function Verification
- Observation/Volunteer Hours or Work Experience
- Personal Statement Response
- Life Experiences or Special Circumstances
- Language Proficiency other than English
- Completion and Submission of Application

*Note – Some areas will be verified by uploading a specific document. Other areas will be verified by in the online application by clicking a check box or typing your name as a digital signature.

Application Process

Applicants must apply to San Diego Mesa College and obtain a student ID number (CSID) before applying to the PTA Program. This application process is free and can be accessed here [Apply to Mesa](#)

Applicants will submit the online application to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program [PTA Application Link](#)

Applicants should ensure they include a **valid email address** in the online application. All application communication will be completed using the email address included in the application. If an applicant does not respond to email communication, their application will be considered incomplete and be withdrawn. Please review the following application details and Rubric below:

Academic Degrees, College Diplomas or Relevant Certificates

- Points are awarded for degrees, certificates or licenses as indicated below based on the Multi-Criterion Screening Rubric below.
- Transcripts, certificates of completion and a current license as appropriate must be uploaded to the application. **Verification must be uploaded in the application.**

| Academic Degrees, College Diplomas or Relevant Certificates | | |
|--|--|--|
| CRITERIA | DESCRIPTION | POINTS |
| Academic degrees or college diplomas, or relevant certificates held by the applicant | Max of 10 points in this category | |
| | Points are awarded for degrees earned in the United States. | |
| | Foreign degrees in a medically related field (PT, OT, MD, Dentist) must be equivalent to an AS degree or higher. | Academic degree (Associates, Bachelor's, Master's) = 5 points |
| | Current License must be uploaded to the application (CNA, EMT, other based on state requirements). | Certificate Program Completed in a relevant field (Personal Trainer, Pilates, Yoga, CNA, EMT, MA) = 5 points |
| | Certificates and transcripts must be uploaded to the application. CPR cards are not accepted. | Corpsman = 5 points (must provide transcripts) |

Prerequisites

- English Placement of 50 or higher in BOTH reading and writing is required. If your English placement is lower than 50 you will need to take English 101 or a higher English course. **The English prerequisite is not considered in the GPA calculation for the application process however must be verified in the online application.**
- Points are awarded for the remaining prerequisites based on the Rubric below.
- Anatomy and Physiology and Introduction to Physical Therapy must be completed in the last 5 years. All prerequisites must be completed with a C or better.
- Anatomy and Physiology with a lab, must cover all systems. Approved SDCCD courses include, BIOL 160 **OR** BIOL 230 **AND** BIOL 235 within the last 5 years prior to applying.
- **Unofficial transcripts for ALL prerequisite courses must be included in the application.**

| Prerequisites | | |
|--|---|--|
| CRITERIA | DESCRIPTION | POINTS |
| GRADES - All prerequisite courses must be completed with a C or better. Anatomy/Physiology and Introduction to Physical Therapy must be completed within the last 5 years. | | |
| Grade point average for general prerequisite courses (for AS degree) | Psychology - PSY 112 Interpersonal Relations or PSY 111 Psychological/Social Aspects of Aging, Death and Dying or PSY 125 Introduction to Behavior Modification are strongly recommended but PSY 101 General Psychology or PSY 245 Abnormal Psychology accepted | Minimum of 2.0 GPA is required in Psychology, Communication and English. 4.0 = 15 points 3.5 - 3.99 = 12 points 3.0 - 3.49 = 9 points 2.5 - 2.99 = 6 points 2.0 - 2.49 = 4 points |
| | Communication - Interpersonal Communication (COMS 135) preferred but will accept a course that meets IGETC area 1C | |
| Grade point average for clinically relevant coursework | Introduction to Physical Therapy (PHYR 210) If you took the course prior to Fall 2021, you will need MEDA 110 as well. Please confirm course completion with Medical Terminology component of this prerequisite with program director, ajohnsto@sdccd.edu - must be completed within the last 5 years prior to applying. | Minimum of 2.0 GPA is required in Anatomy, Physiology and Introduction to Physical Therapy 4.0 = 25 points 3.5 - 3.99 = 20 points 3.0 - 3.49 = 15 points 2.0 - 2.99 = 10 points 2.0 - 2.49 = 5 points |
| | Anatomy and Physiology with a lab, must cover all systems. BIOL 160 OR BIOL 230 AND BIOL 235 - must be completed within the last 5 years prior to applying. | |

PTA Program Essential Functions

- Applicant will read each section of the [PTA Essential Functions](#) document and confirm in the online application where indicated.

Observation/Volunteer Hours or Work Experience

- Points are awarded based on the Multi-Criterion Screening Rubric below.
- A **minimum of 50 hours** observing a PT or PTA in any physical therapy setting is required for the PTA Application. The hours need to be verified by the PT or PTA and the verification form will be uploaded in the application.
- Work experience as a PT aide in any Physical Therapy setting or a RNA in a Skilled Nursing Facility will be considered for this requirement.
- [Observation/Volunteer Hours or Work Experience form](#) must be uploaded in the online application.

| Observation Hours/Volunteer Experience/Work Experience | | |
|--|--|---|
| Observation Hours/Volunteer Experience/Work Experience - A minimum of 50 hours observing a PT or PTA in any physical therapy setting is required for the PTA Application. The hours need to be verified by the PT or PTA and the verification form will be uploaded in the application. Work experience as a PT aide in any Physical Therapy setting or a RNA in a Skilled Nursing Facility is accepted. | | |
| CRITERIA | DESCRIPTION | POINTS |
| Observation Hours, Volunteer Experience or Work Experience | <p>A minimum of 50 hours is required for the PTA Application.</p> <p>Hours must be completed within the last 5 years.</p> <p>The hours need to be verified by the PT or PTA and the verification form must be uploaded in the application.</p> | <p>200 or more hours = 15 points</p> <p>101 – 199 hours = 12 points</p> <p>51 - 100 hours = 8 points</p> <p>50 hours = 5 points</p> |

Statement of Interest

- Points are awarded through the Multi-Criterion Screening Rubric based on the Written Statement of Interest Rubric. Each of the Rubric's are below.
- Written essay response to each of the 3 prompts is required.
- Each response needs to be between 200-500 words and demonstrate proper spelling and grammar.
- Please note that the second prompt includes a reflection on your observation hours or work experience.

| Statement of Interest - Written statement of interest will be submitted in the online application. | | |
|--|---|--|
| CRITERIA | DESCRIPTION | POINTS |
| Written Statement of Interest | <p>Written essay response to each of the 3 prompts below is required.</p> <p>Each response needs to be between 200-500 words and demonstrate proper spelling and grammar.</p> <p>Please note that the second prompt is a reflection on your observation hours or work experience.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe your professional goals as a Physical Therapist Assistant. 2. Explain your understanding of the role of Physical Therapy within the healthcare system. Based on your observation hours or work experience, provide specific examples that illustrate how this role was demonstrated in practice. 3. The Physical Therapist Assistant Program is rigorous and time intensive. What is your action plan to successfully incorporate this program into your schedule and personal commitments? | <p>See Rubric for Written Statement of Interest</p> <p>20 points max</p> |

| Written Statement of Interest Rubric | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| Each response needs to be between 200-500 words and demonstrate proper spelling and grammar. | | | |
| Question/Criteria | Point Value | | |
| | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| 1. Describe your professional goals as a Physical Therapist Assistant. | Lacks clear professional goals as a Physical Therapist Assistant. | Uses specific examples that reflect motivation to work as a Physical Therapist Assistant. | Exceptionally clear, demonstrates strong motivation and professional goals to work as a Physical Therapist Assistant. |
| 2. Explain your understanding of the role of Physical Therapy within the healthcare system. Based on your observation hours or work experience, provide specific examples that illustrate how this role was demonstrated in practice. | Lacks understanding of the role of the Physical Therapy profession. Examples from observation hours/work experience are not present or do not illustrate this role. | Includes some understanding of the Physical Therapy profession and included some details from observation hours/work experience. | Demonstrates strong understanding of the Physical Therapy profession and established a clear connection to observation hours/work experience with examples. |
| 3. The Physical Therapist Assistant Program is rigorous and time intensive. What is your action plan to successfully incorporate this program into your schedule and personal commitments? | No understanding of the rigor of the program or action plan that promotes success. | States some understanding of the rigor of the program and an action plan but lacks details to meet rigorous demands. | States specific understanding of the rigor of the program, provides examples with an action plan of how they will balance commitments and be successful |
| Recommended word count | Not met for any of the 3 prompts. | Met for 1-2 of the prompts | Met for all 3 prompts. |
| Grammar, spelling and cohesiveness of response | Numerous errors that are distracting from the intent of the response. | Only 1-2 errors but some difficulty with conveying the message. | No errors. Clear and easy to read. College level grammar and words used in the essay. |
| TOTAL | | | /20 |

Life Experiences or Special Circumstances

- Points are awarded based on the Multi-Criterion Screening Rubric below.
- Life experiences or special circumstances of an applicant including:
 - **Disabilities** ([SDMC AH Disability Certification Form.pdf](#))
 - **Low family income** (Upload documented eligibility for Financial Aid, CAL Works, BOGFW-G, Federal Pell Grant, or EOPS). A submitted application does not demonstrate eligibility.
 - **First generation college** (Upload a PFD of written personal statement, 100-250 words, related to being a first-generation college student.)
 - **Need to work** (Upload a PFD of written personal statement, 100-250 words, related to your need to work.)
 - **Disadvantaged social or educational environment** (Upload documented eligibility for Financial Aid, CAL Works, BOGFW-G, Federal Pell Grant, or EOPS. No written statements will be accepted.) A submitted application does not demonstrate eligibility.
 - **Difficult personal and family situations or circumstances** (Upload a PFD of written personal statement, 100-250 words, related to difficult personal or family circumstances. Written statement could include about a single parent, deployed spouse, family caregiver, death of a family member, medical problems or financial issues **within the past 6 months.**)
 - **Refugee** (Upload a PDF of current refugee card.)
 - **Veteran status** (Veteran/Active Duty - Upload a PDF of DD-214 form for a veteran or military ID for active duty. Spouse/Military Dependent of Veteran/Active Duty – Upload a PDF of your spouse’s DD-214 form or a Dependent military ID.)
- **Verification form/s or written personal statement must be uploaded in the online application.**

| Life Experiences or Special Circumstances | | |
|---|---|--|
| CRITERIA | DESCRIPTION | POINTS |
| <p>Life experiences or special circumstances of an applicant including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disabilities - Low family income - First generation college - Need to work - Disadvantaged social or educational environment - Difficult personal and family situations or circumstances - Refugee - Veteran status | <p>Criteria/application requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Copy of DD214 form for a veteran or military ID for active duty b. Must be submitted on the disability certification form obtained from the website. (no medical information should be included) No letters from physicians etc. will be accepted. c. Documented eligibility for Financial Aid, CAL Works, BOGFW-G, Federal Pell Grant, or EOPS (must be from one of these, no written statements) d. Written statement from the applicant e. Must be documented on the Work/Volunteer certification form obtained from the website, no paycheck stubs or W-2 will be accepted. f. EOPS verification (no written statements) g. Written statement from the applicant about a single parent, deployed spouse, family caregiver, death of a family member, medical problems or financial issues within the past 6 months h. Current refugee card | <p>Student has 4 of the identifying factors of special circumstance = 10 points</p> <p>Student has 2 or 3 of the identifying factors of special circumstance = 8 points</p> <p>Student has 1 of the identifying factors of special circumstance - 6 points</p> |

Language Proficiency other than English

- Points are awarded based on the Multi-Criterion Screening Rubric below.
- Verification must be on the [Language Certification Form](#) to be considered.
- Must be signed by a supervisor, employer, fluency testing center, professor or other official individual or organization.
- Family signatures will not be accepted.
- Three upper division courses in the same language would be considered.
- **Verification form must be uploaded in the online application.**

| Language Proficiency other than English | | |
|--|--|--|
| CRITERIA | DESCRIPTION | POINTS |
| Documented proficiency or advanced level of coursework in languages other than English. | Including but not limited to: American Sign Language, Arabic, Chinese, including its various dialects, Farsi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, various languages of the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia, the various languages of the African continent | Student is proficient or has completed advanced level of coursework in 3 languages other than English = 5 points |
| | Verification must be on the Language Certification Form to be counted. Must be signed by an appropriate party listed on the form. | Student is proficient or has completed advanced level of coursework in 2 languages other than English = 4 points |
| | Family signatures will not be accepted. | |
| | Three courses in the upper division in the same language would be counted toward the points. | Student is proficient or has completed advanced level of coursework in 1 language other than English = 3 points |
| | Provide upper-division language course information (unofficial transcript). | |

Please review all sections of the Rubric for the Multi-Criterion Screening Process for the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at the link below.

[Multi-Criterion Screening Process](#)

PTA Program Course Sequencing

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| SEMESTER I (FALL) | | TOTAL UNITS 11 |
| PHYR 215 | DOCUMENTATION SKILLS | 1 |
| PHYR 220 | GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT, & AGING | 3 |
| PHYR 225 | ACUTE CARE | 2 |
| PHYR 225L | ACUTE CARE LAB | 2 |
| PHYR 230 | INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN MOVEMENT | 3 |
| SEMESTER II (SPRING) | | TOTAL UNITS 9 |
| PHYR 240 | INTRODUCTION TO PATHOLOGY | 3 |
| PHYR 250 | INTRODUCTION TO THERAPEUTIC EXERCISE | 2 |
| PHYR 260 | TOPICS IN NEUROLOGY & REHABILITATION | 2 |
| PHYR 260L | TOPICS IN NEUROLOGY & REHABILITATION LAB | 2 |
| SUMMER | | TOTAL UNITS 1 |
| PHYR 263 | PATIENT MANAGEMENT | 1 |
| SEMESTER III (FALL) | | TOTAL UNITS 11.5 |
| PHYR 264 | THERAPEUTIC MODALITIES | 1.5 |
| PHYR 264L | THERAPEUTIC MODALITIES LAB | 1.5 |
| PHYR 276 | ORTHOPEDIC EXERCISE & REHABILITATION | 3.5 |
| PHYR 276L | ORTHOPEDIC EXERCISE & REHABILITATION LAB | 2 |
| PHYR 291 | DIRECTED CLINICAL PRACTICE I | 3 |
| SEMESTER IV (SPRING) | | TOTAL UNITS 12 |
| PHYR 280 | ORGANIZATION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY | 2 |
| PHYR 295 | DIRECTED CLINICAL PRACTICE II | 5 |
| PHYR 298 | DIRECTED CLINICAL PRACTICE III | 5 |

*The sequence of courses is subject to change.

*PHYR 291 may be offered in the summer session. If the student completes PHYR 291 in the summer, they will not enroll in PHYR 291 in the semester III.

Continuation in the program is predicated on the successful completion of each semester. The courses in each semester act as the prerequisites for the next semester's work.

Graduation Requirements

All PTA Program graduates must earn the associate degree including PTA program curriculum and general education (GE) requirements in order to sit for the National Physical Therapy Examination for the PTA.

As the Program is an Associate Degree curriculum, the District-required general education (GE) courses must be completed before graduation. In the PTA program, the entrant should plan on having the GE courses completed before the third semester (and not have a work schedule that could interfere) in order to allow for full time availability for directed clinical practice. This availability in the third and fourth semester allows for increased ease in providing a well-rounded clinical experience.

The entrant is encouraged to complete as many of the GE courses (Multicultural, P.E., Humanities, etc.) as possible prior to entering the program so as to allow for an increase in time to be spent on study or work while in the program. Completion also allows for an ability to have increased flexibility to participate in directed clinical practice.

In an agreement with the School of Exercise Science, Health Education, and Athletics, the graduates of the program are exempt from completing the district's Health Education course degree requirement.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can I find out if the courses I have taken outside of the San Diego Community College District will transfer or meet the prerequisite course requirements?

You will find general information on the prerequisite courses in this packet. All coursework must be completed at a regionally-accredited college. It is recommended that you meet with an academic counselor with specific questions regarding prerequisites and general education requirements.

2. Can you give me a list of facilities where I can complete my observation hours?

We do not have a list of facilities that can be sent to you. It is recommended that you contact facilities close to where you live and ask if they will allow you to observe physical therapists or physical therapist assistants. Some facilities have waiting lists for people to observe so you should contact facilities as soon as possible. Information about potential sites will only be given at Information Sessions. Dates and times of information sessions may be found on the Allied Health website page.

3. Can I complete the program in less than two years?

No, the program cannot be completed in less than two years since the technical courses are taught sequentially and require two full years for completion.

4. Can I work while completing the PTA program?

Students are encouraged to have a flexible work schedule if they are working while completing the PTA Program. The PTA Program uses a cohort model with all students in classes together for the 2 years of the program. Classes are offered at a specific day and time and do not have flexibility to adjust. Attendance is mandatory for all classes.

Program Costs

In order to improve student financial literacy, the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at San Diego Mesa College has provided the following cost breakdown for the two years of the program. The costs are the best current estimate and may vary slightly.

Tuition (Based on Fall 2025 tuition rates):

\$46 per unit for in-state students x 46.5 units (PTA curriculum only, includes PHYR 210 prerequisite*) = \$2,139.00

Out of state students add an additional \$369 per unit, \$415 x 46.5 units (PTA curriculum only, includes PHYR 210 prerequisite*) = \$19,297.50

*To be eligible for licensure you must complete the Associate degree which is approximately 60 units.

Parking (Based on Fall 2025 semester):

\$40 per semester for automobiles (5 semesters)

\$30 per semester for Carpool permits

\$17.50 per semester for Motorcycle permits

Health Fee (Based on Fall 2025 semester):

\$23 per Fall and Spring semesters (4 semesters total)

\$17 per Summer semester (1 total)

AS Membership Fee (Based on Fall 2025 semester): \$8

Student Representation Fee (Based on Fall 2025 semester): \$2

Textbook & Course Packets Estimated Cost* (Based on Fall 2025):

1st semester - \$360

2nd semester - \$200

3rd Semester – \$207

4th semester – No additional textbooks

*Please note costs are estimated and based off of previous bookstore prices.

Immunizations/Physical (Based on Fall 2025 costs at Mesa College Student Health Services):

Physical Exam \$ 35
QuantiFERON Gold \$55
Tetanus, Diptheria and Pertussis (Tdap) - \$45
MMR \$88, titre is \$25
Varicella \$148, titre is \$10
Hepatitis B Series (series of 3) \$50 each, titre is \$10
Flu Vaccine \$0 (free)

*Students may see their own medical provider if preferred.

AHA CPR and AED (Based on Fall 2025):

\$46 Online Course
\$15 Course Manual

*Additional fee for the live in-person skill check is dependent on location.

Background Check/Drug Screen (Based on Fall 2025): \$77 per year (additional costs may apply if you have lived outside of the state of California)

Complio (Based on Fall 2025): \$24 per year

\$25 additional rotation fee (clinical site dependent)

Professional Liability Insurance (Students can purchase professional liability insurance from a provider of their choosing. The cost listed below is an example from Fall 2025):

Professional Liability Insurance: \$25

PTA License Cost (Based on Fall 2025):

LiveScan \$49.00
PTA Application Processing Fee and Initial License \$300.00,
PTA National Physical Therapy Examination \$400.00 to Federation, \$70 to Prometric
testing site
CA Law Exam: \$50

Recommended:

PTA Licensure Examination Preparation Course (Based on Fall 2025 and includes the test preparation book, 3 practice examinations and the course): \$190.00