



**Indian River
State College**

**PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT
Student Handbook**

Powered by

The School of Health and Human Sciences

The Physical Therapist Assistant program (PTA) reserves the right to make any revisions, deletions, or additions to the regulations or procedures which, in the opinion of the faculty and/or Indian River State College, serves in the best interest of the program and its students.

IRSC is an EA/EO educational institution

(Rev. 3/2026)

PREFACE

Indian River State College offers a Physical Therapist Assistant program leading to a two-year Associate in Science Degree. The program is designed to provide students with the basic physical therapy knowledge, procedures and related tasks to assist the supervising Physical Therapist in a variety of healthcare settings. This is a professional program and students are expected to conduct themselves ethnically and professionally as in the role of the physical therapist assistant demonstrating the “preferred relationship” with the physical therapist. (Refer to: APTA Code of Ethics for Physical Therapy Profession, APTA Guide for Professional conduct [APTA], The Guide for Conduct of the Physical Therapist Assistant [APTA], Standards of Practice for Physical Therapy [APTA], Florida Laws and Rules [FS-486 Physical Therapy Practice Act].

Students accepted in the program are regarded as mature, responsible individuals seeking a formal education in the field of physical therapy to maintain a professional behavior and appearance during all classes, laboratories, scheduled field trips and/or any situation in which the student is identifiable as an Indian River State College Physical Therapist Assistant program student, whether on campus or in the community. Students are not considered employees of the program’s designated clinical education sites or facilities. This handbook has been prepared to inform the student of the regulations and requirements of this educational endeavor. However, the regulations and requirements contained herein are subject to revision at any time and may be modified at the discretion of the Physical Therapist Assistant program faculty and/or Indian River State College administration as deemed necessary.

EA/EO Statement

Indian River State College provides equal employment and educational opportunities to all without regard to race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, genetic information, and any other factor protected under applicable federal, state, and local civil rights laws, rules and regulations. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies:

Adriene B. Jefferson, Dean of Northwest Center,

Equity Officer & Title IX Coordinator

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These forms must be signed and returned on or before the first day of class

PROGRAM INFORMATION

1.01 Program Accreditation

Successful completion of the Physical Therapist Assistant program at Indian River State College leads to an Associate in Science Degree. Graduates are eligible for application to take the Florida Jurisprudence Examination and the national licensing examination given by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy <http://www.fsbpt.org>

The Physical Therapist Assistant program at Indian River State College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) 3030 Potomac Avenue, Suite 100, Alexandria, VA 22305-3085; phone 703-706-3245; email: accreditation@apta.org; website: www.capteonline.org.

1.02 Career Description

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program at Indian River State College is a two-year program requiring 74 credit hours (76 weeks) including five 15-week semesters and one 7-week summer session. Graduates will receive an Associate of Science in Physical Therapist Assistant degree. The Program curriculum includes courses in general education and basic science as well as technical physical therapy coursework. Students will be exposed to direct patient care through two, seven-week clinical education experiences during the second year of the program. Students must achieve entry-level status during the final clinical experience.

The physical therapist assistant (PTA) is an educated individual who works under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist. Duties of the assistant include relieving pain and/or increasing function in clients/patients through the use of therapeutic application of heat, light, water, electricity, sound, massage, exercise, gait and functional activity. Physical therapist assistants practice in a variety of health care settings, including hospitals, ambulatory health clinics, home health, private practices, specialized clinics, schools and institutions of higher education, research centers, industries, wellness and fitness centers, health maintenance organizations, extended-care facilities and nursing homes.

1.03 Admission Criteria

The PTA program admission procedure is outlined in the Physical Therapist Assistant Application Booklet found on the IRSC website at <https://irsc.edu/programs/physical-therapist-assistant.html>.

1.04 College/University Transfer Possibilities

Refer to the Physical Therapist Assistant Application Booklet located on the Indian River State College website at <https://irsc.edu/programs/physical-therapist-assistant.html>.

1.05 Curriculum

The general education courses that are components of the Associate in Science Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant may be taken concurrent with or prior to the required physical therapy courses. The courses synthesize with the program philosophy and purpose to reach the program goals. The required general education courses and course descriptions may be found in the current *Indian River State College Course Catalog*.

The technical physical therapy courses consist of lecture and lab to enhance the educational development of the student to achieve competency skills necessary for placement in the educational clinical site. The comprehensive courses along with course descriptions can be found in the current *Indian River State College Course Catalog*.

The PTA program is committed to the advancement of students to attain **critical thinking** and **problem-solving skills, self-discipline, creativity** and **ethical values** to make decisions in their personal and professional lives. The integrated curriculum plan of general education courses of humanities, natural sciences, mathematics, social and behavioral sciences and technical physical therapy courses enhance the social, cultural and intellectual development of the student to meet the needs of the health care delivery system.

1.06 Philosophy and Purpose

The philosophy of the Associate in Science Degree Physical Therapist Assistant program at Indian River State College supports and assists the implementation of the philosophy and purposes of the College. In support of the College Mission Statement, the program believes education is a partnership that involves a growth process as in the roles of the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant in the health field. The physical therapy faculty encourages the development of the individual through optimum learning environments through life experiences. The College and the servicing communities provide rich learning experiences and resources that enable students to develop the competencies necessary for the practice of physical therapy.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Physical Therapist Assistant program is to provide the various populations of the community with safe, effective, entry-level physical therapist assistants through a comprehensive curriculum instructed by faculty dedicated to the program.

1.07 Goals

The program enables the College to achieve its mission by preparing PTA students for employment in the community by achieving the following **goals**.

1. Prepare competent individuals for the profession in physical therapy through an institutional **organization** that supports policies, procedures and practices defined by the Florida Department of Education, Florida State Board of Physical Therapy Practice and accreditation agencies.
2. Provide sufficient quality **resources** to enhance academic/clinical settings stimulating student learning and exemplifying professional/value-based behaviors for the role of the physical therapist assistant.
3. Graduate competent students meeting the needs of the public through an educational **curriculum** reflecting current physical therapy practice and trends.
4. Prepare program graduates for employment in a variety of physical therapy practice settings through a process of continuous improvement and on-going program **assessment** to determine effectiveness.
5. **Achieve Program Learning Outcomes for the Physical Therapist Assistant Program**

Communication – Utilize proper verbal, non-verbal and written communication

Critical thinking – Select appropriate patient/client interventions within the plan of care established by the Physical Therapist

Problem solving – Demonstrate clinical problem solving when determining patient status, change in status and need for modification of the established treatment plan.

Work cooperatively – **Exhibit** expected clinical behaviors in a professional manner consistent with established core professional values and established ethical and legal guidelines.

Plan of Care/Intervention – **Demonstrate** entry level competency skills of a PTA for employment in the various physical therapy settings.

Professional Behavior – **Demonstrate** professional behaviors of accountability, altruism, compassion and caring. Display professional and ethical behavior.

1.08 Knowledge of College Policies, School of Health and Human Sciences Regulations, and Program Guidelines

The PTA program abides by the Indian River State College policies. Indian River State College policies pertaining to students can be found in the Student Planner/Handbook located on the Indian River State College public website.

Students are expected to have a working knowledge and understanding of the content of the Indian River State College School of Health and Human Sciences Student Handbook and the Physical Therapist Assistant Program Student Handbook. After reviewing the student handbooks, students sign and date the **“Statement of Acknowledgement/Agreement/Understanding”** which includes an agreement where the student states they understand the content of the handbook and agree to abide by the guidelines and procedures set forth during their tenure as a Physical Therapist Assistant student.

The PTA Program Student Handbook is reviewed and revised annually by program faculty. Program faculty consider input for manual revisions from students, college administration, PTA program advisory committee members, and college staff. When changes are made after the initial publication of each year’s Student Handbook, PTA Program students and Indian River State College administration will be notified of the updates.

Academic Standards

Academic standards are those measures by which, the faculty of the program, determine a student's quality of performance. They are composed of guidelines for advancement in the program as well as the regulations for grading, re-admission and dismissal.

2.01 Requirements for Progression

The Physical Therapist Assistant program is a cohort-based, meaning that students work through a curriculum together to achieve the same degree. Students must progress through the curriculum with their cohort. If a student is not able to take the required courses as scheduled, the student will be withdrawn from the program and will have to reapply for admission to the program with a future cohort.

Due to the sequential nature of the curriculum, students must successfully complete all courses for a given semester before becoming eligible to take courses in the subsequent semester. It is essential that students master the knowledge and skills of each Physical Therapist Assistant course (determined by a minimum grade of "C" or better.) In the event that the student obtains a grade lower than a "C" in any of the Physical Therapist Assistant courses, they will be required to withdraw from the program and will have to reapply for admission to the program with a future cohort.

2.02 Grading Scale

1. Students must achieve a minimum of "C" for the final grade in **all courses** (technical core curriculum and natural science courses) that are required for completion of the degree.

A grade of "D" or "F" may be given in any course; however, such a grade is not considered as having met the prerequisite standard for advancement to the next term of academic study nor will it permit continuation of enrollment in the program. (Refer to Student Readmission Regulation.)

If a student achieves **below a 76%** on any quiz or exam in a PHT course, the student **must** meet with the instructor to complete the **student counseling remediation form**.

2. A student must meet minimal performance standards on lab practical and lab practical finals to progress to the next level of academia or clinical education in the program. Competency rating scales are computed on a scale of 100 points with 76 or above passing. The student must receive a minimum of 76% for the lab practical grade. Should the student receive a grade of below 76% accuracy on lab practical testing (comprehensive performance standard skills), the student will be retested (maximum one time). After remediation, the highest obtainable score on a repeat performance is 76%. A student who does not pass a lab practical (second attempt) or lab practical final (second attempt) fails the course and is withdrawn from the program.
3. A student physical therapist assistant will not be competent for clinical practice **with a grade of 75% or below** on a Performance Standard or Lab Practical Final if the patient/client is put at risk due to the following **safety reasons** listed below. **(This is a guide only and does not include every situation for an automatic failure.) See Safety Considerations (Appendix A).**

4. The student must meet minimal performance standards as detailed in the Clinical Performance Instrument in order to successfully pass the clinical educational component of the program. A student who receives one or more red flags on the **final** clinical performance instrument in Clinical Practice I and II, will be given an unsatisfactory grade and will be withdrawn from the program. (Refer to PTA Clinical Education Manual.)
5. Clinical Practice I and II are graded on a satisfactory or unsatisfactory basis - final determination of grade depends on satisfactory performance report and other assigned requirements (attendance at class conferences, journals, etc.) as outlined in the clinical syllabi.
6. The grading scale utilized by the program is:

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93-100
B	85-92
C	76-84
D	70-75
F	69 and below

7. An incomplete grade (I) is given to a student, who although passing the majority of the given course, has not completed the full class requirements. At the time that grades are submitted, the student will be given a list of work not yet completed and an explanation of how completion of the requirements will contribute to the final grade.
8. If a student withdraws from or fails a PHT course or general education course during the first semester, he/she must reapply to the program. The student's application will be given the same consideration as all other applicants applying for the Physical Therapist Assistant program. If a student does not pass **more than one core PTA course** during the **first semester**, the student will not be eligible to reapply to the program.
9. All clinical and classroom assignments are to be handed in on time.
10. Grades will be lowered per course syllabi for all late assignments unless other arrangements have been made with the instructor. No assignments will be accepted after one-week past due date.
11. Individual course syllabi further detail specific academic standards relative to any given course.

2.03 Open Lab

Open Lab is an opportunity for students to practice skills learned during lecture/lab. **Students must be dressed in laboratory attire.** Students are encouraged to attend all open lab sessions to practice skills in a supervised setting that are offered at various times each week.

2.04 Review of Tests/Quizzes

Tests, quizzes and special project grades are available on Canvas. Due to curriculum content, tests and quizzes are not reviewed during lecture time. Students are able to review test/quizzes and projects during OPEN LAB or students may request individual appointments with instructor for test question review.

All tests, quizzes, practicals, special projects and a copy of performance standards skills will be kept in a student file in the PTA Faculty Office and/or electronically in the Student File Cabinet. Student folders are available for review during OPEN LAB or a scheduled appointment with the faculty.

2.05 Student Probation Regulation

Refer to the School of Health and Human Sciences Handbook for Probation, Readmission, and Dismissal Regulations

2.06 PTA Student Re-Admission Regulation

If a student falls below minimum academic standards and fails a PTA core course during the first semester, they must re-apply as a new applicant of the next academic year. Their application will be given the same consideration as all the other applicants applying for the PTA program. A student who fails more than one core PTA course will not be eligible to reapply.

Upon receiving notice of readmission, the student will be required to demonstrate competency for previously completed courses as determined by successful completion of a comprehensive written exam (score of 76% or greater) and lab practical for skills documentation (score of 76% or greater).

It will be the student's responsibility to contact the Program Director within 10 days of receipt of readmission and make arrangements for a comprehensive exam and lab practical prior to the scheduled orientation for the following fall semester.

Students who have failed a course during the first semester will have only one opportunity to re-apply to the program.

Students who have **unsuccessfully** repeated a course **will not** be re-admitted to the PTA program. Students may repeat one core PTA course for purposes of re-entry. A course withdrawal with an average grade below 76% is considered a course failure if the student has completed 75% of the course.

A student may only register for the same core PTA course twice. A second course failure will require that the student be withdrawn from the PTA program. The student will not be eligible for reentry at the point of withdrawal.

Conditions for Readmission

1. Students who withdraw from the program for one of the following reasons:
 - a. Pregnancy
 - b. Illness, injury or disability of the student or an immediate family member as verified by a physician's written statement.
 - c. Non-academic reasons

- d. The student received a "D" or lower in one technical course (PTA core curriculum) and/ or natural science course.
 - e. The student received a failing grade on a lab practical or final lab practical.
 - f. The student received an unsatisfactory grade in the clinical component of the Program.
 - g. The student is unable to participate in the clinical educational component of the program due to health issues or failure to otherwise meet qualifications for participation.
2. The student has completed at least one full semester of enrollment in the program and maintained the required academic standards of the program.
 3. The student was in good standing and has met all financial obligations to the program and IRSC at the time of withdrawal.
 4. The conditions necessitating the student's withdrawal have been alleviated.

Re-Admission Process

The program reserves the right to require readmitted students to repeat one or more courses.

Students wishing to be re-admitted to the program due to withdrawal, incomplete or failure must do so by the next application deadline.

A written request to be re-admitted should be addressed to the PTA Program Director at least 6 weeks prior to the next PTA application deadline date.

The Program director evaluates the request and verifies that the student satisfies the conditions for re-admission.

The Dean of Health and Human Sciences and/or the Program Director will inform the student of the decision. The decision to be re-admitted will be made by the Program Director and Faculty. Students who have received a "D" or lower in a PTA course must withdraw from the PTA program. They may be re-admitted subject to the following:

- a. Available space in the PTA program, as determined by the Program Director.
- b. If the re-entry point in PTA program will allow for the normal sequence of courses to be followed.
- c. Student must successfully complete a comprehensive exam (score of 76% or greater) to verify retention of information covered in all previous courses during the designated time frame for the upcoming semester.
- d. Once the student has successfully completed the comprehensive exam, the student will be required to demonstrate competency in all lab proficiencies previously performed.

Faculty will determine competency based on satisfactory completion of all of the steps identified in the lab exercise competency evaluation. The student must demonstrate competency in all previously completed lab proficiencies prior to being permitted to enroll in any core PTA courses.

A student will have only one opportunity for re-admission into the program.

Students will be required to complete a drug screen, background check and physical exam including required immunizations prior to re-admission.

2.07 Computer Requirements

Students are required to have a laptop computer (not iPad or tablets) for completion of course-related assignments and examinations. The laptop computer should be less than three years old and have the ability to connect to Wi-Fi. It must have a built-in microphone and speakers with a port for earbuds/headphones. The laptop should have a minimum of one USB port.

Microsoft Office 365 software can be downloaded for free through MyRiverPortalHelp.

Using an IRSC computer to access materials of a sexual or derogatory nature violates the College policy on non-harassment, which assures a positive learning environment. Violation will result in disciplinary action.

Academic Regulations

The rigorous and complex nature of the lecture and laboratory portions of the curriculum demand that specific guidelines be set and adhered to regarding student attendance. The continuity of patient/client care requires that the student attend all lecture/laboratory sessions.

3.01 Attendance

1. All technical lecture/laboratory classes are **mandatory**.
2. The student should be seated and ready to begin class at the designated class time. Tardiness is considered unprofessional conduct.
3. If the student is late to class, the student should inform the instructor at the end of the class period indicating a reason for the tardiness. It is the responsibility of the student to be certain that all information, assignments, etc. be obtained.
4. If the student is absent on an exam day, the **exam will be given on a day the student and instructor agree upon**.
5. It is the responsibility of the student to reschedule all lab practicals/performance standards missed on absent days with an instructor.
6. Each tardy and/or unexcused absence will result in a 5-point deduction per incident from the student's professionalism grade in a course.

3.02 Professional Responsibility

The student is **required to attend all Indian River State College PTA program activities/events**. The program Faculty will inform students of these upcoming events.

3.03 Absence from Lecture or Laboratory Classes

The following is defined as an **excused absence**.

- "A student's serious illness" means a condition such as pneumonia, surgery, hospital confinement or valid medical reason.
 - "Death in the immediate family" will be interpreted to mean mother, father, spouse, child, brother, sister, grandparents or significant other.
 - "Statutory governmental responsibilities" refer to such matters as jury duty or subpoenas for court appearances.
1. If the student expects to be absent from a given class, the student must contact the instructor directly or by leaving a message for the instructor within an appropriate time prior to the scheduled class time. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.
 2. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain all lecture/laboratory materials and if necessary, schedule a time to meet with the instructor for specifics.
 3. Each unexcused absence will lower the final course grade by 5 points for each incident.
 4. There will be no make-up quizzes or exams for unexcused absences. The student will receive a zero for that quiz or exam.

3.04 Tardiness

1. If the student is tardy 3 times in any combined learning environment, (lecture, laboratory or clinical class), the student will be required to write a two-page paper on "Professional Accountability." The student **must** present the information in two minutes at the next class to his/her classmates and PTA program faculty. If the student fails to present the information and/or submit the paper to the instructor, it will be considered a 4th tardy (see below, Number 2).
2. If a student continues to be tardy and has a 4th tardy, it will be considered an unexcused absence. (Each unexcused absence will lower the final course grade one letter grade.)
3. Excessive tardiness of 5 will result in dismissal from the program.
4. If a student is tardy on the day of quiz, a zero will be given for the grade.

3.05 Student Dress Code

A professional appearance is essential while enrolled in the Physical Therapist Assistant program. Students who violate the dress code will not be admitted to class or be able to participate in PTA program activities. (**each absence will be considered an unexcused absence.**)

Refer to the Health Science Division Student Handbook, section 2.16 for specifics regarding student dress code.

3.06 Specific Guidelines for Lecture and Lab

Lecture Attire

Students are to wear black pants and the Indian River State College PTA polo shirt, black/brown closed toe shoes with non-skid heel and black/brown belt.

Laboratory Attire

1. The Indian River State College PTA program T-shirt and royal blue shorts, socks and sneakers are considered the laboratory uniform. Women are required to wear an athletic bra or bathing suit top for lab sessions that require visualization of the spine.
2. Hair should be tied back so as not come in contact with the equipment or the "patient."
3. Indian River State College warm up jacket or solid black full zipper jacket may be worn over the lab uniform in cases when the lab or weather seems too cool.
4. Students who are not properly outfitted in the lab uniform will not be permitted to participate in the lab session.
5. Earrings and facial piercings are **not** permitted regardless of size.

PTA program uniforms and accessories are available for purchase at The River Shop

3.07 Classroom/Lab Safety Regulations

Indian River State College is committed to providing a safe environment for its employees and students. The College publishes a *Safety Management Manual* on an annual basis. A copy of the manual is available from the Program Director and the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education. A copy of the *Safety Management Manual* is also kept in the PTA Lab. A first aid kit is located in the PTA lab storage closet.

Safety regulations regarding the use of all equipment are presented at the start of each semester. It is imperative that these standards be adhered to in order for a safe environment to be maintained in the classroom and in the lab area. In the event that a student notices any potential hazards, (e.g., exposed electrical wires on devices located in the classroom, lab or any other area), the student is to discontinue usage and notify the Program Director or any other faculty member immediately. In the absence of a faculty member, the student is to ask the Health Science Division Administrative Assistant (772) 462-7544 to notify the Indian River State College Maintenance Department.

Students are to practice only those techniques presented in lecture. Electrical calibration and testing of all equipment are performed on an annual basis prior to utilization in lab.

In the event of fire, the student should activate the nearest emergency alarm located at the closest classroom or building exit. All students should leave the area immediately. Students are prohibited from working with any classroom or lab equipment until they are given an “all clear.” If any injury occurs while the student is present in the PTA lab/classroom area, the student must inform the faculty immediately. Refer to the Indian River State College Student Handbook.

Food and drinks are not permitted within the lecture/laboratory classrooms.

Refer to the School of Health and Human Sciences Student Handbook and Indian River State College Student Handbook for regulation of electronics including cell phones.

3.08 Smoking Regulation

Refer to Indian River State College Student Handbook for the smoking regulations and Board policy.

3.09 Informed Consent

Students enrolled in the PTA program are expected to perform a variety of physical therapy procedures on each other in the classroom and laboratory for education purposes. Participation is an important component of the learning process. Students must sign informed consent forms at the start of the program regarding potential risks, discomfort, and expectations that remain in effect throughout their tenure in the PTA program. Additionally, students have the right to refuse participation based on religious, personal, or health reasons.

Safety in application of treatments is a primary emphasis in the PTA program as expected in the future practice of physical therapy. Students are instructed to apply the least amount of force or intensity to achieve the physical therapy treatment goals. As with any treatment, students must understand that there exists the possibility of discomfort, pain, muscle soreness, freezing or burning tissue, or other unexpected phenomenon. It is the responsibility of the student to adhere to safety guidelines and immediately report any problems or feelings of discomfort to the instructor.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Professional ethics are essential qualities in the practice of physical therapy. The Physical Therapist Assistant student at Indian River State College assumes an obligation to conduct himself/herself in a manner compatible with the College's function as an educational institution as described in the Indian River State College **Student Handbook** under **Standard of Student Conduct and Administration of Student Discipline**. A student's academic work must be the result of the student's thought, self-expression or research. Any student that is caught for academic dishonesty may be dismissed from the program.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS

Appropriate professional behaviors are expected of all members of the learning community. Experience shows that behaviors demonstrated in the classroom do carry over into clinical practice. The purpose of this guideline is to help students recognize problem areas and correct them. These are basic skills of a competent graduate. The PTA program must address problems in these areas as part of the guarantee to graduate only skilled and caring health care professionals.

The Physical Therapy profession adopted core values as standards of professional behavior outlined in the APTA document "Value Based Behaviors for the Physical Therapist Assistant". The expected behaviors include accountability, altruism, collaboration, caring and compassion, duty, excellence, inclusion, integrity, and social responsibility.

Students are expected to follow professional standards in the classroom, laboratory and clinical settings. Developing the skills to function in the professional setting requires self-awareness, faculty feedback, and ongoing assessment.

5.01 Professional Behaviors Defined

According to the APTA's Core Values for the Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant position statement, HOD P09-21-21-09, last updated on 12/14/2021:

The core values guide the behaviors of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants to provide the highest quality of physical therapist services. These values imbue the scope of physical therapist and physical therapist assistant activities. The core values retain the physical therapist as the person ultimately responsible for providing safe, accessible, cost-effective, and evidence-based services; and the physical therapist assistant as the only individual who assists the physical therapist in practice, working under the direction and supervision of the physical therapist. The core values are defined as follows:

- **Accountability** is active acceptance of the responsibility for the diverse roles, obligations, and actions of the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant including self-regulation and other behaviors that positively influence patient and client outcomes, the profession, and the health needs of society.
- **Altruism** is the primary regard for or devotion to the interest of patients and clients, thus assuming the responsibility of placing the needs of patients and clients ahead of the physical therapist's or physical therapist assistant's self-interest.
- **Collaboration** is working together with patients and clients, families, communities, and professionals in health and other fields to achieve shared goals. Collaboration within the physical therapist-physical therapist assistant team is working together, within each partner's respective role, to achieve optimal physical therapist services and outcomes for patients and clients.
- **Compassion** is the desire to identify with or sense something of another's experience, a precursor of caring. Caring is the concern, empathy, and consideration for the needs and values of others.
- **Duty** is the commitment to meeting one's obligations to provide effective physical therapist services to patients and clients, to serve the profession, and to positively influence the health of society.
- **Excellence** in the provision of physical therapist services occurs when the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant consistently use current knowledge and skills while understanding personal limits, integrate the patient or client perspective, embrace advancement, and challenge mediocrity.
- **Inclusion** occurs when the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant create a welcoming and equitable environment for all. Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants are inclusive when they commit to providing a safe space, elevating diverse and minority voices, acknowledging personal biases that may impact patient care, and taking a position of anti-discrimination.
- **Integrity** is steadfast adherence to high ethical principles or standards, being truthful, ensuring fairness, following through on commitments, and verbalizing to others the rationale for actions.
- **Social responsibility** is the promotion of a mutual trust between the profession and the larger public that necessitates responding to societal needs for health and wellness.

5.02 Development of Professionalism Guidelines

Students are expected to demonstrate behaviors consistent with the expectations of the Physical Therapy profession. The following are some examples of expected behaviors:

Value Based Behavior	Sample expected behavior
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks and responds to feedback • Acknowledges and accepts consequences for actions • Meets deadlines, including being on time for class • Attends classes/labs for expected times • Adheres to code of ethics and policies/procedures • Contacts instructor (phone, email, or in person) in advance of scheduled activities when unable to attend; in cases of unexpected emergency, contacts instructor as soon as possible • Recognizes problem or need; Actively seeks feedback and help • Develops plan of action in response to feedback • Demonstrates improvement based on self-assessment or feedback • Critiques own performance and will share that self-assessment • Maintains open line of communication with individuals offering critique
Altruism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists classmates • Assists faculty/program director/staff • Participates in program and/or college sponsored events
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers role of PTA in all situations (stays within scope of practice) • Resolves dilemmas/problems in a respectful manner • Responds during interactions using appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication • Communicates concerns/questions for the PT with respect
Compassion Caring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of socio-cultural influences on patient care • Considers individual differences when interacting with others (non-judgmental about others) • Advocates for the needs of others • Maintains calm tone in conversation; avoids use of offensive statements
Duty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completes all work with effort to meet quality requirements • Utilizes resources responsibly in completion of work • Acknowledges and accepts responsibility for meeting expectations and attempts to make corrections when feedback is given • Dresses appropriately according to dress code • Uses correct terminology and expression in verbal and written communication • Integrates concepts from other courses • Demonstrates a tolerance for ambiguity

Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates safe practice and maintains confidentiality • Shows commitment to learning • Demonstrates flexibility and is adaptable to change • Schedules and keeps appointments • States the component parts of a problem clearly • Identifies resources needed to develop solutions for identified problems • Analyzes possible solutions to problem • Determines which solutions are realistic, likely to succeed, and effective choices • Considers the consequence of each possible solutions
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greets classmates, instructors, and patients authentically • Listens attentively and respectfully without judgment • Seeks to work with all classmates • Works for shared success
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains academic honesty • Is trustworthy • Recognizes own limits and acts accordingly • Contributes to a positive academic environment • Maintains appropriate and effective professional relationships
Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in volunteer activities • Promotes cultural competence • Promotes health/wellness • Advocates for policy changes that may impact patient care

5.03 Professional Communication Expectations

The following guidelines are to be used with phone and E-mail communication with your course and clinical instructors. Violation of these guidelines is a breach of professional behaviors.

Phone etiquette

- State who you are (If calling someone new, state you are a student PTA).
- State reason for the call.
- Leave a call back number(s) and/or E-mail.
- State times that you are available for a call back.
- Do not call very early or very late.
- Speak clearly.
- Do not use slang

Netiquette

- Check email daily and respond promptly for requests for information from instructors. E-mail will be our primary means of offsite communication with you.
- Notify all instructors if you have a change in E-mail address.
- Use complete sentences.
- Do not use “slang” abbreviations i.e., LOL, etc.
- Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. If you need to, type out in Word, use spell and grammar check then copy to E-mail.
- Send attachments in Word only unless told to use a different program.

- If a person is cc'd hit "reply to all" if the information you are sending is pertinent to that person as well as the sender.
- If a large group has received an E-mail and you are sending information that is only pertinent to you and the sender hit "reply".
- Refrain from sending any chain letters.
- Refrain from sending jokes, uplifting messages, cute pictures, web links etc., unless instructed to do so.
- Maintain confidentiality of patients, fellow students and faculty.
- Do not share another person's E-mail address unless you have their permission.
- Use a title in the subject line.
- Please use E-mail for necessary questions. Problem solve first, rely on others, then request information from instructors. This prevents too many E-mails and slows down the ability to reply in an efficient manner.
- Use please, thank you, you're welcome, etc.

5.04 Implementing for Breach of Professional Behaviors

Consistent and effective professional behaviors are expected in classroom, labs, and clinical settings at all times. Behaviors not conforming to those expected of an entry level PTA are considered a breach of professional behaviors. A breach of professional behaviors will be brought to the student's attention and addressed based on the level of attention and concern indicated. In contrast, other behaviors that compromise the educational experience for the student or their peers may place the student "at risk" of point deductions but would not require disciplinary action or dismissal unless the behaviors remain uncorrected after sufficient notification and opportunity for improvement has occurred.

Step one: Problem identified and student is made aware of the concern. The breach of professional behavior is documented using any written or verbal form (Email, grade book, handout, verbal discussion). This documentation is shared with the student and the student is encouraged to discuss the issue with the course instructor.

- Loss of professionalism points in the course per syllabus guidelines
- Other program faculty are informed to determine if the problem requires monitoring across the program or can be identified as an isolated circumstance.

Step two: Demonstration of unprofessional behaviors, or repeated lack of professional behavior at any time during participation in the PTA program warrants initiation of a state of program probation. Following written notification, the student will be required to meet individually with the Program Director to develop a corrective behavioral action plan. Failure to complete the behavioral action plan and to demonstrate professional behavior throughout the remainder of the semester will result in a deduction in the student's final grades for the semester. This will be deemed as an unprofessional conduct penalty. The penalty will be commensurate with the extent of the unprofessional conduct and will be applied upon consensus of the entire faculty.

In the case of particularly egregious behavior, immediate dismissal from the program may be warranted

A 10%-point deduction is applied to the student's overall course grade in accordance with the grading procedure outlined by the course instructor.

- The student and course instructor identify what course of action must be taken to resolve the concern and to prevent further occurrences. The plan and consequences of a failure to demonstrate improvement are identified in a student success plan which is entered into the student record.
- A method of tracking concerns across all program settings (class/lab/clinic) is initiated to ensure that the problem is addressed and corrected by the student in all program settings.
- The student may be required to meet periodically with one or more of --program instructor, program director, or program advisor --to address and document progress or lack of progress related to professional behaviors.

Ideally, concerns are addressed satisfactorily at step two. Student and faculty establish the plan and agree on positive and negative consequences.

Step three: Recommendation for a change in program status

Problems are ongoing and have not been resolved. This student has not demonstrated acceptable levels of improvements in the identified behaviors established by the student and program faculty. The program faculty feels the student is not competent to provide therapy services at this time.

- An additional 10% deduction is applied to the summative grade for the course.
- PTA program may recommend the student exit or modify participation at the program level and establish a plan for this change. Participants in this step may include -student, program director, & program counselor, Dean.
- If the student's status in the program changes, he or she may request re-entry in the PTA program. This petition would follow the Health Sciences Division Readmission Process.

Dismissal Regulation

Refer to Health and Human Sciences Student Handbook for Dismissal Regulation.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION

Additional Health Requirements

1. Students must provide evidence of certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) from American Heart Association for the Health Care provider BLS certification providers, by the start of the first semester of core PTA technical courses.
2. The Physical Therapist Assistant program recognizes that a physical therapist assistant student who is not physically or mentally well can pose a threat to the patient/client/student/faculty safety.
 - a. Students who have a change in health status while enrolled in the program must report the nature of their change in status to the Program Director and/or Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education, ACCE)
 - b. Students may be requested by Program Director or PTA Program Faculty to seek assistance with the Indian River State College Health and Wellness Center if a change in health status occurs.
 - c. Any student who exhibits symptoms of illness which pose such a threat and/or who is under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs may be immediately removed from the clinical area and will be referred to their private physician. (Refer to the Health and Human Sciences Student Handbook.)
 - d. After any change in health status (i.e., hospitalization, infectious disease, injury, musculoskeletal, etc.), the student must submit a statement from their physician to the effect that their condition is not detrimental to the safety or health of himself/herself nor patients/clients before returning to the program. (Refer to Appendix for Change in Health Status form).
 - e. In cases where absences caused by a change in health status interfere with student's progress, students will be asked to withdraw from the program.
 - f. Students who withdraw from the program due to a change in health status may apply to re-enter the program after resolution of the health problem and submission of an updated health record.
3. The student must provide updates to health record. Changes in medical condition should be promptly reported to the Physical Therapist Assistant program office. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.

GENERAL INFORMATION

7.01 Confidentiality of Records

Refer to Health and Human Sciences Student Handbook and Indian River State College Student Handbook for information regarding confidentiality of records.

A student program file that includes information related to academic records and professional development is maintained on each student in the PTA program. These files are located in the PTA program director's office and ACCE's office. An electronic student file cabinet is maintained on the secure shared drive for the PTA program only accessible by the Dean of Health and Human Sciences and PTA core program faculty. Information from these files is released only to PTA faculty members, the Health and Human Sciences Dean, and the student.

- Program files are maintained for five years after graduation from the program.
- Program files for students leaving the program due to academic failure or voluntarily with a stated intent to return at a future date are also maintained for five years.

7.02 Advisement Services and Faculty Office Hours

Indian River State College employs full-time Academic Counselors and Advisor Specialists. Refer to <https://irsc.edu/student-resources/advising-services.html> for services and hours. Faculty office hours are posted outside individual office doors each semester.

7.03 Professional Membership Career and Technical Student Organization, [CTSO]

The Florida Department of Education (Curriculum Framework), Program Title: Physical Therapist Assistant states:

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), Inc., are the appropriate career and technical student organizations for providing leadership training and reinforcing specific career and technical skills. Career and Technical Student Organizations provide activities for students as an integral part of the instruction offered. The activities of such organizations are defined as part of the curriculum in accordance with Rule 6A-6.065, F.A.C.

American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)

Membership in the APTA and Florida Physical Therapy Association (FPTA), State Chapter, is recommended as an active IRSC PTA student member. The Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education serves as the advisor and will inform PTA students on scheduled events.

7.04 PTA Class Representatives

Students are encouraged to develop leadership skills through service to their class as Class representatives, Social Chair and student involvement in APTA, FPTA and Health Occupations Students of American (HOSA) events. The Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education serves as an advisor to the Class representatives and will inform students of responsibilities.

7.05 Student Activities

Refer to Indian River State College Student Handbook or contact the Student Activities Office located in the Koblegard Student Union.

7.06 Indian River State College Emergency/Disaster Procedures

Refer to Indian River State College Student Handbook

7.07 Support Services

Refer to the Indian River State College Student Handbook for information concerning support services or visit <https://irsc.edu/student-resources/student-support-services.html>.

7.08 Transportation

The student is responsible for travel to and from clinical sites and arranged field trips which may or may not be close in proximity to their geographical residences.

7.09 Program Expenses

Per the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) Rules of Practice and Procedures 8.20(c) Student Costs, current information about program expenses can be found on the Indian River State College PTA Webpage at www.irsc.edu/programs/physical-therapist-assistant.html

7.10 Student Achievement Awards

Each year prior to graduation, the PTA program faculty recognizes three second-year students for outstanding achievement. The Outstanding Scholar Award is presented to the graduating student with the highest-grade point average (GPA) while enrolled in the program (only PTA program grades are considered for this award, 74 credits). The Outstanding Clinician Award is presented to the graduating student who has demonstrated exemplary skills and professional behaviors in the clinical setting. The Leila Darress Award is presented annually to a graduating student elected by the class and faculty who meets the following criteria:

- A grade point average equal to or exceeding that of the top 1/3 of the graduating class
- Clinical performance equal to or exceeding that of the top 1/3 of the graduating class
- Overcoming significant hardship (financial, psychosocial, physical) during the course of training to complete PTA training

7.11 Graduation Requirements

1. To qualify for graduation, the PTA student must have successfully completed the College requirements for the A.S. Degree as described in the College catalog located on the Indian River State College website.
2. Upon graduation from the College, the PTA student will be:
 - a. Granted an Associate in Science Degree from Indian River State College.
 - b. Eligible to apply to take the National Physical Therapist Assistant Examination to become a Licensed Physical Therapist Assistant.

7.12 Licensing Examination

The National Physical Therapist Assistant Examination serves to evaluate the minimum level of competence of the graduate. Further information can be obtained through the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy, 509 Wythe Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, and Telephone: (703) 739-9420.

It is mandatory for graduates of the program to become licensed if they wish to practice in the State of Florida. Specific information regarding application will be presented in the second year of study.

Appendix

Resources and Forms

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS (ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS)

The role of the Physical Therapist Assistant in the various health care settings requires academic, physical, mental and environmental work/demands. To be successful as a PTA student and PTA graduate, the following requirements are expected to be performed **safely, ethically** and **legally** under the supervision of a physical therapist.

Academic

- Graduate of an accredited Physical Therapist Assistant program achieving an Associate in Science Degree.
- Obtain State Licensure to practice in Florida.

Physical

- Demonstrate coordination of small and large muscle groups to provide safe and effective care including transfers, ambulation and positioning of patient/client using minimum, moderate and maximum assistance techniques.
- Ability to sit, stand and walk for extended periods of time (3-5 hours), negotiating environmental barriers and safely with a patient/client.
- Demonstrate volitional and utilize movement to perform proper body mechanics of all patient/client treatment techniques and related procedures (e.g., stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling, reaching and handling)
- Perform heavy work as defined by U.S. Department of Labor “exerting 50 to 100 pounds of force.
- Perform range of motion and graded manual resistance of patient/client muscle groups for determining strength, for strengthening and stretching exercises.
- Ability to resist and support a patient/client with poor balance and weakened muscle groups on uneven surfaces, inclines, declines, stairs, curbs, etc.
- Perform manual hand dexterity and coordination to manipulate and calibrate equipment, (dials, probes, ultrasound heads, switches, scissors, tweezers, etc.) individually or simultaneously for modality and wound procedures.
- Respond to auditory emergency medical situations sufficiently with patients/clients (e.g., hearing monitor alarms, emergency signals, CPR, auscultatory sounds, verbal communication).
- Assess and observe patient/client condition (blood pressure and heart rate, respiration, etc.) response to treatment including near and far acuity (up to 10 feet away recognizing color discrimination).
- Perform physical assessment of structure, size, shape and muscle tone through tactile feeling (palpation).

Mental

- Demonstrate sufficient and accurate use of verbal, non-verbal and written communication effectively with staff, patient/client and families concerning treatment procedures.
- Receive and interpret verbal, nonverbal and written communication skills effectively with other health care provider.
- Ability to manage and function emotionally during stresses of an intensive academic training program for preparation of clinical situations with a variety of patients/clients (terminally ill, psychosocial responses of disabled individuals and families, etc.).
- Respect patient/client/family confidentiality.
- Ability to make appropriate judgments and decisions by set priorities in clinical situations.

Environmental

- Demonstrate the ability to apply universal precautions including the use of personal protective equipment (rubber gloves, gown, goggles, masks, etc.) when indicated.

Indian River State College provides reasonable accommodations to PTA students with documented disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Reasonable accommodations made in the academic setting at IRSC may not be available in all clinical sites for Clinic I & II (PHT 2810 & PHT 2820). [Refer to Appendix for Release of Information to Clinical Site Form]. Contact the Physical Therapist Assistant Program Director and Student Disabilities Services following acceptance to the program and before the first day of classes in the Fall, to declare your need for reasonable accommodations.

Indian River State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Safety Considerations

Patient safety is an important consideration during skills competencies and lab practical exams. Placing a simulated patient at risk during a practical exam, may result in failure of that exam.

Safety Considerations and Precautions including but not limited to:

- Perform hand washing before and after treating patients
- Identifying yourself to the patient and explain the procedure to be performed to reduce anxiety and promote safety
- Correctly identify the patient (ask name, check ID band)
- Check the medical records and health history for potential contraindications, tests and procedures, weight bearing status etc.
- Determine the patient's safe of health and physical ability to perform the task(s) (example: check vital signs, muscle testing, etc.)
- Ensure there is sufficient space and unobstructed view for task(s); Keep the floor clear of lines, cords, rugs, mats, liquids and other hazards
- Guard the patient at all times; be prepared for the worst; be alert for unexpected movements
- Maintain equipment & secure properly
- Obtain necessary equipment and prepare for the procedure or task; prepare treatment area BEFORE patient arrives to avoid leaving the patient unattended

**Indian River State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program
The School of Health and Human Sciences**

INFORMED CONSENT AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY

I, _____, understand that as a clinical student, I may be exposed to environmental hazards and infectious diseases including, but not limited to Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B, HIV (AIDS) and Covid-19 while in a clinical facility.

Neither Indian River State College nor any of the clinical facilities used for clinical practice assumes liability if a student is injured on the campus or in the clinical facility/practicum during training unless the injury is a direct result of negligence by the College or clinical facility. I understand that I am responsible for the cost of health care for any personal injury I may suffer during my education. I understand that I must purchase private health insurance while enrolled in the PTA Program.

I further understand that I must have liability insurance (which covers malpractice) while enrolled in classes involving clinical activities. This insurance fee is automatically included each year in the lab fee.

I understand and assume responsibility for the regulations, objectives, course requirements and inherent risks involved in the education of Physical Therapist Assistant students at Indian River State College.

Student (Print) _____ Student ID Number _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

**Indian River State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program**

**INFORMED CONSENT FOR LABORATORY, LAB PRACTICALS
AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

Review and sign the following consent, then return to the Program Director for review. There are two sections, one containing guidelines as Patient-Simulators and Student PTA-Simulators during laboratory, lab practicals and Performance Standard testing. If you have any cultural or individual differences that need attention or adjustment to the following, seek immediate advisement with the Program Director.

Patient-Simulators

I, _____, agree to be treated by the PTA faculty, Clinical Supervisor, guest lecturers or classmates during any or all labs, practicals and Performance Standard testing as required throughout the two-year curriculum of the PTA program. I am responsible to provide constructive verbal and non-verbal feedback to my classmates, simulating the PTA, concerning draping, safe conditions, etc. following the treatment session.

Student PTA-Simulators

I, _____, agree to follow the APTA Guide for Conduct of the PTA during laboratory, lab practicals and Performance Standard testing as required throughout the two-year curriculum of the PTA program. I agree to protect the modesty and safety of all patient-simulators treated.

Student (Print) _____ Student ID Number _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Indian River State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program

INFORMED CONSENT OF VARIOUS FORMS OF MEDIA

I, _____, am willing to appear in photographs, transparencies, films, videotapes and other forms of media, for educational and informational purposes at Indian River State College.

Student (Print) _____ Student ID Number _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Indian River State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program
CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

The patient has a right to every consideration of privacy concerning his/her own medical care program. Case discussion, consultation, examination and treatment are confidential and should be conducted discreetly. Those not directly involved in his/her care must have the permission of the patient to be present. The patient has the right to expect that all communications and records pertaining to his/her care should be treated as confidential.

A Patient's Bill of Rights (1975)

I am aware that as a student of the Indian River State College Physical Therapist Assistant program (PTA), I have access to patient information that is protected by state and federal law. I understand that state law prohibits me from making any disclosure of medical information without the specific written consent of the person to whom such information pertains, or as otherwise permitted by federal, state or local laws. I also understand that failure to maintain appropriate confidentiality will result in my dismissal from the PTA program.

Student (Print) _____ Student ID Number _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

**Indian River State College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program**

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT STUDENT AGREEMENT

READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT BEFORE SIGNING:

I have received the Physical Therapist Assistant Student Handbook, and it has been explained to me. I agree to reread the handbook and affirm that I will be responsible for all the data therein. I understand and am aware of the following:

INITIAL:

- _____ **ALL GUIDELINES PROVIDED IN THE PTA STUDENT HANDBOOK**
- _____ **PROGRAM ACCREDITATION**
- _____ **PROGRAM INFORMATION**
- _____ **PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS**
- _____ **CONFIDENTIALITY AND STUDENT RECORD GUIDELINES**
- _____ **PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE OF THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM**
- _____ **ACADEMIC STANDARDS**
- _____ **ACADEMIC REGULATIONS**
- _____ **PROGRAM ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS**
- _____ **PROGRAM ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS**
- _____ **PROGRAM EXPENSES**

I agree to abide by all the rules, regulations and procedures of the program.

I am also aware that this handbook is intended as a guide and that regulations and procedures described herein may be changed.

I understand that I have access to the Indian River State College Catalog.

In addition, I have read the Indian River State College Student Handbook and the Indian River State College School of Health and Human Sciences Student Handbook, and agree to abide by all the college rules, regulations and procedures.

I must return this signed form on or before the first day of class.

Student (Print) _____ Student ID Number _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____