

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Are there pre-requisite courses for the PTA program?**
 - a. The courses used in the selective admission process are:
 - i. Anatomy & Physiology I (Lecture and Lab)
 - ii. Anatomy & Physiology II (Lecture and Lab)
 - iii. Intro to Physics (or higher)
 - iv. College Algebra (or higher)
 - b. Students are encouraged to complete these courses and do well to earn the maximum points for consideration to the program
- 2. How long is the PTA program?**
 - a. Upon acceptance to the program, two years – 5 semesters of core PTA courses
- 3. Is the PTA program Financial Aid eligible?**
 - a. Yes
- 4. Can the program be done online?**
 - a. No, the program is only offered face-to-face
 - b. The program is very hands-on to enhance learning skills that will be used daily in the profession
- 5. Can this program be taken part time or one class at a time?**
 - a. No, the program must be taken with a full-time commitment, and all courses are taken sequentially. The cohort progresses together.
- 6. Do you offer this program in the evenings?**
 - a. No, the program is only offered during the day on the Massey Campus in Fort Pierce
- 7. Can I work while in the PTA program?**
 - a. Yes, but it is not recommended to work full-time. The program is quite demanding of your time both in and out of the classroom, so most students decrease their work hours while in the program
 - b. During the second year, you will be “working” without pay during two, seven-week clinical rotations where you are required to be in the clinic 40-hours per week.
- 8. What is the class schedule like during the program?**
 - a. The class schedules vary each semester and depend on the availability of adjunct faculty as well as full time faculty.
 - b. Classes usually begin at 8:30am and students may be on campus until as late as 4:30pm
 - c. There are no scheduled classes on Fridays; however, we offer open lab to practice skills learned during the week that most students attend regularly
- 9. Where can I do my observation hours? Do you have a list of facilities?**
 - a. You are welcome to do observations at any facility that will allow such. We recommend you contact the facility and inquire about the option to “shadow” the PT or PTA. Explain that you are applying to a PTA program and must get at least 30 hours of observation.

- b. We do not provide a list of facilities and recommend that you try a variety of sites to get a good feel for what the profession is all about.
- c. You are expected to dress professionally and be actively engaged while doing your observation hours
- d. You will have to write an essay about your experience during the application process
- e. You must have a licensed PT or PTA sign off on the hours using the “observation experience form” provided on our webpage

10. When can I apply?

- a. Applications open in early January and close in early May each year. See the webpage for exact dates.

11. How many are accepted each year?

- a. Currently, we accept a maximum of 20 qualified candidates each year

12. When will I be notified about being accepted?

- a. Applicants are notified via email within 4-6 weeks after the close date for applications about provisional acceptance. Further steps are required, including a drug screen and background check and mandatory attendance at the program Orientation, to be fully accepted into the program

13. Can I start in January?

- a. No. There is only a fall start date for this program each academic year,
- b. Students begin core PTA courses at the start of the fall semester after acceptance

14. Can I take the general education courses before starting the core PTA program?

- a. Yes, and this is highly recommended. Due to the fast pace and rigor of the core PTA courses, students are encouraged to finish as many general education courses as possible prior to applying to the program

15. What courses can I take to help me prepare for the PTA program?

- a. A strong foundation in anatomy and physiology is highly recommended.
- b. Medical terminology is not required but is extremely helpful
- c. Selective admission courses to earn maximum points (see question 1)

16. What skills are needed to be successful in the PTA program and Physical Therapy profession?

- a. Strong Foundational Science Knowledge
 - i. Strong test-taking skills a written exams heavily weighted in the program to prepare graduates for the National Board exams
- b. Critical Thinking & Clinical Reasoning
- c. Hands-On Psychomotor Skills
 - i. Comfort level with human contact
 - ii. PTAs perform many physical tasks including therapeutic exercise instruction, gait training, manual therapy techniques, transfers and mobility assistance
- d. Strong Communication Skills
 - i. Both **verbal and written communication** are essential:
 - 1. Explaining exercises clearly

2. Encouraging patients
3. Documenting accurately
4. Communicating with PTs, nurses, OTs, and other team members
5. Professional communication is a core requirement in clinical education.

e. Professionalism and Ethical Behavior

- i. Reliability and punctuality
- ii. Accountability for actions
- iii. Maintaining patient confidentiality
- iv. Accepting feedback
- v. Demonstrating empathy and respect

f. Time Management & Organization

- i. Keeping up with readings
- ii. Studying consistently
- iii. Preparing for labs
- iv. Balancing clinical rotations, assignments, and exams
- v. Students who plan ahead typically succeed.

g. Physical Stamina & Body Mechanics

- i. PTAs frequently:
 1. Lift, guard, and assist patients
 2. Stand for long periods
 3. Demonstrate exercises
 4. Move equipment
 5. Proper body mechanics help prevent injury and maintain safety.

h. Adaptability and Stress Management

- i. Manage stress effectively
- ii. Stay calm with challenging patients
- iii. Learn from mistakes without becoming discouraged

i. Compassion and Patient-Centered Care

- i. PTAs work closely with people experiencing pain, fear, or disability.
Compassion helps:
 1. Build trust
 2. Motivate patients
 3. Improve treatment adherence
 4. Enhance patient satisfaction

j. Willingness to Learn & Accept Feedback

- i. PTA education and clinical practice are continuous learning processes.
Openness to constructive criticism is vital for improvement.