**Physical Therapist Assistant**

*Frequently Asked Questions*

**Dear Prospective Physical Therapist Assistant Student:**

We are pleased that you have indicated your interest in the Physical Therapist Assisting Program. This "Question and Answer" page will give you information about the program. It may also raise additional questions that can be answered during a counseling session with the allied health academic advisors and counselors (Appointments available by calling Ext. 4033) or by contacting the Physical Therapist Assisting faculty (Ext. 7881) in the Division of Allied Health and Nursing, Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

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Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education

**What is a Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)?**  
Physical therapist assistants work under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist. Their duties include assisting the physical therapist in implementing treatment programs according to the therapist’s plan of care, training patients in exercises and activities of daily living, conducting treatments, using special equipment, administering modalities and other procedures, and reporting to the physical therapist on the patients’ responses.

**What is the PTA Program at LCCC?**  
The curriculum for the physical therapist assisting program consists of a combination of didactic and clinical learning experiences. Courses in the professional portion of the program include instruction in data collection techniques, wound care, developmental activities, postural training and body mechanics as well as various exercise techniques used in rehabilitation. Other professional courses include the use of physical agents that assist in healing and pain control including sound, light, electricity and water.

The physical therapist assisting program includes hands-on practice on campus as well as clinical rotations in the community. Clinical rotations are designed to give the student the opportunity to work with a number of medical diagnoses in acute care, rehabilitation, out-patient and long term care settings while being supervised by a clinical instructor.

Other courses which physical therapist assistant students must complete include anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, and general education courses that lead to the students’ respective Associate of Applied Science degree awarded by the college.

Licensure or certification is required in all states for the physical therapist assistant to practice. Graduates from an accredited program must obtain a specified minimum passing score on a licensure exam. This passing score is the same across all jurisdictions in the country, so that passing the licensing exam in any state/jurisdiction gives the graduate the opportunity to apply for a license in any
state. Some states require additional tests or educational requirements in order to apply for, or transfer a license to that state. For example, Ohio requires the successful completion of a test of knowledge of the laws and rules governing the practice of Physical Therapy in the state of Ohio in order to become licensed or transfer a license in the state. Complete information on practice acts can be obtained from the state licensing boards.

A graduate from the program will be prepared for entry-level employment in settings such as hospitals, outpatient clinics, schools, home care, and extended care facilities.

**How long is the Program?**
The program professional courses run in a sequence of five semesters starting each Fall, which includes one summer semester over the two year period.

**How long is the waiting list for the program?**
The program does not select students based on a waiting list system, or maintain a waiting list. Students are selected for the program annually through a selective or competitive entry process. This is detailed in the current college catalog and website. The deadline to apply each year is Nov 15. Students who are not granted entry into the program for the following Fall semester, must reapply if they wish to be considered again. Students are not given additional consideration, nor penalized for reapplying to the program in subsequent years.

**I have 30 seconds – can you tell me the basics of how to apply to the program?**
These are the very basic steps to give you a sense of the overall process:
- Apply to the college to become a student of the college.
- Have your transcripts sent and apply to have them evaluated for credit (High School and all colleges).
- Apply to the program (in person, with an advisor or counselor) by Nov 15th for potential admission the following fall semester
- As part of the applicant pool, be screened and processed through the selective admission procedure

**Will I have to attend school in the summer?**
Because of the structure of the program and information that must be covered, it is necessary to schedule classes during the summer semester between the first and second year of the program.

**Is the program offered in the evening or on weekends?**
The program is only offered during the day, on a typical Monday to Friday academic week. Occasionally, some early evening or weekend hours may be required of a student during an internship experience.

**Is the program part-time or full-time?**
This may depend on the number of courses that you have to take as well as the required courses needed to maintain financial aid status, employment status and other factors. We recommend that students complete as many (or all) of the non-technical or general education courses ahead of time as they can before starting the PTA technical courses. This would likely reduce the remaining course load to part time. However the required time spent studying is extremely significant when in a
program such as this, so students should not just factor in the time spent in lecture, lab and clinical internships but also consider the large amounts of time in reading, studying, study groups, extra lab practice etc. Additionally during portions of the last three semesters of the program, students will be scheduled in full-time clinical internships (or combination of class and clinical internships).

Can I take longer than two years to complete the PTA courses?
The professional courses follow closely in content and must be taken in five consecutive semesters. Students are encouraged to complete as many of the non-professional courses (e.g. English, psychology, statistics) as possible before starting the PTA courses in order to better focus their energy on the PTA courses if they are accepted into the program, which may extend the length of the time it takes to complete the degree. However the entire curriculum of PTA courses and non-professional courses can be taken simultaneously, and can be completed in 5 semesters when taken in the sequence suggested in the curriculum guide.

Because of the high level of effort required of the technical (PTA) courses, many students prefer to complete as many of the general education courses as possible before starting the PTA coursework. For the student who is planning to complete those general education courses ahead of the technical/clinical courses, a sample schedule that could be utilized as a guide to counseling the student in how to complete the course sequence is as follows:

**SAMPLE PART TIME SCHEDULE WITH GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES DONE FIRST**

**Fall Semester (First Year) (Complete general education/non-technical coursework)**

- BIOG 121 Anatomy and Physiology I >** 4
- MTHM 121 Statistics > 3
- SDEV 101 College 101 ^ 1

**Spring Semester (First Year)**

- BIOG 122 Anatomy and Physiology II >** 4
- ENGL 161 College Composition I 3
- ALHN 121 General Pathology > 2

**Summer Semester (First Year)**

- SOCY 151 Introduction to Sociology 3
- PSYH 151 Introduction to Psychology 3
- PSYH 251 Human Growth and Development 3

**Fall Semester (Second Year) (Entry into the PTA Program)**

- PTHA 111 Introduction to Physical Therapist Assisting >** 2
- PTHA 105 Foundations of Physical Therapist Assisting >** 2
- PTHA 121 Physical Therapist Assisting Procedures I >** 5

**Spring Semester (Second Year)**

- PTHA 112 Functional Anatomy and Kinesiology >** 4
- PTHA 122 Physical Therapist Assisting Procedures II >** 5

**Summer Semester (Second year)**

- PTHA 241 Clinical Practicum I >** 3

**Fall Semester (Third Year)**

- PTHA 221 Rehabilitation Principles I >** 3
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PTHA 242 Clinical Practicum II >** 3

**Spring Semester (Third Year)**

PTHA 245 Advanced Topics and Clinical Critique >** 3
PTHA 222 Rehabilitation Principles II >** 4
PTHA 243 Clinical Practicum III >** 5

Total Credit Hours: 65

Are there prerequisites that must be taken before being accepted into the program?

Students must meet requirements of a high school or college level biological science course with a lab (only certain courses qualify), and a math course (only certain courses qualify), as well as meet required levels of proficiency in Reading, Writing and Algebra. Students must complete all remediation courses.

The general education courses listed on the curriculum (such as English, Psychology, Statistics etc.) are not prerequisites and do not have to be taken in order to apply to, or to be accepted into the program. While we encourage candidates to take as many of these as possible to allow the student to focus their studies on the PTA coursework, students are not required to complete general education courses before program entry.

Will graduating as a physical therapist assistant prepare me to continue my education and become a physical therapist?

Both physical therapy and physical therapist assistant students must complete courses such as anatomy, kinesiology, and general education courses that lead to the students’ respective degrees. Additional courses will have to be taken in these professional areas. Physical therapist’s educational theory and practice typically include advanced coursework in anatomy, examination and evaluation, physiology, physics, research, pathophysiology, neurology, and pharmacology. Any plans to continue your education in the field of physical therapy should be discussed with appropriate sources such as the PTA program Director and program advisors for the prospective PT program. Graduates of the PTA program can complete various Bachelor’s degree through the University Partnership Program at LCCC, or other appropriate bachelor programs enabling them to apply to traditional or transitional PT programs, providing they meet the necessary entry prerequisites for the PT program at the school they wish to attend. Graduates may pursue Physical Therapy Doctoral degrees, but it is their responsibility to investigate the accepting college or university requirements. Because seats are limited in both PT and PTA programs, students are encouraged to carefully consider up front, which career choice is best for them and plan accordingly so that they can select and attend the program that is the right choice for them.

Are there opportunities for advancement as a Physical Therapist Assistant?

Many Physical Therapist Assistants work in clinical care in a wide variety of settings. Some choose to specialize in a particular type of setting, patient population, or diagnostic category. A PTA might specialize in working with children with developmental delays in a school setting, brain and spinal injured patients in a rehabilitation unit, or sports and orthopedic problems in an outpatient practice as a few examples. Formal advanced recognition programs are available through the American Physical Therapy Association for those PTA’s who demonstrate advanced knowledge, skills and training in specific areas.
Other Physical Therapist Assistants become clinical instructors, educational coordinators, managers and department directors, giving continuing education, becoming college professors, and more. Credentialing as a Clinical Instructor is available to PTA’s. PTA’s may continue their education beyond the Associate Degree level with a wide variety of Bachelor and advanced degrees in many areas.

**Does the program prepare me to become a specialist or to work in specialty areas?**

As required by accreditation and the mission of the program, the goal is to prepare a student for employment in a variety of settings with solid entry-level skills at graduation. The program prepares graduates with a wide degree of physical therapy data collection and measurements, treatment, documentation, communication, professional and other skills. Students do learn measurement and treatment techniques for patients in specific diagnostic classifications, for example pediatrics, orthopedics, and neurology. Students may be exposed to specialty areas as part of their education in a particular clinical setting.

**How can I learn more about the field of physical therapy, becoming a PT or PTA, and the program?**

There are a variety of ways to learn more about the field, about becoming a PT or PTA, and about the program.

The American Physical Therapy Association website, at [www.APTA.org](http://www.APTA.org) offers many helpful resources about the field, choosing a school, about specific programs, and more. Additionally, students are encouraged to review the materials available on the LCCC PTA program website for additional information as well.

The PTA faculty, through the Division of Allied Health and Nursing, offer a one-credit course on Career Exploration in Physical Therapy open to any student. This course is not a PTA program course and is not a prerequisite for the PTA program. The course is designed for any student who might have a potential interest in the field. It might help a student decide which career to pursue, and provides a realistic picture of working in the field.

Students can also contact the Program Director by email or phone for questions or to make an appointment to discuss specific issues related to their interest in the field.

Students who have very limited actual exposure to, or experience with the field are encouraged to seek out some exposure. Arrange to visit the PT department in a local skilled nursing facility, hospital, rehab center, outpatient, and other settings for an afternoon to see what physical therapy is like. Talk to the PT's/PTA's while you are observing.

**Will my credits from another college or university transfer to LCCC?**

For non-technical or general education courses, an official evaluation of transfer credit can only be completed after the student has been admitted to LCCC, has submitted official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions and has completed an LCCC Transcript Evaluation Request form. A student wishing to enroll prior to the receipt of official post-secondary transcript(s) is subject to the same requirements as any entering student as described in the LCCC Catalog.

Only credits and hours are transferable; transfer grade point averages and/or grades do not replace LCCC grades on the official LCCC transcript. Transfer credit is granted for college-level and some technical courses earned at regionally accredited
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institutions of higher education for which students receive a grade of "C" or higher. Credit received on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory or credit/no credit basis will be evaluated using the same process as graded courses.

A transfer student who is under academic probation at another college or university may be admitted as a Probationary Student. A student’s record is subject to review by the Committee on Admissions and Scholastic Standing.

Steps to admission include:

1. Complete all LCCC admission procedures prior to requesting evaluation of college level and/or military transcripts.
2. Complete and return the Transcript Evaluation Request form to the LCCC Records Office or online. Each Transcript Evaluation Request is valid for three months from the date of receipt. If transcripts are not received within the three month time limit, your future ability to register for LCCC classes may be limited or denied.
3. Complete a Request for Official Transcript form (included in the Transcript Evaluation Request form) for each institution of higher education you attended. This includes:
   - In-state college transcripts
   - Out-of-state college transcripts
   - International transcripts
   - Military transcripts
   - AP/CLEP transcripts
4. The transferability of credit is awarded by the LCCC Transfer Center office.
5. You will receive a Notification of Credit Accepted letter from the LCCC Transfer Center when your evaluation is completed. Your evaluation becomes part of your permanent student achievement file.

Transferring Credit from Another PT/PTA Program

Students wishing to transfer successful courses completed from other PT/PTA programs must contact the program director of the PTA Program. The student will need to submit transcripts, tests, papers and work completed, and other documentation demonstrating successful completion of the course along with course descriptions and syllabi to adequately describe course content. If student documentation demonstrates that a course (or courses) already taken meets one of our courses in content and standards, the student may attempt to pass our practical and final exams for that course to gain transfer credit.

For courses in the major field (PTA) to transfer, they must be from an accredited US PT or PTA program (CAPTE) and an accredited college or university recognized by the USDE (or similar agency appropriate to the country). Other health care/degree programs (e.g. exercise physiology, kinesiology, athletic science, massotherapy, etc.) are not acceptable. The coursework in question was completed with a grade of "C" or better and is no more than 5 years old. Students must apply in writing for the credit, providing sufficient evidence (copies of transcripts, college catalogs, syllabi from previous institutions, etc) to demonstrate mastery of at least 80% of the content area of an equivalent LCCC PTA course. This may be accomplished by combining more than one course from the original institution (e.g. two or three courses from the original institution may be used to demonstrate mastery of the material from an LCCC course.) Students will be counseled regarding the content area of the LCCC course and offered the opportunity to take time to obtain and review course materials on their own. Students must arrange to take, and pass at a score of 70% or higher, a written comprehensive examination covering the content area of the course for which credit is desired. If the course also includes a laboratory
component, students will also be asked to complete a practical exam component, with a passing score of 75% or better. Courses that are prerequisite courses for a later course in a sequence must be completed by either the transfer method or traditional methods in order before progressing to the next course in the sequence.

Students who were dismissed from a PT or PTA program for an academic failure of 2 or more courses or a single clinical failure may apply for admission to the PTA program at LCCC starting from the beginning of the program, along with any other entry cohort, with no advanced entry standing. Students may need to provide verification of status when leaving other programs and wishing to transfer to LCCC, e.g. via transcripts of courses, copies of clinical evaluations, interviews with the program director, and may be required to sign a waiver or allow LCCC to contact the previous program to verify student status and academic achievement. Students dismissed from any allied health program (at LCCC or another college) for academic dishonesty or unprofessional behavior, are not eligible for admission to the PTA Program.

As per LCCC policy (see college catalog), a minimum of 20 credits of the degree must be obtained by courses taken at LCCC. In addition, the last course taken for credit must be taken at LCCC in order to be granted a degree from LCCC.

Is there a ranking of PTA programs?
The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) is the national organization that represents physical therapy. The APTA does not rank programs. Physical therapy programs are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) which assures quality in physical therapy education. LCCC’s PTA program is accredited by CAPTE.

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Lorain County Community College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314; telephone: 703-706-3245; email: accreditation@apta.org; website: http://www.capteonline.org/. If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call 440-366-7881 or email jmyers@lorainccc.edu.

All programs accredited by CAPTE are required to publish data on graduation rates, employment rates, and license exam pass rates on their websites. Some programs (such as LCCC) publish additional and more extensive data, to help students compare programs and determine which program might be right for a particular student.

What factors should I use in deciding on a school?
The decision to attend a physical therapist assisting program is a very personal one which must be made on the basis of a variety of factors, such as:

- Geographic location and size of the school
- Cost
- Class size
- Faculty composition and cohesiveness
- Degree awarded; design, comprehensive nature and length of curriculum
- Graduation and pass rates, other program outcomes
- Accreditation status, outstanding progress reports
Are there positions available in the field of physical therapy? What are the career opportunities for a PTA?
Throughout the history of physical therapy in the United States, there has been a shortage of qualified physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. The US Department of Labor continues to have high expectations for growth for PT and PTA employment, however no assurance is given that this trend will continue.

The American Physical Therapy Association has worked hard over the years to improve physical therapy education, research, and practice, making the field an accessible and favorable field of choice. Additionally, many factors have positively influenced the physical therapy profession.

One factor affecting the need for physical therapy services is the changing makeup of the population. As the “baby boom” generation ages, physical therapists and physical therapist assistants will be in demand to treat patients who are affected with arthritis, stroke, heart disease, and other prolonged-care conditions common to older adults.

As a consequence of societies’ increasing participation in sports and fitness activities, more PTs and PTAs may be needed in the health care system to treat and help prevent musculoskeletal injuries.

Licensed physical therapist assistants work in settings that include hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitation centers, home care, school systems and outpatient physical therapy offices. With the aging of Americans including the transition of baby boomers into retirement and older adulthood, the need for physical therapy services are expected to increase. The United States Department of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook for 2010-2011 states that, for physical therapist assistants: “Employment of physical therapist assistants is projected to grow 40 percent from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations.”

How do the salary and benefits compare to other professions?
Most full time employers in the health care field offer a lucrative benefit package including medical coverage, paid vacation, continuing education, and retirement plans. Specific benefits should be discussed with the prospective employer. The estimated starting salaries for physical therapist assistants in this area varies between $42,000 to $58,000 per year based on practice setting.

How are students selected for the program?
The application process for admission to the college is detailed in the current annual college catalog as well as the admissions process portion of the website. All prospective PTA students must be admitted to the College through the normal procedures noted there. Additional information or questions can be addressed to the Enrollment Services at ext. 4032.
Admission Requirements for the program include the following:
1. High school diploma or GED
2. Minimum high school GPA of 3.0 if 15 credit hours of college-level work have not been completed or a minimum college GPA of 2.5 or higher if 15 credit hours of college-level program supporting coursework have been completed (includes transfer/transient work)
3. High school biology or college level biology course (including lab) with a grade of "C" or better (Anatomy and Physiology courses with lab are acceptable)
4. One year of high school of college level algebra with a grade of "C" or better

Additionally, PTA students must make application for selective admission to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program by filing a valid Program Application with the Enrollment Services by Nov 15th of the year before they wish to enter the program. Initially, 40 students will be selected from the pool of Program Applications filed with the Enrollment Services. From those 40, the final 20 will be selected. Program seat size is capped at 20 for PTA courses by accreditation requirements. Under no circumstances can the program admit excess numbers of students.

The admission process to the program is selective and competitive, and is done in a two phase process. Criteria for final selection of the 20 students and their point values include the following:

First Phase (40 students selected based on):
- Grade point average (maximum 20 points)
- Completion of program support classes (maximum 2 points)

Second Phase (From those 40, final 20 will be selected with additional points for):
- Completion of volunteer/observation hours (required, but = 0 points)
- Recommendation form from volunteer/observation site coordinator (maximum 1 point)
- How support courses are completed (full time, part time, mix) (maximum 1 point)
- A group interview by the PTA selection committee (maximum 5 points)
- Self narrative (maximum 5 points)
- Generic Professional Behaviors (maximum 2 points)

The program and college will not be unduly or unfairly influenced by any outside party including any graduate, employer, advisory committee member, accrediting body, individual, other stakeholder or entity in selection decisions. The program reserves the right to market to, and encourage recruitment of those populations deemed underserved by the profession or community, and to help promote cultural diversity in the field, while maintaining standard selection processes.

In the case of a tie for the last slot(s), the earliest date on the Program Application will be the determining factor.

**Why does the program include interviews and writing samples as part of the selection process?**

Our profession involves continuous face-to-face interaction with patients utilizing personal communication. It also involves a large amount of written documentation. Much of our time is spent educating patients. All of these activities require skills in the written and spoken language. For another thing, the licensure exam that graduates must take to obtain his/her license upon graduation specifically stipulates
in the requirements for the exam that the test-taker must be proficient in English in order to be successful in the exam. Further, research has indicated that the selection processes of the program are correlated with program success, and success on the licensure exam.

**How are the interviews and writing samples scored as part of the selection process?**
The scoring process is done by a panel utilizing a number of persons, typically faculty, and other stakeholders of the program (advisory committee members, Clinical Faculty, Laboratory Faculty, Employers, etc). The scoring process has been vetted and normed, as was the scoring criteria which utilizes rubrics. Interviewers look at oral and listening skills, participation dynamics, content, professional behaviors and overall demeanor. Written narratives are scored for technical writing skills, following directions, content and style and impression conveyed by the student.

**Does the program accept recommendations or letters of reference regarding an applicant?**
Unfortunately the program cannot accept or consider letters of recommendation, reference, outside calls, or other unsolicited recommendations (verbal or written) about a student. While we appreciate that students wish to portray the tremendous support that others in the community might wish to show for their candidacy for the program, and we affirm the positive nature of this support, these are impossible to objectively score, and cannot be applied equally across all students in a competitive selection process. Therefore they cannot be accepted or considered.
The recommendation form from volunteer site or observation site is provided to those students offered an interview in the selection process, and hours are verified on that form only, and the rating and recommendation is provided on that form as well, in a specific, confidential, and verifiable manner.

**If I am not selected for the program or interview, can I be told why, and my numeric position on the applicant list?**
The program and associated Selection Committee cannot divulge the scores and/or rankings of individual students because of the confidential nature of the various scoring instruments and confidentiality promised to those participating in the process as well as the large volume of applicants. Students may request a counseling session to discuss ways to improve their chances for admission (e.g. completion of additional non-technical courses, improving GPA, etc). However, the student’s scores in any selection process, and student’s rank in applicant pool is not available by identifiable name to individual students by policy.

**How much actual patient contact will I have during the program?**
There are three clinical affiliations scheduled as a part of the PTA program. During this time students will have patient contact under the direct supervision of an assigned clinical instructor. The first two clinical rotations are part time and are scheduled during the summer semester year 1 and fall semester year 2. The third clinical is full time and is scheduled during the spring semester of the second year. Students are required to abide by the hours and policies of the clinical agency at which they are placed.

Student placement will be based on availability and the program goal of providing a well-rounded clinical education.
Will I do all of my clinical training at one site?  
The clinical rotations are designed to give experience in many areas. For this reason, a different site is normally assigned for each clinical experience, and sites are selected so that students attend a minimum of three different clinical facility employers. Sites are assigned based on clinical instructor availability, individualized learning needs of the student, the type of clinical rotation (at a minimum a long-term care and acute care rotation are required by the program) and other factors designed to best prepare the student as a competent PTA. While student input into clinical site selection is encouraged, scheduling is not based on distance or convenience, student work or home life circumstances, or strictly on student preference but instead on providing the best possible educational experience. Students who are/have been employed by a particular clinical site are not placed with that same employer or facility/facilities for clinical internships.

Is transportation to the clinical sites provided? 
No. Students must provide their own transportation. Since there are multiple clinical sites, car-pooling will be difficult. Students may be required to pay for parking at various facilities. Driving will be required to the clinical sites, potentially up to one hour.

Are criminal background checks required? 
Fingerprinting is required for PTA students late in the second semester and the results are expected to carry students through the end of clinical practicum courses. Fingerprinting is performed on campus through a contracted service, though some clinical sites may also perform their own testing. Faculty and staff would not normally access the results, except for certain select clinicals that REQUIRE the program to review the results and in certain cases of a positive result. If you are denied placement by a clinical site because of a fingerprint background check, a confidential discussion about the reason for the testing failure would be necessary. A student who fails the testing based on a facility’s guidelines, will be unable to continue to progress through the program. A student who cannot be placed into a clinical site due a testing failure will be unable to complete the clinical practicum requirements for the program, and therefore will be unable to continue in the program sequence.

Students accepted into the program will be informed when the background checks will be done, and do not need to obtain the background testing on their own prior to entry.

Background testing is now also routinely done as a student completes the application for licensure in preparation for testing. Any history of guilty pleas, convictions, or arrests must be reported and discussed with the licensing agency. Please note that in health care, facilities and licensing agencies may still be able to view expunged records.

Is drug testing required? 
All clinical education sites reserve the right to insist on drug testing. Some clinical education sites are routinely requiring pre-clinical drug screening. Clinical sites and the program have the right to insist on pre- or post-placement drug/alcohol testing as well as tobacco testing of students. Testing may be done through arrangement with the clinical site, or through a medical center as requested by the program. A student with a positive result may be unable to be placed into a clinical site or sites,
may require repeat testing, and may result in dismissal from the program. The cost for testing, if not borne by the clinical site, is at the cost of the student. Students understand that results may need to be reviewed by the program faculty, division dean, and/or clinical site. Sites have the option to do spot testing as well based on their own discretion and clinical guidelines.

**Does the college have baby-sitting service?**
Yes although space is limited. Inquiries should be made at the childcare center, extension 4038.

**Can I work while I am in the program?**
A general college guideline indicates that a student taking 12 or more hours (full-time) may work a maximum of 15 to 20 hours per week. Most PTA students find that it is difficult to work large numbers of hours while they are in the program. In additional, during some semesters, the academic and clinical load requires up to 40 hours per week of attendance during the day at classes, labs and/or clinicals, making daytime work impossible to maintain during those semesters. During those 40 hour/week semesters, considering the hours of education, and required study hours, many students find any significant work hours to be a difficult burden. Experience has shown that those students who attempt to complete the program while working a significant number of hours are often unsuccessful academically and fail to complete the program, or may be unsuccessful in attempting to pass their license exam.

**Are there jobs available in the field, that I can do while in the program?**
Some students like to work in a physical therapy department while pursuing a degree in the field. This has some benefits as well as potential limitations. First, Ohio law (as well as insurance reimbursement) severely limits what a person without a license may do in the field. Without a PT or PTA license (or a related license), those persons working in an "Unlicensed Personnel" capacity are limited by law to duties such as care of equipment, transporting, clerical duties, assisting a patient preparing for treatment, or acting as a second set of hands for a PT/PTA currently working with a patient. Second, while there is a benefit from being able to observe therapy in action, there can also be a potential downfall if observing therapy which may not be performed as it must be instructed by an accredited education program.

**How many hours of outside studies will I need per week?**
You may find the information provided in each PTA class to be difficult and challenging. On an average, students need two to five hours of outside study for each hour in class. Anecdotally, most student report + or - 40 hours per week spent reading and studying during the program, outside of class time.

**What suggestions do you have that would increase my likelihood of being successful in the physical therapist assistant program?**
Make up any deficiencies you have in the basic skills of reading, math, writing and science. Your counselor is available to help you with these decisions. We recommend making an appointment with one of the Allied Health Programs Counselors in Enrollment Services, at 440-366-4033.

Take as many of the academic support courses as possible before entering the program. If it is not possible to take all of the courses, try to get as many of the science courses out of the way as possible.
It is recommended that students complete their science sequence requirements no more than one academic year prior to admission to the program as possible. Also, it is required that students achieve a “C” or better in their science and mathematics courses.

Students who are still in high school and placing their name in the program pool for the PTA program should consider the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), Early College High School Program, CLEP, or other programs as a way of taking academic courses at the College while they are still in high school. This should be discussed with your high school counselor and/or the Colleges’ Allied Health and Nursing counselor.

**How/Where do I obtain the form for the 40 Volunteer/Observation hours?**
The form is provided to students invited to the second phase of the selection process, during the interview process.

**During the selection process, 40 volunteer or observation hours are required. Where should I do them, and when?**
Almost all the physical therapy departments in the region accept observers, or volunteers. Hospitals, private clinics/practices, skilled nursing facilities, all are known to take students for their hours. You can pick a facility that interests you and give their physical therapy department a call to arrange the observation experience. If you have very little familiarity with the field, splitting the hours between 2 facilities might be a good idea, as the type of physical therapy you see one place may look very different from the therapy in another facility.

We typically do not recommend that you complete the 40 hours until after you have made it to the point in the selection process of the interview. During the interview is when the form necessary to verify the hours is given. However, we do encourage you to thoroughly investigate the field before applying to the program. Talk to some PT’s and PTA’s. Visit several departments to see what therapy looks like. Go to [www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org) and read about the field. There are several introductory books on the field available at the library.

**Is financial aid available for Physical Therapist Assistant students?**
Financial aid is available to qualified students through the Financial Aid Office. Allied Health and Nursing students are urged to make inquiry to determine if they are eligible.

Some facilities offer students a contract to pay for their education in return for some period of time to be spent working for the employer after graduation. The American Physical Therapy Association House of Delegates offers a set of guidelines to “assist students/new graduates in negotiating appropriate agreements to provide financial assistance in exchange for a promise of future employment. They suggest that all students and new graduates obtain appropriate legal counsel prior to signing any agreement. In addition, the guidelines list provisions that employment agreements should include and "set forth in clear language" associated with repayment, termination of employment, and non-compete clauses.” (APTA House of Delegates)

**Information sharing:**
Because of Federal laws (FERPA), the program is restricted in sharing information about students. The program and college are permitted to share certain types of
“directory information” (see college website) but the program cannot, and will not share information about students on unsecure sites, via email, phone or postings. Student permissions are required to share information for job references and other information. Directory information may be shared with assigned clinical sites, though students are responsible to provide assigned clinical sites with any information beyond name, address, and phone. Students should also be aware that if a student is beyond 18 or beyond high school graduation, we are unable to share any information about a student with parents, spouses or significant others of the student without signed release.

**Statement of Non-Discrimination:** The College and PTA program shall practice no discrimination in recruitment, hiring, retention, or conditions of employment; that is, all procedures and all actions in these areas shall be conducted on the basis of ability, training, and experience, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, child-bearing status, age, handicap, or sexual orientation, except in situations in which an infirmity prevents adequate performance of a specific job in which the College must comply with requirements for retirement plans or with other restrictions mandated by state or federal laws.

**What accommodations are there for students with special needs?**
The Office for Disability Services exists to serve the needs of students with disabilities - physical, learning and/or emotional. If you are a person with a disability who needs accommodations or assistance, contact the Office for Disability Services.

**Where can I go for more information?**
For general information, consider [www.APTA.org](http://www.APTA.org) and associated links. Read the website thoroughly, including admission information. For help with plotting a course toward your career in an allied health program at LCCC, contact one of the allied health counselors at 440-366-4033, or the PTA program director at 440-366-7881.