PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT:

More than a job....
a career!!
Overview of profession

- Specialty areas with examples:
  - Orthopedics: arthritis, muscle strain, ligament sprain
  - Neurology: stroke, head injury, spinal cord injury
  - Cardiopulmonary: heart attack, asthma, COPD
  - General medical: Diabetes, PVD, general weakness
  - Pediatrics: cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy
Overview of profession

- Practice settings:
  - hospital, home health
  - private practice clinics
  - long term care facilities
  - school systems
  - industry
  - other
Patient Care Process

- Generally, referral from physician to PT
- PT evaluates pt, identifies problems and goals
- From goals, develops treatment plan
- Intervention is provided by PT/ PTA
3 Levels within a PT department

- **Physical Therapist**
  - Evaluates patient, develops plan of care, directs and supervises all patient interventions

- **Physical Therapist Assistant**
  - Provides interventions, monitors patient performance and progresses within the plan of care developed by the PT.

- **PT Aide/ Technician**
  - Provides support for interventions, maintains clinic environment
Therapist vs. Assistant

- Doctoral or Masters level of education
- Performs initial examination, sets up goals, & treatment plan
- Responsible for major decision making
- More potential to advance & specialize

- Associate of Applied Science (2 years)
- Provides patient treatment, monitors pt. response.
- Progresses pt. within the established treatment plan
- Can specialize
Introduction to:

KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE PTA PROGRAM
The mission of the Kirkwood Community College Physical Therapist Assistant program is to develop practitioners who will be able to provide exceptional quality patient care under the supervision of a Physical Therapist.
for entry level employment upon successful completion of the licensure exam.

to assume responsibility for self assessment, peer review and planning of future professional growth.

who will recognize the importance of ongoing service to the community and the profession through ethical practice and life-long learning.
Admission Process

- Apply to Kirkwood, listing PTA as your major
- Test scores (compass or ACT) OR
- Transcripts from a prior degree
- Pre-requisite courses
  - Intro to PT 2 credits
  - Human Anatomy and Physiology I 4 credits
Required Test Scores

- **Compass**
  - Math 50
  - Writing 70
  - Reading 82

- **ACT**
  - Math 18
  - Reading 19
  - English 18
You MUST:

- Submit a copy of your admission checklist to the Health Science Office AFTER you have completed all admission requirements.
- Submit a copy of test scores/ transcripts
- Tests & courses taken at KCC are on file.
Then what?

- Office coordinators will verify that requirements have been met.
- You will be admitted to the program or added to the wait list.
If you do not meet the test scores, & still want to pursue admission, go to Learning Services (2063 Cedar Hall) & a plan of action will be developed.

When you have finished remediation activities, you will need to retake the Compass test.
Curriculum

Plan of Study at:
- [www.kirkwood.edu/healthscience](http://www.kirkwood.edu/healthscience)
- Click on programs, then PTA, then plan of study

- Any course with an asterisk can be taken prior to program acceptance.
- Courses without an asterisk are reserved for students who have been accepted into the program.
PTA Curriculum

- Includes general education, treatment/assessment, and clinical education
- Fall start, 2 years in length, includes summer between year 1 and 2.
- Very intense: requires lab practice outside of scheduled class time
- Employment of more than 10-15 hours per week is discouraged.
Student Assessment

- Students will take written exams over classroom content.
- Students will take performance exams related to physical therapy skills.
- Students will be assessed on professionalism behaviors.
Professionalism Behaviors

- Teamwork
- Attendance & Promptness
- Problem Solving
- Dependability/Responsibility
- Participation in Class

- Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication skills
- Organization
- Ability to Use Constructive Feedback
- Self Control
- Appropriate Attire
PTA Curriculum

- Requires physical stamina
- Clinic involves travel, added expense
- Involves latex exposure
Clinical Requirements

- 5 clinical placements:
  - Fundamentals, Clinic I, II and III (block 1 and 2)
- Students and Clinic Sites are surveyed
- PTA Clinic Coordinator assigns students
  - Must have a variety; need to meet accreditation standards.
- Progression from observation to hands on patient care as skills are learned.
Clinical Compliance

- Clinical Compliance requirements as listed on web site: [www.kirkwood.edu/healthscience](http://www.kirkwood.edu/healthscience)
  Click on programs, then PTA then compliance guide

- Prior to program
  - Health physical
  - Background Check

- The remainder of the items will be discussed in detail at new student orientation
Answers to
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
What do I do while I wait?

- We strongly encourage you to:
  - Complete general education courses
  - Obtain employment or volunteer experience in Physical Therapy or related health care setting.
- Completing general education courses will allow you more time to do PT coursework after admission.
- Experience in PT or health care will be to your benefit during the PT coursework.
Will previous coursework transfer??

- You need to send an official copy of your transcript to enrollment services. You will be notified as to which courses are acceptable to transfer.
Is there student support?

- Financial Aid
  - Grants, scholarships, loans, etc.
  - [www.kirkwood.edu/financialaid](http://www.kirkwood.edu/financialaid)
  - 319-398-5485

- Learning Services
  - Testing services, tutoring, remediation
  - [www.kirkwood.edu/learningservices](http://www.kirkwood.edu/learningservices)
  - 319-398-5574
Student Support

- Counseling
  - Career, personal, educational counseling
  - [www.kirkwood.edu/counseling](http://www.kirkwood.edu/counseling)
  - 319-398-5471

- Tutoring by local clinicians
  - 4 hours per week availability
  - Student needs to take initiative to attend and seek assistance.
Are there jobs?

- Employment outlook nationwide is good.
- The “ideal job” in the “ideal location” may not be available.
- Average starting salary $17.02 (based on 2008 graduates) Range $16 through $18.50/ hour
- Depends on setting
To go on to become a PT, will require at least 4-5 years after completion of program. Must first complete Bachelors degree, then apply to a Physical Therapy program.

PTA graduates must sit for the licensure exam, pass and pay fees before they qualify to practice in Iowa.

Interstate endorsement process.
To obtain more information about the profession, call APTA at 1-800-999-2782 or on the internet at <http://www.apta.org>

To obtain more information about the KCC PTA program, contact 319-398-5566 or on the internet at [www.kirkwood.edu/healthscience](http://www.kirkwood.edu/healthscience)

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