

Union College
Division of Allied Sciences
Physical Therapist Assistant Program
STUDENT HANDBOOK

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STUDENT HANDBOOK

Dear Students,

Welcome to the Union College Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program. This handbook was prepared to help you become familiar with the Physical Therapist Assistant Program. It contains the policies and procedures that delineate the rights and responsibilities of Union College physical therapist assistant students.

It is the responsibility of each student to review this handbook and refer to it as needed during the period of enrollment in the program. All statements in the Union College Physical Therapist Assistant Handbook are announcements of present policies and guidelines and are subject to change at the end of each semester. The Physical Therapist Assistant Student Handbook serves as a supplement to the College Catalog and to the College Student Handbook. The Union College Student Handbook is available online at: <https://www.ucc.edu/academics/academic-divisions/division-of-allied-sciences/physical-therapist-assistant-program/>

This an exciting time to pursue an education for preparation as a physical therapist assistant. The job market offers opportunity and variety. We are committed to helping you achieve your professional goals.

We wish you success in your pursuit of a physical therapist assistant education here at Union College.

Sincerely,
Sohal Hallur, PT, ScD, Director,
Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Marie-Helene McAndrew, PT, DPT
Assistant Professor. PTA
Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE)

Disclaimer

1. The College reserves the right to change the contents and requirements of this Physical Therapist Assistant Student Handbook before the first day of classes each semester/term.

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PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) is responsible for the National Physical Therapist Assistant Examination (NPTE). A minimum score of 600 is required for licensure. Specific information can be found at www.fsbpt.org. All students graduating from an accredited Physical Therapist Assistant program are eligible to sit for the licensure examination. The examination is administered four times over the course of a calendar year at specific computerized testing centers throughout the country.

Information regarding the State of New Jersey application and licensure process is available at <https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/pt/Applications/Application-for-Licensure-as-a-Physical-Therapist-Assistant.pdf>. Information for licensure and examination review courses are included as part of the second-year curriculum.

CAPTE ACCREDITATION

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Union County College received accreditation on December 31, 2020, to December 31, 2030 from the:

Commission on Accreditation in
Physical Therapy Education
American Physical Therapy Association
303 Potomac Avenue, Suite 100
Alexandria, Virginia 22305
Tel #: (703) 706-3245
email: accreditation@apta.org; website: <http://www.capteonline.org>.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Physical Therapist Assistant is a healthcare professional who delivers physical therapy services under the supervision of a physical therapist. Upon successful completion of the program at Union County College, students are awarded an Associate in Applied Science degree and are eligible to sit for the state licensure examination.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The art and science of Physical Therapy focuses on the health needs of individuals across the life span. Learning is a dynamic process in which the student and instructor develop a professional association that facilitates student success in both didactic and clinical experiences. Based on specialized knowledge and skills related to movement of the human body, the Physical Therapist Assistant program at Union County College will produce altruistic, culturally sensitive graduates who strive for lifelong learning opportunities.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program transforms our community by preparing highly qualified, entry-level professionals who promote safe and ethical professional practices. The Program is

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committed to excellence in providing an evidence based Physical Therapist Assistant education, encouraging graduates to continue the pursuit of lifelong learning and relevant professional contributions.

PROGRAM AND COLLEGE POLICIES

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program (PTA) adheres to the College's documented policies and procedures. There are instances, however, when the PTA Program has established its own policies and procedures in order to ensure patient safety. Students must be knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities within the PTA Program and the College. Every student is advised to become familiar with the Physical Therapist Assistant Program Student Handbook & Clinical Handbook, Union County College Student Handbook, the Union County College Catalog and other college publications. Please note that all new students are required to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination proof before the start of classes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program curriculum is designed to prepare highly qualified, entry level licensed physical therapist assistants who:

1. Deliver safe, appropriate, and effective patient care to the clients under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist within the scope of PTA practice.
2. Communicate effectively with patients, family, and colleagues.
3. Utilize human, fiscal and system resources appropriately to provide efficient, ethical physical therapy service.
4. Demonstrate professionalism, accountability, integrity and cultural competence in all responsibilities of the physical therapist assistant.
5. Contribute to the continuous improvement of the profession by actively pursuing career development activities.

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PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The PTA program at Union County College is composed of a comprehensive curriculum of didactic and clinical learning experiences that are reflective of contemporary physical therapy practice.

CURRICULUM SEQUENCE

Pre-Clinical Phase– Prerequisite course work

ENG 101	English Composition I	3 credits
BIO 105	Anatomy and Physiology I	4 credits
MATH 119	Algebra	4 credits
PSY101	General Psychology	3 credits

Spring Semester

PTA 115	Functional Anatomy	3 credits
PTA 130	PT Procedures I	6 credits
PTA 251	Independent Living	2 credits
ENG 102	English Composition II	3 credits
PSY 204 OR PSY 212	Lifespan Development OR Psychology of Adulthood and Aging	3 credits

Summer 1

PTA 140	PT Procedures II	3 credits
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Summer II

BIO 106	Anatomy and Physiology II	4 credits
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Fall Semester

PTA 217	PT Seminar & Clinical Practice I	7 credits
PTA 220	PT Procedures III	6 credits
PTA 221	PT Procedures IV	4 credits

Spring Semester

PTA 223	PT Seminar	2 credits
PTA 224	Clinical Practice II	12 credits

Total Program Credits: 69 credits

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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PTA 115 – Functional Anatomy

This course is the study of neuro-musculo-skeletal structures with an emphasis on the function of typical human movement. Topics studied will include basic human kinesiology and biomechanics, posture and gait analysis, goniometry and manual muscle testing. Prerequisites: (All with a grade of “C” or better) BIO 105, ENG 101, MAT 119, PSY 101. Co-requisites: PTA 130, PTA 251. 2 lecture hours and 3 laboratory hours per week. 3 credit hours.

PTA 130 – Physical Therapy Procedures I

This course teaches the student to implement basic physical therapy treatment programs. Didactic and laboratory practice are included for heat, light and hydrotherapy modalities, ambulation, massage, bed positioning, wheelchair maneuverability, transfers and basic therapeutic exercise. Lab practice will include patient care essentials for the physical therapist assistant including infection control and vital signs. Prerequisites: (All with a grade of “C” or better) BIO 105, ENG 101, MAT 119, PSY 101. Co-requisites: PTA 115, PTA 251. 3 lecture and 9 laboratory hours. 6 credit hours.

PTA 140 – Physical Therapy Procedures II

This course is a study of pathological processes, assessments, and appropriate physical therapy procedures for selected orthopedic conditions commonly seen in physical therapy. A problem-solving approach will be utilized to provide the student the opportunity to identify patients’ needs and determine treatment modifications as per the PTA scope of practice. Prerequisites: (All with a minimum of “C+”) PTA 115, PTA 130, PTA 251. 1 lecture hours and 6 laboratory hours per week. 3 credit hours.

PTA 217 Clinical Seminar and Practice I

This course is designed to integrate the students’ clinical and didactic experiences by developing problem solving and interpersonal skills. Topics studied will include the health delivery system, legal and ethical issues relating to Physical Therapy intervention, documentation skills and an introduction to Guide to Physical Therapy Practice. The course will also explore the elements of effective interaction between a Physical Therapist Assistant and other professionals, as well as the Physical Therapist Assistant and the patient. Areas including verbal and non-verbal communication, personal and cultural bias, and social versus therapeutic helping relationships will be discussed. The students will participate in two days of supervised Physical Therapist Assistant clinical experience per week. Students must provide their own transportation. Prerequisites: All previous professional coursework with a minimum grade of “C+”. Co-requisites: PTA 220, PTA 221, ENG 102 and BIO 106. 2 lecture hours and 15 clinical hours per week. 7 credit hours.

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PTA 220 Physical Therapy Procedures III

This course is the study of pathophysiological processes, medical treatments, and appropriate physical therapy procedures for selected neurological conditions commonly seen in physical therapy. Physical therapy treatments will include advanced therapeutic exercise and ADL, modalities, electrotherapy and orthotics in relation to each neurological condition.

Prerequisites: All previous professional course work passed with a minimum grade of “C+”, ENG 102, BIO 106. Co-requisites: PTA 217, PTA 221. 4 lecture hours and 6 laboratory hours per week. 6 credit hours.

PTA 221 – Physical Therapy Procedures IV

This course is a study of pathophysiological processes, medical treatments, and appropriate physical therapy procedures for selected medical and pediatric conditions commonly seen in physical therapy. Physical therapy treatments will include advanced therapeutic exercise, ADL, and assistive devices in relation to each pediatric and medical condition. Prerequisites: All previous professional course work passed with a minimum grade of “C+”, ENG 102, BIO 106. Co-requisites: PTA 217, PTA 220. 3 lecture hours and 3 laboratory hours per week. 4 credit hours.

PTA 223 – Clinical Seminar

This capstone course is the study of advanced topics in physical therapy education including therapeutic exercise, psychosocial aspects of disability and dying, continuation of total treatment programs for selected conditions, ethical issues and entry level preparation. Prerequisites: ENG 102, PTA 217, PTA 220, PTA 221 all passed with a grade of “C+” or better. Co-requisite: PTA 224. 2 lecture hours per week. 2 credit hours.

PTA 224 – Clinical Practice II

The students will participate in a full time supervised Physical Therapist Assistant clinical experience for 14 weeks. Students must provide their own transportation. Prerequisites: PTA 217, PTA 220, PTA 221 all passed with a grade of “C+” or better. Co-requisite: PTA 224. 36 clinical hours. 12 credits.

PTA 251 – Independent Living

This course is the study of barriers that impact people living with disabilities. The course offers the student an opportunity to explore and problem solving the functional limitations of a given disability. Prerequisites: All passed with a grade of “C” or better: BIO 106, ENG 102, MAT 119, PSY 101. 2 lecture hours per week. 2 credit hours.

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ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS GUIDELINES

In keeping with the goals of the Physical Therapist Assistant program, the highest priority is placed on developing graduates who are competent, caring physical therapist assistants who possess the skills needed to incorporate new knowledge and methods into a changing healthcare environment. Certain essential functions are required for admission, progression and graduation from the PTA Program.

An individual must be able to independently, with or without reasonable accommodation, meet the following essential functions. Information about support services for students with disabilities is available at Disability Support Services. Individuals unable to resolve deficiencies in these essential functions, with or without reasonable accommodation, are counseled to pursue alternate careers.

The student is expected to possess functional use of the senses of vision, touch, and hearing so that data received by the senses may be integrated, analyzed, and synthesized in a consistent and accurate manner. A student must also possess the ability to perceive pain, pressure, temperature, position, vibration, position equilibrium and movement that are important to the student's ability to gather significant information needed to manage patients effectively.

Observation Skills:

Students must be able to acquire a defined level of required information as presented through educational experiences in both basic arts and sciences and clinical sciences. To achieve the required competencies in the classroom setting, students must perceive, assimilate and integrate information from a variety of sources. These sources include oral presentation, printed material, visual media and live demonstrations. Consequently, students must demonstrate adequate functional use of visual, tactile, auditory and other sensory and perceptual modalities to enable such observations and information acquisition necessary for academic and clinical performance.

Communication Skills:

Effective communication is critical for students to build relationships with faculty, advisors, fellow graduate students, coworkers, patients/clients and their families in the student's various roles of learner, colleague, consultant, educator and leader. Students must be able to gather, comprehend, utilize and disseminate information effectively according to professional standards. Students are required to communicate in the English language both verbally and in writing, at a level consistent with competent professional practice. Students are expected to use grammar and vocabulary proficiently. They must be able to elicit information, gather information and describe findings verbally and in writing. Communication should be comprehensible by faculty, peers, patients/clients, professionals, and laypersons.

Students must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients/clients and colleagues, including individuals from different cultural and social backgrounds; this includes, but is not limited to, the ability to establish rapport with patients/clients and communicate clinical reasoning and decision making effectively. They should also be able

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to observe, recognize and interpret non-verbal communication, including body language, demonstrated by others. Students should be able to recognize non-verbal communication and body language of themselves, recognize the effect on others and adjust it as needed to meet professional standards and facilitate effective relationships.

Motor Skills:

Students must possess the motor functions needed to manipulate instruments or tools and to handle patients/clients. These functions will vary depending on the needs of each individual according to the patient/client management process (see additional standards below). The motor capacities usually include the physical strength and coordination to safely handle and move patients/clients, perform clinical procedures, and to manage and direct patients/clients in various practice settings.

Intellectual/Conceptual Abilities:

Students must demonstrate critical thinking skills so that they can problem-solve creatively, master abstract ideas, and synthesize information presented in academic, laboratory and fieldwork settings. Students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, process, integrate, synthesize, apply and retain facts, concepts, and data related to the art and science of health care. In some areas, this requires comprehension of three-dimensional relationships and spatial relationships of structures. Students must develop and exhibit a sense of medical ethics, and also recognize and apply pertinent legal and ethical standards.

Behavioral and Social Skills:

Students must demonstrate emotional stability and acceptable communication skills as noted above and be capable of developing mature and effective interpersonal relationships with other students, faculty and health care workers. Students must be able to tolerate physically and emotionally stressful workloads while also functioning under pressure. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility and function in the face of the uncertainties inherent to the classroom and clinical setting.

Students must exhibit the ability and commitment to work with individuals in an intense setting, therefore, to meet the needs of people of diverse cultures, age groups, socioeconomic groups and challenges without bias. These individuals may be severely injured; they may be limited by cognitive, emotional, and functional deficits that may create at times an adverse environment. The ability to interact with individuals with these impairments and dysfunctions without being judgmental or prejudiced is critical in establishing one's professionalism and therapeutic relationship. Compassion, integrity, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities that are critical to complete the Physical Therapist Assistant program.

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FITNESS FOR DUTY POLICY

It is expected that students will come to class, College laboratory, and clinical laboratory in a condition fit for the competent and safe performance of their duties and that such a fit condition will be maintained throughout scheduled time. The objectives of this policy are to identify an impaired student and ensure safe, competent patient care.

Faculty are held accountable for ensuring that students are fit for duty and for taking prompt, appropriate, and decisive action whenever a student appears to be impaired.

Students who arrive in the clinical area, class, or other assignment and are considered by their instructor to be unfit for duty can expect to:

- Have their work performance and behavior witnessed and documented
- Be questioned in private as to the nature of their problem.
- Be asked by their instructor to undergo a medical evaluation in the Emergency Room **or** have the observed behaviors witnessed by another health care professional.

Procedure

1. When substance abuse is suspected, the instructor will document observations, confront the student, and notify the Dean.

Observations may include but are not limited to:

- frequent absenteeism and/or tardiness (no documented medical reason for absence).
- drowsiness or sleepiness.
- smell of alcohol on the breath/body.
- increased inability to meet schedules and deadlines.
- slurred/incoherent speech or speech pattern different from normal speech.
- unusually aggressive behavior.
- unexplained change in mood.
- change in appearance.
- lack of manual dexterity.
- lack of or decreased coordination in body movement.
- inappropriate responses to stimuli.
- unexplained work-related accident or injury.
- inattentiveness to work.

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2. If the student's observed behavior or performance raises any questions about the student's physical or emotional condition and /or fitness to perform the assignment safely, the instructor will:
- Interview the student regarding observations and ask for an explanation.
 - Request the presence of a second instructor/health care professional to witness and confirm any observed performance and/or behavior problems; such observations may include but are not limited to above list.
 - If deemed to be impaired the student will:
 - ✓ meet with the Dean of Allied Sciences
 - ✓ be referred
 - ✓ **be assigned a grade of F**
 - ✓ **be dismissed from the program**
 - ✓ be ineligible for readmission

CHAPERONING POLICY

When students are performing procedures that are patient sensitive, the student should talk with the instructor to receive guidance and to determine if the presence of another individual is advisable. The instructor may, at any time and at his or her sole discretion, require that another individual be present during any patient interaction.

DISABILITIES SUPPORT SERVICES

Union County College is committed to providing a total educational experience for students with disabilities. Disability Services is designed to assist students with documented disabilities. The goal is to ensure that each Union County College student is provided equal access to the College's academic programs, activities, and awards without discrimination based on a disabling condition. Students who have documented disabilities may receive help with the following:

- Academic Accommodations
- Academic Advisement and Registration Assistance
- Testing Accommodations
- Interpreters
- Referral to Community Resources
- Assistive Technologies
- Linkage to Para Transit Services providing transportation to and from the College

Accommodations are provided to address the special needs of students with documented disabilities, in compliance with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (NJLAD), Section 503/504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, including the recent Amendments. To learn more about Disability Support Services, contact us at disabilitysvc@ucc.edu

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PROGRAM POLICIES

Student Employment

Enrollment in the PTA program is a full-time responsibility, therefore, employment during the academic year is not recommended. The PTA program is a comprehensive and intensive program that requires at least two (2) hours of study for each hour of classroom attendance. Missing classes or leaving early for employment is not acceptable. Employment must not interfere with part time and full-time clinical practice experiences. Students should be aware that the PTA program may require an occasional evening and/or Saturday class.

Communication

Students may communicate with program staff using UCC email, Canvas mail or voicemail. Staff will respond within 24-48 hours of student's submission. All students are expected to have their UCC accounts active for receipt of notices from the Program Director and Staff. Union County College expects all members of its community to use electronic communications in a responsible manner.

Cell Phones

Use of cell phone are not permitted during class or clinical education. Cell phone must be turned off or be in vibrate mode and secured away during classroom, laboratory and clinical activities. Students may use their cell phones during scheduled break periods.

Confidentiality

Student grades are kept confidential and accessible a by password protected login into Canvas. All information that is obtained during client interactions is of a confidential nature. Important information regarding clients may be shared with agency staff members, instructors, and peers in an appropriate manner and setting. Students are not to disclose information to other individuals who are not directly involved in the client's care. Tape recording conversations, removal of client's records and photography/videography is prohibited. When completing written assignments following clinical experiences, do not use the client's name on any documentation. Every effort should be made to maintain the client's confidentiality. Students demonstrate respect for clients by protecting their identity. Students will sign a Confidentiality Agreement prior to the first clinical affiliation acknowledging HIPPA policies and procedures.

Change of Name/Address

The student is responsible for notifying the Program Director and Union County College Student Services of any change in name, address and/or telephone.

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Illness or Injury

All students must show proof of health insurance prior to registration. Students are responsible for access and the cost of health care/emergency services. In the event of a medical emergency while on campus, notify the campus security immediately. Following a major illness or injury, health clearance must be obtained from the personal health care provider before students are able return to the classroom or clinical practice. In the event of a student injury during class or at clinical practice, the event will be reported to the Program Director and ACCE. The student will fill out an incident report form and provide copies to the Program Director and the Union County College Security Office.

Student Guidance and Grievances

PTA Program staff will post office hours for advisement, guidance and tutoring. Students may also schedule an alternate appointment convenient for both student and instructor. Under guidance of the instructional staff, students in the PTA professional education program assume responsibility for their own ongoing learning as well as personal and professional growth.

To facilitate the sharing of information, student representatives from each class are chosen and can meet with instructional staff as needed. During these meetings, students may express the thoughts of their peers and offer possible suggestions for program improvement. Additional meetings with student groups may be scheduled during the year as necessary. Student representatives will be determined each semester by nomination and an election of the majority in each class.

Students are also encouraged to participate in the evaluation of the program by completing course/clinical and instructor evaluations at the end of each course. This input assists in the review and revision of the PTA curriculum.

Students have the right to express their concerns regarding academic and non-academic issues. These issues may include, but are not limited to: course activities, clinical affiliation sites, discrimination, disruptive classroom behavior, harassment, or intimidation. Students are to convey their expressed concerns to the appropriate faculty member. If a student does not perceive a resolution of the issue, then they should contact the Program Director. Students should submit a signed written statement addressed to the Program Director outlining the concern. Every attempt will be made to resolve the concern. If the concern is not related to the course grade and cannot be resolved, the students should contact the Dean.

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Safety On/Off Campus

Please refer to the Union County College Student Handbook and booklets for policies on Public Safety. In the event of an emergency, the designated student emergency contact will be notified.

Student Support Services

For information about various student services and resources including the Academic Learning Centers, library, financial aid, records and registration, student accounts, disability services, counseling support, etc., please go to <https://www.ucc.edu/campus-life/student-services/>

Student Records

The PTA Program maintains all student records and documents in the Program's locked file cabinet. Documents include but are not limited to application, consents, releases, confidentiality agreement, proof of insurance, criminal background checks and examinations. After graduation, the student's records will be moved to the PTA archive for 5 years and then destroyed.

GENERAL CLINICAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Students who are planning to enroll in PTA Program need to have the following prior to the student's first clinical practice:

- ✓ Student Health Documentation
- ✓ Health Care Insurance
- ✓ HIPPA Form
- ✓ Drug Testing
- ✓ First Aid/CPR certification for the Health Care Provider
- ✓ Malpractice Insurance
- ✓ Criminal record history background check
- ✓ Satisfactory completion of prior semesters course work and competency skills

Student Health Requirements

Students enrolling in their first clinical course in the PTA Program, and those students who are resuming their studies after an absence of a year or more, must complete health requirements through their personal health care provider. The requirements include:

- a. Physical examination (within 6 months)
- b. Laboratory studies: Urinalysis, complete blood count, blood chemistry panel, urine drug screening with confirmation
- c. Proof of immune status – blood titers are required for all of the following¹:
 - i. Measles/Mumps/Rubella
 - ii. Hepatitis B
 - iii. Flu Vaccination (as available)

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- iv. Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (Tdap) Vaccine or declination
- d. Two-Step or Three Step Mantoux skin test for tuberculosis² as per clinic request

Students should make copies of ALL health records before submitting the documents to the Program for the student files.

Notes:

¹Students who are not immune to measles, mumps, rubella, varicella, or hepatitis B will need to obtain the appropriate vaccination and a follow up titer is required following vaccinations. Students who are not immune to the infectious diseases noted may be prohibited by the clinical agencies from participating in experiences in areas where disease transmission poses a high risk to patients, staff, visitors, and /or students.

²All current students are required to have an annual Mantoux skin test for tuberculosis. A two- step Mantoux test is not required if proof of a negative Mantoux within 12 months is provided. Students who test positive to the Mantoux skin test or have received BCG require a chest X-ray and pulmonary clearance.

Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR Certification)

Students enrolled in PTA clinical courses are required to be First Aid/CPR certified (Healthcare Provider). A copy of the certification card will be submitted to the Program and placed in student files prior to registration for the first clinical course. It is the students' responsibility to maintain current certification.

Malpractice Insurance

All students who are enrolled in a clinical course are required to carry malpractice insurance (minimum coverage of one million dollars any one claim, three million dollars any one annual period of insurance). The insurance policy documentation must demonstrate coverage for the entire clinical course. Without proof of coverage, students will not be permitted to register. A copy of proof of insurance statements will be submitted to the Program and placed in student files.

Background Check

All students enrolled in the Physical Therapist Assistant program are required to have a background check in order to participate in clinical practice. Students must sign and submit a **Background Check Release Form** and **Disclosure Form** prior to PTA 217 Clinical Practice registration. Additionally, some clinical affiliates require their own background checks. A criminal history may have an impact enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant program and the subsequent ability to obtain licensure and employment as a PTA. If a student is denied clinical placement by any clinical site due to criminal history information, that student will be dropped from the program. The Academic Coordinator for Clinical Education will receive and review the results of the criminal background checks. Reasonable effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of these records. Reports will be maintained in student files in the Program's locked file cabinet. Students who believe that their personal information is inaccurate will need to have this resolved prior to clinical placement. It is the continued responsibility of

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the students to immediately report convictions of any crimes or offenses that occur after the completion of the background check.

Infection Control

While participating in classroom, laboratory and clinical practice experiences, students need to be aware of standard precautions and transmission specific precautions (droplet, airborne, contact). All equipment, linens, utensils, dressings, etc. that come in contact with a client's body fluids are considered contaminated and need to be handled accordingly.

The following are some basic guidelines to follow:

1. Wash hands before and after client care.
2. Use barrier protection (eyewear, masks, gloves, gowns) when indicated.
3. Dispose of equipment and other materials appropriately (such as in designated hampers).
4. Report the presence of open lesions or infections to the instructor.

In the event of an accident during classroom or laboratory session, the event will be reported to the Program Director. The student will fill out an incident report form and provide copies to the Program Director and the Union County College Security Office. In the event of an exposure during a clinical affiliation, affiliation procedures will be followed as well as contacting the ACCE and filling a PTA program incident report.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

1. Student Handbook Waiver must be signed and submitted at new student orientation, indicating review and understanding of the Program's policies and procedures.
2. Fitness for Duty Contract must be signed, submitted, and adhered to. Failure to adhere to this policy can result in a grade of F and dismissal from the program.
3. Release Form, Video and Photography Consent, Informed Consent, Privacy and Confidentiality Agreement and Examination Confidentiality Agreement must be signed and submitted at new student orientation.
4. Students must complete the entire program within 4 consecutive calendar years.
5. The program consists of a prescribed set of professional and general education courses.
6. Students who complete a professional course with a course average below 75% are dismissed from the program.
7. Students who fail a clinical component of a course are dismissed from the program.
8. Students who have been dismissed from the program for academic failure may apply once for readmission following the readmission policy.
9. A cumulative grade of C+ (75%) or higher must be earned in all PTA courses. Program course work includes, academic, laboratory and clinical practice.
10. Students must complete all examinations administered during the program.

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11. Students are responsible for all written and verbal information that is shared in scheduled class.
12. Students are encouraged to seek assistance promptly from PTA staff when and if they experience academic or personal difficulties.
13. Students who have an Accommodation Alert Form should provide a copy of the form to each instructor. The student will take the exams on the same day as the class.
14. Students may not be in clinical units outside of the scheduled clinical hours.
15. Students may not switch clinical assignments or schedules without the expressed written permission of faculty or administration.
16. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner in class, laboratory and clinical practice at all times; failure to comply with established code of student conduct may result in dismissal from the program and/or the College.

Course Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes, laboratory, and clinical practice. If classes are cancelled due to school closure for weather or other emergencies, a make-up may be scheduled.

Lateness

1. Students are expected to arrive to class on time. A student who arrives for class 10 minutes after the start of class is considered late for class.
2. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor by phone call to the instructor or division secretary if the student is going to be late for class.
3. Lateness is considered unprofessional conduct. Repeated lateness by a student (once a week for 3-4 weeks) will result in student meeting with the faculty and program director. Student's professionalism grade will be deducted if repeated lateness persists

Absences

1. The student is expected to assume responsibility for obtaining course material and assignments in the event of an absence.
2. The student should contact the instructor or division secretary of an absence.
3. Make-up for work missed due to an excused absence is the responsibility of the student and should be arranged with the instructor within one week after returning to school. Scheduling a make-up is at the discretion of the instructor.
4. A grade of zero will be recorded for a missed quiz or exam due to an unexcused absence.
5. Excused absences consist of an emergency, illness or death in the family. Students must provide a valid documentation for an excused absence to the instructor upon returning to class.

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6. Absences are to be reported by contacting the instructor by phone, email, or through the department secretary.

Grading

1. The student must earn a minimum grade of 75% (C+) or higher in all PTA courses to maintain good academic standing in the PTA Program.
2. Student who are unable to maintain good academic standing in a professional course will be dismissed from the program.
3. Instructors will post grades on Canvas within a week of the assessment date.
4. The official due dates for the final grade each semester is published on the academic calendar on the Union County College website.

Grading Scale:

Numeric Grade	Grade
100-90	A
89-85	B+
84-80	B
79-75	C+
74-70	C
69-65	D+
64-60	D
Below 59	F

74.4 or below designates an unacceptable level of professional performance.

0.5> will be rounded up

0.4 < will be rounded down

Academic Integrity

Any violation of academic integrity will result in dismissal from the Program with no readmission. Please refer to the Union County College Student Handbook.

Test Review

1. Student is entitled to review an examination for the purpose of a learning experience.
2. Exams will be reviewed in a mutually respectful atmosphere.
3. Each student will sign and date the reviewed exam before handing it back to the instructor.

Practical Examination

1. Students may not share information about the practical examination with other students.
2. Students are expected to take practical exams on the scheduled dates for the course. In the event of an emergency necessitating an absence, such illness or death in the family, students must notify the course instructor as soon as possible.
3. In the event of failure on a practical examination, the student may retake the practical examination once and follow the guidelines as stated under the remediation policy.

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4. In the event of an absence from an exam due to emergency the student must provide supporting documentation.
5. Student must notify the instructor of a late arrival for practical examination and may be asked to take the practical examination at another appointed time at the discretion of the faculty
6. Each student will be allowed to reschedule one written exam each semester due to extenuating circumstances.
7. Faculty reserves the right to allow additional reschedules on an individual case basis.
8. A re-take of a practical examination will be administered in the presence of the program director and another faculty member. The repeat of the practical examination and all subsequent practical examinations may be videotaped for quality assurance.
9. The missed exam will be scheduled within ten (10) days of the original exam date.
10. Students are required to comply with the remediation policy before they can take the retake practical exam.
11. The student must achieve a minimum grade of 75 in the re-take practical exam. If the student fails to achieve a 75 in the re-take practical exam, the scores of the two practical exams will be averaged and will be used for grading purposes.

Written Examination

1. Students are expected to take exams on the scheduled dates for the course. In the event of an emergency necessitating an absence, such illness or death in the family, students must notify the course instructor as soon as possible.
2. In the event of an absence from an exam, the student is required to present documentation that verifies the emergency circumstances.
3. Each student will be allowed to reschedule one written exam each semester due to extenuating circumstances.
4. Faculty will determine when to reschedule the missed written exam.
5. Students must not leave their seats during the written examination.
6. No communication between students will be tolerated during the written examination.
7. Students may not share information about the written examination with other students.
8. Students must notify the instructor of a late arrival for a written examination and may be given the option to take the written examination during the remaining time scheduled or at another appointed time at the discretion of the faculty.

Remediation for Unsatisfactory Performance

1. Students who receive a grade below 75% on a **written or practical exam must** undergo remediation.
2. After a written examination failure, a student will be required to attend a conference with faculty and review the test within 2-3 days after a student receives the grade. The meeting will be documented in a student conference record, signed by both the instructor and the student to acknowledge acceptance of the plan, and placed in the student's file.

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3. During the meeting, the faculty will identify areas of deficiency that a student needs to improve, and the faculty will create a remediation plan during the conference to address weaknesses. The plan will include but is not limited to individualized tutoring to review content in areas of weaknesses and special assignments for practice.
4. After the remediation session, a student must take either a re-take exam consisting of multiple-choice or essay-style questions. The faculty will have discretion on the exam the student will take. A student's maximum grade in the retake exam will be 75. The grade earned in the re-take exam will replace a student's original exam grade if it is a 75 or is higher than the grade earned in the original exam
5. For failure of a practical exam, students will be required to attend open laboratory hours and practice areas of skills deficiency under the guidance of the skills instructor. The faculty will identify and provide areas of the student's skills deficiencies to the skills instructor, who will help the student to achieve competency.
6. The student is expected to complete the remediation plan formulated by the faculty within seven days of its design.
7. The student will be allowed to retake the practical exam once the skills instructor certifies that the student's deficient skills have been corrected. The maximum grade a student can achieve in the retake practical exam will be a 75. The grade earned in the re-take exam will be entered as the student's grade for the exam if it is a 75 or is higher than the grade earned in the original exam

Licensure Exam Preparation

1. Each student will be expected to attend collaborative learning sessions (CLS) held by the program faculty throughout the year. Faculty will use CLS review material from individual courses, review exam-taking skills and strategies, and help students get acquainted with questions used in the licensure exams
2. All students will take their first licensure preparation exam during the final's week of the fall semester. The program will identify each student's knowledge deficiencies based on their exam performance and create an individualized improvement plan. This plan will include but is not limited to learning study strategies, completing assignments in deficient areas, weekly tutoring sessions with faculty, and improving exam-taking skills. The remediation plan stated above will be enforced in the following spring semester.
3. Students will then be required to take another practice exam in March of the subsequent spring semester, and their performance will be compared with the previous exam. The program will continue to monitor student results and adjust the remediation plan as required for each student
4. Students will take a third practice exam during the final exam week of the spring semester, which will be an assignment provided in PTA 223. The remediation plan provided by the program will cease to continue if a student earns 75% or more in the third practice exam. The student will be asked to continue their studies and take the fourth and final practice exam a week before their licensure examination.
5. A student will be expected to continue their remediation plan even after graduation if they fail to achieve a grade of 75% or above in the third licensure preparation exam. The

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program will monitor student progress until they complete the fourth and final preparatory exam.

6. All students are mandated to attend the licensure exam preparatory conference hosted by the program on campus in the month of April in the spring semester.

Competency Testing

1. PTA laboratory courses also include individualized competency testing for specified skills that have been identified as entry level skills.
2. All competency testing must be completed prior to student initiating PTA 224.
3. Competency testing will be conducted throughout the curriculum by the course instructor.
4. Student may retake a competency test until entry level competency is achieved.

Assignments

1. All clinical and classroom assignments must be submitted by the due date.
2. Student is responsible to alert the faculty if the assignment is going to be submitted late
3. Faculty will review and excuse each late submission on an individual basis based on the extenuating circumstances presented.
4. The maximum grade for an assignment submitted after the due date is 75.
5. All written assignments, unless otherwise specified, are to be typed, double spaced, and presented in a neat and organized manner on the date specified by the course faculty.

Grade Appeal

1. Students who wish to appeal a course grade must present their initial appeal to the course instructor who awarded the grade.
2. The instructor will follow the college policy for the grade appeal process.

Laboratory

1. Students are expected to come to lab sessions prepared to perform the lab activities assigned for that day.
2. Any student desiring additional practice with laboratory equipment should plan with the course instructor.
3. Open lab hours are available each week. A schedule is announced at the beginning of each semester. Students will sign in on the Open Lab Attendance Sheet.
4. Students may not use PTA classroom or equipment without permission of an instructor.
5. Due to the necessity for scheduling adequate laboratory and class experiences, classes may be scheduled on evenings and/or Saturdays.
6. Lab partners will be randomly assigned throughout the semester to ensure that all students have an opportunity to work with each of their classmates except under special circumstances.
7. Students are expected to work with their classmates and assist those who may extra help.

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8. All PTA program laboratory courses involve direct interaction between the students and the PTA faculty. All students experience both administering care and receiving care. Classmates are both “patients” and “clinicians” except under special circumstances.
9. Students are required to sign a Laboratory Practical Participation Consent at the start of the program which will remain in effect for the duration of the program.
10. If a student is injured during a laboratory session, the incident is immediately reported to the Program Director and the student fills out a College Incident Report.
11. All students are expected to bring two (2) towels, shorts, tank tops and a set of twin sheets for all lab sessions and wear comfortable clothing that allows for ease of movement and dignity of the individual. This includes but is not limited to sweatpants, gym shorts, tank tops, halter tops, sports bras, sneakers, and rubber soled closed toe shoes.
12. Information on Standard Precautions is provided in the PTA curriculum. All staff and students are required to always follow Standard Precautions and students will demonstrate understanding of this information in the professional courses and practical examinations. Gloves and masks are available in the lab for individual use and safety.
13. Material Safety Policy and Material Safety Data Sheets are maintained in the program office and the PTA laboratory cabinet for accessibility.
14. Laboratory equipment undergoes biomedical inspection once annually. User manuals for all equipment are maintained in the PTA laboratory cabinet.

Readmission for Voluntary Withdrawal

1. A student who postpones registration or stops attending must officially withdraw from the program.
2. Eligible students seeking readmission to the Physical Therapist Assistant program can either reapply to the program by submitting a new PTA application form or pass cumulative exams and clinical skills competency tests for all courses completed prior to withdrawal.
3. Once a student has passed the comprehensive re-entry skills competency test, the student will need to retake all incomplete courses to continue with the program sequence.
4. Students who withdraw from the program for health reasons must present a health clearance note to continue.
5. All readmissions are contingent on the availability of space.

Dismissal

Automatic dismissal from the PTA Program includes, but is not limited, to the following situations:

1. Failure to maintain a course grade average of 75% or higher in all PTA courses
2. Participation in academic course work and/or Clinical Practice while under the influence.
3. Breach of patient confidentiality.
4. Breach of academic integrity.
5. Failure to comply with the Student Code of Conduct and the Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant.

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Readmission of Dismissed Students

1. Students who have been dismissed from the program due to an academic failure can reapply for admission into the PTA program. A student who has been dismissed from the program due to clinical failure is not eligible for readmission.
2. Eligible students seeking readmission to the Physical Therapist Assistant program must submit a formal written request for readmission.
3. Additional requirements include the submission of completed PTA Application Form. This allows the student the opportunity to tend to any personal, financial, or academic issues prior to readmission.
4. All readmissions are contingent on the availability of space.
5. Once readmitted, the student will need to retake all PTA courses and complete all requirements
6. The student will need to repeat health examination, drug testing and background check as well as maintain first aid/CPR certification.
7. Any subsequent failure in a professional program course will result in a final dismissal from the Program with no further consideration for readmission.

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PROGRAM OUTCOMES AND FORMS

Graduation Rates:

Graduation Rates	Percent
Class of 2021	96%
Class of 2022	93%
Average (2021-2022)	94.5%

Licensure Rates: First Pass Rate

Licensure Rate	Percent
Class of 2021	77.8%
Class of 2022	61.5%
Average (2021-2022)	69.65%

Employment Rates: Based on available completed surveys

Employment Rate	Percent
Class of 2021	100% **
Class of 2022	100% **

** Based on the number of students who have passed the licensure examination until January 13, 2023, and not on the number of students who have graduated from the program**

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INFORMED CONSENT

I understand that the PTA Program will include academic, laboratory, clinical practice which will include direct contact with peers and patients with a variety of illnesses and diseases. I therefore understand that I may be exposed to these illnesses and diseases.

Additionally, laboratory courses will require considerable physical exertion, as when transferring a student partner or in exercise training. Certain examination and treatment procedures can cause mild irritation and/or injury of known or unknown neuro-musculoskeletal conditions of the student examiner or model.

I fully recognize the dangers and hazards inherent in the health care field which may be present during my participation in the Program. I hereby agree to assume all the risks and responsibilities associated with my participation.

I agree to hold harmless, indemnify, release and discharge Union County College and all of its officers, agents and employees from and against all claims, demands and actions on account of damage to personal property, personal injury, disease or death which may result to me from my participation in this program.

Name _____
please print

Student Signature _____ Date _____

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PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPE CONSENT

Periodically, the PTA Program at Union County College will utilize photography or videotaping of students, faculty and staff involved in classroom demonstrations. It will be used for student feedback and/or student assessment review by other Physical Therapy professionals. Students enrolled in the PTA Program consent to being filmed and understand that the film and images remain the property of the PTA Program.

Name _____
please print

Student Signature _____ Date _____

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FITNESS FOR DUTY CONTRACT

The Union County College Physical Therapist Assistant Program has a Fitness for Duty Policy. This policy is concerned with performance problems related to impairment and documentation of the same. I have read and understood the fitness for duty policy an degree to abide by this policy.

Name _____
please print

Student Signature _____ Date _____

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PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a set of federal rules that defines what information is protected, sets limits on how that information may be used or shared, and provides patients with certain rights regarding their information. I understand that it is my responsibility to become familiar with federal and state laws regarding confidentiality as it is applicable to my responsibility as a student.

These rules protect information that is collected or maintained, (verbally, in paper, or electronic format) that can be linked back to an individual patient and is related to his or her health, the provision of health care services, or the payment for health care services. This includes, but is not limited to, clinical information, billing and financial information, and demographic/scheduling information. Any use or disclosure of protected information requires written authorization from the patient.

Any patient information you see or hear, directly or indirectly, must be kept confidential when attending your clinical education rotations to include but not limited to: charts and other paper and electronic records, demographic information, conversations, admission/discharge dates, names of attending physicians, patient financial information.

I understand and agree to the following:

- I will access, use, and disclose such information as described within my scope of practice as a Physical Therapist Assistant Student.
- I understand that any fraudulent application, violation of confidentiality or any violation of the above provisions will result in the termination of my privilege to observe and participate in the PTA Program's clinical education rotations.
- My signature below indicates that I have read, accept, and agree to abide by all of the terms and conditions of this Agreement and agree to be bound by it.

Name _____

please print

Student Signature _____ Date _____

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EXAMINATION CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I understand that the contents of all examinations are confidential. I agree that I will not share any information related to any examination nor will I receive any information related to examinations from any individual. Any violation of the examination confidentiality may result in dismissal from the Physical Therapist Assistant Program.

Name _____
please print

Student Signature _____ Date _____

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STUDENT REQUEST FOR TEST QUESTION REVIEW

If a student wishes to challenge a particular test item, the student must contact the faculty within 24 hours after the test to arrange a meeting. At the time of this meeting, the student must present written documentation regarding the test item from a required course textbook.

COURSE _____

TEST _____

NAME OF STUDENT REQUESTING TEST REVIEW _____

Test Question # _____

Reason for Requesting Review:

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

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STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

I am in receipt of the *Physical Therapist Assistant Program Handbook*. I understand that I will be held accountable for all program policies and procedures. I further understand that I will be informed when policies and procedures are updated or changed.

I understand that clinical affiliates require current First Aid/CPR certification for the Healthcare Provider, complete up-to-date health records, criminal background check and drug testing in order to participate in the clinical practice experience.

I also understand that working during the clinical phase of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program is not recommended.

Name _____
please print

Student Signature _____ Date _____

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PTA STUDENT HANDBOOK WAIVER

I hereby certify that I have read and understood the contents of each page of PTA Student Handbook; that I am familiar with the contents of this document; and that I fully understand and agree to its terms and provisions. Any questions that I have about the Physical Therapist Assistant Program and the contents of the Physical Therapist Assistant Student Handbook have been fully explained to my satisfaction.

Name _____
please print

Student Signature _____ Date _____

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APPENDIX I

CAPTE ACCREDITATION

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Union County College received accreditation on November 17, 2010 to December 31, 2019 from the:

Commission on Accreditation in
Physical Therapy Education
American Physical Therapy Association
1111 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 706-3245
email: accreditation@apta.org; website: <http://www.capteonline.org>.

Applicants may contact the Commission on Accreditation with inquiries regarding the Physical Therapist Assistant Program. To contact the program directly, please call 908.791.4917.

Formal Complaints to CAPTE:

CAPTE has a mechanism to consider formal complaints about physical therapy education programs (PT or PTA) that allege a program is not in compliance with one or more of CAPTE's [Evaluative Criteria](#) (for complaints about events occurring before December 31, 2015) or the Standards and Required Elements (for complaints addressing events occurring January 1, 2016 and thereafter) or has violated any of CAPTE's expectations related to academic integrity.

To obtain the materials necessary for submitting a complaint, contact the APTA Accreditation Department at 703/706-3245 or at accreditation@apta.org.

by CAPTE, complaints must be received no later than ninety (90) days prior to a meeting. At its discretion, CAPTE may choose to consider complaints between its regularly scheduled meetings. Ordinarily, such consideration will occur only when delay in consideration of the complaint could have a serious adverse effect on either the complainant or the institution.

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NOTES