

Thank you for your interest in the MSC PTA program. This document is prepared to assist prospective students to better understand the admission and application process for the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program at MSC. More information about the program can be found at the program home webpage: <http://mscsh.org/pta-home.html>

Students do not need to apply to the program to take the general education (first year) course work (see curriculum sheet for details). These courses are open to all interested students and are applicable to many areas of study. Graduating high school students, new to college, or second career students who are interested in applying to the PTA Program courses need to complete at a minimum the first semester of the (1st) year course work in order to be eligible to apply to the PTA portion of the program which begins in the Spring semester of each year.

If you are not a current MSC student, you do not need to apply to the college in order to apply to the PTA portion of the program. If accepted into the PTA Program then you will need to complete an application to the college. Students interested in applying to the PTA program must meet the following minimum program specific requirements:

1. **Completion of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester courses** or be in the process of completing at the time of application. To be eligible to apply, students must be able to complete all required 1<sup>st</sup> year courses by the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of the program. These 1<sup>st</sup> year courses are listed on the PTA Curriculum Sheet linked to the academic's area of the MSC webpage: [www.mscol.edu](http://www.mscol.edu), as well as the PTA Program home webpage.
2. In order to take the MSC Anatomy & Physiology (A&P) courses in semester one, students must have an **ACT science sub score of 20 or above** and have had at least a "B" in high-school science courses. Students who do not meet this program specific requirement must complete the prerequisite for the MSC A&P courses. If you take your biological sciences (A&P) at another college, then you must meet the requirements for that school's sciences.
3. View the required **PTA Program Admission Video** prepared by the PTA Program Director. This video is linked to the PTA program webpage in the Application Information area and becomes available for viewing by September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.
4. Attain a **GPA of at least 2.5** on completed college course work with a grade of "C" or higher in prerequisite classes in the biological and behavioral sciences. All courses in the biological and behavioral sciences must be taken within 10 years of anticipated year of graduation from the PTA Program.
5. Have an **ACT Reading score of at least 20** or a **NexGen Reading Exam score of at 250**.
6. Take the **Admission Test** offered for MSC Allied Health students. *This test is the ATI TEAS and is explained further in the PTA Admission video.* Students are awarded additional points for scores above a 60 on the Admission Test on a graduated scale. Students will receive a "Ticket to Test" form signed by the staff or faculty after review to ensure they are eligible for admission. The student will then pay for the exam in the MSC Business office and then schedule a test time in the MSC Testing Center on the Tishomingo campus. There is a cost to take the admission test. Students applying to the PTA program may only test one time during an application period.
7. Complete a minimum of sixteen (**16**) hours of observation of a physical therapist (PT) or physical therapist assistant (PTA) in a clinical facility that provides physical therapy. Students are encouraged to earn additional points for observation of additional 32 hours for a maximum total of 48 hours. A maximum of 16 hours per PT or PTA can be used. Documentation of all observation is completed on the Clinical Observation Form and returned to the program by the PT/PTA who was observed. The Clinical Observation Form is available on the program webpage.
8. Be able to meet the **physical and mental requirements** of the role required of a PTA. A detailed list of these requirements is available in the Application Links area of the webpage which becomes available during the application period beginning September 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Each applicant must sign this document to ensure they are aware that they must be able to meet the physical and mental requirements to complete the PTA program.
9. Complete the PTA Application and related materials and submit these as instructed in the admission video. applications must be submitted to the PTA Office prior to the **third (3<sup>rd</sup>) Thursday in November**.

## **How are the students in the second year chosen?**

This is a question that is explained in detail during the Application Orientation Video that must be viewed prior to application. The following information is provided as a summary of the process. The PTA Program courses all beginning with a PTA prefix are available to those students who have applied to and have been accepted into the program. Students are selected from the most qualified of those who apply and are chosen in December and begin the program the following spring semester (January). The new class of students meets for the initial orientation during the week prior to the first week of the spring semester in early January.

The class is determined by a selection committee that is made up of program advisory committee members, PTA program faculty, and other campus faculty. The program director does not have a vote in the process. The actual selection of the class is made by a committee who is "blinded" to the applicant. This means that they know only the qualifications and points of each applicant. The selection committee uses a points system that has been developed and refined over the years. This system is as objective and unbiased as possible. It is our desire to select students who are qualified and capable of success in the program and prepared to enter the profession upon graduation.

The point system includes the following areas:

1. ACT Reading Score / NexGen Reading Score
2. Admission Test score
3. Grades on prerequisite (1st year) course work
4. Overall GPA
5. Exposure to PT - Clinical observations

*The point system is subject to change each year. The points system and the specific application procedure for each year are explained during the application orientation video linked to the web site by September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.*

**A minimum of sixteen (16) hours of clinical observation is required by the time of application to the MSC/PTA program.** Clinical observation can be scheduled with any willing PT or PTA licensed in the state in which the observation occurs. Students interested in completing observation hours should contact a provider organization (for example a hospital, out-patient clinic, or private provider) and gain permission for the observation experience. Times should be set up that are convenient for the provider and students should present themselves in a manner that they might for a potential employer. Student's should inquire about proper attire and ask questions that demonstrate a desire to learn about the profession. This observation is very important to help applicants garner a better understanding of the profession of physical therapy. The maximum amount of time that a student can observe the same PT or PTA is 16 hours for the purpose of gaining points. In addition to the required 16 hours, additional hours up to 32 can result in additional application points. All clinical observation must be documented on the current clinical observation form. Information regarding the availability of any alternate exposure will be provided during the application video posted by September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

To expand the applicant's awareness of the scope of physical therapy practice in this area, students are encouraged to perform clinical observation beyond the minimum 16 hours required. Students can gain additional points by observing with physical therapists (PT's) or physical therapist assistants (PTA's) up to 32 hours (16 hours per clinicians) for a max total of 48 hours including the initial required 16 hours for which no points are awarded. This means to earn the most points; the applicant will need to observe at least three (3) different PT's or PTA's for 16 hours each. These professionals may work in the same facility but each must complete a separate clinical observation form for the applicant. After the initial required 16 hours, the applicant earns 1 point for every two hours of observation. Since there are 32 total hours that can be used beyond the initial 16, this means that the applicant can earn up to the 16 points toward their application. The program is competitive so all applicants are encouraged to complete the observations. The documentation of observation requires the use of the clinical observation form which must be completed by the applicant and the clinician. The Clinical Observation Form may be printed from the Application Information area of the program website.

For further information, or if you have questions, please contact the program office.

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