Observation Hours:
Students are required to complete a minimum of 40 observation hours. Observation must occur with a licensed physical therapist or physical therapist assistant. This observation should be completed **in at least two or more different practice settings. At least 10 hours need to be in an acute, acute rehab, or sub-acute environment.** Please contact the program director if you have questions. Suggestions to help you to meet this requirement:

- Request a list of clinical sites from the PTA Program Director if needed. Most facilities are willing to allow prospective physical therapist assistant students to observe their physical therapy practice. Any facilities can be contacted and asked if they would be willing to allow you to observe.
- Select several sites and telephone them early in the day- between 8:00 and 8:30 am. This is usually the best time to speak with them. Have your calendar available with possible dates and times that will work for your schedule. Please remember, you will need to be flexible and accommodate their schedules. **DO NOT automatically expect to observe the day you contact them.**
- When you visit the site, dress professionally casual (no jeans). Wear comfortable shoes with no open toe, no or minimal fragrances, and minimal jewelry. Remember, you are in a professional environment!
- Provide your healthcare professional with the Observation Form with the upper portion completed. When you have completed your hours at that site, the professional you’re observing will need to fill-out a portion of this form and sign it. It will then need to be signed by the healthcare professional on the form and over the seal of the envelope and submitted with your PTA Program Application. The Observation Form may be copied if needed or additional copies can be obtained on the College website at [www.gfcmsu.edu](http://www.gfcmsu.edu) under the PTA Program section.
- Remember, as you are observing, they are also observing you!
- We suggest that during or shortly after you have completed each observation that you take the time to jot down your impressions of the experience. This may include your thoughts, diagnosis observed, what was good or bad, etc.
- **DO NOT WAIT** to obtain observation hours. Practicing Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants are busy people, so fit in the observation time when you can and early.
- Finally, you may want to send out a thank you note to the healthcare professional for taking time out of their schedule to assist with your educational experience.