

# Physical Therapist Assistant Program



**GREAT FALLS  
COLLEGE**

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**MONTANA STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

## **Student Information & Application Packet**

*(Applications are subject to change year to year)*

## **Fall 2025 Enrollment**

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Dear Prospective Physical Therapist Assistant Student,

I am thrilled that you are interested in the Great Falls College Montana State University's (GFC MSU) Physical Therapist Assistant Program. Physical therapy is a wonderful profession. As a physical therapist for over twenty years, I have found it to be a very challenging and rewarding career.


Physical Therapist Assistants (PTAs) work closely with the physical therapist (PT) and with many other healthcare providers. PT and PTAs are dedicated to using their knowledge, expertise, and compassion in the treatment and prevention of disease processes affecting an individual's function. Observing either a PT or PTA is a necessary and essential part of learning about the physical therapy profession. The experience will give you a better understanding of the commitment needed to be successful during your education in the physical therapist assistant program and ultimately in the profession.

Great Falls College MSU's Physical Therapist Assistant Program has a limited enrollment capacity. **Twenty (20) new students are enrolled in the fall of each year.** The small size is advantageous to our students, allowing more individualized attention and a greater amount of hands-on experience. Of course, with all the advantages there are disadvantages. Limited enrollment lends itself to a competitive student selection process. It is important to review and understand our selection process when exploring this area of study.

Information about the profession, the program itself, and application materials for **Fall 2025** entry are enclosed. **Please read these materials carefully.** For additional information, answers to specific questions, a campus tour, or to set up an appointment, please contact Student Services at (406) 771-4414 or Brad Bechard PT, DPT, NCS Physical Therapist Assistant Program Director at (406) 771-5134. Information can also be found at [www.gfcmsu.edu](http://www.gfcmsu.edu).

With increasing life expectancy and improved medical technology, access to physical therapy services is more important than ever. Making a commitment to becoming a physical therapy professional will not prove to be just a job, but a lifelong fulfilling career. I want to thank you for your interest in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program; hopefully the following information will enlighten you about our program and the profession.

Sincerely,



*Brad Bechard, PT, DPT, NCS*  
Director, Physical Therapist Assistant Program

**PTA Program Director Contact Information:**

Brad Bechard, PT, DPT, NCS  
Director, Physical Therapist Assistant Program  
Great Falls College Montana State University  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Great Falls, MT 59405  
Office: A214  
Ph: (406) 771-5134  
Fax: (406) 771-4317  
[bradley.bechard@gfcmsu.edu](mailto:bradley.bechard@gfcmsu.edu)

## **What is Physical Therapy?**

Physical Therapy is the care and services provided by or under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist. More than 750,000 individuals are treated every day in the United States. The practice of physical therapy consists of diagnosing and managing movement dysfunction by enhancing physical and functional abilities. It consists of clinical applications that help to alleviate pain, prevent the onset or progression of limitations or disability, and prevent changes in health status that occur as a result of disease, disorders, conditions and injuries. Physical therapy interventions can also restore health, maintain overall wellness, improve fitness, and provide quality of life as it relates to movement and health.

## **Core Values of Professional Conduct in Physical Therapy:**

- Accountability
- Altruism
- Collaboration
- Compassion/Caring
- Duty
- Excellence
- Inclusion
- Integrity
- Social Responsibility

## **Who is the Physical Therapist Assistant?**

Physical therapist assistants (PTAs) provide physical therapy services under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist. PTAs help people of all ages who have medical problems, or other health-related conditions that limit their ability to move and perform functional activities in their daily lives. PTAs work in a variety of settings including hospitals, private practices, outpatient clinics, home health, nursing homes, schools, sports facilities, and more. PTAs must complete a 2-year associate of applied science degree and are licensed, certified, or registered in most states. Care provided by a PTA may include teaching patients/clients exercise for mobility, strength and coordination, training for activities such as walking with crutches, canes, or walkers, massage, and the use of physical agents and electrotherapy such as ultrasound and electrical stimulation.

The PTA contributes to society and the PT profession through the provision of physical therapy services, teaching, and administration.

## **Physical Therapist Assistant Program Goals:**

### **Student Goals (Student Learning Outcomes):**

- 1. The student will demonstrate an entry level skill set of interventions utilizing critical thinking, ethics, safety skills, and knowledge of red flags for the provision of services under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist.**
- 2. The student will construct effective communication and documentation between colleagues, patients, interdisciplinary team, and various other stakeholders regarding provision of physical therapy services.**
- 3. The student will effectively implement best practice outcome measures under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist.**
- 4. The student will effectively educate the implementation of preventative and evidence-based practice as it relates to their clinical decision making.**

5. The student will demonstrate commitment to the profession by serving the needs of their patients and community through participation in service-related activities.
6. The student will practice ethical billing, quality assurance standards, and scheduling of patients in the provision of services under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist.

#### **Faculty Goals:**

1. Program faculty will demonstrate life-long learning through the pursuit of continuing education related to the profession of physical therapy and area of teaching responsibility.
2. Program faculty will continually develop updated course materials to provide students a contemporary education via evidence-based practice.
3. The program faculty will demonstrate commitment to the profession through service-learning activities within the community.

#### **PTA Program Goals:**

1. The program will continue to demonstrate quality education and rigor while meeting the needs of the community.
2. The program will contribute to the needs of the community through the student association and its pursuit of volunteering and fundraising.
3. The program will promote life-long learning to reflect contemporary practice and advocate physical therapy via the APTA to best meet the needs of the profession and society.

### **Mission and Philosophy of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program:**

#### Mission

*The Great Falls College MSU PTA Program: Developing Quality Skills with Unwavering Ethics*

#### Philosophy

All students, regardless of race, creed, color, age, or gender, have a right to an education that stimulates their curiosity and challenges their intellect. The faculty of the PTA program is committed to student success, and pursuit of excellence within the educational environment. Students will be encouraged to embrace the concept that learning is a lifetime experience, as well as a critical component of their continued professional development in the field of health care delivery.

### **History of PTA Program at Great Falls College MSU:**

From 1996 - 2003, Great Falls College MSU offered the only physical therapist assistant postsecondary education program in Montana graduating six classes. From 2003 to 2007, the PTA program was in a state of moratorium. Due to high demand in Montana for the physical therapist assistant in the workforce, the program was reactivated.

**Following an on-site visit in October of 2018, the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program at Great Falls College MSU has earned accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) from April 30, 2019 through June 30, 2029.**

## **Accreditation Status:**

The Physical Therapist Assistant program at Great Falls College Montana State University is accredited by:

**The Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE)**

1111 North Fairfax Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
703-706-3245

[accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org)

[www.capteonline.org](http://www.capteonline.org)

**The next onsite visit will occur in Fall of 2028.**

## **Program Cost:**

Costs are subject to change. The below information is based on the 2024-25 academic year. Costs are estimates only. Costs include listed specific pre-requisite courses and requirements after formal acceptance into the PTA Program. It DOES NOT include costs associated with any repetition of courses, or any courses needed to build-up skills in Math and English so the student can take the required courses in these two subjects. Appropriate attire, transportation costs, room and board, relocation costs to Great Falls for class work and other locations for clinical experiences including room and board, immunizations, and costs associated with the national board exam are not included in the below costs. There may be other costs not included in this list.

Tuition (in-state) and Fees	\$10,070.00
Application Fee	30.00
Lab/Course Fees	1090
Program Fees	138
Book / Supplies	2478.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$13,806.00</b>

Information on student scholarships and financial aid is provided by the Office of Financial Aid: (406) 406-771-4334 or <https://gfcmsu.edu/home/financial-aid/>

Please refer to the College catalog for complete information available online at <http://catalog.gfcmsu.edu/academic-programs/physical-therapist-assistant/>

## **PTA Program Requirements Prior to Admission:**

Prior to being considered for admissions into the program the applicants must:

- Be admitted to GFC MSU and in good academic standing. Application information may be acquired at the office, or by calling Admissions at (406) 268-3700 or online at <https://gfcmsu.edu/home/admissions/>
- Complete 40 hours or more of observation with a licensed physical therapist or physical therapist assistant. Please note that higher point values for admission to the PTA Program are awarded at 10-hour intervals. Refer to section “Observation Hours” in this packet.
- **Earn a grade of “C” (not a “C-”) or higher in all pre-requisite courses.**
- **Computer literacy and keyboarding are assumed.**

## **Additional Steps for PTA Program Application:**

- A representative from the Registrar’s Office will be involved in verifying grades, reviewing transcripts, and compiling the scoring process for this program.
- Submit official high school/HiSET/GED transcript or diploma, and college transcripts, to the

Registrar. **(Please ensure all transcripts which are required to prove completion of prerequisite courses have been submitted to the Registrar's Office.)** If completing spring or summer courses, final transcripts will need to be sent. You are NOT required to send transcripts from GFC MSU.

- Send official transcripts to:
  - Office of the Registrar
  - Great Falls College MSU
  - 2100 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South
  - Great Falls, MT 59405
- Only students in Good Academic Standing will be eligible for program acceptance.
- Course work will be evaluated as follows: **Anatomy/Physiology courses need to have a lab component and to be taken within 5 years of application to the program and all other general education courses (including chemistry) need to be taken within 15 years of application to the program.** The PTA Program director at their discretion may accept courses that are older than the 5 years for Anatomy/Physiology courses and/or older than the 15 years for general education pre-requisite courses. Exceptions to age limits above may be accepted for students who have earned a degree and are using/utilizing the course as part of their profession/career. Students may be asked to take a placement test to determine if their math and English skills are at the appropriate level for the program.
- Students who have taken courses multiple times, the most recent verifiable grade will used.
- For students who have taken a higher-level course than the pre-requisite course requirement, he/she may utilize the grade for that course for admissions purposes if the grade is higher than that of the required course.
- Points and GPAs will be calculated by the Registrar's Office and grade points will be calculated using the current catalog criteria which includes +/- weighing. **See page 12 for grade breakdown.**
- For students who have been awarded credit for successful performance in subject examinations of the CLEP or DSST programs, the credits will be accepted by GFC MSU, however there is no grade for calculation for scoring or GPA. In this situation, the total points will convert to percentages for ranking. *(The program may accept Pass/Fail classes upon the program director's approval.)*
- For students who have been awarded credit for successful performance in subject examinations of the AP program, the credits will be accepted by GFC MSU for scores of 3, 4 or 5, however there is no grade for calculation for scoring or GPA. In this situation, the total points will convert to percentages for ranking. *(The program may accept Pass/Fail classes upon the program director's approval.)*
- For students who have been awarded credit for Prior Learning Assessment, the credits will be accepted by GFC MSU for Passing (P) grades, however there is no grade for calculation for scoring or GPA. In this situation, the total points will convert to percentages for ranking. *(The program may accept Pass/Fail classes upon the program director's approval.)*
- For students who have additional educational attainment, the Registrar's Office will verify degrees awarded from official transcripts.
- Admission will constitute the top 20 completed applicants with the highest percentage of total points earned.
- In case of a tie, this is the tie breaking criteria
  1. Highest subtotal GPA within Anatomy and Physiology classes
  2. Highest prerequisite GPA
  3. Highest total observation hours recorded

## **Equal Opportunity Policy:**

Great Falls College MSU is committed to the provision of equal opportunity for education, employment, and participation in all College programs and activities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, gender, age, political ideas, marital or family status, physical or mental disability, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

The College's Equal Opportunity Officer is the Executive Director of Student Services, 2100 16th Avenue South, Great Falls, MT 59405. Telephone: 406-771-4300.

## **Physical Therapist Assistant Program Curriculum:**

### **Prerequisite Courses**

**All prerequisite courses must be completed with a C (not C-) or higher.**

<b>Course No.</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Credit</b>
PHSX 105	Fundamentals of Physical Sci w/Lab <b>OR</b> Chemistry course with program director approval	4
BIOH 201**	Human Anatomy & Phys I Lecture/Lab	4
BIOH 211*	Human Anatomy & Phys II Lecture/Lab	4
COMX 115 <b>OR</b> COMX 111	Intro to Interpersonal Comm <b>OR</b> Intro to Public Speaking	3
WRIT 101**	College Writing I	3
M 105**	Contemporary Mathematics <b>OR</b> Any math course in the MUS Core	3-4
PSYX 100	Introduction to Psychology	3
	Any course in the Social Sciences, Humanities, Cultural Diversity Core	3

### **Pre or Corequisite Course**

AHPT 105	Intro to Physical Therapy (online) (Prerequisite or corequisite with consent of program director)	3
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### **Fall Courses**

<b>Course No.</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>
AHPT 101*	Physical Therapist Assisting I/Lab	5
AHPT 205*	Anatomy and Kinesiology /Lab	6
AHPT 206*	Pathophysiology for the PTA	3
AHPT 218*	Therapeutic Exercise for the PTA	2
AHPT 210*	Clinical Experience I (4-week)	3



## Spring Courses

Course No.	Course Title	Credits
AHPT 201*	Physical Therapist Assisting II Lab	5
AHPT 213*	Neurorehabilitation for the PTA Lab	6
AHPT 215*	Introduction to Orthopedics/Lab	4
AHPT 220*	Clinical Experience II (4-week)	3

## Summer Courses

Course No.	Course Title	Credits
AHPT 225*	Seminar & Project in PTA (online)	1
AHPT 230*	Clinical Experience III (8-week)	7

### **TOTAL PROGRAM CREDITS – 75~**

\* Indicates prerequisites needed

\*\* Indicates placement in course(s) is determined by placement test

~Many students need preliminary math, English and biology courses before enrolling in the program requirements.

## 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, 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 business 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 (pg. 17) 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.

### **Optional Experiences to Earn Additional Points:**

- Additional points may be earned through employment within a healthcare field that involves direct patient contact or billing/coding services.
- Additional points may be earned through employment or volunteer in a fitness environment as a trainer working with clients on various exercise programs or instructor, including such experiences in coaching.
- The applicant must include a letter substantiating hours of employment as a healthcare worker or employment in a fitness environment within the community. **The letter must be from a direct supervisor in order to receive points in the application process. Hours worked, the description/nature of the work, and dates must be included. This letter must be signed by the supervisor across the back outside seal of the envelope and submitted with the applicant's application.**
- Contact the PTA Program Director for any questions regarding these experiences.

### **Enrollment in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program:**

The formal portion of the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program begins fall semester with a limited enrollment of 20 students. There are 30 credits of pre-requisite courses which may take one year or longer to complete. All pre-requisite coursework must be completed with a grade of "C" (not C-) or higher. The student must apply for acceptance into the formal portion of the PTA program and be accepted. The formal portion of the PTA program is challenging and consists of fall, spring, and summer semesters; taking one full year. This time includes built-in clinical experiences, which may or may NOT be in the Great Falls area. Upon completion of the PTA program, the graduate is prepared to take the national board examination for physical therapist assistants provided by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy and must receive a passing score in order to become a licensed PTA. Licensure is required to practice as a physical therapist assistant in Montana and is overseen by the State of Montana Board of Physical Therapy Examiners.

- Physical Therapist Assistant Program Admission Application is included in this packet. It should include your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, proof of requirements (see Application Packet Cover and Check-off Sheet below). This should be submitted to the Administrative Assistant of the Health Science Division by **May 30, 2025** for prospective admission to the PTA program for fall 2025. **Application material submitted after that date will not be considered for the initial selection process and would only be considered if the initial process does not yield a full class. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all requirements are met by the established deadline and that all necessary materials have been submitted. All application items should be sent as a complete packet (as able) via certified mail or physically brought in to the Health Sciences Administrative Assistant. Items sent separately and at random are easily lost or misfiled. Great Falls College MSU is not responsible for any late, lost or misfiled information.**
- Successful applicants will be notified of their admission status by email by June 27, 2025. A 'letter of intent' will be enclosed and will need to be returned by the specified date.
- If a space becomes available in the program, the next highest scoring applicant will be

notified and offered admission to the PTA Program.

**Note: Submission of false material in this Application Packet will be grounds for non-admission or, if discovered after admission, grounds for expulsion.**

### **Helpful Phone Numbers:**

- Admissions: (406) 268-3700
- Bookstore: (406) 771-4367
- Financial Aid: (406) 771-4334
- Physical Therapist Assistant Program Director – Brad Bechard, PT, DPT, NCS: (406) 771-5134
- Registrar - Dena Wagner -Fossen: (406) 771-4312

### **Transferability of Courses:**

It is essential that you speak with the PTA Program Director if you have questions about transferability of courses from other institutions. The best way to assure that your courses transfer and that you have all the pre-requisites for the PTA program is to apply to the College (general admission process) and then to have your official transcripts evaluated by the Registrar's Office. Only the courses that apply toward the degree and have met the criteria will be accepted.

Coursework taken at other educational institutions may be designated as equivalent courses for Great Falls College MSU. [https://prodmyinfo.montana.edu/pls/gfagent/hwzkxfer.p\\_selstate](https://prodmyinfo.montana.edu/pls/gfagent/hwzkxfer.p_selstate)  
Please review the information on transferring courses here: <http://catalog.gfcmsu.edu/student-services/admissions/transfer-from-other-institutions/>

If you have additional questions about transferability of courses, send a written request for evaluation of your prior transcripts to the Registrar at Great Falls College MSU. Please include appropriate course descriptions and official transcripts from former colleges with your request for evaluation.

Registrar's Office  
Great Falls College MSU  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Ave S  
Great Falls, MT 59405  
406-771-5128

### **Requirements following acceptance to the PTA Program:**

- All formal PTA students must attend the PTA Program Orientation. This mandatory orientation is held in August prior to classes starting. Information about the PTA program will be provided and reviewed at this time. If accepted into the formal portion of the PTA program, you will be informed of the date and specifics of this orientation.
- All Health Science students will complete the required immunizations to their Program Director **after acceptance** into their program. All GFC MSU students enrolled in 6 or more credits are required to have health insurance. There are health risks inherent in working in a clinical environment. Students are urged to use good sense in acquiring and maintaining health insurance coverage. **Please see** <https://gfcmsu.edu/home/current-students/studentengagement/wellness/student-insurance/> **for more information.**
- Hepatitis B series inoculation (HBV) is required. This can be obtained for a fee at the City-County Health Department, 115 4<sup>th</sup> Street South, Great Falls, MT, (406) 454-6950. If for some reason you elect not to have this three-shot series, a signed Declination form will be kept in your file. This form is available from the PTA program director.
- You must be **Health Care Provider CPR certified**, and retain this certification throughout

your collegiate career as a PTA student, and then as a PTA. CPR/First Aid classes are provided each semester at the College or can be obtained elsewhere. The CPR Certification must be current during any clinical affiliation experience (scheduled toward the end of the fallsemester).

- **Health Sciences Division Policy: Student Background Checks and Drug Screening**  
To promote patient safety and decrease institutional liability, most clinical agencies require students to have cleared a background check and/or drug screening before they will permit the students in the clinical setting. To meet these requirements, the College requires that the check/screening be done prior to placement in any clinical agency. Background checks/drug screenings are done at the student's expense. Students with background checks that reveal a finding will be evaluated individually to determine whether they will be eligible for clinical placement and state licensure for their respective degree program. There is a zero tolerance for positive findings regarding the drug test resulting in non-admittance or dismissal from the program (please see PTA program student handbook). Students are encouraged to go through [Verifiedcredentials.com](https://www.verifiedcredentials.com) for their background and drug screenings yet may go through other vendors upon the approval from the program director. **Copies of your required immunizations, CPR card, background check, and drug screen** **5are all due by approximately September 30, 2025. It is encouraged to start on these as soon as possible once admitted into the program.**

### **Technical Standards for the Physical Therapist Assistant:**

Students will be required to perform certain physical, intellectual, and conceptual tasks required (see page 16) in the classroom, during lab activities, and at clinical sites. A student must have the ability to perform these tasks with reasonable accommodation as outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities must meet or exceed academic standards with or without reasonable accommodations.

### **Statement about Disability Services**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Instructors must receive an official letter from the Director of Academic Success and Accessibility in order to provide accommodations. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Director of Academic Success and Accessibility or call 406-771-4311 to schedule an appointment. <https://gfcmsu.edu/home/current-students/asa/>

### **PTA Program Selection Criteria:**

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program Selection Committee will be the individuals to consider the applications submitted by prospective PTA students. They will utilize the following point scale, maximum of 104 points. The applicants with the top 20 percentage point totals demonstrated within the completed applications will be accepted for admission. Grade Point Average (GPA) will be calculated (see Application Evaluation Sheet below) to determine total points for each pre-requisite course. Please remember that plus and minus will affect the GPA utilized as per the College catalog.

**Plus or minus is equivalent to the following:**

(A)	=	4	(B)	=	3.0
(A-)	=	3.7	(B-)	=	2.7
(B+)	=	3.3	(C+)	=	2.3
			(C)	=	2



# Physical Therapist Assistant Program

## Application Packet Cover & Check-off Sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

✓	Item
	<b>Completed Admissions File.</b> A completed admissions file includes a completed application, copies of high school/GED/HiSET transcripts or diplomas, and completion of placement testing or submit official college transcript(s) verifying placement. Complete admissions files will be verified by the Registrar’s Office and applicants with incomplete files will not be admitted to the program. Students are encouraged to check with the Admissions Office to confirm that their admissions file is complete.
	<b>In Good Academic Standing</b> All students must be in good academic standing which means they are not on academic probation/warning OR academic probation/warning continued, OR academic suspension. Good academic standing will be verified by the registrar and any applicants who are not in good academic standing will not be admitted to the program. Students are encouraged to check with the Registrar’s or Admissions Office to confirm that they are in good academic standing.
	<b>Official Transcripts from all college institutions</b> (send official transcripts to Registrar –DO NOT submit with this application).
	<b>Completed all prerequisites with a C (not C-) or higher.</b>
	<b>Complete 40 or more hours of observation with a licensed PT or PTA providing written proof of observation on “Observation Form for the Pre-physical Therapist Assistant” included in this packet. Observation hours must be in at least 2 different TYPES of settings (includes 10 hours of acute, rehab, or sub-acute settings).</b>
	<b>OPTIONAL: Verification of employment in a healthcare field, and/or employment/volunteer in a fitness environment</b>
	<b>Read and submit this completed PTA Application Packet Cover and Check-off Sheet, Application Evaluation Sheet, Technical Standards of the PTA, and sign/check off Campus Option form to the Health Science Administrative Assistant.</b>

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Application Evaluation Sheet – please fill out completely

Science courses must be completed within 5 years (2010) of applying for PTA Program and must include a lab component, other courses within 15 years (2020) of applying. *\*Please include if class occurred face-to-face (you went on campus), or hybrid (a mix of on campus & online), or completely online. Information on the delivery method of the course is for data gathering purposes only and will not impact the scoring of your application.*

**All grades must be a C or higher (not a C-).**

Item	Institution and year course was completed	*Delivery –online, hybrid or face-to-face	Points (see page 13)	Point Value Scored per Item
Introduction to PTA (AHPT 105)			___grade	
Fundamentals of Physical Science w/Lab (PHSX 105) <b>or</b> College level Chemistry			___grade	
Human Anatomy & Physiology I Lecture (BIOH 201)			___grade	
Human Anatomy & Physiology I Lab (BIOH 202)			___grade	
Human Anatomy & Physiology II Lecture (BIOH 211)			___grade	
Human Anatomy & Physiology II Lab (BIOH 212)			___grade	
Intro to Interpersonal Communication (COMX 115) <b>or</b> Intro to Public Speaking (COMX 111)			___grade	
College Writing I (WRIT 101)			___grade	
Contemporary Math (105) <b>or</b> Core level math			___grade	
Introduction to Psychology (PSYX 100)			___grade	
List additional Social Science/Humanities/Cultural Diversity course: _____			___grade	
Physical therapy observations hours (60 hours max)  <b>40 hours required from 2 different settings (10 hours must come from acute, rehab, or sub acute)</b>  <b>*Bonus hours may include any healthcare discipline (eg PT, ST, OT, RT)</b>			*20 points (60 hours), <b>Bonus</b> *15 points (50 hours), <b>Bonus</b> 10 points (40 hours), <b>Required</b>	<b>Faculty will calculate these points.</b>
Employment in a healthcare field. (Contact Program Director for questions)  (1040 hours max)  <b>Optional</b>			20 points (1040 hours+), 15 points (520 hours), 10 points (260 hours), 5 points (50 hours)	<b>Faculty will calculate these points.</b>
Employment/volunteer in a fitness environment. This includes students participating in HOSA. (Contact Program Director for questions)  (1040 hours max)  <b>Optional</b>			20 points (1040 hours+), 15 points (520 hours), 10 points (260 hours), 5 points (50 hours)	<b>Faculty will calculate these points.</b>

**Total (104):**

# Technical Standards for the Physical Therapist Assistant Program

<i>Technical Standards</i>
<i>Demonstrate safe transferring and gait training of patients of various sizes from a variety of surfaces.</i>
<i>Effective set up and use</i> assistive devices such as wheelchairs, canes, and walkers.
<i>Demonstrate safe</i> positioning patients, and positioning of equipment.
<i>Effectively perform</i> palpation skills and take measurements of various patients in a culturally sensitive manner.
<i>Effectively</i> perform chart reviews and continuous assessment of the patient's status.
<i>Effectively</i> communicate with patients, families, caregivers, coworkers, and healthcare providers regarding instruction, questions, and or requests in a culturally sensitive manner.
<i>Effectively take and record</i> doctors' orders, patient histories, and subjective/objective findings.
<i>Demonstrate</i> appropriate time management regarding treatment and documentation.
<i>Provide</i> effective and safe treatment interventions within the established plan of care as set by the physical therapist with emphasis on critical thinking skills.
<i>Perform</i> safely, effectively, and calmly under stressful situations.
<i>Maintain</i> composure while managing multiple tasks simultaneously.
<i>Effectively</i> prioritize multiple tasks.
<i>Display</i> respect, professionalism, politeness, discretion/confidentially, teamwork, legal, and ethical standards of the profession of physical therapy.
<i>Consistently adhere to standard precautions for infection control.</i>

I understand that I will be expected to demonstrate competency in the technical standards stated above in order to successfully complete my program.

---

Student Signature

Date

**The Great Falls College Physical Therapist Assistant program is excited to introduce an EXPANSION PROGRAM option starting in the Fall of 2025**

**PENDING ACCREDITATION APPROVAL DURING THE SPRING MEETING.**

Choose one of two attendance options depending on your learning preference and life needs.

- Option 1: The On-campus lectures/labs are face-to-face Monday through Friday for 12 weeks in the fall and 12 weeks in the spring at Great Falls College. Clinicals can take place at nearly any location. **Max capacity is 20 students at this location.**
  
- Option 2: The expansion program option through Gallatin College at the MSU campus offers greater accessibility for students who work or live in the Bozeman area. Students are **required** to be on the MSU campus for lectures and lab. Lecture will take place synchronously via live video such as Web Ex Monday through Wednesdays. Lab will be hands-on with an instructor physically present two days a week (**Thursdays and Fridays**) for 12 weeks in the fall and 12 weeks in the spring. Clinicals can take place at nearly any location. **Max capacity is 6 students at this location.**

**Note:** **Total capacity between both sites cannot exceed 20 students.** If the Gallatin College site does not have at least 2 students successfully admitted into the PTA program, we will not run the program at that distance location however you can remain in the program, but you must travel to a Great Falls College campus and join their lab class on Thursdays and Fridays weekly. If we are unable to provide a lab instructor for the location you have chosen, you can remain in the program, but you must travel to the GFC campus weekly during lab sections. Travel and lodging costs will be at the student's own expense.

Option 2 may employ correspondence study, audio, video, or computer technologies. Through the distance education piece of this program, students are required to uphold the same rigor and time commitment that those located at the Great Falls College MSU campus. Lecture classes will be taught through live video such as WebEx and you must be in one of the designated classrooms to participate. Lab classes will be taught by an instructor at your location in a designated lab space.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the program, please do not hesitate to contact us.

**By signing this page, I confirm that I have read and understand the expectations as presented on this page of this packet:**

Student name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Brad Bechard, PT, DPT, NCS  
PTA Program Director  
Great Falls College MSU  
406 771 5134



# OBSERVATION FORM

## PRE- PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

Potential PTA Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Observation	# of Hours	Printed Name of Clinician	Clinician's Phone #
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Type of Setting (circle the setting that applies): acute, rehab, sub-acute, nursing home, home health, schools, and/or out-patient

Total Hrs Observed \_\_\_\_\_

### **Clinician to fill-out the remainder of this form:**

Please help evaluate this potential PTA student by filling in the following:

	Yes	No
1) Courteous when establishing appointment time for clinical visit.	_____	_____
2) Punctual in attendance for clinical observation.	_____	_____
3) Respectful of clinicians time and schedule.	_____	_____
4) Appropriate attire worn during observation.	_____	_____
5) Demonstrated interest in the clinical setting.	_____	_____
6) Asked appropriate questions of clinician.	_____	_____
7) Exhibited respect and courtesy toward clinicians, patients and others.	_____	_____
8) Demonstrated positive and appropriate interpersonal skills.	_____	_____
9) Demonstrated true interest in the physical therapy profession.	_____	_____
10) HIPAA compliant.	_____	_____
11) Followed clinical site policies and procedures.	_____	_____

Please provide comments about this individual and their potential for success in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Great Falls College MSU. **When completed please enclose within an envelope with your signature across the seal and returned to the student as part of his/her application towards the PTA Program.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Clinician: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your support of the PTA Program and for allowing this potential student to observe your work. Please contact Brad Bechard, PTA Program Director at (406) 771-5134 with any questions or comments.


## **Mailing Instructions**

**Application packets must be postmarked on or before May 30, 2025 to be considered eligible for admission into the Physical Therapist Assistant program for the 2025-2026 academic year.** From the pool of completed applications, the prospective PTA students will be screened. **In the event that a full class of 20 PTA students cannot be initially attained, then incomplete or late applications may be looked at for possible admission.** Applications with requirements not met at the time of the program deadline may be provisionally admitted pending fulfillment of ALL requirements. All persons submitting an application will be notified of their admission status following the selection process, by June 27, 2025.

*Please only send required documentation as other supplemental items will be discarded.*

**It is recommended that application packets be sent by certified mail, or hand delivered and date stamped.**

**Hand-deliver or mail the Physical Therapist Assistant Program Application Packet to:**



**Physical Therapist Assistant Program  
Attention: Health Science Administrative Assistant  
Great Falls College MSU  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Great Falls, MT 59405**