



PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT (PTA) PROGRAM FAQs

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at City Colleges of Chicago – Malcolm X College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085; telephone: 800-999-2782; email: accreditation@apta.org; website: <https://www.capteonline.org>. If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call Erin DiCapo at 312-850-7021 or email edicapo@ccc.edu.

Q: What is the best first step if I am interested in the PTA Program?

A: Visit the advising and admissions department and bring unofficial transcripts so that you can determine which pre-requisite courses you need to complete and make a semester plan to complete these courses.

Ask advising to be coded with the pre-PTA designation to design your coursework pathway if you chose to pursue the PTA program.

The advising department at MXC takes walk in appointments during regular business hours. [Virtual Student Services](#) including advising, registrar services, and financial aid, are also available to all students.

Please note, official transcripts will be required in order for transfer credit to be awarded. Official transcripts must be submitted to the [Malcolm X Registrar](#).

Q: What is the general overview and timeframe for completing the program?

A: If attending full time, the entire program is the equivalent of 5 semesters in length.

We follow a 1+1 model of PTA education. This means a student will complete 2 semesters of pre-requisite coursework PRIOR to completing the application (or be currently enrolled at time of application) for entry into the PTA program and 3 semesters of technical coursework AFTER being admitted into the PTA program.

The two semesters of pre-requisite coursework can be completed part time (more than 2 semesters) or full time (2 semesters). The technical coursework (final 3 semesters) must be completed on a full-time basis.

Q: What are the minimum requirements for the Program?

A: The technical phase (final 3 semesters) of the PTA Program is a selective enrollment program. To apply, students must meet these minimum requirements:

1. Cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher
2. Completion of all pre-requisite coursework with a “C” or better

It is very important that students recognize that meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee a seat in the program. Up to 30 applicants are admitted each year. Students should strive to do their very best in all pre-requisite coursework. Note that most applicants have A’s and B’s, equating to an average GPA of 3.5 in the pre-requisite coursework.

Q: What are the pre-requisite courses for the Program?

A: There are nine pre-requisite courses that students must complete, test out of, receive transfer credit for, or be enrolled in PRIOR to applying to the program.

These courses are: English 101, Math 118, Bio 116, Physics 131, Psych 201, ESSS 101, ESSS 102, ESSS 103, ESSS 112.

Students must receive a “C” or higher in all pre-requisite foundational coursework to apply to the PTA program.

****Please note, taking all pre-requisite courses DOES NOT guarantee acceptance into the technical portion of the PTA Program.*** The PTA Program at MXC is a selective enrollment program. Admission into the technical portion of the program is a competitive process requiring an application, personal statement, proof of observation hours in physical therapy settings, and an interview.

Q: When does the technical phase of the program start?

A: The technical phase of the program starts the summer semester each year. There is only one admission cycle each year.

Q: When can I apply?

A: The application is available during the fall semester each year (late October/early November). This timeframe coincides with registration for the spring semester, which opens in early November each year. Students who have completed or are enrolled in any remaining pre-requisite courses and have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher will be eligible to receive the application. Once you request the application through your student portal (my.ccc.edu), the admissions department will verify requirements are met and you will receive the application packet via email.

Q: How can I apply?

A: Your student portal (my.ccc.edu) will show you which programs at MXC you are eligible to apply for. Once you have completed or are enrolled in all of the pre-requisite courses, you will be eligible to apply to the PTA Program if all requirements are met.

Q: When are applications due?

A: Applications are due at the end of January/beginning of February (the exact date may vary from year to year).

Q: How many students are accepted each year?

A: Per our accrediting body, the PTA Program may admit up to 30 students each year.

Q: Do you offer transfer credit?

A: Yes, we do accept transfer credit. Official transcripts must be submitted to the [Malcolm X Registrar](#) for evaluation of transfer credit. Please use the link below to view instructions for submitting official college transcripts.

Q: Which pre-requisite courses can I test out of?

A: There are Prior Learning Assessments (PLAs) in place for ESSS 101, ESSS 102, and ESSS 112.

Students will have ONE attempt to receive a passing score for each PLA taken.

Please note, there is currently no PLA or transfer credit given for ESSS 103. This course must be completed at MXC.

Please reach out to the Program Director, Erin DiCapo (edicapo@ccc.edu) if you would like more information regarding PLAs.

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests are available for English 101, Math 118, and Psych 201. Successful completion of a CLEP test results in awarding of college credit for the corresponding course. Please see the [CLEP General Information](#) page for more details about CLEP tests, including cost and scheduling procedures.

Q: I hold a personal fitness training certification, can this substitute for the ESSS pre-requisite courses?

A: Unfortunately, experience cannot substitute for course credit. Your experience will be of great value in both the pre-requisite and technical coursework. You may consider testing out of these requirements. We currently have PLAs in place for ESSS 101, 102 and 112. See previous section for details.

Q: Do you offer night classes?

A: Many of the pre-requisite courses offer night sections. At this time, the technical portion of the PTA Program (final three semesters after the selective admissions process) is only offered as a full-time day program.

Q: Is there a part-time option?

A: Students may take pre-requisite courses on a part-time or full-time basis. However, at this time, the technical portion of the PTA Program (final three semesters after the selective admissions process) is only offered as a full-time day program. During these three semesters, students are asked to reserve M-F from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.

Q: Can I work during the program?

A: Because of the rigorous nature of the technical phase of the PTA Program (final three semesters after the selective admissions process), it is strongly advised that the student not engage in part-time work unless absolutely necessary. It is ultimately a student's decision whether and how much to work. Students should be advised that schedules will not be altered to accommodate a student's employment schedule.

Q: Is a background check required for the program?

A: Students offered a seat in the PTA Program will be required to complete a background check prior to beginning the technical phase of the program during the summer semester.

Students with a positive background check should contact the PTA Program Director to make an appointment for a counseling session and begin the process of expungement or sealing, as a positive background check may limit opportunities to participate in clinical education, and ultimately affect a graduate's ability to obtain licensure in the state of Illinois as a Physical Therapist Assistant. To practice Physical Therapy, you must have a license.

Q: Is there financial aid available to students in the PTA Program?

A: Yes. Please discuss your course plans with financial aid as there may be implications for the amount and type of money you receive as you continue your educational pursuits depending on the number of credit hours you have taken or are planning to take.

Visit the [financial aid webpage](#) for more information. Financial aid is also available through the [Virtual Student Services](#) home page.

Q: Once I graduate from the PTA Program can I start practicing as a PTA right away?

A: Physical Therapist Assistants are licensed healthcare providers. Thus, following graduation, you must sit for a licensure exam- the National Physical Therapist Assistant Examination (NPTE-PTA). Upon successful completion of this exam you will be a licensed PTA and can practice physical therapy in the state of Illinois.

Q: Is the PTA Program at Malcolm X College accredited?

A: Yes, the PTA Program is fully accredited by the Commission on Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE).

Q: How much does the program cost?

A: The cost of the program will vary depending on how many of the pre-requisite courses you must take prior to applying to the program and if you are a Chicago resident. For in district students who take all of the pre-requisite courses through CCC in addition to the technical course work, the cost is approximately \$13,000. This estimate also includes other costs associated with the program (ex: books and licensure preparation and exam fees).

Tuition at city Colleges is based on credit hours. More information on cost can be found [here](#).