



Coursework Tool For Foreign Educated Physical Therapist Assistants

PTA-Tool 2

Implementation Date February 15, 2017

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INTRODUCTION

The Coursework Tool for Foreign Educated Physical Therapist Assistants (PTA Tool 2007) was developed by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) in response to the 2008 published regulation number CMS-1385 by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for Medicare reimbursement. This CMS regulation requires a foreign educated physical therapist assistant to show certification of education which is substantially equivalent to an entry-level physical therapist assistant's education in the United States.

PTA-Tool 2 was developed by the Federation in 2017 to address the changes in the Commission on Accreditation of Physical Therapy (CAPTE) updates to the Evaluative Criteria for accredited PTA programs. The PTA-Tool 2 was approved and adopted by the Board of Directors in February of 2017 with recommended implementation February 15, 2017.

It reflects the minimum foundational studies and applied science and technical education for substantial equivalence at the time of graduation with respect to a US first degree for a physical therapist assistant. Coursework Tools should not be interpreted as the sole determinant of an individual's educational preparation or competence to work as a physical therapist assistant. CWT PTA-tool 2 is validated against the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education's (CAPTE) *PTA Standards and Required Elements for PT Assistant Education Programs effective January 1, 2016*.

PTA- Tool 2 may be used by credentialing organizations and educational programs. In addition, it may be used as a self-evaluation method to guide foreign educated physical therapists assistants in comparing their education to US standards.

THE USE OF THE COURSEWORK TOOL

The PTA Tool 2 is to be used to assess those candidates who are applying for licensure or certification as PTAs in a US jurisdiction, or who are working in a setting providing services to clients who qualify for CMS funding. Finding substantial equivalency alone does not qualify an individual to work as a PTA. The finding of equivalency, however, may be a determinant in allowing a candidate to sit for the PTA National Physical Therapy Examination.

The role of the physical therapist assistant has historically been identified and labeled in the US as one of a paraprofessional who is uniquely educated to assist the physical therapist in the provision of physical therapy services. PTA education in the US is at the post-secondary level of education, and results in an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.), Associate of Science (A.S.) or an Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree. Programs are generally two years in length. The emphasis of PTA education is in the area of intervention.

US PTA curriculum consists of Foundational Studies and Applied Sciences and Technical Education. Foundational Studies include required content in English Composition within the humanities, and social/behavioral sciences. Content in natural sciences, is required however the content may be embedded in the Applied Sciences coursework. The Applied Sciences and Technical Education include a minimum of 60 semester credits to address basic health science, medical science: General Medical Knowledge, Clinical Science: Physical Therapy Management, Clinical Decision Making within the Plan of Care developed by the PT, data collection skills, therapeutic interventions, supervised clinical work and additional required technical coursework.

At the time of this publication, FSBPT has identified at least seven foreign PTA programs, located primarily in Canada and Europe.

OVERVIEW

Summary

The applicant must meet the requirement of not less than seventy-five semester credit hours. The minimum coursework requirements, in and of themselves, do not necessarily satisfy the requirements of the entry-level physical therapist assistant degree. The applicant must have completed sufficient credits to satisfy the requirement for at least two years of post-secondary education. The applicant must also meet any jurisdiction-specific requirements.

Foundational Studies

Foundational Studies include required content in English Composition within the humanities, and social/behavioral sciences. Content in natural sciences, is required however the content may be embedded in the Applied Sciences coursework.

The applicant must meet the specific requirements in the jurisdiction where they are seeking licensure.

1. Humanities

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| a. English | e. Literature |
| b. English composition* | f. Art |
| c. Speech or oral communication | g. Music |
| d. Foreign language (other than native language) | h. Native Languages |

*required

2. Physical/Natural/Biological Sciences

- a. Physics
- b. Biology
- c. Anatomy
- d. Physiology
- e. Chemistry
- f. Zoology

3. Social/Behavioral Science

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| a. History | f. Psychology |
| b. Sociology | g. Philosophy |
| c. Economics | h. Ethics |
| d. Religion | |
| e. Political Science | |

4. Mathematics/Logic – Not Required

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| a. Statistics | e. Calculus |
| b. Algebra | f. Trigonometry |
| c. Pre-calculus | g. Geometry |
| d. Computer Studies | h. General Math |

Applied Science & Technical Education

Forty-nine semester credits shall be the minimum required in applied science and technical education.

1. **Basic Health Science** (Coursework is required in each topic listed below.)
 - a. Human anatomy (specific to physical therapy)
 - b. Human physiology (specific to physical therapy)
 - c. Kinesiology or functional anatomy
 - d. Pathology
 - e. Nervous System
 - f. Musculoskeletal System
 - g. Cardiovascular System
 - h. Respiratory System
 - i. Integumentary System
 - j. Endocrine/Metabolic Systems
 - k. Gastrointestinal System
 - l. Genital and Reproductive Systems
 - m. Hematologic, Hepatic/Biliary Systems
 - n. Immune System
 - o. Renal and Urologic Systems
2. **Medical Science: General Medical Knowledge of systems across the lifespan**
 - a. Pediatric Conditions
 - b. Geriatric Conditions
3. **Clinical Science: PT management of:**
 - a. Integumentary System
 - b. Musculoskeletal System
 - c. Neuromuscular System
 - d. Cardiopulmonary System
 - e. First Aid/Emergency Care
4. **Clinical Decision Making Within the Plan of Care Developed by the PT:**
 - a. Interpret the components of the Plan of Care developed by the PT.
 - b. Health Record Review
 - c. Discontinuation of episode of care/Discharge planning
 - d. Report any Changes in patient status
 - e. Withhold interventions beyond the scope of work for the PTA
5. **Data Collection Skills** (17 skills are required)
6. **Intervention Skills** (9 skills and Associated Subcategories are required)
7. **Clinical Education**
 - a. 520 hours
 - b. Deliver physical therapy services to patients/clients with a variety of diseases/conditions.
 - c. Experiences must occur in at least 2 different types of practice settings.

The clinical education component includes organized and sequential experiences coordinated with the didactic component of the curriculum, which may include integrated and full-time experiences, which are supervised by a clinical supervisor who is a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant. The maximum number of full-time clinical education credits is 15. 48 clock hours equal 1 semester unit.

- 8. Additional Required Technical Coursework**
- a. Role of the PTA
 - i. Direction and supervision of the PTA by the PT
 - ii. Interprofessional collaboration.
 - b. Professional Ethics and Behaviors
 - i. Ethical Behaviors
 - ii. Ethical Decision Making
 - c. Administration
 - d. Educational Techniques
 - e. Communication (related to client/patient care)
 - f. Documentation/Billing
 - g. Medical Legal Issues and Healthcare Delivery
 - i. International Classifications of Disabilities
 - h. Psychosocial Aspects in PT Work
 - i. Evidence Based Practice
 - j. Patient and Healthcare Provider Safety

PTA EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Foundational Studies

I. Foundational Studies

A. HUMANITIES: One course minimum.	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE
1. English		
2. English Composition*		
3. Speech or Oral Communication		
4. Foreign Language (other than native language)		
5. Literature		
6. Art		
7. Music		
8. Native Languages		
Humanities subtotal		

* Required

B. NATURAL SCIENCE: Physical Sciences & Biological Sciences This content area may be embedded within Applied Sciences, thus evidence Found In is acceptable.*	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE
1. Physics		
2. Biology		
3. Anatomy*		
4. Physiology*		
5. Chemistry		
6. Zoology		
Natural Science subtotal		

C. SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE: One course minimum.	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE
1. History		
2. Sociology		
3. Economics		
4. Religion		
5. Political Science		
6. Psychology		
7. Philosophy		
8. Ethics		
Social & Behavioral Science subtotal		

D. MATHEMATICS: Not required	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE
1. Statistics		
2. Algebra		
3. Trigonometry		
4. Calculus		
5. Pre-Calculus		
6. Geometry		
7. General Mathematics		
8. Computer Studies		
Mathematics/Logic subtotal		
SUBTOTAL FOUNDATIONAL STUDIES CREDITS:		

II. Applied Sciences & Technical Education

Sixty (60) semester credits are required in this area.

A. BASIC HEALTH SCIENCE: Coursework is required in 1-16.	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE	JUSTIFICATION
1. Human Anatomy			
2. Human Physiology			
3. Kinesiology or Functional Anatomy			
4. Pathology			
5. Nervous System			
6. Musculoskeletal System			
7. Cardiovascular Systems			
8. Respiratory System			
9. Integumentary System			
10. Endocrine / Metabolic Systems			
11. Gastrointestinal System			
12. Genital and Reproductive Systems			
13. Hematologic, Hepatic / Biliary Systems			
14. Immune System			
15. Lymphatic System			
16. Renal and Urologic Systems			
Basic Health Science Subtotal			

B. MEDICAL SCIENCE: General Medical Knowledge of Systems across the lifespan: Coursework must include but is not limited to 1-2	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE	JUSTIFICATION
1. Pediatric conditions			
2. Geriatric conditions			
Medical Science subtotal			

C. CLINICAL SCIENCE: Physical Therapy Management of: PTA coursework must include but is not limited to areas 1 - 5.	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE	JUSTIFICATION
1. Integumentary System			
2. Musculoskeletal System			
3. Neuromuscular System			
4. Cardiopulmonary System			
5. First Aid/ Emergency Care			
Clinical Science subtotal			

D. CLINICAL DECISION MAKING WITHIN THE PLAN OF CARE DEVELOPED BY THE PT:	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE	JUSTIFICATION
1. Interpret the components of the Plan of Care (POC) developed by the PT.			
2. Health Record Review			
3. Discontinuation of Episode of care./ Discharge Planning			
4. Report any changes in patient/client status			
5. Withhold interventions beyond the scope of work for the Physical therapist assistant			

E. DATA COLLECTION SKILLS CONTENT AREA SUMMARY		
Indicate content area that you found evidence for items 1 - 17. All are required.		
Data collection skills content areas include but are not limited to the following:	Credit Hours	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE
1. Aerobic capacity and Endurance		
2. Anthropometric characteristics		
3. Mental functions/Arousal, mentation, and cognition		
4. Assistive Technology/Assistive Devices		
5. Gait, locomotion, and balance		
6. Wheelchair Management and mobility		
7. Integumentary integrity		
8. Joint integrity and mobility		
9. Muscle performance (including strength, length tone and endurance)		
10. Neuromotor development		
11. Pain		
12. Posture		
13. Range of motion		

14. Physical environment and measure of physical spaces		
15. Safety and barriers in the home, community and work environments		
16. Functional status/ (ADL & IADL), including standardized questionnaire		
17. Ventilation, respiration, and circulation		

Adapted from the *PTA Standards with Evidence*, Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education; 2015

F. INTERVENTION CONTENT AREA SUMMARY		
Indicate the content area for which you found evidence for items 1-9b. All are required.		
Intervention content areas include, but are not limited to, the following:	Credit Hours	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE
1. Airway Clearance Techniques		
1 A. Breathing exercises		
1 B. Coughing techniques		
1 C. Secretion mobilization		
2. Application of Devices and Equipment		
2 A. Assistive/adaptive devices		
2 B. Prosthetic and orthotic devices		
3. Biophysical Agents:		
3 A. Biofeedback		
3 B. Compression Therapies		
3 C. Cryotherapy		
3 D. Electrotherapeutic Agents		
3 E. Hydrotherapy		
3 F. Superficial and Deep Thermal Agents		
3 G. Traction		
3 H. Light therapies		
4. Functional Training in Self-Care and in Domestic, Education, Work, Community, Social, Civic Life		
5. Manual Therapy Technique		
5 A. Passive range of motion		
5 B. Massage		
6. Motor Function Training		
7. Patient/Client Education		
8. Therapeutic Exercise		
9. Wound Management:		
9 A. Isolation and sterile techniques		
9B. Dressings		

G. CLINICAL EDUCATION	CREDIT HOURS**	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE	JUSTIFICATION
Two clinical internships. Total clinic hours = 520 hours			

** Maximum number of full time clinical education credits is 15.00. Forty-eight clock hours equal one semester credit.

Clinical experiences:	Yes No	TRANSCRIPT/DOCUMENT REFERENCE
1. Deliver physical therapy services to patients/clients with a variety of diseases and conditions settings		
2. Occur in at least 2 different types of practice settings		

H. ADDITIONAL REQUIRED TECHNICAL COURSEWORK: Coursework is required in areas 1-10.	CREDIT HOURS	TRANSCRIPT REFERENCE	JUSTIFICATION
1. Role of the PTA within patient /client management			
1 A. Direction and supervision of the PTA by the PT.			
1 B. Inter-professional collaboration			
2. Professional Ethics and Behaviors			
2 A. Ethical Behaviors			
2 B. Ethical Decision Making			
3 Administration			
4 Educational Techniques			
5 Communication (related to client/patient care)			
6 Documentation/Billing			
7 Medical Legal Issues in Healthcare Delivery			
7A. International Classifications of Disabilities			
8 Psychosocial Aspects in Physical Therapy Work			
9 Evidenced Based Practice			
10. Patient and Healthcare Provider Safety			
Related Technical Coursework subtotal			

SUBTOTAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION CREDITS (60 minimum):	
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III. ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

Describe the academic level of the educational program and the institution within the context of the country's educational system:
1. Status (recognition/accreditation) within the country's educational system:
2. Entry requirements (minimum of secondary education):
3. Degree equivalence (Associate of Science, etc.):
4. Other (CAPTE accreditation, etc.):

IV. Summary

	Number of Credits
Total Foundational Studies Credits :	
Total Technical Education Credits (60 minimum):	
Total Credits (75 minimum):	

75 credits = Two years of study including summer sessions, based upon the CAPTE Annual Report 2015.

DEFINITIONS

Adequate: Coursework satisfies the requirement that the level of complexity and scope of the content in a course or courses meets established standards necessary for the entry-level associate's degree.

Clinical Education: That portion of a program that is conducted in the healthcare environment rather than the academic environment. That aspect of the curriculum is where students' learning occurs directly as a function of being immersed within physical therapy work. These experiences comprise all of the formal and practical "real-life" learning experiences provided for students to apply classroom knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors in the clinical environment. (*A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Assistant Education: Version 2007, p 129.*)

Clinical Sciences: The curricular content which addresses the systems approach to medical and surgical conditions frequently encountered. This component of the curriculum includes content about the cardiopulmonary, integumentary, musculoskeletal, and neuromuscular systems. Clinical science content is related to work expectations which include the specific responsibilities of patient history, data collection, and intervention. Content includes both diseases that require direct intervention of a physical therapist for management and diseases that affect conditions being managed by physical therapists across systems. (*A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Education: Version 2007; p. 112.*)

Clock Hour: Fifty to sixty minutes or as determined by the policy of the institution.

Comments: Validation of transcript references. Identifies specific references within official institutional records where content area(s) may be found. These references may be in the form of educational objectives, listing of course content, course syllabi, test questions, or other curricular documents.

Content Area: Component competencies as designated by the *Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Preparation of Physical Therapist Assistants* (adopted April 2006, effective July 1, 2007)

Course: A series of study which is taught at the post secondary level and results in an official transcript of record with assigned grade, a course description and syllabus, and credit can be verified by the institution. Credit is either assigned by a semester of 15 weeks plus exam week or is converted to semester hours based on 16 weeks of study.

Credit Hour: A semester credit hour must include at a minimum: 15 hours of lecture, or 30 hours of laboratory, or 48 hours of clinical education.

Foundational (Basic) Sciences: Essential content that contributes to the development and understanding of physical therapy to include sciences that can be described as *basic* and *applied* and as *biological, physical, and behavioral.* (*A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Assistant Education: Version 2007, Page 132*)

Grades: grades must equate to a "C" average in the United States. No failing grades should be accepted. Credentialing decisions for conversion of grades or semester credits should follow accepted guidelines as published in acceptable and recognized country codes and "International Reference Guides." This includes

but is not limited to, P.I.E.R., NAFSA publications or AACROA publications.

Intervention: The purposeful and skilled interaction with the patient/client, and, when appropriate, with other individuals involved in care, using various methods and techniques to produce changes in the patient's/client's condition consistent with the diagnosis and prognosis. (*Guide to Physical Therapist Practice Second Edition*, Jan. 2001; p. S37); *A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Assistant Education: Version 2007 p. 133*)

Standards: Foundational requirements of an established profession to determine entry-level professional/ technical requirements for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. In physical therapy, *The Guide to Physical Therapist Practice Second Edition, A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Assistant Education: Version 2007*, and *Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation of Education Programs for the Preparation of Physical Therapist Assistants* serve as resources for setting these requirements.

Substantially Equivalent: The individual has satisfied or exceeded the minimum number of credits required in foundational and technical education needed for a U.S. first degree for a physical therapist assistant. Coursework completed may not be identical in all respects to a U.S. first degree for a physical therapist assistant, but all required content areas are evident. Deficiencies may be noted in coursework, but may not be in the essential areas of technical education or of such magnitude that the education is not deemed to be at the entry-level of preparation for work in the United States.

Technical Skills: Psychomotor processes/procedures supported by affective and cognitive processes/procedures that constitute patient/client interventions. The skills must be integrated to achieve the most effective interventions and optimal outcomes. (*A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Assistant Education: Version 2007, p.135*)

Transcript Reference: Official documentation from the academic institution of courses completed, grades assigned, and degree conferred in the form of an official transcript. In the exceptional cases where an official transcript does not exist within the institution, an alternative official document may be considered.

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