

Physical Therapist Assistant  
REQUIRED OBSERVATIONS

*An observation series is required prior to validation for the Physical Therapist Assistant Program. Students must observe, at a minimum, two different PT's or PTA's performing their skills in two different clinical practice sites for a minimum of 40 total hours.*

**PURPOSE**

To provide each student with a realistic basis for making a career choice in the field of Physical Therapist Assistant by observing the actual work environment and to provide the student the opportunity to ask questions related to the occupation of Physical Therapist Assistant.

**INSTRUCTIONS/STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Contact two Physical Therapy Departments to schedule a minimum of 20 hours of observation in each department.
2. You should select two different patient environments, e.g., hospital, outpatient/private clinic, school, neurorehabilitation, home care agencies, etc. for your observations.
3. Call each department at least one week in advance to arrange your observation time.
4. Confirm your visit with the PT/PTA at least two days in advance.
5. Dress appropriately, use good judgment and common sense and remember that hygiene and cleanliness are important to the site and their patients/clients. DO NOT WEAR blue jeans, t-shirts, sweatshirts, halter tops, shorts, sandals, or go without socks.
6. Arrive promptly at your scheduled time, report to the Physical Therapy Department and request to see the PT/PTA through whom arrangements were made.
7. Introduce yourself and state your purpose for being there.
8. Notify the observation site PT/PTA if you will be late or unable to attend at your scheduled time.
9. The attached form includes questions to be asked to the PT/PTA; schedule a time to do this during your observation.
10. Log your hours of observation on the attached Observation Hours Log. Have the PT/PTA initial next to their name.
11. Upon completion of 20 hours of observation at each site have the PT/PTA sign the attached Observation Verification Form.
12. After completing all observations type the answers from both PT/PTA observation questions and the student observation questions.
13. Keep copies of your completed paperwork to for your records.
14. The completed observation paperwork (Observation Verification Form, Observation Hours Log, typed responses to Observation Questions) should be submitted to the Registrar's Office with your PTA program validation application.

*Contact: Paige McMillen 989-686-9025 or Program Coordinator, Chris Hausbeck 989-686-9316 with any questions.*

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**PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT  
OBSERVATION VERIFICATION FORM**

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

Student Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**OBSERVATION SITE:**

PT/PTA: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

PT/PTA Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**OBSERVATION SITE:**

PT/PTA: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

PT/PTA Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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**PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT  
OBSERVATION HOURS LOG**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>PT/PTA</b>	<b>Hours</b>

**PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT  
OBSERVATION QUESTIONS**

*Responses to these questions should be collected at each observation location and must be typed before submission.*

**The following questions are designed to be answered by the PT/PTA at each observation site.**

1. How would you describe the job duties of a PT/PTA in your setting?
2. What do you like most about your profession?
3. What do you like least about your profession?
4. What are the opportunities for advancement in the PT/PTA field?
5. What types of patients does a PT/PTA work with?
6. How does a PT/PTA fit into the team approach to patient care?

**The following questions are designed to be answered by the student.**

1. Have these observation experiences increased or decreased your desire to be part of the PTA profession? Why?
2. Based upon what you know about the occupation, what do you think will be the major benefits of this career for you? (List at least three.)
3. What do you think will be the hardest challenges of this career for you? (List at least one.)