Physical Therapist Assistant

Physical therapist assistants (PTAs) provide services to patients/clients who have impairments, disabilities, or changes in physical function and health status as a result of injury, disease and other causes. They help to restore and promote overall fitness and health. Physical therapy is often indicated for individuals with disabling conditions such as low back or neck pain, arthritis, heart disease, fractures, head injuries, cancer and cerebral palsy as well as for individuals needing services for disease and disablement prevention.

The PTA works under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist who conducts an initial evaluation of the patient/client and establishes a plan of care which may be implemented by the PTA. The PTA collects data related to muscle strength, range of motion, balance and coordination, posture, performance of physical tasks, respiration and motor function. Interventions may include the use of therapeutic exercise, training in the many activities of daily living, electrotherapy, heat and cold applications, and other biophysical agents to relieve pain and reduce swelling. They may also use traction or deep-tissue massage to relieve tissue tension and pain, and they teach patients to use assistive and adaptive devices such as crutches, prostheses and wheelchairs. Some PTAs specialize in areas such as pediatrics, geriatrics, orthopedics, sports medicine and neurology.

EMPLOYMENT

Physical therapy is predicted to be one of the fastest growing occupations by the US Department of Labor for the coming decade. Demand for physical therapist assistants continues to rise with the rate of retirement within the baby-boom generation and the increasing demand for physical therapy services for all age ranges.

Most physical therapist assistants are employed in hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, or out-patient physical therapy clinics. Other job opportunities are found within home health agencies, outpatient rehabilitation centers, schools and industry. In sports therapy, PTAs may work with athletes before, during, and after sporting events. Physical therapist assistants also teach in academic institutions.

EARNINGS

The wage scale for new PTA graduates ranges from $50,000-65,000/year for full-time work and will vary depending on the region and practice settings. Check with physical therapy sites in your area to get more specific information.

Loma Linda University is located in Southern California, 60 miles east of Los Angeles, and is a faith-based, health sciences institution emphasizing excellence in education, personal integrity, intellectual development, community service, and personal commitment to Christ. Located on campus are two world-class health care facilities, the Loma Linda University Medical Center, a 797-bed acute-care teaching hospital, and the Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital.

One of the unique things about Loma Linda University is its broad spectrum of education within health care. As you learn within your chosen discipline, you are in direct contact with other students studying in the doctor of physical therapy program, and in nursing, medicine, dentistry and many others. The School of Allied Health Professions at LLU is the largest school of its kind in the world, one of the eight schools which comprise Loma Linda University.
How to apply:
The online application period opens August 1 and closes April 1. For the greatest advantage, apply before the preferred deadline of November 1. To apply go to www.llu.edu.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign language) or IELTS (International English Language System) scores are required for applicants whose native language is not English or whose secondary education was received outside the United States (refer to: http://www.llu.edu/allied-health/sahp/internationalstudent.page )

Financial Aid: Our Financial Aid Office can help you plan to finance your education. Be sure to apply early for financial assistance, even before receiving your acceptance into the program. FAFSA applications (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) may be submitted starting on October 1. Applications for Cal Grants (California residents only) must be postmarked no later than March 2, and are available after December 25. Contact our Financial Aid Office at (909) 558-4509, at http://www.llu.edu/students/financial-aid/ or by mail at: Financial Aid Office, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, CA 92350

Contact Information:
For advising on prerequisite coursework, send unofficial transcripts by e-mail to sahpadmissions@llu.edu and include “PTA” in the subject line.

For all other questions about the program: Office: 909-558-4634
Administrative Assistant: Jamie Evans, AS jevans@llu.edu

Updated 07/17/19