Psychiatric Technician Program Description:
Cuesta College offers a twelve-month training program which is physically located at the Department of State Hospitals-Atascadero (DSH-A) for persons interested in becoming a licensed Psychiatric Technician. The Psychiatric Technician Program provides students the necessary training and skills needed to provide care to individuals with mental illness and/or intellectual disability. Upon completion of the program, graduates must pass a State Board Licensing Exam to obtain a license to practice as a Psychiatric Technician. Graduates of the DSH-Atascadero/Cuesta College PT Program have one of the highest pass rates in the state! Psychiatric Technicians typically work under the supervision of a physician, psychiatrist or a registered nurse. Licensed Psychiatric Technicians are employed throughout California. Most work in state hospitals, developmental centers, state and county correctional facilities, county and private mental health facilities, addiction treatment centers, work activity and day treatment programs and special education programs.

The Psychiatric Technician Program is a full-time, Monday-Friday program with typical hours of 6:45-2:30 each day. School days consist of classroom theory or clinical practicum assignments. Student attendance is mandatory in order to complete the state-mandated training hours required of a Psychiatric Technician student. Students are required to attend every class and complete every assignment. Any excused absences must be made up. Students with excessive absences will be dismissed from the program. As clinical sites exist throughout San Luis Obispo County, students MUST have reliable transportation.

Psychiatric Technician State Board Licensing Exam Pass Rates:
Psychiatric Technicians are licensed by the Board of Vocational Nurses and Psychiatric Technicians (BVNPT). To view recent pass rates, go to http://www.bvnpt.ca.gov/pdf/pt_pass_rates.pdf

Application Process:  (INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS ARE NOT ACCEPTED)
The Psychiatric Technician Program accepts applications year round. There are three application deadlines each year; in January, May and September. (Contact the Psychiatric Technician Program Office for specific dates). Upon the application deadline dates, candidates with a completed application on file are entered into a random draw. Applicants are then notified in writing of their status on the candidate list and what steps to take next to be processed for class. The application process consists of numerous steps, including a physical exam with TB testing and immunizations, a drug screen, and fingerprinting and background checks through both DSH-Atascadero and the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education. Additionally, eligible applicants who wish to also be employed part-time at DSH-Atascadero while enrolled in the program will be required to complete and pass a Training and Experience Exam, in addition to having positive employment references.

Time Commitment:
The time commitment required by students enrolled in the program is great. Students should expect to devote at least 34-35 hours each week to in-class and clinical assignments and another two to four hours per day for homework and study assignments. Students receive just ten State holidays off during the year and a total of four weeks off between terms; one week off between the Summer and Fall terms and the Fall and Spring terms and two weeks off between the Spring and Summer terms. The Psychiatric Technician Program adheres to strict attendance and punctuality policies and students who violate these policies may be dismissed from the program.
The Psychiatric Technician Program Curriculum (consists of 61.5 units-1664 hours):

PSYT 110 a three-week New Employee Orientation (6.5 units)
- Working in a forensic facility
- CPR/First aid
- Critical thinking & study skills
- Crisis intervention
- Managing assaultive behavior

PSYT 207 a 16-week Nursing Science Term (19 units)
- Nursing fundamentals
- Caring for the elderly
- Medical and surgical nursing
- Anatomy and physiology
- Communicable diseases
- Pharmacology
- Nutrition

Clinical sites are in the community at local skilled nursing facilities, day programs and hospitals.

PSYT 209 a 16-week Psychiatric Nursing Term (18.5 units)
- Communication skills & team building
- Group therapy & self-discovery
- Mental & personality disorders
- Pharmacology
- Medication administration
- Forensic nursing

Clinical sites are at Department of State Hospitals-Atascadero and various community mental health settings.

PSYT 208 a 16-week Developmental Disabilities Term (17.5 units)
- Normal growth & development
- Intellectual impairment
- Caring for the disabled person
- Genetics
- Medication administration
- Use of adaptive equipment
- Behavior management techniques
- Pharmacology
- Sign language

Clinical sites are in residential care facilities, day programs, work activity programs, child development centers and special education classrooms.

Strategies for Success:
- Students who anticipate needing financial assistance in order to attend Cuesta College should apply for education funding even though they have not yet been notified about acceptance into the program. You may apply online at http://academic.cuesta.edu/finaid/
- Possess a stable level of physical and mental health, which enable the student to care for patients in the clinical setting. Ability to lift and carry up to 50 pounds.
- Speak, read, and write the English language fluently and proficiently at college level. Professional use of medical terminology and correct spelling are expectations during the program.
- Be prepared to drive anywhere in San Luis Obispo County for clinical assignments.
- Arrange reliable dependent care and back-up dependent care for class and clinical days. Clinical assignments may start as early as 6:45 a.m. and could run as late as 2:30 p.m.
- Practice good self-care, stress management, and relaxation skills.
- Form and participate in a study group.
- Possess good organization, time management, and priority setting skills.
- Continue to explore and utilize available Cuesta College campus support services including counseling, Career Center, re-entry, study and tutorial skills, learning skills, library, health center, and financial aid.
- Develop strong study skills and demonstrate strong critical thinking skills.
- Establish a strong support system.
Eligibility Requirements:
Applicants must:
1. Be 18 years of age or older
2. Satisfy one of the following:
   - High school graduate
   - Completion of Equivalency Examination or G.E.D.
   - Two or four-year college degree of AA or higher from an accredited academic institution
3. Completion of one of the following:
   - MATH 003 and ENGL 156 course or equivalent with a “C” or better OR
   - Pass the Math and English Assessment Test at Cuesta College or equivalent. (Placement into Math 007 and English 201A or higher; math placement must be within three years). **You must apply to Cuesta College and obtain a Cuesta I.D. number in order to take the assessment tests** OR
   - Two or four-year college degree of AA or higher from an accredited academic institution

Application Procedures:
1. Complete the Psychiatric Technician Program application and submit with supporting documentation by application filing deadline. **INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!**
2. Attach the following supporting documentation to the program application:
   - Copy of current driver’s license and social security card; AND
   - **Official** sealed high school transcript or **official** sealed G.E.D. or proficiency report/certificate or **official** college transcripts of AA degree or higher from an accredited academic institution (Official transcripts must be received sealed by sending institution) Students may submit unofficial transcripts from Cuesta College ONLY!
   - **AND** one of the following:
     a. Proof of Assessment Test (Placement in Math 007 and English 201A) from Cuesta College or equivalent OR
     b. **Official** college transcripts completing Math 003 and English 156 with a “C” or better or equivalent OR
     c. **Official** college transcripts of AA degree or higher from an accredited academic institution (Official transcripts must be received sealed by sending institution) Students may submit **unofficial** transcripts from Cuesta College ONLY! **All other transcripts must be official!**
3. Applications and supporting documents may be mailed or delivered to the Psychiatric Technician Program Office at DSH-A. An after-hours mailbox is located just outside the program office door. **Official transcripts must be received in a sealed envelope from the sending institution.**
4. All applications and supporting documents must be received by the Psychiatric Technician Program Office by the deadline in order to be included in the next random draw process. Contact the program office for specific dates.

Approximately four weeks prior to classes beginning, the 30 selected candidates will receive a letter from the Psychiatric Technician Program Office indicating the date/time of the mandatory Registration/Orientation meeting held at Cuesta College’s North County Campus in Paso Robles. **Candidates will need to bring their Cuesta College ID number and the Completion Report showing they have completed the MANDATORY Online Orientation in order to register for PSYT 110 and PSYT 207 during this meeting. (See Additional Cuesta College Admission Requirements: pg. 5)** Login to MyCuesta account, click on the Student tab, and choose Online Orientation from the Steps to Success channel.

Foreign Transcripts:
International degrees, including high school equivalency, must be evaluated prior to being submitted. You may contact Academic Credentials Evaluation Institute, Inc., (ACEI) P.O. Box 6908, Beverly Hills, CA 90212 or download an application at the ACEI website: [http://www.acei1.com/applications.html](http://www.acei1.com/applications.html).
Applicants with foreign transcripts must still meet the English requirement through assessment testing or official college transcripts showing proof of English. You may contact Cuesta College Counselor Cindy Stever at 805-591-6200 ext. 4222 or cstever@cuesta.edu for assistance.

Selection Criteria/Random Draw:
1. All eligible applicants will go into a Spring, Summer or Fall computerized random draw and then be placed on a candidate list.
2. Thirty (30) students are selected for admission each term.
3. To maintain your status, you must respond to all correspondence and advise the Psychiatric Technician Program Office (805-468-3175) of any address/telephone number/e-mail address changes.

Clearance Process:
Once an applicant has been notified they are being processed for a particular class, they must clear a health screen/physical, a drug screen and two sets of fingerprints.

Health Screen/Physical:
1. Applicants are expected to provide complete medical and psychological history, including any illness, treatment and/or medications.
2. A physical examination and history will be conducted.
3. A drug screen must be taken and passed with negative results.
4. Proof of immunity is required upon admission.

Fingerprints: In order to participate in clinical assignments and meet clinical objectives, applicants will need to complete and clear two sets of fingerprints.

1. Department of State Hospitals-Atascadero (DSH-A). The Employment Office at DSH-A will contact you to arrange for DSH-A fingerprints and these will be provided at no charge. Prints must clear three weeks prior to classes starting.
2. SLO County Office of Education. Once applicants are notified that they are being processed to attend school, it is mandatory that applicants contact the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education at (805) 782-7236 to schedule an appointment to have fingerpints done. Fingerprints are completed in both their San Luis Obispo and Atascadero offices. Prints must be taken by the given deadline and must clear three weeks prior to classes starting. Cost to the applicant is $60.00.

Convictions: State hospitals and psychiatric technician programs shall not employ/admit an applicant if he or she has ever been convicted of any of the following felony offenses. These offenses will also disqualify you from attending the program. Applicants on formal or informal probation are also disqualified. These crimes include any crime specified in Penal Code Section 290, which generally includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offenses of a sexual nature</th>
<th>Child abuse</th>
<th>Assault with a deadly weapon or with force</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder, battery or robbery</td>
<td>Mayhem</td>
<td>Poisoning or adulterating food, drink, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual battery</td>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>Drug sales/transport for sales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elder or dependent adult abuse</td>
<td>Spousal Rape</td>
<td>Arson or attempted arson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aiding or abetting an escape</td>
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<td>Intercourse based on fraud</td>
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</table>

If an applicant has been convicted of a misdemeanor offense or a felony offense other than those listed or has been arrested for any other criminal offense, applicant shall be subject to administrative review.

Part-Time Employment for Students:
Currently, DSH-Atascadero offers part-time employment to eligible students enrolled in the Psychiatric Technician Program. This offer of employment is separate and apart from the student’s status in the program.
Students who choose not to be employed while in the program may do so with no effect on their standing in the program. Please direct all questions about part-time employment to the DSH-A Employment Office at 805-468-3384.

**Additional Cuesta College Admission Requirements:**
1. Apply to Cuesta College via [cuesta.edu/apply](http://cuesta.edu/apply) as soon as possible. Complete the MANDATORY online orientation (step 6 of the application process [http://www.cuesta.edu/student/getstarted/orientation/](http://www.cuesta.edu/student/getstarted/orientation/)).
   **Print out the Completion Report to bring to Registration/Orientation Day.**
2. Send official high school and other college (if applicable) transcripts* to Cuesta College, Office of Admissions & Records, P.O. BOX 8106, San Luis Obispo, CA 93403-8106.
   *NOTE: This is in addition to the official transcripts that are required to be sent to the Psychiatric Technician Program Office with your Psychiatric Technician Program application.

**Financial Aid Info:**
It is highly recommended that applicants apply for financial aid!
- Complete the 2016-2017 FAFSA to be eligible for state and federal funding [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Visit the FAFSA home page for deadline information. The FAFSA is also required to apply for Cuesta College Scholarships.
- Cuesta Scholarship Program Application. Go to the Cuesta College Financial Aid website to apply!
- Various other sources of funding are available to students. Contact the Financial Aid Office at 805-546-3143 for information, or go to the Cuesta College financial aid website [http://www.cuesta.edu/student/aboutmoney/finaid/](http://www.cuesta.edu/student/aboutmoney/finaid/)

In order to receive financial aid and/or scholarship benefits, applicants must submit official transcripts to Cuesta College Office of Admissions & Records as noted above. It is strongly recommended that you complete the FAFSA application as soon as possible. You can apply now, even prior to being notified of admission status into the Psychiatric Technician Program.

**Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSPS):**
Any student who feels he/she may require an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSPS) Office at Cuesta College to discuss his/her specific needs. Their office is located on the San Luis Obispo campus in Building 3300 (805-546-3148) or on the North County campus in Paso Robles in Building N3100 Room N3121 (805-591-6215). Students with documented disabilities should contact the DSPS office to coordinate reasonable accommodations. This may include, but is not limited to extended time on exams, distraction-free testing environments, and/or other accommodations. Applicants are encouraged to contact the DSPS Office as soon as possible for needed services.

**Other Student Services:**
Students enrolled in the Psychiatric Technician Program have access to all Cuesta College student services and supports (i.e., bookstore, library, computer lab, counseling, health center, tutoring center, etc.).
**APPROXIMATE COST OF THE PSYCHIATRIC TECHNICIAN PROGRAM: $3800.00**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cuesta College Registration Fees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fees are subject to change by the State of California and may occur at any time during the academic year. If fees change <strong>after you have registered</strong>, you will be refunded or billed the difference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrollment Fee for California residents: $46/Unit = $2829.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Resident Fee: $199/Unit + Enrollment Fee ($46/Unit) = $15,067.50</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>A non-resident student is one who has not had a legal residence in California for more than one year immediately preceding the beginning of the Cuesta College semester the student plans to enroll. Contact the Admissions Office at (805) 546-3140 for more information.</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>Fingerprint Fee: (two (2) sets of fingerprints required)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Your first set of prints is through the SLO County Office of Education in order to enter clinical facilities. Once you have been notified that your random draw number is being processed for a particular class, you must call the Office of Education at (805) 782-7236 to schedule an appointment <strong>immediately</strong> so your prints and background check will have time to clear. <strong>The cost to you is $60.00.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>You will be contacted by the Employment Office at DSH-A when to take your second set of fingerprints. They will be provided at DSH-A at no charge to you.</td>
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<tr>
<th>School Registration Fee (1st Term):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSYT 110 - 6.5 Units (3-Week Mandatory Orientation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSYT 207 – 19.0 Units</td>
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<tr>
<th>Uniforms/shoes (Instructors will inform you of specific color/styles):</th>
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<tr>
<td>Encouraged to purchase two sets of scrubs</td>
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<tr>
<th>Textbooks 1st Term: (approximate)</th>
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<tr>
<td>$272.75</td>
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<tr>
<th>Equipment/Supplies:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Watch, stethoscope, penlight, notebooks, paper, etc.</td>
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| Approximate Cost to Start School | $1710.75 |

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<tr>
<th>Registration Fee 2nd Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>PSYT 209 – 18.5 Units</td>
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<tr>
<th>Textbooks 2nd Term (approximate)</th>
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<tr>
<td>$106.25</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Registration Fee 3rd Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>PSYT 208 – 17.5 Units</td>
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<tr>
<th>Textbooks 3rd Term (approximate)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$87.75</td>
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<tr>
<th>State Licensing Exam Application Fees:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Application Processing Fee</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBI Fingerprint Processing Fee</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOJ Fingerprint Processing Fee</td>
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</tbody>
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| Licensing exam application fees will be due at the end of 3rd Term | $199.00 |
Psychiatric Technician Program
Application Process

Submit Completed Application Packet

Random Draw

Top 80 Applicants Processed

“School Only” Student

DSH-A Fingerprint

SLO County Office of Ed. Fingerprint

Physical/Substance Abuse Test

Possible Priority Status Next Class

Possible Priority Status Next Class

Candidates Below Top 30

Top 30 Admitted

By Deadline

Cleared All Processes

Met All Step Deadlines BUT Failed to Clear by Final Deadline

Employment Reference Checks

Go to “School Only” Student

Complete all “School Only” Processes

Fail

Fail

Fail

Disqualified

Disqualified

Disqualified

Pass

Pass

Pass

“Working” Student

DSH Training & Experience Exam

Fail or Don’t Take

Pass

Go to “School Only” Student

Fingerprints

SLO County Office of Ed.

Fingerprints

May 2016