



Physical Therapist Assistant Program Frequently Asked Questions

What is a PTA?

A Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) is an educated, skilled, and licensed health care worker. Under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist, the PTA helps people of all ages who have health-related conditions that limit their ability to move and perform functional activities in their daily lives. Job activities of a PTA may include helping a person to exercise or learn to use crutches, providing electrical stimulation, paraffin baths, applying hot or cold packs, traction, and ultrasound treatments. PTAs are responsible for recording patient responses to treatment and reporting progress. Clients seeking physical therapy may be accident victims or individuals with disabling conditions, such as arthritis or head injury, or may be recovering from surgery or sports injuries. PTAs work in a variety of settings including hospitals, outpatient clinics, home health, nursing homes, schools, sports facilities, and more.

Academic Requirement: A PTA possesses an Associate of Applied Science Degree

What is a PT?

A Physical Therapist (PT) is a highly educated, skilled, and licensed health care professional. PTs examine patients' medical histories, then test and measure their strength, range of motion, balance and coordination, posture, muscle performance, respiration, and motor function. They also determine the patient's ability to be independent and reintegrate into the community or workplace after injury or illness. The physical therapist develops patient treatment plans describing a therapy strategy, its purpose, and the anticipated outcome. PTs work in coordination with PTAs to restore, maintain, and promote client fitness and health.

Academic Requirement: A PT must possess a degree at the Masters level or above. Most educational programs for physical therapists now culminate with a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree.

Will having a degree in PTA help me to become a PT?

PTA and PT are considered distinct academic paths. In general, a PTA program is not a stepping-stone to a PT program and technical courses in PTA program are generally not transferrable to a PT program, though general education coursework may be accepted in transfer.

Does a PTA have a license?

In most states, PTAs must have a license. The Alabama Board of Physical Therapy requires that an applicant for licensure as a physical therapist assistant must first have completed a program of physical therapy education approved by the Physical Therapy Association's Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). The Alabama Board of Physical Therapy grants qualified applicants a license following satisfactory completion of a written examination.

Alabama Board policy states, "*Licensure shall be refused to any applicant who is of other than good moral character. The determination as to what constitutes other than good moral character and reputation shall be solely within the judgment of the Board.*" Grounds for refusal of licensure may include, but are not limited to, conviction of a felony or of a crime involving moral turpitude, conduct detrimental to the best interest of the public, or conviction of violating any state or federal narcotic law.

Additional information can be found at: <http://www.pt.alabama.gov/>

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Curriculum Plan		
	Semester 1 - Fall	Credit Hours
EMS 106	Medical Terminology	2
PTA 200	Physical Therapy Issues & Trends	2
PTA 250	Therapeutic Procedures I	4
PTA 220	Functional Anatomy & Kinesiology	3
PTA 221	Kinesiology Lab	1
BIO 201	Human Anatomy & Physiology I	4
ORI 110	Freshman Seminar	1
	Semester 2 - Spring	
PTA 251	Therapeutic Procedures II	4
PTA 252	Physical Agents & Therapeutic Modalities	2
PTA 240	Physical Disabilities I	2
PTA 202	PTA Communication Skills	2
BIO 202	Human Anatomy & Physiology II	4
SPH 106/107	Speech Elective	3
	Semester 3 - Summer	
PTA 230	Neuroscience	2
PTA 232	Orthopedics for the PTA	2
PTA 290	Therapeutic Exercise	1
PSY 200	General Psychology	3
ENG 101	English Composition I	3
EMS 100	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation I (optional)	(1)
	Semester 4 - Fall	
PTA 260	Clinical Education I*	1
PTA 266	Clinical Fieldwork I*	2
PTA 231	Rehabilitation Techniques	2
PTA 241	Physical Disabilities II	2
MTH 100	Intermediate College Algebra	3
PSY 210	Human Growth & Development	3
	Semester 5 - Spring	
PTA 263	Clinical Affiliation I*	3
PTA 261	Clinical Education II*	1
PTA 267	Clinical Fieldwork II*	2
PTA 201	Physical Therapist Assistant Seminar	2
HUM Elective	Art, Music, Philosophy, Religion, Literature, Theater	3
	Total =	69

Curriculum Plan / PTA Courses

All general education and PTA courses must be taken and passed with a C or higher in order to complete the program. Five semesters are required even when all general education coursework has been completed prior to enrollment in the PTA program. If a student begins the program with outstanding general education coursework, the classes must be completed as scheduled in the curriculum plan.

Graduates of the PTA program are awarded an [Associate of Applied Science Degree in Physical Therapist Assistant](#).

PTA classes and labs are taught in-person on the Decatur campus. Clinical courses* take place at assigned facilities throughout the Tennessee valley region and the student generally works 40 hours per week following the schedule of their on-site clinical instructor.

What physical capabilities are required of a PTA?

Students enrolled in the PTA program are required to successfully complete both academic and clinical requirements. The program has adopted a list of **Eligibility Criteria** to delineate the physical, cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills deemed minimally necessary for admission, progression, program completion and the provision of safe and effective client care. The Eligibility Criteria can be found on the PTA website. The Alabama Community College System endorses the Americans' with Disabilities Act. If a student cannot meet the Eligibility Criteria it is their responsibility to request appropriate reasonable accommodations through the CCC Student Disability Services Office.

When does the program begin?

A new class of twenty-four (24) PTA students is enrolled each fall semester.

How can I apply to the CCC PTA program?

Click "**How to Apply**" on the PTA website to find directions. An application with all required forms is posted on the website to download and print. Applications are accepted each year beginning in January and ending at a deadline date in April.

What expenses are involved in the PTA Program?

In addition to tuition, health students have expenses related to the listed requirements below, plus textbooks and laboratory supplies. Approximate costs are discussed in information sessions and program orientation.

HEALTH SCIENCES STUDENTS REQUIREMENTS:

- Retain reliable transportation to and from the campus and assigned clinical education facilities.
- Comply with a dress code that includes an assigned uniform
- Undergo a health examination, TB screening, and validate current immunization or immunity to infectious diseases including COVID
- Submit proof of current certification in basic life support (CPR) at the healthcare provider level
- Purchase low-cost malpractice insurance through the CCC Health Sciences division
- Submit to a background check by a designated vendor
- Undergo drug and alcohol testing by a designated vendor

Do I have to have a background check, a physical examination, drug testing, or have taken CPR to apply to the PTA Program?

No, none of the above are required to apply. PTA faculty will instruct enrolled students when to proceed with these requirements. Policies for the background check and drug testing are provided upon enrollment. Results may prohibit a student from participating in clinical education and may necessitate withdrawal or course failure.

What is involved in PTA lab courses?

Many PTA classes include laboratory hours for learning skills. Courses with lab components require hands-on participation with other students and lab attire that allows practice on, palpation of, and observation of body segments. For female students this includes a halter top or sports bra and shorts which allow for exposure of the hip joint and thigh. Male students must also wear similar shorts and upper body covering that allows exposure of the trunk, front and back.

What are "clinical experiences"?

In addition to on-campus classes, each student will have three clinical rotations while in the PTA program. When the student is on a clinical rotation he/she will be assigned to a clinical facility full time to practice as a

Student PTA with a licensed PT or PTA as a clinical instructor who will supervise the student for the duration of the clinical rotation.

Clinical rotations are scheduled Monday through Friday, generally between the hours of 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM, full time. Health care facility assignments are based on the learning needs of the student, not geographical proximity to the home. Students must have reliable transportation, flexibility in their personal schedules, and the willingness to commute to clinical sites throughout north Alabama and southern Tennessee.

Will I be able to work and attend the PTA program?

The program requires commitment. Successful students report studying approximately two hours for each contact hour of lecture classes per week. Sound study skills and time management are critical to achievement in the PTA program. Therefore, it is recommended that students work no more than 20 hours per week.

The PTA Program Application says the grading policy is different. Why is that?

The PTA program grading policy is more stringent than the general college grading policy. In order to pass a PTA course the student must receive a grade of 75% or greater. Students who do not receive a minimum of 75% as a final grade in a course will not be allowed to progress in the program. It is the belief of the faculty that having a strict grading policy will help to better ensure student knowledge and competency.

Is the PTA program accredited?

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Calhoun Community College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100 Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085 telephone: 703-706-3245; email: accreditation@apta.org; website: www.capteonline.org.