



# Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)



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## Associate in Applied Science Degree (5 semesters)

### At a Glance

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) is a skilled technical health care worker who assists the physical therapist in providing services that help improve mobility, relieve pain, and prevent or limit permanent physical disabilities of patients suffering from injuries or disease. Patients include accident victims and individuals with disabling conditions such as low back pain, arthritis, heart disease, fractures, head injuries, and cerebral palsy.

Duties of the physical therapist assistant are varied but include rehabilitation of orthopedic, neurological, pediatric, and sports related problems. Physical therapist assistants are employed in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, skilled nursing facilities, home health care agencies, private practices, and other specialized health care settings. Once a patient is evaluated and a treatment plan is designed by the physical therapist, the physical therapist assistant can provide many aspects of treatment.

Components of treatment procedures performed by these workers involve exercise, massage, electrical stimulation, paraffin baths, hot and cold packs, traction, and ultrasound. The physical therapist assistant is responsible for reporting patient responses and treatment outcomes to the physical therapist.

### Program Description

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program is a two-year course of study. The student should complete the first year of general education course prerequisites before being eligible to apply to the PTA Program. Three semesters are necessary to complete the final year of the program. The second-year classes include technical and clinical experience in a variety of health-care settings where the student performs selected clinical procedures under the supervision of a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant.

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Wallace State Community College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314; Telephone: 703-706-3245; E-mail: [accreditation@apta.org](mailto:accreditation@apta.org); Website: <http://www.capteonline.org>. Only graduates of CAPTE accredited schools will be eligible to apply for the National Licensing Examination for the Physical Therapist Assistant, administered by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy. After successful completion of this exam, the individual can be a licensed physical therapist assistant.

### Admission Requirements

Admission to the final year of the PTA Program is made annually, with classes starting in the fall. Enrollment is limited but there is not a waiting list; all eligible applicants are considered for admission. Students are selected on the basis of completion of program application requirements, prerequisite GPA and ACT test scores. Applications will be accepted from March 1 until June 1 for classes that begin each fall term. Applications received after the deadline will be considered on a space available basis. No application will be received or considered after the start of the fall semester. See the program application, available through the program website, for additional information.

### Applicant Information

1. Unconditional admission to the college – College application must be submitted prior to the program application deadline.
2. Student must be in good standing with the college.
3. Receipt of complete program applications accepted between March 1 and June 1 for Fall entry. Applications received after the deadline will be considered on a space available basis.
4. The PTA program online application is located on program's webpage at [www.wallacestate.edu](http://www.wallacestate.edu). Online application instructions are under the *PTA Program Application* tab. All applicants are required to upload all necessary documentation for consideration.
5. Official transcripts from each college attended must be provided to the Admissions Office and all unofficial transcripts must be uploaded.
6. Student must meet the essential functions and technical standards required for the program as documented on the required WSCC physical form at [www.wallacestate.edu](http://www.wallacestate.edu) -see Physical Form Essential Functions on the Health Division page.
7. A minimum of 20 ACT composite score (National or Residual) is required for admission consideration. Proof of score must be uploaded. Higher scores will receive more points in the application process.
8. Documentation of a minimum of 24 hours of observation at not less than 2 different facilities; this paper work must be signed by the Licensed Physical Therapist or Licensed Physical Therapist Assistant under whom this observation was completed. Additional hours will receive more points in the application process.
9. Applicants must possess a minimum of 3.0 or greater grade point average on a 4.0 scale with a "C" or better in

all general required courses. GPA calculated for program selection will be on the general required prerequisite courses only. Students who have successfully completed all of the prerequisite courses will be considered for admission first. Students who have not completed all prerequisites will be considered thereafter only if space is available and provided that submitted documentation reflects that prerequisites will be successfully completed prior to the program start date.

It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that the application submission is complete and that all information is submitted to the appropriate offices. Any piece of missing documentation will result in the application submission not being considered. Each time an applicant reapplies to the program this packet must be completed again. Retain copies of every item uploaded, as this information will not be released from submitted applications.

### **Selection and Notification**

1. The PTA Program admits students in the fall semester of each year. Admission to the program is competitive, and the number of students admitted is limited by faculty and clinical availability. Meeting minimal requirements does not guarantee acceptance. Please see the program application posted online to review the process and visit the PTA Program website for statistics for recently admitted classes.
2. Program applications will be reviewed for completion of program admission requirements. Applicants who have completed all program requirements will be considered before those who have not.
3. Applicants are ranked on the basis of a formula that weighs the grades in prerequisite courses, observation hours and ACT score. All applicants who meet the minimum requirements are considered; however, the higher an applicant's prerequisite GPA, observation hours and ACT score, the better his/her chances for admission. Additional points will also be added to the ranking for individuals who have completed PTA 120 or both MSG 104 and MSG 204 at WSCC. (Additional points will only be available for WSCC PTA 120 or WSCC MSG 104/204, not both. If an applicant has completed both, the higher of the two point values will be added.)
4. In the event of a tie for program admission, the applicant with the highest numerical average in PTA 120 (first attempt) will be accepted. If this does not fully resolve the tie, the program will then consider highest GPA points followed by highest ACT composite score followed by highest ACT reading subscore. Written notification of the outcome will be mailed to each applicant at the address provided on the application.
5. Students selected for program admission must respond, confirming their intent to enroll, within ten (10) days of the acceptance letter postmarked date. A student who fails to respond will forfeit their position in the class.
6. Students who are accepted into the program and are not

eligible to register for classes by the day of program orientation due to failing to meet the financial aid deadline must make alternate payment arrangements or forfeit their place in the class. The WSCC financial aid deadline for fall is usually June 1 each year - refer to the financial aid website for details. This deadline includes the FAFSA and all required paperwork.

### **Program Expectations**

Students admitted into the Physical Therapist Assistant program are expected to comply with the Health Science Programs regulations and expectations as published in the Programs of Study section of the Wallace State College Catalog and on the college website.

### **Upon Admission**

Following official acceptance into the program students will be required to submit a physical examination form (current within one year), which includes documentation of immunizations along with evidence of having begun the Hepatitis B vaccinations. Also upon acceptance, students will be required to document successful completion of American Heart Association approved CPR for Healthcare Providers certification, valid through September of the following year. Additionally, students must be able to meet all Performance Standards/Essential Functions as published on the program website. Students will also be required to successfully complete a background check and drug screening. PTA students must carry liability insurance and accident insurance, which are available through the College, as well as personal health insurance. Do not complete any of these (CPR, physical exam, background check or drug screening) until instructed to do so by the program director.

### **Progression**

Students selected for admission to the PTA Program must maintain a minimum grade of 75% or higher in major required courses. Failure to do so, or withdrawal from a PTA major required course, will result in dismissal from the program.

Students are required to pass the PTA Exit Exam in PTA 201. Failure to pass the exit exam will result in a failing grade for PTA 201, regardless of other grades or competencies achieved. See the PTA Program Student Handbook or PTA 201 syllabus for further information.

### **Readmission to Program**

Applicants who have been previously dismissed or have withdrawn from the program may be readmitted one time only. A new application must be submitted to be considered. No preferential consideration is given to prior students for readmission.

### **Career Path**

The high school student interested in a career in physical therapy should pursue advanced math and science courses to

prepare for success in college. Upon completion of the PTA Program, graduates are eligible to sit for the National Physical Therapy Examination for the Physical Therapist Assistant, achieving licensure and therefore employability throughout the United States. Due to the diversity of patients seen and the variety of clinical settings available, PTAs can specialize in the care of one patient group or experience a variety of employment options. A PTA can also advance their clinical skills through professional continuing education. PTAs interested in administrative positions can continue their education by pursuing a Health Science degree or a degree in Health Care Management from a university, many of whom may recognize the PTA Program year as elective credit. Consult the STARS transfer guide for further information. The PTA program is not usually a direct pathway to becoming a physical therapist although a limited number of programs do exist that link the two. The individual who wishes to become a physical therapist will pursue a Doctorate in Physical Therapy and should take bachelor or master level course work appropriate to the program to which they plan to apply. Further information about PTA and PTA education is available through the American Physical Therapy Association website at [www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org)

The U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook, anticipates that positions for physical therapist assistants will increase much faster than average, growing by 30% in 2016-2026 and that long-term demand will continue to rise, in accordance with the increasing number of individuals with disabilities or limited function. The growing elderly population is particularly vulnerable to chronic and debilitating conditions that require therapeutic services, making the role of the PT/PTA team vital. In addition, future medical developments should permit an increased percentage of trauma victims to survive, creating added demand for therapy services. Physical therapists are expected to increasingly utilize assistants to reduce the cost of physical therapy services. Median annual earnings of physical therapist assistants were \$57,430 in May 2017, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$79,380. (Source: U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics)

**NOTE:** *The Guided Pathways Curricular Maps below contain all the elements required for degree/certificate completion. However, courses may be offered or taken in other semesters so long as prerequisites are met and courses are available. Additional option available. Please see DegreeWorks for allowable substitutions. Courses may be available days, nights, hybrid, and online. Sample maps for part-time attendance may also be available. Please see an advisor.*

**NOTE:** *The first two semesters can be flexibly arranged, with multiple sections of each course being offered most semesters, although some courses must be completed in sequence such as the Biology and Psychology courses.*

**ASSOCIATE DEGREE:**

**AAS PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT – Guided Pathway/Map**

**1st Semester**

ORI 110*	Freshman Seminar	1
ENG 101	English Composition I	3
PSY 200	General Psychology	3
BIO 201**	Human Anatomy and Physiology I	4
MTH 100	Intermediate College Algebra	3
HUM 101***	Introduction to Humanities	3
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Total Semester Credit Hours		17

**2nd Semester**

SPH 106	Fundamentals of Oral Commun	3
PSY 210	Human Growth and Development	3
BIO 202**	Human Anatomy and Physiology II	4
HIT 110****	Medical Terminology	3
PTA 120*****	Introduction to Kinesiology	3
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Total Semester Credit Hours		16

**NOTE:** *The final three semesters of the program must be completed in the sequence shown. Classes are only available as full-time day classes.*

**3rd Semester-Fall Semester ONLY**

PTA 200	PT Issues and Trends	2
PTA 202	PTA Communication Skills	2
PTA 220	Functional Anatomy & Kinesiology	3
PTA 222	Functional Anatomy & Kine Lab	2
PTA 240	Physical Disabilities I	2
PTA 250	Therapeutic Procedures I	4
PTA 258	Introduction to Clinical Environ	1
PTA 260	Clinical Education I	1
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Total Semester Credit Hours		17

**4th Semester-Spring Semester ONLY**

PTA 230	Neuroscience	2
PTA 231	Rehabilitation Techniques	2
PTA 232	Orthopedics for the PTA	2
PTA 241	Physical Disabilities II	2
PTA 251	Therapeutic Procedures II	4
PTA 266	Clinical Field Work I	2
PTA 290	Therapeutic Exercise	1
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Total Semester Credit Hours		15

**5th Semester-Summer Semester ONLY**

PTA 201	PTA Seminar	2
PTA 268	Clinical Practicum	5
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Total Semester Credit Hours		7

**TOTAL CREDIT HOURS 68-69**

*\*ORI 110 - Freshman Seminar is a college requirement, not a program requirement. Students transferring in 12 or more semester credits or enrolled at WSCC prior to Fall 2004 are exempt.*

*\*\*BIO 103 (or a passing score on the Biology Placement Test) is a prerequisite for BIO 201 & 202.*

*\*\*\*The program will accept any 3 semester credit humanities elective course (art, music, theater, religion, philosophy, literature or humanities.)*

*\*\*\*Medical Terminology must be a 3 semester credit course.*

*\*\*\*\*Recommended course: PTA 120 is not an admission requirement for the PTA Program but will add additional points to the program application based on the grade achieved. Alternately, additional points are available for MSG 104/204. Courses for additional points must be completed at WSCC. Visit the program website for additional information.*

**NOTE:** *All courses with the PTA or MSG prefix must be completed at WSCC.*