

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM

FACTS SHEET

The Physical Therapist Assistant program at Wallace State Community College is a two-year course of study. The first year of general education prerequisites should be complete before being eligible to apply to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program. Three semesters are necessary to complete the final year of the program, which begins in the fall semester. 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 Licensed Physical Therapist or Physical Therapist Assistant.

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What do PTA's do?

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) is a skilled technical health care worker who, under the direction of a Physical Therapist, assists in patient treatment. The physical therapist assistant, following the plan of care developed by the supervising physical therapist, delivers care to the patient using established procedures. Duties of the PTA are varied but include rehabilitation of orthopedic, neurologic, 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.

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If accepted to the PTA program, what type of class schedule can I expect in a typical week?

The PTA student should prepare for classes that meet five days a week in the fall and spring semesters, particularly during clinical rotations. The PTA Program is not a part-time program and requires an intensive amount of studying when not in class. The program is currently utilizing a class schedule that requires a student to come to campus approximately four days per week. For example, currently classes meet Monday through Thursday from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm. However, during clinical education assignments students will be required to stay at their assigned facility during normal business hours which may run 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and may include time on Saturday and Sunday. Hours will vary depending on the facility.

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When does Clinical Education Fieldwork begin and where does it take place?

The first clinical rotation is at the end of fall semester and a second clinical rotation is scheduled for three weeks early in spring semester (often in March but can be earlier). The final summer semester of the program consists of 2 full-time rotations for a total of nine weeks. The program has an extensive clinical network ranging from Hanceville, Alabama to Alaska. Students are placed based on educational needs and site availability. All clinical travel expenses are the responsibility of the student.

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Are students able to work during the program?

Full-time employment is not recommended so that appropriate study time is available. The course load is a full-time load and a student should expect to spend 2-3 hours of study time outside of class for each credit hour in which they are enrolled. For example, fall semester is a total of 17 credit hours. Program students should plan for 40-50 hours of study time outside of scheduled class time. Students should contact the Office of Financial Aid at 256-352-8137 to discuss financial aid options.

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Can I complete the PTA Program online or on a part-time basis?

You can complete the general education / prerequisite (first year) classes at your own pace and often in an online format, but the PTA Program classes (final year) must be completed in three consecutive semesters. While online classes are included, this does not significantly reduce the number of days or hours on campus. The program involves a full-time commitment and course load, including significant study expectations beyond scheduled class times, for one full year.

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Are all the PTA courses held on the campus at Wallace State Community College in Hanceville?

All PTA program courses are held at the Hanceville campus. While the first year of general education (prerequisite) courses can be completed at any regionally accredited college, the PTA Program year must be completed at the WSCC-Hanceville campus. The clinical education portion of the program is in various health care facilities both in-state and out-of-state. Additionally, there may be field trips that require students to drive and/or carpool to a given facility within a reasonable distance of the school.

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Is the PTA program fully accredited?

Yes. The PTA Program at Wallace State Community is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, VA 22305-3085; telephone: 703-706-3245; email: accreditation@apta.org; website: <http://www.capteonline.org> [If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call 256-352-8332 or email alina.adams@wallacestate.edu] Further information regarding program accreditation can be found on the "Licensure/Accreditation" link of the PTA Program website.

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Will the PTA program help me if I decide to go to PT school later?

All physical therapy programs require that you complete at least a bachelor's degree, and sometimes a master's degree, prior to admission. While many of the PTA program prerequisites and required courses may be counted toward completing your bachelor's, it may not be a direct step into a PT program. However, a very small number of PTA to PT degree programs do exist. Advantages of completing the PTA program prior to beginning a PT program include enhanced academic preparation, improved understanding of the profession and an excellent employment potential to finance your future education plans. Individuals who are interested in pursuing a degree as a physical therapist should contact the school of their choice for admission requirements. A listing of accredited physical therapy programs is available through the American Physical Therapy Association website at www.apta.org

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Will I be able to get a job after completing the PTA program?

Graduates are eligible to sit for the National Physical Therapist Assistant Examination. Following successful completion of the exam, a licensed physical therapist assistant will find job opportunities nationwide. Naturally, employment opportunities fluctuate within geographic regions and practice locations. Currently a new graduate can expect a starting salary of \$38,000-42,000 annually.

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I have heard that there are changes being made to the PTA curriculum/program. What changes can I expect?

The PTA Program is constantly changing and improving to meet the demands of a dynamic marketplace. However, when changes occur in admissions standards, general education/prerequisites or program classes, the changes are first communicated through the WSCC and PTA Program websites. It will also be published in the online WSCC catalog. Changes of this type usually involve a transition year in which either old or new prerequisite requirements are acceptable for program admission consideration. Visit the websites often for the most up-to-date information and the earliest possible notification of changes should they occur.

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Do I need to meet with a PTA program advisor at WSCC?

The PTA program is currently offering pre-recorded advising sessions, available on-demand. These recordings provide information about program expectations, application procedures and other general program information. We encourage you to visit the PTA Program website to access this recording.

Program advisors are also available by email or phone. Individual appointments are available. Advisors are happy to provide program information and individualized recommendations to help you successfully pursue your goal of becoming a PTA. It is strongly recommended that you correspond with a WSCC PTA program advisor at least once to develop a semester-by-semester plan of classes. This is particularly true if you are attending another institution and planning to transfer classes to WSCC. Attaching a student copy of your transcripts to your email, or having a copy available during phone calls, appointments, or advising sessions will help the advisor provide the most accurate information.

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If accepted into the PTA program, what is the expected financial cost of the second year of study?

A breakdown of estimated program expenses is available on the "Estimated Expenses" link on the PTA Program website. Please visit this link for the most up-to-date expectations. Tuition and fee costs are published each semester when the WSCC Schedule of Classes is released – please see the WSCC website to view the current schedule.

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What is the length of the program?

Ideally, the program takes approximately 2 years to complete - 2 semesters of general education / prerequisites and 3 semesters of major required program courses. Regardless of the length of time you take to complete the prerequisites, the PTA Program classes are 3 consecutive semesters and must be completed within those 3 semesters. The classes begin in the fall of each year and program students graduate one year later at the end of the summer term.

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What are the basic requirements for PTA Program admission?

Admission to the PTA Program is based on your [prerequisite GPA](#), [ACT score](#) and [hours of observation](#), of which the prerequisite GPA is approximately three times more important than the other categories. Each of these areas are discussed in detail in the sections below, including the necessary [prerequisite](#) coursework.

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Where can I obtain information about the program?

Right now, you are looking at the best source of PTA Program information available – our program website. The current WSCC catalog (available on the WSCC homepage) is also a great source. You are also invited to view our pre-recorded advising session. This session includes general advising information and application submission information and is available on demand. Visit the program webpage for more information. Finally, you can make an appointment with a Health Program advisor through the WSCC Advising Center at 256-352-8040. For general program information or to set up an appointment to meet with a program advisor, contact the Health Division/PTA secretary at 256-352-8307.

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Can I get an information packet mailed to me?

The PTA Program no longer maintains printed information – all program information is posted on the Wallace State PTA webpage.

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What courses are required for admission into the program?

Students are required to complete the following courses with a grade of “C” or above in each: ORI-Orientation (a WSCC requirement. You are exempt from the Orientation (ORI) requirement if you transfer in at least 12 credit hours from another institution), ENG 101-English Composition I, Humanities Elective (the PTA Program recommends PHL 210 Ethics and the Health Sciences but any three credit hour (Code ‘A’) art, music, theatre, religion, philosophy or literature course is acceptable), PSY 200-General Psychology, PSY 210-Developmental Psychology, SPH 106-Fundamentals of Oral Communication, HIT 110-Medical Terminology, MTH 100-Intermediate College Algebra, BIO 201 & 202-Human Anatomy and Physiology I & II (prerequisite is Biology 103 or acceptable HESI Biology placement test score). A full list of up-to-date courses and their credit hours can be found in the current WSCC catalog. It is important that any prerequisite transfer course taken must include the same number of credits as those shown in the current WSCC catalog.

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Are there any exceptions to these general education / prerequisite classes?

Students who transfer in at least 12 credit hours from another regionally accredited institution are exempt from the Orientation (ORI) requirement. Although WSCC requires BIO 103 as a prerequisite to BIO 201 and BIO 202, other institutions may not have this same requirement. If you are attending one of those institutions and plan to transfer in both BIO 201 and BIO 202, the PTA program does not expect nor require you to complete BIO 103. While the PTA program does recommend certain Humanities electives (for example, PHL 210 Ethics and the Health Sciences) any Code A, three credit hour Humanities course will substitute. Humanities courses include art (ART), music (MUS), theatre (THR), religion (REL), philosophy (PHL), humanities (HUM) or literature courses. Also, any higher math course can be substituted for MTH 100. Please note that MTH 098, MTH 116, MTH 131, and MTH 132 are NOT higher math courses and will not substitute for MTH 100.

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Do I have to complete the general education / prerequisites in one year?

No. You may take as long as you need to complete the requirements for admission into the program, however, the final year of PTA Program classes must be completed within the specified 3 semester sequence. The final 3 consecutive semesters begin in the fall each year.

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Can the general education / prerequisite courses be taken at any other colleges?

Yes. Wallace State Community College in Hanceville transfers classes from many other colleges in the state. Courses are transferable if they are equivalent in both credit hours and content to our established prerequisite courses. Information on course equivalency may be obtained by contacting the WSCC Admissions office at 256-352-8128. A course description from your college catalog may be required. The list below includes common course substitutions from neighboring institutions, provided that a grade of “C” or above is achieved.

- BIO 120 Medical Terminology will transfer in for the HIT 110 Medical Terminology PTA requirement. (AL Southern, Calhoun, Central AL, Enterprise-Ozark, Gadsden State, Jeff State, Lawson State, Northeast AL, Snead State, Shelton State, Southern Union, Wallace-Selma)
- OAD 211 Medical Terminology will transfer in for the HIT 110 Medical Terminology PTA requirement. (Bevill State, Northwest Shoals)
- HPS 105 Medical Terminology will transfer in for the HIT 110 Medical Terminology PTA requirement. (Faulkner)
- OAD 204 Medical Terminology will transfer in for the HIT 110 Medical Terminology PTA requirement. (Jefferson Davis)
- The PTA program also regularly substitutes SPH 107 Fundamentals of Public Speaking for the SPH 106 Fundamentals of Oral Communication requirement.

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Can I substitute other courses for any of the general education / prerequisites?

Generally speaking, if the course name, description and credit hours are the same – even if the course number code is different – a course will usually transfer. For example, the PTA program routinely transfers in a variety of medical terminology classes (BIO 120, OAD 211, HPS 105, OAD 204) from our neighboring institutions. The same is true of ENG 101 English Composition I – a variety of course names and numbers are used by different institutions, but every school has a 3-credit hour basic English composition course. However, regardless of the course name or number used, the course content and the credit hours must be the same for substitution. For example, PSY 210 Human Growth and Development can be found under a variety of names (Lifespan Development, Development Psychology, etc.) but it must include the full life span in the content and be 3 semester credit hours in length. Not just any random Psychology course (like Abnormal Psychology or Child Psychology) will substitute. In fact, your transcript would need to include Child Psychology, Adolescent Psychology, Adult Psychology and Psychology of Death and Dying to include all the content found in the PSY 210 course. Also, be very careful – any medical terminology class that you take must be 3 credit hours to meet the PTA Program requirements. Ultimately the easiest way to determine equivalent course transfer is to contact the WSCC Department of Admissions or a WSCC PTA program advisor.

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Am I required to retake the Placement Test if I am transferring in from another school and have had the English and Math requirements?

No, placement testing is not required for students transferring general education/prerequisite level English or Math courses. However, if you have just graduated high school and are entering WSCC for the first time as a freshman, a placement test may be required prior to registering for English or Math classes. However, usually your ACT scores are used for placement. If placement testing is needed, it can be done at your convenience most days in our computer lab. If you are transferring in Math or English classes from another college it is not necessary to retake the placement test.

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Are there any other courses for the PTA program that can be taken prior to my acceptance?

Yes. PTA 120 Introduction to Kinesiology is available to interested students. It is strongly recommended that PTA 120 be taken prior to submitting the program application. This course is not required for program admission but can contribute additional points toward the admission process based on the grade achieved. Please visit <http://pta120.wordpress.com> for more course information. Currently a significant percentage of those admitted to the program have taken this course. Please see the “Program Statistics” link on the PTA Program website for additional details.

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Can I be admitted if I still have general education / prerequisite courses to be completed?

All general education/prerequisites should be completed prior to the application deadline. Students who have completed all general education/prerequisites prior to the application deadline will be considered over those applicants who are in the process of completing courses. Students who are completing general education/prerequisite work during the term in which they are applying will only be considered on a space available basis. Currently the program is receiving more applications from individuals that have completed all general education/prerequisites than we have space available. At this time, it is somewhat unlikely that you will be considered for admission without

having completed all general education/prerequisite courses. Please see the “Program Statistics” link on the PTA Program website for additional details.

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Is PTA 120 a general education / prerequisite requirement?

PTA 120 – Introduction to Kinesiology, while strongly recommended, is not a prerequisite requirement to the PTA Program. Taking this class will not help or hinder the general education/prerequisite GPA considered for program admission. It does, however, have the potential to add additional points to the PTA application process. Currently a significant percentage of those admitted to the PTA program have taken PTA 120. This course can be beneficial when you have one application category that is slightly below average. For additional information regarding PTA 120, please visit <http://pta120.wordpress.com> and see why PTA 120 is so important.

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When can I apply for the program?

Following the completion of the first year of general education / prerequisite courses, you should submit an application for the PTA program between March 1 and June 1 of the year in which you would like to start the PTA program classes. PTA Program classes begin in the fall of each year. Please note – a new application is required each time you apply, and the program releases a new application near the first of each year. Keep copies of everything submitted as items from previous applications will not be released and are destroyed immediately after the application period closes.

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What information is required to complete an application?

The following information is required to be submitted directly to the Admissions Office: WSCC application, official transcripts from each college attended and an ACT score of 20 or higher. The following information is submitted directly to the PTA Program using an electronic application process: completed PTA program application, documentation of physical therapy volunteer/observation experience, as well as student copies of all transcripts and your ACT score. See application links for specific submission details.

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Is it necessary to get letters of recommendation to better my chances of being accepted into the program?

No. Letters of recommendation are not required and will not better anyone’s chances of being accepted into the program. Letters submitted will not factor into the admission decision.

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How many students apply to the program and how many are accepted each year?

The number of applications submitted varies from year to year. For example, in recent years the program has received well over 100 applications to the PTA Program, of which approximately 80% had completed all admission requirements and were eligible for program admission. There is not a waiting list and every qualified applicant is considered. Applications are not returned nor is any information released from application packets. Currently, the program accepts 36 students each year in the fall using a process that considers prerequisite GPA, ACT and hours of observation. More specific information is available on the “Program Statistics” link on the PTA program website.

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Do I need CPR certification, a physical examination, background check, drug test or any other medical testing to submit or complete an application?

No. The required physical exam, drug testing, background screening, and CPR certification are completed AFTER you have been formally accepted into the final year of the PTA program so that each will be current and valid throughout the clinical rotations. Do not complete any of these items until formally accepted into the program and instructed to do so by the program director.

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What is the timeline for the admissions process?

The Program begins accepting online applications on March 1 of each year. The final deadline by which all online applications must be submitted is June 1. (Because this is an online application, if June 1 falls on a weekend, the application will close on the weekend.) Each applicant will receive a reply by email and/or mail within 2-4 weeks, (usually around July 1) regarding the application decision made (both acceptance and denied).

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How do I make my application more competitive?

To be competitive in the PTA program admission process you should work on improving your prerequisite GPA, ACT score and hours of observation. Carefully review program admission statistics from previous years (visit the “Program Statistics” link on the PTA Program website for information), using those numbers as target scores to exceed. It is also strongly recommended that you complete PTA 120 – Introduction to Kinesiology or MSG 104/204 (must be completed at WSCC) to add additional points to your application. While neither PTA 120 or MSG 104/204 are program admission requirements, either can potentially add points to the application based on the grades achieved, helping to compensate for one of the admission score categories (prerequisite GPA, ACT score, or observation hours) that is slightly below average.

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What do I do if I don’t get admitted to the PTA program?

Typically, the PTA program receives more qualified applicants than we have space available. Due to accreditation standards, space, clinical availability and faculty limitations, the PTA program only admits 36 students. Based on current statistics (see “Program Statistics” link on the PTA program website for exact numbers), that means that two-thirds or more of those who apply will not be admitted. It is very common for applicants to apply to multiple health division programs, and most of the PTA general education/prerequisite classes will apply to other programs. We also encourage applicants who wish to re-apply to PTA at a later date to retake and improve general education/prerequisite class grades, retake the ACT to improve the score and increase observation hours prior to re-applying.

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What is the minimum GPA required for program admission?

A minimum 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale is required. Keep in mind that this is a minimal requirement – currently those being admitted have a significantly higher average GPA than this score. The general education/prerequisite GPA is the most important of three factors considered for admission, thus the higher the general education/prerequisite GPA score the better your chances for admission. Please see the “Program Statistics” link on the PTA program website for additional details.

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How is the general education / prerequisite GPA determined for program admission and what if some of the prerequisite courses have been retaken, earning higher grades?

The general education/prerequisite GPA considers only the grades achieved in each of the general education/prerequisite courses. The PTA Program no longer uses a cumulative GPA. During the application process the highest grade achieved in each general education/prerequisite class (regardless of the order in which those classes are taken) is used to determine the application GPA points awarded. See the currently posted PTA Program Application to review this process. Remember – this process only considers the grades achieved in nine (9) courses. This includes the following: ENG 101 (ENG 102 may be substituted), Humanities elective, SPH 106, MTH 100, BIO 201, BIO 202, PSY 200, PSY 210, and HIT 110. It does not include orientation, BIO 103, PTA 120 or MSG 104/204 grades). A general education/prerequisite GPA (and thus the points awarded) can be improved by retaking any prerequisite course in which you achieved less than an “A”. Every general education/prerequisite class in which you score an “A” puts you that much closer to a 4.0 general education/prerequisite GPA and thus the highest possible score in this category. The general education/prerequisite GPA is the most important score in the program admission process.

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How do I improve my GPA?

PTA program admission is based on your general education/prerequisite GPA, ACT score and total hours of observation, with the general education/prerequisite GPA points being the most important of these numbers. This score is calculated using the highest grade made in each of these classes:

- ENG 101 English Composition (or ENG 102)
- SPH 106 Fundamentals of Oral Communications (or SPH 107)

HUM	Humanities Elective
MTH 100	Intermediate College Algebra (or higher math course)
BIO 201	Human Anatomy and Physiology I
BIO 202	Human Anatomy and Physiology II
PSY 200	General Psychology
PSY 210	Human Growth and Development
HIT 110	Medical Terminology

The current PTA Program application itemizes the points awarded for each grade.

A general education/prerequisite GPA is much easier to improve than a cumulative GPA. Each general education/prerequisite class that you retake and improve your final grade will have an immediate impact on your general education/prerequisite GPA and thus, the points received in the application process. Because of the highly competitive nature of the PTA program application process it is strongly recommended that you retake any general education/prerequisite class that you made a “C” in and possibly even some of your “B” prerequisite classes, particularly when you have more “B’s” than “A’s”.

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Do you require the ACT or any other special entrance exams in order to be admitted into the program?

Yes. A minimum composite score of 20 on the ACT (national, residual or superscore) is required for a student to be qualified for acceptance into the PTA Program, regardless of previous education, degrees awarded or experiences. Individuals who have completed higher degrees are not exempt from this expectation. The ACT score is one of three factors considered for admission, thus the higher the score the better your chances of being admitted. Generally, ACT scores improve when taken after college level work, especially math and science courses. If you are planning to retake the ACT, you might consider the ACT Residual Exam offered at WSCC. This exam is the same as the national exam but is offered on-campus, allowing for a quicker release of scores.

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But I already have a bachelor’s degree (or master’s, etc.) – do I need to go back and take a basic college entrance exam like the ACT?

Yes – the ACT is one of three scores that are considered for program admission. Without an ACT score your application will not be considered. However, the good news is that if you already have a degree (or even if you’ve already taken all your general education/prerequisites) you should be “over” prepared for the ACT. Generally, ACT scores improve when the test is taken after college level work, especially English, math and science courses.

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Is it necessary to take the writing portion of the ACT?

No, it is not necessary to take the Writing portion of the ACT. The PTA program only requires the standard four section (English, Reading, Math & Science Reasoning) version of the test.

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I took the SAT...is it the same thing?

First of all, determine which SAT test you took. Virtually everyone took the Stanford Achievement Test while in high school. This standardized test would have been given by the teachers at your high school to gauge your academic progress and it was not a college entrance exam. However, you may have also taken a college entrance exam like the ACT, now known simply as the SAT (previously the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Scholastic Assessment Test, SAT 1: Reasoning Test or SAT Reasoning Test). While the College Board’s SAT is not the same as the ACT, there is a concordance scale available that allows us to convert your SAT score to an equivalent ACT score. You may e-mail your SAT score to the PTA program director for conversion information.

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How do I improve my ACT score?

The ACT is a college admission exam. Although WSCC does not have a minimum required score for college admission, the PTA Program and most other health programs require a minimum score as part of the application process. If it has been several years since you last took the ACT- retake it. Often scores will improve after you have completed college level courses, particularly math, science, and English coursework. Visit the ACT website. ACT offers practice questions and study recommendations online. You might also consider taking an ACT prep course (the WSCC Adult Education department often offers this service), purchasing a study guide or engaging a tutor to help you prepare. You also might consider taking additional college courses in your area(s) of weakness such as a reading class or math class. While it is important to strengthen your sub-scores that are low, you can also see

improvements in the overall score by improving your strengths. For example, if your best sub-score is in English, work on improving that area. If it is a topic that you are better at - perhaps you enjoy it more – then you can often improve more in that area than trying to improve in an area that you don't enjoy or at which you do not excel.

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How much volunteer/observation experience is required?

You must have a minimum of 24 hours of observation in a minimum of 2 different facilities. (We define “two different facilities” to be two entirely separate business entities. The in-patient hospital and the outpatient clinic of that same hospital would be considered as one location, even if they have different physical addresses.) This is the minimal requirement. Often the average numbers of hours for those admitted are higher than this minimum. See the currently posted “Program Statistics” link on the PTA program website for more information. Hours of observation is one of three factors considered for admission, thus the more hours accumulated, the better your chances of being admitted, up to a maximum total of 100 hours.

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Where can I go to get the required observation hours?

Contact a local physical therapy department or clinic to arrange volunteer/ observation hours to be done under the supervision of a **Licensed PT or PTA only**. The PTA Program does not have a list of those facilities nor do we assist with arranging observational experiences. Check your local listings for physical therapy clinics near you. Ask for the physical therapy department when you call. Some facilities are extremely flexible, allowing you to observe at your convenience. However, other clinics may be much more formal, often requiring you to complete an orientation before beginning or only permitting observation on certain days and times. Check with your local PT clinic or department for details.

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What if my hours are on a different form?

Wallace State – Hanceville will accept observation hours documented on forms from other schools provided that those hours are signed/verified by a licensed PT or PTA and include the required facility contact information. Please note that hours spent with an OT or OTA cannot be counted for PTA hours.

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Will time spent as a patient in physical therapy count as observation experience?

This is a question that only the PT or PTA who treated you can answer. If you were in a coma or a drug-induced haze and remember very little of the experience – no, those hours will not count. But, if you were alert, oriented, and actively participating, **AND** the treating therapist agrees that those treatment sessions were a good observational experience for you, then, yes, those hours can count. To document patient treatment hours, have the supervising PT or PTA write a letter on company letterhead that includes the total number of hours spent in treatment.

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Is there an easier way to document my work hours as a physical therapy aide?

Yes. Instead of completing pages of observation forms, your supervising PT or PTA can write a letter on company letterhead that includes employment start date, end date (if applicable) and total number of hours worked as an aide under their supervision.

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Does the program require observation hours to be completed in certain types of facilities (hospital, out-patient clinic, pediatric, etc)?

The PTA program only requires that you have 24 hours, divided between 2 completely separate physical therapy clinics. We do not look at the type of clinic, the variety of experiences, or the number of hours spent in each. However, we do recommend that you try to experience a variety of physical therapy practice locations. The purpose of observation hours is to help confirm that physical therapy is the right career choice for you. Thus, more variety in your experiences will give you a better idea of what physical therapy is all about. Also, it is important to realize that pediatric therapy is very different from geriatric therapy, that out-patient orthopedic patients have different challenges from in-patient (hospital) orthopedic patients, and that physical therapy can include wound care, aquatic therapy, prosthetics, and much more. A variety of observational experiences can open your eyes to the much bigger picture of what physical therapy really involves.

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