

Physical Therapist Assistant

Degree Type

Associate of Science (AS)

Admission Requirements

Procedure for Admission to the Associate of Science or Associate of Applied Science in Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Admission into the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program is a two-step process:

1. Candidates are eligible to enter the general education phase of the PTA program as “PTA students” by meeting South University’s General Undergraduate Admission Requirements.
2. Candidates must complete prerequisite coursework and meet all requirements outlined below to be eligible for admission to the professional phase of the PTA program.

Students may transfer prerequisite courses into the program before entering the professional phase if approved by the registrar. The coursework that is transferred to South University must permit the student to obtain a 2.75 CGPA by the time the student applies for admission into the PTA Professional Phase. Students who transfer coursework into South University, but cannot mathematically attain a CGPA of 2.75 by the time they would enter the professional phase, will not be admitted to the PTA program.

Transfer credit will not be accepted for courses in the South University PTA Professional Phase Curriculum.

Note: This does not apply to South University PTA students (in good standing) transferring between campuses.

Students from South University who are in another major will be permitted to transfer into the general education phase of the PTA program if they meet all requirements as stated in the PTA Program Change Policy. Applicants must satisfy technical standards for the PTA program in order to be admitted.

Admission Requirements for the Professional Phase of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Applicants must apply for admission into the professional phase of the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program. Applicants must submit a complete application packet and meet all admission requirements as stated below to enter the ranking process. The professional phase slots will be filled by applicants with the greatest academic potential for success as determined by the ranking process. Applicants with the highest numerical ranking will be admitted to the professional phase of the program.

The criteria to determine admission to the PTA program include:

1. Application must be submitted seven (7) weeks prior to the start of the professional phase of the program.
2. Applicants must meet the Essential Functions and Technical Standards (listed in the application for admission and the program student handbook) of the program in order to enter the ranking process.
3. Applicants must complete a health screening, at their own cost, utilizing a program-specific physical exam form, verifying medical clearance.
4. Applicants must complete a background check at their own cost using the agency identified by the PTA Program Director. Applicants must meet timelines and requirements as detailed in the application packet. The

PTA program follows the College of Health Professions Background Check Policy located in the South University Catalog (www.southuniversity.edu/admissions/academic-catalog). Applicants are not eligible for admittance into the Professional Phase of the PTA program if they have a felony conviction, plea, or adjudication withheld, or any disqualifying misdemeanor, for which a pardon or exemption for disqualification has not been received, including but not limited to rape or sexual abuse or molestation, and abuse, endangerment, or neglect of a child, disabled person, or elderly person.

5. Applicants must complete a drug screen at their own cost using the agency identified by the PTA Program Director. Applicants must meet timelines and requirements as detailed in the application packet. The PTA program follows the College of Health Professions Substance Abuse and Screening Policy located in the South University Catalog (www.southuniversity.edu/admissions/academic-catalog). Applicants with positive drug screen results will not be admitted into Professional Phase of the PTA Program. Applicants may be eligible to reapply to a future admissions cycle (see PTA Program Director).
6. Applicants must complete 20 hours of observations of the practice of physical therapy and submit documentation on program-provided forms.
7. Applicants must achieve a 2.75 CGPA or greater in prerequisite coursework. All prerequisite coursework must be successfully completed prior to entry into the Professional Phase of the PTA Program.
8. The following science prerequisite courses require a grade of C or higher and must be completed within 7 years of the start date of the Professional Phase of the program.
 - a. [AHS1001](#) Medical Terminology
 - b. [BIO1011](#) Anatomy and Physiology I
 - c. [BIO1012](#) Anatomy and Physiology I Lab
 - d. [BIO1013](#) Anatomy and Physiology II
 - e. [BIO1014](#) Anatomy and Physiology II Lab
9. Applicants must submit ATI Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) scores. Scores will not be accepted if greater than 5 years old. A score of “proficient” is preferred.
10. Ranking will be based upon:
 - a. Cumulative GPA in required prerequisite coursework (2.75 or greater required).
 - b. Science GPA (see 8 a-e above).
 - c. The ATI Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) (score of “Proficient” is preferred).
 - d. Repeating a course to achieve a higher grade is associated with penalty point deductions from the ranking score.
11. The number of students entering the professional phase is established in accordance with regulations set forth by the program’s accrediting body.

Post-Acceptance Requirements

All accepted PTA applicants are responsible for meeting assigned deadlines for completion of post-acceptance requirements as published within the campus-specific PTA Enrollment Guide. Failure to submit the following post-acceptance requirements will deem a student ineligible for clinical education courses, which may result in dismissal from the program.

Accepted PTA students must:

1. Complete an American Heart Association Basic Life Support (BLS) CPR certification course and provide a copy of a valid certification/card. The certification/card must remain valid throughout all clinical rotations.
2. Submit proof of required immunizations as identified in the PTA Enrollment Guide through the compliance platform.
3. Submit a Level 2 background check (Florida students only). This must be performed at the student’s own cost, using the agency identified by the PTA Program Director.
4. Understand that additional drug screening, background checks, immunizations, tuberculosis screening, and/or medical clearance may be required by some clinical sites. All associated fees are the responsibility of the student.

Professional Standards for Physical Therapist Assistant Students

The following standards reflect expectations of a student in the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program for the performance of common physical therapy functions. In adopting these standards, the PTA Program is mindful of the patient's right to safe function in a broad variety of clinical situations while receiving physical therapy interventions. The PTA student must be able to apply the knowledge and skills necessary to function in a broad variety of clinical situations while administering physical therapy interventions. These standards do not encompass all that may be required for employment of the PTA Program graduate. In order to verify the students' ability to perform these essential functions, students are required to demonstrate the following technical standards throughout the curriculum.

The faculty is the sole judge of a student's ability to meet these standards through successful completion of the requirements of the program and individual courses.

1. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving Skills. Ability to collect, interpret and integrate information and use that information to make appropriate decisions.
2. Interpersonal Skills. Ability to collaboratively work with all PTA students and with program faculty and patients in the classroom, lab, and clinical setting.
3. Coping Skills. Ability to respond appropriately to stressful environments or during impending deadlines.
4. Communication Skills. Ability to communicate effectively in English using verbal, nonverbal and written formats with faculty, other students, patients, families, and healthcare workers.
5. Mobility/Motor Skills. Sufficient motor ability to execute the movement and skills required for safe and effective physical therapy treatment in various clinical settings.
6. Sensory Abilities. Sufficient visual, auditory, and tactile ability to monitor and assess health needs.
7. Behavioral Skills. Ability to demonstrate professional behaviors and a strong work ethic.

The Physical Therapist Assistant program fully supports the provision of reasonable accommodations to students with special needs. Program requirements will not be altered. Instead, it is the policy of South University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with special needs who request them so that they can meet the program requirements. It is the students' responsibility to contact the Dean of Student Affairs/Office of Disability Support Services with documentation to support their need for accommodations. Students are encouraged to contact the Dean of Student Affairs and/or Program Director as early as possible to discuss their particular situation.

Both Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C.A. Section 794, and the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibit discrimination against "otherwise qualified" persons with a disability. If an applicant can perform the Technical Standards listed above, the applicant is "otherwise qualified" under the law and must be treated the same as a person without a disability. A person who cannot perform the Technical Standards is not "otherwise qualified" and may be denied access to the program without discrimination.

For additional admissions information please see the admissions section [here](#).

Program Overview and Outcomes

In keeping with the stated purpose of South University, the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program strives to produce physical therapist assistants who, under the direction and supervision of physical therapists, reflect the highest standards of practice and conduct within the profession of physical therapy.

A physical therapist assistant is an educated health care provider who works under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist. Duties include assisting the physical therapist in implementing treatment programs according to

the plan of care, training patients in exercise and activities of daily living, conducting treatments using special equipment, administering modalities and other treatment procedures and reporting to the physical therapist on the patient's responses. (www.apta.org)

Program Student Learning Outcomes

Graduates will be able to:

1. Provide safe, efficient, efficacious interventions within the plan of care established by the physical therapist.
2. Communicate using effective and culturally competent verbal, nonverbal, written, and digital communication.
3. Provide effective education to patients, caregivers, and members of the healthcare team.
4. Demonstrate the ability to appropriately and efficiently utilize resources to provide high- value physical therapy services.
5. Recognize the importance of maintaining competence in applicable areas of physical therapy practice.
6. Demonstrate the ability to work within the guidelines and standards established by regulatory, professional, and organizational entities.
7. Demonstrate behaviors consistent with the Core Values of the profession of physical therapy.

Graduation from a CAPTE accredited physical therapist assistant education program or its equivalency and passage of the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE) is required for licensure. Graduation from this program does not guarantee licensure as a PTA, and it is the student's responsibility to be aware of the licensure requirements in each state. Complete information on practice acts and regulations can be obtained from the individual state licensing boards or through The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (www.fsbpt.org). Specific information regarding application for licensure will be available to the student during the last term of study.

Associate of Science in Physical Therapist Assistant: 110 Credits

Offered at Austin, Columbia, Montgomery, Savannah, Tampa, and West Palm Beach.

Area I General Education: 32 Credits

Basic Communications

Course Code	Title	Credits
ENG1100	Composition I	4.0

Choose one of the following required electives:

Course Code	Title	Credits
ENG1200	Composition II	4.0
COM2006	Interpersonal Communication	4.0
SPC1026	Public Speaking	4.0

Mathematics and Statistics

Choose one of the following:

Course Code	Title	Credits
MAT1001	College Algebra I	4.0
MAT1005	College Algebra II	4.0

Natural Sciences

Course Code	Title	Credits
	BIO1011 and BIO1012	6
BIO1011	Anatomy and Physiology I	4.0
BIO1012	Anatomy and Physiology I Lab	2.0
	BIO1013 and BIO1014	6
BIO1013	Anatomy and Physiology II	4.0
BIO1014	Anatomy and Physiology II Lab	2.0

Arts and Humanities (Choose one):

Course Code	Title	Credits
HUM1200	Introduction to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	4.0
ENG2011	Introduction to American Literature: 1865 to present	4.0
HIS1101	U.S. History I: Colonial to 1865	4.0
HUM1001	History of Art through the Middle Ages	4.0
HUM2101	World Civilization I: Prehistory to 1500 C.E.	4.0
PHI2301	Introduction to Philosophy	4.0
REL1001	World Religions	4.0

Social and Behavioral Sciences

Course Code	Title	Credits
PSY1001	General Psychology	4.0

Area II Foundation Requirements: 4 Credits

Course Code	Title	Credits
AHS1001	Medical Terminology	4.0

Area III Professional Phase: 74 Credits

The Montgomery, Savannah, and West Palm Beach campuses follow a 9-quarter sequence of courses (evening classes)

Course Code	Title	Credits
PTA1001	Introduction to Physical Therapist Assistant	4.0
PTA1003	Pathophysiology	4.0
PTA1005	Kinesiology	6.0
PTA1006	Testing and Measurement for the Physical Therapist Assistant	6.0
PTA1008	Modalities	6.0
PTA2000	Habilitation/Rehabilitation	6.0
PTA2021	Therapeutic Exercise and Orthopedic Applications	6.0
PTA2046	Advanced Habilitation/Rehabilitation	6.0
PTA2050	Professional Seminar	4.0
PTA2057	Physical Therapy through the Lifespan	2.0
PTA2058	Clinical Externship I	9.0
PTA2059	Current Rehabilitation Issues	3.0
PTA2099	Clinical Externship II	12.0

Area III Professional Phase: 74 Credits

The Austin, Columbia, and Tampa campuses follow an 8-quarter sequence of courses:

[PTA1001](#) can be taken prior to acceptance into the professional phase in Austin, Columbia, Richmond, Tampa, and Virginia Beach.)

Course Code	Title	Credits
PTA1001	Introduction to Physical Therapist Assistant	4.0
PTA1003	Pathophysiology	4.0
PTA1005	Kinesiology	6.0
PTA1006	Testing and Measurement for the Physical Therapist Assistant	6.0
PTA2000	Habilitation/Rehabilitation	6.0
PTA2024	Therapeutic Interventions I	6.0
PTA2025	Therapeutic Interventions II	6.0
PTA2046	Advanced Habilitation/Rehabilitation	6.0
PTA2047	Essentials of Clinical Care	2.0
PTA2048	Clinical Externship I	8.0
PTA2049	Current Rehabilitation Issues	4.0
PTA2050	Professional Seminar	4.0
PTA2099	Clinical Externship II	12.0
Total Credits		110