Jefferson State Community College

PTA Frequently Asked Questions – 2027 Application Cycle

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

What is a Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)?
The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) is a technically educated health care provider who works under the supervision of a physical therapist (PT). The PTA performs duties and carries out treatment plans as directed by the PT. Duties of the PTA are varied and include but are not limited to the application of physical modalities, exercise programs, gait training, functional activities, and patient education. Work in physical therapy includes physical activity such as bending, lifting patients, and prolonged standing and walking. Physical therapist assistants utilize various rehabilitative techniques to help patients whose abilities have been impaired by an accident, injury, illness, disease, or other health-related conditions that limit movement and functional abilities. Clients include adult and pediatric patients with orthopedic and neurologic injuries and various medical conditions. Employment settings include acute care and rehabilitation hospitals, outpatient clinics, schools, nursing homes, home health and sports medicine clinics. The Physical Therapist Assistant is an important member of the dynamic rehabilitation team and will interact with other health care providers including occupational therapists and assistants, nurses, speech pathologists, and physicians.

Is the Physical Therapist Assistant Program an accredited program?
Yes. The PTA Program at Jefferson State Community College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). CAPTE is the only accreditation agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) to accredit entry-level physical therapist and physical therapist assistant education programs. Further information about accreditation can be obtained online at www.capteonline.org.

Can you provide me a general overview of the program?
The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Jefferson State Community College is an associate-level program that results in the awarding of the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree. The degree is awarded after one year of prerequisite coursework and one year of professional coursework. Once the student has completed the program and graduates, they are qualified to sit for the National Board Exam for professional state licensure. The program is designed to prepare competent, ethical, entry level physical therapist assistants in occupational responsibilities, academic knowledge, and the clinical skills necessary to serve the physical therapy health care needs of the public.

How long does it take to complete the program?
The degree is awarded after one year of prerequisite coursework and one year of professional coursework. The professional phase of the program is three (3) consecutive semesters of specific PTA courses.

I have not discussed my goals with an advisor. How do I contact an advisor?
All students are strongly encouraged to seek academic advising on a regular basis in order to achieve their educational goals. Academic advisors may be contacted at (205) 983-5911, or advising@jeffersonstate.edu. General online advising: https://www.jeffersonstate.edu/academics/advising/
For specific PTA-related questions, please contact a department advisor at (205) 983-5270.

I have listed Physical Therapist Asst (Pre) as my major; am I automatically in the PTA Program?
No. Admission to the college as a Physical Therapist Asst (Pre) major does not guarantee admission to the program. Please refer to the PTA program website for specific program requirements and application procedures.

How many students typically apply to the program?
The JSCC PTA program receives many applications per year. Those meeting minimum qualifications are ranked per published criteria. The program accepts the top 30 ranked students each year.

Where is the program located?
The program is located at the Shelby-Hoover Campus of Jefferson State Community College. The program is housed on the 3rd floor of the General Studies Building (GSB) located at 4600 Valleydale Road, Birmingham, Alabama 35242.

Is there a program website?
Yes. Program information can be found on the website:
https://www.jeffersonstate.edu/academics/programs/physical-therapist-assistant/

When does the program begin?
The program begins in the summer semester each year.

When is the next application due date?
Applications are only accepted once a year. Applications are due every January 15th, by 4pm unless the date falls on a holiday, Saturday, or Sunday.

What does the program cost?
The estimated costs for the Traditional Track and Hybrid Track programs are listed below. Please note that **Tuition and Fees are subject to change by the ACCS Board of Trustees without notice.** The list below does not include other fees associated with transportation/lodging on clinical rotations, small lab supplies (gait belt, goniometer), or other incidentals.

Pre-requisite Coursework (In State) – 29 credit hours x $196		$5,684.00
Pre-requisite Coursework (Out of State) – 29 credit hours x $315		$9,135.00
Professional Coursework (In State) – 40 credit hours x $196		$7,840.00
Professional Coursework (Out of State) – 40 credit hours x $315		$12,600.00
Costs associated with Dress Code		Varies
Books*	Semester 1 Approximately	$800.00
	Semester 2 Approximately	$600.00
	Semester 3 Approximately	$100.00
Liability Insurance		$15.00
Health Insurance		Varies depending on provider
Medical Exams, Tests, and Immunizations		Varies depending on provider
Drug/Alcohol Screening, Background Check, Driving Record History		$120.00
APTA Student Membership (Annual Dues Including State Dues)		$95.00
Licensure Preparation Course		$85.00
PEAT-Practice Exam and Assessment Tool (Optional)		$100.00
Licensure Application and Testing Fees*		$672.00

*(Based on the AL State Board Fee Schedule and does not include testing center fee)

PHYSICAL THERAPIST VS PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

I am interested in becoming a PHYSICAL THERAPIST. What courses do I need to take?
Any student interested in attending school to become a physical therapist (PT) must contact the school they wish to attend. For information on PT Education and accredited PT schools, visit the APTA website (www.apta.org).

I am interested in becoming a PHYSICAL THERAPIST but want to become a PTA first, what courses will transfer to a PT program? Students need to contact the PT school of interest to determine which pre-requisites may transfer. The actual core PTA courses will not transfer to a PT program.

I am trying to decide what career program to pursue. What is the salary difference between a PT and PTA?
Salaries vary according to experience, setting, location and other variables. Statistics on occupational employment and wages may be accessed through the United States Department of Labor website (www.dol.gov).

PTA PROGRAM CLASS SCHEDULE

What kind of schedule can I expect once I am admitted into the program during normal circumstances?

TRADITIONAL/ON-CAMPUS TRACK

- **1st semester:** Students are present for lecture courses on Mondays and Tuesdays. Students must be present for lab courses all day on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. There will be circumstances in which participation on a Saturday may be required.
- **2nd semester:** Students are present for lecture courses on Mondays, Tuesdays; and must be present for lab courses all day Wednesdays and Thursdays. There will be circumstances in which participation on a Friday or Saturday may be required. All students will be assigned to a 2-week, full-time (40 hours/week) clinical during this semester.
- **3rd semester:** In addition to academic courses, PTA students are required to participate in clinical experiences and lab experiences off campus at health care facilities. During the 3rd semester, each student is assigned to 14 weeks of full-time (40 hours/week) clinical placement. These internships are supervised by licensed clinical instructors in a variety of physical therapy settings. The clinical schedule typically involves a student to be present Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm; however, students must follow the schedule of their designated clinical instructor. Additional hours or participation on weekends during clinical assignments may be required. Clinical placement may be geographically distant from home or permanent address and will be assigned by the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) based on program goals, objectives, and necessary learning experiences. Students are responsible for their own transportation and lodging for clinical education and off- campus experiences.

This course sequence is preferred by students who desire a more structured learning environment. On-campus classes are all enhanced and/or supported by the college's course-management system. A portion of the on-campus program is delivered through distance education services.

HYBRID TRACK

This is a hybrid track and **CANNOT** be completed entirely online. All students are required to be on campus for laboratory sessions and clinical experiences. Lecture courses available online may still require that PTA students visit instructional sites to give presentations or to complete exams, quizzes, labs and/or clinicals.

- **1st semester:** Students are present for laboratory courses all day on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. There will be circumstances in which participation on a Saturday may be required. All lecture courses are completed online.
- **2nd semester**: Students are present for laboratory courses all day Wednesdays and Thursdays. All lecture courses are completed online. There will be circumstances in which participation on a Friday or Saturday may be required. All students will be assigned to a 2-week, full-time (40 hours/week) clinical during this semester.
- **3rd semester:** In addition to academic courses, PTA students are required to participate in clinical experiences and lab experiences off campus at health care facilities. During the 3rd semester, each student is assigned to 14 weeks of full-time (40 hours per week) clinical placement. These internships are supervised by licensed clinical instructors in a variety of physical therapy settings. The clinical schedule typically involves a student to be present Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm; however, students must follow the schedule of their designated clinical instructor. Additional hours or participation on weekends during clinical assignments may be required. Clinical placement may be geographically distant from home or permanent address and will be assigned by the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education (ACCE) based on Program goals, objectives, and necessary learning experiences. Students are responsible for their own transportation and lodging for clinical education and off- campus experiences.

Overall, the hybrid course sequence is preferred by students who desire some flexibility during the school week. However, hybrid students must be highly organized; the hybrid environment requires more planning, preparation, and detail. The hybrid student must also be very motivated, disciplined, self-directed and willing to make the time commitments involved with assuming this challenging responsibility.

GPA AND ACT EXAM

What GPA is required for application eligibility? Students must demonstrate a minimum GPA of 2.5 on PTA program-specific prerequisite coursework. Although 2.5 GPA is the minimum required, the applicant pool average is usually much higher.

My GPA on prerequisite coursework is over 2.5 but I have a "D" (or below) for one course, is this acceptable? NO. Grades earned for prerequisite courses must be "C" or above.

What ACT score is required for application eligibility? All applicants must provide proof of achieving an ACT Composite score of 21 or higher and a Science subscore of 19 or higher. ACT scores must be achieved within three (3) years prior to the application deadline OR have proof of earning a bachelor's degree or higher prior to the application deadline to be considered for admission to the PTA Program. The scores must be included with the application and on file with enrollment services by the deadline. A copy of the transcript listing the bachelor's degree must be submitted with the PTA application.

Do I have to take the Science section of the ACT? Yes. The Science section of the ACT is required for admission consideration, and applicants must achieve a minimum Science subscore of **19 or higher**.

Do I have to take the written portion of the ACT? No, this portion is not required, only MATH, SCIENCE, ENGLISH, and READING.

I have received a composite of less than 21 or a science subscore of less than 19, can I still apply? Applicants who do not meet the minimum qualifications will not be considered for the program.

If I earn my bachelor's degree after the application deadline, does that waive the ACT requirement? No. The bachelor's degree must be completed *prior* to the application deadline to replace the ACT requirement.

I have received a bachelor's degree (or higher-level degree), do I still need to take the ACT exam? No, a copy of the transcript listing achievement of the bachelor's or higher degree completed prior to the application deadline must be included in the application. There is not a time limit on when the bachelor's degree was obtained.

I have taken the ACT exam more than 3 years ago. Do I still need to take it again? Yes, unless you have **earned** a bachelor's degree prior to the application deadline.

Do you combine the highest scores of all ACT exams taken (superscore)? NO.

How many times may I take the ACT? Please refer to the Retest Restrictions located on the ACT website: http://www.actstudent.org/regist/retestrestrictions.html

Where can I take the ACT exam? A student may register for the National exam at www.actstudent.org and choose the location through the registration process. ACT Residual examinations may be taken at JSCC by appointment. Contact the testing center for exam information and offerings: testing@jeffersonstate.edu, Jefferson: (205) 856-7896, Shelby: (205) 983-5276, or St. Clair-Pell City: (205) 812-2712.

What is an ACT Residual examination? This is an on-campus test provided by ACT-participating colleges to enrolled/admitted students who were unable to test on a national test date. Results are reported **only** to the college administering the exam. No official ACT student reports are generated, and no additional score reports will be generated to report scores to any other institution; a simple test results page may be provided to the student and uploaded into the school database within a short time frame. Testing can be conducted on any date except an ACT national test date.

I believe I need pre-ACT exam assistance or review; are there any resources?
For ACT exam preparation, please contact: Barbara Goss, Director of Libraries, Jefferson State Community College (205) 280-8213, Email: bgoss@jeffersonstate.edu

What is the average GPA and ACT score of students applying to the program?
The average GPA varies with each applicant pool. Statistics for the last reporting periods:

	Average PTA Prerequisite GPA	Average ACT Composite	Average ACT Science Section
2026 Top 30	3.47	23.8	24.6
2025 Top 30	3.59	22.9	23.1
2024 Top 30	3.60	23.25	22.8

Do you accept any other standardized test scores in place of ACT scores? No. The PTA Program only accepts ACT scores for admission consideration unless the applicant qualifies under the bachelor's degree exemption.

PREREQUISITE COURSES

What courses are required to be considered for admission into the program?
Nine (9) pre-requisite courses are required: Anatomy and Physiology I (4), Anatomy and Physiology II (4), English 101 (3), General Psychology (3), Human Growth and Development (3), Math Elective (3), Medical Terminology (3), Speech (3) and a Humanities (3) course. Please refer to Admissions Requirements for details on these courses, time restrictions, and other procedural requirements necessary for admission.

Do I have to complete the prerequisite courses in one year and in what order do I need to take them in?
No, students interested in applying to the program do not have to take all prerequisites in one year or in any specific order (except when taking courses with a prerequisite, i.e., BIO 201 before BIO 202). However, the core PTA program must be completed in the specific sequence designed. BIO 201 and BIO 202 can be no more than 5 years old at the time of application.

Do I need to complete all the prerequisite courses prior to the application deadline?
No. Students do not need to have all courses completed by the application deadline. **ALL** students are advised to complete as many courses as possible to improve their admission ranking score. (Please keep in mind other admission requirements must be completed by the deadline).

Students still taking courses by the application deadline may be considered on a conditional basis if courses are in progress with the intent to complete by the end of Spring Semester and before the professional phase begins. For example, if a student is applying for the Summer 2027 program and is taking 2 courses Spring 2027, they may apply if the courses are in progress with the intent to complete by the end of Spring Semester 2027. Proof of registration for courses in progress at the time must be provided with the application.

Those applicants that meet all qualifications by the deadline, demonstrate an excellent academic record, perform well on the ACT or have earned a bachelor's degree, and provide documentation of observation experience in the appropriate settings will achieve a high candidate score (per admissions ranking formula) thus increasing their chances of getting into the program.

I went to another college/university; will my credits transfer?
Each student should have official transcripts sent to JSCC for transcript evaluation. You may contact the Records office to ensure transcript evaluation at (205) 856-8087 or by email records@jeffersonstate.edu.

I have taken Anatomy and Physiology I & II, but it is over 5 years ago; can I still apply?
Anatomy and Physiology I & II courses must be completed within 5 years of the deadline; An exception may be made if the student can provide documentation of having passed BIO 230 Human Pathophysiology with at least a C within the last 5 years or if a student has completed Jefferson State's PTA 120 with a grade of "C" or higher. Otherwise, the candidate must retake A&P I & II to be considered for the program.

I have taken higher level anatomy courses; do I still have to take Anatomy and Physiology I and II?
All students must have a record of BIO 201 and 202 no older than 5 years. An exception may be made if the student can provide documentation of having passed BIO 230 Human Pathophysiology with at least a C within the last 5 years or if a student has completed Jefferson State's PTA 120 with a grade of "C" or higher. Students should request review of appropriate upper-level courses in writing and submit with application.

I have taken Kinesiology (or similar) courses before; do I still have to take the Kinesiology course sequence once in the PTA program?
YES. All students accepted into the program must take program courses in the directed sequence.

I noticed that the ranking formula awards 2 bonus points for certain courses, is this correct?
YES. To qualify a student must have: Documentation of having completed PHS 112 **or** any Physics course with a grade of "C" or higher **or** completion of an Intro to PTA seminar. Either option will add a bonus of 2 points to the ranking score. This is a one-time bonus only; candidates will not receive additional points for additional courses in this category. The Intro to PTA seminar is a free on-campus seminar offered 3 times a year: Register Here

Can I qualify for additional points by taking PTA 120 Introduction to Kinesiology?
Yes. PTA 120 is an optional course, but it is highly recommended for students interested in the PTA Program. This course is only available at JSCC Shelby-Hoover campus. Students may qualify for additional application points based on enrollment or based on the grade received upon completion. Please refer to the most current ranking formula located on the PTA Website at https://www.jeffersonstate.edu/academics/programs/physical-therapist-assistant/

I have completed all prerequisites but would like to take additional courses this semester; are there any other courses recommended to better prepare for the program? These courses are suggested only, they are not required.

- **PTA 120 Introduction to Kinesiology (3 hr)** – no prerequisite; highly recommended for all PTA candidates. Students may qualify for additional application points based on enrollment or based on the grade received upon completion.
- **ENG 102 English Composition II (3 hr)** – prerequisite: "C" or higher in Eng 101
- **PHL 206 Ethics and Society (3 hr)** – no prerequisite
- **PHS 112 Physical Science II (4 hr)** – no prerequisite
- **PHY 115 Technical Physics (4 hr)** – prerequisite: MTH 100. Algebra-based with concepts in motion, forces, torque, electricity, etc.
- **PHY 201 General Physics 1 (4 hr)** – prerequisite: MTH 113 or equivalent. Trig-based with concepts in mechanics, properties of matter and energy, thermodynamics and periodic motion (PT school applicants need PHY sequence)
- **MTH 113 or higher –** ONLY for applicants interested in pursuing a PT degree
- **BIO 230 Human Pathophysiology (4 hr)** – Prerequisites: BIO 201, BIO 202, and BIO 220.

Students without experience using computer-based systems may want to consider a course in Information Systems or Microcomputer Applications.

APPLICATION

Where do I find an application?
Please visit our website at https://www.jeffersonstate.edu/academics/programs/physical-therapist-assistant/

Do I need letters of recommendation, and will they improve my chances of getting into the program?
Letters of recommendation are **NOT** required. Letters of recommendation will not be reviewed and will not improve a candidate's qualifying rank.

Is health insurance required by the deadline?
NO, this is not required by the application deadline. All students accepted must provide documentation of current in-force health/hospitalization insurance by the start of the 1st PTA Core Semester (by date designated by the ACCE). Applicants may provide a copy with the PTA application if they have documentation at the time of the deadline.

Is CPR certification required by the deadline?
NO, this is not required by the application deadline. All students accepted must provide documentation of CPR certification, less than 2 years old, at the health care provider level (one-rescuer CPR-adult, one rescuer CPR-infant/child, airway obstruction, and two-rescuer CPR) by the date established by the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education. If a student has current documentation, this may be included with the application materials.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Program Director/Advisor
Leslie Naugher GSB 316E
(205) 983-5996
lnaugher@jeffersonsate.edu

ACCE/Advisor
Cindy Elliott GSB 316A
(205) 983-5270
cwelliott@jeffersonstate.edu

PTA Instructor/Associate Dean Health- Rated Programs
Vanessa LeBlanc GSB 316
(205) 983-5995
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Jefferson State Community College
1-888-4JEFFST (453-3378)

Shelby-Hoover Campus
4600 Valleydale Rd
Birmingham, AL 35242

Academic Advising: advising@jeffersonstate.edu

Admissions: admissions@jeffersonstate.edu

Financial Aid: finaid@jeffersonstate.edu

Records Office: records@jeffersonstate.edu

Testing Center: testing@jeffersonstate.edu
Jefferson: (205) 856-7896
Shelby: (205) 983-5276
St. Clair-Pell City: (205) 812-2712

IT Support: helpdesk@jeffersonstate.edu

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

Statement of Equal Opportunity
Jefferson State has filed with the Federal Government an Assurance of Compliance with all requirements imposed by or pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Regulations issued thereunder, to the end that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored by this institution. It is also the policy of Jefferson State to be in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 which provides that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Non-Discrimination Policy
It is the policy of Jefferson State Community College, a postsecondary institution under the control of the Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees, that no student, employee or applicant shall be discriminated against on the basis of any impermissible criterion or characteristic including, but not limited to, race, color, national origin, religion, marital status, disability, gender, age or any other protected class as defined by federal and state law.