

NASH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM A45640
REVISED AUGUST 2023

The PTA program has **competitive selective admission requirements** beyond those necessary for general admission to the college. **A separate PTA program application is required after acceptance to the College.**

Refer to page 3 for the program’s application, admission requirements and procedures. The deadline for completion of all application eligibility requirements is June 2 each year for admission consideration to the fall PTA cohort.

Students who apply by the June 2 deadline will receive an invitation to take **the required HESI A2** (HESI Admission Assessment Exam). For information on the HESI-A2, visit [HESI-A2](#)

PROGRAM ADVISING

Faculty advisors for the Physical Therapist Assistant program are available to assist you in meeting your educational goals. For general information regarding the program or assistance in selecting and registering for courses while preparing to apply to the program, contact the Health Sciences Advising Center at healthsciencesadvising@nashcc.edu or on campus at the Advising Center (Building A-2034) between 8:00AM and 6:00PM Monday – Thursday and 8:00AM – 1:00PM Friday.

For questions regarding the PTA program application process, determine meeting eligibility requirements or to receive a PTA Program application (after meeting application eligibility requirements), contact the Health Sciences Admissions Coordinator at 252-451-8390, healthsciencesadmissions@nashcc.edu, or Bldg. B-2130.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Nash Community College’s Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program is a **full time** five-semester curriculum that prepares the student for a career in physical therapy through classroom, laboratory, and clinical education. The PTA curriculum prepares graduates to work in direct patient care settings under the supervision and direction of physical therapists. The PTA works to improve or restore function by alleviation or prevention of physical impairment and performs other essential activities in a physical therapy setting. Course work includes normal human anatomy and physiology, the consequences of disease or injury, and physical therapy treatment of a variety of patient conditions affecting humans throughout the lifespan. The PTA curriculum schedule requires students to be **on campus** @ 4-5 days a week from 8:30 am– 3:30 pm. Graduates are awarded an Associate in Applied Science degree in Physical Therapist Assistant; are eligible to apply for licensure to the NC Board of Physical Therapy Examiners and take the national licensure examination administered by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy. The Nash Community College PTA program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085; 703-706-3245, email: accreditation@apta.org; website: www.capteonline.org.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment is available in general hospitals, rehabilitation centers, extended care facilities, specialty hospitals, home health agencies, private clinics, and public school systems. Employment and salaries for Physical Therapist Assistants vary based on work setting and geographical location. The current salary range in the local area can be found at [salaries](#)

PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT

The Physical Therapist Assistant program does not necessarily serve as a “stepping stone” to becoming a physical therapist. If the ultimate goal is to become a Physical Therapist, Nash Community College can assist by providing college transfer courses to partially satisfy the requirements of the physical therapy school of your choice. Graduation from a PTA program does not guarantee later acceptance in a physical therapy program. Visit the American Physical Therapy Association at www.apta.org for information about Physical Therapy programs in your area.

EXPOSURE RISK IN HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS

Students are at risk for exposure to blood and body fluids that may be contaminated with the hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and other potentially harmful or contagious pathogens while in the clinical setting. Bloodborne pathogens and methods to protect against associated exposure risks are taught before the student's first clinical experience. Education on Bloodborne pathogens and standard precautions may also be a part of the student's orientation to a clinical facility. It is important for students to always follow standard precautions to minimize the risk of exposure in a clinical setting.

PTA prefix technical courses completed in North Carolina are in consideration for transfer credits on an individual basis based on course title, prefix, description, earned grade, completion date and from a CAPTE accredited program at the time the courses were completed. Student is required to demonstrate retention of knowledge and skills in PTA technical courses by successfully completing both a written proficiency examination and laboratory competency examination for each approved PTA transfer course.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND AND DRUG SCREEN POLICY

Criminal background checks and drug screens are not required for admissions to the PTA program. Once admitted to the program, however, students can expect to submit to criminal background checks (state and/or federal, which may also include fingerprint, National Sex Offender search, social security verification/trace, and health care fraud and abuse) and drug screens in order to meet the regulatory criteria of facilities participating in the clinical education component of the PTA program. The PTA faculty recognizes and is supportive of clinical facilities mandating criminal background checks and/or drug screens on students in the program.

If a clinical facility prohibits a PTA student from participating at the facility based on the results of a criminal background check and/or drug screen, the student will be dismissed from the PTA program. No alternative clinical experience will be arranged on behalf of the student, resulting in the inability of the student to meet the curriculum requirements of the program. Students are encouraged to follow due process procedures described in the PTA program *Student Handbook* should they feel ineligibility was determined because of false or inaccurate information.

Students can expect to absorb all costs related to criminal background checks and/or drug screens. Specific procedures will be provided to students in the PTA program upon acceptance and enrollment. Students should also expect to submit to a criminal background check and fingerprinting, at their own cost, when seeking eligibility for state licensure. Students with criminal records should contact the physical therapy licensing board in the state they plan to practice prior to applying for admissions to the PTA program to inquire about potential restrictions for licensure.

CLINICAL EDUCATION EXPECTATIONS

The PTA program requires three separate clinical learning experiences (totaling 16 weeks) in the second year of the program. Clinical facilities are located throughout central, northern, southern, and eastern NC and require approximately 40 contact hours per week. Students can expect to have additional costs for uniforms, meals, and travel (up to 60 miles one direction) or housing to complete the clinical components of the PTA curriculum. Students will follow the schedule of their assigned clinical instructor that may range from 7:00 am – 7:00 pm, include weekends; college recognized holidays, or student breaks

Reliable transportation is critical!

Clinical Eligibility

Students are assigned to facilities that have a current clinical education agreement with the PTA program at Nash Community College. If an assigned clinical facility prohibits a student in the PTA program from participating in or completing the clinical learning experience due to reasons related to the student, no alternative clinical experience will be arranged on behalf of the student. This will result in the student being unable to meet the curriculum requirements of the PTA program and, ultimately, being dismissed from the program. Examples (not inclusive) of situations, which may lead to a clinical facility's decision to prohibit or terminate a student's clinical experience, are:

1. Results of a background check or drug screen (including all forms listed in the Criminal Background Check and Drug Screen policy).
2. Inability to demonstrate current the American Heart Association (AHA) Basic Life Support (BLS) Provider CPR certification, physical examination, health insurance and required immunizations/vaccines (including but not limited to annual influenza and COVID-19).
3. Issues surrounding a student's previous employment at the facility.
4. Significant concerns or issues identified by representatives of the clinical facility relating to the unsafe, unethical, illegal, or generally unprofessional conduct of a student.
5. Non-adherence to the facility's personnel and dress code policies, which includes the appearance or visibility of body art and piercings.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

In addition to the general institutional academic policies described in the [Academic Catalog](#), the Physical Therapist Assistant Program adheres to the following standards:

1. A minimum course grade of **C** (70%) or **S** (satisfactory) is required for all general education or related courses (non-PTA courses) for credit acceptance in the PTA program.
2. A minimum course grade of **B** (80%) or **S** (satisfactory) is required for all PTA prefix courses identified in the Physical Therapist plan of study for credit acceptance in the PTA program.
3. A course grade below **B** or **U** (unsatisfactory) on any PTA prefix course or failure to complete any non-PTA prefix courses or PTA prefix courses required after admission into the program technical phase is grounds for dismissal. Readmission at point of interruption is not guaranteed. Refer to Readmission Policy for specific details.
4. The student overall grade point average must meet or exceed a 2.0 from time of program application until completion to remain in satisfactory academic standing for progression through the program.

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM APPLICATION PROCEDURE

STEP 1: NASH COMMUNITY COLLEGE APPLICATION

Applicants must complete the general admissions application to Nash Community College by **May 30** either online at [Admissions-application process](#) or on campus at Student Services. During application to the college, select physical therapist assistant as the program of study. The application process includes submission of official high school and all post-secondary transcripts required for program admission as described in the [Academic Catalog](#)

STEP 2: PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM APPLICATION PROCESS

- A. Application period is September 1 – June 2
- B. **To be eligible for a program application, the student must meet the following criteria:**
 1. An overall grade point average must meet or exceed a 2.0
 2. Eligible to enroll in ENG 111 and MAT 171
- C. Submit a Physical Therapist Assistant program application to the Health Sciences Admissions Coordinator by **June 2** for consideration for admissions in the following fall semester (August).
- D. Eligible applicants will be invited to take the required HESI Admission Assessment (HESI A2) on annually established dates. Testing offered at Nash Community College and allowed once per calendar application period. The most recent HESI A2 composite percentage score establishes the applicant ranking. HESI A2 composite percentage scores are valid for two years. Students are required to pay the exam fee to sit for the HESI A2. Picture ID is required at the testing site. Nash Community College will only accept HESI A2 composite percentage scores directly transferred from HESI

ADMISSION SELECTION

STEP 3: DETERMINATION OF ADMISSION STATUS

- A. Maximum number of students accepted into each cohort annually is 22. Each cohort will start the technical courses in January (spring semester – refer to the curriculum sequence on p. 4)
- B. Applicants ranked and selected for admission based upon the HESI -A2 composite percentage score and the ability for a maximum of 9 additional points for a total ranking score based on the following:

Criteria to earn additional points by the program application deadline date June 2		Points
BIO 168 Anatomy & Physiology I	course completion with a grade of C or higher	2 points
BIO169 Anatomy & Physiology II	course completion with a grade of C or higher	2 points
MAT 171 Precalculus Algebra	course completion with a grade of C or higher	2 points
Awarded degree	Associate, Bachelor, Masters, etc. (must be reflected on the official transcript submitted to Admissions by the application deadline)	2 points
Nash CC Current Enrollment	must have been enrolled in course during Spring semester	1 point

In the event that the ranking process results in the same ranking score for more than one student to be offered a seat, priority will be given first to a student currently attending NCC, then the highest overall GPA.

- C. Applicants will receive written notification of their conditional admission status prior to the extended registration period for fall semester. Program correspondence will occur through the Nash Community College student email.
- D. Applicants notified of conditional admission must complete the following steps by established deadlines to be accepted into the PTA Program:
 - a. Submit evidence of a recent (within one year) physical examination, using a form provided by the College and available from the Health Sciences Admissions Coordinator. The physical exam must be updated annually following enrollment into the PTA program.
 - b. Complete immunization requirements in accordance with North Carolina Law as well as recommended or required immunizations for students working in the health care environment.
 - c. Submit evidence of current American Heart Association (AHA) Basic Life Support (BLS) Provider CPR certification that must remain effective through completion of clinical learning experiences.
 - d. Submit evidence of current health insurance coverage that must remain effective through completion of clinical learning experiences.
 - e. Submit evidence of a minimum of forty hours of observational experience in a physical therapy setting under supervision of a licensed physical therapist. The Health Sciences Admissions Coordinator will provide form.

Nash Community College does not unlawfully discriminate in the recruitment of students or employees or with respect to employment terms and conditions on the basis of an individual's race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, disability, age, religion, or veteran status.

Curriculum Sequence Checklist

Physical Therapist Assistant – A45640

Course and Hour Requirements:

		<u>Prerequisite</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Clin/Exp</u>	<u>Credit</u>
First Semester (FALL)						
ACA	122	College Transfer Success (None)	0	2	0	1
BIO	168	Anatomy & Physiology I (None)	3	3	0	4
CIS	110	Intro. to Computers (None)	2	2	0	3
ENG	111	Writing and Inquiry (DRE 098)	3	0	0	3
MAT	171	Precalculus Algebra (DMA 010-080)	3	2	0	4
PSY	150	General Psychology (None)	3	0	0	<u>3</u>
Semester Total						18
Second Semester (SPRING I- Technical)						
BIO	169	Anatomy & Physiology II (BIO 168)	3	3	0	4
HUM/FA		Hum/Fine Arts Elective (<i>preferably HUM 115 or PHI courses - see list below</i>)	3	0	0	3
COM	231	Public Speaking (DRE 097)	3	0	0	3
PTA	110	Intro to Physical Therapy (PTA Program Admission, ACA 122, MAT 171, ENG 111, PSY 150, CIS 110)	2	3	0	3
PTA	125	Gross & Functional Anat. (PTA Program Admission, ACA 122, MAT 171, ENG 111, PSY 150, CIS 110)	3	6	0	<u>5</u>
Semester Total						18
Third Semester (SUMMER)						
PTA	135	Pathology (PTA 110, PTA 125, BIO 169, HUM/FA, COM 231)	4	0	0	4
PTA	222	Professional Interactions (PTA 110, PTA 125, BIO 169, HUM/FA, COM 231)	2	0	0	2
PTA	225	Intro to Rehabilitation (PTA 110, PTA 125, BIO 169, HUM/FA, COM 231)	3	3	0	<u>4</u>
Semester Total						10
Fourth Semester (FALL- Technical)						
PTA	145	Therapeutic Procedures (PTA 135, PTA 222, PTA 225)	2	6	0	4
PTA	235	Neurological Rehab (PTA 135, PTA 222, PTA 225)	3	6	0	5
PTA	245	PTA Clinical III (PTA 145, PTA 235)	0	0	12	<u>4</u>
Semester Total						13
Fifth Semester (SPRING II – Technical)						
PTA	212	Health Care Resources (PTA 245)	2	0	0	2
PTA	215	Therapeutic Exercise (PTA 245)	2	3	0	3
PTA	255	PTA Clinical IV (PTA 212, PTA 215)	0	0	12	4
PTA	155*	PTA Clinical I (PTA 255)	0	0	6	2
PTA	185*	PTA Clinical II (PTA 255)	0	0	9	<u>3</u>
Semester Total						<u>14</u>
Total Hours for Graduation						73

*PTA 155 and PTA 185 are combined into one clinical experience the final six weeks of the semester.

HUM/FA Elective (Select 1 course) ART 111, ART 114, ART 115, DRA 111, ENG 231, ENG 232, ENG 233, ENG 241, ENG 242, ENG 261, ENG 262, HUM 110, HUM 115, HUM 120, HUM 130, HUM 150, HUM 160, HUM 180, HUM 211, HUM 212, MUS 110, MUS 112, PHI 215, PHI 220, PHI 230, PHI 240, REL 110, REL 211, REL 212

ESTIMATED PROGRAM COSTS

Nash Community College tuition and fees are set by the State Board of Community Colleges and are subject to change without notice. College tuition and fees found at [Tuition-and-Fees](#)

Term	In state Tuition	College Fees	Textbooks student notes Program Expenses	Technical Tools Supplies Program Expenses	Clinical Education Program Expenses	Other Program Expenses	Total
Fall (General Ed)	\$ 1,368.00	\$ 215.00					\$ 1,583.00
Spring I Technical	\$ 1,368.00	\$ 215.00	\$ 490.00	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ 10.00	\$ 2,283.00
Summer	\$ 760.00	\$ 127.00	\$ 210.00			\$ 100.00	\$ 1,197.00
Fall Technical	\$ 988.00	\$ 160.00	\$ 405.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 1,963.00
Spring II-graduation	\$ 1,064.00	\$ 171.00	\$ 270.00		\$ 50.00	\$ 805.00	\$ 2,360.00
Totals	\$ 5,548.00	\$ 888.00	\$ 1,375.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 450.00	\$ 925.00	\$ 9,386.00

Term	Out Of State Tuition	College Fees	Textbook student notes Program Expenses	Technical Tools Supplies Program Expenses	Clinical Education Program Expenses	Other Program Expenses	Total
Fall (General Ed)	\$ 4,824.00	\$ 215.00					\$ 5,039.00
Spring I Technical	\$ 4,824.00	\$ 215.00	\$ 490.00	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ 10.00	\$ 5,739.00
Summer	\$ 2,680.00	\$ 127.00	\$ 210.00			\$ 100.00	\$ 3,117.00
Fall Technical	\$ 3,484.00	\$ 160.00	\$ 405.00		\$ 400.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 4,459.00
Spring II-graduation	\$ 3,752.00	\$ 171.00	\$ 270.00		\$ 50.00	\$ 805.00	\$ 5,048.00
Totals	\$ 19,564.00	\$ 888.00	\$ 1,375.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 450.00	\$ 925.00	\$ 23,402.00

PTA Program Specific Expenses in addition to college tuition & fees	Amount
HESI Admission Exam (prior to program acceptance)	\$ 55.
Health Science Fee (included in tuition expenses)	\$ 10. / semester
Books /student notes/ apps (@ total for PTA Technical Courses)	\$ 1400.
PTA Technical tools & lab supplies (@ total for PTA Technical Courses)	\$ 200.
APTA Student Professional Membership (summer – third semester)	\$ 90.
Background, Drug Screen check, immunization tracker and Rotation Manager (fall technical– fourth semester)	\$ 200.
Clinical Attire and equipment (fall technical– fourth semester)	\$ 200.
PEAT (Practice Exam & Assessment (spring II –fifth semester) (included in tuition expenses)	\$ 90.
Professional Licensure application (spring II –fifth semester)	\$ 150. (NCBPTE application fee) \$ 485. (FSBPT examination fee) \$ 85. (Prometric testing site fee)

Please note: Information intended for estimated cost only and is subject to change without notice. Additional costs for transportation, housing and meals associated with clinical education experiences may be incurred and are the student's responsibility.

FINANCIAL AID

Nash Community College makes every effort to provide financial assistance, where need exists, for students whose primary goal is to acquire post-secondary education. The Academic Catalog details the Financial Aid process and types of aid available.

Department of Education regulations dictate to colleges what criteria must be met before financial aid awards from federal and state funds can be disbursed. One such criterion includes the requirement that late starting classes have proper attendance documentation before funds can be disbursed. Distribution of financial aid awards will be adjusted for late start classes.

Students accepted in the Physical Therapist Assistant curriculum are affected by late start classes. Pell grant funds are distributed based on the % of credit hours enrolled/attending at a time. The Physical Therapist Assistant program has semesters where classes are not run concurrently, but sequentially within a semester. Students awarded financial aid Pell grants will be impacted by the distribution of grant funds throughout the Physical Therapist Assistant curriculum except the summer semester and will receive partial dollar distributions throughout these semesters.

Student loan fund disbursements require a student to be enrolled/attending six (6) credit hours for loan dollars to be disbursed. All student loan funds will be awarded once the six (6) credit hour stipulation is attained, which may be later than the College's initial student loan disbursements while in the PTA program.

More detailed information concerning financial aid is available from the College's Financial Aid Office at 252-428-7328 or by sending an e-mail to nccfinancialaid@nashcc.edu

Please note: Students are responsible to secure funds for the purchase of and program related expense (uniforms, criminal background checks, drug screens, and physical and immunization requirements) before the distribution of financial aid funds.

PROGRAM READMISSION

The following policy clarifies the conditions under which a student who exits the Program without satisfying all of its requirements may apply for readmission to resume progress towards the Associate in Applied Science in Physical Therapist Assistant degree.

1. A student who fails to complete the PTA program as scheduled may reapply to the program by meeting the admissions criteria that are in effect at the time of reapplication.
2. A student will be required to proceed through the general selection and acceptance procedures along with other candidates or the following year if the student demonstrated academic failure or withdrawal by the end of the first technical semester (PTA prefixed course).
3. A student who reapplies for re-entry at the point of non-progression will be considered if less than three (3) years has passed. In situations where greater than three (3) years has passed, the student will need to apply through the general application process and will be expected to start with the first technical semester of PTA-prefix courses.
4. A student must submit a written letter of intent for readmission to the Program Director describing reasons for leaving the program, desire for re-entering the program, detailed plan of academic preparedness for future success and the anticipated semester of re-entry. Written request must be received within 90 days of anticipated semester start date.
5. A personal interview may be scheduled between the prospective student and an appropriate member of the PTA program.
6. Re-entry into the program is not guaranteed and will be considered on a case by case basis considering the point of re-entry, space availability per the number of currently enrolled students at the point of re-entry, prior academic and clinical student performance, and the number of confirmed clinical education learning experiences.
7. A student will be required to demonstrate retention of knowledge and skills in PTA technical courses by successfully completing both a written proficiency examination and laboratory competency examination for each prerequisite course to the point of re-entry, regardless of an original passing grade for the course. A student must follow the same program course sequence and expected completion timeframe as currently enrolled students at the point of program re-entry.
8. A student will be required to meet all program policies and maintain satisfactory academic progress throughout the program
9. A student dismissed from the program as a result of inappropriate internet use; misconduct or unprofessional behavior during on- or off-campus learning activities; non-adherence to laboratory and clinical education policies; or significant concerns in regard to clinical expectations for safety, ethical, and legal standards will not be considered for re-entry to the PTA program or subsequent admissions to any health sciences program at Nash Community College.
10. Any student is allowed only two (2) attempts to complete the PTA program.
11. A student will receive written notification of readmission status.

PTA FACULTY ADVISORS

Faculty advisors for the PTA program are available to assist in meeting student educational goals. The contact information below will assist a student in scheduling an appointment.

Andrea Milks, PT, MS (Director)	almilks594@nashcc.edu	252-451-8481
Erin Griswold, PTA, BAS	eggriswold627@nashcc.edu	252-451-8281
Stephen Tart, PTA, BS	sdtart261@nashcc.edu	252-451-8338

PTA PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Outcomes	2-Year Average (2021 – 2022)
Acceptance Rate	38.0 %
Program Completion Overall	90.7 %
Graduation Rate (CAPTE) **	97.7 %
Licensure 1 st take Pass Rate	79.3 %
Licensure Overall	97.4 %
Employment Rate within one year of graduation based on graduate responses	100 %
Average Exam Score	649 (National 654)

**** Graduation rate does not reflect withdrawal from the program due to non-academic or personal reasons**

MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, PROGRAM AND GRADUATE GOALS

PTA Program Mission:

The Physical Therapist Assistant program at Nash Community College provides an affordable opportunity for students to gain the knowledge and skills, and develop the professional behaviors necessary to earn the Associate in Applied Science degree in Physical Therapist Assistant. The program is dedicated to developing graduates with an awareness of diversity who are competent and caring entry-level physical therapist assistants who will provide evidence-based physical therapy services under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist and are committed to lifelong learning.

PTA Program Philosophy:

The Physical Therapist Assistant program supports the mission and goals of Nash Community College. The faculty promote high standards of ethics and professionalism as they strives to meet the following commitments to students, community partners, the public and the College:

1. To assist qualified students to meet their individual goal of becoming a Physical Therapist Assistant.
2. To prepare individuals to competently practice physical therapy at the Associate Degree level.
3. To serve the needs of the public by providing skilled, licensed physical therapy personnel.
4. To contribute to fulfillment of College mission by meeting the needs of its students and the surrounding communities

PTA Program Goals:

The PTA program at Nash Community College will:

1. Identify, recruit, and accept qualified applicants by providing accurate information to students and the public that is sufficient to make informed decisions.
2. Provide an organized, contemporary and comprehensive curriculum integrating academic and clinical education experiences to prepare students as entry-level physical therapist assistants.
3. Promote high academic, clinical and professional standards that foster the development of problem solving, critical thinking, and effective communication.
4. Graduate entry-level physical therapist assistants capable of gaining licensure and prepared to work safely and effectively in the best interest of the public under the direction and supervision of a physical therapist as part of a dynamic healthcare team.

PTA Graduate Goals:

Graduates of the Physical Therapist Assistant program at Nash Community College will be able to:

1. Gain licensure and employment as an entry-level physical therapist assistant.
2. Work collaboratively with physical therapy professionals and other healthcare providers in a variety of clinical settings in the best interest of the public.
3. Demonstrate entry-level professional, safe, and effective physical therapy services under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist.
4. Uphold the ethical and legal standards of the profession by complying with national and state regulations regarding the practice of physical therapy in all practice settings.
5. Recognize the need for continued personal and professional growth through self-assessment and a commitment to lifelong learning to remain current in physical therapy practice.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS OF PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT EDUCATION

Admission, Retention and Graduation Standards

Students enrolled in the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program at Nash Community College must demonstrate competence in various intellectual, physical and social aspects, which represent the fundamentals of professional Physical Therapy practice upon graduation. The PTA curriculum provides the general, technical and clinical education required to enable the student to deliver entry-level clinical services in an array of health settings. All students must meet the minimum criteria established by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education and the Nash Community College PTA Program without regard to student preference or choice for specialty care delivery in the future.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ensures qualified applicants to public institutions the ability to pursue program admissions, however, the applicant must meet essential requirements. The PTA Program holds all enrolled students to the same standards with or without reasonable accommodations.

The following functions are considered essential requirements for Nash Community College's PTA Program admission, retention and graduation. The purpose of these functions is to ensure PTA students provide safe, competent and timely care to patients receiving physical therapy services.

Performance Area	Essential Function	Performance Example (Not all Inclusive)
<u>Mobility/Motor Skills:</u>	<p>Sufficient motor ability (balance, coordination, speed and agility) and strength to:</p> <p>Move independently throughout a clinical setting</p> <p>Move equipment/patients</p> <p>Ensure safe and effective treatment interventions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist and safely guard patients during mobility tasks (walking, transferring, exercising, and other Physical Therapy treatment procedures). • Independently transition in and out of postures, including bending, kneeling, sitting, crawling, standing and walking for a minimum of 90 minutes without rest. • Manipulate equipment and patients involving squatting to the floor, reaching above head, pulling/lifting or guiding weight in excess of 100lbs. • Demonstrate the dexterity required to manipulate devices/equipment commonly utilized in Physical Therapy interventions, including gauges, dials, small nuts/bolts/ screws, and other equipment components.
<u>Sensory Abilities</u>	<p>Sufficient auditory, visual and tactile ability to monitor and assess health needs of patients.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Auditory</u> (corrected or not): recognize soft voices/sounds, voices under protective garb, equipment signals, calls for assistance up to 10 ft. away, measurement of vital signs and breath sounds in often active/loud environments. • <u>Visual</u> (corrected or not): recognize non-verbal responses including facial expressions and body language; observe and measure color changes, movement patterns, equipment settings; assess environmental situation up to 20 feet away. • <u>Tactile</u>: palpation of musculoskeletal landmarks, pulse; identify skin temperature/texture changes, muscle tone and joint movement; Provide competent interventions including massage/soft tissue mobilization techniques, manual contact/resistance during functional and exercise training.

Performance Area	Essential Function	Performance Example (Not all Inclusive)
<u>Communication Skills</u>	<p>Sufficient communication abilities in English for written (printed and typed), verbal (direct and telecommunications)</p> <p>Non-verbal communication with patients, families and other health care providers in the clinical environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak, hear and observe individuals/groups in order to elicit information and communicate effectively in verbal and non-verbal formats. • Attain, comprehend and utilize information presented in written and verbal format and produce appropriate written documentation, including treatment logs, medical records and billing. Use appropriate medical terminology and correct spelling/grammar. • Communicate appropriately/professionally to individuals from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds (employ culture competence). This includes explaining and teaching physical therapy procedures and answering questions posed by others.
<u>Behavioral/Social Interpersonal Skills</u>	<p>Sufficient behavior and social abilities to interact and work collaboratively with individuals, groups, and families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to establish rapport and participate effectively as a team member in patient care delivery. • Manage physically taxing workloads and emotional stress. • Demonstrate the ability to adapt to rapidly changing situations/environments without warning. Show flexibility and coping skills to function in fast-paced clinical situations with multiple psychosocial issues presenting.
<u>Cognitive Ability / Critical Thinking Skills</u>	<p>Sufficient ability to collect, interpret and integrate information for sound clinical decision-making.</p> <p>Must be able to understand three dimensional and spatial relationships of structures, and discern complex information for good clinical judgments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation and measurements of patient responses to physical therapy interventions. Ability to recognize normal and abnormal responses and appropriately decide modifications to treatment procedures. • Respond to emergencies, including first aid and CPR. • Recognizing treatment effectiveness, relate treatment rationale to patients and others, consult with Physical Therapist or other health team members as indicated. • Read and comprehend relevant information in textbooks, medical records and professional publications.

Please Note: These requirements do not reflect the ability of the graduate to pass state licensing examinations, nor functions, which may be required for employment of the graduate.

Students seeking admissions to the PTA program must initial and sign showing they are capable of meeting the essential functions described with or without reasonable accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student with disabilities to request reasonable accommodations necessary to meet the essential functions. If an accommodation is requested, the student must provide documentation of his/her disability and the accommodation being requested to the College's ADA Officer, at ADA@nashcc.edu

Compiled from Technical Standards and Essential Requirements documents from the following academic institutions:

- Fayetteville Technical Community College, Fayetteville, NC – Physical Therapist Assistant Program*
- Greenville Technical College, Greenville, SC – Physical Therapist Assistant Program*
- Guilford Technical Community College, Jamestown, NC – Physical Therapist Assistant Program*
- East Carolina University, Greenville, NC – Department of Physical Therapy*
- Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC – Department of Physical Therapy*

Other Resources:

- Ingram D. Essential functions required of physical therapist assistant and physical therapy students. Journal of Physical Therapy Education. 1994; 8:57-59.*
- Ingram D. Opinions of physical therapy education program directors on essential functions. Physical Therapy. 1997; 77:37-46.*