

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM**Preparing to Apply to the PTA Program: What Do I Need to Do?**

Are you interested in a career in physical therapy? The PTA Program is currently seeking accreditation status with the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, and if candidacy is approved, will be accepting applications for the program during the spring semester of 2026. Accepted students will enter the program in the fall semester of 2026.*

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program will be a selective entry program. You must apply for admission to the program separate from the admission application that you will have submitted for Southwest. Applications for the PTA program will be accepted each spring with a deadline of **June 1**. We anticipate our applicant pool to be competitive due to the job market of the surrounding area. We suggest that you exceed the program's minimum requirements by following the information below. Please contact the PTA Program Faculty (see contact information below) for advising assistance!

<p><u>Program Application Academic Requirements</u></p> <p>To be eligible for application to the PTA program you must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have an ACT Math score of 19, Writing score of 18, and Reading score of 19 or the equivalent as determined by the Southwest Admissions Office <u>OR</u> have completed all required learning support competencies as applicable. ACT scores of 21 or above are preferred but not required. 2. Have had high school algebra I and II or the college level equivalent (see above if applicable). 3. Have had high school biology or the college level equivalent (one semester of college general biology.) 4. Have a minimum high school GPA of 2.8 on a 4.0 scale if < 15 college credits <u>OR</u> an overall college GPA of 2.8 on a 4.0 scale (excluding learning support coursework). A grade of a "C" or better is required in all PTA degree coursework including the general education coursework that may be taken prior to applying to the program with the exception BIOL 2010 and 2020 that must be completed with a grade of A or B. 	<p><u>Program Course Requirements (Total 70 credit hours)</u></p> <p><i>NOTE: Repeated coursework will be averaged.</i></p> <p>Required General Education Courses (24 credit hours): A required general education course is one that must be completed by the student before they are eligible to graduate from Southwest with an A.A.S. degree in PTA. These courses can be taken before a student is officially admitted into the program or during the five semesters of the PTA program. To be competitive in the program's competitive applicant pool, it is highly recommended that students complete most or all of this coursework prior to applying to the program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Anatomy and Physiology I <u>and</u> II (BIOL 2010 and 2020) • Physics for Health Sciences (PHYS 1210) • English Composition I (ENGL 1010) • General Psychology (PSYC 1030) • Math (MATH 1530 or 1710) • A Humanities elective (ex. PHIL 1030, PHIL 1040, PHIL 2030)
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<p>5. Applicants are also required to have observed in at least two physical therapy settings prior to applying.</p> <p>6. Students are required to take the TEAS exam and score a minimum of 60%. You may sign up to take the exam through the Testing Center.</p>	
<p>Recommended Courses: These courses are NOT REQUIRED for graduation from Southwest with a degree in PTA; however, points are earned in the program's application process if you have completed these courses with a grade of C or higher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Terminology (ALHS 1020) • Any other 4-credit hour natural science course (BIOL 1010, for example) <p>Other Courses for Consideration (that may or may not add application points):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMM 2045 Public Speaking • INFS 1010 Computer Applications • ACAD 1100 Academic Success Seminar • PHED 2050 Health and Wellness • PHED 2010 First Aid and Safety • PSYC 2130 Life Span Psychology 	<p>Required PTA Courses (46 credit hours): These courses <u>are only open to those students who have been officially accepted</u> into the program through the program's application process. These courses are sequential and must be completed in the order in which they are offered. Class size is limited to 20 students.</p> <p><u>More Information about the PTA Career check out our program's website!</u> Program specific information will be added at a later date.</p> <p>Or contact a program faculty member: Jennifer Stevens jstevens@southwest.tn.edu Jeanie Jarrell sjarrell@southwest.tn.edu Allied Health Department: 901-333-5400</p>

Please note:

1. Grades of A's and B's in **all** of the above courses are recommended. All course grades will be calculated into your overall grade point average (GPA) and the higher your GPA is the more competitive you will be in the program admissions process.
2. Overall GPA includes **all** Southwest courses **in addition to** any college courses from **other** institutions (excluding Learning Support courses).
3. Credit **will not** be given in the program admissions process for science classes completed before the 5 year period prior to the application deadline.
4. If your cumulative GPA (including coursework from other institutions) is less than 2.8, you should repeat coursework that is applicable to the program degree. **Please check with a Financial Aid representative to see how repeating a course may affect your award.**

***CAPTE STATEMENT:**

Graduation from a physical therapist assistant education program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085; 703-706-3245; accreditation@apta.org is necessary for eligibility to sit for the licensure examination, which is required in all states. Candidacy is considered to be an accredited status, as such the credits and degree earned from a program with Candidacy status are considered, by CAPTE, to be from an accredited program. Therefore, students in the charter (first) class should be eligible to take the licensure exam even if CAPTE withholds accreditation at the end of the candidacy period. That said, it is up to each state licensing agency, not CAPTE, to determine who is eligible for licensure. Information on licensing

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requirements should be directed to the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT; www.fsbpt.org) or specific state boards (a list of state boards and contact information is available on FSBPT's website.)

Southwest is seeking accreditation of a new physical therapist assistant education program from CAPTE. The program is planning to submit an Application for Candidacy, which is the formal application required in the pre-accreditation stage, on 10/15/2025. Submission of this document does not assure that the program will be granted Candidate for Accreditation status.

Achievement of Candidate for Accreditation status is required prior to implementation of the professional/technical phase of the program; therefore, no students may be enrolled in professional/technical courses until Candidate for Accreditation status has been achieved.

Further, though achievement of Candidate for Accreditation status signifies satisfactory progress toward accreditation, it does not assure that the program will be granted accreditation.

If candidacy is granted, the initial cohort will be admitted in Fall 2026 with a graduation date of May 2028. The date of the first licensure examination for which the graduates would be able to sit for the board exam will be July 2028.