

**Nash Community College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program A45640
August 2026**

The PTA program has competitive and selective admission requirements that exceed 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 help you achieve your educational goals. For general information about the program or assistance with selecting and registering for courses as you prepare to apply, contact the Health Sciences Advising Center at healthsciencesadvising@nashcc.edu or visit the Advising Center (Building A-2034) on campus between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM Monday through Thursday, and 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Friday.

For questions regarding the PTA program application process, determining 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 alleviating or preventing physical impairment and performs other essential activities in a physical therapy setting. Coursework 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; they 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: accreditationsupport@apta.org; website: [Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education \(CAPTE\) Official Website](#).

EMPLOYMENT

Employment is available in 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 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 offering college transfer courses that partially fulfill the requirements of the physical therapy school of your choice. Graduation from a PTA program does not guarantee later acceptance into 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 face potential exposure to blood and body fluids that may be contaminated with hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and other harmful or contagious pathogens in the clinical setting. Education about bloodborne pathogens and protective measures is provided before the student's first clinical experience. Additionally, this information may be part of the student's orientation to a clinical facility. It is crucial for students to always follow standard precautions to reduce the risk of exposure in a clinical environment.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND AND DRUG SCREEN PROCEDURE

Criminal background checks and drug screens are not required for admission 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 to meet the regulatory criteria of facilities participating in the clinical education component of the PTA program. The PTA faculty recognizes and supports clinical facilities mandating criminal background checks and/or drug screens for students in the program.

If a clinical facility prohibits a PTA student from participating in 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 student's inability 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 before applying for admission to the PTA program to inquire about potential licensure restrictions.

CLINICAL EDUCATION EXPECTATIONS

The PTA program requires two 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, which may range from 7:00 am – 7:00 pm, including 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 exhaustive) 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 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).
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 include the appearance or visibility of body art and piercings.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

In addition to the general institutional academic procedures 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 the point of interruption is not guaranteed. Refer to the Readmission Procedure.
4. The student's overall grade point average must be 2.0 or higher from the time of program application until completion to remain in satisfactory academic standing for progression through the program

PTA prefix technical courses completed in North Carolina are considered for transfer credit on an individual basis based on course title, prefix, description, earned grade, completion date, and completion at a CAPTE-accredited program. The student is required to demonstrate retention of knowledge and skills in PTA technical courses by completing both a written proficiency examination and a laboratory competency examination for each approved PTA transfer course.

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](#) 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 be 2.0 or higher
 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 admission consideration in the following fall semester (August).
- D. Eligible applicants will be invited to take the required HESI Admission Assessment (HESI A2) on annual dates. Testing is offered at Nash Community College and allowed once per calendar application period. The most recent HESI A2 composite percentage score establishes the applicant's 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. The maximum number of students accepted into each cohort annually is 24. Each cohort will start the technical courses in January (spring semester – refer to the curriculum sequence on p. 4)
- B. Applicants are ranked and selected for admission based upon the HESI-A2 composite percentage score and the ability to earn a maximum of 9 additional points for a total ranking score based on the following:

Table 1: Table summarizing the specific criteria, requirements, and point values available for earning additional ranking points.

Criteria to earn additional points by the June 2 program application deadline		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's, Master's, 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 the course during the Spring semester	1 point

If 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 to the highest overall GPA.

- C. Applicants will receive written notification of their conditional admission status before the extended registration period for the 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 following 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 the supervision of a licensed physical therapist. The Health Sciences Admissions Coordinator provides the form.

Nash Community College does not unlawfully discriminate in the recruitment of students or employees or concerning employment terms and conditions based on 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:

Table2: Curriculum requirements by semester, detailing course titles, lecture/lab hour breakdowns, and total credits per course

		<u>Prerequisite</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Lab</u>	<u>Clin/Exp</u>	<u>Credit</u>
First Semester (FALL)						
ACA 122 or 115	College Transfer	(None)	0	2	0	1
BIO 168	Success 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 or ENG 025)	3	0	0	3
MAT 171	Precalculus Algebra	(DMA 010-080 or MAT 035)	3	2	0	4
PSY 150	General Psychology	(None)	3	0	0	3
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	(Preferably HUM 115 or PHI courses - see list below)	3	0	0	3
COM 231	Public Speaking	(DRE 098 or ENG 025)	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	5
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	4
Semester Total						10
Fourth Semester (FALL- Technical)						
PTA 215	Therapeutic Exercise	(PTA 135, PTA 222, PTA 225)	2	3	0	3
PTA 235	Neurological Rehab	(PTA 135, PTA 222, PTA 225)	3	6	0	5
PTA 155*	PTA Clinical I	(PTA 215, PTA 235)	0	0	6	2
PTA 245*	PTA Clinical III	(PTA 215, PTA 235)	0	0	12	4
Semester Total						14
Fifth Semester (SPRING II - Technical)						
PTA 145	Therapeutic Procedures	(PTA 155, PTA 245)	2	6	0	4
PTA 212	Health Care Resources	(PTA 155, PTA 245)	2	0	0	2
PTA 185**	PTA Clinical II	(PTA 145, PTA 212)	0	0	9	3
PTA 255**	PTA Clinical IV	(PTA 145, PTA 212)	0	0	12	4
Semester Total						13
Total Hours for Graduation						73

*PTA 155 and PTA 245 are combined into one clinical experience for the final seven and a half weeks of the semester.

**PTA 185 and PTA 255 are combined into one clinical experience for the final eight and a half weeks of the program.

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 211, HUM 212, MUS 110, MUS 112, PHI 215, PHI 220, PHI 230, PHI 240, REL 110, REL 211, REL 21

ESTIMATED PROGRAM COSTS

Nash Community College's tuition and fees are set by the State Board of Community Colleges and may change without notice. You can find information about college tuition and fees at [Tuition-and-Fees](#).

Table 3: Table Summarizing the In-State Tuition, Fees, and Other Expenses for the Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Term	In state Tuition	College Fees	Course Materials Textbooks student notes apps	Technical Tools Supplies Program Expenses	Clinical Education Program Expenses	Program & Professional Licensure Application Expenses	Total
Fall (General Ed)	\$ 1,368.00	\$ 97.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,465.00
Spring I Technical	\$ 1,368.00	\$ 97.00	\$ 650.00	\$ 100.00	\$ -	\$ 12.00	\$ 2,227.00
Summer	\$ 760.00	\$ 97.00	\$ 150.00	\$ -		\$ 102.00	\$ 1,109.00
Fall Technical	\$ 1,064.00	\$ 97.00	\$ 300.00	\$ -	\$ 185.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 1,658.00
Spring II-graduation	\$ 988.00	\$ 97.00	\$ 350.00	\$ -	\$ 40.00	\$ 829.00	\$ 2,304.00
Totals	\$ 5,548.00	\$ 485.00	\$ 1,450.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 225.00	\$ 955.00	\$ 8,763.00

Table 4: Table Summarizing Out-of-State Tuition, Fees, and Other Expenses for the Physical Therapist Assistant Program

Term	Out Of State Tuition	College Fees	Course Materials Textbooks student notes apps	Technical Tools Supplies Program Expenses	Clinical Education Program Expenses	Program & Professional Licensure Application Expenses	Total
Fall (General Ed)	\$ 4,824.00	\$ 97.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,921.00
Spring I Technical	\$ 4,824.00	\$ 97.00	\$ 650.00	\$ 100.00	\$ -	\$ 12.00	\$ 5,683.00
Summer	\$ 2,680.00	\$ 97.00	\$ 150.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 102.00	\$ 3,029.00
Fall Technical	\$ 3,752.00	\$ 97.00	\$ 300.00	\$ -	\$ 185.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 4,346.00
Spring II-graduation	\$ 3,484.00	\$ 97.00	\$ 350.00	\$ -	\$ 40.00	\$ 829.00	\$ 4,800.00
Totals	\$ 19,564.00	\$ 485.00	\$ 1,450.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 225.00	\$ 955.00	\$ 22,779.00

Table 5: Table summarizing Physical Therapist Assistant Program estimated expenses, including clinical uniform costs, clinical background checks, therapeutic software apps, and supplies in addition to tuition and fees

Program-Specific Expenses in addition to college tuition & fees	Amount
HESI Admission Exam (before program acceptance)	\$ 55.
Health Science Fee (included in tuition expenses)	\$ 12. / semester
Books /student notes/ apps (@ total for PTA Technical Courses)	\$ 1400.
PTA Technical tools & lab supplies (@ total for PTA Technical Courses)	\$ 50.
APTA Student Professional Membership (summer – third semester)	\$ 90.
Background, Drug Screen check, immunization tracker, and Rotation Manager (fall technical– fourth semester)	\$ 185.
Clinical Attire and equipment (fall technical– fourth semester)	\$ 100.
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 exam fee) \$ 92. (Prometric testing site fee)

Please note: This Information is intended for estimated cost only and is subject to change without notice. Additional transportation, housing, and meals costs associated with clinical education experiences may be incurred and are also 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 provides details on 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. The distribution of financial aid awards will be adjusted for later-starting classes.

Students accepted into the Physical Therapist Assistant curriculum are affected by late-starting 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 for 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 for securing funds for the purchase of program-related expenses (uniforms, criminal background checks, drug screens, and physical and immunization requirements) before the distribution of financial aid funds.

PROGRAM READMISSION

The following procedure 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 for the following year if the student demonstrates 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 have passed. In situations where more than three (3) years have 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, a detailed plan of academic preparedness for future success, and the anticipated semester of re-entry. Written requests must be received within 90 days of the 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 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; failure to follow laboratory and clinical education policies; or serious concerns regarding safety, ethical, and legal standards in the clinical settings will not be eligible for re-entry into the PTA program or future 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

PTA program faculty advisors are available to assist students in achieving their educational goals. The contact information provided below can assist students 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

Table 6: Table summarizing the two-year average for PTA program outcomes, including annual graduation rates, NPTE licensure pass rates, and post-graduation employment statistics

Outcomes	2-Year Average (2024 – 2025)
Acceptance Rate	47.0 %
Program Completion Overall	76.8 %
Graduation Rate (CAPTE) **	87.59 %
Licensure 1 st Take Pass Rate	85.11 %
Licensure Overall	94.12 %
Employment Rate Graduate responses within one year of graduation	100 %
Average Exam Score	649 (National 651)

**** 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 promotes high standards of ethics and professionalism as they strive to meet the following commitments to students, community partners, the public, and the College:

1. To assist qualified students in meeting 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 the fulfillment of the College's 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 that qualified applicants to public institutions can 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.

Table 7: Table outlining the program's essential technical standards across five domains: mobility and motor skills, sensory abilities, communication, behavioral and interpersonal skills, and cognitive or critical thinking abilities

Performance Area	Essential Function	Performance Example (Not all Inclusive)
<u>Mobility/Motor Skills:</u>	Sufficient motor ability (balance, coordination, speed, and agility) and strength to: Move independently throughout a clinical setting. Move equipment /patients Ensure safe and effective treatment interventions.	• Assist and safely guard patients during mobility tasks such as 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 weights over 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>	Sufficient auditory, visual, and tactile ability to monitor and assess the health needs of patients.	• <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.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS OF PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT EDUCATION

Table 8: Table outlining the program's essential technical standards across five domains: mobility and motor skills, sensory abilities, communication, behavioral and interpersonal skills, and cognitive or critical thinking abilities

Performance Area	Essential Function	Performance Example (Not all Inclusive)
<u>Communication Skills</u>	Sufficient communication abilities in English for written (printed and typed), verbal (direct and telecommunications) Non-verbal communication with patients, families, and other health care providers in the clinical environment.	• Speak, hear, and observe individuals/groups to elicit information and communicate effectively in verbal and non-verbal formats. • Attain, comprehend, and utilize information presented in written and verbal formats 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 cultural competence). This includes explaining and teaching physical therapy procedures and answering questions posed by others.
<u>Behavioral/Social Interpersonal Skills</u>	Sufficient behavior and social abilities to interact and work collaboratively with individuals, groups, and families	• 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>	Sufficient ability to collect, interpret, and integrate information for sound clinical decision-making. Must be able to understand three-dimensional and spatial relationships of structures, and discern complex information for good clinical judgments.	• 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. • Recognize 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 that may be required for employment of the graduate.

Students seeking admission 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.