

Physical Therapist Assistant Program - Frequently Asked Questions

HOW TO APPLY

Q: How do I apply to the PTA Program?

Students must start by applying to the college (Chatt Tech) and be accepted by Spring Semester of each year. Once accepted to the college, students can apply to the PTA Program separately by viewing the Mandatory Application Video posted on the [PTA Program website](#). The link to the application is provided at the end of the video by QR Code – be prepared to access this link when finishing the video. Students are only considered for admission if they have met (or expect to meet) all of the pre-requisites by the published deadlines. More information about the application process is on the [PTA Program website](#).

Q: Can I transfer credit from other colleges or universities?

Yes, we accept transfer credit for pre-requisite courses. When you apply to Chatt Tech, you can submit your previous coursework for evaluation by our Admissions office, and they will determine if your previous course work meets the pre-requisite requirements. You can find more information about transfer credits [on the college's website](#). We do not accept transfer credit for professional courses (PHTA prefix).

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Q: How long is the PTA Program?

The PTA Program takes 4 full-time semesters, after completion of all pre-requisite courses. Students start in the Fall Semester each year (in August), and graduate at the end of Fall Semester the following year (in December).

Q: Is it hard to get into the PTA Program?

The PTA Program does have competitive admissions (even though Chatt Tech is Open Enrollment), and not all students who apply are accepted into the program. The total number of applications varies each year, but we accept about 22 students each Fall based on a points system. You can see what items are considered for points on our [PTA Program website](#).

Q: Is the PTA Program offered online?

No, the PTA Program is only offered in person on the North Metro Campus. There are some classes within the program with online portions, but the majority of the program is in person. However, you can take your prerequisite courses in any format you choose (such as nights, weekends, or online), or at another college.

Q: Are PTA Program classes offered at night or on weekends, or can I take classes “part-time”?

No, PTA Program classes are only offered Monday-Friday during regular business hours, in-person. Students in the program must take a pre-determined set of classes each semester with a fixed schedule.

Q: Is the PTA Program offered on any other campuses?

The PTA Program is only available on the Chatt Tech North Metro Campus.

Q: What is the schedule like for a PTA student?

Students in the PTA Program should expect to be on-campus, in person 4-5 days/week, for most of the day. Class is usually scheduled from about 9:00am and 3:30pm each day, but will vary for specific classes and specific semesters. Class typically does not start before 9:00am and ends by 5:00pm (does not apply to clinicals). PTA students are considered “full-time” students.

Q: What is a “Closed Cohort”?

The PTA Program uses a “closed cohort” model. This means that only students in the PTA program may take PTA classes, and students in each cohort will take all their classes together. Students in the program must take a pre-determined set of classes each semester.

ABOUT CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Q: Are “Clinicals” part of the program?

Yes, students must complete 3 separate “Clinical Rotations” during the program (sometimes called “Field Work” in other professions). Each student is assigned a licensed therapist to work with during each rotation, and they travel to that therapist’s location for the duration of the rotation. For example, a student is assigned to work with a therapist at a local hospital. That student would travel to the hospital each day and match the hours of their assigned therapist.

The location and hours of your clinical rotations will be different than your class schedule but will typically be five 8-hours days. Sometimes this includes early mornings or evenings, but your total hours will not exceed 40 hours/week, and will not include any overnight times.

We do our best to assign each student a rotation that works for them and where they live, but you may still have a long commute (up to 90 minutes one-way, though this is rare).

Q: What are the requirements for “Clinicals”?

Students are required to get a Background Check, Drug Screen, vaccinations, and other requirements. All requirements are set by the clinical sites and cannot be altered or waived by Chatt Tech. Requirements for Clinicals are reviewed in more detail during Application Sessions, or you can email the PTA Program Director, Aaron Freeman at aaron.freeman@chattahoocheetech.edu.

Q: Do I have to get the COVID vaccine for the PTA Program?

Vaccines are not required to apply or to be accepted to the PTA Program. However, most employers and most of our clinical partners require the COVID vaccine (and other vaccines) to attend clinical rotations, which are required to complete the program.

Vaccine requirements are set by the clinical sites and cannot be altered or waived by Chatt Tech. However, some clinical sites may have their own waiver process for medical or religious reasons. If a waiver process exists, Chatt Tech cannot guarantee that a student waiver will be accepted. Chatt Tech cannot alter or select student clinical placements to avoid vaccination requirements (or any other requirements).

FINANCIAL AND WORK QUESTIONS**Q: Are the costs for clinicals included in my tuition?**

Unfortunately, no. You will need to cover the cost of travel and obtaining other clinical requirements, such as vaccines, a background check, and drug screen. Having Health Insurance is recommended to reduce the cost of these items. Depending on your wardrobe and clinical site, you may also need to purchase clinical attire (such as professional attire or scrubs). The program does offer limited scrubs to borrow. More information about PTA Program cost is available on our [PTA Program website](#).

Q: Can I work during PTA program?

PTA Program classes are scheduled full-time, Monday through Friday during regular business hours (See Q: What is the Schedule for a PTA Student”). It is possible to work outside these hours, but the student must be highly dedicated and diligent. The program is challenging and has a variable schedule, especially during Clinicals and around Midterm and Final Exams. Virtually all students have to study and practice outside of class hours, even if they did not have to in previous course work. Your clinical schedule can also be different from your regular class hours (see Q: Are “Clinicals” part of the program?).

If you do choose to work, a flexible schedule is strongly recommended.

Q: What kind of job can I get after I graduate from the PTA Program?

The program prepares graduates to practice as Physical Therapist Assistants only. Statistically, most PTAs work in either an Outpatient Physical Therapy clinic or a Hospital, however PTAs are also qualified to work in Home Health, Skilled Nursing Facilities, and other Rehabilitation facilities. A common misconception is that physical therapy is only for athletes, but there are many different areas of specialization where a PTA can practice. You can read more information about PTAs at [Choosept.com About PTs and PTAs section](https://www.choosept.com/about-ptas).

Q: How much money does a PTA make?

In 2024, graduates of the program reported an average starting salary of \$28/hour, or about \$58,000 annually. In 2024, the APTA reported the median annual wage for all PTAs nationwide is \$62,770.

OTHER COMMON QUESTIONS**Q: I eventually want to become a PT. Will the PTA program help me get into PT school?**

No, the PTA program is not a good step towards PT school. PT school applicants must have a Bachelors degree and additional pre-requisites. Obtaining an Associates in PTA will not meet this requirement, and your coursework is unlikely to transfer. It is not necessary or common to get a PTA degree before going to PT school.

Q: What's the difference between a Physical Therapist (PT) and a Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)?

PT's and PTA's collaborate together to treat patients, but they have different education and licensure requirements. PT's require a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree, while PTA's require an Associates degree. You can see more information about PT's and PTA's at [ChoosePT.com](https://www.choosept.com). The APTA also has a [helpful information page](#) about PTAs.

Q: I have a felony conviction on my record. Will that be an issue?

A history of a felony conviction will not prevent you from applying or being accepted to the PTA Program. However, it can potentially be a barrier to attending Clinical Rotations or to obtaining your PTA license from the GA State Board of Physical Therapy. The nature of the offense, frequency, time since conviction, and other factors can all play a role. You can find more information on the [GA State Board of Physical Therapy website regarding policies and procedures](#).

Q: I still have questions. How can I find out more information about the PTA Program?

The [PTA Program website](#) is the primary source of information about the program. You can also contact the academic advising team to assist you at [Find your Advisor](#). You can contact the PTA Program Director, Aaron Freeman at aaron.freeman@chattahoocheetech.edu.