PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM

APPLICATION INFORMATION PACKET
2023 Admissions

GCC PTA Website: for application and admissions information:
http://www.germanna.edu/physical-therapist-assistant

GCC Catalog:
https://www.germanna.edu/pathways/health-science/physical-therapist-assistant/

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Updated 11/02/2022

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ABBREVIATIONS

CAPTE: Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education
The organization responsible for the accreditation oversight of PT and PTA programs in the U.S.
DCE: Director of Clinical Education
The full-time GCC faculty member responsible for clinical placements and student assessment in clinical experiences, as well as other teaching duties.
FSBPT: Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy
The organization which administers the licensing exam, required to practice as a PTA.

LIST OF ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS NOT INCLUDED IN THIS PACKET:

Advising Worksheet and FAQs
Volunteer Rating Form
Introductory Letter for Clinical Observation/Volunteer Experiences
Application Instructions

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM INFORMATION

Accreditation Status of the PTA Program

Graduation from a physical therapist assistant education program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education is necessary for eligibility to sit for the licensure examination, which is required in all states.

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Germanna Community College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave. Suite 100, Alexandria, VA 22305-3085; telephone: 703-706-3245; email: accreditation@apta.org; website: http://www.capteonline.org. If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call 540-423-9821 or email ptassistant@germanna.edu. The satellite location offered in cooperation with Laurel Ridge Community College operates under the GCC PTA Program accreditation. If needing to contact that site directly, email rparameswaran@laurelridge.edu.

A link to confirmation of the accreditation status is available on the Germanna PTA Program website by clicking on the CAPTE logo.

General Information

Currency of Information: Please see the current GCC College Catalog and refer to the PTA Program website to ensure up-to-date information. Information in this packet is subject to change.

Germanna Community College administers the PTA program and core curriculum, regardless of site of attendance. Students accepted to the program register for all PTA core courses through Germanna, and successful graduates receive the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Physical Therapist Assistant from GCC. The two sites are referred to as GCC PTA-Locust Grove (GCC PTA-LGC) and GCC PTA-Luray. Students apply independently to either site, or to both sites.

At Locust Grove, a new cohort is accepted to begin the program each fall semester. At Luray, a cohort is accepted to begin every odd-numbered fall semester. There are four semesters in the technical portion of the program, plus a four-week summer clinical experience between the two years. Academic calendars for upcoming semesters are available at http://www.germanna.edu/academic-calendar/. Students should expect to devote 40 hours a week to the PTA program when in session. Successful graduates receive the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Physical Therapist Assistant from Germanna Community College (GCC).

Applications are submitted electronically between April 15 and May 15 of each year. The top applicants at each location in Phase I are invited for the interview process. **Admission to the PTA program is competitive; class size is limited and not all qualified applicants can be accepted.** A standardized system is in place which includes a point designation for criteria presented in detail in the section "Selective Admissions Process" on page 10 of this document.

Mission of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program

The mission of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Germanna Community College is to prepare successful graduates of a comprehensive and contemporary program of study who have the knowledge, skills and attitudes expected of entry-level physical therapist assistants, and who are able to meet the employment needs of the surrounding communities.

Additional Materials

The following supporting materials are available online:

Observation Evaluation Form	https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:5c59f091-8483-37d9-a033-186e80d1f52a
Germanna Forms	https://www.germanna.edu/admissions/admissions-forms/ **Transcript Evaluation Request Form** found under "Transfer Student" or at Transcript Evaluation Request Form **Request to Change Program of Study** found under "New or Returning Students"
Inpatient PT Video for Application Essay	Inpatient Physical Therapy

THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT CAREER

The Profession of Physical Therapy

Physical Therapy is a profession primarily concerned with the treatment and management of impairments and disabilities and the promotion of mobility, functional ability, quality of life and movement potential through therapeutic exercise, functional training, and a variety of modalities.

The Role of the Physical Therapist Assistant

Physical Therapist Assistants (PTAs) provide physical therapy services under the direction and supervision of the Physical Therapist (PT). The Physical Therapist evaluates the patient and determines an individualized plan of care for each patient, designed to promote the ability to move, reduce pain, restore function, and prevent disability. The PTA then carries out the plan of care under the supervision of the PT, who is responsible for the services provided by the PTA. PTAs work closely with Physical Therapists and other members of the health care team to ensure patient success in achieving optimal functional ability.

PTAs work with people of all ages, from birth to old age, and in a variety of settings, including outpatient clinics, hospitals, inpatient rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, home health agencies, private practice, school systems, and sports programs. PTAs address mobility deficits with interventions such as teaching therapeutic exercises, applying therapeutic modalities, performing manual stretching or soft tissue mobilization, teaching a patient to walk using an assistive device, teaching a family member to assist a patient, improving body mechanics for safety in the workplace, or instructing parents how to manage mobility issues in children.

Job Market for Physical Therapist Assistants

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the demand for physical therapist assistants is expected to spike upward by 31% between 2016 and 2026 - a much quicker rate than average. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a median income of $57,430 for PTAs in 2016, depending on position, experience, degree, geographic location and practice setting.
https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physical-therapist-assistants-and-aides.htm;
http://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/physical-therapist-assistant

"There are several driving factors in this faster-than-average job growth. Rising populations of both aging baby boomers and those with chronic health issues, such as diabetes and obesity, are expected to increasingly require the services of physical therapist assistants. Medical and technological advances, which help save the lives of trauma victims or newborns with birth defects, are also creating more work for these professionals, since PTAs are increasingly needed to provide therapeutic services to these individuals." U.S. News and World Report
http://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/physical-therapist-assistant

Predicted population growth in the region supports the growing need for qualified health care personnel in central and northwest Virginia. Additionally, a new Veteran's Administration

outpatient healthcare facility is scheduled to open in Spotsylvania County in 2024, increasing the need for rehabilitation clinicians in the area.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE PTA STUDENT

In addition to academic standards, certain behavioral expectations exist for the successful PTA Program candidate, outlined below. Applicants should review these expectations carefully and discuss any concerns with the PTA faculty advisors.

- The decision to work in a health care profession should be based on an understanding of various health care settings. The candidate should be willing to provide care across the care continuum, and to patients who are critically or terminally ill, have a communicable disease, or are severely injured or disabled.
- The candidate should feel comfortable providing treatment to all individuals without prejudice, regardless of gender, age, race, cultural background, religious affiliation, socio-economic status, or personal lifestyle choices or conditions.
- The candidate should have a basic understanding of and agree with the philosophy and practice of physical therapy and the role of the physical therapist assistant.
- Practicing health care professionals must demonstrate personal responsibility for their actions and should be willing to accept constructive criticism both in the classroom and the clinical environment.
- Significant physical demands are placed on the physical therapist assistant student and practicing PTA, including lifting, bending, reaching and manipulating equipment. These requirements and other abilities are outlined in the document "Essential Functions of the Physical Therapist Assistant Student," included on page 14 of this packet. The candidate will be asked to acknowledge understanding of these standards of physical and cognitive performance as part of the application.
- The candidate must be willing to abide by guidelines governing the use of social media relative to their experiences in the PTA Program.
- The candidate will be prepared to comply with the policies of GCC (and LRCC, where applicable), the Division of Nursing and Health Technologies, the PTA Program, and partnering clinical facilities, including vaccination and background check requirements.
- The candidate will be prepared to abide by dress code, appearance, personal behavior, and hygiene guidelines befitting a member of the health care professions.

Vaccinations

Germanna students enrolled in health care programs requiring clinical placements must meet the vaccination and credential standards required by the facilities to which they are assigned throughout their designated program of study. Inability to meet these requirements may impact the student's ability to graduate from this program of study.

The following immunizations are required:
- TDAP (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis)
- Varicella
- MMR
- Hepatitis B series
- Influenza

- Tuberculosis
- COVID-19**

**A note about COVID-19: Although Germanna Community College does not require all health professional students to be vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine to be admitted into a restricted admissions health program, the vaccination (and other immunizations and vaccinations) may be required by our clinical facilities in order for our students to enter these facilities. A clinical facility's decision to mandate the COVID-19 vaccine or other vaccines and immunizations is independent of Germanna Community College.

Germanna Community College faculty and students must comply with the policies required by clinical facilities with which we have legal agreements. If a student refuses to comply with a clinical facility immunization and vaccination requirement, Germanna Community College will attempt, but cannot guarantee, to assign a student to an alternative clinical facility. A student will be placed in an alternative location only if it meets the educational objectives of Germanna Community College and program requirements for clinical placement. Faculty also must be available to appropriately supervise students at the clinical facility. **Refusal to comply with a clinical facility immunization and vaccination requirement by a student in our health programs may impede your progress in the program or your ability to remain in the program. Vaccination status is a component and requirement of the PTA Program and information will be reviewed by the DCE prior to students participating in clinical education experiences.**

Criminal Background Check/Drug Screen

A criminal/sex offender background check is required as part of the admission process, as many clinical sites may deny a student with a criminal record access to its clinical units. The cost of the background check is the responsibility of the student. Instructions for ordering the required background checks and drug screen are available on page 8 of this document. The background check and drug screen must be completed from 1–6 months prior to application. Any student who does not pass the background check or drug screen must resolve this issue directly with the agency that conducted the search. Unresolved issues presented in the criminal background checks or drug screens will result in invalid application, or dismissal from the program. Students will be screened for felony convictions (including barrier crimes outlined in the Code of Virginia) and misdemeanor drug and alcohol convictions. An exception is made for a single alcohol-related misdemeanor conviction more than five years ago. Applicants who have been convicted of a barrier crime will have considerable difficulty fulfilling the clinical placements required during the program and obtaining professional licensure in a health care field. Applicants who present with a criminal record may not be offered admission to the PTA program.

ACADEMIC PREREQUISITES AND REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the information provided here, applicants are directed to the GCC College Catalog PTA Program Pathway for the year of application.

Basic Academic Requirements

The following chart presents academic competency requirements that may impact a student's ability to enroll in the program prerequisites discussed below. **Students are responsible for ensuring that these competencies are met.**

English Competency	Students are required to meet college policy for enrollment in ENG 111
Science Qualifications	In order to register for BIO 141, students must demonstrate competency in one of the following ways: • 2 units of high school sciences: biology, human anatomy, chemistry or physics (grade C or better) within 5 years • BIO 101 or equivalent college-level course within 5 years • Score 70% or higher on NAS2 MOOC enrollmentlab@germanna.edu

In addition, applicants to the PTA program must demonstrate **math competency** through eligibility for MTH 154 with or without corequisite support, in accordance with Germanna Community College Direct Enrollment policy.

Courses Required Prior to Application
These five (5) prerequisite courses must be completed prior to or during the semester in which the student applies to the PTA program.
BIO 141   Anatomy and Physiology I (grade of B or better within 5 years)
ENG 111   College Composition I (or awarded CLEP or AP/IB credit)
PSY 230   Developmental Psychology
SDV 101 or 100   Orientation to Healthcare or College Success Skills (or earned bachelor's degree)
Humanities Elective   ART, ENG LIT, HUM, MUS, PHI, REL, or Foreign Language course

Co-requisite Courses: Recommended Prior to Application; Required for Graduation
These courses may be completed <u>prior to</u> or <u>during</u> the technical portion of the program
BIO 142   Anatomy and Physiology II
SOC 200   Principles of Sociology
HLT 105*   AHA Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification course
     *(should be taken in the summer prior to the first semester of the PTA program, or during the first semester of the program)

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS: APPLYING TO THE PTA PROGRAM

As early as possible:

1. **Apply for admission** to Germanna Community College.

2. **Complete the Transfer Evaluation Request Form** if any required courses were taken at colleges other than Germanna. This includes other VCCS colleges. Assure that transcripts from all other colleges attended are on file with the GCC Admissions and Records office prior to the program application deadline date. Transcripts are not required for courses taken at VCCS colleges. See Welcome Center staff for assistance. Students should also note that in order to receive the associate degree, the college must have on file an official transcript showing high school or higher completed degree.

3. Attend a **Physical Therapist Assistant Information Session** (dates and locations are announced on the PTA Program website and through LRCC announcements). Students will be able to attend information sessions via Zoom meetings.

4. Demonstrate math competency through eligibility for MTH 154 with or without corequisite support, in accordance with college Direct Enrollment policy.

5. Complete the **prerequisite** general education courses (SDV 100, ENG 111, BIO 141, PSY 230, and the Humanities elective) or show advanced standing proficiency per college guidelines. **BIO 141 must be completed with a grade of "B" or better**; the remainder must be completed with a grade of "C" or better, or P+. These courses must be completed prior to or during the semester of application. Students are encouraged to take the remaining general education courses required for graduation (BIO 142 and SOC 200) prior to beginning the PTA program if at all possible. When alternative grading options exist, applicants must ensure they are receiving a letter grade in BIO 141 or its equivalent transfer course.

6. Achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 or better.

7. Complete the TEAS test (https://www.atitesting.com/teas-prep), offered through GCC Testing Services for Germanna students.

8. Complete a criminal background check and drug screen through the source used by the Nursing and Health Technologies Division. The background check and drug screen must be completed within the six months prior to application. A positive background check may prevent admission into the program; a record of a barrier crime will in most instances prevent admission to the program as this record may prevent required clinical affiliation placements. Completing this step early is recommended, as background checks may take up to six weeks.

9. Complete 20 documented volunteer/observation hours in an outpatient physical therapy setting under the direct supervision of a physical therapist or a physical therapist assistant, **within two years of application**. The supervisor rating form must be received by the PTA Program by the application deadline. Previous work experience as a Physical Therapy aide or technician may be used for these hours. See observation evaluation form for details.

10. Meet with a PTA program faculty member for completion of the Faculty Advising Review Checklist **within the 6 months prior** to the application deadline, and **no later than two weeks prior** to the application deadline. **You do not need to wait until all application**

components are completed to have a Final Advising meeting. Contact a faculty member via email for an appointment, which may take place in person or via Zoom meeting.

11. Complete the online PTA Program Application. Applicants may choose to apply to either the Locust Grove program or the LRCC/Luray program, or both.

12. Successfully complete the interview in Phase II of the application process, if invited. The top applicants (for each site) are invited to the interview phase, and applicants are expected to present themselves professionally and to answer questions clearly.

13. Submit an updated transcript to Admissions and Records to show completion of any required general education courses taken outside the VCCS during the semester of application.

NOTE: It is recommended that General Education requirements be completed within **five years** prior to application to the program. It is **mandatory** that BIO 141 be completed within the **five years** prior to admission, unless waived by the Program Director.

Applicants who have completed a high school International Baccalaureate (IB) program may have coursework that can qualify for the Humanities elective. See a counselor for details.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure all application materials are submitted by the appropriate deadline. Deadline dates are subject to change, and students are advised to visit the PTA program website regularly for any updates. Upon completion of any additional courses at non-VCCS institutions, an updated official transcript must be sent to the Admissions and Records Office as soon as it is available.

Applications to the Germanna/Locust Grove program location and the LRCC/Luray program location are completed separately. Applications to the LRCC/Luray program are accepted during odd-numbered application years. In those years, students may apply to either program, or to both, submitting separate applications for each.

Timeline for Application

	GCC PTA at Locust Grove	GCC PTA at Luray
Final Advising	November 1-May 1 annually	Open dates, contact rparameswaran@laurelridge.edu for appointment, **Deadline:** May 1 of the year of application
Application window	April 15-May 15 annually	April 15-May 15 of odd-numbered years only
Interviews	Early- to mid-June	Early- to mid-June of application year
Notification of acceptance	Late June to early July	Late June to early July of application year
Orientation	During the week prior to first week of classes	During the week prior to first week of classes
Classes begin	Last week of August	Last week of August

SELECTIVE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Students are selected for the PTA program on a competitive basis, with twelve (12) students accepted annually at the GCC program. Twelve students are accepted every other year at the LRCC expansion site. The selection process in Phase I is blinded, and application materials are evaluated without applicants' names. The interview in Phase II is conducted by a three-person panel consisting of two full-time PTA faculty and a representative of the GCC Multicultural Coalition for Diversity and Inclusion.

Applications are reviewed for completeness by the PTA Program Director and DCE. Applicants are ranked by Admissions and Records staff using the priority points described below. The top applicants are notified via email and phone of their invitation to the second phase of the application process, the face-to-face interview. Once the pool of interviewees is identified, the remaining applicants are informed that they are not under consideration for the PTA Program.

Students must meet the following basic expectations in order to be considered for entry into the PTA program:
- Attend a PTA Program Information Session Zoom Meeting
- Return signed Student Data Form
- Complete Final Advising meeting with a PTA Program faculty member
- Complete required coursework, observation hours and TEAS test by the application deadline

Phase I Evaluation
Priority Points
The table below presents the categories for which students will earn the points for Phase I of the application process. Each is explained in detail in the following narrative.

Admissions Priority Point Categories	Possible Points	Percent
Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS)	50	50%
Volunteer/observation experience evaluations	25	25%
Essay	25	25%
Total	100	100%

TEAS Examination
Students will register for the TEAS examination through the Germanna Community College Testing Center, whether applying to Locust Grove or Luray. There is a fee for the exam (currently $65.00, including a distance proctoring fee), payable at the testing center at the time of testing. Students must first **create an account** at www.ATItesting.com, and select Germanna Allied Health from the list of institutions. The student then contacts Germanna's Testing Center at LGCTesting@germanna.edu to request a test date/time, which is either a morning or afternoon block of time. There are "blackout" times during final exam weeks, so plan ahead. The deadline is May 1 of the year of application. The test may be done in-person at Germanna Locust Grove campus or proctored online. In any case, the Germanna Testing Center handles the scheduling of the test and provides instructions to the student. Detailed guidance is provided in the TEAS Instructions document on the PTA Program webpage under Forms and Documents.

Admission points will be earned on a sliding scale based on performance on the examination. The TEAS test consists of four sections: Reading; English and Language Usage; Mathematics; and Science. The composite score (all four sections combined) will be used to award priority points. Students may retake the TEAS components for a total of two attempts; a minimum wait of seven days is required before any retake. Without completing extra study for the exam, a retake does not guarantee a higher score, based on past results. The most recent test results will be used for the application.

Study materials are available on the ATI website for students concerned about standardized tests of this nature.

Complete instructions are found on the following page.

Germanna Community College (GCC) Testing Services
TEAS (Test of Essential Academic Skills)

The LGC Testing Center, along with Proctorio, provides remote test proctoring services to students who plan to apply to a Health Technology program (Dental Hygiene, Dental Assisting and Physical Therapist Assistant) at Germanna Community College only. Germanna Testing Services does **not** administer the TEAS to students applying to other institutions. Please contact them for their testing accommodation. The test may be taken at the Locust Grove Testing Center or remotely.

Procedures for scheduling the TEAS Test:
1. Create an account at https://www.atitesting.com/. Record your user name and password for future reference.
2. Submit an email to LGCTesting@germanna.edu using your VCCS email address. The following information is required, and we cannot schedule your appointment without all information.
   - ✓ Your full legal name
   - ✓ Your Germanna/VCCS 7-digit Student ID Number
   - ✓ Your primary contact phone number
   - ✓ Your preferred appointment date (Please be specific, and read below for details)
   - ✓ Your preferred appointment time (9:00 a.m. or 1:30 p.m.)
   - ✓ Whether you prefer to take the exam in the Testing Center or remotely
   - ✓ Major/Program of Study (Dental Hygiene, Dental Assisting or Physical Therapist Assistant)
   - ✓ Your VCCS Canvas email address (We can respond only to VCCS emails.)

3. Once you submit all of the requested information to the GCC Testing Center, you will receive an email confirmation of your appointment day and time. Your appointment is not confirmed until you have received a confirmation email from Testing Services. This email will contain important information on next steps, including a "dry-run" appointment, if the test will be taken in a distance format.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:
TEAS testing appointments MUST be scheduled in advance. We do not accommodate same-day testing requests. **The TEAS Test is available by appointment Monday – Thursday 9:00 a.m. or 1:30 p.m.**
- Appointments are scheduled by the LGC Testing Center only. Due to COVID-19, TEAS testing is offered remotely using Proctorio. (DO NOT use the ATI website to schedule your appointment.)
- TEAS and other health professional tests **are NOT offered during the "Final Exam Week" of any semester.**
- **Your appointment is not confirmed until you have received a confirmation email from GCC Testing Services**; otherwise, you will not be allowed to test. Please **allow 5 business days (not including weekends, holidays and unexpected closings) to receive a confirmation of your appointment time.**
- You are required to create an account at the ATI website, https://www.atitesting.com/, prior your appointment. **If you need assistance creating an account with ATI, please contact** ATI services found at: https://www1.atitesting.com/About/CanWeHelpYou.aspx.
- **THERE IS A FEE** for the TEAS exam. For pricing information, please visit the TEAS website, https://www.atitesting.com/. **You will pay for the exam when you log on for your proctored exam.**
- *Dental and physical therapist assistant students should contact their advisor to find out the number of times the TEAS can be taken.*
- For Dental Program information, please visit https://www.germanna.edu/dental/.
- For Physical Therapist Assistant Program information, please contact PTAssistant@germanna.edu.

Please visit our web page for more detailed information on the test: http://www.germanna.edu/testing/nursing-health-testing/

Important Reminders for taking the TEAS Test remotely:
1. You must complete a dry-run of your computer with a Testing Center staff member at least one to two business days before your appointment. A dry-run <u>cannot</u> be completed on the day of the test. This dry-run will be scheduled with you by a Testing Center staff member.
2. BRING to your remote proctoring appointment: 1. your ATI username and password, 2. a valid credit/debit card (NOT CASH), 3. a valid photo ID that contains both a photograph and a signature, 4. your student ID number, and 5. one sheet of blank paper and a pencil.
3. **Allow at least four (4) hours to take the test.**

Volunteer/Observation Hours – rated by PT/PTA supervisor

Applicants are evaluated by a supervising PT or PTA in the facility in which they complete observation or volunteer hours, using a standardized instrument, the Observation Evaluation Form. The observation evaluation form is returned to Germanna by the supervising clinician, following instructions on the form, and scores recorded. Points are earned for listening skills, verbalization, interest, behavior, and professionalism, as noted on the form, available in Forms and Documents on the PTA website.

Students are advised to arrive on time, dressed appropriately for a healthcare setting. Students should also make notes about the experience, which will be useful for the application essay and for the Interview Phase of the application process.

Essay

Students will use the PT from ICU to hospital discharge video of physical therapy treatment in an inpatient setting as well as their outpatient observation experience to compose the essay. Essays are graded anonymously by PTA program faculty after they have been assigned applicant numbers by Admissions and Records staff. The scores are averaged and recorded by Admissions and Records. Applicants are directed to the Essay Instructions and Rubric on page 14.

Transfer Students

Official transfer credit evaluations are completed when both the official transcripts **and** a Transcript Evaluation Request Form are received by Admissions and Records. Students should submit outside transcripts by April 1 of the year of application, to ensure timely recording of required credits, and as soon as possible for courses taken during the semester of application. Transcripts should be sent to transcripts@germanna.edu. The transcript evaluation request form may be submitted at any time and should be submitted to the same email address. An earned Bachelor's degree in any field of study waives the SDV requirement. Coursework transferred to GCC must represent collegiate coursework applicable to the student's curriculum, with course content and level of instruction at least equivalent to those of students enrolled in Germanna's curricula. Coursework from regionally accredited institutions typically meets the criteria. Any VCCS course will transfer as the same course at any other college in the VCCS (some course numbers may be different) without providing a transcript. However, the Transcript Evaluation Request Form must be completed by the student. This applies to LRCC pre-PTA students as well. Students requiring assistance are directed to the Admissions and Records Office.

ESSAY INSTRUCTIONS

As part of the application, applicants will submit an essay worth 25 points toward the total priority points. Students will base their essay on their observation of outpatient PT and on the following video: Physical Therapy from ICU to Hospital Discharge. Read the following instructions carefully.

- Do not refer to yourself by name in the essay. Avoid content that clearly identifies the writer as much as possible or reasonable. Do not refer to patients, clients, therapists or agencies by name.
- Clearly explain why you want to be a physical therapist assistant and describe characteristics you possess that will enable you to be a successful student and compassionate health care professional.

- Discuss and compare the delivery of physical therapy interventions in the inpatient and outpatient environments, based on your observation experience and the video provided. You may use examples of work done with patients or family members.
- The essay is expected to be **600-1000 words** in length.
- The applicant will cut-and-paste the essay into a text box in the application form.
- Applicants will acknowledge that the essay is their own work.

At least two PTA Program faculty members independently grade each essay using the rubric below in a blind process, and the scores are averaged.

Item	Exemplary	Good	Fair	Poor
Content – discuss and compare aspects of physical therapy in the inpatient and outpatient settings (10)	9-10 Addresses aspects of both settings, and insightful description of similarities and differences	6-8 Addresses aspects of both settings; provides description of similarities and differences	3-5 Does not adequately identify or describe similarities and differences	0-2 Does not address content as instructed, or discussion is very limited in details
Describe personal characteristics that support success as a PTA student and compassionate healthcare provider (10)	9-10 Uses multiple examples from the student's life experience and knowledge of physical therapy to effectively convey personal characteristics	6-8 Uses at least one example to convey personal characteristics	3-5 Description is general and does not use specific examples adequately	0-2 Description of personal characteristics is inadequate
Writing Mechanics/ Following instructions (5)	5 Follows all instructions; writing is error-free	4 Writing has up to three errors, or does not fully comply with instructions	2-3 Fair use of vocabulary and writing mechanics; does not follow all instructions	0-1 Vocabulary and mechanics are not at the expected first-year college level; does not follow instructions

Residency
Students who do not reside in Virginia are only considered for the PTA program if the number of applicants falls short of the number of available placements in the program. The residency decision is made using the student's address of record in SIS at the end of the application window.

PHASE II OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS: THE INTERVIEW

Interviews of the top-rated applicants are conducted three to six weeks after the application deadline. Each of the twenty finalists are interviewed by a panel consisting of the core faculty members and a representative of the GCC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council, using standardized questions and a rubric. The questions are made available to applicants at the time of the interview, and interviewees are given a few minutes to review the questions and make notes. Applicants are permitted to bring notes to the interview session. Interviews are scored on (a) the ability to formulate and clearly communicate concise answers to the interview questions, (b) enthusiasm for and insight into the profession of physical therapy and the PTA student experience, and (c) an overall recommendation from each interviewer.

Students will be informed of the format of the interview during final advising. Students may also be asked to complete a writing assignment or group activity at the time of the interview. Scores for these activities may be included in the interview score.

General appearance expectations for the interview are communicated in the letter of invitation to interview. In addition, the GCC Career and Transfer Center is available for assistance, and a PTA interview preparation workshop is available for interested applicants. Further information will be provided during final advising.

Final ranking considers both the average interview score and points earned in Phase I, and the students with the highest total scores are selected for admission. Remaining interviewees are placed on an alternate list, in descending order of ranking.

Students selected for admission to the program are notified via email within ten days of the last scheduled interview and will be asked to confirm intent to enroll by a specified date. In the event an accepted student does not confirm intent to enroll, alternates are notified in the same manner. Any remaining students are notified of non-admission; however, the alternate list is maintained in the event of any last-minute withdrawals or changes to application standing.

If a student's overall GPA falls below the required 2.5 as a result of courses taken during the semester of application, the student will lose their ranking and will be removed from the qualified list until the student's overall GPA returns to 2.5 or better and they rectify any unacceptable grades, at which time they may be reinstated to the list of qualified students.

Applications do not carry over from year to year. Unsuccessful applicants may resubmit a new application the next cycle. The process for re-applying is the same as the initial process. Volunteer/observation hours performed for the initial application are accepted, as long as the experience occurred within two years of the application date, or with prior approval of the program director. Following a second unsuccessful application attempt, students are required to meet individually with the program director for guidance. A written recommendation from the program director will be needed for additional application attempts.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION

Mandatory Program Orientation

PTA Program Orientation will be held the week prior to the start of classes in August. The dates are announced to students in the letter informing them of their acceptance to the PTA program. Students should expect to spend all of the assigned orientation days on campus. Information regarding the following will be provided during program orientation:

1. CPR Certification
2. Drug Screen/Background Checks
3. Medical Examination form
4. Immunization form (required immunizations: TDAP, Varicella, MMR, Hepatitis B series, Influenza, COVID-19)
5. 2-step TB Test
6. Liability Insurance
7. Health/Medical Insurance
8. ID/Name Badge
9. Uniforms/Program Patch
10. Supplies

Important information about immunizations: Students who are accepted to the program must begin their Hepatitis B series by August 31 in order to finish it before the first clinical. Other immunizations may require separate appointments for each, so plan accordingly. Please note that the PTA Program requires the 2-step TB test for initial entry into the field of healthcare. If a student already has TB testing through a healthcare employer, that documentation is acceptable provided it is current. *Vaccine requirements are subject to change based on current public health and clinical guidelines/requirements.

Once accepted, students must maintain a current CPR Certification, have a documented medical exam, and complete an annual drug screen/background check. If any of these requirements are not met, the student will not be able to proceed in the program. In addition, students must have personal medical insurance and professional liability insurance valid throughout the program. Students are responsible for these fees.

The PTA program requires a substantial commitment of time and effort. The Technical Phase of the GCC PTA program consists of four semesters of demanding pre-determined coursework, as well as clinical affiliations with specific attendance requirements. Students must be prepared for approximately 40 hours a week of course/lab, clinic, and individual and group study time. Regardless of the class schedules as published in SIS, students are expected to be available Monday-Friday during each semester, to cover open lab requirements and additional obligations. Students must complete all PTA coursework with a "C" or better and must maintain an overall 2.5 GPA.

Three full-time clinical education experiences are part of the curriculum. Additional travel time may be required. The DCE will attempt to place students in clinical affiliations as close to their

homes as possible, but students may be required to travel up to 1.5 hours to and from a clinic location if necessary. Transportation and cost involved is solely the responsibility of the student.

All PTA students must complete their clinical education experiences (clinicals). If a student fails a clinical or must be withdrawn for cause, they must repeat that clinical prior to progressing to the next semester of the program. This may result in a delay of one year, due to the prescribed progression of the curriculum. If a student fails the terminal clinical, they must repeat that course successfully prior to graduation. Failure of more than one clinical experience will result in dismissal from the program.

Courses in the PTA curriculum may be conducted in face-to-face or hybrid format, or, when appropriate or required due to college policy, in distance format. Students at GCC PTA-Luray will attend face-to-face course lectures conducted at Locust Grove via synchronous interactive video, with the LRCC site coordinator present.

An annual criminal background check and drug screen will be required, as mandated in clinical affiliation agreements. A clinical facility may deny any student who has a positive drug screen access to its clinical units. The cost will be the responsibility of the student. It is also the student's responsibility to keep all requirements current during the program. Failure to do so may result in inability to perform the required clinical portions of the program and could result in a failing grade for the clinical affiliation and dismissal from the program.

In addition, a student may be required to undergo additional alcohol or drug screening, at the student's expense, if there is suspicion of substance use during classes or clinical experiences. Applicants to the PTA Program should be prepared to behave according to GCC and program policy.

It is the student's responsibility to comply with all program requirements once admitted to the program. These documents will be kept in the Document Manager of the source used by the Nursing and Health Technologies division which will be purchased once the student has been accepted into the PTA program.

Once academic and clinical requirements are completed, the graduate is able to apply to take the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE) for PTAs in the state in which he/she chooses to practice. The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy administers the licensing exam.

COST OF THE PROGRAM

The PTA program may require monetary expenditures in addition to the typical college and textbook fees. Students are wholly responsible for all fees related to the PTA program.

At the academic year 2022-23 cost-per-credit hour ($163.75), the tuition cost for the **technical portion** of the PTA program totals $7,695.25. This does not include prerequisites, which will vary by student, but may be an additional $3,600.00, or more if preparatory courses are required. It is estimated that students will spend approximately $1,903 on the following program requirements:
- Textbooks and other educational resources
- Supplies
- Uniforms and name badges
- Medical and professional liability insurance
- Student membership in the American Physical Therapy Association
- Immunizations and medical checkups
- Fees for background checks and drug screens
- CPR, HIPAA and OSHA certification

Students may also incur costs related to clinical education, in the form of travel, parking, and possible dress code requirements, but these will vary considerably by student. Currently, the PTA licensing exam, administered by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT), is $485.00 plus processing and testing fees, and the application for licensure with the Virginia Board of Physical Therapy is $100.00. Applicants are referred to https://www.fsbpt.org/ and https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/PhysicalTherapy/ for up-to-date information.

Current information for college tuition and fees is available at http://www.germanna.edu/business-office/tuition-and-fees/.

FINANCIAL AID

The PTA program at GCC qualifies for Federal financial aid. **Students should complete the FAFSA by the priority filing date of May 1 of the year in which they apply to the program, even though they will not yet know if they have been accepted.** Filing after this date may impact the timing of availability of funds, and it may affect the amount of the financial aid. Students are referred to http://www.germanna.edu/financial-aid/ or to the Welcome Center at the Fredericksburg or Locust Grove campus for additional information. The FAFSA Worksheet is available at http://www.germanna.edu/financial-aid/financial-aid-forms/.

The PTA program is included in G3 funding through the Commonwealth of Virginia; information is at https://www.germanna.edu/g3/. This funding source provides for free education for those who qualify.

The Hunter Williams PTA Scholarship Fund is a Germanna Educational Foundation fund specifically to support PTA students. https://www.germanna.edu/educational-foundation/ allows students to research that and other potential scholarship funds.

PTA PROGRAM CURRICULUM
Please note that this curriculum is not to be used to determine courses needed in order to apply to the program. Refer to the information on pages 5-6 of this document, and the Advising Worksheet, for those requirements.

PTA PROGRAM CURRICULUM

Five-semester Curriculum - AAS in Physical Therapist Assistant

Courses in bold are technical courses for the PTA curriculum and must be taken in the sequence provided here

*Subject to change in response to situations beyond our control

Semester	Courses	Lecture Cr	Lab Cr	Clinical Educ.	Credit Hours

Semester One (All General Education)
 	
 Total 14 credits
	SDV 101 Orientation to Health Care Careers
	  (or SDV 100 College Success Skills)
	 BIO 141 Anatomy and Physiology I
	  (or NAS 161 Health Science I)
	 ENG 111 College Composition I
	 PSY 230 Developmental Psychology
	 _____ Humanities Elective (ART, ENG LIT, HUM, MUS, PHI, REL, or Foreign Language)
		1
		
		 3
		
		 3
		 3
		 3
			
			 1
			
					1
					
					 4
					
					 3
					 3
					 3

	Semester Totals	**13**	**1**		**14**
Semester Two (Fall) Total 13 credits	HLT 105 CPR **PTH 105** Intro to Physical Therapist Assisting **PTH 121** Therapeutic Procedures I **PTH 151** Musculoskeletal Structure and Function	1 1 3 3	 1 2 2		1 2 5 5
	Semester Totals	**8**	**5**		**13**
Semester Three (Spring) Total 12 credits	**PTH 115** Kinesiology for the PTA **PTH 122** Therapeutic Procedures II **PTH 110** Medical Reporting SOC 200 Principles of Sociology*	3 3 1 3	1 2 		4 5 1 3
	Semester Totals	**7**	**3**		**13**
Summer Clinical	**PTH 131** Clinical Education I (Total: 140 hours)			2 cr	**2**
	Semester Totals			140 hrs (4 wks)	2
Semester Four Total 14 credits	**PTH 225** Rehabilitation Procedures **PTH 210** Psychological Aspects of Therapy **PTH 251** Clinical Practicum I (Total: 225 hours) BIO 142 Anatomy and Physiology II *	3 2 3	2 1	 3 cr 	5 2 3 4
	Semester Totals	**8**	**3**	225 hrs (6 wks)	**14**
Semester Five Total 15 credits	**PTH 226** Therapeutic Exercise **PTH 227** Pathological Conditions **PTH 255** Seminar in Physical Therapy **PTH 252** Clinical Practicum II (Total 240 hours)	3 3 2 	1 	 3 cr	4 2 2 4
	Semester Totals	**10**	**1**	240 hrs 6 wks	**12**
	Total for Degree	**46**	**11**	**605 hrs**	**68**
*these courses may be taken prior to Semester Two, but receiving financial aid may be affected until the student is accepted into the PTA program. Alternatively, they may be taken during the summer between Semesters 3 and 4.					

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT STUDENT

In the course of the PTA curriculum, students are required to demonstrate certain physical, behavioral and cognitive functions related to those expected in physical therapy practice, as well as specific factors related to the classroom experience. Germanna Community College has adopted the following standards that students of the program are expected to possess. Qualified individuals with a disability who can perform these essential functions with reasonable accommodations will not be denied admission to the program; however, they must contact a college disabilities counselor to determine what reasonable accommodations are appropriate to this setting. Provisions for accommodations will be made in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

PTA Student Expectations
- attend class up to 25 hours per week, and be available for 40 hours per week during clinical assignments
- tolerate extended sitting and/or standing in classroom and lab environment
- give and receive treatment interventions including but not limited to modalities, therapeutic exercise, massage, and manual therapies
- wear lab attire that may involve exposure of areas of the body
- use critical thinking and sound decision-making
- exhibit professional behaviors including, but not limited to, critical thinking, sound judgment, confidentiality, courtesy, and respect
- present a professionally-attired appearance for the clinical setting free from visible tattoos, non-traditional piercings, or unnatural hair color
- meet program standards for successful course completion, including regular attendance, timely submission of work, and compliance with academic honesty guidelines
- reflect thoughtfully on personal strengths and weaknesses as opportunity for growth

Physical Strength, Endurance and Dexterity:
- perform physical activities such as standing, walking, sitting, bending, squatting, kneeling, crawling, reaching, pushing and pulling
- lift 25-50 pounds occasionally, and/or 10-25 pounds frequently, and/or up to 10 pounds constantly (from the Dept. of Labor definition of Medium Work)
- demonstrate ability to administer CPR
- use hands for grasping, pushing, pulling, and fine manipulation
- coordination sufficient to manipulate equipment controls, to perform manual treatment/assessment techniques and to respond to patient safety needs

Sensation
- tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment and discrimination of temperature
- visual acuity sufficient for reading medical records, instrument panels, and for monitoring patients for response to treatment and making visual observations of function
- hearing sufficient to hear soft voices, equipment timers and warning sounds, to assess patient sounds including breathing, and to hear and respond to emergency situations
- sense of smell sufficient to maintain a safe environment and to respond to emergencies

Communication
- ability to use spoken and written English, including appropriate interpretation and expression of information
- ability to communicate clearly with patients and members of the health care team encompassing a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual factors

Students will be asked to acknowledge these during the advising process and once accepted to the program, or to secure documentation of a disability from the Germanna Disability Services office. Disabilities or other situations that impact the ability to perform the activities required of the PTA student will be considered on a case-by-case basis.