BISHOP STATE
PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

About Our Program

Bishop State's Physical Therapist Assistant Program (PTA Program) is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) as a traditional 1+1 program. CAPTE has designated a cohort/class size of 21 students once per year.

"Traditional" means that at least 75% of our technical (that is, PTA) courses are face to face. **"1+1"** means that students complete all pre-requisite (general education) courses prior to applying to the program for admission.

Cost of attendance is posted on the PTA webpage

Degree Plan

The degree plan consists of **6 semesters** of coursework which leads an **Associate in Applied Science.** The degree plan may include 70-72 semester hours of credit based on student pre-requisite course selection.

The first two semesters are the pre-requisite work consisting of general education courses which are foundational in nature. Students should focus on retaining the skills and concepts learned in these courses to have the greatest chance of success for admission and completion of the PTA Program.

Upon completion of the pre-requisite courses and meeting the admission criteria, students may apply for admission to the program.

The Degree plan may be accessed through the Bishop State Website through the PTA Program page or through the College Catalog.

Admission Criteria

The admission criteria for the PTA Program are as follows:

- **Pre-requisite GPA ≥ 2.75**
- **Math/Science GPA ≥ 2.5**
- **Completion of PTA Program Entrance Exam**
    - This examination has been designed to reflect the pre-requisite courses and the concepts taught therein.
    - The examination is proctored by the Bishop State Community College Learning Assistance Center.

    - Students register for the exam online.
    - Fees for the examination are paid to the Bursar's Office at the Downtown location (351 N. Broad Street).
- **Observation Hours**
    - 50 hours minimum
        - 25 hours x 2 different settings
        - Accepted Settings include:
            - Acute care (regular hospital)
            - Skilled Nursing Facility (also known as nursing homes)
            - Outpatient (clinic based, may be private, chain, or a hospital run clinic)
            - Specialty hospitals (example: Rotary Rehab Hospital, LTACH hospitals, Spain Rehab…)
    - Hours must be completed under the observation of a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant.
    - Hours should be tallied and documented on the PTA Program's Observation Hours Form with the signature of the supervising PT/PTA.
    - Additional points toward admission may be accrued up to 100 hours.
    - Work as a clinical aid or PT Tech is acceptable for observation hours.
- **2 References/Letters of Recommendation**
    - The references should be from 2 of the following acceptable sources:
        - Current or Former Employer
        - Current or Former College Instructor
        - Physical Therapist or Physical Therapist Assistant under whom you have worked or observed.
    - You will need the name, email, and phone number for each of your references.

Application Process

When:

The application for the PTA Program opens in January of each academic year and closes on May 15.

Who:

Interested students who will complete pre-requisite courses by Spring semester of the application year.

Where:

Our application is hosted online using the same platform which hosts the Bishop State Community College application.

Students must apply to the College prior to completing a PTA Program Application.

See the Bishop State PTA Program Webpage for links.

How:

A link to the application will be posted on the Bishop State PTA Program webpage each year. The link will take candidates to the application site.

To begin the application, it is recommended that applicants gather the following documents:

- Driver's License
- References
- Observation Hours Forms
    - Save all observation forms on your computer/device into a single file
    - If you need assistance with this, you may reach out to the PTA Program to schedule a time to complete this.
- Score Report for Admission Exam
- Bishop State-issued email address and password

Once all information is input/uploaded into the application, the applicant must submit the application for consideration for admission into the program.

Early applicants may receive first consideration in admissions. Applicants do not need to wait for completion of Spring classes to submit their applications.

Beginning in 2026-2027 academic year, the PTA Program will begin piloting an early acceptance program for well-qualified graduates of Mobile County high school graduates. Additional information will be available via our website and Bishop State Public Relations and Marketing.

Admission to the Program

All applicants who successfully meet all criteria are considered for admission. When there more qualified applicants than space/seats allowed by our accreditor, students are admitted competitively based on their admission points table scores. In the instance of a tie in points, the tiebreaker is the admission examination score.

When the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of approved seats in the cohort, the program will designate up to five "Alternates." Should any student offered admission into the program decline, the alternate with the next highest admission point score is offered the seat.

All admissions are "conditional" until the criteria set forth in the offer of admission are met. This includes attendance at orientation sessions, unconditional admission to Bishop State Community College, completion of online orientation materials,

completion of all required forms, and compliance with clinical and program requirements such as a background screen and drug test.

Achieving unconditional admission to the program does not ensure completion of the PTA Program. Successful completion of the PTA Program requires academic rigor, dedication to studies, time management skills, self-awareness and willingness to sacrifice free time you may be used to having to succeed academically.

All who are interested in the program are encouraged to attend information sessions offered by the School of Health Sciences.

Financial Aid

Bishop State Community College students may qualify for financial aid opportunities including:

- Scholarships
- Pell Grants
- Private Loans---Bishop State Financial Aid Office or outside sources
- WIOA---Check with your county's employment office
- VA/Veterans Tuition Benefits---Bishop State Financial Aid Office
- Health Science and PTA Specific Scholarships---Bishop State Foundation

****Please note that all financial aid options will require the applicant to first complete the FAFSA.**

Legal Limitation of Licensure/Practice

The Alabama Board of Physical Therapy shall refuse to issue a license to any person and after notice and hearing in accordance with its regulations and rules shall suspend or revoke the license of any person who has: (1) practiced physical therapy without a referral, (2) used drugs or intoxicating liquors to an extent which affects his or her professional competency, (3) been convicted of a felony or of a crime involving moral turpitude, (4) attempted to gain a license by fraud or deception, (5) been adjudged mentally incompetent by a court of competent jurisdiction, (6) been convicted of violating any state or federal narcotic law or (7) other behaviors unbecoming or illegal of a PT or PTA. Any questions regarding the legal limitations of licensure/practice should be directed to the Director of the PTA program immediately before pursuit of the PTA degree.

Students/Applicants with Disabilities

Those with disabilities are welcome to apply. The Program recommends that potential students review the Essential Functions of the Physical Therapist Assistant document prior to beginning a dedicated course of study for PTA. (See Resources on the PTA webpage.