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PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

PROGRAM APPLICATION INFORMATION PACKET

2026 Admissions Cycle

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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 LAUREL RIDGE 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

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 Laurel Ridge 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 540-843-0 or email PTAssistant@Laurelridge.edu

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

General Information

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

Laurel Ridge Community College administers the PTA program and core curriculum. Students accepted to the program register for all PTA core courses through Laurel Ridge, and successful graduates receive the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Physical Therapist Assistant from LAUREL RIDGE.

At Luray, a new cohort is accepted to begin the program each fall semester. There are four semesters in the technical portion of the program. Academic calendars for upcoming semesters are available at <https://laurelridge.edu/academic-information/>. 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 Laurel Ridge Community College (LAUREL RIDGE).

Applications are submitted electronically between April 15 and May 15 of each year. **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 Laurel Ridge Community College (LAUREL RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE) PTA Program is to deliver accessible, high-quality education to underserved communities within our service region. We strive to foster professional competence, financial opportunity, and personal growth, empowering graduates to serve with skill, integrity, and compassion.

Additional Materials

The following supporting materials are available online:

Observation Evaluation Form	<u>Observation Evaluation Form</u>
Laurel Ridge Forms	<u>https://laurelridge.edu/enrollment-services/enrollment-services-forms/</u>
Inpatient PT Video for Application Essay	<u>Acute Care Physical Therapy</u>

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) deliver physical therapy interventions under the supervision and direction of a licensed Physical Therapist (PT). The PT is responsible for evaluating each patient and developing a customized plan of care aimed at enhancing mobility, alleviating pain, restoring function, and preventing disability. PTAs implement this plan in collaboration with the PT, who maintains overall accountability for the services provided.

PTAs work closely with Physical Therapists and other healthcare professionals to support patients in achieving their highest level of functional independence. They serve individuals across the lifespan—from infants to older adults—and practice in a wide range of settings, including outpatient clinics, hospitals, inpatient rehabilitation facilities, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, private practices, educational institutions, and athletic programs.

Their scope of practice includes addressing mobility impairments through interventions such as instructing therapeutic exercises, applying physical modalities, performing manual techniques like stretching and soft tissue mobilization, and training patients in the use of assistive devices. PTAs also provide education to family members and caregivers, promote safe body mechanics in the workplace, and guide parents in managing mobility challenges in children.

Job Market for Physical Therapist Assistants

The job market for Physical Therapist Assistants (PTAs) is strong and growing. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of PTAs is projected to grow 19% from 2022 to 2032, much faster than the average for all occupations. This growth is driven by an aging population, increased demand for rehabilitation services, and expanded healthcare access. As of 2023, the median annual wage for PTAs was approximately \$62,770, with higher earnings in home health care and nursing care facilities. Job prospects are especially favorable for those willing to work in rural or underserved areas.

This accelerated job growth is driven by several factors, including an aging population, increasing rates of chronic conditions like diabetes and obesity, and advances in medical care that improve survival rates for trauma victims and individuals with congenital conditions—many of whom require long-term rehabilitative services provided by PTAs.

Behavioral Expectations for PTA Program Candidates

In addition to meeting academic standards, candidates for the PTA Program must also meet certain behavioral expectations, as outlined below. Applicants are encouraged to review these carefully and consult with PTA faculty advisors if they have any concerns.

- A commitment to healthcare should be based on an understanding of diverse care environments. Candidates must be prepared to work across the continuum of care, including with individuals who are critically or terminally ill, have communicable diseases, or who are significantly injured or disabled.
- Candidates must be comfortable treating all individuals with respect and without prejudice, regardless of gender, age, race, cultural background, religious beliefs, socio-economic status, or personal lifestyle choices.
- A basic understanding of, and alignment with, the philosophy and practices of physical therapy—and the role of the physical therapist assistant—is expected.
- Healthcare professionals are accountable for their actions and must be open to receiving constructive feedback in both academic and clinical settings.
- The role of a PTA requires significant physical capability, including lifting, bending, reaching, and operating equipment. These and other essential abilities are described in the “Essential Functions of the Physical Therapist Assistant Student” on page 14 of this packet. Candidates will be required to acknowledge their understanding of these physical and cognitive expectations as part of the application process.
- Candidates must agree to follow social media policies specific to their participation in the PTA Program.
- Compliance with all applicable policies—including those of Laurel Ridge Community College, the Division of Nursing and Health Technologies, the PTA Program, and affiliated clinical sites—is required. This includes adhering to vaccination and background check requirements.
- Professional standards for dress, personal appearance, conduct, and hygiene must be upheld at all times, reflecting the expectations of the healthcare field.

Vaccinations

Laurel Ridge 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**

Important Information Regarding COVID-19 and Clinical Placement Requirements

While Laurel Ridge Community College does not require COVID-19 vaccination for admission into

restricted health programs, students should be aware that clinical facilities may mandate the COVID-19 vaccine and other immunizations as a condition for participation in clinical experiences. These requirements are determined independently by each clinical site and are not controlled by the college.

As part of our legal agreements with clinical partners, Laurel Ridge Community College faculty and students must comply with the health and safety policies of those facilities. If a student declines to meet a clinical site's vaccination or immunization requirement, the college will make reasonable efforts to arrange an alternate clinical placement. However, alternate placements are not guaranteed. Any alternative site must still fulfill the program's clinical education objectives and meet supervision requirements by available faculty.

Failure to meet clinical site immunization or vaccination requirements may delay a student's progress in the program or result in dismissal from the program. Vaccination status is documented in the program's clinical information management system and will be reviewed by the Director of Clinical Education (DCE) before students are cleared for clinical participation.

Criminal Background Check/Drug Screen

A criminal/sex offender background check is required as part of the admission process **after an offer of conditional acceptance** has been made. 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 through ViewPoint are available by emailing ptassistant@LaurelRidge.edu. The background check and drug screen must be completed **AFTER receiving the offer of conditional acceptance and prior to the start of the fall academic semester**. 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 healthcare field. Applicants who present 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 LAUREL RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BIO 101 within 5 years • Score 70% or higher on NAS2 MOOC

In addition, applicants to the PTA program must demonstrate math competency through eligibility for MTH 154 with or without corequisite support, in accordance with Laurel Ridge 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 prior to or during 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 Laurel Ridge Community College.
2. **Complete VCCS Transcript Evaluation** if any required courses were taken at VCCS colleges other than Laurel Ridge. Ensure that official transcripts from all other colleges attended are on file with the LAUREL RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE Records office prior to the program application deadline date. Transcripts are not required for courses taken at VCCS colleges. Students should also note that in order to receive the associate degree, the college must have on file an official transcript showing a 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 Laurel Ridge 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 101 (preferred) OR 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 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. A "C" in the PTA program is 75%-84.99%.
7. Complete the TEAS test (<https://www.atitesting.com/teas-prep>), offered through LAUREL RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE Testing Services for Laurel Ridge students at [Testing Center](#)
8. 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.
9. 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. (15 Nov - 1 May). **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.
10. Complete the online PTA Program Application.

11. For the interview portion, applicants are expected to present themselves professionally and to answer questions clearly.

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.

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 Records Office as soon as it is available.

Timeline for Application

	Dates
Final Advising	November 15-May 1 annually
Application window	April 15-May 15 annually
Notification of acceptance	Late June to early July
Orientation	During the week prior to first week of classes
Classes begin	Late August

SELECTIVE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Students are selected for the PTA program on a competitive basis, with twelve (12) students accepted annually at the LAUREL RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE program.

The selection process and application materials are evaluated without applicants' names.

Applications are reviewed for completeness by the Enrollment team. Applicants are ranked by staff using the priority points described below. Once the top 12 applicants are identified, have confirmed conditional program acceptance and come back with a clear background check and drug screen, the remaining applicants will be 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/Final Advising Form and Essential Functions 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 Laurel Ridge Community College Testing Center, whether applying to Luray or Luray. There is a fee for the exam (currently \$69.00, including a distance proctoring fee), payable at the testing center at the time of testing. Students must first **create an account** at www.Atltesting.com, and select **Laurel Ridge Allied Health** from the list of institutions. The student then contacts Laurel Ridge's Testing Center at [Testing Center](#) to request a test date/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 Middletown, Fauquier or the Luray campus or proctored online. In any case, the Laurel Ridge 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 **14** 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.

Students anticipating application to the LAUREL RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PTA Program at Laurel Ridge may coordinate exam taking with the Laurel Ridge testing center. In any event, students taking the TEAS somewhere besides Luray must log into your ATI account and request your TEAS transcript to be submitted to Laurel Ridge CC. This is the format that ATI has in place to notify the Laurel Ridge Testing Center to put your scores into the Student Information System (SIS).

Complete instructions are found on the following page.

TEAS Testing

Testing availability by program: Physical Therapy Assistant – February 1 through mid-May. TEAS testing is available at all 3 campus of Laurel Ridge Community College, Middletown, Fauquier and Luray- Page.

Note:

- One retake permitted 2 weeks after the initial test.
- Reserving a Seat
 - o Step 1: Reserve a Seat at your preferred Campus using the links below.
 - o Step 2: Check your email for a Confirmation of your seat request, which will contain vital information about paying for and completing your exam.

Reserve a seat here:

Luray-Page: [Luray Testing dates availability](#)

Middletown: [Middletown Testing dates availability](#)

Fauquier: [Fauquier Testing dates availability](#)

Need Accommodations?

Testing accommodation is available for the ATI TEAS exam. Students are required to have a letter of accommodation to receive alternate testing conditions for the exam. All testing must be completed within the testing centers' normal hours of operation. Testers with extended time accommodation should consider this when reserving their seat. For testing center hours, please see [Here](#).

To best facilitate testing accommodation, please follow these instructions:

1. Students who require testing accommodations will need to first contact the Office of Accommodations and Disability Services to obtain a letter for any necessary accommodations.
2. Once a letter of accommodation is acquired, the student must then forward the letter to the Testing Center where testing will take place:

• Middletown Campus—testing-middletown@laurelridge.edu

•Fauquier Campus–testing-fauquier@laurelridge.edu

•Luray-Page County Center–testing-luray@laurelridge.edu

3.The student will then be contacted to schedule a new testing date, depending on the accommodation, and receive further instructions on how to register for the exam.

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 Laurel Ridge 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, at the end of this manual.

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 video [Acute Care Physical Therapy](#) 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 the Enrollment team and the scores are averaged and recorded. 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 the Records office. 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 records@laurelridge.edu. An earned bachelor's degree in any field of study waives the SDV requirement. Coursework transferred to LAUREL RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE 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 Laurel Ridge'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 Laurel Ridge pre-PTA students as well. Students requiring assistance are directed to the Records office.

The Laurel Ridge PTA Program does not currently have a process in place to accept PTA transfer students from other programs. Any future changes to this policy will be posted on the PTA Program website.

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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: [Acute Care Physical Therapy](#). 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	2-3 Fair use of vocabulary and writing mechanics;	0-1 Vocabulary and mechanics are not at the expected first-year

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		instructions	does not follow all instructions	college level; does not follow instructions

Admission Decisions

Final ranking considers overall GPA as well as points for observation, essay and TEAS testing. 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 conditional admission to the program are notified via email 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.

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 Physical Examination form
4. Immunization form (required immunizations: TDAP, Varicella, MMR, Hepatitis B series, Influenza, COVID-19)
5. 2-step TB Test
6. Professional Liability Insurance (HPSO)
7. Health/Medical Insurance
8. ID/Name Badge
9. Uniforms/equipment
10. Supplies

Immunization, Health, and Program Requirements for Admitted PTA Students

Students accepted into the PTA program must begin the Hepatitis B vaccination series early in the fall to complete it before the first clinical rotation. Other immunizations may require multiple appointments—plan ahead. A 2-step TB test or Quantiferon blood test is required for initial healthcare entry. Existing TB test documentation is acceptable if current. *Vaccine requirements may change based on public health or clinical guidelines.*

Upon admission, students must maintain:

Current CPR certification

Annual physical exam

Annual drug screening and background check

Personal health insurance

Professional liability insurance

All related costs are the student's responsibility. Failure to maintain these requirements may result in dismissal.

Program Commitment and Attendance

The Technical Phase spans four rigorous semesters, including coursework, labs, and clinical experiences—expect approximately 40 hours/week of combined commitment. Despite SIS-published schedules, students must remain available Monday–Friday for labs and program needs. All PTA courses require a grade of "C" or better and an overall GPA of 2.5 or higher to remain in the program.

Clinical Education

The curriculum includes three full-time clinical rotations. While placements near students' homes are prioritized, travel of up to 1.5 hours each way may be required. Students are responsible for transportation and related costs.

All clinicals must be completed to progress and graduate. Failing or being withdrawn from a clinical may delay progression by a year. Two failed clinicals will result in dismissal. If the final clinical is failed, it must be repeated successfully for graduation.

Additional Policies

Courses may be delivered in face-to-face, hybrid, or distance formats, depending on college policy. Annual drug screens and background checks are required per clinical site agreements. A positive result may disqualify a student from clinical placement. Additional drug or alcohol screening may be required at the student's expense if substance use is suspected.

Students are responsible for keeping all documentation current via the Viewpoint Document Manager, which must be purchased upon program acceptance.

Licensure

After completing all academic and clinical requirements, graduates are eligible to apply for the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE) for PTAs, administered by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy, in the state where they wish to practice.

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 2025-26 cost-per-credit hour (Instate: \$180.20), the tuition cost for the **technical portion** of the PTA program totals \$11,200. This does not include prerequisites, which will vary by student, but may be an additional \$3,714.92, 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 \$105.00. 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 [LAUREL RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE Tuition Rates](#)

FINANCIAL AID

The PTA program at LAUREL RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE 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 [Financial Aid](#) or to the Welcome Center Luray campus for additional information. The FAFSA Worksheet is available at completing the FAFSA Worksheet allows students to be candidates for potential scholarship funds and/or community grants.

The PTA program is included in G3 funding through the Commonwealth of Virginia; information is at https://laurelridge.edu/G3_Funding/g3-programs-at-laurel-ridge/. This funding source provides free education for those who qualify.

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)	SDV 101 Orientation to Health Care Careers (or SDV 100 College Success Skills)	1			1
	BIO 141 Anatomy and Physiology I (or NAS 161 Health Science I)	3	1		4
Total 14 credits	ENG 111 College Composition I	3			3
	PSY 230 Developmental Psychology	3			3
	Humanities Elective (ART, ENG LIT, HUM, MUS, PHI, REL, or Foreign Language)	3			3
	Semester Totals				14
Semester Two (Fall)	HLT 105 CPR	1			1
Total 14 credits	PTH 105 Intro to Physical Therapist Assisting	1	2		3
	PTH 121 Therapeutic Procedures I	3	2		5
	PTH 151 Musculoskeletal Structure and Function	3	2		5
	Semester Totals				14
Semester Three (Spring)	PTH115 Kinesiology for the PTA	3	1		4
Total 12 credits	PTH 122 Therapeutic Procedures II	3	2		5
	PTH 131 Clinical Education I (Total: 140 hours)	0	2		2
	SOC 200 Principles of Sociology*	3			3
	Semester Totals				14
Semester Four	PTH 225 Rehabilitation Procedures	3	2		5
Total 14 credits	PTH 210 Psychological Aspects of Therapy	2			2
	PTH 251 Clinical Practicum I (Total: 225 hours)			3 er	3
	BIO 142 Anatomy and Physiology II *	3	1		4
	Semester Totals			225 hrs (6wks)	14
Semester Five	PTH 226 Therapeutic Exercise	3	1		4
Total 15 credits	PTH 227 Pathological Conditions	3			2
	PTH 255 Seminar in Physical Therapy	2			2
	PTH 252 Clinical Practicum II (Total 240 hours)			3 er	4
	Semester Totals			240 hrs 6wks	12
	Total for Degree			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. Laurel Ridge 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 Laurel Ridge 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.

Volunteer Observation Request

Laurel Ridge Community College

Physical Therapist Assistant Program

200 College Dr, Luray, VA 22835

Dear [Clinic Director or Clinical Coordinator],

On behalf of the Laurel Ridge Community College Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Program,

I would like to extend our sincere appreciation for your role in supporting future healthcare professionals. We are writing to introduce our program and to respectfully request your consideration in allowing our prospective or pre-program students to complete **20 hours of volunteer experience** at your facility.

As you know, observation in a physical therapy setting provides valuable early exposure to the profession and helps students understand the scope of care provided by PTs and PTAs in various clinical environments. These experiences are essential not only for admissions preparation but also for helping students confirm their passion for the field of physical therapy.

We value the partnership between clinical sites and educational programs like ours and hope to work closely with you to cultivate well-prepared, compassionate physical therapist assistants.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or if you need additional information.

Warm regards,

Dr. Rekha Parameswaran, PT, DPT

Program Director & Faculty – PTA Program

Laurel Ridge Community College

Email: rparameswaran@laurelridge.edu

Phone: 540 843 0798

Volunteer/Observation Rating Form
To be completed by the supervising PT or PTA

Please evaluate the PTA program applicant based on your observation of their behavior, attitude, and professionalism during their volunteer or observation experience at your facility.

Return this completed form to: PTAssistant@LaurelRidge.edu

Applicant Name: _____
Dates of Observation/Volunteer Work: _____
Total Hours Completed: _____
Facility Name: _____
Supervisor Name (print): _____
Supervisor Title (PT/PTA): _____
Email / Phone: _____

Performance Rating

Please rate the applicant in the following areas using this scale:

Rating Scale	Description
5 – Excellent	Consistently above expectations
4 – Good	Frequently above expectations
3 – Satisfactory	Meets expectations
2 – Needs Improvement	Occasionally below expectations
1 – Unsatisfactory	Consistently below expectations

Category	Rating (1–5)	Comments (Optional)
Punctuality and Attendance		
Professional Appearance		
Respect for Patients and Staff		
Willingness to Learn		
Communication Skills		
Ability to Follow Instructions		
Engagement and Interest in the profession		
Overall Impression		

Would you recommend this individual for consideration in the Laurel Ridge PTA Program?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ With Reservations (please explain below)

Additional Comments (optional):

Supervisor Signature: _____ **Name (Please Print):** _____

License #: _____ **Date:** _____