

# PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

## Description

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) works under the supervision of a physical therapist to assist in the treatment of individuals suffering from disease or injury by relieving pain, restoring movement, and improving function. The PTA also works with other healthcare team members to ensure each individual functions at their maximum potential.

The PTA Program at Laredo College consists of 66 semester credit hours, includes three full-time clinical experiences, and can be completed in two years or six semesters (84 weeks). Upon completing the program, the student is awarded the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Physical Therapist Assistant and will be eligible to sit for the physical therapist assistant national licensure exam.

### Mission

The Mission of Laredo College Physical Therapist Assistant program is to provide quality education that transforms students into caring, knowledgeable, and skilled entry-level physical therapist assistants committed to safe and ethical practice to meet the healthcare needs in the community and the region.

### Vision

The PTA Program at Laredo College seeks to foster learning through quality instruction which will prepare graduates to serve the community's healthcare needs.

### Goals

1. Graduates will demonstrate competent and safe entry-level practice.
2. Graduates will exhibit professional behaviors and adhere to ethical practice consistent with the profession and licensure regulations.
3. Graduates will participate in professional growth and lifelong learning activities.
4. The program will produce graduates who will obtain licensure and effectively transition to a physical therapist assistant career.
5. PTA Program faculty will maintain contemporary expertise.

### Outcomes

## Graduate Outcomes

1. The PTA graduate will be rated good to excellent in the provision of competent and safe patient care under the supervision of a physical therapist by 100% of employers surveyed. (Goal 1)
2. PTA graduates will rate themselves good to excellent in the provision of competent and safe patient care under the supervision of a physical therapist by 100% of graduates surveyed (Goal 1)
3. The PTA graduate's professional behaviors will be rated good to excellent by 100% of employers surveyed (Goal 2)
4. The PTA graduate's adherence to ethical standards of practice will be rated good to excellent by 100% of employers surveyed (Goal 2)
5. The PTA graduate's participation in professional development activities will be rated as good to excellent by 100% of graduates surveyed. (Goal 3)

## Program Outcomes

1. PTA program graduates will have a 95% first-time pass rate on the licensure exam as evidenced by the NPTE examination results. (Goal 4)
2. One hundred percent of program graduates seeking employment will be employed as PTA's within 12 months of passing the licensure exam. (Goal 4)

## Faculty Outcomes

1. One hundred percent of full-time faculty will complete on faculty development activity related to their teaching content area. (Goal 5)

## Accreditation and Licensure

The Physical Therapist Assistant Program is accredited by the

Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education  
3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100  
Alexandria, Virginia 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 Dr. Esmeralda Vargas at 956-721-5262 or email [esmeralda.vargas@laredo.edu](mailto:esmeralda.vargas@laredo.edu)

The graduate is eligible to sit for the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE) for physical therapist assistants which is administered by the

Texas State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners  
1801 N. Congress Ave, Suite 10.900  
Austin, Texas 78701  
(512) 305-6900.

## Clinical Education

Three full time clinical experiences, must be completed as part of the requirement for graduation from the PTA Program. All clinical experiences can be completed in Laredo, but a student can opt to complete a clinical out of town. The clinical experiences may include assignments at facilities in Laredo or in surrounding geographical areas in South Texas. The estimated cost for room and travel for an out-of-town clinical experience is approximately \$2,000 to \$2,500. These additional costs are the responsibility of the student. In addition, the applicant should be aware that they may be required to work with clients who may speak only Spanish; thus, the ability to speak Spanish is a definite asset to the student.

## Progression in the PTA Program

The student should refer to the Progression/Promotion Procedures listed in the PTA Student Handbook.

## Withdrawal

A student considering withdrawal from a PTA Program course should refer to the PTA Student Handbook and make an appointment with the instructor and Program Director.

## Attendance

The PTA Program follows the LC attendance policy for academic/didactic courses. All clinical education courses require attendance in order to be

in compliance with accrediting agencies. Please refer to the attendance policy in the PTA Student Handbook.

## Dismissal

The student should refer to the dismissal policies listed in the PTA Student Handbook.

*For further information about the Physical Therapist Assistant Program, contact the Program Director, Dr. Esmeralda Vargas at 721-5262 or by email at [esmeralda.vargas@laredo.edu](mailto:esmeralda.vargas@laredo.edu). An appointment can also be scheduled with the Allied Health Instructional Assistant at 721-5261 or at the South Campus College of Health Sciences Building, room A307.*

## Degrees & Certificates

- Physical Therapist Assistant, Associate of Applied Science (<https://catalog.laredo.edu/degree-programs-certificates/health-sciences/physical-therapist-assistant/physical-therapist-assistant-associate-applied-science/>)

## Admission Requirements

### Application Requirements

The student seeking admission into the PTA Program must:

- Apply for admission and be accepted to Laredo College. (click here (<https://www.laredo.edu/admissions/>) for more information).
- Be college ready in Reading, Writing, and Math.
- Earn a minimum GPA of 2.5 in PTA degree-specific courses, (prerequisite and academic courses) with a grade of "C" or better.
- Complete the following prerequisite courses:

Code	Title	Hours
BIOL 2301	Anatomy and Physiology I	3
BIOL 2101	Anatomy and Physiology I Laboratory	1
ENGL 1301	Composition I	3
PTHA 1301	The Profession of Physical Therapy	3

- Complete 20 hours of observation shadowing a PT or PTA in any setting ([https://www.laredo.edu/Academic-Career-Pathways/health-sciences/\\_PTA\\_Files/List%20of%20Facilities%20for%20Observation%20Hours1.pdf](https://www.laredo.edu/Academic-Career-Pathways/health-sciences/_PTA_Files/List%20of%20Facilities%20for%20Observation%20Hours1.pdf)), **except in home health**. Students employed as physical therapy aides may count work experience towards this requirement. If the applicant has work experience as a physical therapy tech/aide, a letter from the place of employment must also be submitted on company letterhead stating term of employment.
- Submit the following through the online application portal: **Applications are accepted from March 1<sup>st</sup> through the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday in May.**
  - Complete PTA application online at [https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/laredo\\_physical\\_therapist\\_assistant\\_program](https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/laredo_physical_therapist_assistant_program) ([https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/laredo\\_physical\\_therapist\\_assistant\\_program/](https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/laredo_physical_therapist_assistant_program/))
  - The PTA or PTA that the student observed will complete the observation evaluation form ([https://www.laredo.edu/Academic-Career-Pathways/health-sciences/\\_PTA\\_Files/PTA%20Volunteer\\_Observation%20Forms%203.14.23.pdf](https://www.laredo.edu/Academic-Career-Pathways/health-sciences/_PTA_Files/PTA%20Volunteer_Observation%20Forms%203.14.23.pdf)) online through the portal. The clinician will need to upload the completed volunteer observation log (<https://www.laredo.edu/>)

[Academic-Career-Pathways/health-sciences/\\_PTA\\_Files/PTA%20Volunteer\\_Observation%20Log%202.27.23.pdf](https://www.laredo.edu/Academic-Career-Pathways/health-sciences/_PTA_Files/PTA%20Volunteer_Observation%20Log%202.27.23.pdf)).

## Selection Process

Admission into the PTA Program is based on the following (see to PTA Program Candidate Score Sheet ([https://www.laredo.edu/Academic-Career-Pathways/health-sciences/\\_PTA\\_Files/PTA%20Program%20Candidate%20Score%20Sheet%2020232.pdf](https://www.laredo.edu/Academic-Career-Pathways/health-sciences/_PTA_Files/PTA%20Program%20Candidate%20Score%20Sheet%2020232.pdf))):

- Degree-Specific grade point average GPA (50%)
- Pre-entrance exam (40%)
- Observation Evaluation (2%)
- Personal Interview (8%)
- Bonus Points (refer to the Frequently Asked Questions page)
- Eligible students will be invited to sit for a pre-entrance exam the first week of June.
- Eligible students will be invited to sit for an interview the third week of June.
- Students will be ranked based on percentage points awarded. Admission is based on achieving at least 65% of the points awarded. **A maximum of 18 students will be accepted.** Due to program size limitations, some applicants who meet the program admissions requirements may not be admitted. Additionally, only those students who meet the cut-off percentage score will be admitted each fall semester.
- Accepted applicants will be notified via email by late June or mid-July.
- The applicant not selected for admission into the program may reapply at the next application cycle and complete the admission requirements described above.

## Conditional Acceptance

A student conditionally accepted into the Physical Therapist Assistant Program must submit the following items seven days before the first day of class. The student is responsible for all fees associated with these procedures.

- A physical exam by a U.S. physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner of choice. To access the Physical Examination Form, please click ([https://www.laredo.edu/Academic-Career-Pathways/health-sciences/\\_PTA\\_Files/Physical-Exam-Form-8-1-2019.pdf](https://www.laredo.edu/Academic-Career-Pathways/health-sciences/_PTA_Files/Physical-Exam-Form-8-1-2019.pdf)) here.
- Proof of Immunization: Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, MMR, Varicella, Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis (Tdap), Bacterial Meningitis (S. B. No. 62 requires that all college students under the age of 22 must receive the Bacterial Meningitis vaccine. If you are 21 or under, you may request an exemption form from the Texas Department of State Health Services, please click here (<https://co-request-jc.dshs.texas.gov/>) for further information), and an annual flu vaccine
- TB skin test (annual) or chest x-ray (every two years)
- American Heart Association BLS Health Care Provider CPR Certification

A negative criminal background check: [www.castlebranch.com](http://www.castlebranch.com) (<https://discover.castlebranch.com/>)

- Negative 10- panel drug screen

The PTA Program adheres to the Equal Educational Opportunity Policy as listed in the LC Manual of Policy FA (LEGAL). Click here (<https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails/?key=1207&code=FA#legalTabContent>) to access policy.

**Continuous Enrollment**

To maintain continuous enrollment in the PTA Program, the student must pass all program courses with a "C" or better, adhere to the College and Program Student Code of Conduct, uphold professional behaviors, and maintain a negative background check.