



Physical Therapist Assistant

Physical therapist assistants (PTAs) provide services to patients/clients who have impairments, disabilities, or changes in physical function and health status as a result of injury, disease and other causes. They help to restore and promote overall fitness and health. Physical therapy is often indicated for individuals with disabling conditions such as low back or neck pain, arthritis, heart disease, fractures, head injuries, cancer and cerebral palsy as well as for individuals needing services for disease and disablement prevention.

The PTA works under the direction and supervision of a licensed physical therapist who conducts an initial evaluation of the patient/client and establishes a plan of care which may be implemented by the PTA. The PTA collects data related to muscle strength, range of motion, balance and coordination, posture, performance of physical tasks, respiration and motor function. Interventions may include the use of therapeutic exercise, training in the many activities of daily living, electrotherapy, heat and cold applications, and other biophysical agents to relieve pain and reduce swelling. They may also use traction or deep-tissue massage to relieve tissue tension and pain, and they teach patients to use assistive and adaptive devices such as crutches, prostheses and wheelchairs. Some PTAs specialize in areas such as pediatrics, geriatrics, orthopedics, sports medicine and neurology.

EMPLOYMENT

According to the US Bureau of Labor and Statistics, jobs for physical therapist assistants are expected to grow by 19% between 2023 to 2033. This is much faster than the average for all occupations. Demand for physical therapist assistants continues to rise with the rate of retirement within the baby-boom generation and the increasing demand for physical therapy services for all age ranges.

Most physical therapist assistants are employed in hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, or out-patient physical therapy clinics. Other job opportunities are found within home health agencies, outpatient rehabilitation centers, schools and industries. In sports therapy, PTAs may work with athletes before, during, and after sporting events. Physical therapist assistants also teach in academic institutions.

EARNINGS

The wage scale for new PTA graduates ranges from \$50,000-90,000/year for full-time work and will vary depending on the region and practice settings. Check with physical therapy sites in your area to get more specific information

Loma Linda University is located in Southern California, 60 miles east of Los Angeles, and is a faith-based, health sciences institution emphasizing excellence in education, personal integrity, intellectual development, community service, and personal commitment to Christ. Located on campus are two world-class health care facilities, the Loma Linda University Medical Center, a 1,046-bed acute-care teaching hospital, and the Loma Linda University Children's Hospital.

One of the unique things about Loma Linda University is its broad spectrum of education within health care. As you learn within your chosen discipline, you are in direct contact with other students studying in the doctor of physical therapy program, and in nursing, medicine, dentistry and many others. The School of Allied Health Professions at LLU is the largest school of its kind in the world, one of the eight schools which comprise Loma Linda University.

THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AT LLU

The Associate of Science degree in physical therapy for the physical therapist assistant (PTA) at LLU requires a minimum of 2.25 years of college after high school. The first year of specific prerequisite courses may be completed at an accredited junior college or a four-year college or a university which are transferred to Loma Linda University upon acceptance to the program. The second year plus one quarter is completed at Loma Linda University in the PTA technical education program. Graduates of the program are eligible to take the National PTA Licensing Examination and obtain state licensure.

HOW TO APPLY:

The online application period opens August 1 and closes May 1. For the greatest advantage, apply before the preferred deadline of November 1. To apply go to <https://home.llu.edu/academics/how-apply> or scan the QR provided below.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign language) or IELTS (International English Language System) scores are required for applicants whose native language is not English or whose secondary education was received outside the United States (refer to: <http://www.llu.edu/allied-health/sahp/internationalstudent.page>)

Financial Aid: Our Financial Aid Office can help you plan to finance your education. Be sure to apply early for financial assistance, even before receiving your acceptance into the program. FAFSA applications (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) may be submitted starting on October 1. Applications for Cal Grants (California residents only) must be postmarked no later than March 2, and are available after December 25. Contact our Financial Aid Office at (909) 558-4509, at <http://www.llu.edu/students/financial-aid/> or by mail at: Financial Aid Office, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, CA 92350.

OBSERVATION EXPERIENCE:

A minimum of 80 hours work/observation experience (volunteer/employee) in a physical therapy department, 20 hours of which must be in an inpatient setting and 20 hours in an outpatient setting.

COST OF ATTENDANCE:

Please review LLU's Find a Program [website](#) for the most up-to-date information on the cost of attendance or scan the QR code below.



REQUIRED COURSES FOR THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM (AS DEGREE)

The Physical Therapist Assistant program includes one year of specific, required courses (48 quarter units or 32 semester units) which must be transferred to LLU, followed by five academic quarters (15 months) of study in the School of Allied Health Professions at Loma Linda University. Upon completion of the course of study, the student receives an Associate of Science degree and becomes eligible to take the national PTA board examination, a requirement for becoming licensed in most states.

To be eligible for admission, the applicant must complete all prerequisite courses at an accredited college or university with a minimum GPA of 2.5 in the science prerequisites and a minimum GPA of 2.5 in the non-science courses. Individuals with an earned bachelor's degree in any field need only complete the prerequisites denoted with two asterisks (**). Admission is a selective process. Selection criteria include the science GPA, non-science GPA, completion of subject requirements, interview, essay, recommendations, and work or volunteer experience.

MINIMUM PREREQUISITE COURSES: "C MINUS" GRADES ARE NOT ACCEPTED FOR CREDIT.

HUMANITIES AND RELIGION HUMANITIES:

Select 4 quarter or 3 semester hours from:

- Art / Music (performing arts limited to 2 quarter hours)
- Literature Philosophy
- Foreign language Civilization/ History
- (English as a second language may not be included)

SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY AND ANALYSIS NATURAL SCIENCES:

- * *Intro to Physics (1 quarter or semester)(Lab is recommended but not required)
- * *Human Anatomy & Physiology w/ labs, complete course sequence (preferred OR General Biology w/labs (complete course sequence)
- * *Math: 2 years of high school level math selected from: Algebra I (elementary), algebra II (intermediate), geometry, with grades of C (2.0) or better. (May be taken in high school or college. If taken in college, must be intermediate algebra, but this is not counted towards your GPA or the accumulated number of credits you need).
- * *Medical Terminology

SOCIAL SCIENCES:

- * *General Psychology
- * *A second psychology course chosen from:
 - Human growth and development (preferred)
 - Developmental psychology or Abnormal psychology

COMMUNICATION:

- Freshman English Composition, complete sequence
- * *Speech or interpersonal communication

HEALTH AND WELLNESS:

- Health Education/ Nutrition or 2 activity courses in Physical Education

ELECTIVES:

To meet a minimum total requirement of 48 quarter (or 32 semester) units.

STUDENT HEALTH REQUIREMENTS:

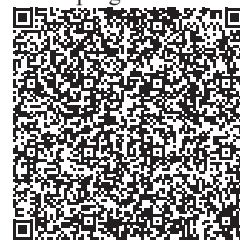
Please review the New Students—Health Requirements. <https://llu.edu/campus-spiritual-life/student-health-service/new-students-health-requirements>



CONTACT INFORMATION:

For advising on prerequisite coursework, send unofficial transcripts by e-mail to studypta@llu.edu or Andrea Lopez (Administrative Assistant) at andlopez@llu.edu and include "PTA" in the subject line.

For all other questions about the program see our contacts below:



SCAN TO SAVE CONTACT

Reviewed 08/25/2025



LOMA LINDA
UNIVERSITY

LLU at a Glance

>> Founded in 1905 >> A Seventh-day Adventist institution integrating health, science, and Christian faith >> Offers over 200 programs in the health sciences >> Houses eight schools: Allied Health Professions, Behavioral Health, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health, and Religion >> About 4,000 students >> Over 1,300 faculty >> 2,000 professional researchers >> \$46 million dollars in private and public grants generated each year >> Many service-learning opportunities

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