

**Physical Therapist Assistant  
School of Health Professions  
Application Information**

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for applying for the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) Hybrid Program at NorthWest Arkansas Community College. This program is designed for students who want to pursue a PTA degree while continuing to live, learn, and complete clinical internships in their home communities. Because our mission is to expand access to high-quality physical therapy education in underserved areas, preference in the selection process is given to applicants who live farther from the main campus.

Students admitted to the hybrid program should expect to complete most—or all—of their clinical internships outside of Northwest Arkansas at their own expense. Our hope is that graduates will continue serving patients in these communities, helping meet the growing need for skilled physical therapy providers.

**Application Requirements**

To be considered for admission into the PTA Program, you must:

- Complete all prerequisite courses by the end of the fall semester of the application year.
- Submit the PTA Program application and informed consent forms through the online portal by November 1.

We accept no more than 10 qualified applicants into the professional phase each January. Applicants will be offered a position based on the provided ranking system.

Important Note: If you have taken Clinical Kinesiology more than twice, a 10-point deduction will be applied to your overall score.

**Informed Consent Forms**

These forms confirm that you have been informed of critical program requirements.

**Scholarship Information**

NWACC Foundation's scholarship application period is open from October 1 – March 1 at <https://nwacc.awardspring.com>.

When you complete the application, the system will automatically match you to all eligible scholarships. For assistance, email [scholarships@nwacc.edu](mailto:scholarships@nwacc.edu).

### **Selection Process**

Applicants must:

- Complete an interview with the PTA Selection Committee (scheduled in late fall).
- Understand that the final percentile score in PHTA 2105 Clinical Kinesiology accounts for 34.2% of your ranking. No substitutions are allowed for this course.
- See the ranking formula for full details.

### **Additional Requirements**

- **Criminal Background Check:** Offenses may prevent completion of clinical rotations and/or eligibility for the NPTE exam.
- **Observation Hours:** Complete 9 hours of observation at three different physical therapy sites (minimum 3 hours per site). Schedule early to meet deadlines.
- **Physical Examination:** Submit a signed Physician Certification of Essential Functions and Physical Abilities form after your physical exam.
- **Transcripts & Immunizations:** Provide official transcripts for prerequisite courses taken at other institutions to the NWACC Registrar. Submit proof of required immunizations (measles and rubella if born on or after January 1, 1957) to both the Registrar and the Health Professions Division.

### **Checklist & Timeline**

Use the provided checklist to organize and submit all required documents in the correct order. The timeline will help you track deadlines and anticipate communication from the program.

### **Questions?**

Email the Health Professions Advisor at [hpadvisor@nwacc.edu](mailto:hpadvisor@nwacc.edu) or the PTA Program Director at [nvirden@nwacc.edu](mailto:nvirden@nwacc.edu).

Kindest regards,

*Nick Virden*

Nick Virden, PT, DPT

*Board-Certified Clinical Specialist in Orthopaedic Physical Therapy  
Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist*

## REQUIREMENTS AND SELECTION

A grade point average of 3.0 or above and a grade of “C” or above in ALL required prerequisite courses is required to be considered for acceptance into the PTA Program. Students must earn a “C” or higher in all PTA Program Professional courses to remain in the PTA Program and graduate with an AAS in PTA.

All prerequisite courses must be completed by the end of the Fall semester you are applying for consideration into the professional phase of the PTA Program that begins in January.

### Pre-requisite Courses

BIOL 2214 Anatomy and Physiology I  
CISQ 1103 Intro to Computer Information OR HIM 1123 Electronic Health Records  
ENGL 1013 English Composition I  
PSYC 2003 General Psychology  
AHSC 1001 Intro to Medical Terminology  
MATH 1003 Survey of Professional Math OR MATH 1203 College Algebra (not considered in the GPA requirement)  
PHTA 2103 Clinical Kinesiology in Physical Therapy

### Pre-requisite/co-requisite courses to be completed before or during the first spring semester of the program

ENGL 1023 English Composition II  
BIOL 2224 Anatomy and Physiology II

### Degree audit information:

If you are transferring credits from another institution and/or want to determine if you have met the general education courses for the PTA Program, you may request a degree audit.

A degree audit identifies the progress a student has made toward an NWACC degree plan and determines the specific credits that NWACC will allow to a student from another institution. There is no charge for a degree audit.

When should a student request an audit?

- If a student has completed coursework successfully at another institution
- Before a degree audit can be completed; official transcripts from all institutions attended must be on file in the Enrollment Support office.

### Distance-Based Preference Overview

The PTA Hybrid Program is designed for students who want to earn their degree while continuing to live, complete clinical internships, and ultimately practice in the communities where they currently reside. To support this mission, applicants who live farther from NWACC's Bentonville campus receive additional points during the selection process, helping prioritize students in underserved areas.

Distance from NWACC Bentonville Campus	Points Awarded
100 miles or more	30 points
75–99 miles	25 points
55–74 miles	15 points
35–54 miles	10 points
34 miles or less	0 points

### Interview Overview

Applicants selected for the interview phase will participate in a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams with a panel of PTA program faculty. The interview is designed to help the faculty learn more about each candidate's communication skills, professionalism, motivation for pursuing the PTA profession, and readiness for the hybrid learning environment. This structured conversation typically lasts 15–20 minutes and provides applicants an opportunity to share their strengths, ask questions, and demonstrate their fit for the program

### Point System

Admission to the PTA Program is based on a point system used to rank qualified applicants. The PTA admits only 10 students each January. The top 10 applicants who meet all admission criteria will receive an offer of acceptance.

If a selected applicant declines their spot, offers will be extended to individuals on the alternate list in order of total points, beginning with the highest-ranked alternate.

Students are ranked based on the following Selection Criteria:

Points	Category
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<b>100 / 292 (34.2%)</b>	<b>PHTA 2105 Clinical Kinesiology in Physical Therapy</b>
<b>72 / 292 (24.7%)</b>	<b>Anatomy &amp; Physiology I, Medical Terminology</b>
<b>45 / 292 (15.4%)</b>	<b>English Composition I &amp; II, General Psychology, Intro to Computers or Electronic Health Records</b>
<b>45 / 292 (15.4%)</b>	<b>Interview</b>
<b>30 / 292 (10.3%)</b>	<b>Distance from NWACC's Bentonville campus</b>
<b>292 / 292 (100%)</b>	<b>Total points possible</b>

## CHECKLIST

Your application must contain the following information to be considered complete. If your submission is not complete, you will not be considered for admission.

The deadline to submit the PTA Program Traditional Application and required documents is March 1<sup>st</sup> via the online application portal.

### **Items to Be Submitted to the Enrollment Support Office**

- Official transcript(s) to transfer course credit\*
  - Immunization records (Measles and Rubella if born after 1/1/57)
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### **Physical Therapist Assistant Program Application Packet**

- Clinical Observation Form
- Physician Certification of Essential Functions and Physical Abilities
- Copy of immunization records (Measles and Rubella if born after 1/1/57)
- Curriculum Informed Consent Form
- Observation Informed Consent Form
- PTA Program Selection Criteria & Course Substitutions Informed Consent Form\*
- Program and Admission Requirements Informed Consent Form
- Licensure/Certification Form – Informed Consent
- Clinical Placement Informed Consent Form
- Clinical Placement Requirements (health insurance, background check, and urine drug screen) – Informed Consent
- Additional Program-Related Costs Informed Consent Form
- Student Health, Physician Certification, Physical Condition, and Disability Policy/Informed Consent Form

\*Course Substitution: If a student believes they have taken a pre-requisite course at another institution or NWACC equivalent to an NWACC course needed for the PTA degree and did not receive credit accordingly, a course substitution may be requested. The student must meet with the Health Professions Academic Advisor to determine if the course is eligible for a course substitution. If so, they will be directed to the appropriate academic division to complete the request. The academic division of the course is in will then determine if a course substitution can be given. There are no course substitutions for Clinical Kinesiology.

## TIMELINE AND SELECTION PROCESS

The chart below is for informational purposes only to inform applicants of the timelines regarding the PTA Program Application & Selection Process

Date	Process
<b>November 1</b>	PTA Program application and all required materials submitted by <b>4:00 PM</b> .
<b>Mid November</b>	Application files reviewed; interview scheduling begins—monitor <b>NWACC email</b> for available dates.
<b>End of Fall Semester</b>	Applicants who completed prerequisite coursework at another institution must have the course instructor email final grades to the PTA Program Director immediately after finals. NWACC student grades are accessed internally.
<b>Approximately 10 Business Days After Fall Grades Post</b>	Applicant rankings finalized and acceptance or alternate notifications sent via <b>NWACC email</b> .
<b>Spring Registration (December/January)</b>	Accepted applicants register for Spring PTA Program courses per catalog
<b>January</b>	PTA Program professional courses begin

## TIMELINE AND SELECTION PROCESS

The chart below is for informational purposes only to inform applicants of the timelines regarding the PTA Program Application & Selection Process

DATE:

- March 1 – PTA Program Application and application materials due by 4:00 pm.
- Third week of March – Application file checked for completeness and we will begin the interview process. Please watch your NWACC email for available dates and times.
- End of Spring Semester – If the applicant completed program pre-requisites at another institution during the Spring semester, they MUST have the course instructor email the final grade to the PTA Program Director ASAP after the final is taken.
- End of Spring Semester – The applicant's rank will be tallied, and notification of acceptance or denial will be sent via NWACC email.
- Summer registration – accepted applicants register for Summer PTA Program Courses
- June – PTA Program Professional Courses begin

**Physical Therapy Clinic Observation Confirmation Form**

Thank you for allowing applicants to the NorthWest Arkansas Community College Physical Therapist Assistant Program to observe physical therapy practice at your facility. This requirement may be met by observation, volunteer or work hours. Observation must consist of a minimum of 3 hours at 3 different facilities.

**Observation #1**

Facility Name & Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Hours Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

PT or PTA Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

PT or PTA Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Observation #2**

Facility Name & Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Hours Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

PT or PTA Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

PT or PTA Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Observation #3**

Facility Name & Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Hours Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

PT or PTA Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

PT or PTA Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that the information given is complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that submission of false information is grounds for denial of admission or immediate suspension if enrolled.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (Print)                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature                      Date

## **Physician Certification of Essential Functions for Physical Therapist Assistant Program**

Students who wish to pursue a career in Physical Therapy Assistant must meet the following essential minimal physical, mental, and job standards to complete the educational activities in the Physical Therapist Assistant program.

Admission to the NWACC Physical Therapist Assistant program is conditional on the candidate's ability to satisfy these professional standards, with or without reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodations will be made on an individual basis. Students who have special needs are encouraged to identify themselves to the Program Director and the Disability Resource Center for reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be based on current documentation provided to the Disability Resource Center.

The following professional standards and essential skills are functions that must be met with or without reasonable accommodations: The American Physical Therapist Association lists their Professional Standards as "Essential Qualifications" as listed below:

### **Motor Skills:**

Candidates shall have sufficient motor function to execute movements required to provide general care and treatment to patients in all healthcare settings. [For example: For the safety and protection of the patients, the candidate must be able to perform basic life support, including CPR, and function in an emergency situation. The candidate must be able, within reasonable limits, to safely assist a patient in moving, for example, ambulating, transferring from a chair to a bed, examination table, or from a wheelchair to another location.

### **Sensory/Observation:**

A candidate must be able to acquire the information presented through demonstrations and experiences in the basic and profession's sciences. He or she must be able to observe a patient accurately, at a distance and close at hand, and observe and appreciate non-verbal communication when performing an assessment and intervention or administering treatment. The candidate must be capable of perceiving the signs of disease and infection as manifested through physical examination. Such information is derived from images of the body surfaces, palpable changes in various organs and tissues, and auditory information (patient voice, heart tones, and lung sounds).

### **Communication:**

The candidate must communicate effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, patients, family, and other professionals. He or she must express his or her ideas and

feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to give and receive feedback. A candidate must be able to: convey or exchange information at a level that allows the development of a health history; identify problems presented; explain alternative solutions; and give directions during treatment and post-treatment. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively in oral and written forms in English. The candidate must be able to process and communicate information on the patient's status with accuracy in a timely manner to healthcare team members. The appropriate communication may also rely on the candidate's ability to make a correct judgment in seeking supervision and consultation in a timely manner.

**Cognitive:**

A candidate must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize in the context of undergraduate professional study. The candidate must be able to read and comprehend extensive written material quickly. He or she must also be able to evaluate and apply information and engage in critical thinking in the classroom and clinical setting.

**Behavioral/Emotional:**

A candidate must possess the emotional health required to fully utilize his or her intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, and prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients and families. In addition, s/he must maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, students, faculty, staff, and other professionals under all circumstances, including highly stressful situations. The candidate must have the emotional stability to function effectively under stress and to adapt to an environment that may change rapidly without warning and/or in unpredictable ways. The candidate must be able to experience empathy for the situations and circumstances of others and effectively communicate that empathy. The candidate must know that his or her values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and experiences affect his or her perceptions and relationships with others. The candidate must be able and willing to examine and change his or her behavior when it interferes with productive individual or team relationships. The candidate must possess the skills and experience necessary for effective and harmonious relationships in diverse academic and working environments.

**Professional Conduct:**

Candidates must possess the ability to reason morally and practice ethically. Candidates must be willing to learn and abide by professional standards of practice. S/he must possess compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, honesty, responsibility, and tolerance. Candidates must be able to engage in patient care delivery in all settings and deliver care to all patient populations, including but not limited to children, adolescents, adults,

developmentally disabled persons, medically compromised patients, and vulnerable adults.

**Physical Abilities:**

Static strength (the ability to exert maximum muscle force to lift, push, pull, or carry objects) and flexibility (the ability to bend, stretch, twist, or reach with your body, arms &/or legs). Physical abilities include standing, walking, sitting, lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, and/or hand function. Strength classification is Medium Work: Exerting 20 to 50 pounds of force occasionally, and/or 10 to 25 pounds of force frequently, and/or greater than negligible up to 10 pounds of force constantly to move objects.

NWACC strives to provide reasonable accommodation as necessary to allow a PTA student to be successful. If you need accommodation, please get in touch with the NWACC Office of Disability Services.

I certify that \_\_\_\_\_ (student name) is able to perform the essential functions and physical demands of a physical therapist assistant.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clinic Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physician Name Print

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physician Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone #

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature                      Date

## Curriculum Informed Consent Form

Curriculum for entrance into the program for summer

- The Physical Therapist Assistant degree program consists of 29 hours of general education courses and 50 hours of Physical Therapist Assistant professional core courses for 79 credit hours in the Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S) degree in Physical Therapist Assistant.
- A grade of “C” or above in ALL required pre-requisite courses is required to be considered for acceptance into the PTA Program. Students must also earn a “C” or higher in all PTA Program Professional courses to remain in the PTA Program and graduate with an AAS in PTA.
- All prerequisite courses must be completed by the end of the fall semester in December to be considered eligible for consideration into the professional phase of the PTA Program that begins in January.

### Pre-requisite Courses

BIOL 2214    Anatomy and Physiology I  
CISQ 1103    Intro to Computer Information OR HIM 1123    Electronic Health Records  
ENGL 1013    English Composition I  
PSYC 2003    General Psychology  
AHSC 1001    Intro to Medical Terminology  
MATH 1003    Survey of Professional Math OR MATH 1203 College Algebra (not considered in the GPA requirement)  
PHTA 2103    Clinical Kinesiology in Physical Therapy

### Pre-requisite/co-requisite courses to be completed before or during the first spring semester of the program

ENGL 1023    English Composition II  
BIOL 2224    Anatomy and Physiology II

### Professional Core PTA Program Courses:

Students accepted into the PTA Program must complete all professional courses with a “C” or higher to remain in the program. Students must take all required courses each semester and attend full-time. The Professional Courses begin in January, and students will complete the program in August of the following year.

**Spring Semester (7 credit hours)**

PHTA 2222 Communication & Documentation

PHTA 2213 Pathophysiological Conditions

PHTA 2252 Life Span Development

**Summer Semester (10 credit hours)**

PHTA 2101 Basic Principles of Physical Therapy

PHTA 2121 Basic Principles of Physical Therapy Lab

PHTA 2114 Basic PT Tests and Measures

PHTA 2112 Basic PT Tests and Measures Lab

PHTA 2332 Special Topics

**Fall Semester (12 credit hours)**

PHTA 2231 Theory & Treatment Techniques

PHTA 2232 Theory & Treatment Techniques Lab

PHTA 2283 Physical Therapy Procedures I

PHTA 2202 Physical Therapy Procedures I Lab

PHTA 2241 Gait Analysis Training

PHTA 2242 Gait Analysis Training Lab

PHTA 2271 Clinical Experience

**Spring Semester (15 credit hours)**

PHTA 2301 Physical Therapy Procedures II

PHTA 2302 Physical Therapy Procedures II Lab

PHTA 2362 Therapeutic Exercise

PHTA 2333 Therapeutic Exercise Lab

PHTA 2391 Neurophysiology

PHTA 2392 Neurophysiology Lab

PHTA 2352 Clinical Internship I

PHTA 2361 Pediatrics

PHTA 2371 Pediatrics Lab

**Summer Session (6 credit hours)**

PHTA 2403 Clinical Internship II

PHTA 2413 Clinical Internship III

I have received information regarding the curriculum & curriculum requirements to be considered eligible for acceptance into the PTA Program. If accepted into the PTA Program's professional component, I must take and pass all professional courses with a "C" or higher to remain in the PTA Program.

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Student Name (Print)

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Student Signature

Date



## Informed Consent & Course Substitutions Informed Consent

### Point System

Admission to the PTA Program is based on a point system used to rank qualified applicants. The PTA admits only 10 students each January. The top 10 applicants who meet all admission criteria will receive an offer of acceptance.

If a selected applicant declines their spot, offers will be extended to individuals on the alternate list in order of total points, beginning with the highest-ranked alternate.

In the event of a tie in total points for the last space in the PTA Program class, the student with the highest grade and percentile score in PHTA 2105 Clinical Kinesiology will be offered the position.

All pre-requisite courses must be passed with a “C” or higher to meet the PTA Program requirements.

Students are ranked based on the following Selection Criteria:

<b>Points</b>	<b>Category</b>
<b>100 / 292 (34.2%)</b>	<b>PHTA 2105 Clinical Kinesiology in Physical Therapy</b>
<b>72 / 292 (24.7%)</b>	<b>Anatomy &amp; Physiology I, Medical Terminology</b>
<b>45 / 292 (15.4%)</b>	<b>English Composition I &amp; II, General Psychology, Intro to Computers or Electronic Health Records</b>
<b>45 / 292 (15.4%)</b>	<b>Interview</b>
<b>30 / 292 (10.3%)</b>	<b>Distance from NWACC’s Bentonville campus</b>
<b>292 / 292 (100%)</b>	<b>Total points possible</b>

\*Course Substitution: If a student believes they have taken a pre-requisite course at another institution or NWACC that is equivalent to an NWACC course needed for the PTA degree and did not receive credit accordingly, a course substitution may be requested, and the student must meet with the Health Professions Academic Advisor to determine if the course is eligible for a course substitution. If so, they will be directed to the appropriate academic division to complete the request. The academic division the course is in will then



## **Program and Admission Requirements Informed Consent**

### **Student Records and Confidentiality:**

The PTA Program maintains all records in a confidential manner according to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. See NWACC College Catalog for details.

### **PTA Program Curriculum Work Recommendation:**

The PTA Program curriculum is very demanding, with many hours of in- & out-of-class time required. It is recommended that students work no more than 10 hours/week. Applicants accepted into the professional component of the PTA Program must take and pass all professional courses offered each semester with a “C” or higher to remain in the PTA Program. Students who do not meet the requirement of a “C” or higher in any course may be dismissed from the PTA Program subject to their right to appeal.

### **Program and Clinical Placement Requirements:**

For students to be placed in the clinical setting for clinical experiences and clinical internships, they must have and provide proof of health insurance, criminal background check, urine drug screen, annual TB skin test, additional immunizations, and CPR Certification. Students will be required to follow other clinical facility policies. In addition, students may be required to go to healthcare institutions outside Northwest Arkansas for clinical internships at the student’s expense.

### **Notice of nondiscrimination:**

NorthWest Arkansas Community College is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination involving equal access to education and employment opportunities to all, regardless of sex, race, age, religion, color, national origin, handicap or veteran status.

The Administration further extends its commitment to fulfilling and implementing the federal, state and local laws and regulations as specified in Title IX and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. NWACC provides services to allow persons with disabilities to participate in educational programs and activities. If you desire services, contact the Director of Disability Services or the Vice President for Learner Support Services.

### **ESL Student Requirements:**

Students for whom English is a second language must earn a score of 92 or higher on the COMPASS ESL Listening Test (taken within the last three years) OR a score of 110 or higher

on the Accuplacer ESL Listening Test to be eligible for admission to the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at NWACC.

Meeting or exceeding this minimum score demonstrates the ability to understand linguistically complex material, including academic lectures and factual reports.

Non-native English-speaking students pursuing a career in PTA who do not meet the minimum score will be required to retest and achieve a passing score by March 1.

I have read and understand the above statements relating to the PTA Program curriculum requirements, clinical placement requirements, notice of nondiscrimination, and ESL COMPASS or ACCUPLACER Listening Test Requirement for students for whom English is their second language.

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Student Name (Print)

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Student Signature

Date









## **Student Health, Physician Certification, Physical Condition, and Disability Informed Consent Form**

Students who are accepted into a Health Professions program must be able to perform course related physical activities. A copy of the essential functions and physical tasks required for the program is included in this packet. The student is required to have a physical and submit certification from a physician that the student is able to perform the related essential functions and physical tasks required for this profession. Proof of physical and the student's ability to perform the essential functions and physical tasks of a physical therapist assistant is to be submitted with the application packet. A copy of the essential functions and physical demands is included for the student to take to the physician.

In the event a student becomes pregnant, a written statement is required from a medical doctor stating that the physical exertion required during the course work and clinical work is not contraindicated. After the delivery, written notice is required from a medical doctor that releases the student to return to the normal course related activities of that particular program.

In the event of an extended (anything beyond four days) illness, injury, or surgery, two letters must be submitted by a medical physician. The first letter is due upon the onset and should state the problem, restrictions, and prognosis. The second letter should state fitness to return to normal course related activities and should be submitted prior to returning to the program.

The faculty and/or the advisory committee of individual programs reserve the right to make the final decision regarding a student's return to the program after a medical leave.

Students who are admitted to the Program are required to submit proof of health insurance by January 10<sup>th</sup> of the spring semester.

NWACC strives to provide reasonable accommodation as necessary to allow a student to be successful. If you have a documented disability that would require reasonable accommodation, please contact the Office of disability Services.

I have read and understand the above statement relating to student health, physical condition, and disabilities. I realize I am responsible for seeing a physician and submitting the physician signed Essential Functions & Physical abilities form with my application.

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Student Name (Print)

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Student Signature

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Date

