



**Indian River
State College**

**Physical Therapist Assistant
APPLICATION
2026
FALL PROGRAM**

MASSEY CAMPUS

3209 Virginia Avenue, Fort Pierce, Florida 34981-5596

IRSC OVERVIEW

Indian River State College (IRSC) is a public, comprehensive college with a statewide and national reputation for excellence. Located in Florida's Treasure Coast region, each of the College's five campuses provide unparalleled educational environments.

IRSC serves approximately 30,000 students annually and offers more than 100 programs leading to Bachelor's degrees, Associate degrees, technical certificates and applied technology diplomas. Continuing a 60-year tradition of responsiveness to community needs, IRSC is committed to advancing educational, cultural, career training, workforce and economic development in its service area.

IRSC was distinguished as the 2019 winner of the prestigious Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, an honor that recognizes outstanding quality in the areas of completion & transfer, labor market outcomes, learning, equity and more. IRSC is one of the few colleges in the nation to earn the Achieving the Dream™ Leader College designation. The College is identified by the United States Department of Education as the most affordable college in Florida and the third-most affordable college in the country.

EA/EO Statement

Indian River State College provides equal employment and educational opportunities to all without regard to race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, genetic information, and any other factor protected under applicable federal, state, and local civil rights laws, rules and regulations. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies:

Adriene B. Jefferson
Dean of Northwest Center, Equity Officer and Title IX Coordinator
IRSC Massey Campus ■ 3209 Virginia Ave. ■ Fort Pierce, FL 34981
772-462-7101

ACCREDITATION

The Physical Therapist Assistant program at Indian River State College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE)
3030 Potomac Avenue, Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085
Phone: 703-706-3245 • Email: accreditation@apta.org
website: www.capteonline.org

Physical Therapist Assistant Licensure

Successful completion of the Physical Therapist Assistant program at Indian River State College leads to an Associate in Science Degree. Graduates are eligible for application to take the Florida Jurisprudence Examination and the licensing examination given by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy <http://www.fsbpt.org>

Upon satisfactory achievement of examinations, graduates become Florida licensed Physical Therapist Assistants. The Florida Board of Physical Therapy and Florida Department of Health Division Medical Quality Assurance are the agencies authorized to issue credentials and licenses in the Physical Therapy profession. Direct questions regarding licensure application to the Florida Department of Health at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/mqa>

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PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

The Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) is an educated individual who works under the direction and supervision of a Physical Therapist. Duties of the assistant include relieving pain and/or increasing function in clients/patients through the use of therapeutic application of heat, light, water, electricity, sound, massage, exercise, gait and functional activity. Physical therapist assistants practice in a variety of health care settings, including hospitals, ambulatory health clinics, home health, private practices, specialized clinics, schools and institutions of higher education, research centers, industries, wellness and fitness centers, health maintenance organizations, extended-care facilities and nursing homes.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Note: All required forms are available in the back of this booklet.

1. ____ Must be 18 years of age at the start of program.
2. ____ Meet with an Advisor for information on General Education pre-requisites and
3. ____ Meet with an Advisor for transferability for program admission.
4. ____ Student must have minimum of 3.0 cumulative GPA.
5. ____ Complete and the online IRSC Application and pay the \$30 nonrefundable fee.
6. ____ Complete the Physical Therapy Observation Experience Form located on the PTA website
 - a. The Physical Therapy Observation Experience form must include a minimum of 30 hours of observation signed by a PT or PTA
 - b. Observation hours **must be verifiable** by the facility site/s listed on form
 - c. Upload the Physical Therapy Observation Experience form with the application
7. ____ Write a 300–500-word reflective essay about the **observation experience**
 - a. The essay must include why you feel you are a strong candidate for the program.
8. ____ Have earned a High School Standard diploma or GED.
 - a. Request official and final transcript(s) from High School and college(s)
 - b. Send transcripts electronically to the Office of Student Records **by the application deadline date**.

All Physical Therapist Assistant program applications will be reviewed after the application deadline. Students will be notified by the Health Science Division of their provisional acceptance into the program via email. At that point, students will receive instructions on final acceptance and when to complete a drug/background screening/physical exam.

Do not proceed with drug/background screening or physical until notified.

- _____I. Mandatory drug screening and a national criminal background check (fingerprinting).
- _____II. Submit Physical Exam Form complete with immunizations documented (Visit www.irsc.edu. Click on **Programs and select Health Science Meta Major**. Go to **Physical Therapist Assistant** and select **Health Science Physical Examination and Immunization Form**.)
- _____III. Proof of Personal Health Insurance.
- _____IV. Submit copy of American Heart Association BLS (CPR) Certification Valid throughout the program.

Satisfactory results of these requirements must be on file in the Health Science Division Office before receiving final acceptance. Students will then be issued a final acceptance letter with information regarding orientation to the program and registering for classes.

Completion of this checklist alone does not guarantee acceptance to the Physical Therapist Assistant program. Students are selected on a competitive basis.

(MAKE A COPY OF ALL FORMS SUBMITTED FOR YOUR OWN FILES.)

INTRODUCTION

The Indian River State College Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program has been selected as a national model for top-quality education due to its success in incorporating real-world experience to prepare students for career success. After an extensive review of all aspects of the program and an on- site visit by a team of experts, the National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education (CTE) designated the IRSC program as “exemplary.” The College’s PTA program earned the exemplary rating in all ten categories including effectiveness, innovation and program quality and was commended for evaluating students in specific patient care skills and their professional behavior.

The Physical Therapist Assistant program is offered through the IRSC Health Science Division. All applicants enter this program through a Selective Admissions process. Contact Advising Services on any IRSC campus or the Health Science Division at (772) 462-7550 for specific requirements and deadlines.

INFORMATION PRESENTATION VIDEO

Students interested in applying to the program should plan to view the PTA Program Information Presentation video, located on the program's website. The presentation video addresses any questions or concerns prospective applicants may have. The video also assists students in understanding how to achieve a **"qualified"** applicant status.

Physical Therapist Assistant Information Presentation Video
can be found on the Physical Therapist Assistant website.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Any candidate who wishes to be considered for the Physical Therapist Assistant program at Indian River State College must complete the procedures listed on Page 1 "Application Checklist". It is the student's responsibility to see that admission requirements are met. No notices will be sent. Additional program specifics are outlined in this booklet.

APPLYING TO THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM (PTA)

Prior to the application process:

1. Read the Physical Therapist Assistant Application Booklet.
2. **Complete** and **submit** the IRSC Application for the Physical Therapist Assistant program (\$30 fee; keep a copy of your receipt).

Note: If at any time during the application process you have a change in personal information (name change, address, phone, number, or emails), submit the changes through MyPioneerPortal and to the Health Science Division at 772-462-7550.

APPLICATION DEADLINE DATE

May 8, 2026

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Factors utilized by the Admissions Committee include but are not necessarily limited to:

- A. **Academic Record** - Past academic performance and grade point average earned in the General Education and required specialized electives of the PTA Curriculum are indicative of the probability of an applicant's completing the academic portion of the program successfully. It is recommended for students to complete as many of the following courses as possible, especially math and science, before applying to the program. (Students must have an overall cumulative GPA of a 3.0).

BSC 2085 or 2094	Anatomy and Physiology I
BSC 2085L or 2094L	Anatomy and Physiology I Lab
BSC 2086 or 2095	Anatomy and Physiology II
BSC 2086L or 2095L	Anatomy and Physiology II Lab
PHY 1020 or higher	Principles of Physics
Any Core Math	

POINT ALLOCATION

Course	Credits	Grade (numeric)	Quality Points Credits x Grade	Weighting Factor	Points Quality Points x Weighting factor
Any Core Math	3			1	
PHY 1020 or higher	3			1	
BSC 2085	3			2	
BSC 2085L	1			2	
BSC 2086	3			2	
BSC 2086L	1			2	
Totals					
GPA					

Instructions:

Total Credits:	Add up only the credits that you have taken
Numerical Grades:	A = 4, B = 3, C = 2
Total Quality Points:	Multiply grade by credits for each course, then add up this column
GPA:	Cumulative GPA within the courses allocated for points.
Total Points:	Multiply quality points for each course by the weighting factor for that course, then add up this column and add GPA

- B. **Motivation and Knowledge of the Field** - Students who know the most about what physical therapists/physical therapist assistants do are most likely to take maximum advantage of the educational opportunities in physical therapist assistant school. Thirty hours of observational/volunteer/actual work experience hours **are required**. It is the responsibility of the applicant to retain a copy of the observation experience form for their personal records and/or resubmission of form for application purposes at a later date.

**THE FOLLOWING PERTAINS TO INFORMATION ON THE PHYSICAL
THERAPY OBSERVATION EXPERIENCE FORM AND REFLECTIVE
ESSAY. HOW TO SUBMIT THE FORMS TO COMPLETE YOUR
APPLICATION TO THE PTA PROGRAM**

PHYSICAL THERAPY OBSERVATION EXPERIENCE/FORM

Prospective PTA students are required to observe the typical responsibilities and duties of a Physical Therapist Assistant. THE MINIMUM PERIOD FOR ADMISSION INTO THE PROGRAM IS 30 HOURS. This may be achieved through OBSERVATION, VOLUNTEER SERVICE and/or PAID EMPLOYMENT in physical therapy departments. Experience in two or more settings is recommended. (It is recommended that you contact the physical therapy departments/health care agencies in your geographical area to confirm their availability.

Bring the **Physical Therapy Observation Experience Form** with you to the Physical Therapy Facility. The form is located on the [Physical Therapist Assistant website](#). Click on the Physical Therapy Experience Form link.

ATTIRE FOR THE OBSERVATION

Business attire and comfortable shoes (no sneakers or high heels). (slacks and dress shirt)
The facility has the right to decline your observation if you are not properly dressed.

REFLECTIVE ESSAY

Write a **Reflective Essay** about the observation experience in the Physical Therapy setting. The essay must be a minimum of 300 and no more than 500 words, **typed and double spaced**. Use your own words and experience; **AI not accepted**. This essay must be uploaded along with your **observation form** to the application portal.

Following completion of your **30 observation hours**:

SCAN FORMS AND UPLOAD TO THE APPLICATION PORTAL

ACCEPTANCE INTO PROGRAM

The Physical Therapist Assistant program admits twenty (20) students annually to the Fall semester. Selected students will be notified by the Health Science Division of their **provisional** acceptance into the program 4-6 weeks after the application deadline date via the email address provided in the Health Science Application. Final acceptance into the program is contingent upon satisfactory results from a physical examination, drug screen and Florida Department of Law Enforcement background check. Information on obtaining these tests/reports will be provided in the provisional acceptance notification package. **These reports should not be submitted with initial application materials.**

Drug Screening & Criminal Background Checks

Refer to the IRSC website at www.irsc.edu. Click **Programs**, and select **Physical Therapist Assistant** and select the **Background Check and Drug Screening Requirements** link.

The Florida Board of Physical Therapy and Florida Department of Health Division of Medical Quality Assurance requires any licensure applicant who has ever been convicted or found guilty of a felony, regardless of adjudication, to explain the circumstances.

Health/Medical Record

A completed medial health form must also be submitted and approved by the Program Director. This health record will contain results from a physical examination and laboratory tests including immunization records.

Applicants who do not meet the standards of good physical and mental health, as required by clinical facilities for safe patient care, may reapply and be considered for application to a Health Science program after resolution of the health problem. An updated health record, verified by a licensed physician, physician's assistant or an ARNP must be submitted.

Indian River State College and partnering clinical sites require all health science students who register for clinical courses to have personal health insurance. Students will be asked to show proof of personal health insurance by presenting their insurance policy number, the name of the insurance provider and the telephone number of the provider to clinical preceptors or administrators.

If students do not have health insurance or do not provide proof of health insurance, they will not be eligible for clinic rotation which will result in termination from program. Personal health insurance may be purchased through the Health and Wellness Department. Contact 772-462-7825 for more information.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

Student Drug Screen, Background Check, and Medical Records

When submitted, these records will become the property of the College, and will not be available for copying or for use to meet the requirements of outside employers. Students who are out of the program for six months or more must submit new records.

Complaint Process

Refer to the Academic Review/Admission Policy located in the IRSC Student Handbook/Planner online.

NON-ACCEPTANCE INTO PROGRAM

Applicants who do not qualify for the program will be notified and may call the Health Science Office at (772) 462-7550 for clarification on how to strengthen their application.

PROGRAM EXPENSES

A list of approximate costs is located on the IRSC website at www.irsc.edu. Click **Programs** and select **Physical Therapist Assistant** then select the **Program Expenses** link. In addition to these costs, the candidate should allow for room, board, transportation and personal living expenses. Note that non-Florida resident tuition is a higher rate per credit hour, which will increase total fees accordingly.

FINANCIAL AID/SCHOLARSHIPS

Financial Aid (grants, loans, work-study) is available to those who qualify. Complete the FAFSA and IRSC Supplemental Financial Aid Application to determine eligibility. For more information, contact the IRSC Financial Aid Office at 772-462-7450 or toll-free at 1-866-900-3243 (FAID).

Scholarships designated for students in the Health Science programs may also be available. Complete the IRSC ONLINE Scholarship Application, available through MyPioneerPortal.

For more information regarding scholarships, contact the Scholarship Development Coordinator; Sherri Monds at smonds@irsc.edu.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM

(74 credits) Selective Admission

Refer to the IRSC website at www.irsc.edu. Click **Course Catalog**. in Contents column click on **Associate in Science**. Scroll down to **Physical Therapist Assistant**.

Completion of an accredited Physical Therapist Assistant program leads to an Associate in Science Degree. The schedule of a Physical Therapist Assistant is rigorous. The PTA program incorporates a working physical therapy and wellness center providing students hands on training in the assessment and treatment of patients, requiring additional hours outside of scheduled class time. Due to the time required for attending lectures, laboratories, and clinical assignments, plus the time necessary for study and practice, students are encouraged to minimize outside work commitments during the time they are enrolled in the program.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Physical Requirement (Essential Functions)

The rights of students with disabilities which pertain to post-secondary education are provided under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. These laws prohibit discrimination by institutions to “otherwise qualified” students with disabilities. This enables such students to have an equal opportunity to benefit from the education offered by those institutions.

The role of the Physical Therapist Assistant in the various health care settings requires academic, physical, mental and environmental work/demands. To be successful as a PTA student and PTA graduate, the following requirements are expected to be performed safely, ethically and legally under the supervision of a physical therapist.

Academic

- Graduate of an accredited Physical Therapist Assistant program achieving an Associate of Science Degree.
- Obtain State Licensure to practice in Florida.

Physical

- Demonstrate coordination of small and large muscle groups to provide safe and effective care including transfers, ambulation, and positioning of patient/client using minimum, moderate and maximum assistance techniques.
- Ability to sit, stand and walk for extended periods of time (3-5 hours), negotiating environmental barriers safely with a patient/client.
- Utilize movement to perform proper body mechanics of all patient/client treatment techniques and related procedures (i.e., stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling, reaching and handling).

- Ability to lift fifty (50) pounds. Moving, lifting, or transferring of patients may include lifting of up to 100 pounds. The physical demands are classified as a heavy by the US Department of Labor.
- Perform range of motion and graded manual resistance of patient/client with poor balance and weakened muscle groups on uneven surfaces, inclines, declines, stairs, curbs, etc.
- Perform manual hand dexterity and coordination to manipulate and calibrate equipment, (dials, probes, ultrasound heads, switches, scissors, tweezers, etc.) individually or simultaneously for modality and wound procedures.
- Respond to auditory emergency medical situations sufficiently with patients/clients (i.e., hearing monitor alarms, emergency signals, CPR, auscultatory sounds, verbal communication, etc.).
- Assess and observe patient/client condition (blood pressure and heart rate, respiration, etc.) response to treatment including near and far acuity (up to 10 feet away recognizing color discrimination).
- Perform physical assessment of structure, size, shape, and muscle tone through tactile ability of fingering and feeling (palpation).

Mental

- Demonstrate sufficient and accurate use of verbal, non-verbal and written communication effectively with staff, patient/client, and families concerning treatment procedures.
- Receive and interpret verbal, nonverbal and written communication skills effectively with other health care providers.
- Ability to manage and function emotionally during stresses of an intensive academic training program for preparation of clinical situations with a variety of patients/clients (terminally ill, psychosocial responses of disabled individuals and families, etc.).
- Respect patient/client/family confidentiality.
- Ability to make appropriate judgments and decisions by set priorities in clinical situations.

Environmental

- Demonstrate the ability to apply universal precautions including the use of personal protective equipment (rubber gloves, gown, goggles, masks, etc.) when indicated.

LATEX ADVISORY – Latex based products are used in all health care facilities.

Indian River State College strives to provide reasonable accommodations as necessary to allow a PTA student to be successful. Contact the Physical Therapist Assistant Program Department Chair and Student Disabilities Services following acceptance to the program and before the first day of classes in the Fall Semester to declare your need for reasonable accommodations.

JOB OUTLOOK

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov), employment of physical therapist assistants is expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2024. Demand for physical therapist assistants will continue to rise, in accordance with the increasing number of individuals with disabilities or limited function. The growing elderly population is particularly vulnerable to chronic and debilitating conditions that require therapeutic services. These patients often need additional assistance in their treatment, making the roles of assistants vital. The large baby-boom generation is entering the prime age for heart attacks and strokes, further increasing the demand for cardiac and physical rehabilitation. In addition, future medical developments should permit an increased percentage of trauma victims to survive, creating added demand for therapy services.

Physical therapists are expected to increasingly utilize assistants to reduce the cost of physical therapy services. Once a patient is evaluated and a treatment plan is designed by the physical therapist, the physical therapist assistant can provide many aspects of treatment, as prescribed by the therapist.

Physical therapist assistants with prior experience working in a physical therapy office or other health care setting will have the best job opportunities.

Entry-level graduates can expect beginning salaries ranging from \$43,000-\$63,000, depending on geographical areas.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I am a junior in high school interested in the Physical Therapist Assistant Degree program. What can I do to prepare for acceptance while still in high school?

Students pursuing the career of a Physical Therapist Assistant should have a background in the life sciences, (including biology and anatomy), interact well with others and have a general interest in the prevention of disease and maintenance/restoration of the quality of life. A high school diploma from an accredited high school or GED is required. The following courses are recommended at the secondary (high school) level:

- Math through Algebra II
- Four years of science (including biology, anatomy, and physiology)
- English Composition

High school students should contact their high school guidance counselor and the IRSC PTA Program Department Chair for advisement concerning dual-enrollment opportunities.

Where do students participate in their clinical training?

The Physical Therapist Assistant program is affiliated with clinical facilities located within the IRSC service area including Martin, Indian River, St. Lucie and Okeechobee counties. The program also has clinical agreements with facilities in Brevard and Palm Beach counties. Students are responsible for transportation to and from the clinical site to which they are assigned.

Are there any other requirements once a student is accepted?

Upon acceptance into the Physical Therapist Assistant program, each student is required to have malpractice and accident insurance annually. These will be included in the course fees. Students are required to have health insurance to enter the program.

Students **accepted** into the program must provide evidence of certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) at the healthcare provider level in accordance with the curriculum of the American Heart Association **PRIOR** to the first day of class in the Fall Semester.

Students **admitted** into the program must have a complete medical examination of their current health status by a licensed physician. Immunizations, tests and health verification must be included. Final acceptance into the program is contingent upon satisfactory results from a physical examination, drug screen and Florida Department of Law Enforcement background check.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**Senior College/University Transfer Possibilities**

All Doctorate of Physical Therapy Programs require a Baccalaureate Degree and additional prerequisites to be considered for entrance. If a student is interested in earning a DPT, individual programs should be contacted to determine his/her prerequisites and other requirements for admission. Generally, institutions will accept the general education course credits earned from Indian River State College or other institutions toward a Baccalaureate Degree.