

Path to Physical Therapy

Physical therapists are healthcare professionals instrumental in diagnosing and treating individuals with conditions that affect their abilities to move and perform activities of daily living. Primarily, physical therapists work with patients to prevent the loss of mobility by developing patient care plans for healthier and more active lifestyles.

Prior to 2015, students interested in physical therapy could obtain a Master of Physical Therapy or a Master of Science in Physical Therapy degree. Now, individuals wanting to practice as a physical therapist in the United States must obtain a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree from an accredited program and pass a state licensure exam.

In addition to metrics, physical therapy programs are interested in the experiences that students have had during their undergraduate careers. It is important that students communicate effectively, participate in community service activities, shadow a variety of physical therapists, interact with people from diverse backgrounds, and develop skills in teamwork and leadership. Research and clinical experiences are also highly valued by physical therapy program admissions committees.

Preparation Checklist

- Research programs that interest you.
- Shadow a physical therapist.
- Volunteer with an organization that you like.
- Gain clinical experience.
- Develop core competencies.
- Get involved on campus.
- Take prerequisite courses.
- Maintain a strong overall and science GPA.
- Conduct undergraduate research.
- Take the GRE.



Common Prerequisites

- Anatomy & Physiology I & II with Lab
- Biology I & II with Lab
- General Chemistry I & II with Lab
- Physics I & II with Lab
- Psychology
- Statistics



Metrics

- Minimum GPA: 3.0
- Average GPA: 3.7
- Average GRE: 310



Standardized Tests

- Graduate Record Examinations (GRE)



Helpful Organizations

- American Council of Academic Physical Therapy (ACAPT)
- American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)
- American Academy of Physical Therapy (AAPT)