



PROFESSION OVERVIEW

Physical therapists (PT or DPT) are licensed healthcare professionals who help patients improve movement and manage pain. They play a key role in the rehabilitation, treatment, and prevention of injuries, illnesses, and chronic conditions.

LENGTH OF PROGRAM (depending on specialty)

- **School:** 3-5 year Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program
- **Residency: Optional;** available for clinical specialization
- **Licensure:** NPTE exam + state requirements



COURSE REQUIREMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The prerequisites for physical therapy schools **vary greatly**. A student's best resource for finding program-specific requirements is the **Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS)**; <http://www.ptcas.org/ProgramPrereqs/>.

***It is the applicant's responsibility to verify all prerequisite courses, requirements, and application deadlines for each school they plan to apply to.**

One year of general biology	BIOL 107/108
One year of general chemistry	CHEM 201/CHEM 202
One year of physics	PHYS 101/102 or PHYS 105/106
Introductory psychology	PSYC 100
Statistics	BIO 209 or PSYC 227

Schools may require English, additional biology, social science, math and/or other courses such as Medical Terminology

*ALL first year Biology students are required to complete Biol 101/102 instead of Biol 107/108

KEY COMPONENTS OF A COMPETITIVE OT SCHOOL APPLICATION

PT programs are looking for well-rounded applicants. The following list identifies criteria considered during the application process. Check the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS) for average grade point average (GPA) and Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores and required observations hours for programs of interest; <http://www.ptcas.org/ProgramPrereqs/>.

- **Overall and science GPA**
- **Knowledge of, and commitment to enter physical therapy**
- **PT-related experience/observation**
- **Strong Interview**
- **Letters of recommendation**
- **Interpersonal communication, problem solving, critical thinking and leadership skills**
- **GRE scores**

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Your timeline for applying to Physical Therapy school should reflect your readiness: academically, personally, and professionally. While some students apply in the summer before their senior year to start PT school right after graduation, others benefit from a more flexible timeline.

Students today are often waiting a year or more after graduation before applying to a health professions school. Taking a gap year and applying in their senior year does not put students at a disadvantage. Applicants may use that time to gain clinical exposure, develop professional skills, clarify their goals, and shore up weaker areas on their application.

For more information, visit [Make the Most of Your Gap Year](#).

APPLICATION SERVICE

The **Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS)** is the centralized application platform for most U.S. Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) programs. Applicants submit one primary application through PTCAS, which is then distributed to participating schools .

Please note that not all DPT programs participate in PTCAS. Applicants to non-participating schools must apply directly to those institutions. Visit ptcas.cas.myliaison.com for critical dates, deadlines, and a list of participating programs

STANDARDIZED TEST

The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is commonly required for admission to many physical therapy programs, although some schools have made it optional. Students typically take the GRE after completing undergraduate coursework. The exam is computer-based, offered year-round, and takes approximately 4 hours to complete. Score reports are typically available 10-15 days after the exam date.

For test dates, registration, and preparation resources, visit www.ets.org/gre.

The GRE consists of the following three sections:

- **VERBAL REASONING (130-170)**
- **QUANTITATIVE REASONING (130-170)**
- **ANALYTICAL WRITING (0-6)**

The following resources can provide you with more information regarding the GRE

- **Educational Testing Service (ETS):** Official test information, registration, and preparation materials - www.ets.org/gre
- **Magoosh GRE:** Free and paid video lessons, practice questions, and study schedules - www.magoosh.com/gre
- **Khan Academy (non-GRE-specific):** Helpful for reviewing math, reading, and analytical writing concepts - www.khanacademy.org
- **Manhattan Prep & Kaplan:** Full-length practice tests and paid prep books/courses
- **ETS POWERPREP Practice Tests:** Official fee-based practice tests that simulate the real exam environment

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) <https://www.apta.org/>
- Exploring Health Careers <https://explorehealthcareers.org/>



American Physical Therapy Association
The Science of Healing. The Art of Caring.



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Please visit www.iwu.edu/career-center/handshake for more information on Handshake.