

## Pre-Physical Therapy

Prerequisites can vary on a school-by-school basis. Please check the prerequisites for schools to which you hope to apply.

Prerequisites	Mason Courses
General Biology 2 semesters with labs	BIOL 103 or BIOL 213 BIOL 104 or BIOL 311 or BIOL 465
Anatomy and Physiology, 2 semesters with labs	BIOL 124 BIOL125
General Chemistry, 2 semesters with labs	CHEM 211 and CHEM 213 or CHEM 103 CHEM 212 and CHEM 214 or CHEM 104 CHEM 212 or CHEM 104
Physics, 2 semesters with labs	PHYS 243 and PHYS 244 PHYS 245 and PHYS 246
Mathematics, 0-3 credit hours	Depends on the PT Program
Statistics 3 credit hours	STAT 250 or BIOL 214
Psychology 3-6 credit hours	PSYC 100 PSYC 211 PSYC 231

For more information on prerequisites, see the [Physical Therapy Central Application Service Course Prerequisite Summary](#).

Admission to a physical therapy program generally requires 40 to 150 hours of volunteer or paid experience in a health care setting. (See links below for more information.) Some schools require volunteer hours in at least two physical therapy practice settings. An undergraduate's major is not a factor in the admissions process; students may major in any area they are interested in pursuing and complete the prerequisites as either requirements or electives within their major.

Students may also refer to the [American Physical Therapy Association \(APTA\)](#) for specific requirements for the programs in which they are interested.

### Physical Therapists

According to [APTA](#), "Physical therapists (PTs) are health care professionals who diagnose and treat individuals of all ages, from newborns to the very oldest, who have medical problems or other health-related conditions that limit their abilities to move and perform functional activities in their daily lives. PTs examine each individual and develop a plan using treatment techniques to promote the ability to move, reduce pain, restore function, and prevent disability. In addition, PTs work with individuals to prevent the loss of mobility before it occurs by developing fitness- and wellness-oriented programs for healthier and more active lifestyles. Physical therapists provide care for people in a variety of settings, including hospitals, private practices, outpatient clinics, home health agencies, schools, sports and fitness facilities, work settings, and nursing homes. State licensure is required in each state in which a physical therapist practices" Further, according to [APTA](#), "There is a high demand for physical therapist assistants in the workforce despite the economic downturn. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of physical therapists is expected to grow

by 35 percent from 2008 to 2018, much faster than the average for all occupations. The need for PTAs is expected to increase into the foreseeable future as the U.S. population ages and the demand for physical therapy services grows.”

### **Education**

There are both masters and doctoral level programs for physical therapy. However, most schools are moving towards the Doctorate of Physical Therapy (DPT). It typically takes three years to complete a DPT depending on the requirements of the program. Physical Therapists need to be licensed to practice after graduating from an accredited physical therapy program. Each state has its own regulations and requirements for licensure. Most schools require a bachelor’s degree prior to starting a DPT program.

### **Applying to Physical Therapy School**

A list of accredited Physical Therapist Education Programs can be found at the [Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education](#).

Physical Therapy Programs participate in the [Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service \(PTCAS\)](#) which allows students to use a single web-based application and one set of materials to apply to multiple PT programs.

The opening date for the PTCAS application is generally July 1. Application deadlines vary from October to May.

Transcripts should be sent to PTCAS with a transcript matching form. PTCAS will not verify or forward your application until all official transcripts are received.

All letters of references must be submitted electronically via PTCAS. DPT programs can still choose to accept paper references directly from applicants, if needed. Program-specific reference requirements are available on the PTCAS website.

The following PTCAS links may be helpful in considering a future application:

[PTCAS Course Prerequisites by Program](#)

[PTCAS Deadlines by Program Name](#)

[PTCAS Deadlines Grouped by Date](#)

[PTCAS Physical Therapy Observation Hours – Summary of Requirements by Program](#)

[PTCAS Reference Requirements by Program](#)

[PTCAS Supplemental Requirement by Program](#)

[PTCAS GRE Requirements and GRE Codes by Program](#)

[PTCAS Frequently Asked Questions](#)

### **GRE**

The majority of DPT Programs require applicants to take the [Graduate Record Examination \(GRE\)](#) which is a standardized test to gauge a student's ability to do well in a graduate program. The GRE is given year-round at computer-based test centers in the U.S., Canada, and many other countries. Appointments to take the test are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.

### **Employment Outlook and Earnings**

The current [Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) provides information for Physical Therapy.

### **Further Information**

For further information on physical therapy careers, please visit the [American Physical Therapy Association](#) and [Explore Health Careers](#).

### **Accredited Schools in Virginia**

[Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education \(CAPTE\) Accredited Physical Therapist Education Programs](#)

[Emory and Henry College](#)

[Hampton University](#)

[Lynchburg College](#)

[Mary Baldwin College/Murphy Deming College of Health Sciences](#)

[Marymount University](#)

[Old Dominion University](#)

[Radford University](#)

[Shenandoah University](#)

[Virginia Commonwealth University](#)

### **Pre-Physical Therapy Advising**

The information contained in this information sheet should be discussed with a Health Professions Advisor. The availability of these health professions advising opportunities is announced through the [HEALTHPROFESSIONS-L listserv](#).

Students must still be advised in their department regarding their major.

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