

Pre-Physical Therapy

at the University of Oregon



Prepared by:

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Academic Advising and Pre-Physical Therapy Objective

Each student has an opportunity to be advised by a Pre-Health Advisor in the Office of Academic Advising. Call 541-346-3211 to schedule an appointment. Please see your academic advisor on a regular basis to confirm you are on track for your degree and occupational therapy school admission.

In order for the Pre-Health Advisors to communicate directly to you and your interests, it is highly recommended to declare a Pre-Physical Therapy Professional Objective. To do so, email health@uoregon.edu with your name and UO ID number, or fill out a form in the OAA.

You are also encouraged to sign up for the Pre-Health mailing list, which provides students with timely announcements and a monthly newsletter. OAA also has a facebook page, located at www.facebook.com/uo.prehealthadvising, which is where more health information can be found.

What is a physical therapist?

Physical therapists help patients recover from injury, disease and/or surgery. They help their patients improve their ability to move, reduce pain, and prevent physical disability. They also work with patients in the prevention of the loss of mobility, by developing programs that promote healthy and active lifestyles. Programs for patients may include exercise, manual therapy, electrotherapy, use of assistive devices, and patient education. Physical therapists can work with people of all ages and physical problems including sprains and fractures related to sports and work, recovering from a stroke, and diseases such as multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy. Physical therapists generally practice in hospitals, out-patient clinics, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, or sports medicine clinics.

Undergraduate Requirements for Physical Therapy School

General Requirements

To be admitted into an accredited Physical Therapy program, one must first earn a bachelors degree before entry into a post graduate physical therapy program. The American Physical Therapy Association's accrediting body, called the Commission on Accreditation of Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), accredits entry-level academic programs in physical therapy. A list of accredited physical therapy schools is listed on the website of the the American Physical Therapy Association, www.apta.org.

There are options for either a master's in physical therapy (MPT) or a doctor of physical therapy (DPT). However, the American Physical Therapy Association recommends that students enroll in DPT programs because by 2015 all programs are going to be DPT . Upon graduation from a PT program, physical therapists are required to pass a licensure exam before practicing.

Specific Course Requirements

Admission requirements vary between physical therapy schools; minimum expectations, however, are similar. Students are encouraged to view the American Physical Therapy Association website (www.apta.org) for the physical therapist admissions process.

Pacific University has Oregon's only physical therapy school.

All physical therapy schools demand coursework in the following areas:

- General (or Inorganic) Chemistry
- Biology
- Physics
- Excercise and Movement Science
- English Composition
- Statistics
- Psychology

Recommended University of Oregon Curriculum:

The minimum requirements for admission to Pacific University's PT schools can be met with the following classes

- English Composition - WR 121, 122 or 123
- General Chemistry - CH 221, 222, 223 with labs
CH 227, 228, 229
- General Biology - BI 211, 212, 213 or 214
- Anatomy & Physiology - HPHY 321, 322, 323, 324, 325
- Physics - PHYS 201, 202, 203 with labs 204, 205, 206
- Microbiology - 330 with lab 331
Some schools look for upper division work in the biological sciences. Check individual programs for requirements.
- Statistics - MATH 243
- Psychology - PSY 201 or 202, plus an additional psychology elective

Pre-Physical Therapy Curriculum

First Year

Fall Term	Winter Term	Spring Term
CH 221 & 227 lab	CH 222 & 228 lab	CH 223 & 229 lab
MATH 111	MATH 112	MATH 243
	BI 211	BI 212

Consider:

- Arts & Letters, Social Science or Multicultural classes
- Major requirements (if a major has been chosen)
- Begin PT related clinical experience and job shadowing

Second Year

BI 214	PSY 201 or 202	PSY Elective ¹
HPHY 321	HPHY 323	BI 330 & 331 ² lab
HPHY 322	HPHY 324	HPHY 325

Consider:

- Arts & Letters, Social Science or Multicultural classes
- Major requirements (if a major has been chosen)
- Continue PT related clinical experience and job shadowing

Third Year

PHYS 201 & 204 lab	PHYS 202 & 205 lab	PHYS 203 & 206 lab
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Consider:

- Arts & Letters, Social Science or Multicultural classes
- Major requirements
- Continue PT related clinical experience and job shadowing
- GRE prep course and exam
- July - Earliest possible time for submitting physical therapy application

Fourth Year

HPHY 409	HYPHY 409	HYPHY 409 (1)
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Consider:

- Additional Upper Division Human Physiology courses
- Completion of all university and major department requirements

¹ Check individual PT programs requirements on psychology. Pacific requires nine (9) quarter hours for admissions.

² Some schools look for upper division work in the biological sciences. Check individual programs for requirements.

This curriculum is not set in stone. Talk to an Advisor for course plans that are right for you.

The Undergraduate Major

The courses described so far consist only of the courses needed to be considered for physical therapy school, but not as a degree-granting major.

Science Majors

Given the pre-PT curriculum, the obvious major is someplace in the sciences: biology, human physiology, general science, and psychology dovetail efficiently with the recommended classes. Many of the requirements of those majors are satisfied with the pre-PT prerequisites. Since major requirements do vary considerably, you should plan your second year in college very carefully in anticipation of a major choice if you have not already committed yourself.

Non-Science Majors

Most PT schools make a point of welcoming non-science majors. Successful PT students come from a wide variety of educational backgrounds, including those who major in English, business, communications, among others. We encourage non-science majors to plan carefully, as many of the PT prerequisites can be taken as electives around a student's major and General Education requirements.

The Major as an Alternative Career

As a pre-PT student, you should face realistically the possibility of not gaining admission to PT school. What will you do if you are not accepted? Another health career? Reapply? Follow other pathways within your major? Don't be surprised if you are asked this often by friends, advisors, and interviewers. It isn't intended to discourage you but to remind you of the realities of PT school application.

Non-Curricular Requirements for Physical Therapy School Admission

The following information can be found on the American Physical Therapy Association website (www.apta.org).

The Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

Most professional schools require the GRE. More information about the test can be found at www.ets.org/gre. You are encouraged to research PT schools to determine whether you need to submit a GRE score to apply. GRE scores are not required by Pacific University.

Letters of Recommendation

Many PT degree programs require one to four letters of recommendations (otherwise called “letters of reference” or “letters of evaluation”). Schools may require you to submit letters from a physical therapist, professor, advisor, or supervisor. You are encouraged to find individuals who can speak to your maturity, dependability, dedication, compassion, communication skills, leadership, and any experience you may have in the field. Check the admission requirements school by school for instructions.

Official Transcripts

All PT schools require official transcripts from every college you have attended. Although few PT schools publically list mandatory GPAs for admission, accumulated statistics illustrate that only applicants with at least a 3.2 and above stand a good chance of admission.

Take all required courses graded.

In general, you should avoid dropping below a full academic load of 15-16 credit hours.

Health Related Experience

PT schools require students to have 20 - 400 hours of experience in a physical therapy setting. The program may specify which settings or types of experiences are required. Applicants may be required to have a licenced PT verify the number of hours

accumulated. Pacific University requires 100 hours of experience with 4-5 PT settings.

The Application Process

149 of the 212 PT schools use a common application service called Physical Therapy Common Application Service (PTCAS). A wealth of knowledge about the application process can be found on the PTCAS web site, including more about the admissions process and requirements. The PTCAS cycle opens in early July.

Students applying to non-participating schools should contact the individual programs for application materials.

Applicants and Admission Statistics for 2010

Pacific University

Average age of Admission: 25

Average Cumulative GPA: 3.7

Average Science GPA: 3.6

Chances for Admission: Self Evaluation

The best way to assess your chances for gaining admission to PT school begins with a review of selection features.

Admission to PT schools is highly competitive, and more students apply than can be admitted. Early planning and preparation is virtually essential for improving your chances for successful admission. Do not fall into the “trap of the minimums,” as virtually no one with just the minimums gets into PT school. Going above and beyond the minimum admission requirements is a very good thing! Over and over again, admission websites and committees stress the importance of the “whole candidate,” representing your academics, extra-curricular activities, leadership, motivation, experience and character. Above all, there is no guarantee of being accepted. Even the most qualified candidates may have to apply more than once.

Residence

The likelihood of acceptance is greatest at the public institutions in the state of which you are a resident. Private schools do not preference residents and therefore all applicants are considered.

Academic Record

The GPA is critical in selection. The national mean is around 3.47. Good grades, by themselves, guarantee nothing. They do indicate a solid performance in the past and can be used to predict a high probability of repeated success in the first two years of the PT school curriculum. It is clear that students with a 3.0 GPA and below are in a high-risk category.

Minority Students

All U.S. public and private schools are seeking underrepresented minority and other non-traditional applicants. Be sure to contact a Pre-Health Advisor for information.

Of Special Interest

- Median salary in 2010: \$77,990
- National Average GPA accepted applicants: 3.47

The current trend is for the physical therapist to be more of an independent practitioner. Most states allow patients to refer directly to physical therapists themselves.

Websites for more information and which provided material for this booklet include:

American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)
www.apta.org

Pacific University School of Physical Therapy
www.pacificu.edu/pt

Physical Therapy Common Application Service (PTCAS)
www.ptcas.org

Bureau of Labor Statistics
www.bls.gov

Related field: Chiropractic Medicine
www.chirocolleges.org

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