

PHYSICAL THERAPY (DPT) USC Dornsife Office of Pre-Health Advisement



Physical Therapist's (PTs) help injured or ill people improve movement and manage pain. They are often an important part of preventive care, rehabilitation, and treatment for patients with chronic conditions. They use a variety of techniques to care for their patients, including exercises; training in functional movement, using equipment such as canes, crutches, wheelchairs, and walkers; and special manipulation of joints, muscles, and other soft tissue to improve mobility and decrease pain. PTs typically work in private offices and clinics, hospitals, patients' homes, and nursing homes. They spend much of their time on their feet, actively working with patients.

Physical therapists entering the occupation need a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree, which typically takes 3 years to complete. All states require PTs to be licensed. PTs may also apply to a 1 year clinical residency program after graduation. As an undergraduate Pre-PT student, it is important to carefully review the prerequisite course requirements of all programs of interest as they vary. Many programs require applicants to have volunteer or paid experiences working with patients under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist, and most programs may require the **GRE** for admission. The program may specify the settings and types of experiences required. Applicants also may be required to have a licensed physical therapist verify the hours. Please consult the **APTA-List of PTCAS Programs** for specific application requirements.

We encourage you to meet with a Pre-Health Advisor at least once a semester to ensure satisfactory progress towards your goals!

COMMON CORE COURSES

Students are responsible for verifying the prerequisite coursework and policies of the schools to which they plan to apply.

DID YOU KNOW?

- A science major is not required. Students should choose a major based on their interests and an area that they find exciting, which at the same time, will keep them academically competitive.
- The vast majority of DPT programs require applicants to have a certain amount of observation hours - where one shadows a PT - ranging from 20-300 minimum, in order to apply; it sometimes needs to be in more than one setting.
- **PTCAS** is the central application service for many accredited PT programs, and opens in July. Applicants who wish to apply to a non-participating PTCAS program must directly apply to the institution using the DPT program's local application.
- Students should contact physical therapy clinics, hospitals, long-term care facilities, e.g., nursing homes, and other health care settings to find observation opportunities.
- Many PT programs require 2 to 4 letters of evaluation as part of the admissions process.

Course	# of Courses	USC Course(s)
General Biology	2 courses with lab	BISC 120L and BISC 220L or BISC 121L and BISC 221L
General Chemistry	2 courses with lab	CHEM 105aL and CHEM 105bL or CHEM 115aL and CHEM 115bL
Physics	2 courses with lab. Major may determine course requirement	PHYS 135aL and PHYS 135bL
Statistics	1 course	MATH 208x or BISC 305 or HP 340 or PSYC 274g
English / Writing	2 courses	WRIT 150 and WRIT 340
Anatomy	1 course with lab	HBIO 301L
Physiology	1 course with lab	BISC 307L
Psychology	1 course in Introductory/General Psychology Some schools also require a 2nd PSYCH course: Abnormal Psychology (PSYCH 360) or Developmental Psychology (PSYCH 336L) or Lifespan Psychology (no equivalent course at USC)	PSYCH 100Lg
Supplemental Requirements <i>The courses below are required by some physical therapy schools. Please refer to individual school for specific requirements.</i>		
Communication / Speech	1 course	COMM 204
Mathematics	1 course in Pre-Calculus or Calculus	MATH 108g or MATH 118xg or MATH 125g
Medical Terminology	1 course	OT 200L
Exercise Physiology	1 course	No equivalent course