PREPARING FOR THE DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM

Physical therapy is only available at the graduate level, so in order to become a physical therapist, you must first obtain your baccalaureate degree. All majors are potentially relevant to the practice of physical therapy, so there is no preferred major. The faculty members of the physical therapy program embrace the value that diversity in all dimensions, including diversity of majors, is valuable to any medical education program. Admission to the physical therapy program requires a minimum 3.0 GPA in undergraduate work. There are some specific prerequisite courses that you must complete in order to be admitted to the physical therapy program, so you must plan on taking these prerequisites while working toward your undergraduate degree. Some of them may fulfill core or major requirements, depending on your specific major. Otherwise, they will count as elective courses.

Prerequisite courses required for admission to the physical therapy program:

Baccalaureate degree completed, or realistic plan of completion, before beginning of physical therapy classes. You may major in any field that maximizes your talents and interests; there is no preferred major.

Overall GPA of all baccalaureate work of 3.0 or better. If applicant has multiple degrees the GPA of the more recent degree completed is used as qualifier. Completed graduate degree with a GPA of 3.0 or better will qualify an applicant with low undergraduate GPA.

Completion of all prerequisite courses, or realistic plan of completion, before beginning of physical therapy classes if one or more prerequisite course(s) is incomplete at the time of application. Prerequisite courses include:

- Fundamentals of Chemistry I, II (CHEM 110/120 or 115/230) or equivalent (one year series with labs).
- General College Physics (PHYS 111/112) or equivalent (one year series with labs).
- Human Anatomy and Physiology (EXSC 221/222) or equivalent (with lab). (At some universities human anatomy and physiology will be offered within the biology department. While human anatomy and physiology are preferred, students may substitute vertebrate or comparative anatomy and physiology.)
- Introduction to Applied Statistics (MATH 160) or equivalent.
- One course in psychology or sociology emphasizing human behavior or disability. Puget Sound courses that fulfill the requirement include Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 101); Psychological Disorders (PSYC 320); Deviance and Social Control (CSOC 206); or Disability, Identity, and Power (CSOC 370).

All prerequisite courses must be taken for a grade, and you must earn at least a grade of 3.0 in each course. If your prerequisite courses have been completed more than 10 years prior to application, you should submit a letter describing how the prerequisite knowledge has been kept current.

Other admissions requirements:

1. Graduate Record Examination scores that are not more than 5 years old.

2. Application to the physical therapy program. University of Puget Sound participates in the Physical Therapy Centralized Application Service for application details see www.ptcas.org

3. Exposure to practice of physical therapy (either volunteer or paid) under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist. There is no minimum number of hours, but the applicant must demonstrate understanding of the roles of physical therapists in the program application. We recommend at least 100 hours of exposure in a variety of practice settings.

All application materials are due by Nov. 1st of the year preceding entry into the physical therapy program. Prerequisite courses may be in-progress at the time of application, but must be completed before beginning physical therapy classes. The physical therapy admissions committee takes the overall application into account. Decisions are made based on a balance of academic performance in undergraduate work, GRE scores, understanding of the nature of the profession, application essay, writing ability as measured by the GRE writing score, and information contained in the personal references. You must achieve all published minimum criteria in order to be considered for admission.

Is physical therapy a match for you?

How can you know? Find out everything you can about physical therapy, about other potential careers, and about yourself. You can find out about physical therapy by volunteering to observe or help in clinics where physical therapy is practiced. You can explore the
American Physical Therapy Association Web page at www.apta.org, be sure to drill down into practice sections and special interest groups.

University of Puget Sound undergraduates are welcome to come and meet with physical therapy faculty members, and arrange to observe a class or two as a way of exploring interest in physical therapy. To arrange such a visit, call the physical therapy office at extension 3180 or email pt@pugetsound.edu.

A good place to explore your own career interests is in Career and Employment Services (Howarth 101) where you may sign up for a computer-based interest inventory. These programs are very easy to use and help you identify potential careers that match your talents and interests. The staff in Career and Employment Services can help you get started on it.