

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

College of Arts & Sciences

Advising & Career Services

Physical Therapy

Physical Therapy as a Career

Physical Therapists (PTs) provide services that help restore function, improve mobility, relieve pain, and prevent or limit permanent physical disabilities of patients with injuries or disease. PTs work closely with patients to restore, maintain, and promote their overall fitness and health. Patients may include accident victims and individuals with disabling conditions such as low back pain, fractures, head injuries, arthritis, heart disease, and cerebral palsy. PTs examine patients' medical histories, then test and measure their strength, range of motion, balance and coordination, posture, muscle performance, respiration, and motor function. They also determine the patient's ability to be independent and reintegrate into the community or workplace after injury or illness. Finally, they develop treatment plans describing a treatment strategy, its purpose, and the anticipated outcome.

Physical Therapy Programs

When researching physical therapy education programs, it is important to note that there are two degree levels; **Master of Physical Therapy (MPT)** or **Master of Science in Physical Therapy (MSPT)** and **Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)**. There are 211 accredited physical therapist programs, 210 are DPT programs and 1 is a MPT program. DPT programs are typically three years and students spend a majority of their time in the classroom and remaining dedicated to clinical experience. Most of these programs require applicants to have earned a bachelor's degree prior to admission.

The Pre-Physical Therapy Curriculum

Academic Prerequisites

General Biology w/lab (BIO 121 &123/124)
General Chemistry w/lab (CHE 106/107&116/117)
Physics w/lab (PHY 101&102 or PHY 211/221&212/222)
Anatomy & Physiology w/lab (BIO 216&217 or 316/317)
Statistics (MAT 221)
Social/Behavioral Sciences
English

Academic Prerequisites

Social Sciences
Humanities
Exercise Science
Cell
Genetics

Immunology
Microbiology

Note: these courses are suggested based on a review of multiple programs. Please check with specific programs as their requirements may vary.

Non-academic Prerequisites

The non-exhaustive list includes: Clinical Experience, Research, Leadership, Community & Public Service, Letters of Recommendation, a Personal Statement and Interviewing skills.

Entrance Exam and Application

Graduate Record Exam (GRE)

Most programs require applicants to complete the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). Some may have minimum acceptable score and last acceptable score dates. Policies regarding the consideration of multiple scores may vary by program. Students should plan on taking the test at least six week prior to submitting their application.

Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS)

Students should plan on submitting their application in the fall prior to their intended starting semester. There are firm deadlines- you cannot apply after this deadline has passed and soft deadlines- you can still apply after the deadline has passed, but the program may give you less or no consideration. It is important to research which to which deadline your intended program adheres.

Additional Resources

[American Physical Therapy Association \(APTA\)](#)

[Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service \(PTCAS\)](#)