

Pre-Physical Therapy Guide 2022-2023

Physical therapists are healthcare professionals who diagnose and treat individuals who have medical illnesses or injuries that limit their ability to move and perform activities. Physical therapists provide care to people with back and neck injuries, sprains/strains and fractures, arthritis, burns, amputations, stroke, multiple sclerosis, conditions such as cerebral palsy and spina bifida, and injuries related to work and sports. They evaluate and diagnose movement dysfunction and use interventions to treat patients. PT's often consult and practice with a variety of other professionals, such as physicians, dentists, nurses, educators, social workers, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and audiologists. (From the online *Occupational Outlook Handbook*)

Physical Therapy is typically a two-and-one-half-year graduate program. Students attend physical therapy school after they have completed an undergraduate degree at a four-year college. Graduates of most physical therapy programs will earn a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree. Physical therapists are required to be licensed in the state or states in which they practice. Physical therapists may also be certified as clinical specialists through the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (ABPTS).

Sample Pre-Physical Therapy Four-Year Academic Plans (See complete checklist of requirements on last page)

The UI DPT program accepts AP credit for math only; all other prerequisite coursework must be taken for graded credit.

Plan A: Starting with General Chemistry

Year 1:

CHEM 1070 General Chemistry I

MATH based on UI math placement*

CHEM 1110 Principles of Chemistry I

PSY 1001 Elementary Psychology

Year 2:

CHEM 1120 Principles of Chemistry II

BIOL 1411 Foundations of Biology

Additional psychology course**

BIOL 1412 Diversity of Form & Function

Anatomy course (with lab recommended)

Statistics course

Year 3:

PHYS 1511 College Physics I

Advanced biology course

Human Physiology course (with lab recommended)

PHYS 1512 College Physics II

Take **GRE** in spring or summer

Apply to DPT programs in summer

Year 4:

Courses to complete the major

Courses to complete the major

Plan B: Starting with Principles of Chemistry

Year 1:

CHEM 1110 Principles of Chemistry I
MATH based on UI math placement*

CHEM 1120 Principles of Chemistry II
BIOL 1411 Foundations of Biology
PSY 1001 Elementary Psychology

Year 2:

BIOL 1412 Diversity of Form & Function
Statistics course
Additional psychology course**

Anatomy course (with lab recommended)

Year 3:

PHYS 1511 College Physics I
Advanced biology course
Human Physiology course (with lab recommended)

PHYS 1512 College Physics II
Take **GRE** in spring or summer
Apply to DPT programs in summer

Year 4:

Courses to complete the major

Courses to complete the major

*The UI DPT Program requires Trigonometry or a higher math course. The major will determine which math class is taken.

**The UI DPT Program requires two psychology courses.

Academic Guidelines

An overall GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) is the minimum for consideration for admission to the University of Iowa DPT Program. In addition, a GPA of 3.0 or above in all prerequisite coursework (including elective science courses) is recommended. The mean overall GPA of the UI entering class is typically 3.6 - 3.8. Prerequisite coursework should be under ten years old, and GRE scores should be no older than five years.

Non-Academic Guidelines

A broad exposure to physical therapy in more than one clinical setting is strongly recommended. A suggested minimum for candidates applying to the UI DPT program is at least 50 total hours in two or three different settings, both inpatient and outpatient. Most successful applicants will have well over this minimum.

UI DPT Program Admissions Profile 2022: 48 students admitted

Mean cumulative GPA: 3.77

Mean prerequisite GPA: 3.69

Mean GRE scores: verbal 153.7 (59.8 percentile); quantitative 154.6 (52.3 percentile); analytical writing: 4.3 (68.6 percentile)

The Application Process

There are over 200 accredited DPT programs in the US. Students can apply to many physical therapy schools, including the UI's Program, by using the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS) (www.ptcas.org). Not all Physical Therapy Programs participate in PTCAS; check the PTCAS website, or the individual school's website, to determine whether the program is participating. For the 2022-2023 admissions cycle, PTCAS opened on June 15, 2022. The PTCAS application deadline for UI is December 1—but applicants who apply

between July 1 and September 15 will be given priority status in the admissions process. Notification of acceptance is by December/January. Some preference is given to well-qualified residents of Iowa. Applications to UI are considered for the July start date only. Application deadlines vary; check the PTCAS website, or the school websites, for deadlines.

Early Admission

As of 2020, PTCAS no longer has an Early Decision option. However, individual schools may choose to have an early decision program; check the PTCAS website, or the school websites, for information.

Diversity in Physical Therapy

The University of Iowa's Department of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science acknowledges the importance of recognizing and understanding cultural diversity. The department's faculty, staff, and students strive to promote trust, respect, and appreciation for individual differences in matters of practice, research, and education. Efforts are made to provide a supportive environment, one appreciative of human differences, while cooperating with each other in the constructive expression of ideas and actions.

Entrance Examination Requirement (GRE)

The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test is required for admission to the UI DPT Program. Arrange to take the test early to ensure receipt of the scores prior to the application deadline. For more information about the test and to register, visit the GRE website:

www.gre.org.

Letters of Evaluation/Recommendation

Three letters of recommendation are required to apply to the UI DPT Program. One letter must come from a physical therapist (or someone who can speak to their skills related to working in a healthcare field), one from a faculty member in the applicant's major who has taught them in at least one class, and one from someone who knows the student well, such as a supervisor or advisor. Letters are sent electronically to PTCAS.

Interviews

The UI Physical Therapy Admissions Committee requires personal, on-campus interviews. Candidates selected will be contacted to arrange an interview. Interviews are scheduled in October and November. Each interview is 30 minutes in length and conducted by two interviewers from either the DPT faculty or from clinical PT staff at the UIHC and VA Hospitals. The interview includes certain questions asked of all applicants, but also allows for some conversation.

Criminal Background Checks

On the PTCAS application, applicants are required to disclose and explain any felony or misdemeanor convictions. Applicants offered admission to the UI DPT Program are required to provide signed consent for conducting an External Criminal Background Investigation in addition to providing a signed Release of Information Waiver. This occurs at the time applicants confirm the Program's offer of admission. Enrollment in the UI DPT Program is contingent on a successful background check. Applicants should also be aware that some clinical education sites will require drug screening for students performing clinical rotations.

Citizenship/International Students

Non-U.S. citizens are eligible for admission to the UI Graduate Program in Physical Therapy. However, the UI Program only accepts coursework from U.S. institutions, and only three non-citizens have been admitted over the past 30 years. A small percentage of U.S. physical therapy programs admit non-citizens. Since the odds can be challenging, non-citizen applicants should thoroughly research and carefully consider such a decision and discuss it with their pre-physical therapy advisors early in their undergraduate years.

Websites

American Physical Therapy Association: www.apta.org

PTCAS: www.ptcas.org UI DPT Program: www.medicine.uiowa.edu/pt/

UI Pre-Physical Therapy Club: See your Pre-PT advisor for current contact information.

UI Pre-Physical Therapy Coursework Checklist

Math:

MATH 1010 Trig or higher

Chemistry—two courses:

CHEM 1110 Principles of Chemistry I

CHEM 1120 Principles of Chemistry II

Biology—at least three courses:

BIOL 1411 Foundations of Biology

BIOL 1412 Diversity of Form & Function*

Advanced Biology course(s)**

Psychology—two courses:

PSY 1001 Elementary Psychology

One additional psychology course

Statistics—choose one:

BIOS 4120 Intro to Biostatistics, STAT 1020 Elementary Statistics,

STAT 1030 Statistics for Business, STAT 2010 Statistical Methods & Computing,

STAT 3510 Biostatistics, STAT 4143 Intro to Statistical Methods

Human Anatomy (with lab recommended)—choose one:

ACB 3110 Principles of Human Anatomy, HHP 1100 Human Anatomy,

HHP 1110 Human Anatomy Lab, HHP 3105 Anatomy for Human Physiology,

HHP 3115 Anatomy for Human Physiology with Lab

Human Physiology (with lab recommended)—choose one:

HHP 1300 Fundamentals of Human Physiology, HHP 1310 Human Physiology Lab,

HHP 3500 Human Physiology, HHP 3550 Human Physiology with Lab

Physics—choose one sequence:

PHYS 1511 College Physics I **and** PHYS 1512 College Physics II

PHYS 1611 Introductory Physics I **and** PHYS 1612 Introductory Physics II

PHYS 1701 Physics I **and** PHYS 1702 Physics II

*Engineering students may substitute BME 2400 Cell Bio for Engineers in place of BIOL 1412 Diversity Form Function.

**At least 4 s.h. of advanced biology coursework is required for admission to the UI DPT Program; additional advanced biology courses beyond this minimum are recommended. Good choices in biology include Animal Behavior, Animal Physiology, Vertebrate Zoology, Cell Biology, Endocrinology, Evolution, Genetics, and Neurobiology. Other options are Microbiology courses, and two courses from the HHP department: HHP 4110 Adv Hum Anat Lab, and HHP 4450 Human Genetics & Disease (the 4 sh section only). Courses from the Biochemistry department are not accepted.

Note: The above are prerequisites for the University of Iowa's DPT Program. Other DPT programs may have different requirements; check the program websites for details. Contact your pre-PT advisor for more information.

Academic Advising Center, 2022-2023