

Doctor of Physical Therapy, DPT

The Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) is the entry-level professional degree for physical therapists. Based on the number of outstanding applicants, approximately 50 students are annually enrolled in the DPT program.

Programs designed to lead to professional licensure are subject to federal regulations regarding informational disclosures. Please see Professional Licensure Disclosures by Program for further information.

Learning Outcomes

Graduates will be prepared to:

- examine, evaluate, treat, and prevent impairments, functional limitations, and disabilities;
- maintain and promote fitness, health, and quality of life; and
- ensure availability, accessibility, and excellence in the delivery of physical therapy services to patients/clients.

As essential participants in the health care delivery system, graduates will be:

- prepared to assume leadership roles in prevention and health maintenance programs, in the provision of rehabilitation services, and in professional and community organizations; and
- able to play important roles in developing health policy and appropriate standards as well as assessing clinical outcomes for the various elements of physical therapy practice.

Requirements

The Doctor of Physical Therapy requires a minimum of 104 s.h. and is completed in two and a half years. Students must maintain a Graduate College program grade-point average of at least 3.00.

The Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at the University of Iowa is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). Satisfactory completion of the professional program qualifies candidates to take the National Physical Therapy Exam for licensure to practice. The minimum passing score on the exam is the same in all jurisdictions.

The Doctor of Physical Therapy degree requires the following coursework.

First Year, Summer

Course #	Title	Hours
PTRS:5101	Introduction to Physical Therapy Practice	2
PTRS:5102	Principles of Physical Therapy I	2
PTRS:5205	Health Promotion and Wellness	3

First Year, Fall

Course #	Title	Hours
PTRS:5100	Professional Issues and Ethics	1
PTRS:5103	Principles of Physical Therapy II	2
PTRS:5209	Surface Anatomy	1
PTRS:5210	Kinesiology and Pathomechanics	4
PTRS:5212	Human Pathology for the Physical Therapist	3
PTRS:5235	Case-Based Learning I	1
PTRS:5790	Integrated Clinical Education in Physical Therapy I	1
ACB:5108	Human Anatomy	5

First Year, Spring

Course #	Title	Hours
PTRS:5131	Therapeutic Physical Agents	2
PTRS:5144	Interprofessional Education I: Team-Based Approach to Health Care	1
PTRS:5201	Musculoskeletal Therapeutics I	3
PTRS:5206	Cardiopulmonary Therapeutics	3
PTRS:5215	Applied Clinical Medicine	2
PTRS:5236	Case-Based Learning II	1
PTRS:5791	Integrated Clinical Education in Physical Therapy II	1
PTRS:6253	Functional Neuroanatomy	4

Second Year, Summer

Course #	Title	Hours
PTRS:6120	Physical Therapy Management and Administration I	2
PTRS:6143	Selected Topics in Physical Therapy Practice	2
PTRS:6176	Pharmacology for Physical Therapists	3
PTRS:6793	Integrated Clinical Education in Physical Therapy III	3

Second Year, Fall

Course #	Title	Hours
PTRS:6122	Psychosocial Aspects of Patient Care	1
PTRS:6134	Physical Therapy Management of Integumentary System	2
PTRS:6145	Interprofessional Education II: Communication, Teaching, and Learning	1
PTRS:6170	Management of People With Prosthetic and Orthotic Needs	2
PTRS:6200	Pediatric Physical Therapy	2
PTRS:6202	Musculoskeletal Therapeutics II	3

PTRS:6224	Activity-Based Neural and Musculoskeletal Plasticity in Health Care	4
PTRS:6237	Community Outreach and Engagement I	1
PTRS:6250	Critical Inquiry I: Evidence-Based Practice	2
One of these (with advisor approval):		1
PTRS:7930	Critical Thinking in Neuro-Mechanical Systems	1
PTRS:7931	Critical Thinking in Pain	1
PTRS:7932	Critical Thinking in Biomechanics and Human Performance Assessment	1
PTRS:7933	Critical Thinking in Activity-Based Plasticity	1
PTRS:7934	Critical Thinking in Neural Plasticity	1
PTRS:7935	Critical Thinking in Movement Science	1
PTRS:7936	Critical Thinking in Cardiovascular Physiology	1

Second Year, Spring

Course #	Title	Hours
PTRS:6121	Physical Therapy Management and Administration II	1
PTRS:6133	Pain Mechanisms and Treatment	2
PTRS:6172	Radiology/Imaging for Physical Therapists	2
PTRS:6173	Differential Diagnosis in Physical Therapy	2
PTRS:6203	Musculoskeletal Therapeutics III	4
PTRS:6204	Progressive Functional Exercise	2
PTRS:6225	Neuromuscular Therapeutics	3
PTRS:6238	Community Outreach and Engagement II	1
PTRS:6251	Critical Inquiry II: Rehabilitation Research	2
PTRS:6792	Integrated Clinical Education in Physical Therapy IV	1

Third Year, Summer

Course #	Title	Hours
PTRS:6794	Terminal Clinical Education in Physical Therapy I	4

Third Year, Fall

Course #	Title	Hours
PTRS:6252	Critical Inquiry III: Clinical Application	1
PTRS:6795	Terminal Clinical Education in Physical Therapy II	4
PTRS:6796	Terminal Clinical Education in Physical Therapy III	4

Graduate Education

Graduate education prepares students with advanced knowledge and skills in specialized fields. At the University of Iowa, the Graduate College advocates for student-centered graduate education and supports equitable application of rules and policies across graduate programs.

Academics

University of Iowa graduate credentials are regulated by policies and requirements found in the Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations. This includes minimum grade-point average (GPA) requirements for academic standing and degree conferral. The Graduate College sets the minimum requirement. Individual graduate programs may establish higher GPA requirements.

Admissions

Graduate student applicants must meet admission requirements for both the Graduate College and the program to which they have applied. University of Iowa graduate admission requirements are published by the Graduate College and on the Graduate Admissions website.

Financial Support

Graduate students might be eligible for financial support. Several contingencies apply, including degree program and award type, satisfactory progress toward degree, satisfactory completion of all duties related to an appointment, and availability of funding. Graduate students should inquire directly with their program for more information about funding availability. The Graduate Student Employment Standards govern the employment relationship between the University of Iowa and all graduate teaching and research assistants in all matters except wages, which are covered by an existing collective bargaining agreement or the conditions of an applicable federal grant.

Admission

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website. They must have completed a baccalaureate degree and all prerequisite coursework from an accredited institution in the United States, or anticipate completing the degree before enrolling in the DPT program. They must have a cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.00 and must have completed the following prerequisite coursework, preferably with a GPA of at least 3.00.

All applicants must take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test. They must take the test early enough for their scores to be received prior to the application deadline.

Prerequisite Science Courses

All science courses should include the appropriate laboratory instruction, if available. The prerequisite courses must be taken for a letter grade. Credit awarded through advanced placement testing may be applied to the prerequisites as indicated below.

Biological Sciences

8 s.h. of introductory biology courses plus one advanced biology course, or AP biology credit plus 8 additional s.h.

of biology including at least one advanced biology course, equivalent to 12 s.h.

Physiology

A systemic human physiology course, preferably with a lab component, equivalent to 3 s.h., or a two-course sequence of anatomy and physiology, preferably with a lab component, equivalent to 6 s.h., can fulfill the physiology and anatomy prerequisites.

Anatomy

Human or comparative vertebrate anatomy, preferably with a lab component, equivalent to 3 s.h., or a two-course sequence of anatomy and physiology, preferably with a lab component, equivalent to 6 s.h., can fulfill the physiology and anatomy prerequisites.

Physics

A complete introductory series equivalent to 8 s.h.

Chemistry

A complete introductory series equivalent to 8 s.h.

Psychology

The equivalent of 6 s.h. of psychology courses, or AP psychology credit plus one additional psychology course beyond the introductory level.

Mathematics

A college-level mathematics course at the level of trigonometry or higher, equivalent to 3 s.h., or AP credit.

Statistics

A statistical methods course equivalent to 3 s.h.

Applications

Applications are submitted online through the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS). PTCAS allows applicants to use a single application and one set of materials to apply to multiple physical therapy programs. Once the application portfolio is complete with PTCAS, they will forward it to the University of Iowa.

See Application Timeline on the Department of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science website for the application timeline.

The physical therapy admissions committee requests personal, on-campus interviews. Since the number of students admitted into each class is limited, not all who apply for admission are invited for an interview.

Background Checks

Enrollment in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program is contingent on a successful criminal background check. Drug screening may be required for some clinical rotations. These costs are the responsibility of the applicant.

Expenses

Applicants admitted to the DPT program must make an advance tuition payment which is forfeited if the applicant does not enroll. In addition to paying University of Iowa tuition and fees plus departmental fees, students are assessed laboratory fees for the human anatomy and neuroanatomy courses and are responsible for purchasing supplies, such

as lab coats. Students are also responsible for all costs associated with professional development and clinical experiences.

All students are required to comply with the pre-entry and periodic health screening program developed by Student Health in cooperation with University of Iowa Health Care. All costs incurred for the health screenings are the student's responsibility. Students are also required to have health insurance.

Career Advancement

The employment outlook for physical therapy graduates is strong. Opportunities exist for professional practice in inpatient, outpatient, and community-based organizations. These include general or specialized hospitals, programs for children with disabilities, private physical therapy clinics, extended care facilities, nursing homes, community and governmental agencies, rehabilitation centers, the armed forces, foreign service, home health agencies, school systems, fitness centers, and athletic facilities. Teaching and research positions also are available as well as options for successful self-employment.

Physical therapists report a very high level of job satisfaction, driven both by prevalent employment opportunities and social interaction.