

Recommendations for Students Interested in Physical Therapy

Students who are thinking of applying to physical therapy school should visit the internet site for the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) at www.apta.org. Specific educational and entrance requirement information for physical therapy graduate programs is available on the site, in addition to general information about becoming a physical therapist. The doctoral degree (DPT) is currently the only degree option with all accredited schools phasing out the master's degree. Interested students should look at CAPTE- accredited graduate schools linked with the APTA home page. Then the student should find the home page for each program of interest to learn of prerequisites and other requirements for application. **NOTE: It is critical to plan ahead if you want to go to PT school so that you will have time to complete the required prerequisite coursework. You should begin looking at schools (and their requirements) no later than the end of the sophomore year.**

Coursework

Most PT programs require courses such as anatomy and physiology, chemistry, physics, statistics, psychology, and general biology. Other courses that may be required include English, social sciences, computers, medical terminology, exercise physiology, biomechanics, human development, organic chemistry, research methods, cell biology, and pathology. Some are true requirements and others are HIGHLY recommended. Requirements are constantly changing (e.g., increased courses as pre-requisites and additional hours working with physical therapists in different settings) and **therefore it is imperative that you communicate early with the schools that you plan to apply to.** See some of the examples below:

GPA/Test Scores

You must have a high overall GPA (e.g., 3.5 or higher) and a high GPA in science courses. Some schools require a specific GPA (e.g., B-) in prerequisite courses. Each graduate school will be different and many also have required scores on the GRE (graduate record exam). Admissions officers also look for volunteer experiences such as a PT aide, involvement in school and community activities, a history of leadership, letters of recommendation from physical therapists or science teachers, and strong writing and interpersonal skills. Most programs also require an interview (e.g., CU).

Practicum Hours

Practicum hours in a therapy setting are also a requirement for most programs. These can generally be either paid or volunteer. You should plan to spend summers getting your practicum hours.

Current examples:

Regis University (CO) – there are currently 2 WSC alumni of the ESS program at Regis

- 1 year of upper-division Anatomy & Physiology with a lab (BIOL 372 & BIOL 373)
- 8 credits of upper-division biology (e.g., cell, genetics, histology, immunology, microbiology, molecular)
- Statistics (3 hours: must include descriptive and inferential) (can take it in math, psychology, or business)
- 6 hours of psychology: Developmental and Abnormal Psychology recommended
- General Chemistry (1 year with labs) (CHEM 111-114)
- General Physics (1 year with labs) (PHYS 170, 171)
- Highly Recommended Courses: Exercise Physiology w/Lab, Biomechanics, Motor Learning, Neuroscience/Neuroanatomy, Speech Communication, Advanced Statistics or Research Methods
- 2.75 GPA in all prerequisites courses ; 3.59 is the average GPA for accepted students
- GRE: 500 Verbal, 650 Quantitative, 4.26 Analytical Writing
- Interview required
- References: 3 required: one from practicing PT, one from college professor, third one from professional or academic reference

CU – Health Sciences Center (CO)- there are currently 2 WSC alumni of the ESS program at CU; highly competitive!

- General Chemistry (1 year with labs) (CHEM 111-114)
- General Physics (1 year with labs)
- 8 hours of upper-division Anatomy and Physiology (with labs)
- 6 hours of psychology: Abnormal, Developmental, General, Child, Human Behavior, Growth & Development (must be in Psychology department)
- 3 semester hours of calculus or trigonometry
- 3 semester hours of statistics (biostats, math stats, or stats in psychology)
- 3-4 semester hours of upper-division science (cell, embryology, genetics, histology, immunology, microbiology, molecular, biochemistry, organic chemistry, or physics)
- Minimum GPA is 3.5 (3.5 GPA in upper-level science courses); Average Incoming GPA: 3.64;
- GRE: 1200 required on GRE (500 Verbal, 650 Quantitative, 4.0 Written); Average Scores for Accepted Students: V: 516, Q: 660, AW: 4.2)
- 3 references required: at least one from a practicing physical therapist, and one from a science professor
- 45 hours of field work in 3 different setting types (e.g., inpatient, outpatient, LTC)

Northern Arizona University (Flagstaff, AZ)

- 3 credits of statistics (biostatistics, math stats, or stats in psychology)
- Developmental or Abnormal Psych
- Anatomy & Physiology (1 year with labs)
- General Chemistry (1 year with labs)
- General Physics (1 year with labs)
- 6 credits of psychology (General or Human Behavior plus Abnormal, Adolescent, Child, or Developmental)
- Minimum GRE scores: Verbal: 440, Quantitative: 550, Analytic Writing: 2.5; Average Scores for Accepted Students: V: 541, Q: 669, AW: 4.0)
- Minimum GPA: 3.0; Average GPA for Accepted Students: 3.59
- 3 References Required: at least one from practicing PT and one from college professor
- 100 PT observation hours highly recommended

Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions (Provo, UT)

- 3 credits of statistics (biostatistics, math stats, business stats, or stats in psychology)
- 1 course in biology (cell, general, embryology, genetics, histology, immunology, microbiology, molecular, zoology)
- Developmental or Abnormal Psych
- Anatomy & Physiology (1 year with labs)
- General Chemistry (1 year with labs)
- General Physics (1 year with labs)
- 6 credits of behavioral sciences (psychology or sociology)
- Minimum GPA: 3.0; Average GPA for Accepted Students: 3.59
- GRE required
- 3 References Required: at least two from practicing PT
- 100 PT observation hours required

University of Nebraska

- GPA: 3.0 required; Incoming class: 3.71; Only 26% of applicants are admitted
- Anatomy & Physiology (1 year with labs)
- General Chemistry (1 year with labs)
- General Physics (1 year with labs)
- Liberal arts education (including coursework in humanities and social and natural sciences)
- Exercise Physiology, Abnormal Psychology, and Statistics recommended
- Average Scores for Accepted Students: V: 455, Q: 625, AW: 4.0)
- Minimum GPA: 3.0; Average GPA for Accepted Students: 3.74
- 3 References Required
- PT observation hours highly recommended
- Admission preference given to Nebraska residents

University of New Mexico (NM)

- 3 credits of statistics (biostatistics, math stats, business stats, or stats in psychology)
- 3 credits of Exercise Physiology
- 3 credits of Nutrition (ESS 360 or BIOL 300)
- Developmental or Abnormal Psych
- Anatomy & Physiology (1 year with labs)
- General Chemistry (1 semester with lab)
- General Physics (1 year with labs)
- 6 credits of psychology (General or Human Behavior plus Abnormal, Adolescent, Child, or Developmental)
- Average Scores for Accepted Students: V: 466, Q: 575, AW: 4.0)
- Minimum GPA: 3.0; Average GPA for Accepted Students: 3.62
- 3 References Required: at least two from practicing PT's
- 100 PT observation hours required