



Physical Therapy Prerequisites Guide

This guide contains common course prerequisites and other requirements for physical therapy (PT) programs in the United State. Each PT program has its own specific course prerequisites and other requirements for applying to their program. It is important to consult with each program's website or admissions office for specific information.

You can also consult the [American Physical Therapy Association](#) (APTA) for information on doctorate degrees (DPT) in Physical Therapy. Additionally, the [PTCAS](#) (Physical Therapy Centralized Application System) has information on and is used to apply to PT programs.

Recommended Courses

Biology

- General Biology with lab (one or both may be required)
 - BIOL 106 – Introductory Biology: Organismal Biology
 - BIOL 107 – Introductory Biology: Cell Biology and Genetics
 - recommended if only one general biology course taken
- Medical Terminology (recommended but not required for most programs)
 - BIOL 220 – Medical Terminology
- Human Anatomy with lab (select one course)
 - BIOL 315 – Gross and Microanatomy
 - KINES 262 – Human Anatomy
- Human Physiology with lab (select one course)
 - BIOL 251 – Introduction to Human Physiology
 - BIOL 353 – Advanced Human Physiology
- Additional Upper-division (300-level or higher) biological science courses (recommended but not required for most programs)
 - Advanced Physiology course (select one)
 - BIOL 350 – Animal Physiology
 - KINES 380 – Introduction to Exercise Physiology (preferred, but only open to Kinesiology majors)
 - NEUROSCI 325 (with lab - NEUROSCI 326) – Foundations of Medical Physiology



- Advanced biological Science course (select one or more)
 - BIOL 301 – General Genetics
 - BIOL 352 - Cells
 - NEUROSCI 301 – Foundations of Neuroscience

Chemistry

- General Chemistry with lab (two semesters required)
 - CHEM 101 and 102 with labs **OR**
 - CHEM 105 and 106 with labs
 - this series requires higher math proficiency
- Additional Upper-division (300-level or higher) chemistry courses (recommended but not required for most programs)
 - CHEM 345 – Organic Chemistry
 - MBIOS 303 – Introductory Biochemistry

Math

- Introductory Statistics (select one course; may require MATH prerequisites or ALEKS math placement score above 45%)
 - STAT 212 – Introduction to Statistical Methods
 - PSYCH 311 - Statistics in Psychology

Physics/Biomechanics

- Introductory Physics with lab (two semesters required)
 - PHYS 101 (and 111) – General Physics I Lecture (and Lab)
 - PHYS 102 (and 112) - General Physics I Lecture (and Lab)
- Biomechanics (recommended but usually not required in most programs)
 - KINES 362 – Qualitative Biomechanics
 - Must be admitted to Kinesiology or Sport Medicine majors

Social Sciences

- Social Science Courses (one or more may be required)
 - Anthropology
 - ANTH 203 – Global Cultural Diversity
 - Sociology
 - SOC 101 – Introduction to Sociology



Psychology

- Introductory Psychology (required by most programs)
 - PSYCH 105 - Introductory Psychology
- Abnormal Psychology (required by most programs)
 - PSYCH 333 – Fundamental of Psychological Disorders
- Developmental Psychology (one or more may be required)
 - PSYCH 361- Developmental Psychology
 - PSYCH 363 – Psychology of Aging
 - Often both PSYCH 361 and 363 are needed to cross lifespan and meet requirements (or take HD 101 which covers lifespan but may not have depth in psychology)
 - HD 101 – Human Development Across the Lifespan

English

- Introductory Writing (select one)
 - ENGL 101 – College Composition
 - ENGL 298 – Writing and Research (Honor’s students only)
- Advanced Writing (select one)
 - ENGL 402 – Technical and Professional Writing
 - ENGL 301 – Writing and Rhetorical Conventions
 - Not all programs require a second English course and others may use a writing intensive course to meet this requirement

Humanities

- Humanities Courses (one or more may be required)
 - Communications
 - COMM 102 – Public Speaking in the Digital Age
 - Philosophy
 - PHIL 365 – Biomedical Ethics
 - Not all programs require this course, but it can help with answering ethical questions during interviews



Other Common Program Requirements

In addition to the prerequisite courses listed on the previous pages, PT programs usually require additional requirements for applying to their programs. It is important to check each institution's website for specific requirements for their PT program and to ensure you meet or exceed these requirements.

Common program requirements include:

- Completion of a bachelor's degree with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Completion of the [PTCAS application](#) and any secondary/institution applications
- GRE (Graduate Record Examination) scores (not all schools require this exam)
- Observational hours with a licensed physical therapist (some programs do not require observation hours, but they are highly recommended)
- Work or volunteer experience with medical/physical therapy related fields
- Additional non-PT volunteering or work experiences
- Any relevant licenses or certificates (CPR, CAN, LPN, PTA, EMT, etc.)
- Two or more letters of recommendation/reference (submitted to PTCAS application)
- Personal Statement (general essay) and program specific (secondary) questions and essays
- If you are an international student, you may need to submit TOEFL scores for English proficiency. Additional requirements may also be needed, please contact the graduate school admissions counselor/advisor.

Application Timeline

The PTCAS application becomes available in mid-June for the following year's Fall Semester cohort/program (e.g. June 2025 for Fall 2026 program). It is important to have completed as many requirements as possible prior to filling out your application including taking the GRE exam (usually prior to May to ensure test scores are released by July). Additionally, filling out a prior year's application may not roll over to a new application. If a secondary/graduate school application is required, make sure to fill it out at the same time as the PTCAS application. Although deadlines vary between institutions, submitting your application prior to September is highly recommended to be competitive as most institutions have rolling admissions. If an institution requires an interview they usually occur between September and May. All program requirements must be met prior to starting any program. If accepted, additional requirements will need to be met before matriculation.