

PRE-PHYSICAL THERAPY: ACADEMIC AND CAREER INFORMATION

Health Professions Advising Office (HPAO) • Jensen Student Access to Science (SAS) Center FO5-109

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NATURE OF THE WORK, EARNINGS AND OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK

Physical Therapists are dynamic health professionals who provide clinical expertise in the restoration, maintenance and promotion of optimal physical function. Physical Therapists evaluate and treat people of all ages with movement disorders and other health problems resulting from diseases, disorders, conditions or injuries. The treatment goals of Physical Therapists include making patients stronger, relieving their pain, helping them to regain and maintain maximum human performance, and educating patients on proper health maintenance. Treatment may include therapeutic exercise, cardiovascular endurance training, and training in activities of daily living.

Physical Therapists are employed in hospitals, private physical therapy offices, community health centers, industrial health centers, sports facilities, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, home health agencies, schools, research institutions, or teach in colleges or universities. They work with other health care providers such as physicians, occupational therapists, nurses, mental health professionals, and speech pathologists and audiologists. In 2006, about 173,000 physical therapists practiced in the U.S. (Occupational Outlook Handbook 2008-2009.) According to the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), the median salary for a physical therapist in May of 2006 was \$66,200 depending on position, years of experience, degree of education, geographic location, and practice setting

To obtain licensure and practice in the US requires graduation from an accredited professional physical therapy graduate program and that graduates pass the national licensure exam. The Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) accredits Physical therapy programs. All accredited entry-level physical therapy programs are at the master's level (MS or MPT) or doctorate level (DPT). Most programs require two to three years of education including didactic work and clinical training in various health care settings. Physical Therapy graduate course work investigates questions related to body movement, simple and complex motor skill development, and the effects of therapeutic activity. Research in the field focuses on understanding the impairments underlying disability, or applications for practical clinical problems.

PHYSICAL THERAPY EDUCATION

As of July 2009, there are 212 accredited programs, 12 of which offer MS or MPT degrees and 200 offering DPT degrees. APTA's vision is that by the year 2020, the majority of Physical Therapists in practice will possess a DPT. "The rationale for awarding the DPT is based on the fact that 1) PT practice requires considerable breadth and depth in educational preparation, a breadth and depth not easily acquired within the time constraints of the typical MPT program; 2) societal expectations that the fully autonomous healthcare practitioner with a scope of practice consistent with the *Guide to Physical Therapist Practice* be a clinical doctor; 3) the realization of the profession's goals in the coming decades, including direct access, "physician status" for reimbursement purposes, and clinical competence consistent with the preferred outcomes of evidence-based practice, will require that practitioners possess the clinical doctorate (consistent with medicine, osteopathy, dentistry, veterinary medicine, optometry, and podiatry); and 4) many existing professional

(entry-level) MPT programs already meet the requirements for the clinical doctorate; in such cases, the graduate of a professional (entry-level) MPT program is denied the degree most appropriate to the program of study.” (www.apta.org Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Degree Frequently Asked Questions, 2008)

There are currently 14 Physical Therapy programs in California. Accredited DPT programs in CA include Azusa Pacific University, Chapman University, Loma Linda University, Mount St. Mary’s College, Samuel Merritt College, University of California, San Francisco/ San Francisco State, University of Southern California, University of the Pacific, CSU Fresno (MPT/DPT) and Western University. Those offering the master’s degree are California State Universities at Long Beach, Northridge and Sacramento.

Admissions requirements vary by program but most admissions committees are very selective and are looking for specific prerequisites courses, strong academic and prerequisite course records, the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), quality letters of recommendation, and work or volunteer experience in the field as indicators of potential to succeed. Application deadlines vary from October of the year prior to matriculation to May. Most programs require a student to have at least a 3.0 cumulative and prerequisite GPA, although the average GPA for accepted students may be higher. Increasingly, programs are also requiring applicants to have paid or volunteer experience in one or more physical therapy settings and may ask that a student have adult CPR certification. Admission requirements can vary widely from program to program. Most programs require Anatomy, Physiology, the year-long sequences of General Chemistry and Physics, all with laboratory plus courses in psychology and mathematics. Many programs also have additional required and strongly suggested courses. HPAO has compiled a CA PT program chart that compares admission requirements, which is available in the office or online at www.sascenter.org/hpao. Before planning your academic courses, consult each physical therapy program directly to confirm your selection. Students can obtain more information by visiting the **American Physical Therapy Association** web site address at www.apta.org or by visiting the Health Professions Advising Office (HPAO) in FO5-109.

PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM AT CSU LONG BEACH

Students interested in applying to the Physical Therapy program at CSULB should plan to attend a PT information session, offered monthly and visit the Dept. of Physical Therapy website. Requirements, as listed on the Dept. of PT website, are:

- Have a Bachelor's Degree in any field (Biology preferred)
- Have completed, or have in progress, all lower division prerequisite courses with at least a "C" in each course, a "B" is preferred.
- Have approximately 100- 200 hours of work experience (paid or volunteer) in as many of the following areas of physical therapy as possible: rehabilitation, geriatric, pediatric, and acute or general hospital (A hospital setting and work in all 4 areas is strongly recommended)
- Complete a departmental application with PTCAS and send various documents to the department (See Dept. website for details) *and* file a university application.

PREREQUISITES FOR THE CSULB PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM

Course Title	Course Number	Units
Human Morphology	Biology 208	4
Evolution and Diversity	Biology 111 w/111L	4
Cell and molecular bio	Biology 212 w/ 212L	4

Course Title	Course Number	Units
Physiology	Biology 207 or 213 w/ 213L	4
Biostatistics	Biology 260	3
General Chemistry	Chemistry 111A & B	5, 5
General Physics	Physics 100 A & B	4, 4
General Psychology	Psychology 100	3

Upon acceptance into the program, graduate students are considered conditionally classified students and must complete the following CSULB coursework with grades of C or better in each course and an overall average of 3.0 or better to automatically advance to the professional program as unconditionally classified students:

Course Title	Course Number	Units
Physiology for Therapists I & II	Biology 341 & 441	4, 3
Psychosocial Aspects Disability	HHS 374	3
Applied Anatomy I & II	HHS 401 & 402	3, 3
Tissue Mechanics and Aging	HHS 403	3
Neuroanatomy	HHS 460	4
Pathology	HHS 471	3

PT Program	Anatomy and/or Physiology	Chemistry	Physics	Psychology	Statistics	Biology	Additional prerequisites
CSULB	Human Anatomy w/ lab	2 sem. General Chem. w/ lab	2 sem. Physics w/ lab	1 sem Psych	Biostatistics	3 sem. Gen Bio. w/ lab <u>or</u> 2 sem Gen Bio and Physio. w/ labs	*additional courses to be completed at CSULB
CSU Fresno	Human Physiology w/ lab	General and Organic Chem. or Biochemistry w/ labs	2 sem. Physics w/ lab	Gen. Psych.	Statistics		3.0 minimum in prereqs./ 3.0 in last 60 units
CSU Northridge	Human Anatomy and Human Physiology- each w/ lab	2 sem. General Chem. w/ lab	2 sem. Physics w/ lab	Gen. & Abnormal Psych.	Statistics	Gen. Bio w/ lab	3.0 min. in prereqs.
CSU Sacramento	Human Anatomy and Human Physiology- each w/ lab	2 sem. General Chem. w/ lab	2 sem. Physics w/ lab	Psychology (2 sem.)	Statistics		Kinesiology w/ lab, Physio., Pathophysio., Pharmacology, Public Speaking
Azusa Pacific	Biology -4 courses w/ lab (Anatomy, cell bio, gen. bio, physiology)	Chem. 1 yr. w/ lab	Physics 1 yr. w/ lab	Psychology (2 sem.)	Statistics		3 courses in Humanities, one must be English comp.
Chapman	Human Anatomy, Human Physiology- each w/ lab	2 sem.Chem. w/ lab	2 sem. Physics w/ lab	Psychology (2 sem.)	Statistics	1 sem. Bio. w/ lab	3.0 prereq., 3.0 last 30 units

PT Program	Anatomy and/or Physiology	Chemistry	Physics	Psychology	Statistics	Biology	Additional prerequisites
Loma Linda	Human Anatomy, Human Physiology- each w/ lab	Chem. 1 yr. w/ lab	Physics 1yr. w/ lab		Statistics	1 additional natural science course	Psych, Hum/Dev., Comm.*See website for additional reqs.
Mount St. Mary's	Human Anatomy, Human Physiology- each w/ lab	Chem. 1 yr. w/ lab	2 sem. Physics w/ lab	3 sem. Psych.	Statistics	2 sem. Bio. w/ lab	3 units upper div. science, comm
Samuel Merritt	Human Anatomy, Human Physiology- each w/ lab	Chem. 1 yr. w/ lab	2 sem. Physics w/ lab	2 sem. Psych.,	Statistics	Gen. Bio. 1 yr w/ lab	English comp., Exercise Physio.
UOP	Human Anatomy, Human Physiology- each w/ lab	Chem. 1 yr. w/ lab	2 sem. Physics w/ lab	2 sem. Psych.- 1 abnormal	Statistics	1 sem. General Bio. w/ lab	Ex. Physio., Medical Term.
UCSF/SFSU	Human Anatomy, Human Physiology- each w/ lab	Chem. 1 yr. w/ lab	2 sem. Physics w/ lab	Abnormal Psychology	Statistics	Cell Bio. Or Vertabrate Histology or Micro	
USC	Human Anatomy, Human Physiology- each w/ lab	Chem. 1 yr. w/ lab	2 sem. Physics w/ lab	2 sem. Psych	One sem colleg-level math	2 sem. Bio.	
Western U.	Human Anatomy, Human Physiology- each w/ lab	Chem. 1 yr. w/ lab	2 sem. Physics w/ lab	2 sem. Psych	Statistics		English Comp.