

PRE-PHYSICAL THERAPY

Students Interested in Physical Therapy

Physical therapy is an integral and unique component of the healthcare system. As a health profession, physical therapy focuses on the neuromuscular, musculoskeletal, integumentary, and cardiopulmonary systems of the human body as they relate to human motion and function. Human movement and the ability to interact physically with one's environment are essential components of physical, emotional, and social well-being. The physical therapist is dedicated to promoting health, preventing disease, improving quality of life, and rehabilitating individuals disabled by injury or disease.

To practice as a Physical Therapist, the American Physical Therapy Association (<https://www.apta.org/>) (APTA) requires that students complete a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree through an accredited program and pass the national licensure examination. Students should first complete a bachelor's degree and meet the pre-requisites for admission to a DPT program. Information about applying to DPT programs can be found in the Requirements (p. 1) tab. The UWM DPT (<https://uwm.edu/healthsciences/academics/doctors-physical-therapy/>) program hosts regular information sessions for undergraduate students. The DPT program is a three-year professional doctorate program beyond the bachelors degree.

An undergraduate degree in Kinesiology (<https://uwm.edu/healthsciences/academics/bachelors-kinesiology/>), the science of human movement, is ideal preparation for training in physical therapy. All UWM DPT prerequisites are included in the course of study. Kinesiology students take coursework in biomechanics, exercise physiology, motor behavior and control, and psychosocial aspects of human movement, which serve as important foundations for advanced training in a DPT program. Students can also explore the practical application of the scientific principles of human movement in correlate and elective coursework.

Inquiries about the DPT program itself should be sent to pt-program@uwm.edu.

Christy Greenleaf (<https://uwm.edu/healthsciences/directory/greenleaf-christy/>), PhD, Program Director, Kinesiology Undergraduate Program

Wendy Huddleston (<https://uwm.edu/healthsciences/directory/huddleston-wendy/>), PT, PhD, Program Director, Doctor of Physical Therapy

Admission to a DPT program is competitive. As with most DPT programs in the country, application to the UWM DPT program occurs through PTCAS (<http://www.ptcas.org/home.aspx>), which is a centralized admissions system. Completion of UWM's Kinesiology Bachelor of Science degree (<https://uwm.edu/healthsciences/academics/bachelors-kinesiology/>) is good preparation but does not guarantee admission to UWM's DPT program. Also, be aware of the admission requirements for each individual DPT program as they do vary. Information about preparing for DPT is available in this document: [Preparing to Apply for Admission to a Physical Therapy Program](http://uwm.edu/healthsciences/wp-content/uploads/sites/129/2015/06/BS-Kinesiology-Pre-PT-handout.pdf) (<http://uwm.edu/healthsciences/wp-content/uploads/sites/129/2015/06/BS-Kinesiology-Pre-PT-handout.pdf>).

UWM DPT application requirements include:

- Completion of an undergraduate degree from an accredited institution with an overall cumulative grade point average above 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale)
- Completion of 10 prerequisite courses with a minimum prerequisite grade point average above 3.0 (on 4.0 scale)
 - Refer to DPT program website (<https://uwm.edu/healthsciences/academics/doctors-physical-therapy/>) for list of prerequisite courses
- GRE scores (taken within the last five years)
- Completion of at least 40 total hours of clinical observation experiences in both inpatient and outpatient settings under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist
- Two letters of recommendation (one academic)
- Responses to narrative essay questions

I'm a new student. How do I start?

You are assigned an academic advisor upon admission to UWM. New Student Orientation (NSO) (<https://uwm.edu/healthsciences/students/new-student-orientation/>) helps those who are new to campus learn and understand the enrollment process and enroll in classes for their first semester at UWM! You should ask to have the designation "Pre-Physical Therapy" added to your academic record.

Who is my advisor?

Undergraduate students who have declared an intent to pursue Pre-Physical Therapy are advised by Torry Rufer (<https://uwm.edu/healthsciences/directory/rufer-torry/>). Contact Torry at 414-229-2758 or tjruferr@uwm.edu.

When should I meet with my advisor?

Students are encouraged to meet with their advisor at least once per semester to ensure timely progress to graduation.

- **Enrolling for spring semester?**
Schedule an appointment with your advisor in October or November.
- **Enrolling for fall semester?**
Schedule an appointment with your advisor in March or April.

Students are also welcome to schedule an appointment with their advisor at any time to discuss academic challenges, career opportunities, or any other questions.

How can my advisor help me?

CHS boasts professional academic advisors who understand the challenges of balancing academics, work, family, and the social aspects of college life. Advisors partner with you to:

- Explore your academic and career interests
- Plan the sequence of your courses
- Prepare for course enrollment
- Access tutoring and other academic support
- Identify opportunities for campus involvement
- Connect you to campus resources
- Plan for graduation