PHYSICAL THERAPY INFORMATION SHEET

Prerequisites can vary on a school by school basis. Please check the prerequisites for schools to which you hope to apply.

PHYSICAL THERAPY PREREQUISITES

General Biology 4-8 credit hours (BIOL 103, 104 or 213, 311)
Anatomy and Physiology 8 credit hours (BIOL 124, 125)
General Chemistry 8 credit hours (CHEM103, 104 or 211, 212)
Physics 8 credit hours (PHYS 243/244, 245/246)
Mathematics 0-3 credit hours (Mathematics depends on the school.)
Statistics 3 credit hours (STAT 250)
Psychology 3-6 credit hours (PSYC100, 211 or 231)

For more information on prerequisites, visit http://www.ptcas.org/uploadedFiles/PTCASorg/Directory/Prerequisites/PTCASCoursePrereqsApplicants2012_13.pdf

Admission to a physical therapy program generally requires 50 to 150 hours of volunteer or paid experience in a health care setting. (See links below for more information.) Some schools require volunteer hours from at least two physical therapy practice settings. An undergraduate’s major is not a factor in the admissions process; students may major in any area they are interested in pursuing and complete the prerequisites as either requirements or electives within their major.

Students may also refer to the American Physical Therapy Association web site at www.apta.org for specific requirements for the programs in which they are interested.

PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

According to APTA (http://www.apta.org/PTCareers/RoleofaPT/), “Physical therapists (PTs) are health care professionals who diagnose and treat individuals of all ages, from newborns to the very oldest, who have medical problems or other health-related conditions that limit their abilities to move and perform functional activities in their daily lives. PTs examine each individual and develop a plan using treatment techniques to promote the ability to move, reduce pain, restore function, and prevent disability. In addition, PTs work with individuals to prevent the loss of mobility before it occurs by developing fitness- and wellness-oriented programs for healthier and more active lifestyles. Physical therapists provide care for people in a variety of settings, including hospitals, private practices, outpatient clinics, home health agencies, schools, sports and fitness facilities, work settings, and nursing homes. State licensure is required in each state in which a physical therapist practices” Further, according to http://www.apta.org/PTACareers/Overview/, “There is a high demand for physical therapist assistants in the workforce despite the economic downturn. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of physical therapists is expected to grow by 35 percent from 2008 to 2018, much faster than the average for all occupations. The need for PTAs is expected to increase into the foreseeable future as the U.S. population ages and the demand for physical therapy services grows.”

EDUCATION
There are both masters and doctoral level programs for physical therapy. However, most schools are moving towards the Doctorate of Physical Therapy (DPT). It typically takes three years to complete a DPT depending on the requirements of the program. Physical Therapists need to be licensed to practice after graduating from an accredited physical therapy program. Each state has its own regulations and requirements for licensure in the state. Most schools require a bachelor’s degree prior to starting a DPT program.

APPLYING TO PHYSICAL THERAPY SCHOOL

A list of accredited Physical Therapist Education Programs can be found at http://www.capteonline.org/apta/directories/accreditedschools.aspx?type=PT&navID=10737421958#

Most Physical Therapy schools participate in the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS) which allows students to use a single web-based application and one set of materials to apply to multiple PT programs. All of the schools in Virginia except Hampton University use PTCAS. Go to http://www.ptcas.org/ for more information.

GRE

Most schools require students to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) which is a standardized test to gauge a student’s ability to do well in a graduate program. The GRE is given year-round at computer-based test centers in the U.S., Canada, and many other countries. Appointments to take the test are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information about the GRE visit their website at http://www.gre.org .

EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK AND EARNINGS


FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on physical therapy careers, please visit the American Physical Therapy Association http://www.apta.org/ and http://explorehealthcareers.org/en/Field/12/Physical_Therapy.


Deadlines by Program Name http://www.ptcas.org/ptcas/public/deadlines.aspx?listorder=name%20%20&navID=10737426787

Deadlines Grouped by Date http://www.ptcas.org/ptcas/public/deadlines.aspx?listorder=date&navID=10737426786


ACCREDITED SCHOOLS IN VIRGINIA

Hampton University— http://www.hamptonu.edu/academics/schools/science/pt/
Marymount University— http://www.marymount.edu/academics/programs/physicalTherapy
Old Dominion University— http://hs.odu.edu/physther/
Virginia Commonwealth University— http://www.sahp.vcu.edu/pt/

PRE-PHYSICAL THERAPY ADVISING

The information contained in this information sheet should be discussed with a Health Professions Advisor. Students must still be advised in their department regarding their major. Students may also go to the http://prehealth.gmu.edu website for more information.

10/10/2012