

Physical Therapy School Preparation Guidelines

Each path to PT school is different. This guide is to help you navigate your own path.

Every Semester you should plan to:

1. Successfully complete pre-professional coursework
2. Maintain excellent grades (3.3 and above to be competitive); science coursework is especially critical
3. Keep your legal and student behavior records clean! They can impact both admissions and professional licensure
4. Explore and participate in meaningful activities and experiences
5. Get to know your faculty and instructors and meet with a Pre-Health Advisor

Freshman Year – Year 1

School Year

- Focus on your academics; practice time management; seek help early if needed
- Start a resume - track activities and experiences; journal observations
- Be active; go to fairs and events and join the Pre-PT Club student organization
- Research PT programs for pre-req courses and other admissions requirements
- Determine if you might apply after your 2nd year (some schools do not require a bachelor's degree to apply); notify CARS if considering earlier admission timeline for PT school
- Explore service opportunities in the Fall and participate in the Spring
- Explore majors based on interests; all majors are equal to PT school admissions
- Register for PHLC 200 for your sophomore year (Spring)

TIP: Volunteer in your Freshman year – start with medically-related in PT settings if possible!

Summer

Of listed, choose what works for you

- Participate in medically-related volunteering or employment; in PT settings if possible but all patient contact is valuable
- Work at a Summer camp with a healthcare focus
- Seek shadowing opportunities
- Find experiences for next year
- Explore options for research if interested

Sophomore Year – Year 2

School Year

- Choose a major based on your interests
- Continue participation in meaningful activities and experiences
- Seek PT observation hours; document as required by PT schools
- Calculate completed Biology, Chemistry, Physics courses GPA; re-figure each semester
- If interested in research, consider a summer opportunity; apply early Spring
- Register for PPT 300 for your Junior year if planning to apply after Junior year (Spring)
- If you want to apply after Senior year (Gap year), request Guest status in PPT 300 Jr year
- If planning to apply after Sophomore year, notify the CARS for PPT 300 enrollment; follow info for Year 3 below

TIP: Focus on non-medical volunteering, PT shadowing, and co-curricular involvement

Summer

- Begin or continue experience(s) in: PT observation, non-medical service, medically-related service, healthcare employment, or research
- Consider Study Abroad / Service Abroad if interested
- If applying after Sophomore year to begin PT school in your 4th year – Follow summer after Jr year info; take the GRE by June or July

Junior Year - Year 3 - IF APPLYING TO START PHYSICAL THERAPY SCHOOL AFTER SENIOR YEAR

School Year

- Talk to a Pre-Health Advisor, review readiness and timeline to apply
- Participate in PPT 300 Pre-PT Seminar
- In the fall decide when to take the GRE exam; plan for study time and preparation
- Research selection factors: GPA, GRE score minimums, Letters of Rec, deadlines
- Identify who to ask for Letters of Recommendation (Fall)
- Brainstorm your personal statement and write draft by Spring
- By February, ask letter writers; follow-up with email and letter requirements
- Review Physical Therapy Centralized Application Service (PTCAS) (Spring)
- If eligible, apply for Fee Assistance Program for PTCAS fees (early Spring)
- Maintain high grades and keep participating in meaningful activities
- In July, begin entering information into your PTCAS application

TIP: Focus on PT observation if needed, non-medical service, leadership, and research if interested

Summer

- Submit Primary Application by early August!
- Order transcripts to submit with Primary Application
- Take the GRE no later than end of July
- Be prepared for programs requiring a secondary application; sometimes an additional essay
- Check letters received
- Contact schools to check if your file is complete – most schools will not interview until it is
- Consider your options if a PT school application is not successful the first time - explore Gap Year options to be prepared
- Follow up on your application status: Transcripts sent? Letters received? Academic Update?

Senior Year – Year 4 – IF APPLYING TO START PHYSICAL THERAPY SCHOOL AFTER GRADUATION	
Fall Semester	Spring Semester
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete any program-specific application requirements- secondary apps and essays • Check your status in the application/admission process • Continue to get good grades; pursue meaningful co-curricular and experiential activities • Update individual schools on experiences completed after submitting primary application • Research financial options for PT school • Interview at PT schools; schedule a practice Interview with the Career Center once you have interviews scheduled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow rules of application and acceptances • Make interim and final decisions about PT school choice, if acceptances offered • Notify schools not attending before deadline given • Complete and submit IRS and financial aid forms

Junior Year – Year 3 - IF APPLYING AFTER SENIOR YEAR – (OR TAKING A GAP YEAR)	
School Year	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review your timeline with a Pre-Health Advisor; identify areas of your application that can be strengthened over the next four semesters (Fall) • Enroll as a Guest Participant in PPT 300 • Maintain high academic performance; calculate your science GPA again • Continue participation in meaningful activities and experiences • Explore Gap Year options: employment, volunteer, academic, etc. and apply • Continue to build faculty relationships and seek mentoring from PT students • Register for full participation in PPT 300 in your Senior Year (Spring) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the GRE exam anytime in Summer or plan to take in Senior year • Continue participation in meaningful activities and experiences • TIP: By Year 4 complete at least two PT observation experiences, non-medical service, and consider research, if interested

Senior Year – Year 4 - IF APPLYING AFTER GRADUATION – (GAP YEAR)	
School Year	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to a Pre-Health Advisor, review readiness and timeline to apply • Participate in PPT 300 • If not taken, schedule to take GRE no later than July • Research selection factors: GPA, GRE score minimums, Letters of Rec, deadlines • Decide who to ask to write a Letter of Recommendation for you (Fall) • Brainstorm your personal statement and write draft by Spring • By February, ask letter writers; follow-up with email and letter requirements • Review Physical Therapy Centralized Application Service (PTCAS) requirements (Spring) • Continue participating in meaningful activities, especially PT experience and service • In July begin entering information into your PTCAS application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Primary Application by August 1 • Order transcripts for Primary Application • Take the GRE by July (if not completed yet) • Follow up on application status: Transcripts sent? Letters received? • Complete program-specific requirements, secondary apps and essays in a timely fashion • Follow up with PT schools to ensure your file is complete – most schools will not interview until it is • Potentially, begin Gap Year experience after graduation, or prepare for a program in Fall

GAP YEAR Following Graduation	
Fall	Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin Gap Year employment, service, research or other experience or begin post-baccalaureate or Special Master's program immediately following graduation, if academic enhancement necessary • Check your file is complete at each PT school • Check your status in the application/admission process • If you are in an academic program, get good grades • Continue meaningful experiential activities; you can often UPDATE individual PT schools on additional experience after submitting your primary application • Interview at PT schools; schedule a practice interview with the Career Center once your interviews are scheduled • Research financial options for PT school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow rules of application and acceptances • Make interim and final decisions about PT school choice, if acceptances offered • Notify schools not attending before deadline given • Complete and submit IRS and financial aid forms

Summer before PT school matriculation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for PT school enrollment – purchase books, make living arrangements, and attend orientation programs • Follow-up on all financial aid forms and deadlines • Take time to Relax. Congratulations!