

PHYSICAL THERAPY, DOCTOR OF (D.P.T.)/AGING STUDIES, CERTIFICATE IN (GRADUATE CERTIFICATE) [DUAL DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE]

Advanced study in physical therapy and aging studies is available through a dual degree and certificate program co-sponsored by the Department of Physical Therapy and the Department of Gerontology in the College of Health Professions.

The program allows students to earn a Doctor of Physical Therapy and a Certificate in Aging Studies with a minimum of 134 credits rather than the 137 credits necessary if the two degrees were pursued separately. This efficiency lowers the overall cost of tuition while also reducing time to earning both degrees.

Program goals

The objectives of this dual degree and certificate program are to:

- Prepare graduates to address the complex needs of a diverse aging population using holistic knowledge of biopsychosocial aging process
- Provide graduates with an understanding of empirically and theoretically based components contributing to optimal aging using evidence-based, best-practice approaches
- Prepare graduates to apply current knowledge, theory and professional judgment, while considering the perspectives of older adult clients/patients
- Prepare graduates to develop skills in comprehensive geriatric care to promote well-being among older adults

Among the many benefits offered by participation in the dual degree and certificate program are the following:

- Enhance D.P.T. graduates' knowledge and skills in caring for older adults, who represent an increasing segment of PT practice
- Increase D.P.T. graduates' competitiveness in the job market
- Offer D.P.T. students an opportunity for career advancement by specializing in geriatrics

The diplomas for this dual degree and certificate program may be awarded simultaneously. Students must complete a separate graduation check out for each program.

Student learning outcomes

See the individual program pages for student learning outcomes.

Other information

Advising

The student is assigned an adviser from each program to develop a plan of study. Advisers from each program will advise students of course requirements from their respective programs.

Admission requirements

Students must meet the admission requirements for each program. Admission into one program does not guarantee admission into the other.

The Certificate in Aging Studies program is open to qualified students who have earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university or the equivalent and who have met all **general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School**.

The admission requirements for the D.P.T. (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-allied-health-professions/physical-therapy/physical-therapy-dpt/#admissionrequirements>) can be found on the program page.

Application procedure

Applicants may apply any time after acceptance into the D.P.T. program.

Students may contact VCU Graduate Admissions to have their transcripts and letters of recommendation from the D.P.T. application attached to their certificate application. A new personal statement is required.

Dual degree and certificate requirements

As standalone programs, the D.P.T. comprises 122 credits while the certificate requires 15 credits. The dual degree and certificate program allows students to share three credits, therefore decreasing total credits to completion from 137 to 134.

Based on the equivalent knowledge acquired by successfully completing PHTY 615 and PHTY 627 in the D.P.T. program, GRTY 601 is satisfied in the certificate curriculum.

Curriculum requirements

Course	Title	Hours
D.P.T. requirements		
IPEC 501	Foundations of Interprofessional Practice	1
PHTY 501	Gross Anatomy (Physical Therapy)	7
PHTY 502	Kinesiology	4
PHTY 503	Applied Exercise Physiology	3
PHTY 505	Applied Microscopic Anatomy for Physical Therapy	4
PHTY 506	Functional Neuroanatomy	4
PHTY 508	Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy I	6
PHTY 510	Rehabilitation I	3
PHTY 512	Health Care Systems	2
PHTY 520	Clinical Education I: Introduction to Clinical Education	3
PHTY 531	Evidence-based Practice Concepts	2
PHTY 537	Rehabilitation II	3
PHTY 540	Psychosocial Aspects of Physical Therapy	1
PHTY 609	Clinical Biomechanics	3
PHTY 615	Pharmacology (Physical Therapy) (satisfies certificate core requirement GRTY 601)	1
PHTY 621	Biophysical Agents	4
PHTY 623	Cardiopulmonary Physical Therapy	3

PHTY 624	Clinical Problem-solving I	2
PHTY 626	Lifespan I	6
PHTY 627	Lifespan II (satisfies certificate core requirement GRTY 601)	2
PHTY 640	Neurologic Physical Therapy	6
PHTY 644	Orthotics and Prosthetics	2
PHTY 646	Clinical Medicine	2
PHTY 648	Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy II	6
PHTY 650	Clinical Education II	8
PHTY 651	Professional Issues in Physical Therapy	2
PHTY 654	Clinical Problem-solving II	1
PHTY 660	Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy III	1
PHTY 661	Administration and Management in Physical Therapy	2
PHTY 670	Clinical Integration of Physical Therapy Concepts	2
PHTY 674	Clinical Problem-solving III	1
PHTY 676	Comprehensive Study of Physical Therapy Practice	1
PHTY 680	Clinical Education III	12
PHTY 695	Clinical Education IV	12
Certificate requirements		
GRTY 601	Biological and Physiological Aging (satisfied by D.P.T. requirements PHTY 615 and PHTY 627)	3
GRTY 602	Psychology of Aging	3
GRTY 603	Social Gerontology	3
GRTY 606	Aging and Human Values	3
Restricted elective		3
Select from:		
GRTY 604	Problems, Issues and Trends in Gerontology	
GRTY 615	Aging and Mental Disorders	
GRTY 638	Long-term Care Administration	
GRTY 691	Topical Seminar	
GRTY 692	Independent Studies	
Total Hours		134

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this dual program is 134.

Sample plan of study

Summer semester

Prior to year one

PHTY 501	Gross Anatomy (Physical Therapy)	7
Term Hours:		7

P1 year

Fall semester

IPEC 501	Foundations of Interprofessional Practice	1
PHTY 502	Kinesiology	4
PHTY 503	Applied Exercise Physiology	3
PHTY 505	Applied Microscopic Anatomy for Physical Therapy	4

PHTY 510	Rehabilitation I	3
PHTY 531	Evidence-based Practice Concepts	2
PHTY 615	Pharmacology (Physical Therapy) (satisfies certificate requirement GRTY 601)	1

Term Hours: 18

Spring semester

PHTY 506	Functional Neuroanatomy	4
PHTY 508	Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy I	6
PHTY 520	Clinical Education I: Introduction to Clinical Education	3
PHTY 537	Rehabilitation II	3
PHTY 540	Psychosocial Aspects of Physical Therapy	1
PHTY 623	Cardiopulmonary Physical Therapy	3

Term Hours: 20

Summer semester

No courses required

Term Hours: 0

P2 year

Fall semester

GRTY 603	Social Gerontology	3
PHTY 512	Health Care Systems	2
PHTY 609	Clinical Biomechanics	3
PHTY 621	Biophysical Agents	4
PHTY 624	Clinical Problem-solving I	2
PHTY 648	Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy II	6
PHTY 661	Administration and Management in Physical Therapy	2

Term Hours: 22

Spring semester

GRTY 606	Aging and Human Values	3
PHTY 626	Lifespan I	6
PHTY 627	Lifespan II (satisfies certificate requirement GRTY 601)	2
PHTY 640	Neurologic Physical Therapy	6
PHTY 644	Orthotics and Prosthetics	2
PHTY 646	Clinical Medicine	2

Term Hours: 21

Summer semester

PHTY 650	Clinical Education II	8
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Term Hours: 8

P3 year

Fall semester

Block 1-8 weeks		
GRTY 602	Psychology of Aging	3
PHTY 651	Professional Issues in Physical Therapy	2
PHTY 654	Clinical Problem-solving II	1
PHTY 660	Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy III	1
PHTY 670	Clinical Integration of Physical Therapy Concepts	2
PHTY 676	Comprehensive Study of Physical Therapy Practice	1

Block 2-12 weeks

PHTY 680	Clinical Education III	12
Term Hours:		22
Spring semester		
PHTY 674	Clinical Problem-solving III	1
PHTY 695	Clinical Education IV	12
GRTY elective		3
Term Hours:		16
Total Hours:		134

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this dual program is 134.

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