

PHYSICAL THERAPY, DOCTOR OF (D.P.T.)

Program accreditation

Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education

The Department of Physical Therapy serves the people of the commonwealth of Virginia and the nation by providing educational programs related to physical therapy. The department provides an environment that encourages education through problem solving, free inquiry, professional behavior and scholarship. The department's primary focus is to prepare individuals for general physical therapy practice. These practitioners are educated to serve as an entry point into the health care system for consumers. Post-professional programs provide quality education leading to careers in teaching and research. The department also provides assistance and services to the community and engages in research and scholarly activities related to the practice of physical therapy.

Preparation of physical therapists

VCU's Department of Physical Therapy offers a three-year degree program leading to a Doctor of Physical Therapy. The program prepares students for entry into the profession by teaching them to evaluate and manage patients with physical therapy problems effectively and in accordance with ethical principles. It also provides students with strategies to continually define and meet their own educational needs in order to keep skills and knowledge current throughout their professional careers.

Expected student outcomes

Satisfactory performance in the experiences provided in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program prepares the graduate to:

1. Demonstrate professional behavior in a manner consistent with APTA Code of Ethics and APTA Core Values
2. Adhere to legal practice standards, including all federal, state and institutional regulations related to patient/client care and fiscal management
3. Communicate effectively with all stakeholders, including patients/clients, family members, caregivers, practitioners, interprofessional team members, consumers, payers and policymakers
4. Adapt delivery of physical therapy services with consideration for patients' differences, values, preferences and expressed needs in all professional activities
5. Integrate basic principles of critical inquiry to evaluate, interpret and utilize professional literature in clinical practice, participate in clinical research activities, and critically analyze new concepts in the application of physical therapy practice
6. Apply current knowledge, theory and professional judgment, while considering the patient/client perspective, the environment and available resources
7. Determine, with each patient encounter, the patient's need for further examination or consultation by a physical therapist or referral to another health care professional
8. Perform a physical therapy patient examination using evidenced-based tests and measures that are appropriate to the patient's age, diagnosis and health status

9. Evaluate data from the patient examination (history, systems review, and tests and measures) to determine a diagnosis, prognosis, client goals and expected outcomes that guide future patient management
10. Establish and manage a safe and effective physical therapy plan of care that is consistent with professional obligations, interprofessional collaborations, and administrative policies and procedures of the practice environment
11. Perform physical therapy interventions in a competent manner to achieve patient/client goals and outcomes
12. Educate others (patients, caregivers, staff, students, other health care providers, business and industry representatives, school systems) using relevant and effective teaching methods
13. Produce accurate documentation that follows guidelines and specific documentation formats required by state practice acts, the practice setting and other regulatory agencies.
14. Collect and analyze data from selected outcome measures in a manner that supports accurate analysis of individual patient and group outcomes
15. Direct and supervise personnel to meet patient's goals and expected outcomes according to legal standards and ethical guidelines
16. Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning and the physical therapy profession by serving as an advocate for the profession and the health care needs of society

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (<http://www.graduate.vcu.edu>) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs>)

Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master's or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student's graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student's faculty regarding the student's academic achievements and the student's readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the **academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements**. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy>)

Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the **academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements**. (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info>)

Other information

A hard copy of the VCU D.P.T. program student handbook and policies and procedures manual is distributed to each entering physical therapy student at orientation.

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (<http://www.graduate.admissions.vcu.edu>).

Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
D.P.T.	Summer	The beginning of November of the year prior to intended enrollment	GRE

For non-native English-speaking applicants, regardless of immigration status, a TOEFL score of at least 600 (score of 250 on computerized exam)

All test scores should be reported directly to VCU.

Special requirements

- The VCU Department of Physical Therapy participates in the American Physical Therapy Association-sponsored physical therapy centralized application service for applicants to the D.P.T. program. All students interested in applying to this program must submit their application materials directly to PTCAS. Applicants who apply through PTCAS will submit a completed Web-based application comprising biographical data, colleges and universities

attended, academic course history, physical therapy observation hours, list of reference providers, work experience, extracurricular activities, honors, professional licenses and a personal essay. It is the applicant's responsibility to read and follow all PTCAS and program-specific instructions. Please visit the Department of Physical Therapy website for application deadlines.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements>), applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. A Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited college or university
2. A minimum grade-point average of 2.7 (in a 4.0 system)
3. A minimum total of 45 volunteer hours in at least two physical therapy practice settings
4. Three recommendations, at least one of which is from a physical therapist

Prerequisites for admission to the professional Doctor of Physical Therapy program include a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited college or university. If the applicant has received college credit hours for AP courses and/or exams, and those hours are listed on the university transcript, those credit hours will be accepted. A grade of D in any required prerequisite course is not acceptable. A minimum GPA of 2.7 (in a 4.0 system) is required to be considered for admission. The GRE is required; the scores should be reported directly to Virginia Commonwealth University. For non-native English-speaking applicants, regardless of immigration status, a Test of English as a Foreign Language score of at least 600 (score of 250 on computerized exam) is required; scores should be reported directly to Virginia Commonwealth University.

The program of study necessary to be considered for admission to the professional Doctor of Physical Therapy program must include a minimum of the following subject areas and credits:

Biological sciences – 12 credit hours including laboratory experiences

- Must include four credit hours of college-level biology
- Must include four credit hours of anatomy and four credit hours of human physiology, or eight credit hours of anatomy/physiology (An exercise physiology course is not an acceptable substitute for a human physiology course.)
- Cell biology and histology highly recommended but not required

Chemistry – eight credit hours including laboratory experiences

Mathematics – three credit hours (must be in pre-calculus or a more advanced mathematics course)

Physics – eight credit hours of general physics with laboratory (Courses that emphasize mechanics, electricity, heat and light are highly recommended.)

Psychology – six credit hours (One introductory course and one course in human growth and development or abnormal psychology is required.)

Statistics – three credit hours

In order to complete the total requirements, students are encouraged to elect courses from the following categories: computer science,

embryology, histology, cell biology, comparative anatomy, kinesiology, exercise physiology, foreign languages and courses in physical education dealing with an analytical approach to human movement or motor learning.

Students must also present a minimum of 45 volunteer hours in at least two physical therapy practice settings.

Students are required to have current CPR certification.

One of the three required letters of recommendation must be from a physical therapist.

Degree requirements

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info>), every professional physical therapy program student must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0. At the end of each semester, the faculty reviews the academic performance of all students. All students must have a GPA of 3.0 by the end of the second academic year in order to matriculate into PHTY 680 in the third academic year. Physical therapy students must complete all clinical education experiences to the satisfaction of the clinical and academic faculty.

Under no circumstances are physical therapy students permitted to participate in graduation ceremonies if they have not satisfactorily completed all the requirements of the professional physical therapy program curriculum.

Curriculum requirements

Course	Title	Hours
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	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)	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	2
PHTY 640	Neurologic Physical Therapy	6
PHTY 644	Orthotics and Prosthetics	2
PHTY 646	Clinical Medicine	2

PHTY 648	Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy II	5
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	2
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
Total Hours		122

The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 122.

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)	1
Term Hours:		18

Spring semester

PHTY 506	Functional Neuroanatomy	4
PHTY 508	Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy I	6
PHTY 520	Clinical Education I	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
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P2 year

Fall semester

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	5
PHTY 661	Administration and Management in Physical Therapy	2
Term Hours:		18
Spring semester		
PHTY 626	Lifespan I	6
PHTY 627	Lifespan II	2
PHTY 640	Neurologic Physical Therapy	6
PHTY 644	Orthotics and Prosthetics	2
PHTY 646	Clinical Medicine	2
Term Hours:		18
Summer semester		
PHTY 650	Clinical Education II	8
Term Hours:		8
P3 year		
Fall semester		
Block 1-8 weeks		
PHTY 651	Professional Issues in Physical Therapy	2
PHTY 654	Clinical Problem-solving II	1
PHTY 670	Clinical Integration of Physical Therapy Concepts	2
PHTY 676	Comprehensive Study of Physical Therapy Practice	1
PHTY 660	Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy III	2
Block 2-12 weeks		
PHTY 680	Clinical Education III	12
Term Hours:		20
Spring semester		
PHTY 674	Clinical Problem-solving III	1
PHTY 695	Clinical Education IV	12
Term Hours:		13
Total Hours:		122

The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 122.

Graduate program director

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Additional contact

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Program website: sahp.vcu.edu/departments/pt/prospective-students/dpt-professional-degree (<http://sahp.vcu.edu/departments/pt/prospective-students/dpt-professional-degree>)