

Pre-Physical Therapy Program in the Biology Department at Winthrop University

INTRODUCTION

Physical therapists (PT) assist individuals with movement and rehabilitation after injury. Several schools offer the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree, including The Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), Methodist University (in Fayetteville, NC), and The University of South Carolina (USC) in Columbia. Winthrop University currently has an established articulation agreement with Methodist University Department of Physical Therapy, which provides the opportunity for students who complete the baccalaureate degree at Winthrop to apply for the DPT program in one of four reserved spots. These programs require a bachelor's degree in order to apply. In the United States, students can no longer enroll in Master's level PT programs; therefore, the DPT must be completed from a CAPTE (The Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education) accredited program. Students must also pass a state licensure exam in order to practice.¹

Students interested in pursuing a career in physical therapy may major in any area, but should ensure that they complete the prerequisites listed below. In addition, admission to physical therapy programs is highly competitive so students will need to maintain a strong GPA. For example, students must maintain a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA and a prerequisite GPA of 3.2 or higher, with no grade below a "C" for prerequisite courses for application to Methodist University's DPT program.²

Most programs also require students to take the GRE (Graduate Record Exam). For example, verbal and quantitative scores within the 20th percentile or higher and analytical writing scores of 3.0 or higher are recommended for students applying to Methodist University's DPT program.² Students must also complete PT experience of direct patient contact in a clinical setting. For example, MUSC recommends a minimum of 40 hours³ and USC recommends a minimum of 50 hours before applying for their DPT programs.⁴ Students may consider BIOL 461 or BIOL 463 for internship credit, which will document the number of clinical hours obtained. Students are encouraged to complete clinical experience at a variety of PT locations (inpatient, outpatient, etc.) and across different categories of PT (such as pediatrics, orthopaedics, etc.).

COURSEWORK

The following are only guidelines; students should consult their advisors and programs of interest to plan their academic schedule.

Biology:

General Biology I and II with labs (BIOL 220/222, 221/223)

Human Anatomy and Physiology with labs (BIOL 307, 308)

Chemistry:

General Chemistry I and II with labs (CHEM 201, 202, and 204; OR CHEM 211 and 204)

Additional Courses

General College Physics I and II with labs (PHYS 201/201L, 202/202L or 211/211L, 212/212L)

Statistics (MATH 141/241)

General Psychology (PSYC 101)

Abnormal Psychology (PSYC 213)

WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO TO PREPARE FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY SCHOOL

The admissions process for physical therapy school is highly competitive. Winthrop offers several opportunities for you to gain experience and skills that will help prepare you for medical school and distinguish yourself as an applicant. You should speak to an advisor about identifying opportunities at Winthrop and in the community. Opportunities available within the Biology Department include:

- Internships (BIOL 461 or 463)
- Undergraduate Research (BIOL 370, 371, 450H, 470, 471, 472)
- Bench to Bedside Program
- Tri-Beta Honors Society
- Honors Program and Honors Thesis
- Pre-Health Professions Student Organization Membership/Leadership
- SEA-PHAGES Program
- Health Professions Connection Blackboard Organization (provides supplemental advising and other helpful information, resources, and services for students planning to go into health professions)

Notes:

(1) Physical Therapist (PT) Education Overview. American Physical Therapy Association (2022). Retrieved from: [https://www.apta.org/For_Prospective_Students/PT_Education/Physical_Therapist_\(PT\)_Education_Overview.aspx](https://www.apta.org/For_Prospective_Students/PT_Education/Physical_Therapist_(PT)_Education_Overview.aspx).

- (2) DPT Prerequisites. Methodist University (2022). Retrieved from: <https://www.methodist.edu/dpt/admissions/>.
- (3) Doctor of Physical Therapy. Medical University of South Carolina (2022). Retrieved from: <https://chp.musc.edu/academics/physical-therapy/admissions>.
- (4) Physical Therapy. University of South Carolina (2022). Retrieved from: https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/public_health/apply/graduate_applicants/application_requirements/physical_therapy_app_requirements/index.php.