Physical therapists must receive a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree from an accredited physical therapist program before taking the national licensure examination that allows them to practice. Other requirements for physical therapy practice vary from state to state according to physical therapy practice acts or state regulations governing physical therapy.

The Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree program are usually three years long. Generally speaking, the first two years are focused on academic and clinical course work including relevant clinical rotations. The third year consists predominately of challenging clinical experiences as well as advanced courses and seminars.

## Lower Division Subjects Required by Most U.S. Physical Therapy Schools

| **Subject** | **Required Coursework** |
| --- | --- |
| One semester of English Composition | English 101 |
| One year of Biology | Requirements vary by campus. Some schools require no courses while other require either 1 semester of Biology (Biology 3) or 2 semesters (Biology 6 & 7). Your undergraduate major may also determine your choice of Math requirements. |
| One year of Inorganic (General) Chemistry | Chemistry 101 & 102 |
| One year of Physics | Either Physics 6 & 7, Physics 66 & 67 or Physics 101, 102 & 103 |
| One semester of Anatomy | Anatomy 1 |
| One semester of Physiology | Physiology 1 |
| General Psychology | Psychology 1 |
| Statistics | Math 227 or Statistics 1. Your undergraduate major may also determine your choice of Math requirements. |

## Lower Division Subjects Required or Recommended by Some U.S. Physical Therapy Schools

| **Subject** | **Coursework** |
| --- | --- |
| One semester of Public Speaking/Speech | Speech 101 |
| One year of Organic Chemistry | Chemistry 211 & 212 |
| Upper division Psychology | Abnormal, Developmental, Adolescent or Sports Psychology course that must be taken at the university in the upper division level. |

Note: All courses should be taken for a letter grade, not Credit/No Credit. Physical therapist requirements vary, check with the individual campus for their specific requirements.

## Choosing an Undergraduate Major

“Pre-physical therapy” is not a major at universities. You should give careful consideration to your choice of major and select an area of study that interests you. Biology and Kinesiology are often popular majors selected. However, students should select an appropriate major that could lead to an alternative career, if necessary.

Students applying to physical therapist programs need to plan carefully and complete not only the physical therapist requirements, but also the requirements for their undergraduate major and the general education required by the undergraduate transfer institution.

## Physical Therapist Selection Criteria

## A bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited university.

## GPA in terms of overall college grades or pre-physical therapist coursework grades, depending on the school.

## Some schools may require admissions tests such the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). Check with the individual campus schools you plan to apply to for information.

## Physical Therapy schools expect applicants to have experience in documented community service.

## To determine oral and written communication skills, physical therapy applicants are required to participate in physical therapy interviews.

## Salary Information

The median wage in 2021 in California was $106,620 ([labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/](https://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/data/oes-employment-and-wages.html#OES)). The median is the point at which half of the workers earn more and half earn less.

## Recommended Website

| **Website** | **Website address** |
| --- | --- |
| American Physical Therapy Association | [apta.org/](http://www.apta.org/) |

## Select Physical Therapy School Websites

| **Website** | **Website address** |
| --- | --- |
| Azusa Pacific University | [apu.edu/bas/physicaltherapy/](https://www.apu.edu/bas/physicaltherapy/) |
| California State University, Fresno | [fresnostate.edu/chhs/physical-therapy/](http://fresnostate.edu/chhs/physical-therapy/) |
| California State University, Long Beach | <https://www.csulb.edu/college-of-health-human-services/physical-therapy> |
| California State University, Northridge | [csun.edu/health-human-development/physical-therapy](https://www.csun.edu/health-human-development/physical-therapy) |
| California State University, Sacramento | [csus.edu/hhs/pt/](https://www.csus.edu/hhs/pt/) |
| Chapman University | <https://www.chapman.edu/crean/academic-programs/graduate-programs/physical-therapy/index.aspx> |
| Loma Linda University | [alliedhealth.llu.edu/academics/physical-therapy?](https://alliedhealth.llu.edu/academics/physical-therapy?) |
| Mount St. Mary’s College | [msmu.edu/graduate-programs/physical-therapy/](https://www.msmu.edu/graduate-programs/physical-therapy/) |
| Samuel Merritt College | <https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/programs/doctor-physical-therapy> |
| University of California, San Francisco | [ptrehab.ucsf.edu/education/dpt](http://ptrehab.ucsf.edu/education/dpt) |
| San Francisco State University | <https://pt.sfsu.edu/> |
| University of Southern California | [pt.usc.edu/](http://pt.usc.edu/) |
| University of the Pacific | [pacific.edu/](https://www.pacific.edu/) |
| Western University of Health Sciences | [westernu.edu/](https://www.westernu.edu/) |

## Clinical Experience

| **Website** | **Website address** |
| --- | --- |
| International Service Learning | <https://islonline.org/programs/program_physical_therapy/> |

Note: Information is subject to change without notice. Check with the individual campus for the most up-to-date information. *Web site links are provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) and/or Los Angeles Pierce College (LAPC) of any of the products, services or opinions of the corporation or organization or individual. The Los Angeles Community College District and/or Los Angeles Pierce College bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality or content of the external site or for that of subsequent links. Contact the external site for answers to questions regarding its content.*