

DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

<https://healthsciences.pacific.edu/healthsciences/programs/doctor-of-physical-therapy>

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Programs Offered

Doctor of Physical Therapy

Program Mission

The mission of Pacific's physical therapy program is to prepare lifelong learners who are skilled, reflective, autonomous practitioners. The program is committed to furthering the body of knowledge of physical therapy and providing leadership within the profession advocating for optimal health, wellness and performance for all members of society.

We accomplish this through a concise program of study emphasizing evidence-based reasoning and creative skills grounded in the basic and clinical sciences. Our academic program is enhanced by a wide variety of innovative clinical experiences and involvement in professional societies.

Curriculum Philosophy

Physical therapists are experts in human movement and function who serve patients/clients at all points along the continuum between health and optimal physical function and disease in a wide variety of circumstances and settings. Physical therapists must be autonomous, highly skilled practitioners to meet the needs of their patients and the expectations of society. These skills are optimally developed in a doctoral level graduate educational program that includes learning experiences in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains and emphasizes the following:

Basic Sciences

Basic sciences are the foundation on which the theory and practice of physical therapy is based. Emphasis on basic sciences provides students with a solid framework in which to view established theory and practice of physical therapy in the educational setting, to evaluate new theory and practice as they move to the clinical setting, and to contribute to theory and practice of physical therapy in the future. Additionally, a solid foundation in basic sciences provides students with the tools needed for clinical reasoning based on evidence, and it provides a common language with which to communicate with other clinicians and scientists.

Professional Behavior

Professional behavior is an essential component of professional success and clinical excellence. Students enter physical therapy programs with a wide variety of past experiences. What constitutes appropriate professional behavior for a physical therapist may not be immediately obvious to all students; therefore professional behavior must be consciously included in the curriculum.

Humility

Clinicians who recognize, integrate, and respond to differences between individuals as well as their vulnerabilities based on social circumstances, become advocates and practitioners who respect the humanity of each person; therefore humility must be consciously included in the curriculum.

Clinical Experiences

Ongoing and progressive clinical exposure promotes accelerated learning and development of clinical competence and facilitates continued student engagement.

Integration of Clinical Relevance Throughout the Curriculum

Integration of clinical relevance in all courses promotes efficient acquisition of clinical reasoning skills.

Student-Centered Learning

Student-Centered Learning promotes intellectual rigor, depth, and accountability for each individual student and fosters the development of the independent learner.

Excellence in Teaching

Excellence in teaching practice results in a deep and efficient learning experience for the student, promotes clinical and intellectual excellence, and fosters lifelong learning.

Conclusion

Commitment to a core curricular philosophy that involves an emphasis on basic sciences, professional behavior, humility, clinical relevance in all courses, early and progressive clinical experiences, student centered learning, and excellence in teaching provides the foundation for an efficient and concise educational experience for students. The field of Physical Therapy and its practice is a dynamic and evolving profession. Following a rigorous and balanced 25-month professional program, graduates of Pacific's Doctor of Physical Therapy program are prepared to meet the needs of their patients and society and to develop their expertise through their commitment to lifelong learning.

Admission Requirements

For the most current information regarding the application process and requirements, including the program policy on transfer credits, please visit the department's website.

Full-Time and Part-Time Status

SHS Graduate students enrolled in 6 credits or more per term will be considered full-time, meaning students will be eligible to apply for the full amount of federal financial aid. SHS Graduate students enrolled in 3-5 credits per term will be considered part-time, meaning students will be eligible to apply for partial amount of federal financial aid. Per financial aid rules, a graduate student who is enrolled for fewer units than 3 credits per term would not be eligible for any federal loan funds.

- **Full Time:** 6 or more units per semester/trimester
- **Half Time:** 3 to 5 units per semester/trimester
- **Less than Half Time:** Less than 3 units per semester

Learning Outcomes

The mission of Pacific's physical therapy program is to prepare lifelong learners who are skilled, reflective, autonomous practitioners. The program is committed to furthering the body of knowledge of physical therapy and providing leadership within the profession advocating for optimal health, wellness and performance for all members of society. We accomplish this through a concise program of study emphasizing evidence-based reasoning and creative skills grounded in the basic and

clinical sciences. Our academic program is enhanced by a wide variety of innovative clinical experiences and involvement in professional societies.

Students in Pacific's Doctor of Physical Therapy program learn skills & techniques necessary for:

- Examining and evaluating patients with health-related conditions, impairments, functional limitations, and disabilities in order to determine a diagnosis toward which the physical therapy intervention will be directed
- Alleviating impairments and functional limitations by designing, implementing, and modifying therapeutic interventions
- Preventing injury, impairments, functional limitations, and disability, including promoting and maintaining fitness, health, and quality of life in all age populations
- Engaging in consultation, education, and research.

The Department of Physical Therapy prepares graduates to practice physical therapy in the State of California.

The Doctor of Physical Therapy Degree

The entry level Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree is a highly structured 25-month course of study, consisting of six consecutive trimesters. Coursework includes foundational sciences (anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology), clinical sciences, management of professional life and practice, clinical applications, and substantive clinical practical experiences.

Doctor of Physical Therapy Curriculum

The Physical Therapy program is a full-time program with a cohort-based plan of study. Students are required to enroll full-time and must advance through a pre-determined curriculum in sequence with their cohort. Students are required to successfully pass each course in a given trimester in order to advance to the subsequent trimester with their cohort and progress in the program. Students who do not pass a course, or who withdraw from a course, will not be able to progress with their cohort in the program. Students may be able to rejoin the program at a later date if allowed by program policy and approved by the program chair/director.

Students must complete a minimum of 111 units with a Pacific cumulative grade point average of 3.0 in order to earn the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree.

First Year

	Units
Fall	
PTHR 311 Gross Human Anatomy	6
PTHR 312 Exercise Physiology in Physical Therapy	2
PTHR 313 Clinical Kinesiology I	3
PTHR 314 Introduction to Physical Therapist Practice	1
PTHR 316 Physical Therapy Examination and Evaluation	4
PTHR 318 Physical Therapy Patient Care Skills	1
PTHR 319 Physical Agents	1
Term Units	18

Spring

PTHR 321 The Nervous System and Behavior	5
PTHR 323 Clinical Kinesiology II	3
PTHR 326 Therapeutic Exercise: Basic Theory and Application	4
PTHR 328 Research: Theory and Application	2

PTHR 329 Pathophysiology	4
Term Units	18
Summer	
PTHR 332 Electrotherapy	1
PTHR 333 Analysis of Movement Through the Life Span	2
PTHR 334 Medical Conditions and Screening for Medical Disease	4
PTHR 335 Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Physical Therapy	4
PTHR 336 Full Time Integrated Clinical Education Experience	4
PTHR 339 Motor Learning and Motor Control	2
PTHR 398 Research Literature Review	1
Term Units	18
Second Year	
Fall	
PTHR 340 Integumentary and Lymphatic Physical Therapy	2
PTHR 342 Physical Therapy Leadership, Administration, and Management	1
PTHR 344 Neuromuscular Physical Therapy	5
PTHR 345 Advanced Clinical Problems I	1
PTHR 347 Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy I	5
PTHR 348 Industrial Physical Therapy	1
PTHR 351 Prosthetics and Orthotics	1
PTHR 353 Diagnostic Imaging for Physical Therapists	1
PTHR 360 Program Completion and NPTE Preparation I	1
PTHR 381 Soft Tissue Mobilization and Taping	1
Term Units	19
Spring	
PTHR 343 Geriatric Physical Therapy	1
PTHR 352 Physical Therapy Management of Population Health	2
PTHR 354 Pediatric Physical Therapy	1
PTHR 355 Advanced Clinical Problems II	1
PTHR 356 Psychosocial Aspects of Illness and Disability	2
PTHR 357 Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy II	2
PTHR 358 Clinical Education and Early Career Development	1
PTHR 359 Full Time Clinical Education Experience I	8
PTHR 361 Program Completion and NPTE Preparation II	1
Term Units	19
Summer	
PTHR 362 Program Completion and NPTE Preparation III	1
PTHR 368 Full Time Clinical Education Experience II	8
PTHR 369 Full Time Clinical Education Experience III	10
Term Units	19

Total Unit: 111

Physical Therapy Courses

PTHR 311. Gross Human Anatomy. 6 Units.

This course involves a detailed regional analysis of the structure of the human body that includes the lower extremity, upper extremity, head, neck and trunk, and thoracic, abdominal, and pelvic cavities. Functional correlates to the structures are also presented and discussed. The course has a lecture component as well as a cadaver dissection based laboratory/discussion component. Prerequisites: Admission to the DPT program or permission of instructor.

PTHR 312. Exercise Physiology in Physical Therapy. 2 Units.

This course is designed to give the physical therapy student a strong foundational knowledge of the physiological response to exercise under normal and pathological conditions, and the mechanisms responsible for those changes. Prerequisite: Admission into the DPT program or permission of instructor.

PTHR 313. Clinical Kinesiology I. 3 Units.

This course introduces students to the basic principles of kinesiology and biomechanics. It emphasizes the integration of basic science knowledge from multiple disciplines into an applied clinical approach to the study of human movement. Course content focuses on the basis of human movement from cells to systems, as well as normal and pathological movement of the lower extremity. Prerequisite: Admission into the DPT program or permission of instructor.

PTHR 314. Introduction to Physical Therapist Practice. 1 Unit.

This course introduces students to the principles and practice of physical therapy. Students explore the history and the role of the profession of physical therapy in the healthcare system and as a member of the healthcare team. Students begin to develop professional behaviors and communication skills required to function in that role. This course includes an introduction to the various practice areas of physical therapy through part-time integrated clinical education experience. Prerequisite: Admission into the DPT program or permission of instructor.

PTHR 316. Physical Therapy Examination and Evaluation. 4 Units.

This course provides an overview of basic examination procedures and clinical reasoning approaches used throughout the practice of physical therapy. Course content includes history-taking, vital signs, inspection, palpation, range of motion measurement, manual muscle testing, neurologic testing, selected special tests, and other functional tests. Prerequisite: Admission into the DPT program or permission of instructor.

PTHR 318. Physical Therapy Patient Care Skills. 1 Unit.

This course introduces the students to the basic principles and practice of patient care in physical therapy. Course content includes patient education, bed mobility and related techniques, transfers and body mechanics, gait devices, wheelchairs, documentation, and aseptic bandaging techniques. Prerequisite: Admission into the DPT program or permission of instructor.

PTHR 319. Physical Agents. 1 Unit.

This course enables the student to properly select and safely and competently apply the various physical agents used by physical therapists. Topics covered include physiological responses and indications, contraindications and precautions for each modality. Case studies are used to illustrate the principles of evaluation and treatment planning. Prerequisite: Admission into the DPT program or permission of instructor.

PTHR 321. The Nervous System and Behavior. 5 Units.

This course is designed to give the student an in-depth understanding to the structure and function of the nervous system, how it controls movement and behavior, and how deficits in the system affect movement and behavior. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 323. Clinical Kinesiology II. 3 Units.

This course is a continuation of PTHR 313 and extends the examination of normal and pathological human movement to the upper extremities, trunk and TMJ regions. Basic biomechanical and kinesiological principles are presented. The relationship of these principles to the clinical environment is stressed. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 326. Therapeutic Exercise: Basic Theory and Application. 4 Units.

This course provides an introduction to the theory and application of therapeutic exercise in physical therapist practice. Students gain an understanding of the physiological effects of training and de-training on the human body and develop the evaluative skills necessary to prescribe a therapeutic exercise plan. Students learn therapeutic exercise techniques for addressing strength, power, endurance, balance, stability, motor control and neuromuscular re-education in a variety of patient populations. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 328. Research: Theory and Application. 2 Units.

This course helps the student develop an understanding of the scientific method of inquiry, research design and methodologies, critical analysis of research articles, critical analysis of health science concepts and findings, and development of clinical research projects through application of the basic principles of the scientific method. This course provides the fundamental background to help students understand evidence-based practice in Physical Therapy. Prerequisites: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 329. Pathophysiology. 4 Units.

This course involves the detailed analysis of the structure, function and pathology of the organ systems of the body. Functional correlates to physical therapy care are included. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 332. Electrotherapy. 1 Unit.

This course enables the student to properly select and safely and competently apply various therapeutic electrical devices. Topics include physiological responses, indications, contraindications, and precautions for the use of these electrical devices. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 333. Analysis of Movement Through the Life Span. 2 Units.

This course focuses on the development and refinement of human movement from infancy to older adulthood. Students develop visual observation skills and handling techniques used to facilitate normal movement in various patient populations. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 334. Medical Conditions and Screening for Medical Disease. 4 Units.

This course focuses on the process of screening for medical referral in the practice of physical therapy. The students learn the major signs and symptoms and medical and pharmacologic management of various medical diseases and conditions. This course also covers the possible sources of referred pain from systemic diseases that may mimic or increase pain caused by neuromuscular or musculoskeletal pathology. The students learn through the use of patient/client interview and other tests and measurements to recognize signs and symptoms that may require referral to other practitioners. During this process, the student applies principles of professional communication to interactions with patients, physicians and other health care providers. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 335. Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Physical Therapy. 4 Units.

This course addresses physical therapy examination, evaluation of and interventions for the individual with cardiovascular and/or pulmonary disease. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 336. Full Time Integrated Clinical Education Experience. 4 Units.

This course consists of full-time clinical experience under the supervision of licensed physical therapists at specified facilities, with which the University maintains an affiliation agreement. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of the instructor.

PTHR 339. Motor Learning and Motor Control. 2 Units.

This course focuses on current theories of motor learning and motor control. These theories will provide a foundation for clinical diagnosis of movement and postural control disorders as well as assessment and treatment interventions. Prerequisites: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 340. Integumentary and Lymphatic Physical Therapy. 2 Units.

This course teaches students the physical therapy management of integumentary and lymphatic conditions. Topics include the pathophysiology and clinical presentations of typical and atypical wound healing and lymphatic system function. Various treatment options to promote wound healing and lymphedema management are covered. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 342. Physical Therapy Leadership, Administration, and Management. 1 Unit.

This course provides an introduction to principles of leadership, business administration, and management in health care. These principles are specifically applied to physical therapy practice settings. Topics include interviewing and negotiating, business planning and budgeting, public relations, and billing and coding. Prerequisites: Successful completion of prior coursework in the DPT program or permission of the instructor.

PTHR 343. Geriatric Physical Therapy. 1 Unit.

This course focuses on physical therapy management of the geriatric patient population. Students gain an understanding of age related changes in biology, physiology, anatomy and function as well as psychological issues and pathological changes associated with aging. Students integrate this knowledge with previous coursework to identify orthopedic, neurological, cardiopulmonary, cardiovascular and integumentary treatment consideration for geriatric patients. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 344. Neuromuscular Physical Therapy. 5 Units.

This course focuses on examination, evaluation and intervention for patients and clients with neuromuscular dysfunction. This course emphasizes the establishment of a diagnosis by a physical therapist, identification of a realistic prognosis and selection of various intervention options based on best evidence. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 345. Advanced Clinical Problems I. 1 Unit.

This course facilitates the integration of knowledge from all prior course work using case studies and actual patient contacts to perform physical therapy examination, evaluation, and intervention. Case studies and patient contacts may include examples of patients/clients with orthopedic, neurological, integumentary, cardiopulmonary, and multiple systems disorders. Students perform all elements of patient care under faculty supervision. Prerequisites: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 347. Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy I. 5 Units.

This course integrates and expands the student's understanding of previous physical therapy coursework as it applies to the musculoskeletal setting, and introduces the student to manual therapy techniques. Students apply concepts from previous coursework to the examination, evaluation, and intervention of patient/clients in the musculoskeletal/orthopedic setting with a regional emphasis on the extremities. Additionally students develop basic competencies in manual therapy techniques for the extremities. Prerequisites: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 348. Industrial Physical Therapy. 1 Unit.

This course covers the physical therapist's roles in occupational health and wellness. Topics include prevention of injury and illness, regulatory compliance, job-based examination and evaluation, and rehabilitation programs that consider the functional requirements of various types of work. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 351. Prosthetics and Orthotics. 1 Unit.

This course provides the student with a basic understanding of the prescription, fitting and use of various orthotic and prosthetic devices. Biomechanical properties of normal and pathological gait for the user of lower extremity devices are discussed. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 352. Physical Therapy Management of Population Health. 2 Units.

This course emphasizes the physical therapy profession and the practice of physical therapy as it relates to promoting the health of populations. Special emphasis will include health policy, applied epidemiologic methods, population health program design, and evaluation, health communications, population health ethics, and professional advocacy. Prerequisites: Successful completion of prior coursework in the DPT program or permission of the instructor.

PTHR 353. Diagnostic Imaging for Physical Therapists. 1 Unit.

This course covers basic principles and interpretation of musculoskeletal diagnostic imaging modalities as they apply to the physical therapist. Indications, normal anatomy, and common findings on plain film x-rays, computed tomography, and magnetic resonance imaging are discussed with an emphasis on the integration of information from clinical imaging into clinical reasoning. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 354. Pediatric Physical Therapy. 1 Unit.

This course provides the student with a foundational understanding of issues and problems that affect the pediatric population addressed by the practice of physical therapy. Students are expected to incorporate knowledge of previous course work used in the evaluation and development of intervention strategies for patients in this population. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 355. Advanced Clinical Problems II. 1 Unit.

This course prepares students for physical therapist practice in inpatient/acute care settings using case studies and simulation scenarios. Students will integrate prior course work to demonstrate examination and evaluation skills, interventions, clinical decision-making, and appropriate responses to adverse patient responses. Patient simulations include pathologies commonly encountered in the inpatient setting. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 356. Psychosocial Aspects of Illness and Disability. 2 Units.

This course is a survey of psychological and social factors related to physical illness and disability. Scientific, theoretical and clinical literature are examined with emphasis on understanding the impact of illness and/or disability on the individual, the family, and the health care professional. This course also covers stress management and professional burn-out. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 357. Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy II. 2 Units.

This course is a continuation of PTHR 347. This course integrates and expands the student's understanding of previous physical therapy coursework as it applies to the musculoskeletal setting, and extends the student's knowledge of manual therapy techniques. Students apply concepts from previous coursework to the examination, evaluation, and intervention of patient/clients in the musculoskeletal/orthopedic setting with a regional emphasis on the spine and TMJ. Additionally students develop basic competencies in manual therapy techniques for the spine and TMJ. Prerequisites: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 358. Clinical Education and Early Career Development. 1 Unit.

This course will prepare students for success in full-time clinical experiences and beyond into early career. Students will be oriented to the performance instrument that will be used to evaluate their clinical performance, and to common teaching strategies used by clinical faculty. Topics also include conflict resolution, legal risk management, professional licensure, National Physical Therapy Examination preparation, and planning for ongoing professional development. Prerequisites: Successful completion of prior coursework in the DPT program or permission of the instructor.

PTHR 359. Full Time Clinical Education Experience I. 8 Units.

This course consists of full-time clinical experience under the supervision of licensed physical therapists at specified facilities, with which the University maintains an affiliation agreement. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 360. Program Completion and NPTE Preparation I. 1 Unit.

Program Completion and NPTE Preparation I. 1 unit. This course is the first in a series of three courses that prepare students to successfully complete the program and pass the national licensure examination. During this course students will review their progress in completing program requirements for advancement to Physical Therapy Doctoral candidacy including but not limited to meeting academic requirements, meeting professional behavior requirements, completing service learning requirements, and demonstrating competency in basic clinical skills. Any areas that require additional work to meet the standard will be identified and a plan for completion put in place. Additionally students will complete an initial comprehensive review and assessment of their readiness to take the National Physical Therapy Examination. Prerequisites: Successful completion of all prior DPT coursework or permission of instructor.

PTHR 361. Program Completion and NPTE Preparation II. 1 Unit.

This course is the second in a series of three courses that prepare students to successfully complete the program and pass the national licensure examination. During this course students complete any remaining program requirements identified in Program Completion and NPTE Preparation I and demonstrate the ability to maintain acceptable professional behavior requirements. Students meeting all the criteria will be advanced to Physical Therapy Doctoral candidacy. Prerequisites: Successful completion of all prior DPT coursework or permission of instructor.

PTHR 362. Program Completion and NPTE Preparation III. 1 Unit.

This course is the third in a series of three courses that prepare students to successfully complete the program and pass the national licensure examination. During this course students complete a comprehensive, structured, guided review in preparation for the National Physical Therapy Examination. Students demonstrate readiness by obtaining a passing score on an approved, summative practice exam. Prerequisites: Successful completion of all prior DPT coursework or permission of instructor.

PTHR 368. Full Time Clinical Education Experience II. 8 Units.

This course consists of full-time clinical experience under the supervision of licensed physical therapists at specified facilities, with which the University maintains an affiliation agreement. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 369. Full Time Clinical Education Experience III. 10 Units.

This course consists of full-time clinical experience under the supervision of licensed physical therapists at specified facilities, with which the University maintains an affiliation agreement. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.

PTHR 380. Medical Spanish for Physical Therapists. 1 Unit.

This elective course teaches the basic Spanish grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure necessary to communicate with patients in a physical therapy and/or medical setting. The course consists primarily of lectures and basic conversational interaction in Spanish. Prerequisites: Successful completion of all previous DPT course work or permission of the instructor.

PTHR 381. Soft Tissue Mobilization and Taping. 1 Unit.

This course teaches both soft tissue mobilization techniques for the various regions and structures of the human body as well as taping and strapping techniques to support and/or facilitate motion. The course consists primarily of labs with demonstration and supervised practice of techniques. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT course work or permission of the instructor.

PTHR 391. Graduate Independent Study. 1-3 Units.

PTHR 393. Special Topics. 1-4 Units.

PTHR 393C. Special Topics. 4 Units.

PTHR 398. Research Literature Review. 1 Unit.

This course helps the student apply the basic principles of research methods to the professional literature and to critically analyze new concepts and findings in that literature. The student chooses a research topic in health science, performs a literature search of primary research articles related to their topic, critically analyzes those research articles, and writes a related literature paper summarizing and synthesizing the information gathered from their literature research. Prerequisite: Successful completion of all previous DPT courses or permission of instructor.