



School of Physical Therapy



Within a vibrant academic community, physical therapy students in the graduate program at Puget Sound benefit from small classes and personal relationships with professors, as well as extensive, hands-on clinical experiences and a coordinated curriculum of written and oral communication woven throughout the program. Trained as critical thinkers and compassionate caregivers, students gain valuable experience through meaningful research, innovative programs, and advanced clinical electives. Puget Sound offers physical therapy services to the community in a free clinic where students deliver care mentored by licensed therapists hired from the region. This clinical learning is integrated into students' second and third years, and is in addition to the program's two required 14-week and 16-week, full-time clinical internships.

Our graduates leave the program clinically ready, as independent practitioners and collaborative professionals in the field. Since the program's founding in 1975, we have had exceptionally high first-time and ultimate passing rates on the professional licensing exam. See our program page for current program statistics at pugetsound.edu/pt.

Clinical Experience

Students in the School of Physical Therapy are required to complete the equivalent of 36 weeks of clinical practice, structured in a developmental sequence to give students the best opportunity possible to achieve excellence as professionals.

During clinical experiences students explore a wide spectrum of practice areas, including adult orthopedics, adult or pediatric neurologic practice, and complex medical, inpatient, and outpatient practice settings, and have the opportunity to explore other specialty areas of practice. Off-campus internships from more than 300 clinical sites throughout the western United States, including Alaska and Hawai'i, begin in the summer of the program's second year.

On-Site Clinic

A special feature of the School of Physical Therapy and clinical experience at Puget Sound is our on-site teaching clinic. Students are responsible for every part of patient evaluation and treatment, from the first visit to the last, while supervised by expert clinicians from the

community. This learning environment provides an unparalleled transitional experience that helps students more fully benefit from off-campus internships.

Opportunities for Community Engagement

Our students play an active role in their community. In addition to providing injury prevention screenings for student musicians and athletes, exercise prescription for community members, and fall risk assessments for older adults, students in the School of Physical Therapy may elect to participate in one of three pathways for ongoing engagement and experiential learning in the community.

All students develop the research literacy and competency necessary to function as effective evidence-based clinicians, but students who elect to collaborate with program faculty on clinical research projects become contributors to the development of new knowledge within the profession. Over the three years of the program, each group completes its project and formally presents the research to the university

community at our annual research symposium. Most students submit their research for presentation at a state or national professional conference.

Students may also elect to seek a global health perspective through curated study and discussion related to the provision of physical therapy services to a global community. The pathway culminates with an experience abroad providing sustainable physical therapy services to individuals in under-resourced communities.

Students interested in local health and wellness initiatives may choose to participate in a community health elective in which students work with a local healthcare or community organization to conduct a needs assessment and maintain an ongoing relationship with the organization and its clients.

Financial assistance to help cover the cost of travel is available through university and departmental grants.

Admission to the School of Physical Therapy

Each entering physical therapy class begins the program in the fall semester. Applications are due in late fall one year prior to the fall semester in which a student plans to enter the program.

Admission requirements:

Baccalaureate degree completed, or realistic plan of completion before beginning physical therapy courses. Students may major in any field.

Overall GPA of all baccalaureate work of 3.0 or better. Puget Sound considers the last completed degree for this GPA; therefore, students with a master's degree with work at 3.0 or better can qualify.

Completion of all prerequisite courses, or realistic plan of completion before beginning physical therapy courses. All prerequisite courses must be taken for a grade, applicants must earn a grade of 3.0 or higher in each anatomy and physiology course, and a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher in all prerequisite courses. For a detailed listing of Puget Sound courses that satisfy these prerequisites visit pugetsound.edu/pt. Consult your course catalog for comparable courses. For assistance in determining courses that meet Puget Sound physical therapy prerequisite requirements, contact the Office of Admission at 253.879.3211 or admission@pugetsound.edu.

Prerequisites include:

- One year of introductory college chemistry with lab
- One year of introductory college physics with lab
- One year of anatomy and physiology (human strongly preferred) with lab
- One course in applied statistics
- One course in psychology or sociology emphasizing human behavior or disability

Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores (only the general test is required) that are not more than five years old.

Exposure to the practice of physical therapy (volunteer or paid) under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist is recommended but no minimum hours are required.

How to apply:

University of Puget Sound participates in the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS). Students who wish to apply to programs in the PTCAS need only submit one application, one set of references, and one set of official transcripts. The complete application is then distributed to each program's admission staff.

For more information or to apply, visit ptcas.org.

Tuition and fees:

The School of Physical Therapy at Puget Sound is a three-year program. Students will participate in two off-campus clinical internships, one during the summer of their second year and one in the spring term of their final year.

Financial aid available to graduate students is composed of federal loans, state work-study employment, and a limited number of departmental scholarships and fellowships.

For more information about tuition, fees, and financial aid, visit the university's Student Financial Services website at pugetsound.edu/gradaid.

Program Outline and Accreditation

The three-year physical therapy program at Puget Sound leads to the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree.

Year One: Students concentrate on foundational courses and begin to study elements of clinical management.

Year Two: Students' main focus is to learn all aspects of patient examination, assessment, and treatment design, progressively dealing with more complex situations through integrated experiences under close supervision in the on-site clinic. In the summer following the second year, students have their first full-time, off-campus internship experience.

Year Three: Students apply what they have learned in the program, take on greater responsibility in the on-site clinic, and study areas of special interest in advanced elective courses. The program is completed with an additional off-campus internship. In total, students have 30 weeks of off-campus internship practice and the equivalent of six weeks of on-site clinic practice.

The School of Physical Therapy at University of Puget Sound is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 1111 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria, VA 22314; 703.706.3245; accreditation@apta.org; capteonline.org.