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Division of Physical Therapy
Health Advisors' Handbook

Academic Year
2009-2010

ACADEMIC PROGRAM
Physical Therapy

Date prepared: June 26, 2009

Program: Physical Therapy

Degree: Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)

For current detail or updates, see our website: <http://www.musc.edu/chp/pt>

The Profession

The profession of physical therapy is governed by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), which currently represents more than 120,000 physical therapists nationwide. The APTA's goal is to foster advancements in physical therapy practice, research, and education. The professional entry-level degree is currently a masters degree. See <http://www.apta.org> . By 2020, the APTA expects all entry-level programs to be at the doctoral level.

Due to the unique and specialized skills required, many educational programs are making a transition to the clinical doctorate of physical therapy. Details about MUSC's Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree program are included in this Advisors' Handbook. There are several specialist certification programs administered by the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties that recognize advanced clinical competence, but these are not required for entry-level clinical practice.

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico require a license to practice physical therapy. In the State of South Carolina, licensing information can be obtained by contacting the S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, South Carolina, Board of Examiners in Physical Therapy, PO Box 11329, Columbia, SC 29211; 803/896-4655. See <http://www.llr.state.sc.us/POL/PhysicalTherapy> . For other states' licensing information, see the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) web site: <http://www.fsbpt.org/licensing/index.asp> . The FSBPT develops and administers the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE) to assess entry-level competence required for first time licensure within the 53 jurisdictions. Other requirements vary from state to state according to physical therapy practice acts or state regulations.

Physical therapists focus primarily on those individuals whose potential or actual impairment is related to musculoskeletal, neurologic, cardiopulmonary, and integumentary (skin) systems. Physical therapists also focus on methods of evaluating these body systems for the purpose of selecting appropriate therapeutic interventions to alleviate pain, to maintain, improve or restore function, and to prevent dysfunction. Physical therapists consult and work closely with patients' physicians and other healthcare practitioners in establishing treatment objectives that are realistic and consistent with patients' needs. Currently, there are 43 states that have enacted legislation to provide direct access, without physician referral, to skilled physical therapy services.

Career Options

The major types of work are: clinical work (direct patient care), research, teaching, administration, and consultation. The employment settings include: schools (K-12), hospitals (emergency, acute, and inpatient rehabilitation), outpatient rehabilitation facilities, community clinics, residential and custodial or long-term care facilities, early intervention programs, home health programs, hospice programs, university clinics, and private practice.

Employment Outlook

College of Health Professions, Division of Physical Therapy, Health Advisors Handbook: 2009-2010.

With just a 0.2 percent unemployment rate physical therapists are now experiencing the best employment conditions since enactment of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

Salary Information

More than 173,000 physical therapists are licensed in the U.S. today. The median salary for a physical therapist is \$70,000 depending on position, years of experience, degree of education, geographic location and practice setting. A survey of recent graduates of the MUSC Physical Therapy graduates indicates that the average starting salary is \$52,400/year (range \$47,000 to \$57,000).

The Program

The Medical University of South Carolina, Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program offers a three-year curriculum that begins each year in late May. The program is full-time, year round and requires 36 months to complete. Structured learning experiences (lecture courses, online coursework and laboratories) allow students to apply theoretical knowledge and develop clinical skills. One seven-week, and three eight-week full-time clinical practicums involving direct patient care are supervised by licensed physical therapists. Quality clinical practice sites are available throughout the United States.

MUSC's DPT program has been updated in depth and breadth of curricular content to include courses that provide the foundation for autonomous practice. These courses include Clinical Pathophysiology, Differential Diagnosis, Clinical Reasoning, Imaging and Electrodiagnosis, and Pharmacology. In addition, a three-semester research series results in a final, Capstone scholarship experience, just prior to the final full-time clinical rotations.

In the clinical education sequence of the program, students complete a total of four full-time supervised clinical rotations at various sites in the United States. Placement at clinical rotations is based on the student's academic standing and educational needs. All off-campus clinical experiences are at the student's personal expense.

Accreditation

The MUSC Physical Therapy Educational Program has been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) of the American Physical Therapy Association since May, 1975. The Doctor of Physical Therapy program is accredited through June, 2011.

Application Procedures

The program commences near the end of May of each year. Applications are available from July 1st of the year prior to the program starting until April 1st of the year classes commence.

The following application deadlines are used:

- Early/Priority Application 15 October
 - Regular Application 15 January
- Regular deadline dates may be extended based on space availability

Applications are available on the MUSC website at <http://www.musc.edu/es>. For questions about the online application process or for a pre-application review of an undergraduate transcript, call the Office of Enrollment Management (OEM) (843) 792-5396. For additional information, contact Dr. Peter Bowman, Director of Admissions for Physical Therapy Division at (843) 792-3942 or email: rehabadmissions@musc.edu.

Admission Requirements:

- 1) Have a bachelor of science or bachelor of arts degree from an accredited college or university by the time of matriculation. A minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale is required for consideration.
- 2) Submit Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores. Applicants should strive for GRE scores in the 50th percentile or above on each section. The verbal GRE score is more heavily weighted in the admissions process.
- 3) Submit Volunteer/Work Experience Form. Forty hours of experience directly related to physical therapy is required.
- 4) Provide two references using the appropriate form. One reference must be provided by a physical therapist and one by a professor or advisor familiar with your academic ability and accomplishments.
- 5) Complete CPR certification through the American Heart Association's BLS for Healthcare Providers, and Basic First Aid Certification through the American Red Cross
- 6) Complete all prerequisite courses. *A minimum of 24 semester hours (36 quarter hours) of the prerequisite courses must be completed prior to application. A minimum average prerequisite GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale is desirable. The basic science prerequisite GPA receives additional consideration in the admissions process.*

Prerequisite Courses	Semester System (hrs)	Quarter system (hrs)
Chemistry with labs*	8	12
Physics with labs*	8	12
Biology *	7	10
Human Anatomy with lab*	4	6
Human Physiology*	3	5
General Psychology	3	5
Abnormal Psychology	3	5
Human Growth and Development	3	5
Statistics	3	5

Basic science courses identified with an *.

Criteria to assist with prerequisite course selection:

- Basic science courses **must be courses for science majors.**
- Biology: Prerequisite courses must be offered through the Department of Biology or a Basic Science Department. In addition to Biology I and Biology II, acceptable courses include genetics, cell biology, zoology, human biology and disease and similar courses. Unacceptable courses include botany, exercise physiology taken in Exercise Science and Physical Education departments, and human physiology when used as the physiology prerequisite.

- **Human Anatomy:** If only a 3 semester credit hour course is offered at your college or university, a comparative anatomy or a kinesiology course is required in addition to the human anatomy course to satisfy the prerequisite requirement.
- **Human Physiology:** Exercise physiology or other courses in Exercise Science or Physical Education Departments will not meet the Human Physiology requirement.
- **Abnormal Psychology:** The abnormal psychology course must cover anxiety disorders, mood disorders, personality disorders, schizophrenia, sexual disorders, delusional disorder, substance abuse, somatoform and dissociative disorders.
- **Human Growth and Development:** This course must include the development and growth of the musculoskeletal and nervous systems, including acquisition and normal development of posture and movement skills.
- **Introductory Statistics:** This course should include parametric and nonparametric statistics.

Both in-state and out-of-state applicants are accepted based on academic merit.

Program-specific requirements (e.g., clinical observations and specific coursework) are identified in the application materials.

Potential applicants with questions should email: rehabadmissions@musc.edu or contact the Office of Enrollment Management at oesadmis@musc.edu or (843) 792-8712.

Selection Factors

Entrance to the Doctor of Physical Therapy graduate degree programs is competitive. Offers of admission to the program follow careful review by the Admissions Committee. Depending on the number of applicants and the inherent competitiveness of the application process, there will be variation across individual programs in the final criteria, and weighting of individual factors. The Admissions Committee of the Physical Therapy academic program will make final decisions regarding admissions.

Applicant Statistics

2009 Entering Class, Physical Therapy DPT

Applied		Offered		Accepted	
Number	309	Number	114	Number	64
In-State	131	In-State	54	In-State	43
Out of State	178	Out of State	60	Out of State	21
Male	80	Male	30	Male	19
Female	229	Female	84	Female	45
Average Age	23.13	Average Age	22.89	Average Age	22.89
Average GPA	3.4	Average GPA	3.64	Average GPA	3.61
Average GRE*	1633	Average GRE*	1733	Average GRE*	1696

* All components included – no breakdown of score given. GRE Analytical Writing scores are converted using the following procedure and added to Verbal and Quantitative scores.

6 = 800 5.5 = 750 5 = 700 4.5 = 650 4 = 600 3.5 = 550
 3 = 500 2.5 = 450 2 = 400 1.5 = 350 1 = 300 0.5 = 250
 0 = 200

Minimum Skills/Eligibility Requirements for Physical Therapy Applicants/Students:

Applicants to the Physical Therapy program must possess aptitude, abilities and skills in the areas of observation, communication, sensory and motor function, intellectual/cognitive skills and behavioral/social attributes.

Sensory/Observational Skills

- Ability to observe demonstrations and participate in lecture and laboratory settings as required in the curriculum
- Ability to observe patients accurately both at a distance and close at hand
- Ability to obtain medical history directly from the patient or guardian
- Ability to use vision, hearing, and other sensory modalities

Communication Skills

- Ability to effectively use English to communicate in oral and written form with faculty, peers, patients and other health care team members
- Ability to complete reading assignments, writing assignments, search and evaluate the literature, and maintain written records

Motor Skills

- Ability to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion and other evaluative procedures
- Ability to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general physical therapy including coordination and speed and agility to assist and safely guard patients who are walking, exercising or performing other therapeutic activities
- Ability to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation
- Ability to lift and transfer patients or direct someone to perform these tasks
- Ability to demonstrate adequate gross and fine motor movements, balance, manual dexterity and kinesthetic awareness to safely perform physical therapy procedures.

Intellectual and Cognitive Skills

- Ability to measure, calculate, reason, analyze and synthesize data
- Ability to obtain, interpret, analyze, evaluate, and document data to determine a physical therapy diagnosis
- Ability to use sound judgment, prioritize therapeutic interventions, and measure and record outcomes
- Ability to use the computer for searching, recording, storing and retrieving information
- Ability to comprehend 3-dimensional and spatial relationships of anatomic structures

Behavioral and Social Attributes

- Ability to use their intellectual capacity, exercise good judgment and promptly complete all duties related to diagnosis and care of patients under potentially stressful circumstances.
- Ability to demonstrate empathy, integrity, ethical standards, interpersonal skills, motivation and interest, not only for admission, but also throughout their careers as physical therapists
- Ability to demonstrate cultural sensitivity

Date prepared: June 26, 2009