

Pre-PT Quick Facts



Pre-Health Advising
Pre-Professional Advising Office
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

You should prepare for a career as a Physical Therapist by building credentials in scholarship, leadership, humanitarian/community service, and shadowing in the various settings of the profession. PT schools greatly value **PT shadowing experience** and prefer for you to have significant shadowing experiences in a variety of PT settings. There is **no “best” major** for pre-PT students. Instead, you are encouraged to pursue a major you are genuinely interested in as that will help you excel. Remember to consult a pre-health advisor about your individual plan!

❖ What is PT? How does it differ from OT?

The fields of occupational therapy and physical therapy are often confused. While both roles provide essential hands-on rehabilitative work to help clients perform everyday tasks as independently as possible, each field takes a distinct approach in helping people get back to their day to day lives. The main difference is that OT focuses on improving a client’s ability to perform activities of daily living (ADL), and PT focuses on improving a client’s ability to perform movement of the human body. OTs tend to have a more holistic perspective and focus on adapting the environment to fit the person.

PTCAS (Physical Therapy Centralized Application Service)

To apply to most PT programs, you will utilize the **PTCAS application** service. Official transcripts, GRE scores, an essay, and letters of recommendation are all submitted to PTCAS. All eight of the PT programs in Georgia use this application service.

PTCAS opens each year in June/July, but programs differ in terms of their application deadlines. Most deadlines are in the fall for a summer start; however, you are responsible for checking the specific deadlines for the programs to which you hope to apply. Generally, you are encouraged to apply well before the deadline since many institutions participate in rolling admissions. Do not enter any information into the PTCAS system until it opens for the new admissions cycle.

Required Courses & GPA Expectations

Typical PT Pre-Requisites:

Chemistry (CHEM 1211/L & 1212/L)
Physics (PHYS1111/L & PHYS1112/L)
Biology (BIOL 1107/L) **BIOL1108/L is common for out of state schools*
Statistics (STAT 2000)
Psychology (PSYC 1101)
Behavioral Science (ANTH 1102 or SOCI 1101)
Anatomy and Physiology (CBIO 2200/L & CBIO 2210/L)

Recommended:

Psychology (PSYC 3230)
Medical Terms (CLAS 1030)
Nutrition (FDNS 2100)
Lifespan Development (HDFS 2200)

DISCLAIMER: This is not a definitive list of the classes you will need for every school. Always check with the individual schools to see their specific requirements. **You should maintain at least a B in all pre-requisite courses.**

GRE

Most PT schools require that you take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The GRE consists of three sections: Quantitative, Verbal, and Essay section. There are no specific courses that you need to take prior to the GRE, but you should plan to dedicate roughly six to eight weeks to exam preparation. While you can opt for a commercial prep course for the GRE, self-study is often sufficient. Students usually sit for the exam in January-May as they head into the application cycle in June. The GRE is offered via University Testing Services on a regular basis.

ppao.uga.edu

Early Decision Program

The Early Decision (ED) program is a binding option for applicants who have decided that a program is their first choice and that they will enroll if accepted. As an ED applicant, you can apply to only one PTCAS program until a decision on your application has been made the program. If an acceptance is extended, you are required to accept this offer and will not be able to apply to any additional PTCAS programs. The Early Decision deadline is typically in mid-August, so students must complete their PTCAS applications quite early to be eligible for this process; however, they should expect to be notified about their early decision acceptance by mid-September. If not accepted to a program via ED, a student is then eligible to apply to other DPT programs via PTCAS by their program-specific application deadlines.

Shadowing

PT programs require that you have experience observing or **shadowing** physical therapists in action. Shadowing is hands-off only. Shadowing requirements for admissions can vary among schools but it is recommended to gain at least 100 hours total of shadowing hours. It is also suggested that you shadow in **3-4 different environments** with both inpatient and outpatient experiences and no less than 20 hours per setting. Diversity of shadowing experiences is incredibly important and may consist of different types of therapy such as aquatic therapy or different populations such as pediatrics or geriatrics. You must record your hours in a log and have the PT that you are shadowing sign off on those hours. You can use excel or download a template to log your hours.

Volunteering & Undergraduate Research

Extracurricular activities, such as club affiliations and **volunteering**, are a large portion of the application that should not be neglected. PT schools are looking for students who not only demonstrate that they can manage rigorous courses while staying busy, but also those who are compassionate, enjoy working with people and are dedicated to serving the community. You should keep in mind that depth of commitment and leadership experience are also considered. As a result, it is best to focus on strong engagement in few activities rather than to spread oneself too thin. Participation in extracurricular activities should not come at the expense of academic work.

Research, although it is not required by most PT schools, is the hallmark of a curious mind and may benefit you in many ways. If you have an interest in research it can be a helpful avenue to pursue.

Diversity of experiences is most important for applications.

Letters of Evaluation

Most PT schools require three letters of evaluation. Requirements can vary between schools, and it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they have collected the correct letters for their program of interest. Generally, programs expect students to provide one letter from a PT, one from a faculty member, and one other of the student's choosing. This can come from another PT, a research mentor, volunteer coordinator, employer, etc. Students should select what they believe will be the most compelling letter.

Georgia PT Program Application Dates

Institution	Application Period	Matriculation Date
Augusta University	July - December	May
Brenau University	July - March	May
Emory University	July - October	June
Georgia State University	July - October	June
Georgia Southern University- Armstrong Campus	July - October	May
Mercer University	July - October	August
University of North Georgia	July - October	May
Georgia – PCOM	July - December	June