

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
PRE-HEALTH ADVISING
ACADEMIC ADVISING AND TRANSFER SERVICES
www.southalabama.edu/departments/academicsuccess/pre-health/

USA DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY
Mobile, Alabama

APPLICATION TO USA DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

The USA Department of Physical Therapy offers a Doctor of Physical Therapy (USA DPT) degree that prepares graduates for professional practice and is designed as an entry-level PT degree. They are seeking applicants who have a strong academic record and high scores on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), as well as documented observation hours. Forty (40) students matriculate into the USA DPT each August.

Students apply July – December in the year prior to their planned start date. Applicants must have a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 and minimum GRE total (verbal + quantitative) of 290. The application process is completed electronically through the Physical Therapy Centralized Application Service (PTCAS). Students also must complete a Supplemental Application to submit to the Department of Physical Therapy. The deadline for all applicants is December 2nd. The Department of Physical Therapy must receive the Supplemental Application by December 2nd.

STATISTICS FOR THE FALL 2018 ENTERING CLASS

Number Enrolled	40
Mean cumulative GPA*	3.88
Mean science GPA	3.72
Mean GRE Total	303
Verbal	152
Quantitative	151

*Cumulative GPA and GPA of the last 64 hours (including Graduate level coursework) are calculated by PTCAS. Both GPAs are considered and the highest is used.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR USA DPT

The USA DPT seeks applicants with a wide range of talents and academic backgrounds. Because of this, all majors, both science and non-science, are considered for acceptance. A bachelor's degree is required for admission. Applicants must also complete the minimum required course work with grades of "C" or higher in each course¹ (see below). Applicants may have a maximum of two science courses remaining by the application deadline. The remaining prerequisites must be completed in the spring and summer prior to starting the program. Please refer to the USA Major Guides for information about course requirements for specific majors.

- General Chemistry with Lab: Two semesters²
- General Biology with Lab: Two semesters²
- Mathematics: One semester³
- Anatomy and Physiology: Two semesters²
- General Physics with Lab: Two semesters²
- English Composition: Two semesters
- Psychology: Two semesters

- Social Science Elective: One semester
- Statistics: One semester

¹U.S. AP and IB credits will be accepted with proper denotation on the undergraduate transcript.

²All math and science courses have required prerequisites. Entrance to these courses will be based on Math ACT or SAT score and/or prior coursework.

³Completion of math courses will be dependent on Math ACT or SAT score. Precalculus Algebra/Trigonometry (one course) or higher math is required (ACT Math 25+, SAT Math 620+ if taken before 5/16, or SAT Math 640+ if taken after 5/16).

RECOMMENDED ACADEMIC PLAN

FIRST YEAR	CREDIT HOURS
CAS 100	2
EH 101 & EH 102	6
MA 115 or higher ⁴	4-6
CH 131/L & CH 132/L ⁵	8
BLY 121/L & BLY 122/L ⁵	8
CA 110	3
TOTAL	31-33

SECOND YEAR

BMD 251 & BMD 252 ⁵	8
Fine Arts	3
English Literature	3
Psychology	6
History (US or Western Civilization)	3
Courses for Major/Minor	9
TOTAL	32

THIRD YEAR

ST 210	3
Physics I & II and Labs ⁵	8-10
Social Science	3
Humanities	3
Courses for Major/Minor	15
TOTAL	32-34

FOURTH YEAR

Completion of Major and Minor	
Courses required for the degree	
TOTAL	30

⁴Students placing into MA 113 will need to take MA 112 to satisfy this requirement.

⁵The semester in which science coursework is taken may be affected by the chosen undergraduate major. Applicants can have a maximum of two science courses remaining at the time of application.

GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATION (GRE)

In addition to maintaining a strong GPA, completing required coursework, and observing a licensed physical therapist, students will need to take the GRE. Students should plan on taking the GRE during the third year. The GRE is composed of three sections: Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Analytical Writing. The Verbal and Quantitative Reasoning sections are each scored on 130-170 scales in one-point increments. The Analytical Writing section is scored on a 0-6 scale in half-point increments.

PHYSICAL THERAPIST CENTRALIZED APPLICATION SERVICE

All applicants must apply to the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Services (PTCAS). Applications are available each July. Students must enter all coursework and observation hours into PTCAS for verification. Students must also send all transcripts and GRE scores to PTCAS. Students are encouraged to begin the process early. Applications are not complete unless they are verified by PTCAS by the deadline.

SELECTION PROCESS

Acceptance to the USA DPT is based on academic ability and aptitude for a career as a physical therapist. GPA and GRE scores are used in a calculation to rank students. Final admission decisions are based on GPA, GRE, and application.

PRE-PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM

Pre-Health Advising is dedicated to supporting the success of students working toward a graduate education in physical therapy. Pre-health advisors are available to help students craft a workable plan by providing structure, guidance, and information about University and Pre-Physical Therapy resources.

CHOOSING A MAJOR

There is no perfect “pre-physical therapy” major at the University of South Alabama. A student can major in any subject area and apply to physical therapy school. If the desired career path changes, students need to be in a major that will allow them opportunities for success. Academic and Pre-Health advisors work together to help students with the coordination of courses for both the major and physical therapy school.

IMPORTANCE OF GPA

Physical therapy schools will require students to provide their academic GPA which includes all grades earned at any institute of higher learning and dual enrollment. In addition, a second GPA will be calculated which includes only those required courses in biology, chemistry, and physics (mean science GPA).

SHADOWING ACTIVITIES

Physical therapy schools desire students with diverse backgrounds and experiences, strong GPAs (especially in math and sciences), sustained volunteer activities, leadership skills and shadowing or experience in the health profession of interest. The USA DPT requires a minimum of 50 hours of work or observation experience under the supervision of a licensed Physical Therapist. Students are encouraged to gain observation experience in a variety of physical therapy settings. Hours must be documented and verified through the PTCAS.

Pre-physical therapy students are entering fields with very strong and well established service orientations. Students need to get involved in service at the start of their college career. There are volunteer activities that students can participate in during the semester, as well as during the summer break. Physical therapists will be part of a team as a health professional, and one way to learn how to be part of a team is to get involved and develop leadership skills.

Students also need to be culturally aware and actively pursue experiences that allow them to learn about themselves and others. It is important for pre-physical therapy students to choose experiences that will allow them to stand out, demonstrate their value, and enable them to work with diverse populations at home and abroad. For instance, if a student studies abroad at some point during the academic career, the student will learn the issues affecting the health and well-being of populations in other countries.

PRE-PHYSICAL THERAPY CLUB

The Pre-Physical Therapy (Pre-PT) Club is an undergraduate student-run organization affiliated with the University of South Alabama Department of Physical Therapy. Students are strongly encouraged to become an active member of the club. Membership in the Pre-PT Club provides students opportunities to meet other students who are interested in physical therapy and to learn more about the physical therapy profession. Members also have the opportunity to participate in mock interviews. This is an active group involved in community service, improving academics, and the development of a network of like-minded people.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

University of South Alabama

Pre-Health Advising

Academic Advising and Transfer Services

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American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)

<https://www.apta.org/>