

SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL THERAPY AND REHABILITATION SCIENCE

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The professional program in physical therapy grants the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree. The program has an entry-level DPT program, an entry-level DPT/MBA program, an entry-level DPT/MPH, and a post-entry level transitional DPT curriculum leading to the DPT degree. The following section describes the profession and the pre-professional requirements and application procedures. This information also is available on School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science program website (<https://www.umt.edu/physical-therapy/default.php>).

The Profession

Physical Therapy is a health care profession concerned with the habilitation and rehabilitation of individuals with limitations resulting from pathological, surgical, or traumatic conditions. The profession is also concerned with health, wellness and prevention of disability in an effort to promote maximal use of an individual's capacities and reduce their risk of illness. Physical therapists are trained to evaluate neurological, musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, respiratory, and integumentary disorders. Exercise and physical agents, such as heat, cold, light, electricity, and massage are used to promote healing, relieve pain, maintain or restore strength, and improve joint range of motion and functional capabilities. Physical therapists play key roles in:

1. the physical therapy diagnosis and treatment of musculoskeletal injuries,
2. wellness and injury prevention,
3. rehabilitating injured workers to return to their jobs,
4. rehabilitating senior citizens after debilitating disease to enable them to remain independent,
5. helping handicapped children to live within the least restrictive environment,
6. preventing and treating sports-related injuries, and
7. conducting research in basic and clinical sciences.

Knowledge of the psychological and social ramifications of disability affecting the individual and his or her family is an integral part of physical therapy intervention.

Physical therapy is practiced in diverse settings, including hospitals, clinics, skilled nursing facilities, sports medicine programs, public schools, and private practices. Legislation in Montana permits direct public access to physical therapists for evaluation and treatment without a physician referral. Even so, physical therapists remain committed to functioning as an integral member of the health care team.

The physical therapy educational program at the University of Montana seeks to prepare physical therapists who have a broad base of skills upon graduation, and who will be able to implement physical therapy services in many settings, especially rural environments. Rural settings require a physical therapist to serve not only as a provider of direct patient care, but also to fulfill the roles of administrator, supervisor, teacher, consultant, and researcher. Students successfully completing

the professional program meet the competencies for physical therapy as determined by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education of the American Physical Therapy Association, receive a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree, and are prepared for state licensure.

The Physical Therapy Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education of the American Physical Therapy Association through 2018.

High School Preparation

Specific high school courses are not required but a background is recommended in mathematics, chemistry, biology, physics, English, and communication skills.

Pre-Professional Physical Therapy Curriculum and Application Process

Students wishing to apply to the professional physical therapy program at the University of Montana-Missoula may select any major for their undergraduate degree. While pre-physical therapy is not a degree-granting major at the University, prospective applicants should list pre-professional physical therapy (PPPT) as their second major. This will allow them also to receive advising from the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science in order to assure adequate preparation for the professional program. In addition to completing a baccalaureate degree, applicants must take the prerequisite courses and meet additional application requirements listed on our website (<http://health.umt.edu/physicaltherapy/>). All prerequisite courses must be taken for a traditional letter grade and must be completed with a grade of "C" (2.00) or better.