

# PRE-PHYSICAL THERAPY

## Competency Development: The Guiding Principle

**Physical therapy (PT) schools are looking for well-rounded individuals who can demonstrate professional competencies!** Many of the experiences listed below will give you opportunities for growth in the 7 core values discussed in the Code of Ethics for the Physical Therapist: [http://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/About\\_Us/Policies/Ethics/CoreValuesEndorsement.pdf](http://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/About_Us/Policies/Ethics/CoreValuesEndorsement.pdf)  
See also the AAMC site: <https://www.aamc.org/services/admissions-lifecycle/competencies-entering-medical-students>  
Note that although the AAMC list is specific to pre-med, growing in these competencies will serve you well in your pre-PT journey.

Your pre-health advisor will be happy to discuss service & leadership opportunities that would connect well with your particular passions and values!

## High-Value Experiences

### 1. **Get involved**

- a. Involvement in Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) or work as a teaching assistant, a lab / learning assistant, or a supplemental instructor can provide you with **leadership and communication** experience that PT schools are looking for.
- b. Developing quality relationships with off-campus, non-profit organizations and the people they serve will give you invaluable **community service** experience. PT schools are looking for people with a service orientation, so it is much better to establish longer, qualitative service relationships with a few non-profits than to focus merely on one-off service events or fundraisers with multiple organizations.

### 2. **Understand what this career entails**

- a. **Shadowing** is a crucial component in your discernment process regarding whether you should pursue this career. PT schools want to see that you have demonstrated sustained interest in this career and that you know what you are getting into. Shadow several PTs (and some occupational therapists) in multiple settings. Note that some PT schools want you to have shadowing experience in both in-patient and out-patient facilities. Talk to your pre-health advisor for more info on how to get started!
- b. **Experience in health care** can take a variety of forms. Physical therapy schools expect that their applicants have exposure to the health care field. You may find it useful to gain experience as a volunteer, an intern, or an employee at a clinical or rehabilitation facility.
- c. Physical therapists need to stay up-to-date about issues related to health care in the US and the world, including the way the media is discussing their profession. They also need to know what is going on in the world in general. Although pre-PT students are not expected to have all the answers, you can begin to **read and stay informed in the field** in order to maintain essential knowledge as you move forward in your journey.

3. **Develop a strong academic record.** Most individuals who are accepted to PT school have a GPA over 3.5. PT schools also place high value on applicants' math and science grades, so pay attention to this during your time here at UW. Talk to a pre-health advisor about how to keep track of your various GPAs. Typical prerequisite courses for PT school and GRE prep are listed on the next page.

4. **Develop relationships with professionals.** Physical therapists, faculty, and work/volunteer supervisors can help you open doors to exciting new experiences, but they will also hopefully get to know you well enough to speak to your competencies in letters of evaluation for your PT school application.

## Meet Early and Often with a Pre-Health Advisor!

Pre-Health Advising Office      hsadvice@uwyo.edu      307-766-3878      Health Sciences Room 110  
To schedule an appointment: <http://www.uwyo.edu/preprof/schedule-an-appointment/index.html>

**Stay Informed!** Sign up to join our Pre-Professional Health ListServ, so you can stay informed about various opportunities, workshops, and information that our office sends out! <https://lists.uwyo.edu/mailman/listinfo/pre-prof>  
**USEFUL TIP:** Create an e-mail inbox rule to send our ListServ messages into a "pre-health" folder to read at regular intervals.

## Academic Preparation

### WHICH MAJOR SHOULD I CHOOSE?

You can major in ANYTHING! Physical therapy schools do not care what you major in as long as you take their prerequisite courses. Most schools require completion of a bachelor's degree before matriculation into their school.

### WHAT COURSES ARE TYPICALLY REQUIRED or RECOMMENDED?

**Note:** Specific PT schools may or may not require all of these courses before application or matriculation. Schools may also require additional courses as entry requirements. **You are responsible for making sure that you are on track to fulfill any specific school's requirements prior to application.** Talk to a pre-health advisor about things to keep in mind for school selection.

#### MATH

**MATH 1400** (College Algebra)

**MATH 1405** (Trigonometry)

**STAT 2050 OR STAT 2070** (Statistics)

**UW Course Prerequisites:** To understand the prerequisites for any UW courses listed on this page, consult [the University Catalog](#). You can find prerequisites either by clicking on a specific course on your "Degree Programs" page or using the search box on the "Course Offerings" page.

#### SCIENCE

*Biological Science courses*

**LIFE 1010** (General Biology)

**MICR 2021** (Microbiology)\*

**KIN 2040 & 2041** (Human Anatomy)

**ZOO 3115** (Human Systems Physiology)

\* LIFE 2022 (Animal Biology) could work as an additional biology course, but MICR 2021 prepares students better for ZOO 3115.

*Chemical Science courses*

**CHEM 1020** (General Chemistry I) [or CHEM 1050]

**CHEM 1030** (General Chemistry II) [or CHEM 1060]

#### **LAB REQUIREMENT (Biology, Chemistry, and Physics)**

PT schools require on-campus, lab-based courses for **all** science courses listed here. PT schools DO NOT usually accept AP credit for these sciences!

*Physical Science courses*

**PHYS 1110** (General Physics I) [or PHYS 1210 / 1310]

**PHYS 1120** (General Physics II) [or PHYS 1220 / 1320]\*\*

\*\* NOTE: Fall-Spring sequence or intensive Summer sequence suggested at UW, since Spring-Fall sequence is online only!

#### PSYCHOLOGY

**PSYC 1000** (General Psychology)

**PSYC 2300** (Developmental Psychology)

**PSYC 2340** (Abnormal Psychology)

#### **How do I prepare for the GRE?**

High-level reading: Regularly read a variety of challenging material (beyond the material required in your courses).

Take any additional courses that require problem-solving or math.

*Talk to a pre-health advisor for other ideas!*

### ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK TO PREPARE WELL FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY SCHOOL

Some schools require additional coursework such as:

KIN 3021 & 3022 (Physiology of Exercise)

Medical Terminology (not available at UW, but through community colleges)

Two composition courses specified as ENGL

**Growth Mindset:** Taking additional challenging courses that interest you will reinforce your knowledge. Selecting a course based on how "easy" it is will not result in the intellectual growth needed to become a physical therapist.

Additional courses at UW that may be beneficial as preparation for physical therapy school include (not required):

KIN 3044 (Concepts in Physical Therapy; spring-only; specifically available for Kinesiology majors)

KIN 3042 (Biomechanics of Human Movement)

#### American Physical Therapy Association

About the profession: <https://www.apta.org/PTCareers/>

Application service: <http://www.ptcas.org/Overview/>

School information: <https://ptcasdirectory.apta.org/>

#### **Questions about funding PT school?**

Find more information at our website:

<http://www.uwyo.edu/preprof/funding-your-education/>

**Wyoming Resident?** Check out WICHE PSEP at this site! <http://www.uwyo.edu/certwy>