

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 work to help people improve their physical abilities, they utilize different approaches. The main difference is that physical therapy focuses on improving a patient’s range of motions, typically by utilizing a prescribed set of exercises while occupational therapy focuses on improving a patient’s ability to perform daily tasks, typically utilizing a wide range of activities. You can think generally of PT being primarily concerned with the body and OT being concerned with the ability to perform daily activities.

Average Matriculant Numbers

- Overall GPA: 3.50
- Science GPA: 3.50
- GRE: ~300 combined score & ~4.0 writing (scores above the 50th percentile)

General Information

- Doctorate Degree (DPT)
- Most programs are 3 years
- Eight institutions in Georgia: Augusta University, Brenau University, Emory University, GA-PCOM, Georgia Southern University-Armstrong Campus (*formerly Armstrong State*), Georgia State University, Mercer University, and University of North Georgia

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 now use this application service.

PTCAS opens each year by July 1st, 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

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.

❖ Do grade trends matter?

If you wish to enter a PT program, you will need to have both a strong science and strong overall GPA. Admissions committees also look for trends on

transcripts—so all is not lost if you stumble in your first semester or two, but then show substantial improvement each subsequent year. However, they will also notice negative trends such as if you consistently withdraw from or perform poorly in hard science courses or if you take multiple courses away from UGA. While an instance or two is not a deal-breaker, a pattern of behavior should be avoided. You must demonstrate the ability to handle difficult scientific content.

Typical PT Pre-Requisites

Biology (BIOL 1107/L) *BIOL1108/L is common for out of state schools
Chemistry (CHEM 1211/L & 1212/L)
Physics (PHYS1111/L & PHYS1112/L)
Statistics (STAT2000)
Anatomy and Physiology (CBIO2200/L & CBIO2210/L)
Psychology (PSYC1101 and/or PSYC3230)

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 July. The GRE is offered via University Testing Services on a regular basis.

prehealth.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 by 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

Generally, PT programs require that you have experience observing or **shadowing** physical therapists in action. Shadowing requirements for admissions can vary in a few aspects between schools including hours required, number of environments, and types of environments. While most programs require 100 hours minimum, more is certainly recommended. It is common for programs to suggest that you shadow in at least two different environments – inpatient and outpatient. It is encouraged to shadow in 3-4 different settings within these environments. Variety in shadowing is always helpful, but it is also important to try to get a well-rounded experience in each environment since shadowing is regularly discussed during admissions interviews.

Volunteering & Undergraduate Research

Extracurricular activities, such as club affiliations and **volunteering** (clinically and not clinically related), 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. For example, a research mentor may be a good person to ask for a letter of recommendation, and research experience may help distinguish you from those without that experience.

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