

Pre-Physical Therapy

In preparation for a career in physical therapy, students may major in one of several academic areas and apply to Widener's graduate physical therapy program early in the third year of undergraduate study. From the very first day of enrollment, students will be assisted in the preparatory phase by a pre-physical therapy advisor. Several pre-physical therapy program options are available.

Pre-Physical Therapy Options

Option One

Widener students may qualify to enter Widener's graduate program in physical therapy following their third year of undergraduate study under the 3+3 track. Students must major in anthropology, biology, fine arts, psychology, or sociology and take a specially determined sequence of courses.

Widener undergraduates who are admitted to the graduate physical therapy program following their junior year are considered to be 3+3 students. The courses they take during their fourth year count toward both their senior undergraduate year and the first year of the graduate degree. The baccalaureate degree in anthropology, biology, fine arts psychology, or sociology is conferred upon successful completion of the first year of graduate study. After successful completion of the graduate program, students receive the degree Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT).

Accelerated Guaranteed 3+3 Admissions Program

Entering freshman with exceptional high school transcripts who have demonstrated strong performance in science courses and on the SAT may be offered the accelerated guaranteed 3+3 program. The guaranteed 3+3 program ensures the student a seat in Widener's graduate physical therapy program. Throughout the first three years of undergraduate study, students must follow the prescribed program, including maintaining an overall GPA of 3.0 or greater. Additionally, all of the specific pre-requisite courses for admission to the graduate physical therapy program must be completed with a minimum grade of B-. Prior to applying to the graduate program, students must provide documentation of a minimum of 40 hours of experience in a physical therapy facility under the direction of a licensed physical therapist. These experiences can be paid or volunteer and it is recommended that they be in at least two very different practice settings (e.g. acute care hospital and outpatient clinic settings). Guaranteed 3+3 students will submit an application to the graduate program in the fall of their junior year. They will need to provide only one letter of recommendation (from a licensed physical therapist) and will have the graduate program's GRE requirement waived.

Guaranteed 4+3 Admissions Program

The majority of entering freshman accepted into the pre-physical therapy program receive the guaranteed 4+3 admission, which ensures them a seat in Widener's graduate physical therapy program. All of the same requirements and benefits of the guaranteed 3+3 are offered, however students will complete all required courses for their academic major and all pre-requisite courses for the graduate program in four years. Students will apply for

the graduate program in the fall of their senior year. This alternative four-year undergraduate program provides a less intense schedule of courses because the undergraduate period is the traditional length.

Regular 3+3 and 4+3 Admissions Program

Widener undergraduates pursuing entry into the graduate physical therapy program through this option must complete the entire application process required for all applicants, including submission of Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores and three letters of recommendation. Widener University students compete for admission with applicants from outside the university. However, Widener undergraduates will be given preferential consideration, which is described in the *Graduate Admissions Guidelines* section. *Any student who has not met the obligations of the guaranteed program, but continues to demonstrate strong grades in the pre-requisite courses for the graduate program is eligible to apply through the regular admissions cycle.*

Option Two

Students who have completed a course of study in a physical therapist assistant program, earning an associate degree from a CAPTE accredited program, may complete a Bachelor of Science in Allied Health degree through Widener's University College, which offers part-time undergraduate degree and certificate programs for adults.

Students who have completed the equivalent of five semesters of undergraduate course work at University College are eligible to apply for admission to the graduate physical therapy program. The students must present a plan that demonstrates they can complete all prerequisite course work by the following fall semester.

Option Three

Applicants holding a bachelor's degree in any discipline from Widener or another university may apply to the graduate program in the regular admissions cycle. Students entering under this option include recent graduates, as well as students seeking a career change.

Graduate Admissions Guidelines

Widener University's pre-physical therapy students will be given preferential consideration over equally qualified applicants from outside the university.

To qualify for this preferential consideration, Widener undergraduates must satisfy objective standards, including prerequisite course work, GPA and GRE scores, and subjective standards based on an assessment of references and essays reflecting the applicants' knowledge of and commitment to the profession of physical therapy. All of these standards are used to assess every applicant to Widener's graduate physical therapy program.

Why Choose Widener?

Widener's graduate program in physical therapy was among the first ten programs nationwide to offer the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree. Now over 95% of 200+ programs offer this degree, which is the preferred degree in physical therapy education by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.

Students following the pre-physical therapy curricular tracks will find a wealth of support from both their advisor in their academic discipline as well as from faculty in the graduate physical therapy program. All freshman are encouraged to take a Freshman Seminar in their first semester and the graduate program offers a special seminar designed for pre-physical therapy students and is taught by graduate physical therapy faculty. Pre-physical therapy students can also take advantage of membership in the pre-physical therapy club, which aids in advising students as they prepare for application to the graduate program and plans both social events and community outreach activities throughout the year. Pre-physical therapy students are also encouraged to take advantage of all that Widener offers its undergraduates, including participation in undergraduate research opportunities, internships, study abroad, and local community service.

Once in the graduate program, students will take part in a many experiential learning opportunities as they prepare to become competent clinicians. Students will engage with a faculty of practicing therapists who are active in clinical practice and research and who represent many of the physical therapy specialty practice areas. All graduate students will complete four full-time clinical rotations in a variety of practice settings in order to prepare them for successful completion of their national board examination and for contemporary physical therapy practice. Students can also elect to participate in leadership roles within the program through our Physical Therapy Student Association and the Student Advisory Board to the Chester Community Physical Therapy Clinic sponsored by the program.

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