

Washington University School of Medicine

# Doctor of Physical Therapy



Washington University in St. Louis

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Doctor of Physical Therapy

# By the Numbers

**38 weeks**

of full-time  
clinical experience

**Ranked #1**

PT program by  
*U.S. News & World Report*

**More than 100**

undergraduate institutions  
represented in student body

**400+** clinical training  
sites nationwide

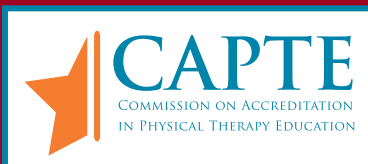
Continuously accredited  
**since 1942**

Average teaching tenure:  
**20 years**

**99%** average passage rate  
on the professional licensure  
exam on the first attempt



**The Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Program** at Washington University School of Medicine prepares graduates to be outstanding diagnosticians and therapists, ready and able to realize their professional goals. Our students learn from leaders in the field in an environment of support, enthusiasm and excellence. We invite you to become a part of our extraordinary community.





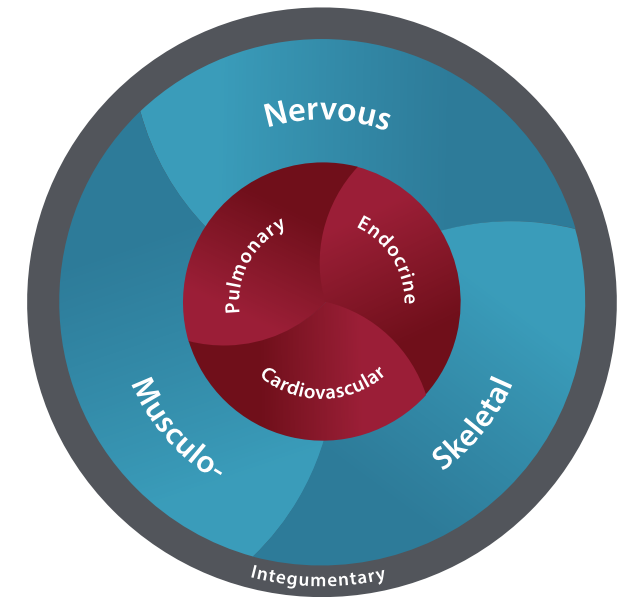
## Why Washington University?

Our faculty, students and staff are proud of the program and passionate about the field. Our program pioneered and continues to advance an approach to physical therapy that focuses on the science of movement — more specifically, how improper movement leads to physical injury, impairment and problems with function.

Under this model, our students learn not only to manage symptoms, but to identify and correct their underlying causes. Our curriculum is built around the human movement system, the set of organ systems that interact to produce and support movement of the body. The primary drivers of movement are the nervous and musculo-skeletal systems, with the pulmonary, endocrine, cardiovascular and integumentary systems in supportive roles.

Our approach produces highly sought-after graduates who go on to successful and rewarding careers.

## The Human Movement System



“The human movement system is the foundation of our profession. Physical therapists are movement system experts. The human movement system sits at the core of our three-pronged mission to provide exceptional education, conduct groundbreaking research and deliver outstanding patient care.”

— Gammon Earhart, PT, PhD, FAPTA  
Director, Program in Physical Therapy

# Program Overview

The Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Program at Washington University School of Medicine is a professional, full-time clinical doctorate course of study that prepares students for the practice of physical therapy.

## Our Learning Environment

The Program in Physical Therapy creates a learning environment for the DPT curriculum that promotes the health and equity of students, employees and members of our community. Our students are surrounded by professionals engaged across the triple aim of education, research and clinical practice. Students work collaboratively with expert clinicians immersed in the contemporary clinical environment, top researchers who incorporate new discovery in the classroom, and master educators who integrate new knowledge through the best practices in the learning sciences. Our environment is warm, non-competitive and collegial. We take a learner-centered approach to education that provides active, flexible and individualized learning opportunities supported through coaching and mentoring; our assessment philosophy is focused on growth and improvement.

## Authentic Situated Learning Experiences

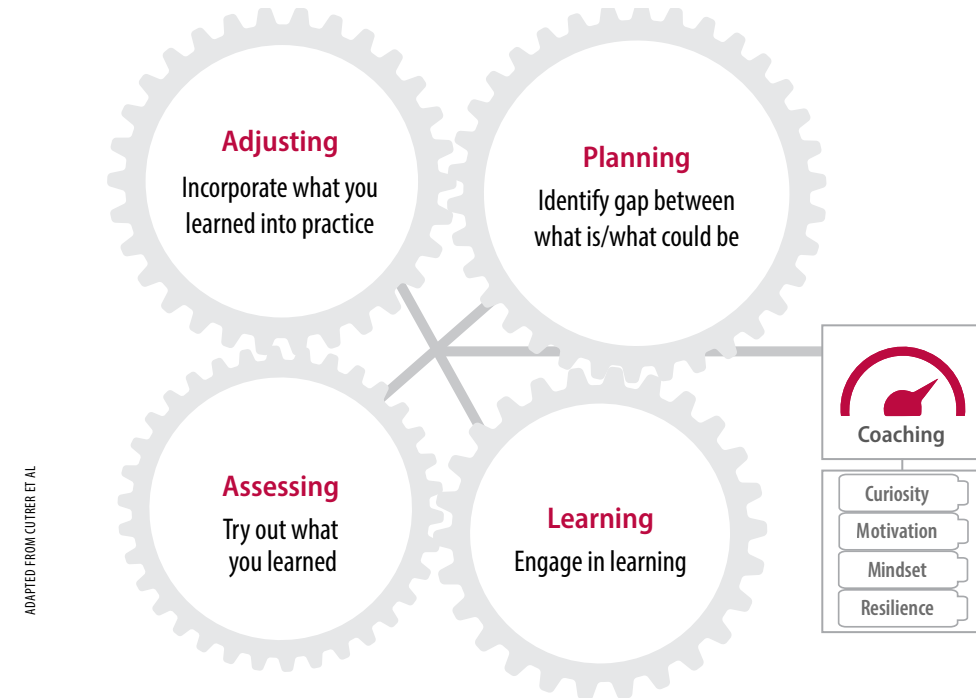
The two-year, eight-month program engages students in authentic situated learning experiences that involve patients in the academic and clinical settings. In the classroom, students interact with each other, faculty and clinical subjects to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities of the movement-system practitioner. Classes also feature case studies and training at off-site clinical locations. Students encounter increasingly difficult cases as they move through the curriculum. Part-time integrated clinical experiences and full-time clinical education begin early and are distributed throughout the curriculum to provide real-world experience and deeper experiential learning.

## Interprofessional Engagement

Students benefit from formal and informal experiences in interprofessional education. They work with and learn from other faculty and students including those from occupational therapy, medicine, pharmacy, audiology and nursing. Program in Physical Therapy graduates embrace their professional identity as leaders in their community, dedicated to advancing human health by preventing, diagnosing and managing movement problems across the life span.

# Inside the Mind of a DPT Student

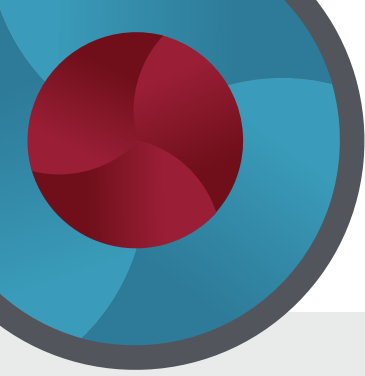
The DPT curriculum focuses on the development of the master adaptive learner while also promoting progression to or beyond competence. Over time, students develop the ability to plan, learn, assess, adjust, critically think and reflect with the independence necessary for exemplary entry-level practice.



## Domains of Competence

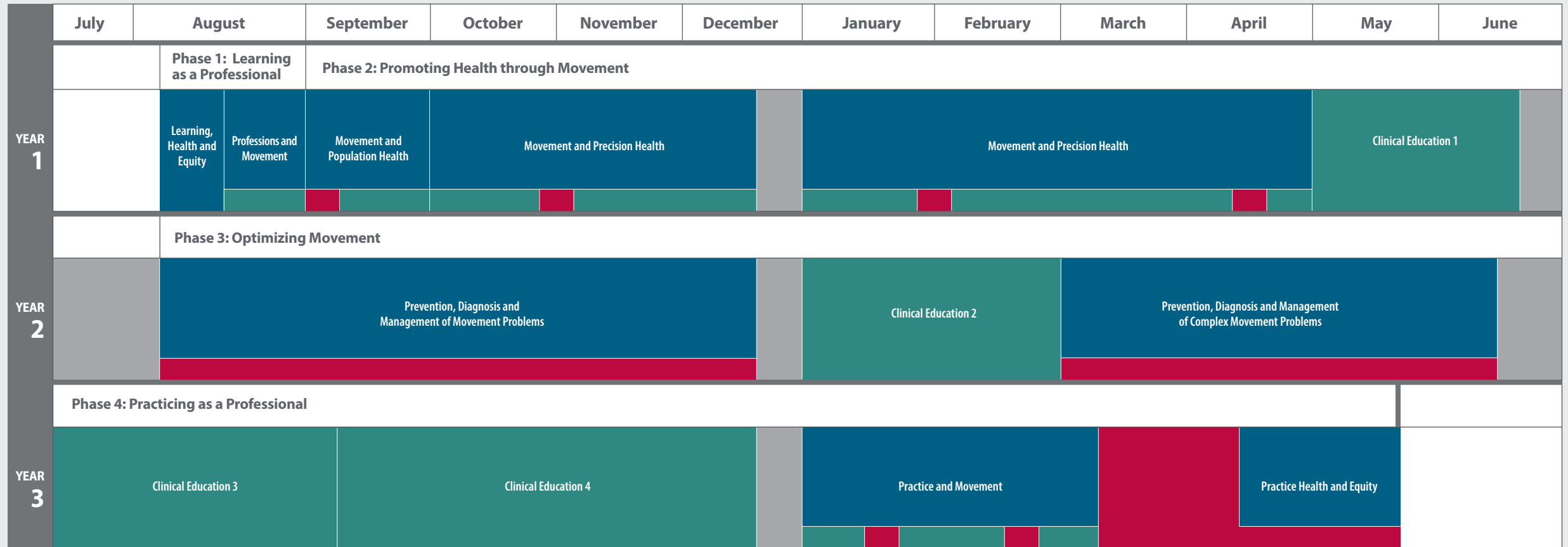
Our domains of competence are the broad, distinguishable areas of competence that together constitute the general descriptive framework for the profession and our program. The learner will progress toward competence in each of these areas as they move through the curriculum.

- Patient and Client Care:** Provide informed, compassionate, effective and efficient person-centered care for the management of movement problems and the promotion of health and wellness
- Knowledge for Practice:** Integrate knowledge from established and evolving movement and other relevant biomedical, clinical, epidemiological and social-behavioral sciences to guide practice
- Practice-Based Learning and Improvement:** Evaluate one's delivery of care, appraise and assimilate scientific evidence, and continuously improve performance based on self-evaluation
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills:** Use effective interpersonal and communication skills to interact and collaborate with others
- Professionalism:** Adhere to ethical and legal principles, model professional behaviors, and demonstrate a commitment to citizenship within the profession and the community
- Systems-Based Practice:** Function effectively and proactively within evolving systems and environments that affect the health of individuals and populations
- Interprofessional Collaboration:** Engage within interprofessional teams as an effective member and collaborative leader
- Personal and Professional Development:** Demonstrate the attributes required to engage in lifelong personal and professional growth



# The DPT Curriculum

Throughout the curriculum the learner progresses through four phases of development. Each phase includes all domains of competence and the complete cycle of the master adaptive learner.



**Active Learning**  
Engaging in content with faculty, patients and peers within an active learning environment

**Clinician/Scholar/Educator**  
Choosing how to engage with competencies organized across current professional and societal issues related to health and human movement

**Situated Learning**  
Learning that occurs in the authentic clinical environment, including Clinical Education (CE) and Integrated Clinical Experience (ICE)

**Unscheduled**  
Break time or time for individualized learning opportunities

### Phase 1: Learning as a Professional

- Learning, health and equity
- Master adaptive learner
- Professions and professionalism
- The movement system practitioner

### Phase 2: Promoting Health through Movement

- Movement science
- Social and environmental systems
- Movement system practitioner and population health
- Movement system practitioner and precision health

### Phase 3: Optimizing Movement

- Prevention, diagnosis and management of movement problems
- Prevention, diagnosis and management of complex movement problems

### Phase 4: Practicing as a Professional

- Practice, health and equity
- Master adaptive learner
- Professions and professionalism
- Focused movement system practice

# Clinical Education

Clinical education is integrated throughout the curriculum. Students learn and apply key concepts, techniques and critical-thinking skills. An emphasis on evidence-informed health care prepares students for excellence in clinical practice.

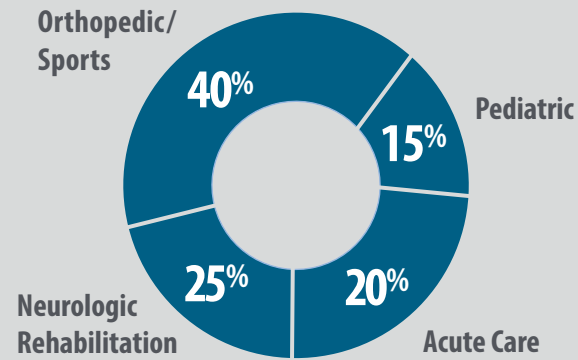
Clinical training includes:

- Classroom learning throughout the program with fellow students and clients
- Integrated clinical experience in an area clinic (year one)
- Four full-time clinical experiences, each 8-12 weeks in length (38 weeks total) in a variety of practice settings

Students complete clinical experiences in a variety of settings such as hospitals, outpatient clinics, skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitation centers and school systems. Students complete clinical experiences in both the inpatient and outpatient settings; the two additional clinical experiences are completed in settings of their choosing.

Students select sites in partnership with their faculty advisors, who also provide guidance during the clinical experiences. Sites are available in a wide variety of settings in urban, suburban and rural areas, and may include international experiences.

## Clinical Experience Practice Specialties



Choose from 400+ sites in 43 states, District of Columbia and international cities.



"The learning atmosphere within the classroom at WUPT is very open, rigorous, and most importantly, clinically relevant. The things that the faculty choose to implement within the curriculum are on the cutting edge of what is most important to clinical practice. I feel beyond prepared to enter the workforce as a new graduate."

— Carter Hoffman, DPT '20, Spring Green, Wisconsin





## Faculty

**O**ur faculty members are fully committed to excellence in teaching and possess the breadth and depth of knowledge to deliver a strong curriculum.

The program is designed to provide individual guidance and attention. All faculty maintain an open-door policy, leaving them fully accessible to provide advice, instruction and one-to-one mentoring.

Many faculty hold leadership positions in the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and its academies, and across the continuum of professional education including DPT education, clinical specialization and residency and fellowship training. They are invited to present their research at regional, national and international professional conferences.

Most treat patients and serve as outstanding clinical role models. Other faculty are actively engaged in research aimed at advancing patient care and the science of movement. They investigate and improve movement system function in people with chronic diseases such as obesity, stroke, diabetes, neuropathy, Parkinson disease and low back pain.

Assistantships and work-study positions provide opportunities for students to work in faculty research laboratories and to see how basic translational and clinical research moves the profession forward.



**“WUPT has a deep bench of faculty who are experts in their field. It is enjoyable and easy getting to know these educators, who will become your colleagues in a few short years. They stress the importance of leaving competition “at the door” and instead working as a cohort to share resources and help each other succeed.”**  
— Sarah Flood, DPT '20, Rancho Santa Margarita, California

# After Graduation

Graduates leave the program as exceptional clinicians. They are trained as generalists but are fully prepared to excel in any practice setting, patient population or specialty area.

- 99% graduate
- 99% typically pass the professional licensure exam on the first attempt (above the national average)
- On average, each student receives at least three job offers
- The vast majority gain a position of their choice before or shortly after graduation
- Alumni practice all across the nation
- Recognized for excellence by several state and national physical therapy associations

## The Profession

The physical therapy profession offers extremely varied and rewarding career options in clinical practice, administration, research and education. For more information visit the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) website at [apta.org](http://apta.org).

### Clinical Specialty Areas

Orthopedics  
Cardiovascular/pulmonary  
Neurologic  
Pediatrics  
Sports  
Geriatrics  
Women's health  
Hand therapy  
Clinical electrophysiology  
Oncology

### Work Environments

Outpatient clinics  
Rehabilitation centers  
Hospitals  
Schools  
Home care agencies  
Nursing homes  
Industrial businesses  
Fitness centers  
Telehealth



"The program challenges students to not only develop excellent clinical skills, but to have big-picture ideas about what they can accomplish as a physical therapist. It will open doors for you that allow you to become a leader in whatever field of physical therapy or facet of the profession that you choose. Take advantage of it!"

— Brett Wright, DPT '20, Longmont, Colorado







## Student Life

The Program in Physical Therapy is extremely proud of its students. They are well-rounded individuals who come from a variety of educational and cultural backgrounds.

Although our students are committed to their studies, they still find time to relax and have fun. In our supportive learning environment, classmates become fast friends, not competitors, and they bring out the best in each other within and beyond the classroom.



## Student Outreach

Our students build leadership skills and improve their community through several outreach efforts:

- Organize **Run for Research**, a 5K/10K run and 1-mile walk to raise funds for the Foundation for Physical Therapy
- Participate in **National Biomechanics Day**
- Participate in a **community service project** each fall
- Participate in **Mini-Medical School** and **health fairs** at Washington University School of Medicine
- Organize the **Vashon After School Program**, teaching local high school students about the physical therapy profession
- **Educate** local and international communities about physical therapy
- **Sponsor** food, clothing and blood drives



"WUPT offers students an excellent didactic curriculum, diverse clinical experiences, research opportunities, and professional service/advocacy in one fantastic program. I believe the education I have received here has prepared me to be the best clinician I can be, and equipped me to be a life-long learner."

— Haley Brogan, DPT '20, Golden, Colorado

# St. Louis

The “Gateway to the West” is a thriving metropolitan area of 2.6 million people that retains the friendly character of the Midwest. The fun and culture of a big city are readily available, but living here is easy and affordable.

Washington University Medical Campus is located in the cosmopolitan Central West End neighborhood with its eclectic bookstores, coffee houses and sidewalk cafes. Housing options include affordable apartments in the Central West End, near the Danforth Campus and in the School of Medicine’s Olin Residence Hall on campus.

Full-time Washington University students are eligible to receive a Metro Universal pass from the university, which provides free access to the entire Metro transit system, including buses and light rail (MetroLink).

Forest Park, located adjacent to the medical center, is a haven for individuals seeking either solitude or outdoor fun. This enormous park, larger than New York’s Central Park, offers countless facilities for athletics, cultural activities and fun. The park is home to the Saint Louis Science Center, the Saint Louis Art Museum, the Missouri Historical Society and the nationally recognized Saint Louis Zoo.

Many types of affordable entertainment are available. The Missouri Botanical Garden offers beautiful displays year-round. The Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra is among the country’s best. The Black Rep — the nation’s largest professional African-American theatre company — offers live theater from the Black perspective. The Fox Theatre presents Broadway shows, dance performances and concerts.

For more information, visit [medicine.wustl.edu/about/st-louis](https://medicine.wustl.edu/about/st-louis)



# Prerequisites

The program recommends completing the majority of prerequisite courses prior to applying.

- One year chemistry sequence with labs
- One year physics sequence with labs
- One year of biology courses (Course content should include cell structure and function and function of macromolecules)
- One course in anatomy with lab and one course in physiology with lab OR a two-course sequence in anatomy and physiology with labs
- One course in psychology
- One course in statistics

At the time of application, you must have no more than five prerequisite courses outstanding and provide a plan for how all requirements will be met prior to enrollment. All prerequisite courses must be completed with a grade of “C” or better.

Applicants must possess a minimum 3.0 GPA in each of the following PTCAS categories: science, combined science and math, and core PT prerequisites.

Additional coursework that demonstrates competence in critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, scientific inquiry, communication and movement sciences better prepares students for the rigor and expectations of the program, but is not required. Examples may include trigonometry; calculus; upper-level psychology;

human anatomy with an emphasis on origins, insertions, actions and innervations of muscle; exercise physiology; and biomechanics.

Although a specific number of observation hours (paid or volunteer) are not required for acceptance, we expect applicants to have sufficient exposure to the profession to provide them with an understanding of the scope of physical therapy practice and the willingness to work with a variety of patients in both outpatient and inpatient settings.

International applicants whose native language is not English must take the TOEFL exam within a year of applying. Minimum acceptable scores: iBT: 100, IELTS: 7.0. International transcripts must be evaluated by World Education Services ([www.wes.org](http://www.wes.org)) if courses were completed at an institution outside of the United States. Documentation must include course names, grades and credits in American terms.

## Student Profile

- Overall average GPA: 3.7/4.0
- Average science: 3.6/4.0
- Average science/math: 3.6/4.0
- Average core PT prerequisites: 3.7/4.0

# How to Apply

## Application Process

Applicants must apply online using the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS) found at [ptcas.org](http://ptcas.org).

It is recommended that applicants complete the application as soon as possible, but not before the majority of prerequisites are completed.

## Deadlines

**January 15:** Deposits for admitted applicants due. Earlier deposits are welcome. This fee is non-refundable and will be applied to tuition after matriculation. If admitted after this date, the deposit is due two weeks after notification of admission.

**February 1:** Final application deadline. PTCAS must receive all official U.S. transcripts, recommendation letters and TOEFL scores.

## Selection Process

The program uses rolling admissions; the program’s admissions committee reviews all completed applications in the order in which they are received, beginning in September.

The committee considers the applicant’s GPA, recommendation letters, essays, extracurricular activities and overall interest in physical therapy. A personal interview is not required for admission. The Program in Physical Therapy recruits and enrolls a diverse student body representing a large number of states, and often several foreign countries.

## Matriculation Requirements

- All prerequisites completed.
- Baccalaureate degree completed and final transcript submitted, showing date of conferral.
- Current certification in first aid and infant/child/adult CPR (American Heart Association preferred).

## Financial Assistance

The majority of students qualify for financial assistance. The program offers multiple scholarships and competitive research assistantships to qualified students. Financial aid is available through application. For more information visit [finaid.med.wustl.edu](http://finaid.med.wustl.edu).



What makes Washington University special?  
**Come see for yourself.**

**W**e invite all prospective students and their guests to take a comprehensive look at the school through a half-day campus visit.

- Tour facilities
- Meet with one of our Student Ambassadors
- Attend a class
- Meet faculty members
- Visit with admissions officers

To arrange a visit, please contact the Admissions Office at least one week in advance.

We also sponsor an annual Fall Open House for all interested students and a Spring DPT Preview for students who are admitted or on the wait list.

**Phone: 314.286.1400**

**Email: [ptadmissions@email.wustl.edu](mailto:ptadmissions@email.wustl.edu)**

**Web: [pt.wustl.edu/visit](http://pt.wustl.edu/visit)**



**Connect for a virtual visit:  
[pt.wustl.edu/visit](http://pt.wustl.edu/visit)**



Washington University in St. Louis

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Washington University School of Medicine

## Doctor of Physical Therapy

Mail Stop: 8502-66-1101

4444 Forest Park Ave., Suite 1101

St. Louis, MO 63108-2212

**Phone:** 314.286.1400 • **Fax:** 314.286.1410

**Web:** [pt.wustl.edu](http://pt.wustl.edu)

Washington University encourages and gives full consideration to all applicants for admission, financial aid and employment. The university does not discriminate in access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, veteran status, disability or genetic information. Inquiries about compliance should be addressed to the university's Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, Washington University, Campus Box 1184, One Brookings Drive, St. Louis, MO 63130. The School of Medicine is committed to recruiting, enrolling and educating a diverse student body.