



Doctor of Physical Therapy Program Frequently Asked Questions

PROGRAM

How long is the program?

2.5 years (30 months) Classes begin in late June and graduation takes place in December.

How many credit hours are required to complete the program?

The full program is 110 credit hours (94 didactic; 16 full-time clinical).

What is the class schedule?

The class schedule will vary by semester but you should be prepared to be in class five to seven hours per day (on average). You will always have at least a one-hour lunch break each day, and we will try to schedule one afternoon each week without classroom time.

How many full-time clinical rotations are in the program?

Three. One is 10 weeks in duration following the first full year of didactic work. The second is also 10 weeks and falls in the middle of the second year. The third is 12 weeks in duration during the final semester of the program.

Do you offer full-time clinical rotations outside the state of Michigan?

Yes. We currently have a number of contracts with facilities outside Michigan (primarily in surrounding states), and we are establishing relationships on an ongoing basis with out-of-state clinics and hospitals as the program develops.

Do I get to choose where I will complete my clinical experiences?

There are many factors to be considered when placing students for formal clinical experiences. Our first priority is ensuring that students are placed in settings that will afford them the best clinical education. In addition, we must ensure that students gain experience in a broad range of settings (we require one formal rotation in each of the following settings: orthopedic, neurological, and inpatient/acute). Another consideration is the need to utilize facilities with which we have a formal legal contract (required by law). As we are a developing program, the facilities on this list continue to grow, expanding our available placement sites both locally and nationally. While student choice will be a factor in placement considerations, it will not be the sole component.

ADMISSIONS

How many students are admitted each year?

There will be 30 students in each cohort.



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What are your minimum application requirements?

Minimum requirements can be found at wmich.edu/physicaltherapy/dpt/requirements.

What is the application deadline?

The deadline for applications will be roughly October 15 of each year. Details can be found at www.ptcas.org.

Will you select applicants on a rolling basis, or consider all applicants once the deadline is passed?

We will consider all applications once the application deadline has passed. At that time, we will determine which applications are eligible for further review (i.e., those that meet all application requirements) and will score and rank order all qualified applications. From those applicants, we will select candidates for an on-campus interview.

Do you have a minimally acceptable GRE score?

No we do not. However, we recognize that GRE scores are one of the strongest predictors of success in completing PT school and passing the licensure exam (NPTE) (which is, of course, a standardized test). Therefore, higher GRE scores are considered when we rank applicants and make selections for interviews. If applicants have taken the GRE more than one time, we only consider the highest achieved scores.

How do I know if classes I've taken meet the program's prerequisite standards?

If you are unsure about whether courses you've completed (or are planning to take) will be accepted as prerequisites for the WMU DPT program, we suggest you speak with [Sarah Anderson](#), the program's advisor.

Can I still be taking classes/prerequisites at the time of application?

Yes, as long as all prerequisite courses are completed (and passed with a C or better) before the start of the program, your application will be eligible for review. Offers for admission will be issued before the end of each spring semester, and may be revoked if a C or better is not achieved in any prerequisite course taken in that spring semester.

Do you require a certain number and/or type of clinical observation?

No, for the following two reasons: (1) We believe that observation hours place a lot of burden and stress on clinical facilities and we have a far greater need for clinical sites to take students for formal clinical education, and (2) There is no guarantee as to the quality of those observation hours (e.g. simple presence in a clinic could be logged as observation time, regardless of whether clinician/patient interaction was observed). However, we do expect that aspiring students have explored the profession thoroughly (including some observation) and can articulate this knowledge and experience if granted an admissions interview.



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Does the admissions process include an interview?

Yes. Applicants will be ranked according to a composite score of all the required application items (e.g. GPA, GRE score, etc.). At this time, we are uncertain how many candidates we will invite for interviews, as this will depend on the number of complete and qualified applications we receive. A select number of applicants will be invited for an onsite interview and scores from this interview process will be added to the pre-interview score. Based on this final ranking, applicants will be 1) offered admission, 2) placed on a waitlist, or 3) declined admission.

My current GPA is lower than 3.0. What can I do to improve it?

Our recommendation in this case is to meet with [Sarah Anderson](#), the program's advisor, who will help you determine your best course of action. This may involve taking additional courses or repeating courses in which a low grade was earned.

MISCELLANEOUS

What is the program's accreditation status?

Effective April 30, 2019, Western Michigan University has been granted *Candidate for Accreditation* status by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). Candidate for Accreditation is a pre-accreditation status of affiliation with CAPTE that indicates the program is progressing toward accreditation and may matriculate students in professional courses. Candidate for Accreditation is not an accreditation status nor does it assure eventual accreditation. During the Summer II session in 2021, CAPTE will conduct a full review of the program (including an on-site visit) and a decision will be made during CAPTE's meeting in fall). If everything remains in order (the program has conducted itself in accordance with its plans outlined in the candidacy application) then the program will be granted full accreditation, allowing our inaugural cohort to graduate in December 2021 from an accredited program.

What makes the WMU DPT program unique?

The most obvious reason is that the program is completely new with a contemporary and well-planned curriculum. WMU's DPT program is the only one in Michigan that is 2.5 years in length (other programs in the state require up to 3.5 years). The faculty who have joined the WMU DPT team have done so out of a desire to build the strongest program in the region. In addition, the program is housed in a newly-renovated building with ultra-modern furnishings and all new equipment. The area designated for the program has large classrooms, its own kitchen space and comfortable study areas. There are many opportunities for classroom and clinical collaboration with other health-related disciplines in the College of Health and Human Services to prepare students for success in "real" world interdisciplinary practice.



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What is the cost of the program?

Tuition at Western Michigan University is currently \$651.57/credit hour for in-state students and \$1232.05/credit hour for out of state students. NOTE: out-of-state students may be eligible for in-state residency status following the first full year, which would allow the in-state tuition rate to be used for the final 1.5 years of the program (more information can be found [here](#)). Students can also anticipate course fees to total \$5000 (\$500 per semester). In addition, WMU requires several other fees (relatively small) of all students. Additional and up-to-date information can be found [here](#).

Will I be able to work an outside job while enrolled in the program?

To some extent, yes. We realize the financial burden that PT school places on most students, and some must work while in school. However, in our experience, students who work more than 10 hours per week tend to struggle to keep up with the vast amount of material presented.

After completing the program, when can graduates take the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE; licensing examination)?

There are four (4) scheduled test dates per year for the NPTE. These occur in January, April, July, and October. With a planned program graduation in December, graduates will be eligible to take the NPTE the following January.