

## Physical Therapy Timeline and Checklist

### 1<sup>st</sup> Year

- Register for the Pre-Health Program to receive a weekly newsletter with upcoming events, opportunities, and announcements.
- Attend the informational meetings for the Pre-Health Program at the beginning of Fall Quarter.
- Make an appointment with the pre-health advisor to discuss how to sequence classes, experiences that will help you prepare for PT school, and the different resources on campus.
- Investigate career information to identify what it means to be a physical therapist and the admission requirements for physical therapy.
- Start taking the core courses that need to be completed before applying to the PTCAS. Focus on academic coursework and how to be a successful college student.
- Look for meaningful opportunities to become involved in research, volunteering, clubs, and mentoring.
- Start to job shadow physical therapist in a variety of settings (hospital, inpatient, nursing homes, etc.)
- Start to develop relationships with faculty, staff advisors and faculty mentors at DePaul
- **SUMMER: Work, volunteer, research, or intern in the health field.**
- **SUMMER: Take summer courses if desired or necessary.**

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

- Attend the informational meetings for the Pre-Health Program.
- Meet with the pre-health advisor to make sure you're progressing through your requirements.
- Continue taking the core courses that are required by the PT programs. Focus on coursework and achieving a high GPA.
- Continue to investigate the career information to identify the admission requirements for PT program.
- Look for opportunities to be involved in meaningful activities (volunteering, research, etc.) that will strengthen your application.
- Attend local graduate school fairs and open houses.
- Apply for research opportunities that you can participate in over the school year or summer.
- **SUMMER: Work or volunteer in the health field.**
- **SUMMER: Participate in summer enrichment, research, or internship program.**
- **SUMMER: Start researching PT programs and take notice if the GRE is required.**
- **SUMMER: Familiarize yourself with the Physical Therapy Centralized Application System (PTCAS)**

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year (or the year prior to applying)

- Meet with pre-health advisor and PAC faculty mentor to make sure all coursework is on track.
- Begin compiling a list of specific PT programs that will meet your professional objectives.
- Complete pre-physical therapy coursework that will be covered on the GRE and required by PT programs.
- Make sure you have established well maintained relationships with your staff advisors, professors, PAC faculty mentor, and healthcare professionals. Start to consider from whom you can receive letters of recommendations.
- Look for opportunities to continue to be involved (volunteering, shadowing, etc.) that will strengthen your application.
- Attend a personal statement writing workshop and begin writing your statement early. Be prepared to make multiple drafts as this statement is critical in the review of your application.
- If needed, register for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).
- Take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).
- Prepare a "plan b" if you are not admitted to the schools of your choice.
- **SUMMER: If you are intending to start your chosen program immediately following graduation, you should begin the application process, including requesting letters of recommendation from your professors. The PTCAS will open up early July.**
- **SUMMER: Double check dates and deadlines and review, edit, and submit PTCAS application early**
- **SUMMER: Submit transcripts, complete supplemental applications, and contact those who will be submitting LORs for you to check on progress.**

### 4<sup>th</sup> Year

- Prepare for interviews by participating in a mock interview
- Meet with your PAC faculty mentor to discuss status of your application.
- Continue to maintain a strong GPA
- If admitted, make final decisions about your choice of school and notify schools you will not be attending.
- If admitted to PT schools, apply for financial aid (FAFSA)
- If admitted, pay seat deposit for the institution of your choice
- Let the pre-health advisor know what schools you were admitted to and which school you will matriculate.

## Physical Therapy Checklist

\_\_\_ 1. **RESEARCH** the Physical Therapy Schools you are interested in. The first step for preparing for PT school is finding out what programs you are interested in. A good place to start is the Physical Therapy Centralized Application Service (PTCAS). The PTCAS provides you with information on due dates, application requirements, prerequisites for each school, and other useful information. [www.ptcas.org](http://www.ptcas.org)

\_\_\_ 2. **PREREQUISITES:** each school requires different prerequisites. Research each school carefully to make sure you have met all the requirements for the application.

Required		Highly Recommended
Anatomy with lab (4 quarter hours)	General Psychology (4 quarter hours)	English Composition
Physiology with lab (4 quarter hours)	Life Span Development (4 quarter hours)	Medical Terminology
General Biology (12 quarter hours)	Statistics (4 quarter hours)	Abnormal Psychology
General Chemistry (12 quarter hours)	General Physics (12 quarter hours)	Calculus

**\*This is a typical example of what a PT school may require – make sure you check each school for their specific requirements.**

\_\_\_ 3. **REGISTER** for the Pre-Health Program. Once you have completed the General Chemistry/General Biology sequence and you are ready to apply to the PTCAS email the pre-health advisor to sign up for PAC. This will allow you to have a faculty mentor that helps you in your junior/senior year prepare for the PTCAS application.

\_\_\_ 4. **GPA:** The higher the GPA, the more competitive you will be. Here is a guideline for applying to PT school.  
 3.8 or higher: apply to 4-5 programs  
 3.5 or higher: apply to 6-7 programs  
 3.3 or higher: apply to 8-9 programs  
 3.0 or higher: apply to 10 programs or more

\_\_\_ 5. **KNOW** the application start date and deadline along with all the prerequisites you will need for each school you are interested in. The PTCAS opens up in early July with the Early Decision Application. ([www.ptcas.org](http://www.ptcas.org))

\_\_\_ 6. **EXPERIENCE:** Start shadowing a Physical Therapist early and often. Physical Therapy schools can require anywhere from 25-200 hours of observation. Double check prerequisites on PTCAS.org to make sure you are getting the amount of observation hours you need.

\_\_\_ 7. **BE INVOLVED:** The more well-rounded your academic career the more competitive you will be. Become in activities and involvement that is meaningful and unique.

\_\_\_ 8. **RECOMMENDATION:** Most Physical Therapy schools do not require a committee recommendation. Therefore, line up 3-5 recommendations. The PTCAS will tell you which types of recommendations they require and accept. If unsure contact the schools you are applying to, to determine what types of references they prefer. Recommendations through PTCAS are electronic.

\_\_\_ 9. **GRE:** Check to see if your programs of interest require the GRE. If so, register for the GRE 2-3 months prior to taking it and take the GRE 6-8 weeks prior to the application start date. Start studying 3 months prior to taking the GRE. A score in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile is Verbal 151, and Quantitative: 150, and Analytical: 40. The average scores of student accepted to Illinois Programs are: Verbal: 154, Quantitative: 154, Analytical: 4.0 and a GPA: 3.64. More information about the GRE can be found at [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org).

\_\_\_ 10. **COMPOSE:** Start to write your personal essay prior to the application in a word document. Each specific school may have a supplemental essay as well. Once you have completed your essay make sure you edit it carefully and have other edit it as well.

\_\_\_ 11. **REQUEST** official transcripts to be sent to you to aid you in filling out the coursework one month prior to your application open date.

\_\_\_ 12. **DOUBLE CHECK/APPLY/SUBMIT:** A lot of PT schools are on the PTCAS.org but not all of them. The earlier you apply the better. Some schools have rolling admissions. Get all your application material ready a month prior to the application open date, fill out the application, double/triple check for errors, and then submit!