
Physical Therapy

In the School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences
In the College of Health and Human Services

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Doctoral Program

General Information

The San Diego State University Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program is designed to educate clinical practitioners prepared for autonomous practice in physical therapy, and to be experts in the examination, evaluation, and intervention of movement dysfunction. Attention to physical therapy services to all ages and diverse populations, the DPT program allows qualified students to prepare as primary care physical therapists capable of practicing autonomously in a variety of environments. Students will be prepared to continue special areas of study to qualify for certification as clinical specialty practitioners. This is in support of the professional commitment as physical therapists providing quality services to the citizens of California and the San Diego region.

Program objectives of the DPT:

- Produce graduates who generate and disseminate physical therapy practice knowledge to improve clinical outcomes and to stimulate the use of research in practice;
- Prepare graduates to evaluate and translate existing evidence as a foundation for a scientifically based advanced practice;
- Graduates who are able to use physical therapy knowledge and innovations in technology and practice to provide safe, effective, appropriate, and culturally sensitive and competent physical therapy practice;
- Leaders in collaborative interdisciplinary teams to influence changes in practice that ensures the delivery of a holistic approach to care;
- Graduates who are prepared to influence health care systems, lead policy initiatives, and clinical practice through dissemination of knowledge, skills, and leadership that will improve the physical health status and outcomes for populations, and advocate for changes that can transform how physical therapy practice is delivered;

- Increase the number of physical therapists who are prepared to implement advanced practice physical therapy roles according to national standards for advanced practice and/or executive leadership in healthcare organizations and/or independent practice;

The Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) is a three-year program. The first two years are didactic instruction while the third year consists primarily of clinical experiences. The DPT is the entry-level degree.

Admission to the DPT Program

In addition to satisfying the requirements for admission to the university with classified graduate standing as described in Part Two of this bulletin, the student seeking admission must possess an undergraduate degree earned at an institution accredited by a regional accrediting association and the following:

- One year (or two semesters) of laboratory and lecture-based human anatomy and physiology courses completed within five years of the application to the DPT program;
- One year (or two semesters) of laboratory and lecture-based general and upper division biology;
- One year (or two semesters) of laboratory and lecture-based general inorganic chemistry;
- One year (or two semesters) of laboratory and lecture-based college level physics;
- One course each of general psychology and upper division psychology (preferably abnormal, child developmental, or lifespan);
- One statistics course;
- One English writing course (English composition or an upper-division writing course);
- No more than two prerequisite courses can be taken during the spring semester (or quarter) prior to commencing the program. In addition, all prerequisite coursework must be completed with a GPA of at least 3.00.

Admission criteria for a preferred applicant to the SDSU DPT program will provide evidence of and demonstrate:

- A grade point average (GPA) commensurate with graduate school admission requirements;
- A recommended minimum 3.00 overall GPA with at least a 3.00 GPA in all upper division and any graduate courses combined;
- The applicant was in good standing at the last institution of higher education attended.

Additional evidence considered in the admission process shall include but not be limited to:

- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) with a minimum score of 300 (verbal and quantitative combined) and a minimum score of 4.0 (analytical writing). Scores from the previous five years will be acceptable as valid;
- Three confidential letters of recommendation from professionals attesting to the ability, scholarship, and aptitude of the candidate for a rigorous full-time DPT program. At least one letter must be from a licensed physical therapist whom the applicant has had a professional association and can appropriately evaluate the applicant's potential as a student in the physical therapy program. One letter must be from a professor for a course which the applicant completed. The third letter must be from a licensed physical therapist or professor as described above;

- Demonstrated evidence of exposure to the field and an appreciation of the breadth, depth, and scope of practice. This can be accomplished through either volunteer or paid work experience in a physical therapy setting. A minimum of 100 observation hours must be completed under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist. Observation in two or more different types of physical therapy settings (e.g. pediatric and orthopedic, rather than two different orthopedic settings) is highly recommended;
- A written statement of purpose reflecting understanding of the challenges facing DPT practice and willingness to work with diverse clients in a variety of physical therapy settings;
- A written statement from the applicant outlining their professional goals and reasons for selecting physical therapy as a career.

The Doctor of Physical Therapy program at San Diego State University does not participate in the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS). Students applying for admission should electronically submit the university application available at <http://www.calstate.edu/apply> along with the \$55 application fee.

All applicants must submit admissions materials separately to SDSU Graduate Admissions and to the SDSU DecisionDesk website.

Graduate Admissions

The following materials must be submitted directly to:

Graduate Admissions
Enrollment Services
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA 92182-7416

- (1) Official transcripts (in sealed envelopes) from all postsecondary institutions attended;

NOTE:

- Students who attended SDSU need only submit transcripts for work completed since last attendance.
- Students with international coursework must submit both the official transcript and proof of degree. If documents are in a language other than English, they must be accompanied by a certified English translation.

- (2) GRE scores (<http://www.ets.org> SDSU institution code 4682);

- (3) English language score, if medium of instruction was in a language other than English (<http://www.ets.org> SDSU institution code 4682).

Doctor of Physical Therapy

The following admissions materials* must be completed or submitted electronically via DecisionDesk (http://decisiondesk.sdsu.edu/Physical_Therapy_DPT.html) by the December application deadline for admission to the fall semester:

- (1) DPT supplemental application form;
- (2) DPT prerequisite course checklist;
- (3) DPT applicant volunteer and work experience form;
- (4) DPT program disclosure form;
- (5) Statement of professional goals;
- (6) Statement of contemporary issues in physical therapy;
- (7) Curriculum vitae or resume;
- (8) Video (1-3 minutes) addressing an issue posed by the SDSU DPT program;
- (9) Names and e-mail address of three references who will be invited to complete a recommendation for the applicant electronically.

* Forms for the materials are available on the DPT program website: <https://ens.sdsu.edu/dpt/prospective/application.process>.

Advancement to Candidacy

All students must (1) Meet the general requirements for advancement to candidacy as required by San Diego State University; and (2) Successfully complete all required courses and the comprehensive examination for the first two years of study constitute the qualifying process.

Specific Requirements for the Doctor of Physical Therapy Degree

(Major Code: 12122) (SIMS Code: 556529)

The Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) is a professional and not a research degree. Students in the program will be involved in evidence-based practice/translational research projects as part of coursework and clinical internship. Students are expected to complete the program in three years while attending full-time as there is no part-time program. The number of units for the DPT program of study is 121 units.

FALL SEMESTER I (19 Units)

DPT 710	Foundations of Physical Therapy Evaluation (4)
DPT 725/ BIOL 725	Clinical Anatomy I (4)
DPT 750	Concepts in Physiology, Pathophysiology, and Pharmacology (4)
DPT 780	Integumentary Therapeutics (4)
DPT 881	Evidence-Based Practice I: Principles and Clinical Applications (3)

SPRING SEMESTER I (19 Units)

DPT 726/ BIOL 726	Clinical Anatomy II (4)
DPT 760	Neurosciences (4)
DPT 782	Therapeutic Exercise (4)
DPT 882	Evidence-Based Practice II: Research Applications (3)
DPT 886	Functional Neuro-Biomechanical Relationships (4)

SUMMER I (12 Units)

Session 1:

DPT 857	Prosthetics and Orthotics (2)
DPT 880	Differential Diagnosis in Physical Therapy (3)
DPT 887	Professional Development in Physical Therapy Practice (3)

Session 2:

DPT 801	Clerkship (3) Cr/NC
DPT 897	Doctoral Research (1) Cr/NC

FALL SEMESTER II (18 Units)

DPT 802	Life Cycle I (2)
DPT 820	Musculoskeletal Therapeutics I (4)
DPT 830	Cardiopulmonary Therapeutics (4)
DPT 835	Neurophysiological Therapeutics I (4)
DPT 885	Evidence-Based Practice III: Case Presentations (3)
DPT 897	Doctoral Research (1) Cr/NC

SPRING SEMESTER II (19 Units)

DPT 803	Life Cycle II (2)
DPT 821	Musculoskeletal Therapeutics II (4)
DPT 836	Neurophysiological Therapeutics II (3)
DPT 875	Medical Therapeutics in Physical Therapy Practice (3)
DPT 878	Psychosocial Aspects of Rehabilitation (3)
DPT 888	Evidence-Based Practice IV: Advanced Clinical Reasoning (3)
DPT 897	Doctoral Research (1) Cr/NC

SUMMER II (10 Units)

Session 1:

DPT 822	Interventions in Musculoskeletal Therapeutics (3)
DPT 837	Interventions in Neuromuscular Therapeutics (3)
DPT 868	Physical Therapy Organization and Administration (3)

Session 2:

DPT 897	Doctoral Research (1) Cr/NC
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FALL III SEMESTER (12 Units)

- DPT 889 Doctoral Project (2) Cr/NC
- DPT 895 Clinical Internship (10) Cr/NC

SPRING III SEMESTER (12 Units)

- DPT 889 Doctoral Project (2) Cr/NC
- DPT 895 Clinical Internship (10) Cr/NC

Courses Acceptable for DPT Degree Program in the School of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences (DPT)

Refer to Courses and Curricula and Regulations of the Division of Graduate Affairs sections of this bulletin for explanation of the course numbering system, unit or credit hour, prerequisites, and related information.

GRADUATE COURSES

DPT 710. Foundations of Physical Therapy Evaluation (4)

Two lectures and six hours of laboratory.
Prerequisite: Admission to the DPT program.
Problem solving and psychomotor skills to perform general physical examination. Concepts, procedures, and techniques required to provide safe and effective patient care.

**DPT 725. Clinical Anatomy I (4)
(Same course as Biology 725)**

Three lectures and three hours of laboratory.
Prerequisite: Admission to the DPT program.
Applied anatomy of upper and lower extremities of the human body; joint anatomy and mechanics, anatomical structures to produce articular movement to include muscles, arterial, peripheral nervous systems, and articular and extremity movement patterns.

**DPT 726. Clinical Anatomy II (4)
(Same course as Biology 726)**

Three lectures and three hours of laboratory.
Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 725 [or Biology 725].
Axial portion of the human body; biomechanics of the spinal column to include head and neck, thorax, related viscera, and abdomino-pelvic region.

DPT 750. Concepts in Physiology, Pathophysiology, and Pharmacology (4)

Prerequisite: Admission to the DPT program or master's degree program in kinesiology.
Normal physiology, diseases, disorders, and injuries. Pathological processes, specific organ system pathology, multisystem pathology, and pharmacological concepts.

DPT 760. Neurosciences (4)

Prerequisites: Doctor of Physical Therapy 725 [or Biology 725] and 750.
Anatomy and physiology of central nervous system; substrates and processes of movement.

DPT 780. Integumentary Therapeutics (4)

Two lectures and six hours of laboratory.
Prerequisite: Admission to the DPT program.
Anatomy, physiology, pathology, mutability of human biological tissues in the rehabilitation process.

DPT 782. Therapeutic Exercise (4)

Two lectures and six hours of laboratory.
Prerequisites: Doctor of Physical Therapy 710, 725 [or Biology 725], 750, 780, 881.
Therapeutic exercise as it applies to clinical practice of physical therapy.

DOCTORAL COURSES

DPT 801. Clerkship (3) Cr/NC

Prerequisites: Successful completion of all coursework up to Doctor of Physical Therapy 801, *Clerkship*.
Cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills of physical therapy practice in a clinical setting.

DPT 802. Life Cycle I (2)

Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 801.
Age-related changes from young adulthood to senescence; analysis of resultant functional limitations.

DPT 803. Life Cycle II (2)

Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 802.
Normal and delayed maturation processes from conception through adulthood; nervous, cardiovascular, and musculoskeletal systems.

DPT 820. Musculoskeletal Therapeutics I (4)

Two lectures and six hours of laboratory.
Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 801.
Examination, diagnosis, and management of lower and upper extremities, and spinal musculoskeletal disorders.

DPT 821. Musculoskeletal Therapeutics II (4)

Three lectures and three hours of laboratory.
Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 820.
Clinical principles and concepts for management of orthopedic, sports, and industrial injuries.

DPT 822. Interventions in Musculoskeletal Therapeutics (3)

Two lectures and three hours of laboratory.
Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 821.
Analysis of interventions used to treat clients with dysfunctions of the musculoskeletal system.

DPT 830. Cardiopulmonary Therapeutics (4)

Three lectures and three hours of laboratory.
Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 801.
Electrocardiography, exercise testing, and exercise prescription for patient populations suffering from acute or chronic illness.

DPT 835. Neurophysiological Therapeutics I (4)

Three lectures and three hours of laboratory.
Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 801.
Neurological deficits in adults and children secondary to upper motor-neuron dysfunction.

DPT 836. Neurophysiological Therapeutics II (3)

Two lectures and three hours of laboratory.
Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 835.
Scientific theory pertaining to composite impairments of neurologic patients, with application of motor-control theory to neurorehabilitation.

DPT 837. Interventions in Neuromuscular Therapeutics (3)

One lecture and six hours of laboratory.
Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 836.
Interventions used to treat clients with dysfunctions of the neuromuscular system.

DPT 857. Prosthetics and Orthotics (2)

Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 886.
Design, fabrication, and fitting of orthotic and prosthetic devices.

DPT 868. Physical Therapy Organization and Administration (3)

Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 801.
Designing, equipping, and staffing a physical therapy practice or department. Budget development, cost accounting, supervisory functions, evaluation techniques, and quality assurance. Business strategies and skills for practice setting. Local, national, economic, and political pressures on delivery of physical therapy services.

DPT 875. Medical Therapeutics in Physical Therapy Practice (3)

Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 830.
Contemporary medical interventions for physical therapy practice.

DPT 878. Psychosocial Aspects of Rehabilitation (3)

Prerequisite: Admission to the DPT program.
Adjustment to physical disability and terminal illness. Development of communication and ethical decision-making skills.

DPT 880. Differential Diagnosis in Physical Therapy (3)

Prerequisites: Doctor of Physical Therapy 710, 725 [or Biology 725], 750.
Musculoskeletal conditions, medical pathological problems, and/or co-morbidities affecting clinical decision-making.

DPT 881. Evidence-Based Practice I: Principles and Clinical Applications (3)

Prerequisite: Admission to the DPT program.
Preparation as a consumer of the professional literature in physical therapy.

DPT 882. Evidence-Based Practice II: Research Applications (3)

Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 881.
Use of evidence in current physical therapy practice.

DPT 885. Evidence-Based Practice III: Case Presentations (3)

Prerequisite: Doctor of Physical Therapy 801.
Patient case and analysis of evidence from clinical interactions between student and client.

DPT 886. Functional Neuro-Biomechanical Relationships (4)

Prerequisite: Admission to the DPT program or master's degree program in kinesiology.
Structures of the musculoskeletal system and individual functional regions. Forces sustained in normal and pathological conditions.

DPT 887. Professional Development in Physical Therapy Practice (3)

Prerequisite: Admission to the DPT program.
Professional physical therapy at individual and societal levels.

DPT 888. Evidence-Based Practice IV: Advanced Clinical Reasoning (3)

Prerequisites: Doctor of Physical Therapy 882 and 885.
Integrate evidence, patient values, and clinical expertise to critically analyze clinical decision making for complex patient cases across broad range of practice settings.

DPT 889. Doctoral Project (2-2) Cr/NC

Prerequisites: Admission to the DPT program and completion of all prior DPT coursework.

Final paper or project on an in-depth clinical or research problem related to the physical therapy profession, presented to a professional audience.

DPT 895. Clinical Internship (10-10) Cr/NC

Prerequisite: Successful completion of all DPT coursework.
Clinical internship in physical therapy.

DPT 897. Doctoral Research (1) Cr/NC

Prerequisite: Admission to the DPT program.
Investigation to the general field of the doctoral project.

