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How will COVID-19 affect the 2020-21 DPT Admissions Cycle?

(As of August 13th 2020)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the following temporary changes will be in effect until further notice. As developments or changes occur, we will continue to update the admissions webpage with information for applicants. Active applicants for the 2020-21 UNLV DPT Program Admissions Cycle may apply the following changes:

1. Observation Hours Requirement: (reduced)
 - a. The minimum observation hour requirement has been reduced from 100 to 50
 - b. The minimum two unique PT settings requirement for observations hours has also been reduced from two to one unique setting
 - c. 50 hours must be documented as “complete” and be verified on PTCAS by no later than November 15th, 2020.
2. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading: (UNLVPT will consider S/U grading for spring 2020 or summer 2020 courses)
 - a. Applicants may apply courses taken for a satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade towards the 11 UNLVPT prerequisite compliment.
 - b. The applicant’s prerequisite GPA must be at minimum 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
3. Online Anatomy & Physiology Lab Coursework: (Will be accepted from spring 2020 through spring 2021 terms)
 - a. Historically all A&P labs were required to be in-person. A&P labs taken online from spring 2020 through spring 2021 will be acceptable for the UNLVPT prerequisites.
 - i. *It is important to note that UNLVPT has always accepted online courses for the remainder of the 11 prerequisite course compliment.*
4. Application Deadlines: (NO Changes)
 - a. PTCAS applications must be submitted by October 1st
 - b. UNLV Graduate College (supplementation application) must be submitted by October 1st
 - c. KIRA Virtual Interview must be submitted by October 15th
5. GRE: (All testing methods offered by ETS will be acceptable)
6. Letters of Rec:
 - a. Three (3) letters are still required.
 - b. At minimum, one (1) letter must come from a licensed physical therapist.
 - c. A list of the other acceptable letter sources is available at:
<https://ptcasdirectory.apta.org/535/University-of-Nevada-Las-Vegas?id=535&tab=admissionRequirements#viewTab>

What is the physical therapy program?

The Doctor of Physical Therapy program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas is an entry-level professional program designed to prepare students to enter the profession of physical therapy. A Doctor of Physical Therapy Degree is awarded following the successful completion of the program that consists of intense academic and clinical work. The program of study consists of 112 credit hours of graduate coursework. These hours are divided among classroom, clinical, and research activities. Students who successfully complete the program will receive a doctor of physical therapy (DPT) degree and will be eligible to take the national licensure exam for physical therapists.

How long is the physical therapy program?

The doctor of physical therapy (DPT) program admits one cohort of new students each summer in June. This professional program is three years long and includes didactic coursework and clinical learning experiences. The program includes 3 summers and 6 semesters.

What are the minimum admission requirements for the DPT program at UNLV?

ALL of the following minimum requirements must be met in order to be eligible for admission to the UNLV DPT program.

- 1. Baccalaureate degree completed prior to start of DPT program**
- 2. Overall GPA (minimum 3.0 out of 4.0)**
 - Program uses PTCAS calculated “Overall GPA”
- 3. Prerequisite GPA (minimum 3.0 out of 4.0)**
 - UNLVPT calculates the applicant’s prerequisite GPA. Applicants must “tag” courses for each of the 11 UNLVPT prerequisite requirements on the applicant’s PTCAS application.
 - i. In the event a prerequisite is retaken for a higher grade, the applicant must “tag” both attempts on PTCAS. The admissions committee will consider the higher grade when calculating the prerequisite GPA.
 - UNLVPT does NOT perform a course-by-course transcript review on PTCAS. Thus, applicants are responsible to “tag” ALL courses they wish to have considered towards the prerequisite course compliment on their PTCAS application.
- 4. Must take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)**
 - Scores must be within 5 years
 - Scores must be reported to PTCAS reporting code: 7618
- 5. 50 hours of observation in physical therapy**
 - Only one (1) PT setting is REQUIRED, however applicants are encouraged to explore and understand the nature of the profession through observation/volunteer/paid hours in a variety of physical therapy settings.

- Settings include outpatient clinics, inpatient acute care or rehabilitation hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health, and specialty settings such as pediatrics, vestibular, hand therapy, wound care, pelvic health, cardiopulmonary, etc.). Telehealth observation hours may also be considered, but may not be the only setting observed.
 - Hours must be documented via PTCAS.
 - i. Only “complete” hours are accepted.
 - ii. Hours documented as “pending” will not count towards the minimum 50 hours.
6. **3 letters of recommendation**
 - 2 letters must come from licensed physical therapists
 7. **Complete online PTCAS application** (www.ptcas.org)
 8. **Complete online UNLV graduate college application** ([UNLV Grad College App](#))
 9. **Complete online KIRA virtual interview**
 - Applicants will receive an email invitation for the KIRA virtual interview after they have submitted their UNLV Graduate College Application.

What is the admission cycle timeline?

The annual application cycle opens in July each year. Applicants should submit PTCAS and supplemental UNLV Graduate College applications before the October 1st application deadline. Virtual KIRA interview submissions **MUST** be submitted by no later than October 15th. Late applications will not be considered. All “complete” applications are reviewed by the end of December.

The program does NOT use rolling admissions.

Following initial application review and scoring, a limited number of applicants (Approximately 110) are invited to an on-campus interview. Historically an on-campus interview is mandatory. Email invitations for on-campus interviews are typically sent each year starting in late December and are issued throughout January until all available interview seats are filled. On-campus interviews typically occur during late January. *The admissions committee will not make a final decision whether or not the final interviews for the 2020-21 admission cycle will be held on-campus or via a virtual platform until later in the fall. Updates will be provided to applicants via email during late December.*

Applicants, who do not receive a final interview invitation will be notified via email by no later than the end of January. Applicants who are not offered an on-campus interview may re-apply during the next admission cycle.

Following the final interview, the admissions committee emails an offer of acceptance to successful applicants. The process to seat 48 incoming students typically takes most of the spring semester. The program uses an alternate list and applicants placed on the alternate list are apprised of their approximate position to assist with applicant planning.

Classes for the incoming cohort of DPT students start during the first week of June

each year. Incoming students must attend a mandatory DPT orientation the Thursday & Friday prior to the start of classes.

How many students apply and how many are accepted into the program each year?

Admission to the UNLV DPT program, like many professional programs, is very competitive. On average, the program receives between 400 to 800 applications annually. 48 new students are accepted to each incoming cohort.

Is it ok to begin the PTCAS application during the last year of my bachelors program or while I am still completing prerequisite courses?

Many applicants apply to UNLVPT during the final year of their bachelor's degree program. Please note that all prerequisite coursework must be completed prior to starting the DPT program in June.

Applicants may have as many prerequisite courses pending as needed during the fall semester of the admissions cycle as needed. Applicants should document pending fall coursework as such on PTCAS and will be required to submit fall grades via the academic update on PTCAS.

Applicants may have NO MORE than two UNLVPT specific prerequisite courses pending during the spring semester immediately preceding the anticipated summer of admission, and neither of those two pending courses may be A&P 1 or 2.

Where/When can I fulfill the prerequisite course requirements?

You may complete the 11 UNLVPT prerequisite courses at any regionally accredited institution. The program recommends applicants complete the majority of the science and math prerequisites at the university level.

Applicants may take online coursework with the exception of Anatomy and Physiology labs. *(See COVID update for 2020-21 admissions cycle)*

Applicants may not take prerequisite courses on a pass/fail basis. *(See COVID update for 2020-21 admissions cycle)* Applicants may not apply Advanced Placement (AP) courses towards the prerequisite compliment unless said AP course appears on an official transcript from a regionally accredited institution and has both a letter grade and quality points/grade points assigned to it.

Applicants may not apply a course with a grade below a "C" to a prerequisite. Those students with pending spring prerequisites during an active application cycle MUST

realize that any offer of acceptance to the DPT program would be contingent upon satisfactory completion of all pending prerequisite coursework prior to matriculation into the program.

Prerequisite course work must be within 10 years from the application cycle. For example, to be eligible to be considered during the 2020-21 admission cycle (classes starting June 2021), ALL prerequisite course work must have been taken during or after the fall 2010 semester/quarter.

What are the 11 UNLV DPT prerequisite courses?

- One year of lecture-based biology courses
- One year of lecture & lab-based anatomy and physiology courses
- One year of lecture & lab-based chemistry (inorganic or organic are ok)
- One year of lecture & lab-based physics (algebra or calculus based are ok)
- One year of psychology
- One semester of statistics

Prospective students should use the following 2 resources to identify appropriate coursework to satisfy the UNLV DPT prerequisite courses.

1. [Prerequisite coursework pdf file found on the UNLVPT admissions webpage](#)
2. [UNLV Program Directory Page on PTCAS.org](#)

I am a current or prospective UNLV undergrad student and I need help to determine what classes at UNLV fulfill the DPT prerequisite courses.

UNLVPT provides a list of pre-approved DPT prerequisite courses offered at UNLV via the [UNLV DPT program webpage \(Admissions tab\)](#). This resource is updated annually. Please download that resource along with this FAQ resource and have these handy for any future appointments with your undergraduate academic advisor. UNLVPT does not provide individual one on one academic advising for prospective applicants. The program can clarify whether a specific course meets the DPT program prereq requirements but will NOT advise undergrad students on matters related to their undergrad degree program(s).

Current UNLV students enrolled in an academic program within the Division of Health Sciences at UNLV are encouraged to work with an academic adviser at the [Division of Health Sciences Advising Center](#). UNLV students are also encouraged to utilize the advising services and programing offered through the [UNLV Pre-Professional Advising Center](#).

For students not enrolled at UNLV please also refer to the prerequisite courses requirements link referenced above as well as the [UNLV Program Directory Page on PTCAS.org](#).

After you have reviewed each of the above linked resources, if you still have questions please direct those directly to the admissions committee at dpt.admissions@unlv.edu. To ensure a timely and accurate response you MUST provide the following information regarding courses you hope to apply towards the 11 UNLVPT prerequisites:

- What institution did you take or plan to take the course?
- Where is this institution located: City and State
- Was the course semester or quarter based?
- How many credits was the course worth?
- What was your letter grade for the course?
- What year did you take the course?
- You must also include either the course description from the appropriate course catalog and preferably the course syllabus for any completed coursework.

Will observation or volunteer hours in health areas other than physical therapy count toward the minimum observation hours?

No, only observation/volunteer/paid hours from a physical therapy department that were under supervised by a licensed physical therapist will count toward the minimum hours required for admission.

Do I need to do observation hours in a hospital as well as outpatient clinic, and how many hours are needed?

No, however prior to application to the program, applicants should fully explore the nature of the profession of physical therapy. Applicants are encouraged to volunteer in or observe various physical therapy facilities in order to gain a broad understanding of the various roles and responsibilities of the physical therapist.

A minimum of 50 total observation hours are required. Observation, volunteer, and paid hours are acceptable. Examples of physical therapy settings include but are not limited to inpatient acute care hospitals, inpatient rehab hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, long-term acute care hospitals, extended care facilities, home health agencies, schools, and outpatient clinics.

When considering outpatient settings the following types of clinics will be considered unique settings: orthopedics, pediatrics, vestibular/balance, cardiopulmonary, wound care, and pelvic health.

How should I document and submit my observation hours for verification?

Observation hours must be submitted and verified via the applicant's PTCAS application. Detailed instructions found here: <http://www.ptcas.org/PTHours/>

- UNLVPT accepts reporting Options #1 and #2.
- **Preferred reporting option #1:**
 - Applicant will submit the email address for supervising PT as well as the details of observational experience as part of applicant's PTCAS application
 - Supervising PT "verifies" applicant hours electronically via PTCAS portal.
- **Alternate reporting option #2:**
 - Applicant uploads image of an hours form to their PTCAS application
 - This form must be signed by the supervising PT.
 - UNLVPT does NOT use a standard form for this.
 - At a minimum this hours form should contain the following information:
 - Applicant name
 - Name and address of the facility applicant observed at
 - Dates (or date range) the observation took place
 - Whether hours were paid or volunteer
 - Total number of hours
 - The physical therapy setting(s) in which the applicant observed
 - The name, license number, and contact information for the supervising PT
 - Supervising PT's signature

How is the overall PTCAS GPA calculated?

UNLVPT uses the PTCAS calculated overall GPA. This overall GPA is calculated using **ALL** college level coursework as reported to PTCAS via official transcripts from ALL institutions that the applicant attended. The overall GPA will include ALL completed undergraduate, post-bac, and graduate level coursework at the time of application submission. The overall GPA calculated by PTCAS includes ALL attempts in the case of course retakes.

Applicants are encouraged to visit PTCAS to have a clear understanding of how this GPA is calculated.

How is my prerequisite GPA calculated?

UNLVPT will consider those courses that the applicant has "tagged" as prerequisites on their PTCAS application as long as these courses meet the minimum prerequisite requirements. In the event that a prerequisite course is retaken for a better grade, the program will use the higher grade.

In the event that the applicant has taken more than the required number of courses in a particular prerequisite category, the program will select the courses with the highest grades as long as each course meets the minimum prerequisite requirement for that category.

What is a competitive GPA and GRE score?

The average GPA and GRE percentile scores for the most recently admitted cohort of UNLV DPT students are always available via the [UNLV Program Directory Page on PTCAS.org](#). It is important to note that while the reported averages may seem high, the GPA range for accepted students often spans from 3.0 to 4.0.

Similarly, when considering the GRE score, while the reported average GRE percentile scores for admitted students is typically high, however the distribution of GRE scores for accepted students covers a wide range of scores.

Thus, applicants who have met ALL minimum admission requirements are encouraged to apply.

Prospective applicant questions such as “Is my GRE score competitive?”, “Should I retake the GRE?”, or “Can someone review my transcripts to see if I will be a competitive applicant?” will not be entertained by the admissions committee.

How do I get an interview?

If you have submitted a complete application prior to the application deadline on November 1st, the admissions committee will evaluate your application materials including your grades, test scores, essays, letters of recommendation, and your observation hours. If you are granted an interview, you will be notified at the email address you have on file at PTCAS.

What GRE score does UNLVPT require?

UNLVPT does NOT have a minimum GRE score, but does prefer a composite score of 300 or higher in the verbal and quantitative sections and a 4.0 or higher on the writing section. However, each application is considered on a case-by-case basis for the GRE.

In the event of a GRE retake, the highest score from each of the three sections of the GRE will be considered even if highest scores are obtained on different testing dates.

Official GRE scores MUST be submitted via the PTCAS application portal using reporting code **7618**. Scores sent to other reporting codes may not be considered.

I am in college. How can I best prepare for PT school?

First, explore the American Physical Therapy Association's (APTA) - ([Careers & Education Webpage](#)) to learn about the profession of physical therapy. Arranging opportunities to observe or volunteer with local PTs is a great way to learn about the profession.

Second, examine the coursework you have taken and determine which courses you will apply towards the UNLV DPT prerequisites. If you are unsure which courses to choose, you can find a detailed list of potential course options at the [UNLV Program Directory Page on PTCAS.org](#). Work with your undergraduate academic advisor to make a good plan to complete these courses.

Third, if your college has a Pre-Professional Advising Center, use it!!

Fourth, if your college has a Pre-PT or other pre-professional health sciences club get involved!! This provides a great chance to network with other future professional, gain leadership experience, and to refine your academic and professional goals. Be sure to identify and leverage the resources on your campus.

Fifth, complete the required observation/volunteer experience in a physical therapy department. While there engage in the process. What does this mean? Examples include taking note of how the PT communicates effectively with staff, patients, and the community at large. Asking relevant questions to help you better understand what the PT or other staff are doing and why. If appropriate in the setting you're at, talk with patients to learn about the patient experience with physical therapy and the health care system in general. As a PT it will be vital that you can connect with people and appreciate and understand their unique point of view and values.

Sixth, identify potential people who you'll ask to write your letters of recommendation. Make sure these people know you well enough to speak to your many strengths.

Seventh, get involved with your community through volunteer and community service. It's important to build these habits of the heart now as they are vital to providing compassionate care as a future PT.

Eighth, seek out opportunities to develop spoken and written communication skills. Take challenging upper division writing courses and when possible research classes that push you to hone your ability to communicate clearly and effectively.

Ninth, develop leadership skills. Seek out opportunities to learn how to be a good teammate. Learn to benefit your "team" in both supporting and leadership roles. Reflect on your strengths and weakness and continually seek to refine this set of skills.

Finally, complete the necessary coursework to earn a baccalaureate degree in the field of your choice.

Does it matter where I went to school as an undergraduate?

Applicants may complete their baccalaureate degree at any regionally accredited institution. If an applicant completed their baccalaureate degree or undergraduate coursework outside of the United States there are additional requirements when submitting these transcripts/documentation to PTCAS. Please see our program directory page on PTCAS for details.

Do Nevada State residents get preference?

Yes, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas is a state school; therefore, preference for admission to the DPT program is given to Nevada residents. See [UNLV Program Directory Page on PTCAS.org](https://www.unlv.edu/graduatecollege/residency) for details on the number of in-state vs out-of-state students accepted to the most recent incoming cohort. Typically around half of each cohort is from Nevada.

Nevada residency of graduate students is in accordance with the regulations of the Board of Regents and the laws of Nevada. A full statement of the regulations is available at the Graduate College.

For more details on UNLV graduate student residency please visit:

<https://www.unlv.edu/graduatecollege/residency>

Are scholarships available?

Yes, several scholarships are available to current UNLVPT students. First, second, and third year DPT students may apply for scholarships through the physical therapy department.

Current students apply for UNLVPT sponsored scholarships annually during the fall semester. Student UNLVPT scholarships are awarded each year during the spring semester. Historically around one-half of all enrolled UNLV DPT program students receive some UNLVPT sponsored scholarship monies.

A limited number of second year UNLV DPT teaching assistant positions may also be available to currently enrolled 2nd year UNLV DPT students through a competitive application process during the spring of the first year in the program. Visit the “current students” page at <https://www.unlv.edu/pt/current-students> for more scholarship details.

Does my degree doctor of physical therapy degree allow me to practice physical therapy?

No. The DPT degree is required to be eligible to sit for the national physical therapy exam (NPTE). Once the graduate passes the NPTE they then apply for a state license to practice as a physical therapist in the state of their choosing. Each state has its own state board of physical therapy that is responsible to issue licenses for PTs in that state.

A list of state licensing authorities can be found at: <https://www.fsbpt.org/>

What if I have a disability?

Students with documented disabilities or those who have received accommodations at any time in the past as a student are strongly encouraged to contact the [UNLV Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC) immediately upon acceptance to the program. The DRC works with students to ensure that those with documented disabilities receive appropriate accommodations. Accepted students should not wait to arrive to campus to start this process.

What is the passing rate for UNLV graduates on the physical therapy licensure exam?

Since 1998, every student who has graduated from the program has passed the licensure exam. Details regarding the UNLV DPT program acceptance rate, graduation rate, and National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE) pass rate are housed on the UNLV Physical Therapy Department Webpage ([UNLVPT Webpage "About" tab](#))

In what area of study should I get my baccalaureate degree?

The majority of UNLVPT students receive their undergraduate degree in kinesiology or exercise science. This often helps them fulfill the prerequisites for physical therapy school in a time efficient manner. Applicants are encouraged to seek a degree in any area of study as long as they have also met the minimum prerequisite course requirements needed to apply.

UNLVPT does NOT prefer any one baccalaureate degree program to another and encourages prospective students pursue an undergraduate degree that they feel will

enhance both their personal and professional future.

Can I go to PT school part-time?

No. The DPT program is full-time lock-step program where enrolled students progress through a pre-planned curriculum as a cohort.

Can I work while I am in PT school?

Due to the rigor and time intensive nature of the UNLV DPT program, outside employment especially during the first two semesters, is discouraged.

I have a cumulative GPA of 2.8, but my prerequisite GPA is 3.5, can I still apply?

Applicants must meet ALL of the minimum requirements to remain eligible for consideration for admission to the DPT program. In the scenario above, while the applicant's prerequisite GPA met the minimum requirement, the applicant's overall (cumulative) GPA did not meet the minimum 3.0 level. Thus, the applicant in this scenario not be eligible for admission to the DPT program.

Where can I go for my clinical experiences while I am in the DPT program?

UNLVPT maintains contracts with many clinics and hospitals throughout the United States. The majority of UNLVPT clinical partners are located in the Western U.S. During the fall semester of the first year in the program, students are oriented to the clinical education program and will have the opportunity to communicate their preferences for clinical learning sites/settings/and locations. Students are NOT guaranteed any specific location for clinical experiences. Furthermore, it is expected that all students will have the ability to travel outside of Las Vegas for at least one of their clinical experiences. The ultimate decision as to the specific location of student clinical experiences is determined by the UNLVPT Director of Clinical Education (DCE) working in conjunction with the UNLVPT clinical education committee as well as UNLVPT's clinical partners.