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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 graduates to enter the profession of physical therapy. The program consists of intense academic and clinical work. The program of study consists of 112 credit hours of graduate-level 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 sit for the national physical therapy exam (NPTE®).

How long is the Doctor of Physical Therapy program?

The Doctor of Physical Therapy is three years long and consists of 3 summers and 6 semesters. The program admits one cohort of forty-eight (48) new students each summer in June.

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)
   - The prerequisite GPA is calculated by the department and will consider those courses which the applicant has tagged for each of the 11 UNLVPT prerequisite requirements on the applicant’s PTCAS application.
   - In the event that prerequisite courses are retaken for a higher grade, the admissions committee will consider the highest grade when calculating the prerequisite GPA.
4. Complete online PTCAS application (www.ptcas.org) by the posted application deadline.
5. Take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)
   - Scores must be within 5 years, when applying.
   - Scores must be reported to PTCAS using reporting code: 7618
6. 100 hours of observation in physical therapy
   - Hours should be come from two (2) or more PT settings
   - Hours must be “complete” and “verified” via applicant’s PTCAS application by the posted application deadline.
   - Hours which are documented as “pending” and are not complete by the application deadline will NOT be counted towards minimum 100 hour requirement.
7. 3 letters of recommendation
   - 2 letters must come from licensed physical therapists
   - The third remaining letter may come from any of the list of acceptable evaluators as found on UNLV’s program profile on PTCAS.
8. Complete online UNLV graduate college application by the posted application deadline
9. Complete virtual KIRA interview by the posted deadline.

What is the admission cycle timeline?

The program does NOT use rolling admissions. 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 should also be completed by no later than October 15th. Late applications and incomplete applications will NOT be reviewed. All “complete” applications will be reviewed by the end of December.

Following initial application review and scoring, a limited number of applicants (approximately 110) will be invited for a mandatory on-campus interview. Email invitations for on-campus interviews will be sent each year starting in late December through January until all available interview seats have been filled. On-campus interviews are typically held during late January or early February.

Applicants, not receiving an on-campus interview invitation will be notified by no later than the middle of February. Applicants who are not offered an on-campus interview are welcome to re-apply during future admission cycles.

Following the on-campus interview, the admissions committee will email offers of acceptance to successful applicants. The process to seat all 48 incoming students typically takes most of the spring semester. The program does use an alternate list and applicants placed on the alternate list will be apprised of their approximate position to assist with their planning.

Classes for the incoming cohort of DPT students start each year during the first week of June. Incoming students must attend a mandatory on-campus orientation the Thursday and Friday before summer classes begin.

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 500-800 prospective students submit applications each year. 48 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 or while completing the last few prerequisite courses. 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 immediately preceding the planned summer of admission. Applicants may have NO MORE than 2 UNLVPT prerequisite courses pending during the spring semester immediately preceding the anticipated summer of admission, and neither of these two pending courses may be A&P 1 or 2.

Where/when can I fulfill the prerequisite course requirements?

You may complete the prerequisite requirements at any regionally accredited community college or 4-year university. However, it is recommended that the majority of the science and math prerequisites be completed at the university level.

Online coursework is acceptable with the exception of Anatomy and Physiology labs, which must be taken in person.

Prerequisite courses must all be taken for a letter grade and may NOT be taken on a pass/fail basis. Advanced Placement (AP) courses will NOT be considered towards prerequisites unless the AP class appears on an official transcript from a regionally accredited institution and has both a letter grade and grade points assigned to it.

Grades below a “C” in prerequisite courses will NOT be accepted. Those students with pending prerequisites in the process during an active application cycle should be aware that acceptance to the program is provisional and is contingent upon satisfactory completion of any pending prerequisite coursework prior to matriculation into the program.

Prerequisite coursework must have been completed within 10 years from the application cycle. For example, to be eligible to be considered during the 2019-20 admission cycle (classes starting June 2020), ALL prerequisite course work must have been taken during or after the fall 2009 semester/quarter.

What are the 11 UNLV DPT prerequisite courses?

- One year of lecture-based biology courses
- One year of laboratory and lecture-based anatomy and physiology courses
- One year of laboratory and lecture-based inorganic or organic chemistry
- One year of laboratory and lecture-based algebra or calculus based physics
- One year psychology (for example: introduction to psychology and one additional semester of either child, adolescent, developmental or abnormal psychology)
- One semester 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
If you are a current UNLV student or plan to take the prerequisite courses at UNLV and have advising questions, please work with your undergraduate academic advisor. Students within the School of Allied Health Sciences are encouraged to utilize the Division of Health Sciences Advising Center. UNLV students should familiarize themselves with the pre-approved course resource that is found on the admissions webpage and linked above. An updated version of this resource is always available via the UNLV DPT program webpage under the admission tab.

If you did not take your prerequisite courses at UNLV and need help to determine whether or not your completed or planned coursework will satisfy the prerequisite courses you should refer to the list of sample prerequisite courses listed on the UNLV Program Profile on PTCAS.org linked above.

After you have reviewed each of the above linked resources, if you still have questions please direct those to Dr. Keoni Kins, at keoni.kins@unlv.edu. To ensure a timely and accurate response you should provide Dr. Kins with the following information regarding any courses you hope to apply towards the 11 UNLVPT prerequisite courses:

- Institution where you took or plan to take the course?
- Was the course semester or quarter based?
- How many credits was the course worth?
- Your grade for the course?
- What year did you take the course?
- You must also provide a course syllabus those courses you’ve already completed, or the course description from the appropriate course catalog for those courses you are considering.

Will observation or volunteer hours in health areas other than a physical therapy department be counted toward the required minimum of 100 observation hours?

No, only the hours spent observing or volunteering in a physical therapy department, under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist, will be counted toward the 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?

Prior to application to the program, applicants are advised to fully explore the nature of the profession of physical therapy. Students are expected to volunteer in or observe various physical therapy facilities in order to gain a broad view of the roles and responsibilities of a physical therapist.

A minimum of 100 total observation hours are required. Both volunteer and paid hours are acceptable. Observation must take place in two (2) or more unique types of
physical therapy settings. 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 facilities, extended care facilities, home health agencies, schools, and outpatient clinics.

When considering outpatient settings, the admissions committee considers the following types of clinics as unique settings: orthopedics, pediatrics, vestibular/balance, cardiopulmonary, wound care, and women’s/pelvic health.

**Please Note: observation in two different orthopedic outpatient clinics that see a variety of patient ages and diagnoses does **NOT** satisfy the minimum requirement of two (2) unique PT settings.

**How will I document and submit my observation hours for verification?**

Observation hours MUST be submitted and verified via the applicant’s PTCAS application. Detailed instructions for this process can be found at: [http://www.ptcas.org/PTHours/](http://www.ptcas.org/PTHours/)

- **UNLVPT accepts reporting Options #1 and #2.**
- **Option #1 (preferred):**
  - 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 with then “verify” applicant’s hours electronically via PTCAS portal.
- **Option #2:**
  - Applicant uploads an image of a paper observation hours form to the 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’s name
    - The name and address of the facility applicant observed at
    - The dates (or date range) the observation took place
    - Whether the hours were paid or volunteer
    - Total number of hours the applicant observed
    - 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 will my overall GPA be 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: undergraduate, post-bac, and graduate level coursework. The overall GPA will include
ALL attempts in the case of course retakes

**How will my prerequisite GPA be 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 repeated, 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 PTCAS Program Profile page](#). It is important to note that while these reported averages may seem high, the GPA for accepted students does range from 3.0 to 4.0.

Similarly, when considering the GRE score, while the reported average GRE percentile scores for admitted students is typically around the 60th percentile, the distribution of GRE scores for accepted students often covers a wide range of scores.

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

Applicant requests such as “Is my GRE score competitive?”, “Should I retake the GRE?”, or “Will someone review my transcripts to see if I will be competitive” 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 deadlines as posted, the admissions committee will evaluate your application materials including your grades, test scores, state of residence, virtual interview score, essays, letters of recommendation, and your observation hours. If you are granted an on-campus interview, you will be notified at the email address you have on file at PTCAS by no later than January 15th.

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 in the writing section. However, each application is considered on a case-by-case basis in regards to the GRE.

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

The admissions committee recommends that the GRE test be taken at least 1 month prior to the application deadline. Official GRE scores MUST be submitted via PTCAS using reporting code 7618.

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

First, explore the American Physical Therapy Association’s webpage to learn about the profession of physical therapy. Arranging an opportunity to shadow or volunteer with local PTs is also a great way to learn more about the profession.

Second, examine the coursework you have taken to determine which courses can be applied towards the UNLV DPT prerequisites. If you are unsure which courses to choose, you can use the detailed list of potential course options on the UNLV PTCAS program profile page. Then, work with your undergraduate academic advisor to ensure you have a good plan to complete these courses. If you are a future or current student at UNLV or another NSHE institution you may find the list of preapproved prerequisite courses found on the UNLV DPT program admissions webpage helpful.

Third, if your college has a pre-PT or other pre-professional health sciences club, get involved! Student clubs and organizations provide a great chance to network with other students who are pursing similar long term academic and professional goals. Many campuses provide resources for students who are pursing graduate programs in health sciences. Make sure to identify and use these resources on your campus.

Fourth, complete the required observation/volunteer experience in a physical therapy department.

Fifth, identify potential evaluators who will write your letters of recommendation. Make sure these are people who know you well enough to speak to your strengths.
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 profile on PTCAS for details.

**Do Nevada State residents get preference?**

Yes, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas is a state school, therefore preference is given to residents of Nevada. See our program profile on PTCAS.org for more 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 department. To be eligible for departmental scholarships, students must demonstrate financial need. Departmental scholarship applications for current UNLVPT students are submitted during the fall semester each year and are awards are currently disbursed during the following spring semester.

A limited number of second year UNLV DPT graduate assistant positions may also be available to currently enrolled UNLV DPT students through a very 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 in physical therapy allow me to practice physical therapy?**
No. The DPT degree is a requirement to sit for the national physical therapy exam (NPTE®). Once the licensure examination has been passed, graduates apply for licensure in each state they wish to practice in through the respective state board of physical therapy examiners in that state.

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

**What if I have a disability?**

Students who have been accepted to the UNLV DPT program are encouraged to contact the UNLV Disability Resource Center at (702) 895-0866 for information concerning their disability and reasonable accommodations well in advance of starting classes.

**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 rates, graduation rates, and board exam pass rates can be found on the UNLVPT department webpage.

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

Many students receive a degree in kinesiology or exercise science to fulfill the prerequisites for physical therapy school in a time efficient manner. However, you can pursue your undergraduate degree in any area of study. UNLVPT does not prefer one baccalaureate degree over another and encourages prospective students to pursue an undergraduate degree plan that they feel will enhance their personal and professional future.

**Can I go to PT school part-time?**

No. The DPT program at UNLV is a three-year, full-time program.

**Can I work while I am in PT school?**

Due to the rigor and time intensive nature of the UNLV DPT program, outside employment 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 be eligible to be considered for admission to the program. In the scenario above, while the applicant’s prerequisite GPA meets the minimum requirement, the applicant’s overall (cumulative) GPA does not meet the minimum 3.0 level. Therefore, the applicant would not be eligible for admission to the DPT program.

Where will I go for my clinical learning experiences while I am in physical therapy school?

UNLVPT maintains contracts with multiple clinics and hospitals throughout the United States. The majority of these clinical sites are located in the Western U.S. Once admitted, students will be asked to communicate their preference for clinical learning sites and settings; however final placement for clinical learning experiences will be determined by the UNLV DPT clinical education team in coordination with partnering clinical sites.