Prephysical Therapy Curriculum

The “prephysical therapy curriculum” is just a list of courses that are required for admission to a doctor of physical therapy (DPT) program. It is NOT an academic major, a minor, or an emphasis area.

What Should I Major In?

Physical Therapy (PT) schools do not require a particular major. Although many pre-PT students at Southern Miss choose an academic major such as Kinesiology or Athletic Training, other majors are acceptable including those in the sciences (like Biological Sciences or Biochemistry), humanities, social sciences, or business. Students should select the major in which they feel the most comfortable and in which they would like to work if they are not accepted into PT school. The Kinesiotherapy emphasis of the Kinesiology major offers more courses similar to what will be taken in PT school but a Biological Sciences or Biochemistry major offers and requires more of the prerequisite courses needed for entering a PT school. A major should be chosen that allows time for the student to take the prerequisite courses for entrance into a Physical Therapy school.

Progress toward a Baccalaureate Degree

Coursework toward a baccalaureate degree at Southern Miss must be planned so the student meets all the requirements for the preprofessional curriculum, a major, a minor if appropriate, and the University General Education Curriculum. At Southern Miss, a minimum of 124 hours is needed for most baccalaureate degrees, with 45 of these hours from courses at the 300-level or above.

Physical Therapy Programs

USM students wishing to pursue a DPT degree in Mississippi apply to the doctoral program at University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson or to a candidate for accreditation program at William Carey University in Hattiesburg, MS in the summer or early fall after their junior year and must complete a baccalaureate degree, typically at USM, before enrolling in their program (more details below).

Visit the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) student web pages: http://www.apta.org/ProspectiveStudents for more information about Physical Therapy careers and PT schools. Visit the CAPTE listing of accredited PT programs http://www.capteonline.org/Programs/ to find information about specific PT programs. The University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) Physical Therapy program is accredited by CAPTE. The William Carey University Physical Therapy program has been granted candidate for accreditation status from CAPTE so that students can enroll in their program. Graduation from a CAPTE accredited program is necessary before taking the national licensing exam for physical therapy which is required by all states.

August 2018 - The University of Southern Mississippi
REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS

The following requirements are needed for admission to the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) in the School of Health Related Professions at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) in Jackson. Requirements for admission to other PT schools such as William Carey University are similar but may differ in some specific requirements.

Link to UMMC SHRP: http://www.umc.edu/shrp/
Link to UMMC Physical Therapy Program: https://www.umc.edu/shrp/Programs/Doctor%20of%20Physical%20Therapy/Doctor%20of%20Physical%20Therapy.html

Link to William Carey University Physical Therapy: http://www.wmcarey.edu/schools/physical-therapy

At UMMC, preference is given to Mississippi residents; out-of-state applicants will be considered only if there are positions available after all qualified Mississippi applicants are accepted. William Carey University will consider both in-state and out-of-state applicants.

Following satisfactory completion of all requirements for UMMC’s or William Carey University professional PT program, students will be awarded the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree.

For UMMC, new application forms for the Doctor of Physical Therapy are posted on or before July 1 each year for the subsequent application deadline. Application deadline is November 1 of the year proceeding potential entry into the program. The program itself starts in May of each year.

The prerequisite requirements for the UMMC Doctor of Physical Therapy degree program are listed below. These occasionally change so students must consult the specific admission requirements and application deadlines for the school(s) to which they plan to apply, including UMMC.

Admission to a physical therapy program is very competitive.

- Applicants to the UMMC Doctor of Physical Therapy program must complete a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university before enrolling but usually apply in the summer or early fall after their junior year before the Nov 1 deadline.
- Students must provide evidence of at least 40 hours observation in at least two physical therapy clinical departments or practices in their year of application at the time of application. A maximum of 20 hours for each site is credited towards meeting the 40 hour requirement.
- It is up to the individual student to set up his or her own observation hours.
- This is a link to the “Verification of Observation Form” on the UMMC website that students applying to enter UMMC DPT in May 2019 use to verify observation hours: https://www.umc.edu/shrp/files/files%20-%20doctor%20of%20physical%20therapy/dpt-observation-form-for-20191.pdf
- The form requires the signature of the licensed physical therapist and their license number.
- Applicants must have an overall minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. (On average, applicants interviewed and accepted typically have a GPA of 3.5 or above.)
- Applicants must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for the 8 required pre-PT courses, which must have been taken within the past ten years: AP or CLEP courses are not accepted.
  - two biology courses with laboratory
  - two chemistry courses with laboratory
  - two physics courses with laboratory
  - one advanced physical or biological sciences course (courses numbered 300 or above) with laboratories when the laboratory is offered, and all prerequisites for the advanced courses. Must be taken at a senior college.
  - one statistics course; must be taken at a four-year college from either a department of education, psychology or mathematics
5 of the 8 prerequisite courses above must be completed by the end of the fall semester of when the application is submitted

- Science courses for non-science majors are NOT acceptable. Combined anatomy and physiology courses will be accepted as meeting a prerequisite for students entering (UMMC DPT program) in May 2019 only if: (1) the course is taken at a four year institution, (2) offered in the biology department and has a biology prefix, and (3) is accepted as credit for science (biology) majors. The Anatomy and Physiology courses (BSC 250 and 251) offered at USM do not meet that requirement since they are not accepted by Biological Sciences for credit in their biology major’s program. For students entering (UMMC DPT program) in May 2020, combined anatomy and physiology courses will no longer be accepted to meet prerequisite requirements.

- A minimum grade of C is required on each required course.
- If a course is repeated, both grades are used in calculating the GPA.

- Applicants must submit an official report of Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores.

- Applicants must meet the technical standards of the program, see the following UMMC link: [https://www.umc.edu/shrp/Programs/Doctor%20of%20Physical%20Therapy/Admissions/Technical%20Standards.html](https://www.umc.edu/shrp/Programs/Doctor%20of%20Physical%20Therapy/Admissions/Technical%20Standards.html)

- An interview with the Physical Therapy Admissions Committee is required.

William Carey University’s prerequisite course requirements are similar to UMMC, 2 semesters of biology, 2 semesters of chemistry, 2 semesters of physics, 1 semester of statistics, 1 semester of anatomy and 1 semester of physiology (can be two semesters of combined anatomy and physiology courses). All science courses should be taken with their labs. Consult their program for complete admissions requirements.

**SUGGESTED COURSE SEQUENCE & STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS**

The suggested pre-PT professional course sequence is merely a guideline for taking the courses required for the UMMC DPT program in a timely manner. Courses to fulfill the major must be worked into the student’s schedule. Students must consult the USM Undergraduate Bulletin, the USM Class Schedule Guide for each semester, and their academic advisor. During the last semester of the Sophomore year, students should develop a more detailed plan for the Junior and Senior years because many upper level courses in all majors are offered in specific semesters (Fall or Spring only) and/or on a rotating two-year cycle.

**YEAR 1**

**Fall**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSC 110&amp;L OR BSC 111&amp;L a</td>
<td>4 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHE 106&amp;L</td>
<td>4 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT 101 b</td>
<td>3 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 101 c</td>
<td>3 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 other course d</td>
<td>6-7 h</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Spring**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSC 111&amp;L OR BSC 110&amp;L a</td>
<td>4 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHE 107&amp;L</td>
<td>4 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT 103 b</td>
<td>3 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 102</td>
<td>3 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 other course d</td>
<td>6-7 h</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

a, The order in which students take the introductory Biological Sciences (BSC) courses does not matter; BSC 110/L covers molecular and cellular topics whereas BSC 111/L covers ecology and organisms.

b, Placement in mathematics (MAT) courses depends on the student’s ACT mathematics subtest score. Trigonometry, MAT 103, is a prerequisite to Physics.

c, Placement in English Composition courses depends on the student’s ACT English subtest score.

- ACT English subtest score 16 or below: ENG 99E (Expanded Composition Studio) and ENG 100E (Composition I expanded)
- ACT English subtest score 17-19: ENG 100E (Composition I expanded)
- ACT English subtest score 20 or above: ENG 101 (Composition I)
“Other” courses include those in the General Education Curriculum and in the major and/or minor.

**Strategy for Success**

- Students should focus on doing well in their academic studies, particularly the required science and math courses.
- Students should become involved with extracurricular activities, including meaningful community service learning, volunteer activities, and leadership positions that will demonstrate effective interactions with diverse people and effective time management skills.

Students should maintain a record of the dates and total hours spent performing such activities. This may be needed when it comes time to apply to PT school.

- Students could start getting some hands-on exposure to physical therapy. Students must provide evidence of **40 hours observation in at least two physical therapy clinical departments or practices** during the year of their application at the time of application to UMMC’s DPT program.

There is a link to the “Verification of Observation Form” on the UMMC website that students use that requires the licensed physical therapist’s signature and license number.

- Students may join AED (Alpha Epsilon Delta), the national Health Preprofessional Honor Society, as associate members at any time even if they do not fulfill the requirements for full membership (must be enrolled at Southern Miss for a minimum of three semesters and meet specific course and GPA requirements). Full members are inducted during the Spring semester. Information and links to AED Full and Associate Member applications are available on the Southern Miss Preprofessional website.

**YEAR 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHY 111&amp;L</td>
<td>PHY 112&amp;L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>4 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 h</td>
<td>4 other classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 classes</td>
<td>9-11 h</td>
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</tbody>
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e, PSY 360 recommended, depending on student’s major; MAT 320 or another upper level statistics course may be recommended or required by a specific major. The PT program at UMMC accepts only statistics courses in education, math, or psychology from a senior college or university.

**Strategy for Success**

- Students continue to focus on doing well in their studies.
- Students remain involved with meaningful community service learning, volunteer activities, and leadership positions.
- Students continue to participate in hands-on exposure to physical therapy. Students must provide evidence of **40 hours observation in at least two physical therapy clinical departments or practices** at the time of application to UMMC’s DPT program.

**YEAR 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced science elective</td>
<td>4 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes to fulfill major, etc.</td>
<td>12-14 h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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f, Advanced science electives must be at the 300 level or above, and must be taken at a 4-year college or university. Associated labs, whether incorporated or offered separately, must also be completed. Not all physical or biological sciences courses offered at Southern Miss satisfy the prerequisite requirements for an advanced science elective. Courses should be related to human biology, health, or medicine, such as Cellular Biology (BSC 360), Comparative Anatomy (BSC 361/L), Genetics (BSC 370), Microbiology (BSC 380/L), Physiology [BSC 451 (Human Physiology) or BSC 450 (Comparative Animal Physiology)] with lab, Histology (BSC 461/L), Embryology (BSC 465/L), Human Embryology (BSC 466/L), Immunology (BSC 486/L); CHE 420/L (Principles of Biochemistry) is suggested for...
students seeking only a single semester of Biochemistry. Otherwise, students may take courses in the series intended for Biochemistry majors or some Biological Sciences majors: CHE 421 (Biochemistry I), CHE 422 (Biochemistry II), CHE 424 (Biochemistry III).

**Strategy for Success**
- Students continue to focus on doing well in their studies.
- Students remain involved with meaningful community service learning, volunteer activities, and leadership positions.
- Students continue to participate in hands-on exposure to physical therapy. Students must provide evidence of 40 hours observation in at least two physical therapy clinical departments or practices during their year of application at the time of application to UMMC’s DPT program.
- Students applying to UMMC PT program must have completed at least 5 of the 8 required courses by the end of the fall semester in which the application is submitted. Applicants accepted for admissions must complete the remaining prerequisite courses by the end of the subsequent spring semester.

**YEAR 4**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classes to fulfill major, etc.</td>
<td>15-18 h</td>
<td>Classes to fulfill major, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

For UMMC, apply online directly to the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at the UMMC School of Health Related Professions: https://www.umc.edu/shrp/Programs/Doctor%20of%20Physical%20Therapy/Admissions/Admission%20Application%20Procedure.html

The deadline for application to UMMC is November 1 of each year for the program that starts the summer semester of the following calendar year.

For the William Carey University Physical Therapy Program consult the William Carey University program about the application process https://www.wmcarey.edu/page/physical-therapy-admission-and-prerequisite-requirements and is done in part through the centralized application service PTCAS at http://www.ptcas.org. William Carey University’s DPT program has a March deadline.

A list of accredited and candidate for accreditation Physical Therapy Schools that offer the Doctor of Physical Therapy degree is at: http://www.capteonline.org/Programs/. This includes the two Physical Therapy programs in Mississippi, the University of Mississippi Medical Center program which has full accreditation and the William Carey University program which has candidate for accreditation status. In Alabama there are fully accredited programs at Alabama State University in Montgomery, University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), and the University of South Alabama in Mobile. In Louisiana there are fully accredited programs at two locations LSU Health Sciences Center in New Orleans and LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport. There are additional physical therapy programs listed as “Developing Programs” in neighboring states and across the country that also have been granted candidate for accreditation status and can enroll students.

UMMC uses a direct application process while William Carey University and many other PT schools use the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS). Participating PTCAS schools are listed at: http://www.apta.org/Educators/PTCAS/Participation/

- Scores from the general Graduate Record Exam (GRE) are usually required (verbal, quantitative, analytical writing sections). Check the schools to which you apply for the deadline for receipt of scores and for how old the scores can be. Reserve a GRE testing time at least 6 weeks ahead of the
test date and allow about a month for your scores to be sent to the PT school before the school’s deadline.

Link:  www.gre.org

Students should study on their own to prepare for the GRE and/or they may take one or more of the USM, one credit hour each, GRE review classes:

MLS 480 (Conquering the GRE Computer Adaptive Test)
MLS 481 (GRE Preparation: Quantitative)
MLS 482 (GRE Preparation: Verbal)
MLS 482 (GRE Preparation: Analytical Writing)

Check the Class Schedule Guide to determine when these courses are offered.

Students are strongly encouraged to take an online practice GRE before taking the GRE that they will use on their application. There are a number of websites that have practice questions or practice tests; use Google to search for “practice GRE questions”.

THE INTERVIEW

Students are advised to practice their interview skills BEFORE attending their first interview.

• You may use the online Perfect Interview™ resource:  http://www.perfectinterview.com/usm/
• Or, sign up for mock interviews through Career Services by calling 601-266-4153:
  http://www.usm.edu/career-services/about-us
• Dress professionally and act professionally at your interview.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT A CAREER IN HEALTHCARE, CONTACT THE PREPROFESSIONAL OFFICE

Preprofessional Office
Dr. Jeffrey Evans, Preprofessional Advisor
jeffrey.evans@usm.edu
Phone: 601-266-4315
Office Location: Bobby Chain Technology Center (TEC 100)

College of Arts and Sciences
118 College Dr., #5004
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001