Pre-PT Quick Facts

Students prepare for a career as a Physical Therapist by building credentials in scholarship, leadership, humanitarian/community service, and shadowing in the various settings of the profession. PT schools greatly value PT shadowing experience and prefer applicants to have significant shadowing experiences in a variety of PT settings, in order to ensure that students have an appreciation for the vast scope of the profession. There is no “best” major for pre-PT students nor are there majors that will make a student “stand out.”

PTCAS (Centralized Application Service)

To apply to most PT programs, students will utilize the PTCAS application service. Official transcripts, GRE scores, an essay, and letters of recommendation are all submitted to PTCAS. All eight of the PT programs in Georgia now use this application service. GA-PCOM will be participating in PTCAS for the first time in the 2018-2019 application cycle.

PTCAS opens each year by July 1st, but programs differ in terms of their application deadlines. Most deadlines are in the fall for a summer start; however, students are responsible for checking the specific deadlines for the programs to which they hope to apply. Generally, students are encouraged to apply well before the deadline since many institutions participate in rolling admissions. Do not enter any information into the PTCAS system until it opens for the new admissions cycle.

Required Courses & GPA Expectations

DISCLAIMER: This is not a definitive list of the classes you will need for every school. Always check with the individual schools to see their specific requirements. For example, Mercer University and GA-PCOM require an Anthropology or Sociology course, while other institutions in Georgia do not.

❖ Do grade trends matter?

Students who wish to enter a PT program will require strong science and overall GPAs as admission is competitive. Admissions committees look not only at raw numbers, but also at grade trends on a student’s transcript—so all is not lost if a student stumbles in their first semester or two, but then shows substantial improvement each subsequent year. However, they will also notice negative trends such as if a student is consistently withdrawing from or performing poorly in hard sciences or is completing courses away from their home institution. While an instance or two is not a deal-breaker, a pattern of behavior should be avoided. Students must demonstrate the ability to handle difficult scientific content as this will translate directly to their ability to perform in a PT program.

GRE

Most PT schools require that applicants take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The GRE consists of three sections: Quantitative, Verbal, and Essay section. There are no specific courses that students need to take prior to the GRE, but students should plan to dedicate roughly six to eight weeks to exam preparation. While students can opt for a commercial prep course for the GRE, self-study is often sufficient.

Students usually sit for the exam in January-May as they head into the application cycle in July. The GRE is offered via University Testing Services on a regular basis.

Average Matriculant Numbers

- Overall GPA: 3.50
- Science GPA: 3.50
- GRE: ~300 combined score & ~4.0 Writing (scores above the 50th percentile)

General Information

- Doctorate Degree
- Most programs are 3 years
- Eight institutions in Georgia:
  - Augusta University
  - Brenau University
  - Emory University
  - GA-PCOM
  - Georgia Southern
  - University-Armstrong Campus (formerly Armstrong State)
  - Georgia State University
  - Mercer University
  - University of North Georgia

Prehealth.uga.edu
**Early Decision Program**

The Early Decision (ED) program is a binding option for applicants who have decided that a program is their first choice and that they will enroll if accepted. As an ED applicant, you can apply to only one PTCAS program until a decision on your application has been made the program. If an acceptance is extended, you are required to accept this offer and will not be able to apply to any additional PTCAS programs. The Early Decision deadline is typically in mid-August, so students must complete their PTCAS applications quite early to be eligible for this process; however, they should expect to be notified about their early decision acceptance by mid-September. If not accepted to a program via ED, a student is then eligible to apply to other DPT programs via PTCAS by their program-specific application deadlines.

**Shadowing Experience**

Generally, PT programs require that applicants have experience observing or shadowing physical therapists in action. Shadowing requirements for admissions can vary in a few aspects between schools including hours required, number of environments, and types of environments. While most programs require 100 hours minimum, more is certainly recommended. It is common for programs to suggest that students complete their shadowing in at least two different environments – inpatient and outpatient. However, it is possible for an individual program to require students to shadow in more or different types of environments. Variety in shadowing is always helpful, but is also important to try to get a well-rounded experience in each environment since shadowing is regularly discussed during admissions interviews.

**Undergraduate Research & Volunteering**

Extracurricular activities, such as club affiliations and volunteering, are a large portion of the application that should not be neglected. PT schools are looking for students who not only demonstrate that they can manage rigorous courses while staying busy, but also those who are compassionate, enjoy working with people and are dedicated to serving the community. Students should keep in mind that depth of commitment and leadership experience are also considered. As a result, it is best to focus on strong engagement in few activities rather than to spread oneself too thin.

While there are many benefits to getting involved in undergraduate research, it is not required for admission into most PT schools. Therefore, if a student were not interested in research, they would be better served dedicating that time to other activities such as volunteering or shadowing. Students interested in research should plan to dedicate at least a year to a specific project or research lab.

**Letters of Evaluation**

Most PT schools require three letters of evaluation. Requirements can vary between schools, and it is the student’s responsibility to ensure that they have collected the correct letters for their program of interest. Generally, programs expect students to provide one letter from a PT, one from a faculty member, and one other of the student’s choosing. This can come from another PT, a research mentor, volunteer coordinator, employer, etc. Students should select what they believe will be the most compelling letter.

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**Georgia PT Program Application Dates**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Application Period</th>
<th>Matriculation Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Augusta University*</td>
<td>July - December</td>
<td>May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brenau University</td>
<td>July - March</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emory University*</td>
<td>July - October</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia State University*</td>
<td>July - October</td>
<td>June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgia Southern University-</td>
<td>July - October</td>
<td>May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armstrong Campus*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mercer University*</td>
<td>July - October</td>
<td>August</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of North Georgia*</td>
<td>July - October</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia – PCOM</td>
<td>July - December</td>
<td>June</td>
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*Indicates programs that participate in PTCAS Early Decision*