

DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM

The College of Health Sciences at Des Moines University offers an accredited entry-level program of study in physical therapy. The program includes 29 months of academic study and supervised clinical education experiences leading to a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree for students who are admitted in fall of 2025.

The DPT program supports the development of health care practitioners via the utilization of innovative and collaborative learning experiences focused on enhancing quality of life via the science of human movement. The program prepares graduates who are competent in advancing health and serving society in diverse healthcare environments that are reflective of contemporary practice.

Mission

Engage innovative thinkers to optimize health through movement.

Vision

Transform communities by optimizing lives through the science of movement.

Program and Student Learning Outcomes

- **EPA 1: Gather a History:** The professional DPT should be able to complete an accurate and focused interview in an organized manner. The history should be tailored to developing an understanding of the patient's health condition, functional needs, and availability of resources. The learner needs to integrate a knowledge of practice to guide the information gathering.
- **EPA 2: Perform a physical examination:** The professional DPT should be able to complete a physical examination tailored to the clinical situation, and the specific patient encounter. Quality of movement should be a fundamental component of the examination. The physical examination should be organized and respect the rights, comfort, and safety of the patient.
- **EPA 3: Develop differential movement-related diagnosis:** The professional DPT should be able to integrate patient data to formulate an assessment, developing a list of potential movement-related diagnoses that can be prioritized. This is a dynamic and reflective process that requires continuous adaption to avoid errors of clinical reasoning. It involves assessment of the patient's health condition, impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions.
- **EPA 4: Develop a plan of care:** The professional DPT should be able to develop patient centered goals based on the identified movement-related diagnosis. It is expected that the patient's health condition, functional needs, environmental and personal factors will be integrated into the plan of care.
- **EPA 5: Document the clinical encounter:** The professional DPT should be able to provide accurate and focused documentation of a clinical encounter in either written or electronic form. Documentation should support the continuity of patient care and allow all health care team members to understand the patient condition, goals of care, and provided or recommended interventions.
- **EPA 6: Communicate findings and plan of care:** The professional DPT should be able to concisely present a summary of a clinical encounter to one or more members of the health care team (including patients

and families) to achieve a shared understanding of the patient's current condition. A prerequisite for the ability to provide an oral presentation is synthesis of the information, an understanding of the participants' health literacy gathered into an accurate assessment of the patient's current condition.

- **EPA 7: Form clinical questions and retrieve evidence to support patient care:** The professional DPT should be able to develop focused clinical questions, identify information resources, and retrieve salient evidence that addresses these questions. This requires that the professional DPT has the basic skill to adequately analyze the quality of the evidence being reviewed and the ability to apply it in a clinical context.
- **EPA 8: Recognize urgent or emergent situations and initiate an appropriate action:** The professional DPT should be able to recognize patient conditions that require urgent or emergency care. The identification and initiation of appropriate course of action is essential to this EPA.
- **EPA 9: Collaborate care with interprofessional team:** The professional DPT should be able to identify, understand, and utilize the skills of the health care team. A climate of respect for the roles and responsibilities of the health care team is expected.
- **EPA 10: Maintain ethical and legal practice:** The professional DPT should conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the APTA Code of Ethics and Core Values. Inherent in this is the expectation of adherence to jurisdictional parameters.
- **EPA 11: Perform interventions:** The professional DPT should demonstrate the ability to perform core interventions in a safe, efficient, and timely manner. The interventions should be targeted to identified therapeutic goals and modified based on patient response.
- **EPA 12: Identify system failures and contribute to a culture of safety and improvement.** The professional DPT should have a foundational understanding of health care systems and the services that are offered. Promoting safe patient care and quality improvement processes is integral. Advocating for health policies and processes that improve access to quality services is essential to transform lives.

Program Requirements

To be considered for admission, you must have a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university prior to the start of orientation.

Required courses must be completed before registration. A science GPA and cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher are recommended to be considered for admission. The following course work must be completed prior to matriculation; grades below a C will not be accepted.

Subject	Required Course(s) or Term Hours
Anatomy ^{1,2}	1 course
Physiology ^{1,2}	1 course
Biology ¹	2 courses
Chemistry ¹	2 courses
Physics ¹	2 courses
Psychology	2 courses
Statistics	1 course

¹ with lab

² or a two-course sequence in anatomy and physiology with lab

Other recommended course work includes biomechanics, kinesiology, exercise physiology, genetics, abnormal psychology, developmental psychology and math (trigonometry or calculus).

Applicants are required to observe physical therapists at work for at least 25 hours. While applicants have until matriculation to complete the physical therapy observation requirement, at least 15 total hours of observation must be complete at the time of application to be considered for an interview. Observations may be in-person or virtual. The most competitive applicants will have observed in a variety of inpatient and outpatient physical therapy settings.

Additional information can be found on the DPT Program Admissions Requirements [website](#).

Program Application Process

Application to the Doctor of Physical Therapy program is accepted through the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS).

Detailed information regarding the process can be found on the DPT Program Admissions [website](#).

Applicants will be contacted by email if they are selected for an interview. An interview is required for admission. Applicants will receive a response to their application status after the interview process.

The DPT program does not accept transfer credits.

Curriculum Overview and Outline

Students must complete each of the courses listed in the accompanying set of course descriptions. The curriculum is designed to assist students with professional and personal development. This is accomplished through integrated and sequential learning experience focusing on the foundational and applied knowledge of the movement systems. The experiences provide the basic cognitive, affective and psychomotor knowledge and skills needed for the practice of physical therapy. These experiences are also designed to motivate students to become lifelong learners.

To ensure excellence for both students and society, formative and summative evaluation is essential with a focus on achievement of competencies. Evaluation facilitates learning and provides validation for program excellence.

The faculty are committed to excellence in teaching and learning, and to serving students, the community and the profession. Excellence is achieved through selection of students with unique natural talents and abilities followed by nurturing and development.

The program is 29 months in length and is divided into seven terms. Each term builds on the information from previous terms.

Program Outcomes

To review the program's outcomes statistics (e.g., average graduation rate, average employment rate, average licensure exam pass rate, etc.), please visit the program's [outcomes webpage](#).

Licensure

Students who satisfactorily complete the requirements for graduation from the physical therapy program of the College of Health Sciences are eligible to take the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE) given by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy. A passing score on this

examination is one requirement for practice as a physical therapist in all states.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION, ACADEMIC PROMOTION AND GRADUATION

The purpose of this document is to specify the technical standards the University deems essential for a student to matriculate, remain in good standing and ultimately achieve all the competencies necessary for graduation within their program. The University, therefore, requires candidates to confirm their ability to comply with these standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, as a condition of admission and on an annual basis thereafter within a program's advising processes.

Fulfillment of the technical standards for graduation does not guarantee that a graduate will be able to fulfill the technical requirements of any specific post-graduate residency or fellowship program or employment setting.

A candidate who is seeking a DO, DPM, MSPAS, DPT or OTD degree at Des Moines University must be capable of completing core educational requirements and achieving the competencies in the basic and clinical sciences. DMU seeks to develop candidates who have a deep and robust health science or medical knowledge base and outstanding clinical skills, with the ability to appropriately apply them, effectively interpret information, and contribute to decisions across a broad spectrum of medical situations and settings. The critical skills required to be successful are outlined below and include the ability to observe, communicate, perform motor functions, as well as to understand, integrate core knowledge and skills, and to behave appropriately in varied educational and professional situations.

Reasonable accommodations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act and the Iowa Civil Rights Act may be required by otherwise qualified individual candidates to meet the technical standards specified below. Requests for University-provided accommodations will be granted if the requests are reasonable, do not cause a fundamental alteration of the health science or medical education program, do not cause an undue hardship, are consistent with the standards of the health science or medical profession, and are recommended by the Accommodations and Educational Support Specialist.

1. Observation: Candidates and students must be able to acquire required information and timely interpret demonstrations, experiments, and laboratory exercises in the basic sciences. They must be able to observe a patient/client accurately for purposes of interactions, evaluation, and treatment.

2. Communication: Candidates and students must be able to demonstrate proficiency in the English language such that they can communicate effectively in oral and written form with all members of the health care team. Candidates and students must be able to communicate with patients/clients in order to elicit and share information. They must have the capacity for comfortable verbal and non-verbal communication and interpersonal skills to enable effective caregiving of patients/clients and collaboration within a multidisciplinary team. In any case where a candidate's ability to communicate is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate reasonable alternative means and/or abilities to communicate with patients/clients and members of the healthcare team.

3. **Motor and Sensory:** Candidates and students must have sufficient motor and tactile function to execute movements reasonably required to perform basic laboratory tests, perform physical examinations, and provide clinical care, including emergency treatment to patients. Such actions may require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements and strength, vestibular function, and functional use of the senses of touch to meet professional care standards. In any case where a candidate's ability to complete and interpret physical findings using such skills and functions is compromised, the candidate must demonstrate reasonable alternative means and/or abilities to retrieve these physical findings. Candidates and students must be willing and able to touch and examine **without regard to known or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, or other characteristics protected by law.**

4. **Strength and Mobility:** Candidates and students must demonstrate strength, including upper and lower extremity and body strength, and mobility to provide clinical care, attend to emergency codes, and to perform or direct such maneuvers as CPR.

5. **Evaluation and Treatment Integration:** Consistent with the ability to assess at a minimum symmetry, range of motion, and tissue textures, candidates and students must perform proper evaluation and treatment integration.

6. **Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities:** Candidates and students must have the ability to accurately measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, problem solve, and think critically. They must also have the ability to participate and learn through a variety of modalities including, but not limited to, classroom instruction, small groups, virtual learning, team and collaborative activities. Interpretation of information from multiple sources (written, verbal, environmental, and interpersonal) is also expected. In addition, candidates and students should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures. Candidates and students must be able to concentrate, timely analyze and interpret data, and make decisions within areas in which there is a reasonable amount of visual and auditory distraction.

7. **Behavioral Attributes, Social Skills, and Professional Expectation:** Candidates and students must be able to effectively utilize their intellectual abilities, exercise good judgment, complete all responsibilities attendant to the evaluation and care of patients/clients, and develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and colleagues. Candidates and students must be able to professionally manage heavy workloads, prioritize conflicting demands, and function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments; to display flexibility, to learn to function in the face of their own possible biases and uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients, and to not engage in substance overuse or abuse. Candidates and students must be able to understand and determine the impact of the social determinants of health and other systemic issues (including workload and environmental demands) which impact the care for all individuals in a respectful and effective manner regardless of known or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, veteran status or any protected status. Professionalism, compassion, integrity, concern for others, ethical standards, interpersonal skills, engagement, emotional intelligence, and motivation are all qualities that are required throughout the educational process.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Des Moines University welcomes qualified candidates and students with disabilities who meet the technical standards of the program, with or without reasonable accommodations. Students with a disability who may need accommodations during their educational career at DMU will be asked to reaffirm their need for accommodations when acknowledging the ability to meet technical standards annually. The student is responsible for requesting accommodations through the Accommodations and Educational Support Specialist in Academic Support within the Center for Educational Enhancement. Please reach out in person, by email (accommodations@dmu.edu), or by calling Academic Support at 515-271-1516. The Accommodations and Educational Support Specialist reviews all requests for accommodations through an individualized, interactive process.

The use of an intermediary may be a reasonable accommodation while performing some non-essential physical maneuvers or non-technical data gathering. However, an intermediary cannot substitute for the candidates' or student's interpretation and judgement. Intermediaries may not perform essential skills on behalf of the candidate or student, nor can they replace technical skills related to selection and observation.

PROCESS FOR ASSESSING COMPLIANCE WITH THE TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Candidates are required to attest at the time they accept an offer to matriculate that they meet the applicable technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, and annually confirm they continue to meet these standards. These standards are not intended to deter any candidate or student who might be able to complete the requirements of the curriculum with reasonable accommodations.

The University will provide reasonable accommodations as may be required by the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Iowa Civil Rights Act

A student whose behavior or performance raises questions concerning his or her ability to fulfill these technical standards may be required to obtain evaluation or testing by a health care provider designated by the University, and to provide the results to the Center for Educational Enhancement to be considered as part of the interactive process to determine possible reasonable accommodations.

Technological compensation can be made with respect to certain technical standards, but candidates and students should be able to perform these standards in a reasonably independent manner.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

In addition to the technical standards set forth, candidates and students must possess the general physical health necessary for performing the duties of a student in the health sciences and a health professional in training without endangering the lives of patients and/or colleagues with whom they might have contact.

Course	Title	Credit Hours
Year 1		
Fall Term		
DPT 1642	Professional Practice & Research Methods	4
DPT 1643	Human Movement	4
DPT 1644	Musculoskeletal Anatomy	4.5

DPT 1645	Kinesiology	4
Credit Hours		16.5
Spring Term		
DPT 1654	Wellness, Health & Evidence Based Pract	4
DPT 1655	Neural Basis of Human Movement	3
DPT 1656	Integrative Visceral Systems & Sys Revie	5
DPT 1657	Physical Therapy Examination and Eval	4
DPT 1658	Professional Practice Topics	2
Credit Hours		18
Year 2		
Summer Term		
DPT 2632	Manual Therapy and Biophysical Agents	4.5
DPT 2633	Therapeutic Exercise	3
DPT 2634	Integrated Practice	3
Credit Hours		10.5
Fall Term		
DPT 2640	Clinical Education Experience I (CEE 1)	10
DPT 2641	Pharmacology and Imaging	3
DPT 2642	Pathophysiology and Integumentary	4
Credit Hours		17
Spring Term		
DPT 2650	Contemporary Professional Prac	3
DPT 2651	Evidence Based Practice Outcomes	2
DPT 2652	Advanced Neuromuscular Interventions	3
DPT 2653	Clinical Education Experience II(CEE 2)	10
Credit Hours		18
Year 3		
Summer Term		
DPT 3634	Practice Management	2.5
DPT 3635	Pediatrics	2
DPT 3636	Adaptive and Assistive Technologies	2
DPT 3637	Management of the Complex Patient	4
Credit Hours		10.5
Fall Term		
DPT 3640	Preparation for Clinical Practice	3
DPT 3641	Complex Movement Analysis	2
DPT 3642	Integrated Manual Therapy	2.5
DPT 3643	Clinical Education Experience III(CEE3)	10
Credit Hours		17.5
Total Credit Hours		108

- Completion of the Federation of the State Boards of Physical Therapy's Practice Exam and Assessment Tool.
- Approval for graduation by the program faculty, Dean and the Board of Trustees of the University following recommendation by the Academic Progress Committee. Academic performance and professionalism is evaluated and considered for graduation.
- Satisfactory resolution of all financial obligations.

Elective Courses

There are no required elective hours for students. A complete list of University electives may be found on the [Elective Courses](#) page. Prior to the start of each term, students are provided a list of electives for which DPT students are eligible.

To receive a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree, a student must satisfy the following:

- Successful completion of all academic requirements:
 - Pass all academic course work and clinical education experiences.
 - Maintain a grade point average (GPA) of at least a 2.0.