

Suggested Timeline for Future Physical Therapists

From completing prerequisite coursework to preparing for the GRE, securing observation hours, and gathering strong letters of recommendation, each step plays a crucial role in building a competitive application. This timeline is designed to guide pre-PT students through their undergraduate experience to the application process. This timeline provides recommendations and should be adjusted based upon your personal journey and conversations with your academic advisor.

Freshman Year



Explore the profession and start prerequisite planning.

We suggest completing the following prerequisites* during the first year:

- » Biology with labs I and II
- » Psychology (fall)
- » Statistics (spring)
- » College writing/composition

Join your institution's pre-physical therapy or pre-health clubs and research one to two other clubs that align with your personal passions.

Contact local health care settings to **explore volunteer opportunities.**

Use the [PTCAS Directory](#) to get a basic understanding of what programs require to apply.

- » Create a tracking document so you can work toward a few programs you think fit your future goals.

Make sure to **discuss your plans with your academic advisor and/or pre-professional advisor.**

Sophomore Year



Build an academic foundation and start observation hours.

We suggest completing the following prerequisites* during the sophomore year:

- » Chemistry with labs I and II
- » Anatomy and physiology with labs I and II

Begin **observation/shadowing hours** in a variety of clinical settings, and set a personal goal that is attainable and balances other requirements.

Build relationships with professors and mentors for future recommendations.



*Course enrollment may need adjustment to align with the progression of science courses required by the student's institution.

Junior Year



Prepare for applications and strengthen personal experiences.

We suggest completing the following prerequisites* during the first year:

» Physics with labs I and II

Continue to record and obtain **observation hours**, making sure to complete them in a variety of clinical settings.

If the GRE is required by programs of interest, **take it** by spring/summer.

In the spring, begin **to ask professors and mentors to write letters of recommendation for you.**

Make sure to discuss your progress to degree completion and your education standing with your academic advisor and/or pre-professional advisor.

Research financial planning for graduate school and **use available resources to increase your financial awareness**, like [Enrich](#).



Senior Year



Apply to DPT programs and finish strong academically.

The [PTCAS](#) opens in early June before your senior year begins; make sure to **review program requirements and deadlines before applying.**

Continue to participate in community activities, observation hours, and research activities.

Give yourself ample time to **complete applications prior to the deadlines.**

Complete any outstanding prerequisites and retake the GRE if required.

Graduate and prepare to attend your future doctor of physical therapy program!

