

DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY (DPT)

Introduction to Physical Therapy

The mission of the physical therapy program at PCOM Georgia is to prepare individuals who demonstrate excellence in the practice of physical therapy, emphasize a “whole person” approach to patient management, commit to the advancement of knowledge and intellectual growth, and engage in the wellbeing of the community.

The PCOM Department of Physical Therapy will be recognized for its:

- Commitment to cultivating an inclusive learning environment that is diverse, inquisitive, dignified, and respectful and that will inspire caring graduates who advocate for all individuals in our changing healthcare environment.
- State-of-the-art learning environment that offers the opportunity for students to learn “whole person” patient management through inter-professional collaboration, development and intellectual growth, as well as hands-on experiences.
- Educational advancement for faculty, students and clinicians to promote development of exceptional healthcare professionals who are committed to life-long learning and engagement in the profession of physical therapy.

Physical Therapy Philosophy

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) provides the basic framework for organizing the curriculum. This framework was chosen because of its emphasis on the individual client as the focus of health care and its consistency with osteopathic philosophy, which emphasizes management of the “whole person” and recognizes the unity of body systems. This is consistent with the program’s belief that physical therapists are experts in movement and use their skills to restore, maintain, and promote optimal movement and function. As such, physical therapists function interdependently in a variety of settings and use theory and established scientific evidence as the foundation upon which they address the needs of the “whole person” (physical, psychological, spiritual, and socio-economic). The curriculum is also founded on the belief that optimal physical therapy is provided in a client-focused environment in which the therapist assumes various roles, including educator, consultant, and advocate.

The organization of the curriculum is based on the assumption that understanding and responding to the effects of health conditions begins with knowledge of good health. The implication is that practitioners need a firm foundation in “typical or usual” human development in order to recognize and assist clients in managing impairments and deficits in activities and participation.

The curriculum model is best described as hybrid, incorporating elements of traditional methods, case-based and systems-based approaches. The curriculum model is “wrapped” in an envelope made up of four themes that is emphasized throughout the program: Critical Thinking, Evidence-Based Practice, Professional Engagement, and Lifespan Development.

In the early stages, the instruction focuses on building foundational knowledge of human body structure and function across the lifespan and includes content from both the Basic/Foundational sciences and the Clinical/Physical Therapy sciences. As the student develops an understanding of “typical” structure and function, the emphasis begins

to shift to health conditions commonly seen in physical therapy across the lifespan, focusing on addressing impairments and activity and participation limitations/restrictions. All components of the patient/client practice management model are addressed in courses that are case-based and systems-based.

Each course is assigned to one of five content areas: Basic/Foundational Sciences, Clinical/Physical Therapy Sciences, Evidence-Based Practice, Professional Engagement, and Clinical Experiences. The following provides course information on course sequencing and course descriptions as related to assigned content areas.

Educational Goals

1. Provide a professional education that will prepare individuals for entry into the practice of physical therapy.
2. Promote the development of professional core values and behaviors.
3. Promote participation in and appreciation for scholarship that will contribute to the evidence supporting physical therapy practice.
4. Promote participation in activities designed to advocate for the profession, community, and individuals.
5. Engage in service to the college, community, and profession.
6. Provide opportunities for post-professional education and professional development.

Degree Requirements

First Year

Term 1		Hours
PT 601AG	Clinical Anatomy for Physical Therapists I	4
PT 621AG	Principles of Evidenced-Based Practice	2
PT 606G	Medical Terminology	1
PT 631AG	Professional Engagement I, Introduction	2
Hours		9

Term 2

PT 601BG	Clinical Anatomy for Physical Therapists II	4
PT 602	Clinical Kinesiology	4
PT 611AG	Physical Therapy Exam I	4
PT 614	Intro to Pharmacology, Diagnostic Tests and Imaging	3
Hours		15

Term 3

PT 603G	Differential Diagnosis for PT	4
PT 611BG	Physical Therapy Exam II	3
PT 605A	Foundations of Clinical Interventions I: Therex	3
PT 632G	Teaching and Learning	2
Hours		12

Term 4

PT 604AG	Clinical Neuroscience I	3
PT 711AG	Musculoskeletal Management I	6
PT 731G	Psychosocial Aspects of Health Management	3
Hours		12

Second Year

Term 1

PT 604BG	Clinical Neuroscience II	3
PT 711BG	Musculoskeletal Management II	6

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PT 605B	Foundations of Clinical Interventions II: Modalities	2
PT 713G	Assistive Technology: P&O	4
Hours		15
Term 2		
PT 741G	Clinical Experience I	8
PT 621BG	Components of Evidenced-Based Practice: Design & Statistics	3
PT 631BG	Professional Engagement II, Health Systems Interdisciplinary Collaboration	2
Hours		13
Term 3		
PT 612G	Cardio and Pulmonary Management	5
PT 613G	Integumentary Management	3
PT 717A	NeuroRehabilitation I	6
Hours		14
Third Year		
Term 1		
PT 742G	Clinical Experience II	10
Hours		10
Term 2		
PT 732G	Professional Engagement III, Practice Management Policy and Ethics	2
PT 717B	NeuroRehabilitation II	5
PT 716G	Complex Multi System Disorders	5
Hours		12
Term 3		
PT 733G	Professional Engagement IV, Lifelong Commitment	1
PT 743G	Clinical Experience III	14
Hours		15
Total Hours		127

¹ All courses are subject to change as revised by the PCOM DPT curriculum committee.