

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
ABOUT
PHYSICAL THERAPY EDUCATION**

1. Why the *Doctor of Physical Therapy* degree, and how is it different from the Masters degree?

In 1999 the American Physical Therapy Association House of Delegates created a strategic plan to transition the practice of physical therapy to a doctoring profession. This plan, “Vision 2020” cites six key elements, the first being the *Doctor of Physical Therapy* (DPT) as the appropriate degree for the profession. In addition, physical therapists in many states now have direct access privileges which allow patients to seek medical advice from a physical therapist without a referral from a physician. The DPT allows for additional education and training in differential diagnosis, professionalism, and autonomous practice for direct access physical therapy.

2. What is the difference between a program that admits students as 1st year undergraduates and a program that begins at the graduate level?

The Duquesne University Physical Therapy program is an example of a 6-year program that admits students as 1st year undergraduates. This allows students to complete both undergraduate and the DPT degree in a total of 6 years. A DPT-only program requires students have a 4-year undergraduate degree prior to beginning the 3-year DPT education, resulting in a total of 7 years to earn the DPT degree.

3. If I enter a program that combines undergraduate and graduate education, what degrees will I have when I graduate?

Students in Duquesne’s Physical Therapy program earn the following degrees.

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| • Bachelor’s of Science Degree in Biology | After 4 years of study |
| • Bachelor’s of Science Degree in Health Science | After 4 years of study |
| • Doctor of Physical Therapy Degree | After 6 years of study |

4. Who teaches the basic science courses?

All of our faculty teaching basic science courses are experienced clinicians in addition to being basic science researchers.

Neuroscience	Dr. David Somers	Physical Therapy Chair and Associate Professor
Anatomy	Dr. F. Richard Clemente	Physical Therapy Associate Professor
Anatomy	Dr. Anne Burrows	Physical Therapy Associate Professor
Physiology	Dr. Cliff Pohl	Physical Therapy Associate Professor

5. Does anatomy class include cadaver dissection?

Knowledge of anatomy is essential to the physical therapist. There are three ways anatomy is taught in physical therapy programs: full cadaver dissection – dissecting all regions of a cadaver; prosections studying previously dissected regions of a cadaver; or computer model - learning anatomy in virtual form on the computer screen. While there are some benefits to each, Duquesne utilizes primarily full cadaver dissection. This gives students an understanding of the nature of human tissues and an excellent three dimensional perspective of the human body. The instructor also makes use of computer models and refers students to various websites to use as resources, and when appropriate, uses prosections to further illustrate a point. Our anatomy class spans two full semesters. The instructor teaches students respect for the individuals who donated their bodies to further the education of health care professionals. At the end of each course, the remains of the individuals are cremated followed by a memorial service. The remains are then returned to the appropriate caretaker.

6. What is the complement of the physical therapy faculty?

Duquesne University has 12 full-time faculty in the Physical Therapy department.

David L. Somers, Ph.D., PT	Program Chair and Associate Professor
Diane Borello-France, PhD, PT	Associate Professor
Anne Burrows, PhD, DPT	Associate Professor
Christopher Carcia, PhD, PT, SCS	Associate Professor and Sportsmedicine Clinical Specialist
Leesa DiBartola, EdD, PT, CHES	Assistant Professor, Certified Health Education Specialist and Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education
F. Richard Clemente, Ph.D., PT	Associate Professor
Kenneth Havrilla, PT, DPT, MS	Assistant Professor, Assistant Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education
Gregory Marchetti, PhD, PT	Associate Professor
Mary Marchetti, MS, PT, GCS	Instructor and Geriatric Clinical Specialist
RobRoy Martin, PhD, PT, CSCS	Assistant Professor and Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist
Cliff Pohl, PhD	Associate Professor
Martha Somers, DPT, PT	Assistant Professor

All of the faculty teaching clinical and basic science courses are or were practicing clinicians. This enables us to bring clinical examples to class to illustrate educational points. The faculty have a strong working knowledge of the clinical environments for which they are preparing the students. The combined experience of our faculty includes practice in acute care, intensive care, outpatient care, inpatient rehabilitation, home health, skilled nursing facilities, hospitals, and management. Several members of the faculty continue to work clinically on a part-time basis which helps them to improve their clinical skills and knowledge.

At Duquesne University, we are fully staffed and have a full complement of faculty. Our faculty have an open door policy and are available to students any time during the work week. In addition, many evenings or weekends faculty are available if students want extra practice or review sessions. Our staff is also dedicated to providing our students with excellent educational experiences. Our staff works diligently to support the work of our faculty and students.

7. Is there a minimum grade point average required to stay in the program?

A minimum cumulative QPA of 3.0 for all pre-professional courses is required in order to enter the professional phase in the senior year and retain a seat in the physical therapy program. A minimum QPA of 3.0 must be maintained every semester after entering the professional phase of the program. If the semester QPA falls below 3.0 the student is placed on academic probation; a student is allowed one semester on probation. Failure to obtain a 3.0 QPA a second semester will result in dismissal from the program. Each student has a professional advisor from the physical therapy faculty an academic advisor in the Dean’s office for support and guidance. Additional support is available to students through various offices on campus.

8. What is the program’s graduation rate?

Three year average

- 80% of students who pursue the DPT degree

9. What is the post graduation employment rate?

The post graduate employment rate for those seeking employment as a physical therapist is 100% employment immediately following graduation. Many of our students have employment contracts prior to graduation.

10. What is the program’s pass rate on the physical therapy licensing exam?

- Duquesne University Three Year Pass Rate (First-time takers) 99%

✓ 2005 Pass Rate	(First-time takers)	100 %
✓ 2006 Pass Rate	(First-time takers)	100 %
✓ 2007 Pass Rate	(First-time takers)	100 %
✓ 2008 Pass Rate	(First-time takers)	97%
- National Pass Rate Average (First-time takers) 86%

11. What is the clinical education experience like for this program?

The DPT includes 5 clinical education experiences, for a total of 40 weeks.

- Clinical Education I 6 weeks Year 2 of Professional Phase
- Clinical Education II 6 weeks Year 2 of Professional Phase
- Clinical Education III 8 weeks Year 3 of Professional Phase
- Clinical Education IV 8 weeks Year 3 of Professional Phase
- Clinical Education V 12 weeks Year 3 of Professional Phase

Each student will have at least one clinical experience in each of the following clinical settings: acute care, rehabilitation, and outpatient physical therapy. Other experiences include but are not limited to: orthopedics, pediatrics, oncology, cardiopulmonary, geriatrics, and home health care. Students must plan for at least one clinical education experience outside of the Pittsburgh area to allow for a more diverse learning experience. While Duquesne University has excellent clinical support, each major hospital offers on average only one clinical placement to each school. Students are responsible for costs related to travel and housing as well as medical tests and clearances that a clinical site requires. Advantages to our clinical education program are that each student is prepared to deliver physical therapy services across the scope of practice and has exposure to five potential employers. Our alumni comment that students who have experienced a variety of cases during their clinicals are better prepared to manage case complexity in both clinical practice and on the licensing exam.

12. How are clinical sites assigned?

Students are given an extensive list and choose 5 suggested sites for each clinical experience. Sites are assigned by random number one year in advance. The student with the lowest random number is considered first for CE I and last for CE II. The following year, new random numbers are assigned and the student who has the lowest number is considered first for CE III and last for CE IV. For CE V, the student with middle numbers for CE III and IV will be first for CE V. We aim to accommodate student's clinical site preferences while maintaining a strong focus on the student's education. Assuring that students have a well-rounded, complete, and learning-focused clinical education is our main priority in the clinical site assignment process.

13. What shadowing/volunteer/employment experiences are required of students?

Prior to admission, prospective students are required to have participated in at least 40 hours of shadowing, volunteering, or employment under the direct supervision of a licensed physical therapist. In addition, students are required to have participated in another 210 hours before April of their third academic year. These experiences must be in at least two different physical therapy settings such as outpatient, acute care inpatient (hospital), pediatric, skilled nursing facility, and rehabilitation centers. The purpose of requiring the student to participate in a variety of physical therapy practice settings for a total of 250 hours is to provide a comprehensive exposure to the physical therapy profession prior to the beginning of the professional phase of the curriculum.

14. Why should I choose this school?

The Duquesne University faculty are dedicated to educating competent and compassionate *Doctors of Physical Therapy*. We are committed to the highest quality education both in the academic and clinical settings. You will be educated by faculty who are licensed physical therapists; have advanced degrees in the sciences, education, and rehabilitation; are clinical researchers; and have dedicated their professional careers to the education of students in physical therapy. Our student-faculty ratio allows us to provide quality education while maintaining close professional contact with students. Our graduates are some of the most well-respected clinicians in physical therapy locally and throughout the country.

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