



**Sacred Heart
UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program is a full-time, three-year course of study that prepares graduates for professional practice as general practitioners who are self-directed, lifelong learners. Graduates will gain an understanding of self in the context of the professional role, competency in clinical practice, a commitment to the application of professional skills, knowledge of self in service to others and a commitment to creating positive change within the greater community. The curriculum is organized around carefully designed patient or professional practice problems that students study, discuss and research in small groups. This problem-based learning method is designed to impart the complex diagnostic and therapeutic skills used in today's most advanced clinics.

Structured clinical activities are integrated into classes, which pair students with expert physical therapists from the local community for in-depth, hands-on training. Students will have opportunities across the curriculum to engage in service learning experiences and community outreach both domestic and international. Furthermore, students have access to state-of-the-art equipment and laboratories, including a motion analysis lab for an unparalleled learning experience. These special features of the program reinforce the practical application of semester content and facilitates the process of professional development.

Graduates demonstrate the ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the profession's body of knowledge through effective use of the professional literature and current information technologies. They are prepared to make clinical judgments from patient examinations and determine a diagnosis and prognosis that guides future patient management, whether that includes the need for further examination or consultation by a physical therapist or referral to another health care professional.

The DPT is a clinical doctoral degree that prepares graduates to enter the physical therapy profession and should be distinguished from an academic doctoral degree earned through advanced graduate study, such as a Ph.D. or Ed.D. The DPT is a first professional degree and is not intended to prepare graduates for careers in research or academia, although physical therapists with a DPT may choose to pursue these goals through further graduate study.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of physical therapy is to promote optimum movement in people across the lifespan. Students acquire competency in clinical practice and gain an understanding of self in the context of the professional role. They prepare to use their knowledge, skills and expertise to optimize movement, promote health and wellness, and mitigate the progression of impairments, with an emphasis on serving others and creating positive change in the greater community.

THE FACULTY

The department includes 19 exceptional faculty members with more than 100 years of aggregate teaching experience. Faculty are well established in the PT community and are nationally recognized for scholarship, service to the profession and teaching excellence. Faculty credentials include: nine academic doctorates, 10 clinical doctorates, graduate degrees in business administration and public health, one fellow of the APTA Education Leadership Institute, one Fulbright Scholar, one Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists, 13 board certifications from the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties and one certification as a lymphedema therapist.

OFFICE OF GRADUATE ADMISSIONS

5151 Park Avenue
Fairfield, CT 06825
www.sacredheart.edu/graduate

MORE INFORMATION

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CAREER OUTCOMES

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of physical therapists is projected to grow 28 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations. Demand for physical therapy will come from the aging baby boomers, who are not only staying active later in life, but are more susceptible to health conditions, such as strokes, that may require physical therapy. In addition, physical therapists will be needed to treat people with mobility issues stemming from chronic conditions, such as diabetes or obesity. The median annual wage for physical therapists was \$87,930 in 2018.

RANKINGS

SHU's DPT program was ranked as one of the number one PT programs in the state of Connecticut in the most recent U.S. News & World Report's Best Graduate Schools. This also places the DPT program in the top five programs in New England and among the top 25 percent in the nation.

ACCREDITATION

The Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at Sacred Heart University is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). <http://www.capteonline.org>



PREREQUISITE COURSE GUIDELINES

Matriculation into the DPT program requires the successful completion of undergraduate prerequisite courses (see descriptions) prior to beginning the DPT program in August. All science prerequisite courses must be taken at a regionally accredited institution. AP course credit from high school, accepted by the undergraduate institution, satisfies the prerequisite requirements regardless of where the course was taken. However, AP course grades do not factor into the prerequisite GPA calculation.

- **Biology I and II with labs** (8 credits)
- **General Chemistry I and II with labs** (8 credits)
- **Human Anatomy and Physiology I and II with labs** (8 credits)
- **General Physics I and II with labs** (8 credits)
- **Pre-Calculus or Calculus** (3-4 credits)
- **Statistics** (3-4 credits)
- **Psychology** (6-8 credits) One course including general or introductory psychology and a second course of the student's choice.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

- Sacred Heart University internal students apply through Sacred Heart University Office of Graduate Admissions by **September 15**.
- External students apply through PTCAS by **October 15**.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Transcripts

- Official transcripts from all institutions attended

GPA

- 3.2 Overall GPA
- 3.2 Prerequisite GPA with no prerequisite course grade below a "C". Applicants may retake a maximum of two courses one time each for a grade replacement.

GRE Test Score Report

- Minimum score not required

Letters of Recommendation

- Two letters of recommendation (one from a past employer, one from an academic source who can attest to the applicant's academic performance)

Response to Two Essay Questions

Observance Experiences

- Documentation of a minimum of two different observation experiences, 50 contact hours total, either volunteer or paid, in different physical therapy practice settings (e.g., hospital, nursing home, rehabilitation agency, outpatient department, private practice, etc.)



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