

Physical Therapy

What is Physical Therapy (PT)?

Physical therapy is “a professional health discipline directed towards the prevention or alleviation of movement dysfunction, and towards the enhancement of physical capacity. The ultimate goal of Physical Therapy is to assist the client/patient to achieve the highest possible level of independent function. Exercise, therapeutic modalities and consultative strategies are used to maximize function. In addition, physical therapists educate their patients and the community about the prevention of disabilities and promotion of health.” (Department of Physical Therapy, University of Toronto)

What are the common academic requirements for PT programs?

- Completion of a 4-year undergraduate degree
- Minimum B/75%/3.0 in the final 2 years/10 credits, but this is typically insufficient due to competition for admission
- Prerequisites vary by institution but may include courses in biology/life science (human anatomy and physiology), statistics, psychology and humanities

Where can I study PT?

There are 5 physical therapy programs in Ontario:

- McMaster University
- Queen’s University
- University of Ottawa (program only offered in French)
- University of Toronto
- Western University

Be sure to visit each university’s website for more information on their program and specific admission requirements.

How do I apply?

The application process is centralized through OUAC’s Ontario Rehabilitation Sciences Programs Application Service (ORPAS): www.ouac.on.ca/orpas

Applications are typically due at the beginning of January.

Looking for Related Experience?

Review the *Volunteering and Internships tip sheets*, attend a *Work Search Strategies* workshop or speak with a Career Counsellor or Career Strategist.

Start Early!

Physical Therapy (PT) programs require a high GPA. Many look for demonstrated interest in PT on your application.

Improve your GPA:

Visit the AA&CC and the CTL to improve your academic skills.

Cultivate References:

Get to know your professors. Their research is interesting! Professors who know you fairly well are able to write strong reference letters for you.

Get Involved:

Join volunteer and co-curricular activities that demonstrate your skills and ongoing interest in a career in PT.

When do I apply?

Begin 1 year prior to your desired Fall start:

- October – Create your OLSAS account
- November – Complete the online application
- By January – Submit all supporting documents
- April – Interviews at McMaster and U of Ottawa
- May – Admission decisions are sent to applicants

What goes into my application?

Application components vary by institution but can include:

- References/Confidential Assessment Forms
- Official Transcript(s)
- Computer Administered Profile (CAP)
- Personal/Applicant Statement
- Interview

What is CAP at U of T?

At U of T, top applicants (ranked initially by GPA) will be invited to complete the Computer Administered Profile (CAP) on-site:

- 2-hour exam
- Short and long answer questions
- Designed to assess personal attributes, life experiences, knowledge of profession, critical thinking & problem solving skills
- Graded by 3 individuals: a professor, a PT student and a practicing Physical Therapist

Where can I find more information?

Physical Therapy Programs in Canada

www.universitystudy.ca/search-programs

College of Physiotherapists of Ontario

www.collegept.org

Canadian Physiotherapy Association

www.physiotherapy.ca

Ontario Physiotherapy Association

www.opa.on.ca

Application & Personal Statement Resources

- Effective Admission Letters (U of T Writing Centre):
www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/admission-letters
- Purdue University Online Writing Lab:
owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/642/01/
- CTL's Graduate School Application and Personal Statement Assignment Calculator:
ctl.utscc.utoronto.ca/assignmentcal

What is a Statement of Intent?

Some programs require a 500-word applicant statement:

- Explain why you have chosen PT as a career. Demonstrate your knowledge of the profession and its scope of practice.
- Explain why you have chosen the program at [school].
- Describe strengths, experiences, attributes, leadership skills and/or abilities that you will bring to the profession.

If you are invited to an interview you can review our *Interviews* and *Preparing for the Multiple Mini Interview* tip sheets, or attend our *MMI Prep 101* workshop for access to an MMI practice session in the winter term. Visit CLN and look in Events & Workshops in Scarborough for *MMI Prep 101*.

Paying for a Physical Therapy Program

Annual tuition for Ontario students ranges \$8,000-12,000. Remember to ask about scholarships and bursaries! You might also find financial support via tools like www.esdc.gc.ca/en/student_financial_aid/scholarships.page

What other considerations are there?

- MScPT programs generally take 2 years to complete on a full-time basis.
- Programs consist of courses and field placements.
- Registration with the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario is required to call oneself a Physical Therapist or Physiotherapist in Ontario.

The AA&CC can help! Attend the Graduate & Professional Schools Fair (October), go to a *Preparing for Professional & Graduate School* workshop, meet professionals in the field through Extern Job Shadowing Program, or speak with a Career Counsellor to learn how to get relevant experience!

Please note: While this tip sheet aims to ensure accuracy, requirements do change. Consider it a starting point for your further research. Visit individual Faculty of Rehabilitation Sciences websites for detailed, up-to-date information about admission requirements and application procedures.