

DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY - DPT

Program Description

Physical therapy is a dynamic profession with an established theoretical base and widespread clinical applications. Physical therapists seek to prevent injury, impairments, functional limitations and disability; to maintain and promote fitness, health and quality of life; and to ensure excellence in the delivery of physical therapy services to patients/clients. In order to provide appropriate interventions, physical therapists must have a thorough understanding of the musculoskeletal, neuromuscular, cardiovascular, pulmonary and integumentary systems.

Physical therapists are essential participants in the healthcare system, working collaboratively with physicians and other healthcare providers, often assuming leadership roles in prevention and health maintenance programs, in the provision of rehabilitation services and in professional and community organizations. They also play important roles in developing health policy and appropriate standards for physical therapy practice.

Physical therapists are employed in a variety of settings, including hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, public schools, private clinics, rehabilitation centers, community health centers, research centers, industry, home healthcare, athletic programs and physical therapy educational programs. In these settings, the physical therapist is involved in the interpretation of tests and measurements, intervention planning, direct patient care, patient and family education, consultation and the direction and supervision of support personnel.

The philosophy of St. Catherine's Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Program considers physical therapy education a process that begins with a liberal arts education. Through the liberal arts and sciences, students learn to integrate knowledge from various disciplines and develop their capacities for analysis, problem solving, critical thinking, and written and oral communication. These abilities are essential traits of an effective physical therapist.

The focus of the DPT Program is to prepare practitioners of physical therapy who lead and influence within the profession and are highly respected for their competence and compassion. The DPT graduate is a generalist and a lifelong learner who will seek the education and experience necessary to become a master clinician.

St. Catherine DPT graduates will be prepared to:

- demonstrate solid foundational physical therapy knowledge and sound clinical skills.
- exhibit information management and knowledge retrieval skills.
- transform information into knowledge and knowledge into sound judgment and ethical action.
- display the agility of mind and spirit to meet the complexity and diversity of the ever-changing landscape of the healthcare environment.
- value and seek the experience, reflective habits and continued education necessary to become master clinicians.
- demonstrate ethical practice grounded in social responsibility.
- positively lead, influence and shape physical therapy practice and the healthcare delivery system.

Accreditation

The Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at St. Catherine University is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314; telephone: (703) 706-3245; e-mail: accreditation@apta.org; website: www.capteonline.org (<http://www.capteonline.org>).

Degree Requirements

Completion of 118 graduate credits with an overall minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

Years to Complete the Program

Students are expected to complete the DPT Program in sequence within three academic years of initial enrollment.

Progression Policy

Annual Review

At the completion of each academic term, the DPT core faculty reviews your performance to determine if academic and clinical standards are met to allow progression or graduation.

Standards for Progression

The student who passes all of her/his academic and clinical coursework satisfactorily will progress in the program and graduate. Required academic grades for progression are as follows:

- Each academic course must be passed with C (2.0) or higher. Credits earned with a course grade of C- (1.667) or below do NOT count toward graduation and must be remediated. A satisfactory (S) grade must be achieved for all research project credits and DPT 7160 Ethics and Leadership Summit. Each clinical education course must be passed with a grade of S (satisfactory).
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required throughout all DPT course work. In addition, a minimum GPA of 3.00 must be maintained for each semester of the DPT Program. If the student does not achieve these requirements for any given semester, the student will be placed on academic probation.

Consequences of Non-Acceptable Student Performance

Non-acceptable performance may be either academic or clinical.

Non-Acceptable Academic Performance

Consequences of non-acceptable academic work are:

1. repeating a course
2. academic probation
3. possible dismissal from the DPT program

Repeating a Course

Repeating a didactic course will be necessary when academic performance is not acceptable (C- or below) for one DPT academic course. In this case the student will be placed on academic probation, to take effect the semester that DPT course work is resumed. Successfully repeating the course will result in removal of the academic probation status. Non-acceptable performance upon repeating the course will result in dismissal of the student from the DPT Program, with the student allowed an appeal procedure. Students are allowed only one non-acceptable course grade during the length of the DPT Program. A second non-acceptable course grade will result in dismissal from the DPT Program.

1. COURSE SEQUENCING: DPT courses are offered only once a year. Therefore, to repeat the course in proper sequence, a leave of absence and permission to re-enter the Program will be required, usually involving a leave of one year.
2. PERMISSION: Permission of the DPT core faculty is needed to re-enter the DPT Program. The student must submit a written petition to the DPT core faculty expressing their intent to repeat the course and resume the Program. The DPT core faculty reserves the right to examine extenuating circumstances in each case of non-acceptable academic performance before granting permission.
3. PLAN: A plan to re-enter the DPT Program for the purpose of repeating a course may be developed by the DPT core faculty. This plan may include, but is not limited to repeating or auditing additional courses and/or demonstrating clinical skills prior to continuing with full-time clinical experiences.
4. GRADING: The final course grade achieved in the repeated course will be used by the Office of the Registrar in re-calculating the student's overall grade point average, however, the original grade will also remain on the student's transcript.

Academic Probation

A student will be placed on academic probation as a result of non-acceptable academic performance, including:

1. a grade of C- or below in one course during the DPT Program
2. a cumulative or semester GPA below 3.0

Successfully repeating a failed course will result in removal of the academic probation status. Non-acceptable performance in the repeated course will result in dismissal of the student from the DPT Program. In regard to GPA requirements, the student is allowed to be on probation for no more than one semester. Failure to remove the academic probation status in the subsequent semester will result in dismissal from the DPT Program (see Dismissal section below). Students may be on academic probation only once during the DPT Program; failure to meet these GPA requirements a second time will result in dismissal from the DPT Program. Students may appeal the dismissal.

If a student is currently on academic probation and is beginning a full-time clinical experience, the clinic will be informed of a student's probationary status.

Conditions for Program Dismissal

A student may be dismissed from the DPT Program for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to any of the following:

1. failure to remove academic probation status
2. unacceptable academic performance (C- or below) in more than one DPT course during the length of the Program
3. unacceptable clinical performance (full-time or integrated clinical education), as defined below
4. academic integrity violations
5. unprofessional behavior
6. failure to meet defined *Professional Behaviors* standards

Each individual case is determined by the DPT core faculty after discussion. The student may be requested to provide input to the DPT core faculty. The student is also allowed appeal procedures.

A student who has been dismissed from the program for any reason and who wishes to be readmitted, must apply for readmission to the

Program through standard admissions procedures and timelines. Specific conditions for readmission, as specified in the dismissal letter, must have been met by the time of reapplication.

Non-Acceptable Performance During Full-Time Clinical Experiences

Upon determination by the DPT core faculty that unacceptable clinical performance has occurred in any full-time clinical experience, the student will fail the course and will receive an Unsatisfactory (U) grade for the course.

Failure of a full-time clinical experience will require repeating the experience. Prior to the beginning of this full-time clinical experience, the student may be required to successfully complete other remediation activities, as determined by the DPT core faculty. A student learning contract, determined by the DPT core faculty and student, may be used in the remediation.

The clinical experience must be repeated successfully to receive a Satisfactory (S) grade for the course. The original grade of Unsatisfactory will remain on the student's transcript along with a Satisfactory grade if the repeated clinical experience is completed successfully. Unsatisfactory performance on the repeated clinical experience, as determined by the DPT core faculty, will result in dismissal of the student from the DPT Program, with the student allowed an appeal procedure.

A student may fail only one full-time clinical experience during the DPT Program; failure of a second full-time clinical experience will result in the immediate dismissal of the student from the DPT Program, with the student allowed an appeal procedure.

During full-time clinical experiences, issues such as unprofessional behavior, academic integrity violations, and failure to meet defined Professional Behaviors standards may result in failure of the clinical experience and may result in dismissal of the student from the DPT Program. The student is allowed an appeal procedure.

Consequences of Non-Acceptable Professional Behavior Performance

The student is expected to improve her/his performance in Professional Behaviors areas previously evaluated as being unacceptable. Failure to achieve a satisfactory rating in an outlined remediation plan may result in a need for additional course work, additional clinical time, delay in progression in the program, or dismissal.

Appeal Procedure for All Dismissals, Except Clinical Performance

If a student has been dismissed due to not meeting DPT Program standards and feels an academic evaluation was inappropriate, it is the student's responsibility to discuss the matter with the faculty member and to develop a plan to solve the issue(s). The appeal process must follow the stages below in sequence:

1. Student talks with the individual faculty member first.
2. If resolution between the student and faculty member does not occur, the student and the Program Director discuss the issue. The faculty member may also be present upon the discretion of the Program Director.
3. If resolution is not reached, the student may present a written appeal of the dismissal to the DPT core faculty.
4. If resolution is not reached, the appeal is brought to the appropriate Dean at St. Catherine University, who may meet jointly with the student, faculty and Program Director. The Dean may involve others in resolving the matter if, in his or her discretion, that seems

appropriate, including a panel to hear the concern. The decision at this level is final.

5. During the appeal process the student will not be allowed to progress to a full-time clinical experience.

Appeal Procedure for Dismissal Due to Clinical Performance

If a student has been dismissed due to unsatisfactory clinical performance an appeal process can be initiated by the student, following the stages below in sequence:

1. A written appeal letter from the student is submitted to the DPT core faculty for review. This letter may include a request to be reinstated to the DPT Program with appropriate action steps to be taken on the student’s part if allowed to be reinstated and repeat the full-time clinical experience.
2. The DPT core faculty will review the student appeal letter. If deemed appropriate, given the identified student action steps, a student may be reinstated to the DPT Program and a repeat full-time clinical experience arranged.
3. If the dismissal is upheld by the DPT core faculty, the student can appeal his/her dismissal to the appropriate Dean at St. Catherine University, who may meet jointly with the student, faculty and Program Director. The Dean may involve others in resolving the matter if, in his or her discretion, that seems appropriate, including a panel to hear the concern. The decision at this level is final.

Academic Integrity

The DPT Program follows the Academic Integrity Policy and Student Code of Conduct expectations as published on the University’s policies website. Academic dishonesty occurs when one’s work is misrepresented. It also occurs when the academic rights of another student are violated. Cases of academic dishonesty will be subject to one or more of the following consequences:

- loss of credit for the test or work in question
- failing grade in the course
- probationary status, for a prescribed period of time
- suspension or dismissal from program or University

Affective Behavior Requirement

The DPT Program expects each student to behave in a professional manner while enrolled in the program, as demonstrated by successful achievement in the *Professional Behaviors*.

These *Professional Behaviors* are self-assessed by the student and reviewed each semester with her or his DPT academic advisor. Input and possible revisions may be made with feedback from the academic advisor, DPT core faculty, clinical faculty and clinical instructors.

Because the *Professional Behaviors* reflect behaviors necessary for success as a physical therapist in the clinical environment, failure to demonstrate progress in the *Professional Behaviors* or meet the specific behavior levels by the defined target dates can result in:

- a need for additional course work
- additional clinical time
- a delay in progression in the program
- formulation of a remediation plan or learning contract
- dismissal from the DPT Program. Students may appeal the dismissal

Additional information for all of these policies can be found in the *DPT Student Guide to Information and Policies & Procedures*.

Curriculum

The DPT curriculum is a three-year coeducational program focusing on clinical decision-making skills and the application of research principles to everyday clinical practice. The program includes 40 weeks of full-time clinical experience throughout the three years. Students also participate in part-time clinical experiences beginning early in the first year of the program. A research project is required during the final two years. The innovative DPT curriculum breaks away from more traditional curricula by integrating basic and clinical sciences in a way that is relevant and meaningful within the current healthcare environment.

The knowledge base necessary for effective physical therapy practice is growing in breadth and complexity. The curriculum, therefore, focuses on developing students’ abilities to recognize and access relevant knowledge, judge the usefulness of the knowledge in the context of clinical practice and build on a contextual framework for the application of the knowledge.

The course work is organized around physical therapy practice settings. Teaching methods include problem-based tutorials, small group work, lecture, labs, clinical experiences and periods of self-directed learning. Throughout the curriculum, ethics, leadership and an appreciation for cultural diversity are stressed, interweaving liberal arts and professional education.

Special features of the DPT curriculum include:

- full-time, 31-month program
- curriculum informed by the current research literature on adult learning (i.e. learner-centered model of education where students are actively involved in the teaching/learning process)
- integrated curriculum rather than one separated into basic and clinical science components
- educational experiences reflect clinical practice, continually integrating knowledge, clinical experiences and critical reflection
- case-based learning
- focus on evidence-based practice
- clinical education occurs at intervals throughout the curriculum, consisting of short experiences with focused learning objectives, as well as extended experiences in a variety of practice environments
- courses team taught by physical therapy faculty with expertise in basic and clinical sciences illustrating the application of science into clinical practice
- ethical leadership and cultural competence developed through service learning and other opportunities. The DPT Program follows the semester calendar, including the January interim term and two summer months. DPT courses are open only to students officially admitted to the DPT Program.

Code	Title	Credits
First Year (41 credits)		
DPT 5000	Introduction to Physical Therapist Practice	3
DPT 5010	Outpatient Physical Therapy I	6
DPT 5025	Acute Care I	6
DPT 5035	Outpatient Physical Therapy II	7
DPT 5040	Rehabilitation I	6
DPT 5055	Transitional Care I	7

DPT 5070	Clinical Education I	6
Second Year (48 credits)		
DPT 6000	Acute Care II	6
DPT 6015	Rehabilitation II	6
DPT 6025	Transitional Care II	5
DPT 6030	Rehabilitation III	4
DPT 6040	Outpatient Physical Therapy III	7
DPT 6055	Clinical Education II	7
DPT 6060	Pediatrics	6
DPT 7000	Research Project Credits I	2
DPT 7100	Complex Medical and Trauma Care	5
Third Year (29 credits)		
DPT 7040	Research Project Credits II	2
DPT 7125	Advanced Clinical Practice I	5
DPT 7135	Advanced Clinical Practice II	3
DPT 7145	Clinical Education III	7
DPT 7155	Clinical Education IV	7
DPT 7165	Ethics and Leadership Summit	3
DPT 8000	Research Project Credits III	2
Total Credits		118