



The University of Texas at Austin  
**Health Professions Office**  
*College of Natural Sciences*

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# Pre-Physical Therapy Guide



**UT Austin**  
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Visit our Website



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## Preface

The information presented in this document provides important resources for UT Austin undergraduate and graduate students planning to apply to physical therapy school. Remember it is important to research physical therapy programs and evaluate your fit before you apply.

Additional pre-health professions resources including prerequisites, timelines and application information for the following health professions: medical, dental, pharmacy, occupational therapy, physician assistant, optometry and veterinary can be found at: <https://cns.utexas.edu/health-professions/current-student-resources/health-profession-pathways>

## Selecting a Major

What should you major in at UT? Most pre-physical therapy students choose to major in kinesiology in the College of Education or a science discipline within the College of Natural. It is important to choose a major based on your academic interests. Some other common majors may include psychology, nutritional sciences or human and family development. Choose a major that you are passionate about. Keep in mind that certain degrees may cover the pre-physical therapy prerequisites, but you will need to remain diligent to ensure you are completing all prerequisites in addition to your major courses.

### Explore a physical therapy career further:

- APTA's "Physical Therapist Careers" is a great resource: [PT Careers](#)
- AATA's "News & Publications" for news of interest to the PT community: [PT News & Publications](#)
- APTA's [Information for Prospective Students](#) section

### Explore majors/health professions further at one or more of the following resources:

- Wayfinder: <https://wayfinder.utexas.edu/career-fields/healthcare>
- My Next Move: <http://www.mynextmove.org/>
- Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/home.htm>
- Explore Health Careers: <http://explorehealthcareers.org/en/home>

## Pre-Physical Therapy Self-Assessment

*The assessment below is designed to assess physical therapy school application strengths. If you are a new pre-physical therapy student, please use this assessment as a planning guide for your pre-PT pathway.*

Check out the New Pre-Health Students page under Current Students on the Health Professions website: <http://cns.utexas.edu/health-professions>.

## Are you working towards submitting a well-rounded application?

### Start by Developing Your Personal Qualities

Individuals who are successful in their pursuit of a physical therapist career possess a set of qualities that they develop as young adults. These include qualities such as: good judgment, self-discipline, maturity, compassion/empathy, integrity, intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, strong work ethic, leadership/accountability, reliability, motivation/persistence, honesty, and cultural competency. Develop these qualities through the experiences and activities you choose to get involved with.

I want to develop the following qualities:

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How am I going to develop these qualities? (Be specific.)

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### Get Involved & Gain Experience

Get involved in what you are interested in - this is key! Activities may include but are not limited to: volunteering, shadowing, community service, and/or campus organizations. Get involved on campus, tutor, mentor, teach, participate in Rec Sports, etc. If you are considering study abroad, check out the study abroad section in this guide. Be yourself and do what you enjoy.

### Community Service

Any experience giving back to the community will be looked upon favorably by professional school admissions committees. A community service activity in which you are directly helping people face-to-face is of the most value, and making an ongoing commitment to that community service gives you time to grow and gain real value from the experience. This can also include work done outside of the health care field such as working for Habitat for Humanity, tutoring children, participating in or working for a fundraiser walk or blood drive, etc.

### Track your Community Service Hours

Professional school applications will ask for details of the time you spent volunteering. UT Austin's [Give Pulse](#) is a great way to find volunteer opportunities, track hours, and become a part of a great community service community.

It's important to keep a record of your volunteer supervisor(s), including name(s) and title(s). *\*Using programs like Microsoft Word or Excel to make tables and keep track of hours can be helpful.*

| Community Service | Dates (can list time period or individual dates) | Hours | Responsibilities |
|-------------------|--|-------|------------------|
|                   |  |       |                  |
|                   |  |       |                  |
|                   |  |       |                  |
|                   |  |       |                  |
|                   |  |       |                  |
|                   |  |       |                  |

What have I learned about myself through these volunteer experiences?

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Have I involved myself in a diverse set of experiences? What skills have I enhanced/gained through these experiences? (For example: I have become a better communicator through my volunteering experiences at the local hospital – explain how you have done this.)

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I want to explore the following community service activities:

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### **Shadowing/Observation**

Time spent officially following and observing physical therapy professionals at work. It is important to gain experience in both inpatient and outpatient settings

#### **Tracking Observation Hours:**

*Finding a physical therapist who is willing to allow you to shadow/observe can be a challenge, but it is worth the effort. Many students start with physical therapy clinics in their area. You may also network with other pre-physical therapy students to see where they have shadowed.*

*[See our resources on Shadowing and Information Interviewing](#)*

*\*Note: If PT hour verification is required by one or more of your designated programs, follow the instructions on the PTCAS application. Visit the PTCAS website for additional information:*

*<http://www.ptcas.org/PTHours/>*

#### **Quick Tips:**

*When deciding where/how to volunteer and get observation hours, you should investigate how each school you are interested in defines volunteer and observation experience. Also take note of what each individual school's hour requirements are and if your experience will fulfill these requirements.*

*Review the **PTCAS (Physical Therapy School Application Service) [Directory](#)** for program-specific requirements. PTCAS will not determine if you meet the PT hour requirements for your designated programs.*

**Observation Log**

| PT Name or Name of Experience | Specialty | Inpatient or Outpatient | Hours | Type of Experience: Shadow/Volunteer/Paid |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-------|---|
|                               |           |                         |       |   |
|                               |           |                         |       |   |
|                               |           |                         |       |   |
|                               |           |                         |       |   |
|                               |           |                         |       |   |
|                               |           |                         |       |   |
|                               |           |                         |       |   |

What have I learned from these experiences? What qualities or skills have I developed and used?

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I want to reach out to the following physical therapists to inquire about shadowing:

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**Hands-on/Direct Patient Care Experience** Gain some hands-on experience in physical therapy by training to be a physical therapy aid or a physical therapy assistant

| Hands-on/Direct Patient Care Experience | Specialty | Hours | Type of Experience: Shadow/Volunteer/Paid |
|---|-----------|-------|---|
|   |           |       |   |
|   |           |       |   |
|   |           |       |   |
|   |           |       |   |
|   |           |       |   |
|   |           |       |   |
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What have I learned from these experiences?

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What skills have I enhanced/gained through these experiences? What do I like and dislike about my experiences in this setting?

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***Other Health Care Experience***

You are working in the health or a health-related field but are not directly responsible for a patient's care; For example, performing clerical work or working as a receptionist.

I have the following non-direct health care experience:

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What have I learned? What skills or qualities did I develop and demonstrate?

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***Work Experience (non-healthcare)***

Any paid work done outside of the health care field, For example: a retail or restaurant job.

I have the following paid experience outside of the health care field:

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What have I learned? What skills or qualities did I develop and demonstrate?

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## ***Awards and Honors***

Relevant awards or honors earned as a college student or post-college. **High school honors should not be included.**

| <b>Award/Honor</b> | <b>Month/Year awarded</b> | <b>Duties/Activities</b> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
|                    |                           |                          |
|                    |                           |                          |
|                    |                           |                          |
|                    |                           |                          |
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What relevant awards and honors have I earned as a college student or post-college?

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What is the most important thing I have learned about myself from these experiences?

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## ***Leadership***

Leadership can be developed in many different ways. Leadership needs to be demonstrated. Think about how you are developing your leadership qualities and skills. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Teaching/ TA a course
- Get involved in student organizational leadership

| <b>Name of Organization</b> | <b>Position/Title<br/>(ex: Communication Director, President, Member, etc.)</b> | <b>Total participation time<br/>(ex. 2 years, 3 semesters, etc.)</b> | <b>Duties/Activities participated in with this organization/group</b> |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
|                             |   |  |   |
|                             |   |  |   |
|                             |   |  |   |
|                             |   |  |   |
|                             |   |  |   |



What is the most important thing I have learned about myself as a leader from these experiences?

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Brainstorm some specific ways you can develop your leadership skills.

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## Academics

Academics include your GPA and GRE Scores. How well are you doing? Are you taking between 14-17 credit hours per semester? Are you keeping your grades up? Use the GPA calculator in your UT Direct account to figure out your GPA.

**Quick Tip:**

*When entering coursework and grades into the PTCAS application, it is important to review the Academic History section and follow the instructions for entering coursework to properly calculate your course's numerical value.*

Overall GPA\* \_\_\_\_\_

\*This includes all course taken at UT and other institutions.

Prerequisite GPA \_\_\_\_\_

**Quick Tip:**

*To be competitive for professional school, you will need a GPA in the range of 3.6 to 3.8 and above. This means you need to be making A's and B's with more A's than B's. If you feel that you are behind in your classes, don't wait until you get your first poor test score to ask for help. There are numerous resources on campus to help you with tutoring and coaching! Start with visiting your faculty members & teaching assistants during office hours. Check out [Sanger Learning Center](#) for more tips!*

### ***Get in the habit of personal reflection***

*After completing the pre-PT self-assessment, you should have a better idea of your strengths and what personal areas you need to develop as you progress on the pre-PT pathway.*

*Your insights about who you are as a person and how your experiences have shaped you will be of tremendous benefit when it is time to write your PT school personal statement. Keep a journal handy so you can jot down your thoughts and observations!*



## **Self-evaluation**

Mark Yes or No for each question. This will allow you to identify areas in which you feel strongest and areas in which you wish to grow.

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Can I explain to someone why I want to be a physical therapist?                         | Y | N |
| Is my GPA above a 3.5?  | Y | N |
| Have my grades improved over time?  | Y | N |
| Have I shadowed more than one PT in different settings?                                 | Y | N |
| Does my application reflect a diverse and consistent set of extracurricular activities? | Y | N |

***Once you have completed this assessment, if you have not made an appointment with a Pre-Health Professions Coach, we recommend that you do so to discuss these topics as well as your application strengths as a whole.***

## **Get to know your faculty**

This can be challenging at UT Austin—the campus is huge and most of the classes in your first year have large numbers of participants. Even though the professors can sometimes seem tough or intimidating, most of them are very approachable one-on-one. Visit your professors during office hours, even if you are doing well in their class. It will make your request for a future letter of evaluation much easier! Get to know your faculty, check out this quick video for some tips: [Getting to know your faculty](#)

## **Who are your references?**

### **Quick Tip: PTCAS References**

Applicants using PTCAS are allowed to enter up to four references on their PTCAS application. Review the PTCAS [Directory](#) to determine the number and types of references required by each institution. If you are unsure check directly with each school you are wanting to apply to.

References must be electronically submitted to PTCAS. Instructions for this process are located here: <http://www.ptcas.org/References/>

## Pre-Physical Therapy Prerequisites Timeline

This **time line** is an **example** of how to complete prerequisite courses for the **Texas Physical Therapy (DPT) programs** in order to apply **in the summer after Year 3 and start PT school after Year 4**. It is based on the prerequisite courses pdf.

It is common for **many students to require more than 3 years to prepare for and apply to PT programs**.

**Students who finish prerequisites in Year 4 or after graduation will have a bridge year or more between undergraduate school and professional school.**

For UT AUSTIN COURSE OPTIONS see the **PREREQUISITE COURSES** pdf on the **PRE-PHYSICAL THERAPY PATHWAY** page under [PREREQUISITES & TIME LINE](#)

**PTCAS has comparison charts of Prerequisites for PT school by program on their [site](#)**

**This is an example to be used as a guide.** Your personal time line may differ. Work with your academic advisor to incorporate these courses into your personal degree plan. To be competitive for admission, complete prerequisites by the time of application. **INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS MAY REQUIRE OR RECOMMEND ADDITIONAL COURSES NOT INCLUDED HERE.** Check individual school admissions web sites for current information and details. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to ensure proper courses are being taken and to stay informed of current admission policies.

### FIRST YEAR

| <u>Fall</u>               | <u>Spring</u> | <u>Summer</u> |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Statistics                | Biology II    | Physics I     |
| Biology I                 | Chemistry II  | Physics I Lab |
| Chemistry I               | Chemistry Lab |               |
| College Algebra or higher |               |               |

### SECOND YEAR

| <u>Fall</u> | <u>Spring</u>       | <u>Summer</u>  |
|-------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Genetics    | Anatomy             | Physics II     |
| Biology Lab | Medical Terminology | Physics II Lab |
| Psychology  | Developmental Psych |                |

### THIRD YEAR

| <u>Fall</u>  | <u>Spring</u>                | <u>Summer</u> |
|--|------------------------------|---------------|
| Physiology   | [GRE: Graduate Records Exam] | [Apply]       |
| Physiology Lab   |                              |               |
| Additional Courses Required or Recommended by Individual Schools |                              |               |
| School Websites for details                                      |                              |               |

### FOURTH YEAR

| <u>Fall</u>  | <u>Spring</u> |
|--|---------------|
| Timing of Interviews and Offers of Admissions will vary. Continue coursework recommended by schools. |               |

**NOTE:**

Genetics is not required by the Texas PT schools but is a prerequisite for some upper-division biology courses.

## Can I Take Courses Away From UT?

Completing your coursework at UT (your home institution) is considered best preparation for health professions schools. For students who find it necessary to take courses away from UT, we offer the following recommendations.

**KEY:** UT: Take classes at UT Austin  
 4YR: If necessary, okay to take class at other 4 year institution  
 CC: If necessary, okay to take class at community college

|                                | Pre-Medical  | Pre-Dental | Pre-Veterinary | Pre-Optometry | Pre-Pharmacy | Pre-Physician Asst | Pre-Physical Therapy | Pre-Occupational Therapy |
|--------------------------------|--|------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Biology &amp; Chemistry</b> | UT   | UT         | UT             | UT            | UT           | UT                 | UT                   | UT                       |
| <b>Physics</b>                 | 4YR  | 4YR        | 4YR            | 4YR           | 4YR or CC    | Not Required       | 4YR or CC            | 4YR or CC                |
| <b>Statistics, Calculus</b>    | 4YR  | 4YR        | 4YR            | 4YR           | 4YR or CC    | 4YR or CC          | 4YR or CC            | 4YR or CC                |
| <b>English &amp; Rhetoric</b>  | 4YR  | 4YR        | 4YR            | 4YR           | 4YR          | 4YR or CC          | 4YR or CC            | 4YR or CC                |
| <b>Other Pre-requisites</b>    | Generally, it seems to be okay to take other prereqs away from UT Austin, if needed; however, students should contact individual professional schools' admission offices for questions about specific courses. |            |                |               |              |                    |                      |                          |

**General Recommendations:**

1. Taking courses away from UT can give the impression that the student is avoiding UT Austin's rigorous courses; therefore, it is important to earn excellent grades at both community colleges and other four-year institutions.
2. It generally appears to be okay with professional schools to take government and history requirements at other four-year institutions or community colleges.
3. For other general requirements students can check with professional schools' admission offices.

## Studying Abroad?

Most health professions schools require that prerequisites be taken at U.S. accredited schools, and some will accept credits from Canadian accredited schools.

Although exchange program courses and some affiliated program courses are counted as in-residence credit by UT Austin, according to Texas state law, foreign course work cannot be counted in the GPAs for application to graduate and post-baccalaureate professional schools. The rules and policies can vary among the professional schools. Students who plan to study abroad should research this carefully for the schools and application services they plan to apply to. Look in the education requirements, transcripts, and FAQ sections of their websites for information about foreign course work and study abroad.

UT Austin faculty-led courses are "in-residence" courses as well as U.S. credits, and so courses like Organic Chemistry II (CH 320N) taught in Spain by UT Austin faculty can be used to satisfy a prerequisite; however, for many students taking these rigorous courses in only 5 weeks may not be recommended. It is important that pre-health professions students master these courses and retain this knowledge for success in entrance exams and in advanced studies.

The UT Austin Health Professions Office very strongly recommends that our students satisfy their health professions prerequisites at UT Austin. Use the study abroad opportunity to study the culture and language of that country and to satisfy general education requirements if approved by your academic advisor. Science courses that are not considered direct preparation for the health professions can be considered as well.

(Examples: research, ecology, environmental science; but NOT cell, molecular, microbiology, anatomy, physiology which figure heavily into your preparation and readiness for professional school and the admissions committee's assessment of your application.

## **FAQ - Foreign Applicants, Coursework from Foreign Schools and Study Abroad**

### **Do schools accept foreign coursework?**

Individual schools differ on what types of foreign course work they will accept to satisfy prerequisites. However, these courses are typically not counted towards your GPA in your application. Refer to the individual schools you are applying to for more information.

## **What about Claiming AP/IB Credit for Prerequisites?**

While we generally recommend that as a pre-health professions student you not "claim" AP/IB credit for prerequisite courses such as biology, chemistry, English, physics, and mathematics, these are important decisions that you must make and that require your careful consideration.

It may seem like a convenient way to eliminate hours from your degree plan and accelerate your path to professional school, but claiming credit can actually be detrimental to your preparation for success on entrance exams and in professional studies. Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses vary in rigor, and they are generally not equivalent to the rigor of UT Austin courses. However, your AP/IB courses can be very good preparation for taking these courses at UT Austin, providing the opportunity to master that material, become better prepared, enhance your GPA, and demonstrate your academic ability and readiness for advanced study in health professions schools.

Unless you are academically very well prepared, it is best to start with the introductory courses. Please consult with your academic advisor for help in determining your readiness for higher level science courses. Most schools that accept AP/IB credit will expect you to take additional upper-division course work in that area of study.

**Here are some specific recommendations:**

## **Science Courses**

### **Biology and Chemistry**

If you claim credit in courses like BIO 311D and BIO 311C you may not be adequately prepared for the rigorous next course here at UT Austin, BIO 325 (Genetics). If you claim credit for CH 301 and CH 302, your first college level chemistry course at UT Austin will be CH 310M (Organic Chemistry I).

Honors students in Biology and Chemistry may claim test credit, register in the honors sequence for Biology or Chemistry, and will take additional upper-division credits in those areas, making up for the lack of first-year hours in those disciplines.

Your UT Austin faculty will expect you to be prepared to learn and understand the material conceptually and theoretically in order to understand test questions well enough to earn A's on your exams. They will teach material beyond the textbook that was not presented in your high school courses. You will be in second year courses with many students who took general biology and general chemistry here and are well prepared to handle the exams in the more advanced courses. They will set the standard for the grade scale or curve in your classes.

## Physics

Physics is required to prepare for some health professions schools. In some cases, you will be tested on physics in your professional school entrance exam. We strongly recommend taking physics at the college level if you are preparing for a professional school that requires physics.

## Calculus and Statistics

For the Texas medical schools, if you take statistics in the classroom here at UT Austin, you can use statistics to satisfy the math prerequisite. Then if your degree plan or any of your science courses require calculus, you can decide with your academic advisor whether to use credit-by-exam or take the course(s) in the classroom.

For all health professions schools, both in Texas and out-of-state, it is important to check their admissions web sites for any restrictions and preferences on credit-by-exam.

## Non-Science Courses

It is usually acceptable to claim credit-by-exam for general education or core curriculum requirements such as history and government. Claiming this type of credit may give you time to take the courses that will prepare you for professional school and school entrance exams. On the other hand, critical thinking skills and an understanding of ethics, society, community, cultures, history, and human behavior are important for your success now and throughout your professional and personal life. Taking college level courses is a good way to develop these areas of knowledge.

## English Literature, Rhetoric, Writing

If you claim credit for freshman writing and literature courses, we recommend taking additional courses in the classroom at the college level. Even if your high school verbal skills were strong, this type of academic skill weakens over time if you do not use it.

Verbal skills are extremely important to your success in your undergraduate course work, your entrance exams, in professional school, and as a health care professional. You must be able to read efficiently, at a good rate, with high comprehension and critical thinking skills. You must develop and maintain a good vocabulary, not just for the sciences but also for social and behavioral sciences, ethics, policies and regulations, and procedural information. Many admissions deans recommend reading well-written novels in addition to your textbook material.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

PT schools vary in their policies and perspectives on credit-by-exam. Review the information on our prerequisite courses lists, located on page 15. Also check individual school admissions websites or contact their admissions offices to be sure about each school's expectations. Taking courses in the college classroom will help you to compete for admission and to succeed in professional school. We strongly recommend that you use these courses as building blocks that will be the foundation for your future career.

### Quick Tips:

Check with each school you plan to apply to and see if they accept AP/IB for the classes you would like to claim credit for. Some schools will not accept AP/IB credit for biological science prerequisites but will accept them for English and social/behavioral science classes.

## To Q or Not to Q (or to switch to pass/fail)

No admissions committee for any health professional school likes to see “Q drops” on a transcript. This is an indication that something became too much for you to handle and that you chose to drop the course rather than see it through. However, there are times when the Q-drop is the best course of action. Keep reading to see how your choice may affect your competitiveness for professional school.

### More of a problem if:

1. **Q-dropping is a pattern on your transcript.** Two Q-drops can signal a possible pattern; three Q-drops create a definite pattern.
2. **It occurs in a context of inconsistent grades.** To be competitive for professional school, you should be making A's and B's with more A's than B's. If you have semesters which include B's and C's – even one or two C's, your grades are inconsistent by a professional school's standard.
3. **It's one of your prerequisite courses for professional school.** In this case, you might consider sticking with the class on a pass/fail basis. Then you only need to earn a D to earn credit. **Check with your academic advisor** about whether you can use the pass/fail option.
4. **It's any science-based course** since the bulk of professional school curriculum will be science based.

### Less of a problem if:

1. **It's the only Q-drop on your transcript at time of application to professional school.** You will want to choose wisely however, depending on the course. If you are taking a lower division or introductory course, keep in mind that upper division courses will be more challenging. You may want to hold on to that “one and only Q-drop” for later.
2. **It's a non-science course.** While professional schools want you to do well in all classes, they are likely to be less concerned if you dropped a sociology or business class.

## What if there are non-academic reasons for needing to Q-drop?

Sometimes personal or family emergencies and other special circumstances make it difficult to find time for and focus on your studies. Sometimes for new students it is difficult to make the transition to UT. If you are dealing with something that is getting in the way of your school work, it is very important that you get help.

1. Talk to your academic advisor and/or an advisor in your college student division office.
2. Check out the support services at the Counseling and Mental Health Center.

## When is switching to pass/fail a better option?

This should really only be undertaken when you are reasonably certain that you can pass the class, in other words, earn at least a D. An F from a pass/fail course is just the same as an F from a letter grade course. If you are taking a pre-requisite course that you must repeat (and you meet the above criteria of being reasonably sure you can pass), you should consider the pass/fail option. This will allow you to continue your exposure to the material for the entire semester. This will create a much stronger foundation when you repeat the course.

## What if I keep the class and then I make a C or lower?

No one wants to explain a poor grade in a class, but there is actually much to be learned about being responsible for your grades (see exercise below). Talking about how you might change your strategy going forward can be not



only a sign of maturity and integrity, it can also demonstrate your resilience. All of these qualities are important to future health professionals.

## What did you learn from this experience?

While it can be tempting to blame others for the need to Q drop a class, you must understand that the responsibility is 100% yours. To help you identify your responsibility, ask yourself these questions.

1. Could I have met with the professor to see what I could do to improve my understanding?
2. If my professor was difficult to understand or hard for me to follow, did I look for other sections of the courses to sit in on so that I could learn the material in a different way?
3. Could I have identified that I needed assistance earlier in the semester? (In time to have possibly salvaged my grade)
4. Could I have managed my time better so that I had appropriate time to devote to the class?
5. Could I have checked out resources for tutoring through the Sanger Learning Center?
6. Could I have adjusted my priorities (lowering especially those which are non-academic) to allow focus on my studies?

## Preparing for the possible professional school interview question

You will want to spend some time reflecting on what you could have done differently so that you did not have to drop the class (see above). If you are asked about the Q-drop, you should be able to explain where things went wrong, what you learned from the experience, and how you might choose differently in the future. Remember the Health Professions Office does provide tips in the Interview Prep appointment and can help you practice your response.

## Academic Assistance

[Sanger Learning Center](#) is great place to go if you need assistance succeeding academically. They have tips and appointments centered on the following:

Academic Support

Utilizing Faculty Office Hours

Visiting with Your Teaching Assistants (TAs)

Improving Your Study Skills

Course-specific Study Groups

## GRE Information

Most PT schools require that applicants take the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE). The GRE is offered as a computer-delivered test year round at most locations around the world, and as a paper-delivered test up to three times a year in areas where computer-delivered testing is not available. The test is usually taken by spring semester of junior year. The test consists of 3 areas: 1) Verbal Reasoning; 2) Quantitative Reasoning; 3) Analytical Reasoning. Students can prepare for the GRE in a variety of ways, including taking a test preparatory course or by purchasing study materials individually. Students can be successful using either strategy so you should weigh your personal needs when deciding on an approach. [Sanger Learning Center](#) also has resources regarding GRE prep.

### Scheduling Your Exam & Preparation

To learn how to register for the GRE along with prep tips, fees, score reporting and more, check out the GRE page on the ETS website: [http://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/register](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register) Most PT schools accept GRE scores that are no more than 5 years old.

## Your GRE Score

| GRE Section            | My Score | Avg. Score |
|------------------------|----------|------------|
| Verbal Reasoning       |          |            |
| Quantitative Reasoning |          |            |
| Analytical Writing     |          |            |

## Need a GPA Booster?

A post-baccalaureate program is for students who have already completed an undergraduate degree and are interested in a health professions career. They need either to finish prerequisite courses and/or need to improve their academic standing for a more competitive professional school application. A few options of the types of post-bacc programs for pre-physical therapy students are given below.

## What Different Post-Bacc Programs are Available?

There are a few different types of post-bacc programs for students hoping to attend PT school, these programs usually come in the form of pre-med post-bacc programs that accept PT students, science-focused certificate programs, and graduate programs:

**Basic Sciences:** This type of program is for students who have not completed the basic requirements for PA school. Generally this is for “career changers” who have decided to pursue a career in physical therapy. The coursework can be done in a formal post-bacc program or individually at a local university.

**Advanced Sciences/GPA Boosters:** This type of program is designed for students who were science majors or have completed the basic science requirements. These are for students who:

- Want to stay academically engaged during a gap year while applying to PT schools.
- Need to raise their GPA to become a more competitive PT school applicant.

**Graduate Degree:** This type of program is applicable to various students. Some students may choose to pursue a graduate degree to boost their GPA, provide basic science requirements, or offer knowledge in areas that will complement their future physical therapy education. Examples of these programs would be an MPH in Public Health, or MS in Medical/Biological Sciences.

## How Do I Get In?

Selection criteria vary around the country. Most programs require at least a 3.0 GPA. Check PTCAS for individual programs’ deadlines. Also research post-bacc PT programs as other out of state schools do have programs that are not part of a centralized list.

## Examples of Post Baccalaureate Programs

- [Northeastern University: Post- Baccalaureate Physical Therapy \(DPT\) Program](#)
- [The University of Vermont: Post-Baccalaureate Physical Therapy \(DPT\) Program](#)

## Research schools before you apply!

Thinking about what type of physical Therapy school you are looking for? Not sure what you want in a school? Check out the following possible criteria for evaluating a PT school's fit for you!

### What type of PT school am I looking for?

1. Size of your cohort
2. Prestige of the institution
3. Training facilities
4. Opportunity to do research
5. Support programs –tutoring, counseling, student health services, childcare
6. Community building – student organizations
7. Options for financial aid/scholarship
8. Outreach/service to Community
9. Family/friends (support in close proximity)
10. Lifestyle - outdoorsy, athletic, cultural arts, etc.
11. Centers/institutes/programs that align with your PT School Goals

### Texas Physical Therapy Schools (Public)

[Angelo State University, Department of Nursing and Rehabilitation Sciences, Physical Therapy Program](#) (San Angelo)

[Texas State University, Department of Physical Therapy](#) (San Marcos)

[Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, Doctor of Physical Therapy Program](#) (Lubbock)

[Texas Woman's University, School of Physical Therapy](#) (Dallas and Houston)

[University of North Texas Health Science Center, Physical Therapy Program](#) (Fort Worth)

[The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, Department of Physical Therapy](#)

[University of Texas at El Paso, Doctor of Physical Therapy Program](#)

[University of Texas Medical Branch, Department of Physical Therapy](#) (Galveston)

[University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Department of Physical Therapy](#) (Dallas)

### Texas Physical Therapy Programs (Private)

[Hardin-Simmons University, Department of Physical Therapy](#) (Abilene)

[University of the Incarnate Word, School of Physical Therapy](#) (San Antonio)

[University of Mary Hardin-Baylor](#) (Belton)

[University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, Doctor of Physical Therapy Program](#) (Austin)

This program has a “blended” educational model, with online and live classrooms.

[US Army - Baylor University](#)

### Rank the schools you wish to apply to in order of interest:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_

## REMEMBER

It is important to do your research on the PT Schools you plan to apply to. Check out [PTCAS's participating PT programs](#), and visit the websites and (FAQ) sections of the schools to learn more about them and their application requirements and process.

Fall

## How the Timeline for Applying to PT School

Fall Semester

### July/August

[PTCAS Application Link](#): Application opens ~July 1

- Open PTCAS application link, and begin application process.
- Print and read application service instructions; Make a plan or “to do” checklist.
- Be sure to read instructions about score reporting; these vary year-to-year and by schools.
- If a school does not use PTCAS, see their website for instructions.

### August/September

- Submit application when you’re confident and when you’ve done your best!
- Complete and submit secondary applications; **applications are not complete until secondary applications are submitted.**

### Fall/Spring Semester during Application Cycle

- Follow up to make sure application is verified.
- Schedule an interview prep appointment with Health Professions Office.
- Interviews are done throughout the fall semester and have the possibility of going into the spring semester.
- If you have multiple admissions offers, talk with a health professions coach to make your decision.
- **Deadline to submit PTCAS application is ~June 1 (Earlier is better - we encourage submitting by beginning of fall (September). Check individual school’s deadlines. Allow for processing time at PTCAS.**

### January

- We recommend students take the GRE early in the spring semester of their application year
- Continue to work on personal statement.

### Spring Semester before Application Cycle

- Attend Health Professions Fair, usually held in February or March to visit with professional schools.
- Obtain official transcripts from all institutions attended. Review for accuracy of information and use as reference for completing application.
- Schedule a personal statement brainstorming appointment.
- Finish personal statement.

## Overview of Physical Therapy School Application Services and Resources

Most physical therapy programs in the United States use the PTCAS system. Be sure to review the [PTCAS Deadline: Grouped by Program Name](#) to ensure you submit your application properly and on time. *\*Early applications are encouraged!*

**Helpful Resources:** PTCAS also lists [non-participating programs](#). See their websites for applications and instructions.

**PT Schools Requiring Secondary Applications:** Some health professions schools require secondary applications to be completed in addition to the primary application. **Applications are not considered complete until the secondary application is submitted.** Most secondary applications require an additional fee and the majority of secondary application fees are non-refundable. The program links provided on [PTCAS's participating P.T. programs page](#) offer detailed information on each school's secondary application requirements, costs, and deadlines.

**Quick Tips:**

- READ and understand all application instructions for PTCAS and individual programs you are applying to.**
- Send application materials based on the earliest deadline of the schools you are applying to. **Example: If the earliest school deadline to submit application materials is October 15<sup>th</sup>, submit all materials by that time, regardless of the other later school deadlines.**
- Pay attention to the interview cycle of every school you are applying to. Times will vary based on their application deadlines.

## Letters of Reference

Letters are key components of your professional school application. The number and type of letters vary from school to school. For additional details and guidelines, check with PTCAS or the application service you are using.

- PTCAS's Letters of Reference instructions and FAQs: <http://www.ptcas.org/References/>
- Review resources on HPO's Application Resources webpage: <https://cns.utexas.edu/health-professions/current-student-resources/health-profession-pathways/pre-physical-therapy#application-services>

## Writing Your Personal Statement

You are welcome to come speak to a Pre-Health Professions Coach to discuss your ideas before starting your personal statement. We will help you brainstorm ideas and help you stay on track.

Visit our [Application Resources Page](#) for a personal statement brainstorming worksheet, a list of action verbs, a list of words describing strengths and skills, and more!

## Interview Tips and Preparation

**Dress Professionally:**

- View our [Dressing Guide](#)

**Practice Improving Your Interview Skills:**

- Schedule a PT School Interview Prep Appointment with a Pre-Health Professions Coach
- You may find it helpful to reflect on how your interview went. Check out the Post Interview Self Evaluation Form on our [Application Resources](#) page.

## Prepare & Practice

Be prepared to discuss your strengths and weaknesses, obstacles, inspirations, current events and personal attributes. Review the following sample questions. By asking you certain questions, interviewers are attempting to gain a better understanding of your personality and your fit with the school.

- Tell me about yourself?
- What kind of community/volunteer work have you done?
- What is the most rewarding experience of your life?

- Who is your favorite author?
- Have you worked while you have been in school?
- Have you had the opportunity to travel abroad?
- What accomplishment are you most proud of?
- Tell me about the most difficult period of your life. How did you deal with this?
- What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?
- What is the most difficult decision that you've had to make?
- How do you plan to finance your education?
- How are you going to decide which Physical Therapy school to attend?
- How do you handle adversity?
- Why should we pick you instead of someone else?
- Why do you want to be a Physical Therapist?
- What will you do if you are not accepted to PT school?
- When did you first decide that you wanted to pursue a career as a Physical Therapist? Was there a specific cause for your decision? Has anything happened since that time to strengthen or weaken your decision?
- Can you see other careers in which you could achieve the same goals or meet the same needs?
- What steps have you taken to find out more about a career as a Physical Therapy?
- Where would you like to start practicing?
- How do you study? How do you manage your time?
- What courses do you find most enjoyable, most difficult? Why?
- Describe your hobbies and interests.
- Describe your best/least favorite course at UT and why it falls into that category.
- Why did you choose \_\_\_\_\_ as your major?
- Are there any questions you would like to ask me?
- Describe a situation where you've worked with people from different backgrounds.
- What type of person do you enjoy being with? What type of person irritates you most and how have you dealt with these types of people?
- What about yourself would you most like the interviewer to know?
- Do you have any particular populations you would like to work with? Have you worked with this type of population in the past?
- How do you handle stress?
- How would you keep health care costs down?
- What is an HMO? / What do you know about managed care?
- What characteristics does a good Physical Therapist possess?
- What current Physical Therapy news/events have you heard about or been following?
- What are the advantages and limitations that you see going into a career as a PT? (Be specific)
- What problems do you predict Physical Therapist will face in the next decade?

## Research Current Events

### Physical Therapy Occupational Outlook

The occupational outlook handbook

<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physical-therapists.htm>

**Advocacy** Learn about policy and legislation affecting Physical Therapist

<http://www.apta.org/TakeAction/>

### JAPTA Online

The Journal of the American Physical Therapy Association

<https://academic.oup.com/ptj>

**The Texas Physical Therapy Association**

<http://www.tpta.org/>

**The Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy**

<https://www.fsbpt.org/>

## Financing Your Physical Therapy Education

The cost of your PT education varies based on which PT program you choose to attend. You should start your financial aid research before you apply to a PT program. To evaluate the total cost of completing a program, request information on expenses from all schools you are thinking of attending, including tuition, books, supplies, travel and lodging for rotations, and exams. Explore options to finance your education. After acceptance, you can consult with your PT school's financial services office.

### Scholarships, Awards, and Grants

Browse the following scholarships and awards to see if you are eligible.

#### Scholarships & Grants

- [Federal/State Scholarship Resources](#)
- [Private Scholarship Resources](#)
- [Mary McMillan Scholarship Award](#)
- [Minority Scholarship Award](#)
- [Minority Grants](#)

#### APTA Awards

- [Outstanding PT Student and PTA Student Awards](#)
- [SPT Minority Scholarship Award for Academic Excellence](#)
- [SPTA Minority Scholarship Award for Academic Excellence](#)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Add It Up!</b> – Include all Living Expenses – Cost of Attendance is more than tuition alone |  |
| Tuition:  |  |
| Rent:   |  |
| Food:   |  |

#### Section Awards

- [Orthopedic Section Outstanding PT/PTA Student Award](#)
- [Pediatrics Section Thesis and Dissertation Awards](#)
- [Performing Arts Special Interest Group \(PASIG\) Student Scholarship](#)

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Entertainment:    |  |
| Health Insurance: |  |
| Laboratory Fees:  |  |
| Car Insurance:    |  |
| Gas:              |  |
| Other Travel:     |  |
| Other Expenses:   |  |

## Pre-Health Professions Services

**Applying to Professional School? We are here to guide you!**

**See an HP Peer Coach if you have questions in one or more of the following topic areas:**

- Going over pre-requisites ("What do I have to take to get into X school?")
- Shadowing opportunities ("how to find, importance of, what is")
- Leadership opportunities ("how to find, importance of, what are")
- Patient care experience ("how to find, importance of, what is")
- Clubs/organizations
- How to ask for letters of recommendation/evaluation
- Course load ("Is this reasonable to take in one semester?")
- Study habits/tutoring resources
- Test-taking strategies
- How to use HPO services

### **Pre-Health Professions Coaching Appointments**

Schedule a Pre-Health Professions Coaching session to meet with a Pre-Health Professions Coach. These appointments cover:

- Progress checks ("How am I doing?" "What else do I need to do?")
- Application Strategies/resources
- Choosing letter writers ("Who should I ask?")
- Academic turnaround ("I am worried about my GPA")
- Potential gap year planning/Post Bacc discussions
- Academic dishonesty/legal issues
- Reapplication strategies
- Study abroad timeline
- Alumni or Post-Bacc Student questions

### **To Q or Not to Q Discussions**

Not sure what to do? Thinking of dropping a course? Then you can schedule an appointment with a Pre-Health Professions Coach about deciding on Q dropping or the pass/fail option. Check out our To Q or Not to Q guide in this guide before your appointment.



### **Personal Statement Brainstorming**

Come speak to a Pre-Health Professions Coach to discuss your ideas before starting your personal statement. We will help you brainstorm ideas for the content of your essays. We have additional personal statement resources [here](#).

We no longer review personal statements in the Health Professions Office. However, we have developed a partnership with the University Writing Center for personal statements. The [University Writing Center](#) is an excellent resource to utilize when writing application essays. Their Writing Consultants can help you at any stage of writing, from getting started to making recommendations for a polished finished product. Some UWC Consultants are identified as knowledgeable about health professions personal statements.

### **Interview Prep Appointments**

Discuss interview strategies with us! You can go over questions you have and perhaps practice a couple questions of your choice with a Pre-Health Professions Coach. You will receive tips and feedback to help you in your professional school interview. Dressing up for your HP Interview Prep appointment is optional, if you would like feedback on your clothing choice and you want to test whether it will be comfortable, or they can just discuss appropriate attire with you.