

Pre-physical therapy

www.goshen.edu/bio

"I came to GC because of its strong science and music departments. GC's small size, combined with its positive attitudes towards crossing disciplines, has enabled me to combine a French horn music minor with my pre-physical therapy natural science major."

–GC graduate Kristen Metzler

Why study pre-physical therapy at Goshen College?

Goshen College can give you the academic foundation needed to enter the field of physical therapy. Goshen College students find many opportunities for academic studies and research; pre-physical therapy students can also gain experience in programs linking GC with local health-care providers.

Academic excellence

Goshen College has an excellent record in preparing students to succeed in the sciences.

- Goshen students who apply to post-graduate programs have a historically high rate of success. In the past 10 years, 82 percent of GC students who have applied to medical school have been accepted.
- In a recent study by Franklin and Marshall College of over 500 undergraduate institutions, Goshen College ranked in the top five percent for its percentage of graduates who earned Ph.D.s in life sciences.
- In a comparison to 70 undergraduate institutions in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, Goshen was number one in the percentage of graduates who received Ph.D.s in the life sciences

Excellent facilities

The modern science building was recently renovated. Its comfortable and safe research labs are well-ventilated and well-equipped for basic research in the biochemical, genetic, cellular, molecular, vertebrate, aquatic and marine areas.

Opportunities to work closely with faculty

Students can interact personally with the science faculty in classes, labs and research activities.

- The student-faculty ratio is 12:1, giving students the opportunity to work one-on-one with their professors.
- Students have the opportunity to participate in various undergraduate research projects directed by faculty members.
- Many students work with professors as lab assistants.

Opportunities to gain experience

Students will find many opportunities to gain valuable experience (paid or volunteer) in and around GC.

- Most Goshen College students spend a semester abroad in GC's unique Study-Service Term (SST). Students who are interested in a health-related career are encouraged to spend their six-week period of service working in a health-related assignment, such as a hospital or clinic.
- Pre-physical therapy students must spend time observing physical therapists working; Goshen General hospital is conveniently located just across the street from GC, facilitating such observation during the school year.
- Students might also find it helpful to seek employment at Greencroft, a large nursing home/assisted living center (within walking distance of GC) or Oaklawn, a psychiatric hospital (a 10-minute drive from GC).

Options for pre-physical therapy programs

Successful admission into an accredited physical therapy program is highly competitive. Carefully chosen course work at Goshen College will give a candidate a strong base for application. There are currently two types of physical therapy programs: master's degree and doctoral degree programs. The majority of programs are now doctoral degree programs, and it appears likely that all will be in a few years. Students would normally need four years of undergraduate college education, followed by two or three years of graduate school education. The two-year graduate programs end with a master's degree, and the three-year graduate programs are doctoral programs.

Suggested plan of study

Most students preparing for a career as a physical therapist major in biology, natural science or one of the other sciences. Practically any major is possible, however, as long as the required prerequisite courses are taken.

The following first-year schedule includes courses that are required for nearly all physical therapy programs and is a good way to get started:

	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>May Term</i>
<i>First year</i>	General Chemistry I Biological Principles I General Psychology Literature and Writing	General Chemistry II Biological Principles II Expository Writing	Electives/General Education

Many schools also require:

Developmental or Abnormal Psychology
Human Anatomy and Physiology
Kinesiology
Statistics

Other courses sometimes required/recommended:

Developmental Vertebrate Biology
Foreign language
Genetics
Humanities
Intro to Computers (or computer proficiency)
Microbiology
Molecular Cell Biology
Organic Chemistry
Physics
Precalculus or Calculus
Sociology
Vertebrate Physiology

Other requirements:

- All required courses must be completed with a 'C' or better. A GPA of at least 3.5 is desirable.
- Nearly all programs require some clinical experience; most require 100-250 hours. This experience can be fulfilled by shadowing a physical therapist or working in the physical therapy field. Nearby Goshen General Hospital accepts student volunteers, as do other hospitals and clinics. Begin acquiring hours early, since schools vary in their requirements. Most schools require Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores as well.

Because of the variability in prerequisites for admission to various physical programs (over 200 in this country), it is important that students select some that are of particular interest to them, and identify the prerequisites for those specific programs. At the time that this was written, a good central source that has links to all of the programs is found at <http://physicaltherapist.com/>. In order to plan properly, this preparation should be done well in advance of the time when you expect to apply to physical therapy schools (preferably at least two years in advance). Once you have collected information for programs that are of specific interest to you, you should discuss your plans with your academic adviser.

Additional resources**Faculty adviser**

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Biology Department Web site:

www.goshen.edu/bio

American Physical Therapist Association Web Site:

<http://www.apta.org>