

1.8.1 Policy and Procedures for Applications for Admission to the University of South Dakota Department of Physical Therapy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To admit a full cohort (currently 32 students) to the University of South Dakota's Doctor of Physical Therapy Program (USDPT) annually.
- 1.2. To identify and admit applicants who are academically, socially, and emotionally prepared to successfully fulfill the mission of USDPT.
- 1.3. To promote a diverse class of physical therapy students able to meet society's future needs for physical therapy.

2. Policies

- 2.1. Applicants, or potential applicants, will not be discriminated against because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.
- 2.2. USDPT criteria will meet or exceed minimum standards and expectations set by the USD Graduate School.
- 2.3. All applicants must complete an application in the Physical Therapy Centralized Application Service (PTCAS) found at www.ptcas.org by designated deadlines.
- 2.4. Applicants may apply for admission at two distinct deadlines typically set near the 2nd week in September (Fall interviews) and the first week in December (Spring interviews) and published annually on the USDPT website. Criteria are identical for each deadline.
- 2.5. USDPT does not grant credit toward the doctoral degree for previous courses, time in other programs, or work experience.

3. Procedures

3.1. Application Process

- 3.1.1. Applicants must submit their completed application at www.ptcas.org by one of the assigned deadlines. Once submitted the Assistant Admissions Officer will review the application and determine if all minimum requirements are met. The Assistant Admissions Officer will consult with the Admissions Chair as needed to clarify applicant requirements.
- 3.1.2. Applicants will be notified via PTCAS e-mail regarding their application status and will be alerted to any missing or insufficient items in the application.
- 3.1.3. Cumulative GPA: Applicants must hold a GPA of at least 3.2 in order to qualify for admission. This GPA is automatically calculated in PTCAS and includes all coursework from every institution attended.
- 3.1.4. Prerequisite Coursework: Prerequisite coursework GPA must be at least 3.2 in order to qualify for admission. This is calculated in the PTCAS application by the Assistant Admissions Officer or Admissions Chair.
 - 3.1.4.1. When calculating prerequisite GPA, if a course has been taken twice, the best grade will be applied to the student's prerequisite GPA.

- 3.1.4.2. Prerequisite GPA will be calculated at the time of application for fall interviews and after the fall term and academic updates (submitted by the established deadline) have been processed for spring interviews.
 - 3.1.4.3. Prerequisite course requirements will be updated annually on the program and PTCAS website.
 - 3.1.4.4. Unfinished Prerequisites: All applicants must demonstrate that, at most, only 2 remaining prerequisites will need to be completed in the spring semester prior to their proposed matriculation year. Fall coursework in progress will not be considered outstanding. Fall interview applicants must have 9/12 pre-requisites completed in order to be considered.
 - 3.1.4.5. Advanced Placement (AP) coursework: A minimum score of 4/5 must be met for any prerequisite coursework. A score report must be sent to the PT department to verify qualification of AP coursework. These documents can be submitted directly to pt@usd.edu or mailed to the department.
 - 3.1.4.6. CLEP: Acceptance of CLEP credits will be considered to fulfill prerequisite coursework only for non-laboratory courses. Credit for these courses will not be utilized in the calculated prerequisite GPA.
- 3.1.5. Graduate Record Exam (GRE)
- 3.1.5.1. All GRE scores must be no more than 5 years old and must be submitted by the applicant directly to PTCAS for verification via code 7814.
 - 3.1.5.2. The overall best GRE scores will be used for each applicant. Sub-scores from differing test dates may not be combined.
 - 3.1.5.3. All scores will be converted to the most current concordance table with percentile rank used for scoring purposes.
 - 3.1.5.4. Fall interview applicants are advised to take the GRE on or before July 31 while Spring interview applicants should have a test date on or before November 1 in order for timely application processing.
- 3.1.6. References: Three personal references must be submitted to PTCAS. One reference must be from a physical therapist. The two remaining references may be from employers, educators, or others who can attest to the academic and social preparedness of the applicant. References from friends or family will not be accepted.
- 3.1.7. Written Essay: A written essay will be completed in PTCAS.
- 3.1.8. Observation Hours: A minimum of 50 observation hours will be documented in PTCAS. It is encouraged that observation hours come from at least 3 distinct settings. All observation hours will be verified via PTCAS through e-mail with the supervising therapist. Work as a paid physical therapy tech will count toward observation hours.
- 3.1.9. Transcripts: Official transcripts from ALL colleges and universities attended must be submitted to PTCAS at the time of application. Academic Updates must be received by USD from PTCAS by the first working day in January, in order to be considered as part of the application.
- 3.1.10. Supplemental Fee and Application: In addition to the PTCAS online application, all applicants are required to apply to The University of South Dakota Graduate School and

pay a \$35.00 application fee. PTCAS applications will not be reviewed until the Graduate School application and fee are received.

3.2. Interviews

- 3.2.1. Applicants will be invited for interview based on their ranked scores from their submitted application. Qualified applicants not invited for interview for the Fall session will be placed on an interview waitlist for the Spring session.
- 3.2.2. Individual interviews will be conducted and scored by at least one core faculty member. If more than one interviewer is present, scores will be averaged.
- 3.2.3. Group interviews will be conducted with 3-5 applicants per group. These interviews will be scored by at least one core faculty member. If more than one interviewer is present, scores will be averaged.
- 3.2.4. Interviews will take place on the USD Vermillion campus. Interactive zoom/remote options will be made available where possible.
- 3.2.5. Additional activities provided during the interview visit will not be scored and will include, as available:
 - A visit with the program chair and/or core faculty members.
 - Question and answer time with current students.
 - A tour of the USD PT facility and an optional campus tour.
 - An optional meeting with a representative from financial aid.

3.3. Final Scoring and Admission Offers

- 3.3.1. After the interview sessions all applicants will be ranked by score in PTCAS. Admissions Committee members will meet to approve or modify the list. After final approval by the Admissions Committee the Graduate School will be notified of each applicant's status with the following options: accepted, waitlisted, denied.
- 3.3.2. Upon contingent acceptance into the USD Physical Therapy Program, each applicant will be asked to pay a standard seat deposit, currently \$400.00, by a specified date (currently no earlier than January 15). Each applicant must also submit and pay for a criminal background check (approximately \$100) and sign off that they are able to perform the tasks outlined in the Essential Functions and Technical Standards document.
- 3.3.3. Waitlisted applicants will be contacted via the phone or e-mail address provided in PTCAS as seats become available.
- 3.3.4. Deferment: Any request to defer enrollment until the following admission cycle will be highly scrutinized and considered on an individual, case-by-case basis by the full Admissions Committee.
- 3.3.5. All application files will be kept in the Physical Therapy Department for two (2) years according to the USD Graduate School policy.