

## **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 28 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](http://www.ptcas.org) by designated deadlines.
- 2.4. Applicants may apply for two types of admissions dependent upon their qualifications: General or Early dependent upon their qualifications.
  - 2.4.1. The University of South Dakota does not participate in the Early Decision Program through the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS). Thus, early admission is not a binding agreement but an opportunity to determine admission status early for highly qualified applicants.
- 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 for Early Admission**

- 3.1.1. In order to be considered for an early interview and possible early acceptance, applicants must have completed 9 of the 12 required prerequisite courses and must meet 4 of 5 thresholds outlined below. Only applications submitted by the early application deadline (currently September 15) will be considered for early admission.
  - Cumulative GPA  $\geq 3.7$
  - Pre-requisite GPA  $\geq 3.7$
  - Verbal GRE  $\geq 50\%$  rank
  - Quantitative GRE  $\geq 50\%$  rank
  - Analytical GRE  $\geq 50\%$  rank
- 3.1.2. Early admission thresholds may be modified based on the average incoming scores of the three previous cohorts. Current thresholds will be published each year on the PTCAS and USD PT websites.
- 3.1.3. Early applicants must have all other application items complete with the exception of prerequisite coursework. However, it must be apparent that the student will have no more than 2 outstanding prerequisite courses to complete in the spring prior to potential matriculation.

- 3.1.4. Early applicants not interviewed will move to the general application process.
- 3.1.5. Early applicants interviewed and waitlisted will be ranked with general applicants after interview.
- 3.1.6. All other processes of application, interview and scoring of early applicants are identical to general admission processes.

### **3.2. Application for General Admission**

- 3.2.1. Applicants applying for general admission must submit their completed application at [www.ptcas.org](http://www.ptcas.org) by the assigned deadline (currently December 1). 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.
- 3.2.2. 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.
- 3.2.3. Cumulative GPA: Applicants must hold a GPA of at least 3.2 in order to qualify for general admission. This GPA is automatically calculated in PTCAS and includes all coursework from every institution attended.
- 3.2.4. Pre-requisite Coursework: Pre-requisite coursework GPA must be at least 3.2 in order to qualify for general admission. This is calculated in the PTCAS application by the Assistant Admissions Officer or Admissions Chair.
  - 3.2.4.1. When calculating prerequisite GPA, if a course has been taken twice, the best grade will be applied to the student's prerequisite GPA.
  - 3.2.4.2. Prerequisite GPA will be calculated at the time of application for early applicants and after the fall term and academic updates (submitted by the established deadline) have been processed for general applicants.
  - 3.2.4.3. Prerequisite course requirements will be updated annually on the program and PTCAS website.
  - 3.2.4.4. 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.
  - 3.2.4.5. Advanced Placement (AP) coursework: A minimum score of 4/5 must be met for any prerequisite coursework. A syllabus and 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](mailto:pt@usd.edu) or mailed to the department.
  - 3.2.4.6. 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.
- 3.2.5. Graduate Record Exam (GRE)
  - 3.2.5.1. 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.
  - 3.2.5.2. The overall best GRE scores will be used for each applicant. Sub scores from differing test dates may not be combined.
  - 3.2.5.3. All scores will be converted to the most current concordance table with percentile rank used for scoring purposes.

- 3.2.5.4. Early admission applicants are advised to take the GRE on or before July 31 while general applicants should have a test date on or before November 1 in order for timely application processing.
- 3.2.6. 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.
- 3.2.7. Written Essay: A written essay will be completed in PTCAS.
- 3.2.8. Observation Hours: A minimum of 50 observation hours will be documented in PTCAS. It is encouraged that observation hours will be diverse in setting. 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.
- 3.2.9. 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.
- 3.2.10. 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.
- 3.3. Interviews
- 3.3.1. Applicants will be invited for interview based on their ranked scores from their submitted application. Interview seats are limited to no more than 20 for early admission and no more than 70 for general admission interviews. Qualified applicants not invited for interview will be placed on an interview waitlist.
- 3.3.2. Individual interviews will be conducted on campus and scored by at least one core faculty member. If more than one interviewer is present, scores will be averaged.
- 3.3.3. Group interviews will be conducted on campus 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.
- 3.3.4. Applicants unavailable for an on-campus interview during early admission will default to general admission dates. Applicants unavailable for general admission interview dates risk forfeiting their application. However, in extreme cases video or phone interviews may be considered with approval of the Admissions Committee. The Admissions Committee reserves the right to refuse video interviewing to any applicant.
- 3.3.5. 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.
- 3.4. Final Scoring and Admission Offers
- 3.4.1. 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.

- 3.4.2. Upon contingent acceptance into the USD Physical Therapy Program, each applicant will be asked to pay a standard seat deposit, currently \$200.00, 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.
- 3.4.3. Waitlisted applicants will be contacted via the phone or e-mail address provided in PTCAS as seats become available.
- 3.4.4. 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.
- 3.4.5. All application files will be kept in the Physical Therapy Department for two (2) years according to the USD Graduate School policy.

Revised Fall 2017