



# Physical Therapy

## College of Science & Health

The UW-La Crosse Physical Therapy Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, American Physical Therapy Association, and designed to ensure that graduates will be able to adapt their training to meet the demands of the health care communities they serve.

Physical Therapy is an advanced degree and students must have an undergraduate degree to apply to the program. The graduate program in Physical Therapy at UW-La Crosse is committed to educating students to enter the profession of physical therapy as generalists who can meet the health care needs across multiple settings such as hospitals, schools, out-patient clinics and private practice. Program graduates are prepared to assume leadership roles in the health care delivery system as well as community and professional organizations. Graduates are prepared to assume other professional roles, including consultation, education, research, administration, and direction and supervision of personnel. Clinical fieldwork experiences are an integral part of the program. The program promotes the inclusion of professional behaviors into the curriculum as a graded requirement for all academic courses and all clinical courses. The program promotes students to be active learners, responsible for their own learning. Curricular content is centered on evidence-based practice patterns.

Admission to the Physical Therapy Program is competitive. Students applying to the program must already have an undergraduate degree. Select students who are biology or physics undergraduate majors at UW-La Crosse will be eligible for early application under the dual degree agreement. Each year, 45 students are selected based on their grade point averages (prerequisite and aggregate), GRE scores, clinical experience, written essays, and references. Complete applications are due in the program office by November 1 for early admission and January 15 for general admission.

### Graduate Program

#### Doctor of Physical Therapy

### Department Features

Physical therapists play a critical role in the delivery of comprehensive health care in today's society. The UW-La Crosse physical therapy faculty members are licensed physical therapists and/or experts with specialty training in the following areas: Biomechanics, Cardiopulmonary, Geriatrics, Neuromuscular Rehabilitation, Musculoskeletal, Integumentary, Pediatrics, Sports, Ethics, Health Administration, and Health and Wellness. Most physical therapy faculty are doctorally prepared and several are board certified clinical specialists through the American Physical Therapy Association.

Currently, students are awarded a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) following completion of 112 credits over 34 months. The DPT degree is

delivered in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee through a consortial relationship. Students integrate their didactic study with 42 weeks of clinical internships during the curriculum, which prepares them to sit for their state licensure examinations. UW-L pass rates on national licensure exams are well above national averages. Graduates enter a very strong employment market upon becoming licensed.

The UW-La Crosse Physical Therapy Program has established an impressive collection of clinical internships in cities concentrated in the Midwest and spanning the entire United States. Volunteer service is also done locally to support causes related to hunger, Special Olympics, health, and fitness.

The Health Science Center, a six-floor consortial facility, is home to the state-of-the-art technology and learning resources used by PT students. It supports integrated education of a variety of health professions and collaborative, clinically focused research in biomechanics, human physiology, microbiology, and rehabilitative services.

The faculty are committed to the achievement of professional excellence and are dedicated to the development of clinical and academic scholarship of each student enrolled in the program. Students have the opportunity to partner with faculty to perform research and often present their research findings at state and national physical therapy meetings.

It is through the combined efforts of a resourceful, motivated and productive faculty, and a conscientious and aspiring student body that the goals of physical therapy education may be achieved. The faculty, students, and graduates of the program will strive to generate lasting and significant advances in the sciences, education, and practice of the physical therapy profession.

#### Admission Criteria

Admission to the graduate program requires that an applicant has:

1. Completed the pre-professional core curriculum by the time of enrollment (see below)
2. Obtained a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
3. Completed two 20-hour clinical work experiences

4. Completed a baccalaureate degree or is in process of completing a dual degree from UW-L Biology or Physics Departments
5. Filed an application for admission to the Physical Therapy Program as a degree applicant. Degree applicants must also apply to UW-La Crosse for Graduate Admission
6. Submitted GRE results.

#### **Pre-Professional Core Curriculum**

General Biology (4 credits)  
 Human Anatomy 4 credits  
 Human Physiology (4 credits)  
 Chemistry (8 credits)  
 Physics (8 credits)  
*Each of the science courses listed above must contain a lab*  
 Statistics (3 credits)  
 Psychology (3 credits)  
 Sociology (3 credits)

#### **Application**

Students enrolled at UW-La Crosse during the academic year they apply to the program are allowed to apply during the spring or fall semesters of their senior year, assuming core and general education requirements can be completed by the time of enrollment, volunteer requirements have been completed, the student has at least a 3.0 GPA overall, and the student will obtain an undergraduate degree before entering the professional program. Dual degree students who are biology or physics undergraduate majors at UW-La Crosse will be eligible for early application. Application procedures and forms may be found at [www.uwlax.edu/pt](http://www.uwlax.edu/pt).

## **Career Opportunities**

Physical therapists may work in acute care, rehabilitation, community health, industry, sports medicine, research, school, or administrative settings in settings such as hospitals, private practice, specialty clinics, public and private schools, rehabilitation centers, and industrial clinics.

#### **Professional Development After Graduation**

- Graduate study in physical therapy, basic life sciences, behavioral sciences, kinesiology, biomechanics, exercise physiology, health care administration, athletic training, clinical specialization board certification, clinical residencies, fellowships or other clinical certifications.

#### **Career Opportunities**

- Administrator/ Clinical Manager in health care organizations
- Director of Fitness and Wellness Programs
- Consultant
- Senior/ Lead Therapist
- Independent PT Practice Owner
- College or University Faculty Member
- Researcher and Author

## **Occupational Outlook**

Employment trends in physical therapy are extremely encouraging. All UW-L PT graduates have found employment within months of graduation and many of them have needed to make their employment choice after considering multiple offers.

This “in demand” employment forecast is fueled by several trends:

- As the “baby boom” generation ages, more physical therapists will be required to treat patients who are affected

with arthritis, stroke, heart disease, and other prolonged-care conditions common to older people.

- As a consequence of society’s increasing participation in sports and fitness activities, more physical therapists will be needed in the health care system to treat and help prevent knee, leg, back, shoulder, and other musculoskeletal injuries.
- Technological and medical advances also play a role in determining the increased need for physical therapy professionals.
- Health care consumers are increasingly able to access a physical therapist directly without first obtaining a physician’s referral.

## **Professional Associations**

American Physical Therapy Association  
<http://www.apta.org/>

Wisconsin Physical Therapy Association  
<http://www.wpta.org/>

Physical Therapy Department  
 4031 Health Science Center  
 1725 State Street  
 La Crosse, WI 54601  
[www.uwlax.edu/pt/](http://www.uwlax.edu/pt/)