



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL
ARKANSAS™

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND
BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
PHYSICAL THERAPY

DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM BROCHURE 2026

UCA Physical Therapy

In existence since 1970, the [UCA Physical Therapy Program](#) is the largest in the state and recognized nationally with over 2,800 alumni. UCA has a total enrollment of approximately 10,000 students. UCA PT is the only program in the state to offer both the DPT and PhD in Physical Therapy degrees, each established in 2000. Located in Conway, Arkansas (25 miles north of Little Rock) with a population around 68,000. The Physical Therapy Center, a 44,000 square-foot state-of-the-art facility, is home to the department.

Mission and Vision

Educating leaders in Physical Therapy is the mission of the Department of Physical Therapy.

Moving individuals and communities toward optimal health is the vision.

Faculty

The [Department of Physical Therapy Faculty](#) are known nationally, and many are board-certified specialists. The PT Department is a part of the [College of Health and Behavioral Sciences](#) and is chaired by Dr. Kevin Garrison, PT, PhD.



Accreditation Status

The Doctor of Physical Therapy curriculum at UCA is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). CAPTE can be contacted by email at accreditation@apta.org or 1111 North Fairfax St., Alexandria, Virginia 22314.

Physical Therapy: A Dynamic Health Care Profession

Physical Therapists (PTs) examine, diagnose and treat individuals of all ages, from newborn to end of life. PTs work with patients who have injuries, disabilities or other health conditions that need treatment. PTs optimize quality of life by maintaining, restoring and improving patient's ability to move, function and live more active lifestyles. Physical Therapists are licensed practitioners who work with multiple patient populations impacted by disease, injury and movement dysfunction. To practice as a physical therapist in the United States, you must earn a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree from an accredited physical therapist education program and pass a national licensure exam and obtain a state license.

Why Physical Therapy?

- PTs and PTAs are in demand and make a meaningful impact every day.
- Ranked among the top health care jobs by U.S. News & World Report.
- Strong job growth and flexibility across settings.
- Opportunities in research, education, and leadership.
- Make a difference every day, helping people move without pain and live life to the fullest.
- You can specialize in nearly any area of health care.
- You'll be part of a community dedicated to helping people live fuller, healthier lives.



Earnings for Physical Therapists

Mean annual salary for physical therapists nationwide is \$100,440, and in Arkansas it is \$92,270, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, May 2023 (3/3/2026). It is estimated that starting salaries in Arkansas for new physical therapists begin at \$75,000. It should be noted that salary is often specific to setting and geographic location.

Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Degree

The curriculum leading to the DPT degree at the University of Central Arkansas requires 37 credit hours of prerequisite course work and a completed baccalaureate degree. The program is designed as a 4+3 curriculum (4 years of undergraduate course work culminating in a baccalaureate degree and 3 years of professional graduate course work) with a clinical doctorate degree awarded after the final 3 years of study. Thirty-nine weeks of the 3-year DPT curriculum are devoted to clinical experiences in physical therapy at clinical education sites.

Requirements

To be considered for admission, candidates must complete a baccalaureate degree and meet the specific prerequisite requirements of the UCA DPT program prior to the enrollment date. Students may pursue the bachelor’s degree in any chosen field of study at UCA or at another accredited university or college, if the departmental prerequisite requirements are met. Prerequisite course work taken at another institution must be equivalent or exceed the courses at UCA. Refer to the [UCA Undergraduate Bulletin](#).

Essential Functions: Upon enrollment in the DPT program students must perform certain essential functions. All prospective students should review the document [Essential Functions of the Student in the DPT Program](#) and the departmental policy prior to applying for admission.

International Applicants: Please note that the [World Education Services](#) (WES) is the only foreign transcript evaluation service for applicants with non-U.S. course work.

Degree and Course Work Required



- I. Completion of a Baccalaureate Degree
- II. Completion of Departmental Prerequisite course work
- III. Regarding required course work
 - a. All science (biology, chemistry and physics) courses or their substitutes must be completed with a grade of C or above.
 - b. All applicants must complete 20 of the 31 hours of the prerequisite science course work prior to the application deadline.
 - c. Courses taken elsewhere must be equivalent or evaluated and approved in advance.
 - d. All college course work must be submitted regardless of when completed or the nature of the course work. Courses required are listed below:

COURSE	CREDIT HOURS
General Psychology	3
Statistics	3
Chemistry I and II, two semester sequence with lab	8
College Physics I and II, two semester sequence with lab	8
Biology for Majors with lab (i.e. UCA BIOL1440 Principles of Biology I)	4
Biology course above BIOL1440, not Botany	3-4
Biology two course sequence in Anatomy and Physiology or one course in Anatomy with lab and one course in Physiology with lab	8
Total Credit Hours	37-38

Application Process

The professional DPT program has strict admission requirements and enrollment limitations with a class size of 60 students. Acceptance is by specific application and competitive admission only. A new DPT class begins each Fall semester. Applications for either Early Assurance or Regular Admission to the professional DPT program are due on October 1. Prior to the August enrollment date, all applicants must have earned a baccalaureate degree and have completed all departmental prerequisite requirements. Contact Jaclyn Burroughs, Program Advisor, by email at jburroughs2@uca.edu for questions regarding application processes.

Regular Admission

The deadline for DPT application is October 1 of the year of planned enrollment. UCA utilizes the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS) at [PTCAS login page](#) for application to the DPT program. To be eligible for regular admission by the application deadline the applicant must:



1. Possess a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 based on a 4.00 scale.
2. Possess a science GPA of at least 3.00 for all biology, chemistry, and physics course work. Science GPA is weighted twice as heavily as cumulative GPA for ranking of applicant.
3. Have completed a minimum of 20 hours of the 31 required hours of science prerequisites by the DPT application deadline.
4. Have received a score on the graduate Record Examination (GRE). Have all GRE scores sent to PTCAS with GRE Code 3630. No minimum score is required, however average GRE combined total score (verbal and quantitative) was 300 for Fall 2025 admission. GRE scores are weighted twice as heavily as cumulative GPA for ranking of applicant.
5. Observation hours are not required. Applicants are encouraged to learn more about the profession of physical therapy in advance so that they are familiar with the role of a physical therapist and the variety of clinical practice.
6. *New: Exceptionally strong applications may be considered for an early interview and decision. Applications completed in PTCAS by August 15, 2026, including GRE scores, will be considered.*
7. Applicants must apply through PTCAS and select UCA.

Early Assurance Pathway

The Early Assurance Pathway (EAP) is designed for UCA undergraduate students and provides two options for entry including First Year Application Deadline and Second Year Application Deadline. Contact Jaclyn Burroughs, Program Advisor, to apply to the Early Assurance Pathway.

1. **First Year Application Deadline:** Selection of this option should be confirmed with the pre-PT advisor by October 1 of the first year at UCA. Students who begin study at UCA as a freshman and score at least a 30 on the ACT (from high school) or 1360 on SAT (verbal and math) will be assured a position in the Professional DPT program. Specific performance standards must be met to maintain the position in the program. Actual enrollment into the professional program will occur after completion of the baccalaureate degree.
2. **Second Year Application Deadline:** Selection of this option should be confirmed with the pre-PT advisor by October 1 of the second year. To be eligible, the applicant must complete the first year at UCA as a first-time freshman undergraduate (no transfer students). At least 27 credit hours at UCA (not counting high school concurrent credits or AP credits) is required with a minimum 3.7 cumulative GPA. Finally, the student must have completed 8 hours of science prerequisites (no high school credit hours) with a 4.0 science GPA.
3. **To Maintain Early Assurance Status:**
 - a) Take all course work at UCA.
 - b) Attend three Pre-PT Club meetings each year (12 total in 4 years).
 - c) By September 1 of the application year, hold a 3.70 cumulative GPA and a 3.50 cumulative science GPA for all undergraduate work.
 - d) Complete 20 hours of required science prerequisite hours by the October 1 deadline for application.
 - e) Complete the baccalaureate degree and all required prerequisites by August of the year of enrollment in the DPT program.
 - f) No interview is required of applicants entering the program under the Early Assurance Pathway.

Grade Point for Recent Course Work

The GPA for recent course work (last 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours) may be considered by the DPT Admission Committee as a substitute for the cumulative GPA for admission purposes only. The substitution may be made if the GPA for the last 30 semester hours (45 quarter hour equivalent) is at least 10% higher than the cumulative GPA and includes 15 hours of appropriate science course work. A minimum 3.00 cumulative GPA and a minimal 3.00 science GPA requirement must be met before utilizing this option. The total hours for the recent college GPA are obtained by beginning with the last semester or quarter of course work and moving backwards chronologically on the transcript(s) until 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hour equivalents are obtained. All courses are included. NO more than 8 hours of science course work may be repeated course work. No more than one-fourth of the non-science course work include in the recent course work GPA may be repeated.



DPT Interviews

Applicants must apply through PTCAS and select UCA. Applicants are initially reviewed by the Chair of the DPT Admissions Committee and applications are ranked using a composite score derived from the cumulative grade point average (CGPA), the science grade point average (SGPA), and GRE scores. Of the three criteria, the SPGA and GRE are weighted 40% each and the CPGA is weighted 20% of the composite score. The top applicants are invited to a mandatory interview scheduled for an early Friday in December. **Exceptionally strong applications may be considered for an early interview and decision. Applications completed in PTCAS by August 15, 2026, will be considered.** The DPT Admission Committee Chair will inform invited applicants of their interview time. The interview is used to assess such factors as the ability to present oneself professionally, to use verbal and non-verbal communication appropriately, to express knowledge about the profession of physical therapy, to function within the group for the interview, and to express ideas quickly and succinctly.



Admission

Applicants accepted for admission are notified in December. A ranked alternate list is also prepared. Individuals may be chosen from this list to replace applicants who decline their appointment at any time. Ranking as an alternate is indicative of the Committee's high opinion of a candidate's potential but does not assure placement in the class or any future class. Students who do not believe they have been treated fairly may appeal to the DPT Admission Committee. Requests for exceptions to the prerequisite course work and policies must be submitted to the DPT Admission Committee by the application deadline. Failure to be admitted does not prevent reapplying for a later year.

Regarding Recent Admission

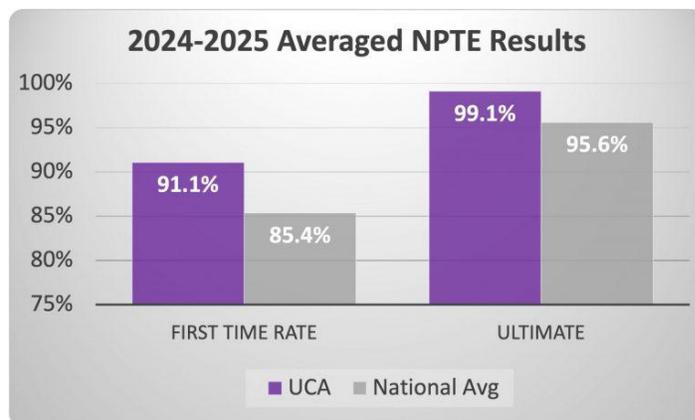
Regarding students admitted Fall 2025, excluding the Early Assurance Pathway students, (updated 2-20-2026):

- Average Science GPA (range 3.14 – 4.0) including all BIOL, CHEM, PHYS course work.
- 300 Average Graduate Record Exam (GRE) Total Score (range 279 – 321) excluding Writing Section.
- 3.85 Average Cumulative GPA (range 3.49 – 4.0) including all course work.
- 24% Acceptance Rate (# of acceptances / # of qualified applicants).
- 66% Matriculation Rate (# of enrolled / # of admitted, includes all declines).

Graduate Outcomes

The UCA DPT program student outcomes are calculated for the years 2024 and 2025 (updated 2-18-2026):

- 91.1% First-time Pass Rate on the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE)
- 99.1% Ultimate Pass Rate on the NPTE
- 94.1% Graduation Rate
- 100% Employment Rate



Program Costs

The estimated total cost for the three years of the UCA DPT program is well below the national average for public and private universities. The [student financial fact sheet \(pdf\)](#) is a CAPTE-mandated form that allows prospective students to make accurate comparisons of the cost of a DPT education. A UCA education is a great value for your investment. Every year, UCA attracts students from contiguous states and across the U.S. and most DPT students can qualify for in-state tuition. Note, tuition and fees are subject to change at any time. Information on tuition and fees is available at [UCA Student Accounts](#).

Additional Offerings

PhD in Physical Therapy Degree:

Qualified students may be accepted to the DPT/PhD program allowing them to simultaneously pursue the DPT, CAPTE accredited program and [the PhD in PT degree](#), Higher Learning Commission accredited program. Application to this program occurs following admission to the DPT program.

Pediatric Physical Therapy Residency Program:

UCA offers an [accredited residency program in pediatric physical therapy](#). This program provides physical therapists an opportunity to achieve advanced skill and knowledge in this clinical practice area. Admission is competitive and occurs following completion of the DPT degree and obtainment of licensure.

UCA DPT Curriculum

The Doctor of Physical Therapy curriculum sequence totals 124 credit hours of graduate course work completed in 36 months including. Clinical education experiences total 39 weeks. Two (2) credit hours of Research Practicum* are required (enrollment are dependent on the project/mentor. Electives are optional. A course description of each physical therapy course is available in the [UCA Graduate Bulletin](#).

UCA DPT Course Sequence

The following courses are required for the DPT degree:

YEAR ONE

Fall Semester (17 credit hours)

PTHY 5505 Gross Anatomy
PTHY 6404 Clinical Foundations in PT Practice
PTHY 6401 Kinesiology I
PTHY 6307 Professional Development I
PTHY 6105 Research I

Spring Semester (18 credit hours)

PTHY 6501 Neuroscience
PTHY 6402 Kinesiology II
PTHY 6406 Human Pathophysiology I
PTHY 6303 Patient Management & Documentation
PTHY 6205 Research I

Summer Semester (13-14 credit hours)

PTHY 6407 Human Pathophysiology II
PTHY 6250 Pharmacology in Physical Therapy
PTHY 7403 Physical Agents
PTHY 6314 Neurophysiological Princ. Motor Control
PTHY 7115* Research Practicum

YEAR TWO

Fall Semester (16-17 credit hours)

PTHY 6405 Therapeutic Exercise
PTHY 7515 Neurological Rehabilitation in Pediatrics
PTHY 7404 Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy I
PTHY 7105 Research III
PTHY 7115* Research Practicum
PTHY 7228 Clinical Education Practicum I (5 weeks)

Spring Semester (18-22 credit hours)

PTHY 7516 Adult Neurological Rehabilitation
PTHY 7411 Physical Rehabilitation
PTHY 7520 Cardiopulmonary Principles & Practice
PTHY 7405 Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy II
PTHY XXXX Elective (optional)
PTHY 7115* Research Practicum

Summer Semester (12-16 credit hours)

PTHY 7406 Musculoskeletal Physical Therapy III
PTHY 7210 Integumentary System: Princ & Practice
PTHY 7307 Professional Development II
PTHY 7336 Complex Patient Management in PT
PTHY XXXX Elective (optional)
PTHY 7115* Research Practicum

YEAR THREE

Fall Semester (credit hours 14-17)

PTHY 6424 Clinical Administration & Management
PTHY 7214 Medical Screening & Differential Diagnosis
PTHY 7389 Clinical Reasoning and Reflection
PTHY 7116 Analysis and Synthesis of PT Practice
PTHY 7428 Clinical Education Practicum II (8 weeks)
PTHY XXXX Elective (optional)

Spring Semester (9 credit hours)

PTHY 7429 Clinical Education Practicum III (8 weeks)
PTHY 7529 Clinical Education Practicum IV (9 weeks)

Summer Semester (5 credit hours)

PTHY 7530 Clinical Education Practicum V (9 weeks)

