

Pathways to a Career as a Licensed Physical Therapist (PT)

1. Direct Pathway

- Complete a 4-year bachelor's degree
- Apply to an accredited Physical Therapy program (3 years of graduate school)
- Graduate with a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)
- Pass the National Physical Therapy Examination (Board Exam)
- License Physical Therapist (PT)

2. Direct Admittance Program Pathway

Some colleges offer a direct admittance into their PT program. You would complete your bachelor's degree in 3 years and then start your DPT degrees in year 4.

Benefits: Guarantee admission into their PT program and length of program is 6 years

- Graduate with a Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)
- Pass the National Physical Therapy Examination (Board Exam)
- License Physical Therapist (PT)

3. PTA to DPT Pathway

- Complete a 2-year Physical Therapist Assistant program and graduate with an associate's in applied science (AAS)
- Pass the National Physical Therapy Examination (Board Exam)
- Licensed Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)

If you have a bachelor's degree, you can apply to a PTA-DPT Bridge Program

- Finley University and Concordia University offer bridge programs (approx. 2 years)
- Governors State University is currently developing a bridge program
- Benefit: Work as a PTA while in school and enter a program with foundational knowledge

If you don't have a bachelor's degree:

- Complete your bachelor's degrees
- Apply to a Bridge program (approx. 2 years or traditional PT program (3 years))

*GSU is currently developing a combined PTA to DPT degree (bachelor's + DPT) that may take 3-4 years.