

# Doctor of Physical Therapy Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What is the application process?**

**A:** To apply to the entry-level Doctor of Physical Therapy program, you will submit your application through [www.ptcas.org](http://www.ptcas.org).

PTCAS will open their application portal approximately July 1. Loma Linda University will begin accepting applications in July with a priority deadline of September 1 and final deadline of November 1.

It is recommended that you begin your application with PTCAS shortly after the portal opens. You will need to enter all courses that you have taken into your application so it will take some time.

It is also recommended that you request official transcripts be sent from each academic institution that you have attended directly to PTCAS. You do not need to have official transcripts sent to Loma Linda University at the same time. You can be accepted based on your verified application from PTCAS, but if accepted and you choose to attend Loma Linda University, official transcripts would need to be sent at that time. Because of this, many applicants will have official transcripts sent to PTCAS and Loma Linda University at the same time.

It is recommended that you continue to log into your PTCAS application on a weekly basis until it shows that all transcripts have been received. It will also indicate that your application has been verified and mailed to the institutions that you have applied to.

Once your application is received by Loma Linda University, you will receive an email from the University Admission office inviting you to fill out the secondary application. You will have approximately two weeks to fill out the secondary application. Please adjust your email filter to accept emails from @llu.edu.

The Department will review the applications in October and select which applicants will be granted an interview. The applicants will receive an email regarding the scheduling of the interviews which will take place between October and January. The Admissions Committee will accept half of the class the third week of November and the rest of the class the third week of January.

The program begins in June of each year.

**Q: What is the minimum GPA for acceptance?**

**A:** When calculating your GPA, the Department will count the prerequisites plus the freshman English composition, two humanities courses, and one social science course.

The minimum GPA in science, non-science and overall is 3.4. The average overall GPA for the past several years has been 3.7. Given the number of applicants, you will need approximately a 3.6 in all three areas to be competitive.

**Q: Can I apply to the Physical Therapist Assistant and the Doctor of Physical Therapy programs at the same time?**

**A:** You can only apply for one program at a time. However, you can switch from one to the other after applying if you change your mind. You must notify the admission office in writing of your request to have your application transferred to another program.

It is best to decide what program you want to apply to before starting your application. For the Doctor of Physical Therapy program you will apply through [www.ptcas.org](http://www.ptcas.org). For the Physical Therapist Assistant program you will apply through the Loma Linda University web site.

**Q: Will the prerequisites be changing in the near future?**

**A:** No.

**Q: Should I complete all prerequisites and observation hours prior to submitting my application?**

**A:** All prerequisites and observation hours must be completed prior to the program starting in June. You must submit with your application a plan indicating how and when you will complete the prerequisites and observation hours.

Applicants can not have more than 3 science prerequisites lacking at the time of application and the Anatomy and Physiology sequence can not be one of the lacking prerequisites. Also, a minimum of 40 observation hours must be completed prior to the applicant's interview date (if an interview is granted).

**Q: Do letters of recommendations need to be submitted with my application?**

**A:** Letters of recommendation may be submitted with your application or they may be sent directly from the recommender to the University. A minimum of three recommendations must be received prior to acceptance into a program.

**Q: Who should I get letters of recommendations from?**

**A:** We recommend that you read the recommendation form and give it to three people that, between them, can fully answer all of the questions. Typically this may be an instructor, a

supervisor in a clinical setting and or a pastor from your church. We need a minimum of three letters and will accept up to five letters.

**Q: When should I apply for financial aid?**

**A:** We recommend that you complete your FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid ([www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)) – as soon as you can after October 1st. If you have specific questions regarding financial aid please contact the Financial Aid department at (800) 422-4558 (option 4 then 2) or through the web at [www.llu.edu/ssweb/](http://www.llu.edu/ssweb/).

**Q: What is an official transcript?**

**A:** For a transcript to be considered "official" by Loma Linda University it must be sent directly from the educational institution to Loma Linda University. If you personally send it or hand deliver it, even if it is sealed and signed, Loma Linda University will not consider it "official."

The address to have transcripts sent is:

Admission Processing  
Loma Linda University  
Loma Linda, CA 92350

**Q: What are observation/work hours?**

**A:** For the entry-level DPT program you must have a minimum of 80 hours of volunteer or work experience in a physical therapy department. Of the 80 hours, a minimum of 20 hours must be in an inpatient setting and a minimum of 20 hours must be in the outpatient setting. The inpatient setting would include a hospital, skilled nursing facility or rehabilitation center. You may turn in the documentation for these hours with your application or they may be sent directly from the facility to the admissions office.

You may submit your observation hours directly through PTCAS, on LLU's Observation Form or on the facility's letterhead.

You need to arrange for these hours directly through the facility at which you wish to observe. For hospitals you typically call the volunteer services department. For private practice clinics call the clinic directly to see if they can accommodate you.

The LLU Observation form can be found at:

<http://www.llu.edu/assets/alliedhealth/documents/pt/ptobservationform.pdf>

**Q: Do I need to take the TOEFL?**

**A:** If English is not your native language, you will need to take the TOEFL. See more information for international students.

[International Student Information](#)

**Q: Do I need to take the GRE?**

**A:** Yes, the GRE is required.

LLU entry-level DPT program GRE requirements:

GRE scores must be submitted to PTCAS by October 1<sup>st</sup>

GRE scores are valid within five years of application date

Only most recent GRE score is considered

Recommended minimum GRE writing score is 3.0

Recommended minimum GRE combined verbal and quantitative score is 300

**Q: Does your program require a secondary application and where do I find it?**

**A:** We do require a secondary application, however, you do not need to fill it out until after we receive your application from PTCAS. Once Loma Linda University receives your application from PTCAS, the Admission office will send you an email inviting you to fill out the secondary application. Within the email it will give you the web site and your password.

**Q: Do I need a Bachelor degree prior to entering the program?**

**A:** Yes. We require a Bachelor degree, in any field, from a regionally accredited college/university.

**Q: What is an acceptance into your program based on?**

**A:** Criteria used includes: GPA, completion of prerequisites, interview, response to essays, recommendations, and interaction with faculty and staff.

**Q: If I have been accepted, can I defer to the following year?**

**A:** Yes, if you will be taking the year to go as a student missionary. If you are requesting a deferment for any other reason, the faculty will make a decision case by case. Please call the program director to discuss your case if you wish to defer.

**Q: What is your class size?**

**A:** Our typical class size is between 65 and 70. In the laboratory setting, we maintain a maximum faculty to student ratio of 1:16. For example, if a lab size consists of 20 students, we will have two faculty members assisting in the teaching and supervision of activities.

**Q: Do you give preference to Seventh-day Adventists?**

**A:** Loma Linda University accepts students from all faiths. As an institution owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, first consideration is given to qualified applicants who are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, each year

we accept qualified applicants who are not members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. On the campus of Loma Linda University over 60 religions are represented by the student body.

**Q: What is the tuition cost for the PT Program?**

**A:** Tuition and fees for the full three year program are approximately \$109,000.

Financial aid is available. Students are encouraged to pursue scholarships.

Tuition rates are subject to increase annually.

**Q: What is the length of the program and what is a typical daily schedule?**

**A:** The program is three years in length. It begins in June and completes three years later in June. The first two years are mostly didactic coursework. The third year, except for nine weeks when the student is on campus, is in the clinic.

Schedules change from quarter to quarter, but as a general rule, the student will be in class or lab Monday –Thursday from 8:00am – to 4:30pm and on Friday from 8:00am – 12:00 noon.

**Q: What is the employment rate for graduates?**

**A:** 100% of graduates for the past five years have been employed within six months of passing the licensure examination.

**Q: How are clinical affiliations assigned?**

**A:** The Department of Physical Therapy has approximately 1000 clinical facilities that accept students for clinical rotations. These sites range from Hawaii to the East coast.

Through a selection process, the students pick which clinical facility they would like to go to. In addition, if the student knows of a clinical facility at which they would like to complete one of their clinical rotations at, but Loma Linda University does not currently have a contract, the student can request that the academic coordinator of clinical education assess to see if a contract with that facility would be appropriate and meet the needs of the student and the Department.

The Department works with the student in regards to placement, it is the official policy of the Department that “All clinical assignments will be made by the academic coordinator of clinical education or a designate. Because of the limited number of local facilities available, assignments cannot be made on the basis of the student's family/marital status or personal preference. Although the department makes an effort to accommodate the student's preference, the student agrees to accept the clinical assignments made by the department at any of the affiliated facilities, whether local or out of state.” Clinical

facilities may also require a background check and or fingerprinting and may have certain stipulations (ie, immunizations, CPR certification) that need to be met before the student is assigned. Costs for these requirements are the student's financial responsibility.

Due to the variety of sites that you may choose, or be placed, for your clinical rotations, it is necessary that you have reliable transportation available to you.

**Q: Can the program be taken part-time?**

**A:** No. The curriculum is sequenced in a way that you need to take one course prior to the next course. Therefore, students are registered each quarter for a Block of courses that all need to be taken that quarter.

**Q: Can the program be taken on-line?**

**A:** No. All of our courses are taught on campus.

**Q: Can I work while I am in the program?**

**A:** It is recommended that students not work while they are in the program. Students will, for the most part, be in lecture or lab Monday – Thursday 8:00-4:30 and Friday 8:00-12:00. A significant amount of time is required for studying outside of the classroom. Though it is not recommended, some students do work, but the hours are kept to a minimum.

**Q: Can I take coursework prior to starting the program that would lighten my load while in the program?**

**A:** No. Students are required to take all scheduled courses in the program regardless of their past academic history.

**Q: How accessible are the faculty?**

**A:** According to surveys taken of the students in the program, this is one of the strengths of our Department. Faculty have an open door policy in which students may walk in at any time to receive help. The faculty will also make appointments with the students to go over examinations, quizzes or areas of weakness. Faculty are very accessible in the lecture portion of the course and even more so in the laboratory portion of the course.

**Q: Does Loma Linda University find a job for me when I have finished the DPT program?**

**A:** Not exactly, but we do offer help! The LLU School of Allied Health Professions has two outstanding resources for its students and alumni: 1) the online Job Resource Center <http://www.llu.edu/allied-health/sahp/jrc.page>? Provides a wealth of contact opportunities

specific to physical therapy; 2) the annual Job Fair where you can meet Human Resource Department representatives from local and national clinical facilities that come on campus to recruit our students and graduates. In addition, the DPT program maintains a Job Openings bulletin board for posting announcements and flyers for new positions that we receive. Emails are received by the Department almost daily announcing openings for physical therapists. These are forwarded on to the students.

In the most recent survey of our graduates, 80% were offered a job prior to graduation from one or more of the clinical sites where they completed their clinical rotations.

**Q: What is the starting salary for a new physical therapist?**

A: Starting salary will vary from region to region in the United States and will vary between settings (e.g. Hospital, Skilled nursing facility, Out-patient, etc.). New graduates in southern California will earn approximately \$70,000 - \$75,000 per year.

**Q: Since you are a religious institution, are there any unique policies or lifestyle requirements for students?**

A: Loma Linda University believes strongly in their motto “To Make Man Whole.” The Department of Physical Therapy encourages students to incorporate the four components into their life on a daily basis.

1. Academics – strong academic coursework to develop the graduate into a competent, professional physical therapist.
2. Physical – Loma Linda University has an activity center that includes two pools, an indoor track, basketball courts, racquet ball courts, aerobic room, weight room, and an exercise equipment room.
3. Social – There are many opportunities to get to know students from other programs on a social basis through the programs sponsored by the Student Association. The Department also encourages students to keep strong the relationships that were established prior to entering the program so that they are just as strong at graduation.
4. Spiritual – It is the desire of the Department that the student’s relationship with God be stronger at the time of graduation than when they started the program. The Student Association plans many activities of a spiritual nature that is available to students. In addition, the curriculum includes religion courses and chapel is a requirement of all students. Many of the faculty will start class with prayer.

**Q: If I have been convicted of a felony, can I still apply and get accepted?**

A: Yes. However, the student will be required to submit a background check at the time of registration. If a student has a felony conviction, it may create difficulties in securing a clinical placement as many clinical sites screen for convictions and may not allow the student to complete a rotation at their facility. Depending on the conviction, and length

of time since the conviction, the graduate may have difficulty being approved to sit for the licensing examination. To be considered for admission, a minimum of 18 months since a conviction must have passed prior to application.

**Q; If I have a DUI on my record, can I still apply and get accepted?**

**A:** Yes, however the incident must have happened four years prior to starting the DPT program. For example, if the incident occurred on January 1, 2019, you will not be eligible to begin the DPT program until June 2023.

**Q: Can I talk to someone to get advice?**

**A:** Yes, we are happy to advise you. You may contact Heather Hebron, Program Manager by email at [hhebron@llu.edu](mailto:hhebron@llu.edu) or contact Dr. Larry Chinnock, Department Chair, by email at [lchinnock@llu.edu](mailto:lchinnock@llu.edu).