

PHYSICAL THERAPY AND ENGINEERING DPT/PHD

Degree Requirements

The following requirements are in addition to, or further elaborate upon, those requirements outlined in The Graduate School Policy Guide (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/academic-policies-procedures/>).

DPT/PhD(Eng)

Total units required for the PhD component of the combined degree is in accordance with the specific PhD program:

- **Biomedical Engineering** (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/biomedical-engineering/biomedical-engineering-phd/>)
- **Mechanical Engineering** (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/mechanical-engineering/mechanical-engineering-phd/>)

DPT/PhD(Eng) Joint Program Sequence

The curriculum is designed to allow a student to successfully complete the DPT, sit for the PT license exam, gain valuable clinical experience, and complete the PhD degree within a seven year timeframe.

- **First Year:** Core Engineering Coursework (see relevant degree program for specifics); pre-requisite course for DPT; selection of primary research lab
- **Second Year:** Development of dissertation proposal; preparation for qualifying examination and/or proposal defense; advancement to PhD candidacy at the end of the second year (see requirements for specific PhD program)
- **Third Year:** 1st Year DPT Training; execution of preliminary study (typically one of the dissertation aims); 1st clinical experience
- **Fourth Year:** 2nd Year DPT Training; defense of preliminary study; 2nd clinical experience
- **Fifth Year:** Completion of DPT Training; final long-term clinical experiences; PT Licensure; clinical practice placement; continuation of PhD work
- **Sixth-Seventh Years:** Part-time clinical practice; progress towards completion of PhD

Part-time Clinical Practice Requirement

It is critical that students develop expertise within the clinical environment in addition to their academic development so that they have a well-rounded appreciation to clinical problems that require engineering solutions. Upon completion of the DPT program, students will be required to sit for the PT license exam within the state of Illinois. They are required to pass the exam within three attempts. Students will be placed within a supervised clinical practice environment 8-12 hours per week. Students will be paid a supplemental salary by the clinical institution. Potential clinical practice sites are established between Northwestern Medicine, Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, and private practice clinics throughout Chicago and the suburbs.

Other DPT/PhD Degree Requirements

- **Examinations:** Graduate qualifying examinations for admission to candidacy
- **Research/Projects:** Thesis research

- **PhD Dissertation:** Original, independent research presented in a defensible thesis of high quality
- **Final Evaluations:** Defense of dissertation