

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
College of Health and Human Sciences
Department of Physical Therapy

Evaluation Process of Applicants

In reviewing applications the Admissions Committee (Committee) attempts to evaluate, among other things, an applicant's likelihood of success in the program and profession. While the Committee reserves the right to consider any information it deems relevant, it begins its evaluation with the following elements:

Interview:

The Committee will interview each of the top selected applicants late in the fall semester (dates TBA). If invited, dress in professional business attire. Applicants will be required to speak with a single faculty member, a student, a physical therapist, or a panel of interviewers; as well as participate in an orientation program. Applicants should be prepared to discuss why they have chosen to pursue a career in physical therapy and how they perceive the role of physical therapists in health care. Those who have researched and gained direct exposure to the profession will be better prepared to respond to the interview questions. During the interview, applicants may be rated on their oral communication skills, professional behaviors and attitudes, ability to interact in a group, knowledge of the profession, ability to solve problems, and motivation to pursue a career in physical therapy.

Geographic location:

A (small) preference is granted to North Carolina (NC) residents and Western Carolina University (WCU) students/graduates:

- Residence in NC
- County of residence in 16 western most county area (same counties designated for Mountain Area Health Education Center and Western North Carolina Health Network)
 - Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, and Yancey
- WCU student or WCU graduate

Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test Scores:

Scores from either the old or new version of the GRE will be accepted. Consistent with recommendations from the Educational Testing Service, percentile scores will be used to equate the two versions of the GRE.

Grade Point Average (GPA) of cumulative undergraduate/graduate course work:

Assessed on a graduated scale from a GPA of 2.84 or less to a GPA of 3.90.

GPA for prerequisite courses required for admission to WCU PT program:

Assessed on a graduated scale from a GPA of 2.84 or less to a GPA of 3.90.

References:

Three references are required as part of the application and must include one from a physical therapist and one from a faculty member who can address the applicant's potential for success in graduate studies.

Observation Experience:

Total number of hours of observation in a physical therapy setting (i.e. with a physical therapist) are assessed on a graduated scale from a range of 0-16 hours of observation to 129 + hours of observation. Additionally, variety and number of settings are considered.

Other Life Experiences:

Life experiences that provide skills or learning opportunities that enhance a student's ability to successfully complete the WCU physical therapy program are assessed. Examples in this category might include employment as a physical therapist assistant or physical therapist aide/technician, military experience, a previous career, being caretaker for an elderly/disabled individual, involvement in extracurricular activities or varsity sports (at college/university level).

Essay:

Applicants must submit an essay as instructed in the Physical Therapy Central Application Service (PT CAS). Since the GRE includes a scored writing sample, the essay is not scored but provides important information about the candidate.

Additional information:

The very first contact an applicant makes with the department begins an application history and professional behavior is an important aspect of all communication that will be considered in the decision-making process. Behavior considered inappropriate by a faculty member and/or an administrative assistant can negatively impact an admission decision.

If the Committee has questions about the applicant's suitability for the program, including questions related to previous professional behavior or academic performance, the Committee may request any other information it deems relevant.