

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

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Mission

The Department of Physical Therapy is committed to creating a student-centric environment that fosters academic excellence and encourages discovery. We aim to transform lives through innovative education, hands-on learning, and collaborative practice. By prioritizing professional development and community engagement, we empower our students to become compassionate, skilled professionals who make a meaningful impact in the field of physical therapy and the communities they serve.

Vision Statement

The Department of Physical Therapy strives to be a leader in innovative education and research, empowering future physical therapists to deliver compassionate, evidence-based care and dedicated service that transforms lives and enriches communities.

Highlights

- Innovative, student-centered curriculum design
- Hands-on learning experiences through community partnerships
- Interprofessional education opportunities
- Evidence-based practice integration
- Community engagement and service learning
- Research and scholarly activity opportunities
- Comprehensive clinical training partnerships
- State-of-the-art facilities and technology integration

Career Opportunities

Graduates of the Doctor of Physical Therapy program are prepared for diverse career paths across multiple settings and specialty areas:

Clinical Practice Settings

- **Acute Care Hospitals:** Inpatient rehabilitation, ICU, emergency departments
- **Outpatient Clinics:** Private practice, hospital-based outpatient, specialty clinics
- **Skilled Nursing Facilities:** Long-term care, transitional care units
- **Home Health Services:** In-home patient care, telehealth physical therapy
- **School-Based Practice:** Special education services, pediatric school settings
- **Industrial/Occupational Health:** Workplace injury prevention, ergonomics, return-to-work programs
- **Sports Medicine Facilities:** Professional sports teams, collegiate athletics, sports performance centers
- **Wellness and Fitness Centers:** Corporate wellness, community fitness programs
- **Research Institutions:** Clinical research, academic medical centers
- **Government and Military:** Veterans Affairs hospitals, military treatment facilities
- **International Healthcare:** Global health initiatives, medical missions

ABPTS Board-Certified Specialty Areas

The American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (ABPTS) recognizes 10 specialized areas where physical therapists can achieve board certification:

1. **Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Physical Therapy (CCS)**
 - Cardiac rehabilitation, pulmonary rehabilitation, intensive care
2. **Clinical Electrophysiology (ECS)**
 - Electrodiagnosis, nerve conduction studies, EMG testing
3. **Geriatric Physical Therapy (GCS)**
 - Aging-related conditions, fall prevention, long-term care
4. **Neurologic Physical Therapy (NCS)**
 - Stroke rehabilitation, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, movement disorders
5. **Orthopedic Physical Therapy (OCS)**
 - Musculoskeletal injuries, post-surgical rehabilitation, manual therapy

6. **Pediatric Physical Therapy (PCS)**
 - Developmental delays, congenital conditions, early intervention
7. **Sports Physical Therapy (SCS)**
 - Athletic injury rehabilitation, sports performance enhancement, return-to-sport protocols
8. **Women's Health Physical Therapy (WCS)**
 - Pelvic health, prenatal/postpartum care, women's health conditions
9. **Wound Management (WMS)** - The latest addition to ABPTS specialties
 - Acute, chronic, and non-healing wound care and treatment
10. **Oncology Physical Therapy (OCS)**
 - Cancer rehabilitation, lymphedema management, survivorship care

Advanced Career Pathways

- **Academic Faculty:** University teaching positions, clinical education coordination
- **Clinical Research:** Principal investigator, research coordinator, clinical trials
- **Healthcare Administration:** Rehabilitation directors, department management
- **Consulting:** Healthcare consulting, expert witness testimony
- **Policy and Advocacy:** Professional association leadership, healthcare policy development
- **Entrepreneurship:** Private practice ownership, innovative healthcare solutions
- **Technology Integration:** Telehealth development, digital health platforms
- **Global Health:** International development, humanitarian missions

Leadership and Professional Development

- Professional association leadership roles
- Clinical mentorship and preceptorship
- Continuing education and conference speaking
- Professional writing and publication
- Quality improvement and patient safety initiatives
- Interprofessional collaboration and team leadership

SHSU Graduate School Opportunities in Related Disciplines

College of Health Sciences

- Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT) (<https://www.shsu.edu/programs/graduate/athletic-training/>)
- Master of Public Health (MPH) (<https://www.shsu.edu/academics/majors-programs/public-health-mp/>)

College of Osteopathic Medicine (<https://www.shsu.edu/academics/osteopathic-medicine/>)

- Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) (<https://www.shsu.edu/academics/majors-programs/osteopathic-medicine-doctor/>)

College of Education (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/graduate-and-professional/college-departments/education/>)

- Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership (<https://www.shsu.edu/programs/doctorate/higher-education-leadership/>)

College of Criminal Justice (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/graduate-and-professional/college-departments/criminal-justice/>)

- Ph.D. in Criminal Justice (<https://www.shsu.edu/programs/doctorate/criminal-justice/>)
- Master of Science in Criminal Justice (<https://www.shsu.edu/programs/graduate/criminal-justice/>)
- Ph.D. in Forensic Science (<https://www.shsu.edu/programs/doctorate/forensic-science/>)
- Master of Science in Victim Services Management (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/graduate-and-professional/college-departments/criminal-justice/criminal-justice-criminology/victims-services-management-ms/>)

College of Business Administration (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/graduate-and-professional/college-departments/business-administration/>)

- Master of Business Administration (MBA) (<https://www.shsu.edu/programs/graduate/business-administration/>)

Additional graduate program opportunities outside of Sam Houston State University relevant to physical therapy include the Master's or Doctorate in Occupational Therapy, Master's in Orthotics and Prosthetics, Doctorate in Chiropractic Medicine, Doctorate in Medicine (MD), Doctorate in Pharmacy, and other health and biomedical science disciplines. These programs complement the DPT by addressing different aspects of patient care, rehabilitation, and healthcare delivery and are currently not offered at SHSU.

Accreditation Status

Graduation from a physical therapist education program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education, 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085; phone; 703-706-3245; accreditation@apta.org is necessary for eligibility to sit for the licensure examination, which is required in all states. Candidacy is considered to be an accredited status, as such the credits and degree earned from a program with Candidacy status are considered, by CAPTE, to be from an accredited program. Therefore, students in the charter (first) class should be eligible to take the licensure exam even if CAPTE withholds accreditation at the end of the candidacy period. That said, it is up to each state licensing agency, not CAPTE, to determine who is eligible for licensure. Information on licensing requirements should be directed to the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT; www.fsbpt.org (http://www.fsbpt.org/)) or specific state boards (a list of state boards and contact information is available on FSBPT's website).

Sam Houston State University is seeking accreditation of a new physical therapist education program from CAPTE. The program is planning to apply for Candidacy, which is the formal application required in the pre-accreditation stage, on November 1st, 2026. Submission of this document does not assure that the program will be granted Candidate for Accreditation status. Achievement of Candidate for Accreditation status is required prior to implementation of the [professional/technical] phase of the program; therefore, no students may be enrolled in [professional/technical] courses until Candidate for Accreditation status has been achieved. Further, though achievement of Candidate for Accreditation status signifies satisfactory progress toward accreditation, it does not assure that the program will be granted accreditation.

- Information forthcoming.

Scholarships

The SHSU Graduate School (<https://www.shsu.edu/academics/graduate-professional-school/>) provides opportunities for interested students pursuing their graduate degree to receive scholarships and funding for course work.

These opportunities are listed below:

- Financial Aid for Graduate Students
- The General Graduate School Scholarship Application
- Graduate A.S.P.I.R.E. (Academic Success Program in Research Empowerment) Program
- Graduate School R.O.A.D. to PhD program

College of Health Sciences

- Cady/Huskey-Health Scholarship: \$2,000
- COHS Bridge Scholarship: \$2,000
- Crowley/Gilbert Family Scholarship: \$1,000
- William (Al) and Elizabeth Rampmeier Endowed Scholarship: \$1,000

National Physical Therapy Scholarships

American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Scholarships:

- **APTA Student Scholarships:** \$5,000 for DPT students and \$3,000 for PTA students (APTA membership required)
- **APTA Academy Scholarships:** Various specialty academy scholarships available through specific practice areas

Foundation for Physical Therapy Research:

- **Doctoral Scholarships:** Up to \$45,000 in total awards, including \$7,500 for coursework phase and \$15,000 for candidacy phase of academic research doctoral studies

Professional Organization Scholarships:

- **APTA Pelvic Health Scholarships:** Multiple awards available annually in partnership with specialty organizations

Private and Foundation Scholarships:

- **Rizing Tide Crest Scholarship:** Annual awards for undergraduate students entering PT school or PTAs entering bridge programs
- **Shape Plus Health & Fitness Scholarship:** \$1,500 for students pursuing health or fitness-related fields

Texas-Specific Opportunities

Texas Physical Therapy Association (TPTA) Scholarships:

- Annual scholarships for TPTA student members
- Specialty awards for students demonstrating leadership and community service
- Regional chapter scholarships available throughout Texas

Texas State Funding:

- Texas Educational Opportunity Grant (TEOG)
- Texas Public Educational Grant (TPEG)
- Various state-sponsored healthcare professional scholarships

For more information on available scholarships, visit SHSU Scholarships or contact the Department of Physical Therapy directly.