



## **POST PROFESSIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK**

### **School of Physical Therapy College of Health Sciences**

**Fall 2023 edition**

**Approved August 22, 2023**

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SCHOOL OF  
PHYSICAL THERAPY  
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

**WELCOME TO TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY**

We are pleased that you will be pursuing advanced graduate study with us. As one of six institutions in the nation and the only institution in Texas to offer a PhD in physical therapy, Texas Woman's University continues to pave the way for physical therapists interested in moving into academic and research roles. To this end, the faculty has developed a curriculum plan that is flexible enough to meet your goals and rigorous enough to meet or exceed Graduate School standards.

A graduate experience is more than individual courses. During your work here you may be invited to participate in various activities in the school, such as providing input to the entry-level curriculum, providing guest lectures, participating in the research projects of the faculty or entry-level students, or providing short, directed clinical experiences for entry-level students. We hope you will take advantage of these opportunities.

The faculty has developed this Handbook to provide a central source of information regarding issues from admissions to program completion. Your academic advisor also will be a source of guidance for you. In addition, you may contact the Associate Director on each campus to clear up any uncertainties you may have. (See contact information on page 6.)

I wish you success in your studies and hope that this Handbook assists you in negotiating the processes and paperwork associated with a graduate degree.

Sincerely,

Alyssa LaForme Fiss, PT, PhD  
Director, School of Physical Therapy

### III. PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this Student Handbook is to provide information pertinent to post- professional graduate students in the School of Physical Therapy. The Post Professional Committee reviews these policies and procedures annually. Refer to the most current *Post Professional Handbook (Handbook)* for guidance as School policies and procedures change over time.

The *Handbook* is in accordance with University guidelines presented in the *Graduate Catalog*, which supersedes all other documents. The University updates the catalog every two years. Over time, requirements and courses change. It is, therefore, recommended that each student retain a copy of the *Graduate Catalog* in effect at the time of acceptance into a program of study. Refer to it for more detailed explanations of specific rules and regulations. The current *Graduate Catalog* is available at <http://catalog.twu.edu/graduate/>.

The student is responsible for reading, understanding, and adhering to all School of Physical Therapy and University policies and procedures. The policies and procedures may be changed during the course of a student's study at Texas Woman's University; therefore, check with academic advisors frequently concerning progress and any changes.

## II. POST PROFESSIONAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Admission requirements for the graduate school are explained in the [TWU Graduate Catalog](#) and on the [Graduate Admissions web page](#).

### A. Application Process

All applicants seeking admission to TWU must submit the following to the School of Physical Therapy through the *Coordinator of Allied Health Applications* on the Denton Campus:

Mary Beth Daugherty  
Coordinator of Allied Health Applications  
Texas Woman's University School of Physical Therapy  
Phone: 940-898-2460  
Email: [MDaugherty@twu.edu](mailto:MDaugherty@twu.edu)

- An application form is completed [online](#). Note instructions for the semester applying and use the appropriate option.
- When asked to select a major, select **physical therapy - post professional** for the certificate or residency programs, and **physical therapy - PhD** for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. For information on admission type, see below.
- If seeking a degree or academic certificate, official transcript(s) from all post- secondary schools attended must be submitted, regardless of whether the credit will be transferred.
- If applying for non-degree-seeking/non-certificate admission, a transcript demonstrating a bachelor's degree or higher is required.

When complete, admission materials will be sent to the Graduate School in Denton, Texas to be processed.

### B. Types of Admission

A student may be admitted to the Graduate School for one of several types of study as indicated below. The acceptance letter sent by the Dean of the Graduate School will specify the type of admission granted. Later the student may change the admission type. A change requires a new, completed application indicating the new type of admission. No additional transcripts are required unless the student attended another college or university between the first and second applications.

#### **Degree Program Admission:**

This status identifies students who are physical therapists seeking the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. The PhD degree is offered on Dallas and Houston campuses to encourage individuals with a professional degree in physical therapy (PT) to prepare for future higher education or research careers.

#### **Non-degree Program Admission:**

This admission type is appropriate for several student-specific situations.

- Students accepted into one of TWU's cooperative residency programs.
- Students seeking a post baccalaureate certificate in a specialized field of study.
- Students seeking additional formal education for career enrichment purposes.
- Students wishing to take a course but unsure about seeking a degree or certificate until academic advising can be arranged later.
- Individuals holding an allied health license (e.g., occupational therapy) may enroll in selected courses for a certificate if qualified or for their own professional development with instructor's permission.

Later, students may seek to change their admission status from non-degree seeking to degree study.

## II. POST PROFESSIONAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

A maximum of 12 graduate semester credit hours earned by a “non-degree seeking student” may subsequently apply toward a graduate degree only if the Dean of the Graduate School, upon recommendation of the student’s academic advisory committee, determines which credits earned as non-degree seeking are appropriate to the degree program.

Non-degree admission does not guarantee future admission in the PhD program.

**Regardless of admission type, students may apply TWU School of Physical Therapy post professional courses to meet the continuing competence (CC) requirements for licensure renewal as a physical therapist in [Texas](#).**

- For courses that a post professional student takes and successfully completes during their 2-year license renewal period, that student can claim 10 CC units for each 1 semester-credit hour. For example, if a post professional student successfully completes 1 course for 3 semester-credit hours, that student has also earned 30 CC units.
- When completing the Texas Continuing Competence Activity Summary for online renewal, enter the course(s) as a post professional PT course with the standard approval number of 90001TX. Use the date that the course was completed (May, August, December) for the completion date. This completion date must fall within the student's renewal period.
- If audited by the Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners, the post professional student would need to submit a syllabus and an official transcript showing successful completion of course(s) completed and claimed for CCU credit.
- Students licensed as a physical therapist in other jurisdictions must consult that jurisdiction’s practice act and rules to determine the ability to apply for CC units in that jurisdiction.

### C. General Admission Requirements

The Graduate School establishes the minimum requirements for admission to all graduate degree and certificate programs at Texas Woman’s University (TWU). Regardless of the type of admission, all applicants must meet the following general requirements of the Graduate School:

- Hold at least an earned bachelor’s degree or equivalent from a U.S. college or university accredited by a regional or general accrediting agency, or an equivalent degree from a foreign college or university. The bachelor’s degree must be substantially equivalent to a bachelor’s degree granted by TWU.
- Have a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) for the last 60 hours of undergraduate study and a minimum 3.0 GPA for all prior graduate work. Submit an official transcript from every university or college attended. If a degree was earned, it must be indicated on the transcript.
- International and permanent resident applicants **must** show English proficiency or meet one of the exemptions noted on the [TOEFL exemption form](#). While the Graduate School accepts several forms of English proficiency, the School of Physical Therapy only accepts [Test of English as a Foreign Language \(TOEFL\)](#) score of 89 (iBT) or higher.
  - All coursework from a foreign university must be evaluated on a course-by-course basis by an evaluation service provider who is a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services ([NACES](#)) or Association of International Credential Evaluators ([AICE](#)).
  - See the [TWU Graduate Catalog section on admission of international students](#) for additional details and deadlines.

### D. Additional Admission Requirements for the School of Physical Therapy

In addition to the general Graduate School requirements, students must meet School of Physical Therapy requirements. These requirements differ depending on admission type. Note that standardized entrance examinations such as the GRE are not required. However, the applicant has the

## II. POST PROFESSIONAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

option of submitting scores voluntarily for consideration as part of a holistic admissions process.

Regardless of the type of admission, application to any of the programs in the School of Physical Therapy can be initiated at any time. However, the Post-Professional Program Coordinator and the Post Professional Committee on each campus will not review and make recommendations regarding a student's application until all materials required by the Graduate School and the School of Physical Therapy have been received. The School of Physical Therapy reserves the right to hold completed applications for review until a sufficient applicant pool exists.

Admissions requirements for the School of Physical Therapy by admission type are as follows:

- ***Doctor of Philosophy Degree***

The PhD program is *not* a cohort-based program; therefore, applications can be completed at any time. Recommended application deadlines to start the PhD program beginning in any of the following semesters:

- January 15 to start the following Summer, Fall, Spring
- August 1 to start the following Spring, Summer, Fall

Students applying to the PhD program must meet all the following requirements:

- Proof of graduation from an approved Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) accredited program or equivalent entry-level physical therapy program.
- A license to practice physical therapy in the United States or a minimum of 24 months of full-time clinical practice (beyond that required for entry-level education) within the last 3 years (preferred).
- A master's degree or clinical doctorate (DPT) is required from accredited programs; however, the masters can be in a related area (not necessarily physical therapy). Degrees must be completed before beginning the Ph.D.
- A basic college course in statistics within the last 10 years (within 5 years recommended).
- A minimum earned GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for previous professional (and post professional, if applicable) degree(s).
- International students or students with bachelor's degree is from a country where the official language is other than English must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Test of Spoken English tests and achieve scores of at least 24-writing, 26-speaking, 21-reading comprehension, and 18- listening comprehension—Total 89. For a list of exempt countries and the TOEFL exemption form, visit the [TWU Office of Admissions website](#).

- ***Certificate Program: Advanced Studies in Women's Health Physical Therapy***

The women's health certificate program is a cohort-based program beginning each Summer in the last 5-week session (July-August). Therefore, the following applications deadlines apply:

- Foreign-educated physical therapists – April 15
- U.S.-educated physical therapists – May 1
- TWU Alumni – June 1

With special permission of the certificate faculty and Dallas Post Professional Coordinator, individual students may apply no later than July 1 to join a cohort in the Fall.

## II. POST PROFESSIONAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

The student applying to the women's health certificate program must meet all requirements:

- Proof of graduation from an approved (CAPTE accredited or equivalent) entry-level physical therapy program.
- A license to practice physical therapy in the United States.
- Have a minimum 3.0 grade point average (GPA) for the last 60 hours of undergraduate study and a minimum 3.0 GPA for all prior graduate work.
- Applicants with an International degree may be required to submit a minimum acceptable score for the TOEFL tests. The School of Physical Therapy requires TOEFL scores of at least 24-writing, 26-speaking, 21-reading comprehension, and 18-listening comprehension. *Note:* A certificate program is not a full-time program; therefore, applicants with an F-1 visa are ineligible to apply.

### E. Contact Information:

**For PhD** information and interview scheduling, contact the Post Professional Program Coordinator at the Dallas or Houston campus:

#### DALLAS

*Fall 2023:*

Mary Thompson, PT, PhD  
School of Physical Therapy  
Texas Woman's University  
5500 Southwestern Medical Ave.  
Dallas, TX 75235-7299  
(214) 689-7713  
Email: [MThompson@twu.edu](mailto:MThompson@twu.edu)

*Beginning Spring 2024:*

Sharon Wang-Price, PT, PhD  
(214) 689-7715  
Email: [SWang@twu.edu](mailto:SWang@twu.edu)

#### HOUSTON

Wayne Brewer, PT, PhD  
School of Physical Therapy  
Texas Woman's University  
6700 Fannin Street  
Houston, Texas 77030  
Phone: (713) 794-2074  
Email: [WBrewer@twu.edu](mailto:WBrewer@twu.edu)

**For Women's Health Certificate and/or Residency (Dallas)** information:

#### Certificate Only

Mary Thompson, PT, PhD  
Email: [MThompson@twu.edu](mailto:MThompson@twu.edu)

*Beginning Spring 2024:*

Sharon Wang-Price, PT, PhD  
Email: [SWang@twu.edu](mailto:SWang@twu.edu)

#### Residency and Certificate

Lorien Hathaway, PT, DPT  
Email: [LHathaway1@twu.edu](mailto:LHathaway1@twu.edu)

### F. Outcomes of Admission Decisions

The Post-Professional Program Coordinator and faculty members on the School of Physical Therapy Post Professional Committee on the specified campus (Dallas or Houston) will examine each complete application to determine if the applicant meets/exceeds the minimum requirements of the Graduate School and the School of Physical Therapy. The committee then makes an admission recommendation based on student qualifications, enrollment capacity, and student/program congruence.

The Dean of the Graduate School then reviews the admission recommendation and if the committee recommendations are accepted, sends an official letter to the applicant.



## II. POST PROFESSIONAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

There are two possible outcomes of admission decisions. Each is explained below:

- **Denial of Admission:**

Admission is denied if (a) the applicant fails to meet the minimum requirements established by the Graduate School and the School of Physical Therapy, (b) the program has reached the limits of its enrollment, or (c) the program cannot meet the educational goals of the student.

- **Admission:**

There are two types of admission.

- *Unconditional:* No additional requirements must be met prior to or during graduate study.
- *Conditional:* Graduate degree study is permitted, however there are certain conditions that must be met for continuation in the program.
  - Conditions may require the completion of prerequisites or degree in progress, satisfactory performance in initial coursework, or the completion of other conditions that indicate the student should continue graduate study. The most common condition in the School of Physical Therapy is that students must earn a grade of B or better during the first 12 credit hours of PhD program coursework.
  - Failure to meet admission conditions results in the student's removal from the degree program.

Once the conditions for full admission have been met, the student and academic advisor petition the Graduate School for [Change of Status-Provisional to Unconditional](#) via a form.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

Consistent with our mission, the Doctor of Philosophy program in Physical Therapy is designed to foster intellectual curiosity, prepare effective researchers and academicians, promote dissemination of knowledge to enhance the practice of physical therapy and provide effective patient care. In addition, the curriculum for the PhD degree encourages the student to analyze available scientific literature and methodology for solving clinical problems in order to conduct productive research.

Objectives of the PhD program are: (a) to increase professional knowledge and skills relevant to physical therapy practice; (b) to expand the breadth and depth of the student's knowledge through further study in related and interdisciplinary fields; and (c) to provide the student with the tools needed to analyze, synthesize, and critically examine theory and research in the context of a substantial research area.

The PhD program is designed for working therapists and offered at both the Houston and Dallas campuses in a collaborative manner. Courses are offered in a variety of formats: on-site Friday and/or weekend, internet, or combination format. With their academic advisor's permission students may take courses in other departments at TWU and at other universities in accordance with Graduate School policies concerning transfer of credit.

#### A. Communication

Clear communication between students and faculty is key to a successful PhD program. Successful students:

- contact their academic advisor and/or the Post-Professional Program Coordinator on the student's assigned campus via email or phone with program-specific questions using their TWU email.
- contact course instructor(s) with course-related questions using their TWU email.
- access and use the School of Physical Therapy Collaborative Space on Canvas, TWU's learning platform. This space has valuable PhD program resources including links to required forms, course syllabi, and announcements.
- follow the School of Physical Therapy as well as other TWU sites on social media. Our Facebook page is TWU School of Physical Therapy. Dissertation announcements and student awards are publicized on this platform.

#### B. Academic advisor

- **Initial Assignment:**

When the student is accepted into the School of Physical Therapy PhD Program, the campus Post-Professional Program Coordinator will assign an academic advisor based on the student's area of interest, faculty availability, and campus resources. It is the student's responsibility to schedule an appointment with the academic advisor to discuss areas of interest and begin the degree planning process.

- **Changes:**

The faculty member advising the student may change based on faculty or student needs. If a change of academic advisor is needed, a change of academic advisor [form](#) must be completed and sent to the registrar.

#### C. Degree Time Limitations

All PhD degrees earned at TWU are to be completed in 8 consecutive calendar years from the date PhD doctoral credit is first earned following acceptance into the PhD program. The Graduate School typically states this date in each student's acceptance letter. Students are encouraged to scan and retain this letter for their records.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

Semester credit hours older than 8 years cannot apply toward any doctoral degree. If a student exceeds the time limitation, a student may be required to enroll in additional courses. Under extraordinary circumstances, semester credit hours older than eight years may be reinstated with permission of the Dean of the Graduate School, upon email request and recommendation of a student's dissertation committee, chair of the department, and dean of the college. The decision of the Graduate School is final and may require the student to take additional coursework.

#### D. Academic Performance

- ***During the first 12 credit-hours of the PhD***

*Students accepted conditionally* into the PhD program (e.g., in the first 12 hours, student must earn B or better...), must meet all conditions to continue enrollment. Therefore, earning a grade less than a B (i.e., C, D, F, or WF) during this timeframe will result in *dismissal* from the PhD program by the School of Physical Therapy Director through the student's official TWU email.

*Students accepted unconditionally* follow academic performance requirements laid out under the next bullet.

- ***Throughout the entire PhD program***

All doctoral students at TWU are expected to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least B (3.0 grade point average [GPA]). Students cannot use courses with grades lower than a B to fulfill degree requirements.

- When a student's cumulative grade point average on graduate-level work falls below a 3.0 GPA, the student is automatically on *academic probation* and notified of this status by the Graduate School through the student's official TWU email.
- Failing to raise the cumulative grade point average to 3.0 or above during the next enrollment results in dismissal from the Graduate School. Notification of academic status will be sent to the student's official TWU email. The grade record at Texas Woman's University cannot be improved by attendance at another university.
- Earning a grade of D, F, or WF in any PhD course will result in dismissal from the PhD program by the School of Physical Therapy Director through the student's official TWU email.
- Should a student receive two failing grades (F) within a single semester, the student will be dismissed by the Graduate School immediately without a probation semester. Notification of academic status will be sent to the student's official TWU email.
- PhD students who have been *dismissed/suspended* may reapply to the TWU Graduate School when eight years have elapsed after the suspension.

No course with a grade below B is accepted toward a doctoral degree at the Texas Woman's University and the School of Physical Therapy PhD program. Therefore, all *students regardless of admission type (i.e., unconditional or conditional), who satisfactorily complete the first 12 credit hours of core PhD coursework but earn a grade of C in any PhD course*, must develop and document a formal remediation plan with their academic advisor and campus Post Professional Program Coordinator in consultation with the course instructor before retaking the course.

Students have the right to appeal a course grade, dismissal from the School of Physical Therapy PhD program, and/or dismissal/suspension from the Graduate School. TWU's policy, process including form and deadlines is located on the [TWU Academic Affairs website](#).

#### E. Planning a Program of Study

The student along with their academic advisor will develop a degree plan using TWU Self-Service, the online system (<https://selfservice.twu.edu>). In the construction of the degree plan, the student and

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

academic advisor must consider course load, residency requirement, transfer credit, program requirements, and expected course offerings described below.

- **Course Load and Residency Requirement:**

The University considers a graduate student full-time if the student is enrolled in nine or more semester-credit hours. Enrollment in fewer hours is considered part-time enrollment. Most students enrolled in the School of Physical Therapy PhD program are employed full-time outside the University and are engaged in part-time study. Nevertheless, the residency requirement must be met.

A residency requirement has been established for the purpose of ensuring that the PhD program be reasonably compact, continuous, and coherent. The residency requirement provides the student with opportunities for practicum, individual study, and interaction with faculty and other graduate students.

All PhD students must complete 2 semesters of residency either consecutively or non-consecutively. While TWU determines a student's residence at admission (in-state vs. out-of-state) for tuition purposes, the School of Physical Therapy defines residency as carrying a minimum load of 4 hours in any semester including summer sessions. In all cases, the courses an individual student takes during the two residency semesters and their timing must be approved by the student's academic advisor and recorded on the student's Self-Service degree plan. Residency requirements do not imply a requirement to live in the State of Texas.

If courses during a residency semester include individual study or practicum course(s), the student must complete the appropriate form ([Independent Study/Practicum Agreement](#)). As with all individual study or practicum courses, the form must be completed the semester prior to the planned semester, and list the learning objectives, tasks/skills to be completed, and grading criteria. In accordance with University policy, faculty may not work with students outside the context of a course, independent study, or practicum.

- **Transfer Credit:**

For the PhD, there is no automatic transfer of graduate credit, but the student's academic advisor may recommend to the Dean of the Graduate School the acceptance of transferable semester credit hours via a form entitled, [Graduate Degree Program Transfer Course Equivalent - Online Degree Audits ONLY](#). This form must be signed by the academic advisor and School of Physical Therapy Director before filing with the Office of Admissions Processing.

TWU does not accept life or work experience for graduate credit. Only graduate coursework completed at regionally accredited institutions may be considered for transfer. A student may apply for consideration of transfer of semester credit hours after satisfactorily completing a minimum of 9 semester credit hours of graduate credit at Texas Woman's University and upon filing a [Graduate Degree Plan Substitution](#) form when there is an active Degree Audit. The rule governing the time limit for doctoral work also applies to transferable credits outside of a previous completed degree or certificate.

Only graduate courses in which a grade of B or better has been earned are acceptable for transfer. No credit toward a graduate degree may be obtained by correspondence and no credit toward a graduate degree may be obtained by extension work from another institution.

**At least 50% of the work counted toward an academic doctoral degree program must be composed of TWU courses.**

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

NOTE: When taking courses through the Federation of North Texas Area Universities (University of North Texas and Texas A&M-Commerce), TWU students earn TWU credit; the courses appear on their TWU transcript, and they pay TWU tuition after following a specific registration process (see TWU's [Federation web page](#)). Courses at the master's and doctoral levels at these universities may apply to the PhD student's degree plan with the academic advisor's permission.

- **Program Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree:**

At TWU, all doctoral degrees must be at least 90-credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree; in total, a minimum of 60 semester-credit hours beyond the master's degree or 50 semester-credit hours beyond the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree is needed for the PhD degree. Coursework includes research tools, core (required) courses, electives, independent study and practicum courses. The degree program is individualized for the student based on the student's goals.

- **Degree Plan Summaries**

	DPT from TWU	DPT to PhD Fast-Track	DPT from outside TWU	Master's Degree
Research Tools	13	13	13	13
Core PhD Classes	25	25	25	25
Remaining Coursework	12 transferred from TWU-DPT	12 transferred from TWU-DPT	12	22
Total	50	50	50	60

#### Research Tools (13 credit hours required)

Doctoral studies require skills/techniques (tools) that are discipline specific. In the School of Physical Therapy all PhD students are required to complete "Tool 1" and "Tool 2" courses. Courses in the Research Tools area must be at least 12 semester-credit hours. At TWU, the 4<sup>th</sup> digit in any course number indicates the number of semester credit hours.

To complete Tool 1, students must take the following 3 courses totaling 7 credit hours.

- PT 6043 Statistical Methods I for the Health Care Professional
- PT 6243 Statistical Methods II for the Health Care Professional
- PT 6191 Applied Statistical Methods for the Health Care Professional

To complete Tool 2, the student must take 2 of the following courses or its equivalent as determined by the student's academic advisor in consultation with the campus Post-Professional Program Coordinator for a minimum of 6 credit hours.

- PT 6213 Computer Applications in PT Research  
AND **one** of the following:
- PT 6083 Advanced Instrumentation in Physical Therapy
  - OR– OT 6643 Advanced Qualitative Methods in Occupational Therapy
  - OR– NURS 6523 Qualitative Nursing Research
  - OR– Other 3-credit hour *introductory level* qualitative research methods and/or analysis course in any other discipline/department at the graduate level

#### Core PhD Courses

**(25 credit hours required)**

- PT 6023 Research for the Clinical Scientist
- PT 6193 Psychometric Properties of Rehabilitation Tests and Measures
- PT 6103 Advanced Practicum
- OR–
- PT 6101 Practicum 3 times (with academic advisor approval)
- PT 6503 Introduction to Grantsmanship in Physical Therapy
- PT 6523 Teaching and Learning in PT
- PT 6533 Academic Issues in Physical Therapist Education
- PT 6971 Integration of Theory & Research in Physical Therapy (Qualifying Examination)
- PT 6983 Dissertation (I)
- PT 6993 Dissertation (II)

**Remaining Coursework**

**(12 to 22 credit hours required depending on entering degree)**

The remaining coursework ranges from a minimum of 22 credits hours for students entering the PhD program with a master's degree to a minimum of 12 credits credit hours for students entering with a DPT degree.

The remaining coursework consists of independent study, field research, supervised teaching, seminars, practicum, and/or elective courses in physical therapy or a related field.

Individual study, field research, supervised teaching, seminar, and practicum courses within the School of Physical Therapy provide PhD students opportunities to develop in the areas of scholarly activities, teaching, and service beyond required core PhD courses. Opportunities and expectations include such activities as writing proposals for grant funding, participating in ongoing research, critiquing literature and proposals, supervising and assisting entry-level students with professional writing and statistical analyses, teaching in the professional or post-professional programs, developing courses, curriculum design, proposing/presenting papers or posters at professional meetings, submitting manuscripts, and assisting in special projects related to scholarship, teaching, service, or administration.

With the academic advisor's permission, students may take elective courses in other departments at TWU or elsewhere (up to 12 credits hours at the graduate level can be transferred from another university; see Transfer Credit section). Suggested courses might include those in related disciplines such as Occupational Therapy, Health Care Administration, Education, Kinesiology, Nursing, or Psychology.

• ***Additional Degree Plan Options:***

In an effort to meet the changing needs of our post professional students in physical therapy, we offer the following degree plan options:

**INTERNAL DPT to PhD "fast-track"**: For the TWU DPT student who wishes to begin the PhD program while in the entry-level program or following graduation, the PhD Degree plan consists of a minimum 38 credit hours.

The entry-level DPT to PhD "fast-track" program addresses the need to educate a larger cadre of faculty members that possess both the clinical skills and academic knowledge to prepare future PT professionals. The degree plan quickly transitions current entry-level students to the PhD and allows the PhD residency requirement (carrying a minimum load of 4 hours in any two semesters)

to be met while enrolled as a DPT student and taking PhD courses.

**This program is only open to internal candidates enrolled in the TWU entry-level DPT program.**

Current students may apply in either semester 2 or in semester 5 with formal application to the Graduate School in semester 8. At the time of acceptance or DPT completion, students will be assigned a PhD academic advisor who will be matched by content area, workload, and ability to mentor PhD students.

Critical Inquiry I, II, and III of the DPT curriculum may be dedicated to one or all of the following: proposal exploration/development, submission of IRB materials and/or the collection of pilot data for the PhD dissertation. However, the research produced for completion of the critical inquiry courses does not have to be aligned with later projects for the PhD.

With approval of the research advisor in consultation with the Post-Professional Program Coordinator on the student's respective campus, DPT to PhD fast track students may elect to take one or more PhD courses while in the entry-level program starting no earlier than semester 4.

DPT to PhD fast track students may stay on an accelerated schedule and graduate with a PhD in approximately 3 years post DPT. Alternatively, students may decelerate PhD coursework and take up to 8 years to complete the PhD. It should be noted, however, that the PhD 8-year clock begins when students take their first PhD course post DPT graduation.

38-credit-hour degree plan (beyond the earned TWU DPT degree) consists of:

- Tool 1, three courses totaling 7 credit hours.
- Tool 2, two courses for a minimum of 6 credit hours.
- Core PhD coursework, nine to eleven courses for a minimum of 25 credit hours.

**EXTERNAL DPT to PhD:** To appeal to practicing physical therapists that have achieved the DPT degree through programs at other universities, we have developed the following degree plan to transition to the PhD.

For students entering the PhD program with an earned DPT degree from another university (not TWU), the degree plan consists of a minimum 50 credit hours:

- Tool 1, three courses totaling 7 credit hours.
- Tool 2, two courses for a minimum of 6 credit hours.
- Core PhD coursework, nine to eleven courses for 25 credit hours.
- Electives/Individual Study/Practicums for a minimum of 12 credit hours.

**MASTERS to PhD:** For students entering the PhD program with an earned master's degree from TWU or another university, the degree plan consisting of a minimum 60 credit hours:

- Tool 1, three courses totaling 7 credit hours.
- Tool 2, two courses for a minimum of 6 credit hours.
- Core PhD coursework, nine to eleven courses for 25 credit hours.
- Electives/Individual Study/Practicums for a minimum of 22 credit hours.

● ***Expected Course Offerings:***

[Course offerings](#) are projected over a 5-year period and updated periodically. In general, required courses are offered every academic year. Once admitted, students have access to additional course details through Canvas School of Physical Therapy Collaborative Space.

Students may enroll in Practicum or Independent Study in any semester with the academic advisor's permission, but the course must be planned and the appropriate [agreement form](#) completed at least one semester in advance.

**F. Preparing, Filing, and Changing a Degree Plan**

The degree plan constitutes a plan-of-action for the student's program. Via [TWU Self-Service](#), the student and academic advisor construct an initial degree plan with advice from the campus Post-Professional Program Coordinator if needed. The PhD degree plan will be reviewed by no fewer than three faculty members in the School of Physical Therapy with full Graduate faculty status. See <https://twu.edu/gradschool/faculty/graduate-faculty/> for a list of qualified members.

An approved plan through TWU's online Self-Service system must be completed before 18 credit hours have been earned. In the Notes feature, the academic advisor documents communications with the student and Graduate School listing approvals, meetings and people present, and the residency time periods. The outline of the course plan can be seen in the Course Plan, Timeline and Progress sections of Self-Service.

Changing when a student will enroll in a planned course can be made in the Self-Service Timeline section by dragging and dropping the course in the appropriate semester.

Substituting a different course from those listed in the Self-Service Progress section requires the academic advisor to complete a [Graduate Degree Plan Substitution form](#) on the [Registrar's web page](#).

**G. Preparing and Maintaining a Current Curriculum Vitae (CV)**

All students prepare a CV using a standard format as determined by the School of Physical Therapy; a [CV template](#) is available at the School of Physical Therapy website. The CV is submitted upon admission and maintained by the student. The CV is submitted annually every September to the Post-Professional Program Coordinator on the student's respective campus, at graduation, and one-year post graduation.

**H. Qualifying Examination: PT 6971 Integration of Theory & Research in PT**

The ability to analyze, synthesize, and critically examine theory and research in the context of a substantial research issue is essential to any student's effort to complete the program. The qualifying examination is an un-mentored written product and oral examination that tests the student's abilities to (a) confirm the substantial development of these essential reasoning skills, (b) identify areas in which further work is required, and (c) determine the student's potential ability to complete a dissertation.

- **Planning:**

The student and academic advisor initially plan and schedule the qualifying examination during the degree planning process. The qualifying examination can be scheduled following completion of all research tools and the majority of other core PhD courses. Both the written and oral exams must be completed in the same semester.

- **Qualifying Exam Advisory Committee:**

The advisory committee may be formed any time after the degree plan is completed online. This committee is comprised of the academic advisor who has full graduate faculty status with dissertation chair endorsement and two additional faculty members in the School of Physical Therapy with full graduate faculty status. See [TWU Graduate Faculty listing](#) for a list of qualified faculty. Advisory committee members may be assigned or selected in collaboration with the student. Qualified faculty on either campus may serve on advisory committees regardless of the student's home campus.



### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

- ***Enrollment for Qualifying Exams:***

Students must be enrolled in PT 6971 Integration of Theory & Research in Physical Therapy where they demonstrate ability to analyze, synthesize, and critically examine theory and research in physical therapy through written and oral examinations by producing an independent written product.

- The PT 6971 syllabus, posted in Canvas School of Physical Therapy Collaborative Space, must be completed one semester prior to enrolling in this course and no later than the 10th class day of the qualifying examination semester.
- As part of the PT 6971 syllabus, the student and academic advisor review policies concerning the qualifying examination, the grading rubrics, and both sign the Qualifying Examination PhD Student Honor Code Pledge no later than the 10th class day of the qualifying examination semester available on Canvas.
- The academic advisor documents the student's qualifying exam product and due dates in the PT 6971 syllabus and/or in a Self-Service Note.
  - Ideally, the written product is due no later than week 10 of long semesters (week 7 in Summer) to allow the student to produce a quality product about 1 month prior to the end of the semester for the oral examination to occur before the end of the semester.
  - The form of written product including the target journal/grant-making agency, the written examination due date, and a tentative date for the oral examination are mutually agreed upon prior to the start of the qualifying exam semester.
- Upon successful completion of the written exam, the oral exam may be scheduled. The oral exam may not be scheduled earlier than two weeks after the written exam has been completed and passed.

- ***Qualifying Exam Product:***

The written examination content must be approved by the academic advisor and/or the advisory committee and be distinct from work produced in prior coursework and the future dissertation. However, examination content can and should be related to the dissertation general topic or area of interest. For example, pilot work can be written in article form for a qualifying exam; however, it cannot serve as a complete chapter in a multi-article formatted dissertation.

Options for the written qualifying exam product:

- Grant application for a project. Page limits and required elements will be determined by the selected granting agency. The grant cannot be the same as the grant developed during PT 6503 Introduction to Grantsmanship in PT course. At completion, the student submits the grant and the grant instructions.
- Manuscript that would be suitable for initial submission to a peer-reviewed journal. The following are acceptable types of manuscripts:
  - Student-collected data that is ready for analysis and dissemination.
  - Pre-existing data sets that require analysis, interpretation, and dissemination; the student would determine the research questions based on the data.
  - Study Protocol (see [Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Journal—PTJ](#)).

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

Students are allowed to:

- seek grammatical and sentence structure assistance ONLY from the Write Site within TWU.
- Independently, students may seek and use statistical resources (internet, textbook, etc.) during the examination semester to prepare for the exam.

Under no circumstances should the academic advisor or advisory committee members assist the student during the examination semester.

Since the written product is an examination, the following is NOT allowed:

- Statistical consultants either inside or outside of TWU
- Statistical assistance from classmates, former instructors, acquaintances, etc.
- Editorial assistance outside of TWU's WriteSite, including classmates, former instructors, acquaintances, etc.
- Formal or information assistance with content.

The oral examination over the written examination product is scheduled for 2-hours and consists of an approximately 30- to 45-minute formal presentation followed by oral questions by the advisory committee. Students are expected to orally defend their work. The topic of the oral examination is clarification/expansion of the written qualification product and the topic in general.

Qualifying exam rubrics are used by the advisory committee to judge the quality of the written and oral qualifying examinations. These rubrics are on the TWU-School of Physical Therapy website and Canvas Collaborative Space and the student would be wise to review them throughout the semester.

Students are allowed to review their average scores for each rubric category after completion of their oral and written examination. Students will not be allowed to review individual rubric scores from the committee members or any free-response comments on the rubrics.

Student must pass both qualifying exams before registering for Dissertation (PT 6983).

The advisory committee may provide general feedback after each exam. After passing both written and oral exams, advisory committee may return edited products to assist student scholarship (i.e., submit the grant or manuscript). Authorship should be discussed at this time.

- ***Following Failure of Qualifying Examination(s):***

The student will have one opportunity to retake each exam once and the retake may occur in the same semester if time allows within the semester (e.g., 2 weeks between examinations).

If a student fails the written or does not pass the oral exam in the same semester as the written exam, the student will receive a grade of "progress."

- The student must re-enroll in PT 6971, Integration of Theory & Research in Physical Therapy, to continue with the examination process with the same advisory committee members in the following semester.
- It is up to the student's academic advisor and advisory committee to determine the need for any concurrent remediation enrollment documented in the Self-Service NOTE section.
- Remediation should be guided by the academic advisor and focus on overarching areas in need of improvement, rather than specific assistance related to the qualifying exam since the student will be retesting with the same unmentored product.
- In the event a student fails either exam twice, the student will receive an F and will be dismissed from the program. For clarification, if the written exam is failed twice, the student will not sit for the oral exam and will be dismissed from the program.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

- ***Following Successful Examinations: Initial Dissertation Committee Selection***

Following completion of the oral qualifying exam and before Admission to Candidacy, students must secure their dissertation committee members.

The role of this dissertation committee is to evaluate the student's professional promise, plans for continued study, and progress with respect to the dissertation and later approves the dissertation and sets the final examination of the candidate for the doctoral degree.

Via the [Admission to Candidacy](#) form, the Dean of the Graduate School will appoint a dissertation committee from a list of faculty members suggested by the student in consultation with the academic advisor, Post-Professional Program Coordinator, and/or Coordinator of Research on the student's respective campus.

All faculty members on the qualifying examination advisory committee may or may not continue their service on the dissertation committee. Faculty members have the right to exclude themselves from any dissertation appointment. In addition, the student, academic advisor, Post-Professional Program Coordinator, Research Coordinator, or Associate Director on the student's respective campus has the authority to exclude any potential faculty member from a dissertation appointment.

Per Graduate School requirements, the research committee is composed of a minimum of three members from TWU.

- The chair must possess Full Graduate Faculty status with Dissertation Chair Endorsement within the School of Physical Therapy. If the dissertation chair is the same faculty member as the student's previous academic advisor, no additional forms are required. If the student's academic advisor is not taking the dissertation chair position, then faculty must submit an [Advisor Change Request](#) form to the Registrar's Office.
- The required second and third committee members must have Full Graduate Faculty status. Dissertation Chair Endorsement is not required.
- An optional fourth or fifth member is allowed. An optional member may be outside TWU, with appropriate educational degrees, research experience, and needed expertise as evident on a current CV delivered to the advisor who submits the CV with the Admission to Candidacy form. This external committee member must be approved by the Graduate School prior to prospectus approval. The appointment letter will state that this is an uncompensated appointment to serve on the dissertation committee.

#### I. Admission to Candidacy

The research advisor, in conjunction with the student, requests [admission to candidacy](#) by submitting the appropriate form found on the [Graduate School webpage](#).

Admission to candidacy requires that the student meet all 6 items:

- successful completion of qualifying examinations demonstrating professional promise;
- unconditional admission to the Graduate School;
- approved degree program (i.e., degree plan) documented in the student's Self-Service audit;
- completion of all research tools;
- satisfaction of the residency requirement; and
- good academic standing.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

The admission to candidacy proceeds in order as follows:

1. The academic advisor verifies that the above conditions have been met. If so, the process proceeds. Note that unconditional admission to the Graduate School is often missing and requires completion of a [form](#).
2. The Request for Admission to Candidacy form is completed by the academic advisor, including the list of dissertation committee members, affirmation of qualifying examination completion and requirements being met, then signed by the dissertation committee chair and the Director of the School of PT.
3. The Director of the School of PT sends the completed, signed form to the Graduate School with any CV(s) from optional external to TWU members.
4. The student submits to the Director of the School of PT a professional photograph suitable for the [TWU School of Physical Therapy PhD candidate profile page](#) and the following information as it applies:
  - Student last name, first name
  - Dissertation Chair
  - Title of dissertation
  - Collaborators outside TWU involved the dissertation (people and/or organizations)
  - Grant funding
  - Education (university name and location) of degrees earned from bachelor's degree forward
  - Residence (current city, state where the student is physically located); may also provide country of origin if relevant.

Note: Once posted on the website, information can be updated by the student through the dissertation chair by notifying the campus-specific post professional coordinator and Director of the School of PT via email.

#### J. Registration Requirements for Dissertation

Students cannot enroll in PT 6983 Dissertation (I) until the Admission to Candidacy has been submitted to the Graduate School. Students cannot begin formal work on their dissertation until they receive the Admission to Candidacy letter from the Graduate School.

Only students registered in dissertation may meet with faculty concerning any aspect of the dissertation.

Doctoral candidates who have completed their degree plan except for dissertation, must register for PT 6983 Dissertation (I) or PT 6993 Dissertation (II) if actively working on their dissertation. The Graduate School prohibits students from registering for independent study courses that are related to the dissertation (e.g., cannot register for a 1-hour independent study to collect dissertation data).

The definition of continuous enrollment is a component decision. The School of PT Post Professional Committee has defined continuous enrollment in PT 6983 or PT 6993 as enrollment in the normal academic year (Fall and Spring).

- Students do not need to enroll in summer sessions or other such inter-sessions beyond the normal academic year in order that their enrollment in dissertation be deemed "continuous." However, if a student elects not to enroll in Summer, it should be understood that the faculty mentor will not be available for assistance, and TWU equipment and/or facilities cannot be used by the student.
- Students may stop dissertation enrollment at any time for any reason; however, they are then prohibited from working on dissertation activities. During this work stoppage, the Graduate School 8-year degree completion clock requirement continues even if the student is not enrolled.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

If students complete the requirements of PT 6983 Dissertation (I) early in a semester (i.e., CITI Responsible Conduct of Research training, approved IRB protocol, and Graduate School approval of the prospectus), the student can begin collecting data for the dissertation during the remainder of the semester. In this scenario, the student would not delay data collection until enrolled in PT 6993 Dissertation (II).

If students want to collect data during semester breaks, they must be registered for PT 6993 Dissertation (II) in the immediately following semester before any data collection can occur.

- To collect data between Spring and Summer semesters, they must be registered in PT 6993 Dissertation (II) for Summer.
- To collect data between Summer and Fall semesters, they must be registered in PT 6993 Dissertation (II) for Fall.
- To collect data over Winter break, they must be registered in PT 6993 Dissertation (II) for Spring.

Note: the student must complete registration for PT 6993 Dissertation (II) in Self-Service, but they do not have to pay before the TWU payment deadline.

If the student completes the requirements of PT 6993 Dissertation (II) at the end of a semester (i.e., successful public/private oral defense and final written dissertation approved by all dissertation committee members), and there is not time to complete all required Graduate School edits before the end of the semester, the Graduate School will direct the student to register for a final 1-hour independent study to complete the Graduate School edits in the following semester.

#### K. Research Committee for Dissertations

- **Purpose:**  
The purpose of the dissertation committee is to evaluate the student's dissertation research progress and achievement and to ensure maintenance of high scholarship standards.
- **Selection of Research Committee Members:**  
See section H. *Following Successful Examinations: Initial Dissertation Committee Selection*, pages 19-20 of this handbook.
- **Authority and Responsibilities:**  
The dissertation research committee overseeing the candidate's dissertation research is an arm of the Graduate School. This committee shall have authority with respect to the student's dissertation; and the committee chair administers this authority. This committee also serves as the candidate's committee to examine the dissertation.

Actions and decisions of the committee are subject to review and recommendation by the campus-specific Post-Profession Program Coordinator and Associate Director, and the Director of the School of Physical Therapy.

The dissertation committee chair serves as the candidate's academic advisor during the dissertation phase of the PhD program.

The dissertation research committee chair serves as the committee spokesperson in dealing with the candidate. The candidate should have no uncertainty concerning the person with whom to deal in the day-to-day preparation of the dissertation, and it should seldom be necessary for the student to hold conferences concerning minor matters with the individual members between committee meetings. However, the candidate will meet with the dissertation research committee as needed to prepare the dissertation proposal with one mandatory meeting where the candidate orally defends the written dissertation proposal.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

Once the candidate has successfully defended the dissertation proposal, it is the dissertation chair's responsibility to ensure the candidate completes the Graduate School's prospectus process (new in Summer 2023) and described below in order:

1. The candidate writes an 8- to 10-page prospectus for the Graduate School as a short synopsis (i.e., title, purpose or the reason for the study's validity or significance, and research methodology to be employed) using the same style (AMA-11<sup>th</sup> edition or APA-7<sup>th</sup> edition) requirements that will be used for the dissertation, standard font size (10, 11, or 12) and font style (Arial, Times New Roman, Calibri, or Cambria), with text double spaced throughout. Details are on the [Graduate School's web page](#).
2. The dissertation committee chair circulates the [Prospectus Cover Sheet](#) for committee member signatures, and forwards the coversheet and prospectus to the Director of the School (Dean of the College signature is not required), who will return the Prospectus Cover Sheet with all signatures to the student.
3. The candidate uploads the following 3 to 6 items as separate documents into the TWU [Prospectus Google Classroom](#). Note: Only candidates and Graduate School staff can access this portal, so only candidates can submit prospectus documents.
  - The signed Cover Sheet (PDF)
  - Prospectus (references and any appendices not counted toward page limits) in Microsoft Word or PDF.
  - Student's [responsible conduct of research \(RCR\) training](#) certificate through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). Both the dissertation committee chair and candidate need to note the expiration date as a valid certificate is required throughout the candidate's dissertation.
  - Dissertation committee chair's current RCR training certificate if not already on file in the Graduate School.
  - IRB approval letter (PDF). Note: If applicable, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval *must* be obtained before uploading *any* documents into the Prospectus Google Classroom.
  - Institution/Agency Approval if applicable (PDF)
4. The dissertation committee chair ensures that the candidate follows Texas Woman's University IRB guidelines established in accordance with the Department of Health and Human Services regulations.
5. The dissertation committee chair also ensures that the candidate understands that dissertation research data collection cannot begin until there is a dissertation committee approved/signed prospectus on file in the Graduate School **and** the Associate Dean of the Graduate School has approved the prospectus and accompanying documents. To clarify, document submission into the Prospectus Google Classroom does not equal approval. Once the Associate Dean of the Graduate School has approved all documents uploaded, a member of the Graduate School staff will email the candidate an official approval letter. Students are prohibited from collecting data or research prior to receiving Graduate School approval. Failure to obtain this approval before data collection is a serious omission and could result in significant consequences to both the candidate and dissertation committee chair.
6. The dissertation committee chair is responsible for notifying the campus Post-Profession Program Coordinator and Graduate School about any major changes to the dissertation (e.g., change in committee membership, deviations from the submitted prospectus).

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

7. The dissertation committee chair is responsible for notifying the campus-specific School of PT Marketing Committee member and Post-Profession Program Coordinator about the candidate's achieved scholarly activities.
8. The committee members are responsible for thorough and prompt review of the student's work throughout the dissertation process. Prompt review is the return of feedback within 10 working days during the semester in which the student is enrolled in PT 6983 Dissertation (I) or PT 6993 Dissertation (II).
9. The entire committee accepts or rejects the completed dissertation in accordance with high standards of scholarship.

- **Changes in Dissertation Committee Appointment:**

If necessary, changes in committee membership can be made at any time.

The candidate, dissertation committee member(s), Post-Professional Program Coordinator, or Associate Director on the candidate's respective campus may initiate a request for a change in committee appointment. The person requesting the change makes the request in writing. Academic courtesy holds that, before an official change is made, the person requesting the change should inform all parties concerned.

The request is routed to all parties, from the student to the Graduate School using the appropriate Graduate School or Registrar form(s):

- [Research Committee Member Change Request](#)
- [Advisor Change Request](#)

#### L. Guidelines for Publication Agreement for Articles Arising from the Dissertation

*Students are prohibited from submitting any part of the dissertation for publication prior to the dissertation defense.*

The School of PT strongly recommends dissemination of dissertation results at a national or international conference and a minimum of 2 peer-reviewed journal submissions within the first year after graduation. Toward that goal, the dissertation committee chair and the candidate should agree on authorship of manuscript(s) prior to beginning the dissertation as part of the student advising process. It is the student's responsibility to clarify expectations through the School's authorship agreement. The [authorship agreement](#) can be found on the TWU School of PT web site and states the following in part:

- In general, the dissertation research idea, methodology, and analysis arise from the student and as such, are the property of the student; therefore, it is clear that the student should be the first author.
- In the event that the student owns the data but does not publish within a year of graduation, the student acknowledges that the dissertation research committee chair has primary ownership of the data and the right to disseminate the results of the study through publication or presentation. Because most journals will not accept an article until all authors have signed the copyright form, if the student cannot be located, the mentor may publish the article without the student's name or consent.
- Authorship of an article includes preparation of the manuscript and requires that all authors are familiar enough with the manuscript so that any author is able to defend its content. Faculty and students both are cautioned to maintain contact, if publication is intended. However, continuing to maintain contact is ultimately the student's responsibility, not the dissertation research chair's responsibility.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

- To retain first authorship for publication or presentation, the student must originate the research idea and prepare and submit the manuscript or presentation within a year of graduation, in consultation with the dissertation research advisor.

In cases where the dissertation research is complex involving dissertation committee members from multiple institutions, the candidate and the entire dissertation committee should collaborate to develop a [dissemination plan](#).

In no case should publication or presentation of any part of the dissertation be attempted without the written consent of the dissertation research advisor

#### M. Dissertation

Graduate education that results in a PhD degree requires the student to make a meaningful contribution to knowledge in the student’s area of study in oral and written forms. The doctoral candidate must write a dissertation based upon research that makes an original contribution to the literature and research in physical therapy.

##### 1. Planning

- Discussions about the dissertation and its potential format should start early in the student’s degree program.
- The School of PT allows two dissertation format types (i.e., Traditional and Multiple Manuscript). The final decision about which option to use must be made by the candidate and dissertation research committee, not by the candidate alone.
- Regardless of format type, every dissertation consists of three sections: front matter, body, and back matter. The number of chapters and elements within each chapter will vary by student according to the particulars of the project and the format type.
- The overview in the following table indicates the proper order of each component within each of the three dissertation sections.

Dissertation Formats

Front Matter	Body		Back Matter
	Traditional	Multiple-Manuscript <sup>a</sup>	
Title Page	Ch. 1: Introduction <sup>b</sup>	Ch. 1: Introduction <sup>b</sup>	References
Dedication (optional)	Ch. 2: Literature Review <sup>c</sup>	Ch. 2: Literature Review <sup>c</sup>	Appendices
Acknowledgments	Ch. 3: Methods	Ch. 3: Manuscript One ( <i>sections same as target journal</i> )	
Abstract	Ch. 4: Results	- Title	
Table of Contents	Ch. 5: Discussion	- Abstract	
List of Tables		- Introduction	
List of Figures		- Methods	
		- Results	
		- Discussion	
		- References	
		Ch. 4: Manuscript Two	
		Final Chapter: Integrative Conclusion	

<sup>a</sup> Minimum number of manuscripts is two as illustrated in this table. The number of manuscripts in a multiple manuscript dissertation is a collaborative decision between the candidate and the dissertation research committee based on the scope of the proposed dissertation.



### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

<sup>b</sup> The exact content of Ch. 1 Introduction will vary based on the research question(s) and subsequent design(s), but is similar in both formats. No study methods or procedures appear in this chapter. See resources available on Canvas for guidance.

<sup>c</sup> The purpose of Ch. 2 Literature Review in both formats is to inform the methodological decisions and procedures reported in subsequent dissertation chapter(s). Ch.2 subject matter and its organization is described, and then further subheadings are based on the variables, context, and organization of the study. See resources available on Canvas for guidance.

#### 2. *Proposal and Prospectus - Student enrolled in PT 6983 Dissertation (I):*

- The dissertation **proposal**, is a formal written product generally considered to be the first 2 or 3 chapters of the dissertation that consists of:
  - Introduction including the dissertation purpose(s); research questions or hypotheses; operational definitions; and anticipated limitations, assumptions, and significance to the profession.
  - Review of the literature that informs and supports (a) the problem the dissertation will address, and (b) the methodological decisions made to carry out the dissertation.
  - Detailed description of the proposed research methods and procedures.
- The exact structure of the dissertation proposal is up to the dissertation committee chair.
- Students may choose to meet with the entire dissertation research committee before writing the proposal (i.e., *Pre-Proposal Meeting*) to orient the entire committee on the research carried out to date and future research plans.
- When the dissertation proposal is deemed complete by the candidate's research committee chair, the student sends it via email or link to other members of the dissertation research committee (hereafter called the committee) to read and critique.
- The proposal must be delivered to each committee member no less than 10 working days before the committee meets to discuss it at a formal initial meeting about the dissertation, commonly called the *Dissertation Proposal Defense Meeting*.
  - The formal written product is discussed, and criticisms are considered.
  - This is a closed meeting (i.e., only the committee members and the doctoral candidate attend).
  - The dissertation research committee votes to (a) approve the proposal as submitted, (b) request that the requisite changes be incorporated under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee chair with no further meeting of the committee being necessary for approval, or (c) request that a revised proposal be submitted with another formal meeting of the entire committee to consider the revised proposal's merits for approval.
- Once the committee approves the proposal, the student generates the **prospectus** for submission to the [Graduate School](#). The dissertation prospectus is an abbreviated dissertation proposal no longer than 10 pages plus references and appendices. The prospectus includes a brief introduction, statement of purpose, little to no literature review, and detailed research methods and procedures.
- Occasionally, the dissertation committee chair and candidate may choose to defend the shorter prospectus rather than the more extensive proposal at the initial dissertation meeting.
  - The candidate must be adequately familiar with the literature and methodological details to effectively defend the proposed dissertation.
  - As with the *Dissertation Proposal Defense*, the shorter prospectus is discussed, and criticisms are considered in a closed meeting.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

- The dissertation research committee votes to (a) approve the prospectus as submitted, (b) request that the requisite changes be incorporated under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee chair with no further meeting of the committee being necessary for approval, (c) request that a revised prospectus be submitted with another formal meeting of the entire committee to consider the revised prospectus' merits for approval or (d) request that a full proposal be submitted with another formal meeting of the entire committee to consider the proposal's merits for approval.
  - After a successful initial defense meeting regardless of the written work defended, the committee must sign and print their names on the [Prospectus Cover Sheet](#) affirming that the attached Prospectus has been read and approved by all members of the Research Committee.
  - The candidate uploads the following 3 to 6 items as separate documents into the TWU Prospectus Google Classroom. All documents must be uploaded at the same time. Note: Only candidates and Graduate School staff can access this portal, so only candidates can submit prospectus documents.
    - The signed Cover Sheet (PDF)
    - Prospectus (references and any appendices not counted toward page limits) in Microsoft Word or PDF.
    - Student's responsible conduct of research (RCR) training certificate through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). Both the dissertation committee chair and candidate need to note the expiration date as a valid certificate is required throughout the candidate's dissertation.
    - Dissertation committee chair's current RCR training certificate if not already on file in the Graduate School.
    - IRB approval letter (PDF). Note: If applicable, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval must be obtained before uploading any documents into the Prospectus Google Classroom.
    - Institution/Agency Approval if applicable (PDF)
  - Upon receipt and review, the Graduate School will send an approval letter after which the student may then implement the dissertation study. **Under no circumstances may a candidate collect dissertation data until this letter has been issued.** Failure to obtain this approval before data collection is a serious omission and could result in significant consequences to both the candidate and dissertation committee chair as deemed appropriate by the Graduate School.
3. *Institutional Review Board – Student enrolled in PT 6983 Dissertation (I)*  
Following the successful defense of the dissertation proposal/prospectus, and if the dissertation involves human subjects, the student must submit the appropriate forms to an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Details concerning IRB policies and procedures are on [TWU's IRB web page](#).
- All PhD students must complete human protection training through CITI and a certificate of completion must accompany the IRB application. This training is different from the RCR CITI training.
  - Candidates must submit their completed IRB application to their dissertation committee chair and have the chair's approval before submitting their IRB application online through the [Cayuse system](#).

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- IRB approval is required before candidates can submit the prospectus and other materials for Graduate School approval. IRB approval may include one or more of the following:
    - TWU IRB approval
    - IRB Authorization Agreement (IAA): The most common dual agreement, the IAA is usually specific to a single study where the candidate's study involves another institution that has its own IRB. The agreement specifies which institution (TWU or other institution) has study oversight. Typically, the location of data collection dictates which institution will act as the reviewing IRB. Because this agreement requires signatures of each institution's signatory authority, review by TWU's Legal Council may be required.
    - Parallel/Dual IRB review: Sometimes institutions agree to collaborate, but each IRB wants to retain oversight (e.g., data collected at TWU and elsewhere). In these cases, the candidate submits an IRB to both institutions and approval from both is necessary prior to the start of any data collection. Participants would sign 2 consent forms, one approved from each overseeing IRB.
    - Individual Investigator Agreement (IIA): This agreement type is for studies where an individual/organization will be involved in the dissertation research, do not have their own IRB (such as employees of small clinics), and wish a formal agreement.
    - Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)/Master Agreements: Rather than being applicable to only one specific study, this agreement type is used by large research networks and as individual agreements between TWU and other institutions with whom TWU commonly collaborates.
  - It is the candidate's responsibility to contact institutional IRB(s) to determine the most appropriate IRB approval(s).
  - During data collection, candidates must immediately report any and all changes to protocol or unexpected results from research to the dissertation committee chair and the IRB. Candidates must keep the chair informed of the data collection process and progress while it is ongoing.
  - **It is vital to keep all signed consent forms for later submission to the IRB. Failure to do so results in loss of data for dissertation use.**
4. *Dissertation studies involving clinical trials, including interventions – Student enrolled in PT 6983 or PT 6993.*
- Candidates planning to conduct a clinical trial must register their study at [clinicaltrials.gov](http://clinicaltrials.gov).
  - ClinicalTrials.gov is a public database of clinical trial and related research information created in 2000 by NIH's National Libraries of Medicine (NLM) in response to Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act of 1997. The purpose of ClinicalTrials.gov is to provide easily accessible information on clinical trials for the public with registration not later than 21 days after enrollment of the first participant as stated in Federal regulation 42 CFR 11.
  - In 2005, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) adopted a policy that began requiring trial registration as a condition of publication. ICMJE's timeframe for ClinicalTrials.gov registration is prior to the first participant's enrollment. Any participants enrolled prior to registration may not be included in the manuscript.
  - To meet both NIH and ICMJE policies, candidates planning to conduct a clinical trial, typically an intervention, must register their dissertation study at [clinicaltrials.gov](http://clinicaltrials.gov) **after IRB approval and prior to data collection.**
  - Candidates needing assistance in determining if they must register their research study should use the [NIH's clinical trial decision making tool](#).

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

#### 5. *Data Analysis Meeting – Student enrolled in PT 6993 Dissertation (II):*

- This meeting is not required by the University but is strongly recommended by the graduate faculty of the School of Physical Therapy.
- If elected by the chair or candidate, the student provides the committee with all raw data, analyses, and conclusions in either an electronic and/or hardcopy format no less than 10 working days prior to the formal meeting.
- During the meeting the student provides a brief overview of the research to date and presents the data and its analyses/conclusions for open discussion.
- Following the presentation and discussion, committee members can request that the candidate collect more data and/or perform additional statistical tests, analyses, or improve/expand in other areas as deemed necessary by the committee prior to the final dissertation defense.
- More than one data meeting can be required by committee request (e.g., substantial changes in first data meeting, mixed methods design).

#### 6. *Writing and Editing the Dissertation – Student enrolled in PT 6993 Dissertation (II):*

- Each dissertation should reflect the highest standards of scholarship. Consequently, the dissertation must conform to the most rigorous standards of content, style, and format.
- The Graduate School has prepared the Thesis, Dissertation, & Professional Paper Technical Manual and the Graduate School Formatting Video Series to facilitate the student's efforts in achieving these goals. These and other up-to-date resources, including common APA and AMA style errors, are available through the [Graduate School website](#). **DO NOT** use previously defended dissertations as a guide because details change on a regular basis.
- The School of Physical Therapy has adopted the most current editions of American Psychological Association (APA) and the American Medical Association (AMA) Style Manuals for formatting tables, figures, headings/subheadings, in-text citation, and references.
- Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they have applied all APA/AMA and University style and formatting requirements to their dissertation. The School of PT strongly recommends that students apply these style and formatting requirements early in the dissertation writing process to avoid potential graduation delay following the final dissertation defense.
- The candidate submits all chapters of the dissertation first to the committee chair for review and critique.
- Once all these initial revisions have been completed, the dissertation is then forwarded to the remaining committee members who provide further revision and critique.
- At every level of review, all committee members are expected to provide prompt review and return of feedback within 10 working days.
- Once the candidate addresses all committee members' concerns and the dissertation conforms to the School of PT and TWU standards for style and formatting, the oral dissertation defense can be scheduled.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

#### 7. *Dissertation Defense/Final Examination—Student enrolled in PT 6993 Dissertation (II):*

- The dissertation defense consists of: (a) a public oral presentation and defense, and (b) a private written and oral final examination with the dissertation research committee.
- When preparing for the public oral presentation and defense, the candidate works with the dissertation chair to ensure the:
  - date and time scheduled as early as possible in the final enrollment semester, no later than 2 weeks prior to the submission deadline available on the [Graduate School website](#) for the current and next semester.
  - the student understands the consequences of academic calendar deadlines.
  - the entire public oral presentation and questions/answers/discussion is 50 minutes.
  - necessary Zoom is scheduled for hybrid format. In addition, live-stream may be available to broadcast the defense on the internet.
  - the public is invited at least 2 weeks prior to the public event including Denton/Dallas/Houston faculty members (including those from other disciplines), the Dean of the College of Health Sciences, the Dean of the Graduate School, and family/friends. Entry-level and post professional students are invited through a Canvas announcement in the School of Physical Therapy Collaborative Space.
- Dissertation defenses foster the School of PT's scholarly community. As such, the public oral examination is open to all PhD students and faculty to strengthen their skills as emergent or experienced scholars.
  - All academic advisors and dissertation chairs should individually encourage all PhD students to attend so that they:
    - learn about both the process and the product for an entire dissertation journey,
    - can prepare for their own dissertation defense,
    - support their peers by being present for them at this critical moment, and
    - participate in the School of PT's scholarly community.
  - Campus-specific School of PT Graduate Faculty, as members of the local scholarly community, are expected to attend face-to-face.
  - Following the candidate's oral presentation, the chair will invite questions from members of the dissertation committee and the audience.
  - Campus-specific School of PT Graduate Faculty attending face-to-face complete the oral defense rubric. The dissertation oral defense rubric is available on the [TWU School of PT website](#).
- The entire dissertation committee is responsible for examining the candidate privately.
  - When the committee has examined the written dissertation and found it acceptable with or without revisions, a formal private 2-hour meeting occurs where the candidate orally defends what was written and orally presented.
  - Committee members ask additional questions. The Graduate School refers to this meeting as the Final Examination and the following steps occur:
    - At this meeting, the candidate must digitally submit to the dissertation committee chair to be uploaded into the PhD Program shared Google Drive, (a) completed [Record of PhD Student Publications & Presentations](#) and (b) current CV.
    - After the examination, the doctoral candidate is then asked to leave the room for the committee's final consideration.
    - The committee deliberates in executive session.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

- The chair polls the committee to find out whether they agree on the final examination decision. A majority vote rules and the candidate is asked to come into the room alone to hear the decision.
- The committee's decision takes one of the following forms:
  - *Unqualified approval*: The committee signs the [Certificate of Completion](#) form affirming (a) that according to departmental records, and upon successful completion of the current enrollment term, the student will have successfully completed all coursework and met all requirements for the degree AND (b) that each committee member and the Director of the School of PT has examined the dissertation for grammar, form, and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the PhD degree. This will result in a grade of CR (i.e., credit) in PT 6993.
  - *Qualified approval*: Suggested changes are made under the direction of the dissertation committee chair without another meeting of the full committee. This will result in a grade of CR (i.e., credit) in PT 6993.
    - Note: If a Data Meeting was held and requested tests or further analyses were completed at that time, the committee can question the candidate about statistical matters with respect to future manuscripts arising from the dissertation. However, no additional statistical tests or analyses can be required at the private examination as a condition of approval for the dissertation and PT 6993.
    - The committee signs the Certificate of Completion for Thesis/Dissertation form.
    - The chair withholds his/her signature until he/she deems the students has made all the required changes and can affirm (a) that according to departmental records, and upon successful completion of the current enrollment term, the student will have successfully completed all coursework and met all requirements for the degree AND (b) that chair affirms on behalf of the other committee members that he/she has examined the dissertation for grammar, form, and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the PhD degree.
    - The dissertation chair forwards to final dissertation and form to the Director of the School of PT for affirmation.
  - *Qualified disapproval*: The candidate's research needs to be repeated or modified, and/or rewritten extensively and resubmitted at a second private examination meeting with the entire dissertation research committee. This will result in a grade of PR (i.e., progress) in PT 6993.
    - Note: The committee chair promptly informs, in writing, the Dean of the Graduate School, the Director and campus-specific Associate Director of the School of Physical Therapy, the Dean of the College, and the student of any decision falling into this category.
    - This second private examination may not be scheduled in the same semester as the original private examination. Therefore, the candidate must enroll in PT 6993 in the following semester (i.e., Fall, Spring, Full 10-week Summer) consistent with receiving a grade of PR.
    - The private dissertation defense and final examination may be repeated only once.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

- *Unqualified disapproval*: This would result in failure of PT 6993.
  - Note: The committee chair promptly informs, in writing, the Dean of the Graduate School, the Director and Associate Director of the School of Physical Therapy, the Dean of the College, and the student of any decision falling into this category.
  - Failure of PT 6993 will result in dismissal from the PhD program by the School of Physical Therapy Director through the student's official TWU email. Students have the right to appeal. TWU's policy, process including form, and deadlines for all appeals is located on the [TWU Academic Affairs website](#).

#### 8. *Final Steps Post Final Examination—Student enrolled in PT 6993 Dissertation (II)*:

Once candidates have passed the final defense examination and satisfied the requirements of the committee, they are ready to submit the approved dissertation to the Graduate School for review.

- This submission process is fully electronic and is made through an [online application](#) developed and maintained by the Texas Digital Library, in conjunction with Texas A&M, Texas Tech, and Baylor Universities—called ETD/Vireo.
- Note: The dissertation chair has limited access to this system (approvals only). Therefore, any questions should be directed to the Graduate School.
- Additional documents to Submit:
  - Certificate of Completion for Thesis & Dissertation
  - Thesis and Dissertation Fee Sheet
  - IRB File Close Letter (If applicable)
  - Author/Journal Agreement (If applicable)
  - Survey of Earned Doctorates
  - CV
- The Graduate Reader/Editor and Thesis/Dissertation Formatting Editor will review the approved dissertation in the ETD/Vireo system to assure it meets Graduate School requirements via a check-list system.
  - From there it will be accepted or sent back via ETD/Vireo system. Dissertations with excessive errors will be returned to the candidate immediately upon initial screening without full review.
  - The Graduate Reader/Editor will return reviewed dissertations through ETD/Vireo. It is likely that the Graduate Reader/Editor will require changes and request that the candidate work closely with the chair to correct errors and consider suggestions for improvement. The candidate has **5 class days to submit revisions**.
  - This process is repeated with the Thesis/Dissertation Formatting Editor until the corrected approved dissertation in its final form is uploaded into the ETD/Vireo system.
- Upon successful completion of digital submission the student will receive an email from the Graduate School acknowledging successful completion of the digital process and their earned PhD.

**N. Applying for Graduation and Request for Reduced Tuition**

Application for Graduation

It is the responsibility of candidates to be aware of all graduation deadlines well in advance of the anticipated final enrollment of PT 6993 Dissertation (II).

Candidates must:

- apply online for graduation no later than the 12th class day of the final semester—no late applications are accepted by the Graduate School;
- apply for graduation even if they are not participating in the commencement ceremony; and
- be enrolled in the term in which they are graduating.

The requirement that candidates be enrolled in the term in which they are graduating may be waived only if all the following criteria are met on or before the Friday prior to the start date of the next term:

- all degree requirements must be met;
- an [Early Deadline form](#) must be submitted to the Graduate School;
- all forms and documents, including their committee-approved thesis or dissertation if applicable, must be submitted to and approved by the Graduate School;
- an application for graduation must be submitted for the graduating semester, which is the next term, and the application fee must be paid.

Candidates will have their degree conferred at the end of that semester. Therefore, they may request, via a form, an [Employer Verification of Degree Completion](#) from the Graduate School stating that all degree requirements have been met along with the official date the degree will be conferred.

Graduation Rollover

Candidates who have applied to graduate and later determine they are not able to meet the submission deadline (last day to file documents required for graduation with the Graduate School) may request to “rollover” their application for graduation to a future semester by submitting the [Rollover Form](#), available on the Graduate School website.

This request must be completed by the rollover deadline (i.e., the submission deadline). By meeting the rollover deadline, candidates do not have to reapply for graduation or pay another application fee. If the candidate fails to meet the submission deadline without submitting the Rollover Form, that candidate must reapply online for graduation and pay another application fee.

Reduced Tuition

Texas residents are eligible to apply for a reduced tuition rate when enrolling for dissertation only, providing those hours are the final credits required for the degree.

The candidate submits the [Reduced Tuition form](#) before the late registration deadline of the semester in which the reduced tuition is being requested. Reduced tuition may be assigned for one semester or one summer session only. Any subsequent enrollment will be at the standard tuition rate

**O. Commencement/Hooding**

Commencement is optional and diplomas are not issued during the ceremonies.

Commencement ceremonies occur in Denton or the Houston area in December and May.

For Dallas/Denton graduates, ceremonies are held the Friday and Saturday of Finals week.

For Houston graduates, ceremonies are variable depending on the venue availability and may occur as early as Wednesday of Finals week and as late as Sunday immediately following finals. TWU does not hold commencement ceremonies in August.



### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

When available, typically mid-Fall and mid-Spring Semesters, the commencement schedules and locations are published on the [Registrar's website](#). This same web address is the link to the Livestream the day of the event. Video of the prior graduation ceremonies are available here as well.

Candidates who are also veterans or active military request complimentary red, white and blue honor cords symbolizing recognition of their accomplishments and in appreciation for their service.

Candidates provide a member-4 copy of your DD 214 with honorable discharge or general under honorable conditions discharge to the TWU's VA Certifying Official in the [Registrar's office](#).

Candidates participating in a commencement ceremony in Houston or Denton order regalia directly through [Herff Jones](#) early in the semester they intend to graduate. Regalia includes black doctoral robe with TWU maroon velvet panels and seal, eight-sided black tam with gold tassel, and hood reflecting the degree received (PhD = Blue) lined with TWU school colors.

Candidates in the Denton area may order regalia/announcements from the TWU Bookstore, 940/898-3103, in the TWU Student Center on the Denton campus.

Information about [what to expect during the ceremony](#) is available on the TWU Registrar's website.

TWU orders diplomas after commencement each term from an outside source and are typically received in the Registrar's office about 4 weeks following commencement. Each student must be certified for degree completion as well as confirmation that all financial obligations to the university have been met (including library and parking fines). Diplomas are generally mailed 4 to 5 weeks after degrees have been posted to the student's transcript. Students are responsible for providing an accurate mailing address to the Graduate School. The Registrar's office mails diplomas; all diploma queries should be directed to that office: 940-898-3036.

#### P. Doctor of Philosophy Flow Sheet and Graduation Checklist

The typical sequence of events/activities in the PhD program is as follows.

1. **Campus-specific PhD Admissions Committee** conditionally accepts the applicant and assigns the student an *academic advisor* who may be temporary.
2. **Graduate School** mails the student an acceptance letter stating the start semester, advisor, and time to complete the degree (i.e., 8-year clock). This 8-year clock starts with the first PhD course enrolled following PhD admission. Students should retain an electronic copy of this document for their records.
  - [Form to change start semester](#).
  - [Form to change advisor](#) later.
3. **Academic advisor** submits a [form to change the student's status from provisional to unconditional](#) after the student completes up to the first 12 credit hours of coursework attaining a GPA 3.0 or higher. This form is sent to the Graduate School.
4. **Student** and **academic advisor** will construct an initial degree plan and note its review with at least two other faculty members within the Self-service system. At this time, the student should discuss research ideas and career plans with the academic advisor and School of PT faculty. Ideally, this task is best completed after 6- to 12-credit hours of coursework, but no later than 18-credit hours.
5. **Student** successfully completes the residency requirements and other coursework. The student and academic advisor begin preliminary planning for the dissertation during this time.
6. **Student** and **academic advisor** plan for written and oral qualifying examinations after all research tools and the majority (i.e., all but one) of the core courses are completed.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

7. *Qualifying examination advisory committee*, consisting of 3 School of PT faculty located at any campus, is formed or internally appointed (not formally appointed by the Graduate School).
8. **Student** successfully completes the written and oral qualifying examinations. These must be passed at least one academic year before the PhD degree is expected to be conferred.
9. **Academic advisor** submits qualifying examination scores to the *campus-specific Post Professional Program Coordinator* for University/state reporting.
10. **Academic advisor** views the student's transcript in Self-Service system to ensure all Independent Studies have titles. The advisor also completes a degree audit to ensure all requirements for student's admission to candidacy have been met.
11. **Student** and **academic advisor** select dissertation research committee.
12. **Academic advisor** submits [Admission to Candidacy form](#) to the Graduate School.
13. **Graduate School** informs the student of their Candidacy status and formally appoints the dissertation research committee. Academic advisor usually serves as chair of this committee, henceforth referred to as *dissertation chair*. The student is now called a doctoral *candidate*.
14. **Graduate School** will perform the official degree audit in Self-Service system when all coursework is complete except the dissertation and no later than the semester prior to graduation.
15. **Candidate** enrolls in PT 6983 Dissertation (I) and may repeat this course as needed. Candidate can enroll in PT 6983 in any semester: Fall, Spring, and/or 10-week Summer semesters.
16. **Candidate** must be continuously enrolled in dissertation (PT 6983 or PT 6993), and make tangible progress toward its completion, from this point onward. The candidate may pause dissertation enrollment for any reason, but during that time may not use faculty time and TWU resources (e.g., Write Site, CRDA, equipment, space). The 8-year clock continues.
17. **Candidate** and **dissertation chair** may schedule an optional pre-proposal meeting with the entire committee to orient the dissertation committee to the dissertation topic and research to date.
18. **Candidate** writes a detailed Proposal and the Graduate School's Prospectus following all University [style and formatting requirements](#) and most current APA or AMA style manual.
19. **Candidate** submits Proposal and Prospectus to the dissertation chair for content feedback and critique. Several drafts between candidate and chair are likely before the chair approves the version the candidate sends to other committee members.
20. **Candidate** and **dissertation chair** schedule Proposal/Prospectus defense meeting.
21. Following a successful defense, the **dissertation chair** submits the candidate's committee-signed Prospectus cover sheet and attached prospectus to the **Director of the School of PT** who returns the signed Prospectus Cover Sheet to the candidate.
22. **Candidate** uploads all required materials into the Graduate School's [Prospectus Google Classroom](#).
23. **Graduate School** notifies the candidate that dissertation data collection can start.
24. **Candidate** enrolls in PT 6993 Dissertation (II) in the following semester and it may be repeated as necessary. The candidate can enroll in PT 6993 in any semester.
25. **Candidates** plan their own timeline to completion by considering two web pages linked on the [Graduate School web page for Current Students](#): (a) Degree Completion and (b) Thesis and Dissertation.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY

26. **Candidate** applies for reduced tuition (for Texas residents only) just prior to the last PT 6993 Dissertation if it is the only remaining course. See the TWU [Academic Calendar for deadlines](#).
27. **Candidate** applies for graduation no later than the 12<sup>th</sup> class day; see TWU Academic Calendar.
28. **Candidate** and **dissertation chair** schedule and conduct data meeting with full committee. This meeting typically occurs at the very beginning of the intended graduation semester or late in the prior semester.
29. **Candidate** writes and revises entire dissertation ensuring that all University style and formatting are correct throughout. Frequent use of [TWU's Write Site](#) is strongly recommended.
30. **Candidate** submits dissertation to the dissertation chair for content feedback and critique. Several drafts between candidate and chair are likely until the chair approves submission to the committee. Allow at least 2 weeks for faculty review for each draft.
31. **Candidate** submits dissertation to the entire committee for content feedback and critique. Allow at least 2 weeks for faculty review.
32. If the dissertation committee is satisfied with the written dissertation, the **candidate** and **chair** invite the public and TWU community to the public oral defense at least 2 weeks prior to the event via Canvas, social media, and selected emails.
33. **Dissertation committee** privately examines the candidate orally.
34. **Dissertation chair** submits the oral examination score to the campus-specific Post Profession Program Coordinator for university/state reporting.
35. **Candidate** completes and submits School of PT required documents (Record of PhD Publications & Presentations [form](#) and current CV) to the dissertation chair at the oral examination.
36. **Dissertation chair** uploads the Record of PhD Publications & Presentations form and current CV to the appropriate School of PT PhD Program Google Drive shared folder.
37. **Candidate** uploads dissertation and other required materials to [TWU's ETD/Vireo portal](#) for the *Graduate Reader/Editor* to review; see TWU Academic Calendar for deadlines. The dissertation will be accepted or sent back to the candidate for revisions.
38. **Candidate** revises dissertation with guidance from the dissertation chair (5 class-day deadline). This process is repeated until the Graduate Reader/Editor accepts the dissertation at which time the *Thesis/Dissertation Formatting Editor* reviews the dissertation.
39. **Thesis/Dissertation Formatting Editor** accepts or sends back the dissertation to the candidate for further revisions.
40. **Candidate** revises dissertation with guidance from the dissertation chair (5 class-day deadline). This process is repeated until the Thesis/Dissertation Editor accepts the final dissertation.
41. **Graduate School** sends the candidate an email acknowledging successful completion of the digital process and their earned PhD.
42. **The newly earned PhD graduate** attends the optional Commencement ceremony and is hooded by their dissertation committee chair.
43. **Everyone** celebrates.

#### **IV. CERTIFICATE PROGRAM OF STUDY: Advance Studies in Women's Health PT**

Both novice and intermediate physical therapists working primarily with women and who are interested in lifelong learning can benefit from this certificate program, in which the student enrolls in 12-credit-hours of coursework. This Certificate will allow physical therapists to earn a recognized academic certificate that may be applied as evidence of continued competence for licensure (CCU) renewal and/or an advanced degree.

The purposes of this Post-Baccalaureate (Post-Professional) Certificate are to (a) advance and validate the educational and clinical foundation of physical therapists choosing to practice primarily with women, (b) provide a means through formal higher education to address self-identified weaknesses in specialized knowledge and/or skills, and (c) assist prospective students to move from novice or intermediate practice in women's health physical therapy toward expert and/or specialist practice. In addition, the 4 courses form the didactic component of the Baylor-TWU Women's Health Physical Therapy Residency, an APTA accredited residency program.

The women's health certificate program in physical therapy at TWU is designed for clinicians seeking recognition of advanced competency, but without the long commitment of a degree program. Our certificate is available alone or in conjunction with the PhD degree. The certificate requires the completion of 12 credit hours. Courses may be offered on the Internet, on site in 2- or 3-day weekends, or in a combination of internet and on-site courses.

Since our women's health certificate corresponds to one of the board certifications available through the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (ABPTS), the curriculum is designed to assist students in preparing for the specialization examination. For details about board certification through ABPTS, see the web site at: <https://specialization.apta.org/become-a-specialist/womens-health>.

##### **A. Admissions**

See Section II, beginning [page 5](#) of this handbook.

##### **B. Advisor**

The Dallas campus Post-Professional Program Coordinator and/or the designated faculty member for the certificate act as the student's academic advisor and will work with students to assure they are making progress toward obtaining the certificate.

This monitoring process begins when the student and academic advisor complete the certificate plan in TWU's online system, Self-Service, at the beginning of the certificate program and continues at least once per semester.

In the student's final semester, the academic advisor completes the form entitled [Completion of Graduate School Certificate](#), available on the TWU Graduate School web page.

In late April of the final certificate course, PT 6633, the academic advisor then checks the form against the student transcript and files it with the Graduate School prior to the end of the Spring semester.

##### **C. Clinical or Licensure Requirements**

The certificate program is clinical in nature and thus requires a U.S. state licensure for lab-based courses (PT 6623 and 6633).

**D. Time Limitations**

A certificate can be earned in as short a time as 1 year or as long as 6 years. The School of Physical Therapy will not apply credit hours toward a certificate program that were obtained longer than 6 years prior to completion of the certificate.

As stated earlier in this Handbook, students beginning in a non-degree program may move to degree seeking status. Courses originally taken to complete a certificate may be applied to a degree program but are subject to the time limitations and requirements of the degree sought. Please refer to the specific information under the degree sought.

**E. General Course Offerings and Sequencing**

The women's health certificate program typically offers one or more 3-credit-hour courses each semester.

The optimum sequence is:

- PT 6603 Female anatomy (last 5-week Summer session—July-August)
- PT 6613 Women's Health for Physical Therapists (Fall)
- PT 6623 Physical Therapy Management of Women's Health I (Fall)
- PT 6633 Physical Therapy Management of Women's Health II (Spring)

Alternatively, students may begin the certificate with PT 6613 with permission, but all 4 courses must be completed to earn the certificate.

**F. Academic Performance Requirements**

A Certificate of Completion from the TWU Graduate School or the School of Physical Therapy implies mastery of the knowledge and skills in the certificate area.

Therefore, in addition to the Graduate School requirement that students who enroll in graduate courses must maintain a 3.0 GPA on all graduate-level courses taken at TWU, only one course where a C was earned will be applied toward the certificate.

Students who fail to maintain a 3.0 average after two consecutive semesters will not be permitted to continue registering for graduate courses.

**G. Certificate of Completion**

In the semester of the final certificate course the Post-Professional Program Coordinator or designated faculty member for the certificate will submit the Certificate of Completion to the Graduate School.

TWU School of Physical Therapy will mail the student the certificate of completion in the semester following certificate completion.

## V. RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

The TWU School of Physical Therapy collaborated with other health care organizations to offer three residencies, one in Houston and two in Dallas, for physical therapists who want to advance their clinical skill in a specialty area. A residency allows a PT to gain greater knowledge and enhance their skills in a particular area of care.

### A. Houston – Neurologic Physical Therapy Residency

TIRR Memorial Hermann in Houston offers an APTA-credentialed Neurologic Physical Therapy Residency Program in collaboration with Texas Woman's University and the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. This collaborative program provides licensed physical therapists the ability to enhance their skills, while working with clinical experts in the area of neurologic physical therapy and academicians of two major educational institutions. Details are available on the School of Physical Therapy [website](#).

### B. Dallas – Neurologic Physical Therapy Residency

Baylor Scott and White Institute for Rehabilitation and Texas Woman's University Residency in Neurologic Physical Therapy is an APTA-credentialed residency whose mission is to promote excellent care in the lifespan of persons with neurologic injury across the continuum of care. Details are available on the School of Physical Therapy [website](#).

### C. Dallas area – Women's Health Physical Therapy Residency

Baylor Scott and White Institute for Rehabilitation and Texas Woman's University Physical Therapy Residency in Women's Health is an APTA-credentialed program. Its mission is to promote excellence in the lifespan of women's health across the continuum of care. Details are available on the School of Physical Therapy [website](#).

## VI. POST-PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Those seeking financial assistance should first contact TWU Office of Financial Aid on the Denton campus, either by phone or through their [web page](#).

Prospective PhD students may apply prior to any admission decision and may email [scholarships@twu.edu](mailto:scholarships@twu.edu) regarding any questions.

Apply for scholarships via the Pioneer Scholarship System with details on the Financial Aid [web page](#).

A limited number of TWU New Graduate Scholarships are available to full- time or part-time PhD students new to TWU.

For full-time scholarships, students must be enrolled in 9 or more credit hours per semester. For part-time scholarships, students must be enrolled in 5 or more credit hours per semester.

Out-of-state students earning a TWU competitive scholarship of \$1000 or more per year qualifies for in-state tuition.

Other external grant and scholarship opportunities may be available to doctoral-level students (e.g., Adopt-a-Doc awards through APTA Sections/Academies, Foundation for Physical Therapy PODS scholarships). Such opportunities are highly competitive and involve an extensive application process. If a student wishes to pursue such funding, students should enroll in an independent study with their academic advisor or dissertation chair in the semester prior to the funding deadline.

## VII. TEACHING AND/OR RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS

The University provides a limited number of graduate assistantships, graduate teaching assistantships, and graduate research assistantships for qualified graduate students. General information can be found on the [Graduate School web page](#). Information regarding appointment procedures and remuneration is also located in the Graduate Catalog.

The assistant receives a stipend for contributing to the teaching and research mission of the University. Stipends vary according to assignment and educational level of the applicant.

Graduate programs are designed to enhance the student's scholarly and professional development. An assistantship should serve as an instrument to facilitate this development. A graduate assistant is both a student and a faculty member. As a student, the assistant is expected to maintain high academic standards to retain the assistantship. As a faculty member, the assistant is expected to complete teaching and research responsibilities in a timely and efficient manner.

Assignments and responsibilities will enhance the assistant's scholarship and professional development.

For the graduate teaching assistant, the teaching assignment should provide opportunities for obtaining a depth of knowledge within the academic discipline.

For the graduate research assistant, the research project should ideally result in a scholarly product or dissertation but may vary depending on the funding mechanisms and agreement between the student and the academic advisor.

Students should consult the School of Physical Therapy concerning the availability of assistantships with the department. Completed applications and supporting documents, including official transcripts, verification of graduate status, and letters of reference must be filed with the Director of the School of Physical Therapy for review and recommendation. The applications are kept on file in the academic component's office.

- Graduate students who are interested in applying for a graduate assistant position should complete the [Application for Graduate Assistantships](#).
- The application should be completed and mailed or emailed as an attachment to the Director of the School of Physical Therapy.
- Please note that admission to the Graduate School must precede an appointment to a graduate assistantship.
- Additional detail about the application process is available on the [Graduate School web page](#).



## VIII. POLICIES FOR POST PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

### A. University Policies

For University policies on grades and GPA, incompletes, adding and dropping courses, appeals, withdrawals, health requirements, etc., please refer to the current Texas Woman's University *Graduate Catalog* and/or the current Schedule of Classes.

### B. Disability Access Policy Statement:

Texas Woman's University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (e.g. mental health conditions, learning disabilities, chronic medical conditions, temporary medical conditions, etc.), please register with Disability Services for Students (DSS) to establish reasonable academic accommodations. After registration with DSS, please contact me so that we may discuss how to implement your accommodations. Applicable policy: [URP: 01.242 Academic Accommodations for Students](#).

DSS contact information: [DSS website](#); dss@twu.edu; 940-898-3835; CFO Ste. 106.

### C. Title IX: Pregnant and Parenting Students

Title IX is a federal law that requires schools that receive federal funds to provide reasonable accommodations to students who are pregnant or have pregnancy-related conditions. This includes pregnancy, pre-natal doctor appointments, childbirth, false pregnancy, miscarriage, termination of pregnancy, or recovery from any of these conditions. Students who may need academic accommodations due to pregnancy-related conditions should complete the [Pregnancy Accommodation form](#) to coordinate academic needs.

### D. Title IX: Sexual Violence Education

TWU is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and TWU policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct.

As students, if you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance.

Alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at the [Report an Incident website \(https://twu.edu/civility/report-an-incident/\)](https://twu.edu/civility/report-an-incident/) or at (940) 898-2968. Additionally, please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, all employees are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

Students who wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility can contact TWU Counseling and Psychological Services at (940) 898-3801 for the Denton Campus, (214) 689-6655 for the Dallas Campus, and (713) 794-2059 for the Houston Campus.

### E. Campus Alliance for Resource Education

TWU believes that to learn effectively, a student's basic needs must be met. If you are struggling with housing, enough food to eat, your mental health, financial issues, or any other basic need, TWU has resources that may be able to assist you. Please contact the CARE office at (940) 898-2789 or make an appointment via the [CARE website \(https://twu.edu/care/\)](https://twu.edu/care/).

## VIII. POLICIES FOR POST PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

### F. **Academic Integrity**

Honesty in completing assignments is essential to the mission of the University and to the development of the personal integrity of students. In submitting graded assignments, students affirm that they have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance and that they have abided by all other provisions of the Academic Integrity Policy and the Student Code of Conduct as found on the TWU website and in the TWU Student Handbook.

Cheating, plagiarism, collusion, dual submission of a paper, or other kinds of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate sanctions that may include failing an assignment, failing the class, removal from an academic program, or being suspended or expelled.

Allegations of academic dishonesty in this course may be reported to the Office of Civility and Community Standards. The specific disciplinary process for academic dishonesty is in the [TWU Student Code of Conduct](#) and [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

For details on avoiding plagiarism, review the Library [Tutorial: Avoiding Plagiarism](#).

### G. **TWU Attendance Policy**

Consistent attendance is vital to academic success and is expected of all students. Grades are determined by academic performance, and instructors may give students written notice that attendance related to specific classroom activities is required.

Absences do not exempt students from academic requirements. Excessive absences, even if documented, may result in a student's failing the course. Excused absences are within the purview of the instructor. Students must consult with instructors regarding make-up work.

### H. **Student Religious Accommodation Policy**

It is the policy of Texas Woman's University to accommodate students who observe work-restricted religious holy days. Upon receipt of proper notice, students who miss classes, examinations, or any other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance will be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities without academic penalty.

Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the coursework required during the period of absence. Students seeking religious accommodations must complete the [Accommodation for Work-Restricted Religious Holy Day Form](#) as outlined by the dates in the [URP: 06.120 Student Religious Accommodation Policy](#).

### I. **Emergency Preparedness Information**

TWU is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all students and places a high emphasis on community safety. We have established thorough protocols to address emergencies such as fires, tornadoes, and active assailant events. Regular drills and training sessions are conducted to ensure that everyone is well-prepared to respond efficiently in case of any emergency. Pioneer Alerts notify students and faculty about rising emergencies via phones, email, and university computers. Keep your information updated through Pioneer Portal to receive these important notifications. In emergencies, evacuate during fires, seek shelter-in-place for severe weather, and call 911 and [RUN/HIDE/FIGHT](#) for active assailants. Review the [TWU Emergency Guidebook](#) for more details or contact Emergency Management at 940-898-3367 or [twuready@twu.edu](mailto:twuready@twu.edu). Follow @TWUReady for preparedness tips and updates. For severe weather areas, visit the [Shelter-in-Place Maps](#).