



**TEXAS WOMAN'S**  
UNIVERSITY

# **POST PROFESSIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL THERAPY**  
**College of Health Sciences**

2022 Edition  
(March, 2022)

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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. The faculty has developed a curriculum plan that is flexible enough to meet your goals and rigorous enough to meet Graduate School standards. We try to offer courses at times and in formats that will fit into your busy schedule.

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 in various ways, and 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 to you about issues from admissions to program completion. Your advisor will certainly be a source of guidance for you, but you also are responsible for understanding what the requirements are. In addition to this Handbook, you can contact someone on each campus to clear up any uncertainties you may still have about forms, procedures, etc. (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,  
Ann Medley, PT, PhD  
Director, School of Physical Therapy

## **I. 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. These policies and procedures are 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 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 advisors frequently concerning progress and any changes.

## II. ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Admission requirements for the graduate school are explained in the *TWU Graduate Catalog* (<https://catalog.twu.edu/graduate/>) and on the Graduate Admissions web page (<https://twu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-admission-requirements/>).

### A. Application Process

All new graduate students seeking admission to TWU must submit the following to the School of Physical Therapy through the School of Physical Therapy Advisor on the Denton Campus:

Mary Beth Daugherty  
Sr. Administrative Assistant  
Texas Woman's University  
School of Physical Therapy  
PO Box 425766  
Denton, Texas 76204-5766  
Phone: 940-898-2460  
Fax: 940-898-2853  
E-mail: [MDaugherty@twu.edu](mailto:MDaugherty@twu.edu)

- An application form is completed online. (<https://twu.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/>).
- 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. At a later date 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 University between the first and second admission to TWU.

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

**Non-degree Program Admission:** This type of admission is appropriate for several student-specific situations.

- Students accepted into one of TWU's cooperative residency programs.
- Students seeking a certificate in a specialized field of study.
- Students are seeking additional education for the purposes of career enrichment.
- Students wishing to take a course but unsure about seeking a degree or certificate until academic advising can be arranged at a later date.
- Individuals holding a license in an allied health discipline (e.g., occupational therapist) may enroll in selected courses, with the permission of the instructor, for their own professional development or for a certificate, if qualified.
- Students wishing to take a course to be applied to the Continuing Competence (CC) requirements for re-licensure 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 CCUs for each 1 credit hr. For example, if a post professional student has successfully completed 1 course for 3-credit-hours, that student has also earned 30 CCUs. When completing the Texas Continuing Competence Activity Summary for online renewal, enter the course(s) as a post professional course with the standard approval number of 90001TX. Use the date that the course was completed (May, August, December) for the completion date (<https://www.tpta.org/>). This date must fall within the student's renewal period. If audited, the post professional student would need to submit a syllabus and an official transcript showing successful completion of a course(s) completed and claimed for CCU credit.

If at a later time students seek to change their admission status to degree study, a maximum of 12 graduate credit hours earned as a non-degree seeking student will subsequently apply toward a graduate degree. The Dean of the Graduate School, upon recommendation of the student's advisory committee, will determine which credits earned as non-degree seeking are appropriate to the degree program.

Non-degree admission does not guarantee future admission in a degree program.

### **C. General Admission Requirements**

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. All coursework from foreign universities must be evaluated by TWU to establish U.S. equivalencies.
- Present an official transcript from every university or college attended. If a degree was earned, it must be indicated on the transcript.
- Standardized examinations such as the GRE are not required. However, the applicant has the option of submitting scores voluntarily.
- TOEFL language proficiency exam score if the applicant earned an undergraduate degree from a foreign college or university (see graduate school website for additional information); see <https://catalog.twu.edu/graduate/graduate-school/admission-graduate-school/international-students/> for details and deadlines.

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

In addition to the general University requirements, students must meet School of Physical Therapy requirements. These requirements differ depending on the type of admission.

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 Coordinator of Post Professional Studies 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 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:

### **1. Doctor of Philosophy Degree**

The student 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 minimum earned GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for previous professional degree. This requirement also applies to post-professional degrees such as a post-professional DPT.
- GRE scores preferred but not required.
- All coursework from a foreign university must be evaluated by TWU's International Education evaluator to establish U.S. equivalencies.
- 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 International Student Admission website at <https://twu.edu/admissions/international-admissions/>.
- A basic course in statistics within the last 5 years (recommended).

### **2. Certificate Program in Women's Health**

- 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.
- GRE scores preferred but not required.
- 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.

- 3. Contact Information:** For PhD information and interview scheduling contact the Coordinator of Post Professional Studies at the Dallas or Houston campus:

**DALLAS**

Mary Thompson, PT, PhD, GCS  
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)

**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)

**Women's Health Certificate or Residency (Dallas)**

Mary Thompson, PT, PhD, GCS  
Phone: (214) 689-7713  
Email: [MThompson@twu.edu](mailto:MThompson@twu.edu)

**E. Outcomes of Admission Decisions**

The Coordinator of Post Professional Studies 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 and enrollment capacity, as well as student/program matching. The Dean of the Graduate School then reviews their admission recommendation and if the committee recommendations are accepted, sends an official letter to the applicant. There are two possible outcomes of admission decisions. Each is explained below:

- **Denial of Admission:** Admission is denied if the applicant fails to meet the minimum requirements established by the Graduate School and the School of Physical Therapy, if the program has reached the limits of its enrollment, or if 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.*

*Provisional:* Graduate degree study is permitted, however there are certain conditions that must be met for continuation in the program. These 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. Students accepted provisionally in the PhD program will not be unconditionally accepted if any PhD course grade is a C or lower. Once the conditions for full admission have been met, the student and faculty advisor request a change of status to *Unconditional Admission* to the Graduate School for by the student via a form (<https://twu.edu/gradschool/forms/>). Failure to meet conditions of admission results in the student's removal from a degree program.

### **III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM OF STUDY**

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 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, videoconference, or combination format. In addition, students may take courses in other departments at TWU and at other universities (within set limitations) with their advisor's permission and 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. If you have questions, please reach out to your chair or the Post-Professional Coordinator on your home campus. In addition, please consider following the School of Physical Therapy as well as other TWU sites on social media. Our Facebook page is TWU School of Physical Therapy.

Also, make sure you have access and are utilizing the School of Physical Therapy Collaborative Space on Canvas. Here you can find valuable resources including links to required forms, course syllabi, and announcements.

## **B. Advisor**

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

During the course of study, the faculty member advising the student may change based on faculty or student needs. If a change of advisor is needed, a change of advisor form must be completed and sent to the registrar

(<https://twu.edu/media/documents/registrar/Advisor-Change-Request.pdf>)

## **C. Time Limitations**

All requirements toward a PhD degree must be completed within a period of eight consecutive calendar years from the date PhD doctoral credit is first earned. Therefore, all requirements, including transfer credit hours from another University to be applied to the PhD degree, must be completed within this time frame. If a student exceeds the time limitation, a student may be required to enroll in additional courses. Students who will complete the PhD degree in their ninth year may petition the Dean of the Graduate School in the eighth year requesting special consideration of their individual circumstances. The decision of the Graduate School is final and may require the student to take additional coursework.

## **D. Academic Performance**

Students who enroll in graduate courses are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA on all graduate-level courses taken at TWU. When a student's cumulative grade average of graduate-level work falls below 3.0, the Graduate School automatically places the student on academic probation and notifies the student. Failure to restore the cumulative average to 3.0 or above, during the next enrollment results in suspension

from the Graduate School. It is not possible to improve the grade record at Texas Woman's University by attendance at another University. Students who have been suspended may reapply to the TWU Graduate School when 8 years have elapsed after the suspension.

Earning a grade of D, F, or WF in any PhD course will result in dismissal from the PT PhD program.

For PhD students accepted conditionally into the program: During the first 12 hours of core-course work, if a PhD student earns less than a B in a required core course, the student will be dismissed from the PT PhD program. In other words, a grade of C, D, or F in the first 12-credit-hours in a core PhD course will lead to student dismissal.

In no case may a course with an earned grade below B apply to the PhD in the School of Physical Therapy. Therefore, students who satisfactorily complete the first 12 credit hours of core PhD coursework, but earn a grade of C in any PhD course, must develop a remediation plan with their advisor and retake the course.

Students have the right to appeal a course grade and/or dismissal from the PT PhD program. See the Policy section of this handbook. The process and form for all appeals at TWU is located at <https://twu.edu/academic-affairs/academic-complaints-appeals/>.

## **E. Planning a Program of Study**

The student along with their academic advisor will develop a degree plan using the online system (<https://selfservice.twu.edu>). In the construction of the degree plan, the student and advisor must consider course load, residency, transfer credit, program requirements, and expected course offerings described below.

### **1. Course Load and Residency Requirement:**

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

All PhD students must complete 2 semesters of residency either consecutively or non-consecutively. 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.

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 periods and their timing must be approved by the student's advisor and recorded on the student's degree plan. If courses during a residency semester include individual study or practicum course(s), the student must complete the appropriate form (Independent Study/Practicum Agreement <https://www.twu.edu/physical-therapy/current-students/phd-forms/>). 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.

## **2. Transfer Credit:**

For the PhD, there is no automatic transfer of graduate credit, but the student's advisory committee has the prerogative to recommend to the Dean of the Graduate School the acceptance of transferable semester credit hours.

Only graduate coursework completed at regionally accredited institutions may be considered for transfer. TWU does not accept life or work experience for graduate credit. A student may apply for consideration of transfer of semester credit hours after satisfactorily completing a minimum of nine semester credit hours of graduate credit at Texas Woman's University and upon filing a Degree Plan or 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 completed degree.

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.**

## **3. 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 of TWU	Master's Degree
Research Tools	13	13	13	13
Core PhD Classes	25	25	25	25
Remaining Coursework	12 transferred from DPT	12 transferred from 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 credit hours.

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

- PT 6043 Statistical Methods I for the Health Care Professional (3 CH)
- PT 6243 Statistical Methods II for the Health Care Professional (3 CH)
- PT 6191 Applied Statistical Methods for the Health Care Professional (1 CH)

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

- PT 6213 Computer Applications in PT Research (3 CH)
- AND **one** of the following:
- PT 6083 Advanced Instrumentation in Physical Therapy (3 CH)
- OR-
- OT 6643 Advanced Qualitative Methods in Occupational Therapy (3 CH)
- OR-
- NURS 6024 Theory and Methods of Qualitative Nursing Research (4 CH)
- OR-
- NURS 6523 Qualitative Nursing Research (3 CH)

-OR-

Other 3-credit hour qualitative research methods and/or analysis course in any discipline/department at the graduate level

**Core PhD Courses  
(25 credit hours required)**

- PT 6023 Research for the Clinical Scientist (3 CH)
- PT 6193 Psychometric Properties of Rehabilitation Tests and Measures (3 CH)
- PT 6103 Advanced Practicum (3 CH)
- OR-
- PT 6101 Practicum 3 times (with advisor approval) (1 CH x 3)
- PT 6503 Introduction to Grantsmanship in Physical Therapy (3 CH)
- PT 6523 Teaching and Learning in PT (3 CH)
- PT 6533 Academic Issues in Physical Therapist Education (3 CH)
- PT 6971 Integration of Theory & Research in Physical Therapy. (Qualifying Examination) (1 CH)
- PT 6983 Dissertation I (3 CH)
- PT 6993 Dissertation II (3 CH)

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

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

The remaining coursework consists of concentration area courses in women's health or neurological physical therapy, 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 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 faculty 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,

assisting in projects, developing courses, presenting papers or posters at professional meetings, and submitting manuscripts.

With the 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). Suggested courses might include those in related disciplines such as Occupational Therapy, Health Care Administration, Education, Kinesiology, Nursing, or Psychology.

#### 4. *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 (3+3 year "fast-track program") or following graduation: Degree plan consists of a minimum 38 credit hours.

The entry-level DPT to PhD "fast-track" program addresses the need to educate a younger 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. **This program is only open to internal candidates enrolled in the TWU entry-level DPT program.**

Current students may apply in either semester two or in semester five with formal application to the Graduate School in semester 8. Accepted students will either be assigned a research advisor at the time of acceptance or DPT completion 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.

DPT to PhD fast track students may elect (with approval of their PhD advisor and the Coordinator of Post Professional studies) to take one or more PhD courses while in the entry-level program starting in semester 4. However, it is more common for fast track students to wait until later in their DPT program to start taking PhD courses.

DPT to PhD fast track students may stay on an accelerated schedule and graduate with a PhD in approximately 3 year post DPT. Or 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.

38-credit-hour degree plan:

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

- **EXTERNAL DPT to PhD:** For students entering the PhD program with an earned DPT degree from another university (not TWU): Degree plan consisting of a minimum 50 credit hours.

To appeal to practicing physical therapists that have achieved the DPT degree through post professional programs at other Universities, we have developed the following program to transition to the PhD.

50-credit-hour degree plan:

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

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

To appeal to practicing physical therapists that have achieved the DPT degree through post professional programs at other Universities, we have developed the following program to transition to the PhD.

60-credit-hour degree plan:

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

##### 5. *Expected Course Offerings:*

Information on course offerings is typically projected over a 5-year period and is updated every 2 to 3 years. In general, required courses are offered every year across campuses. Students may enroll in Practicum or Independent Study in any semester with the advisor's permission, but the course must be planned and the appropriate agreement form (<https://www.twu.edu/physical-therapy/current->

[students/phd-forms/](#)) completed at least one semester in advance. Before admission, TWU publishes DPT and PhD Physical Therapy courses offered by course number and semester at <https://twu.edu/media/documents/oevp/course-rotations/course-rotations-physical-therapy.pdf>. Once admitted to the PhD program, the PhD Course Rotation is posted on the Canvas School of Physical Therapy Collaborative Space available to PhD students.

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

The degree plan constitutes a plan-of-action for the student's program. Via <https://SelfService.twu.edu>, the student and advisor construct an initial degree plan with advice from the Coordinator of Post Professional Studies if needed. On the Dallas campus, 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, advisor document communications with the student and Graduate School listing approvals, meetings and people present, and the residency time periods. The outline of courses plan can be seen in the Course Plan, Timeline and Progress sections of Self Service.

Changing when a student will enroll in a course can be made in 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 advisor to complete a Graduate Degree Plan Substitution form available 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 at <https://www.twu.edu/physical-therapy/current-students/phd-forms>). The CV is submitted upon admission and maintained by the student. The CV is submitted annually every September to the Coordinator of Post-Professional Studies on the student's respective campus, at graduation, and one-year post graduation.

## H. Qualifying Examination

The PhD program is a broad, research-based program that seeks to provide a thorough education in physical therapy practice. 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.

- A. *Planning:* The student and advisor initially plan and schedule the qualifying examination during the degree planning process. The qualifying examination can be scheduled following completion of the majority of core PhD courses and completion of all research tools.
- B. *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 and two additional faculty members in the School of Physical Therapy with associate or full graduate faculty status. See <https://twu.edu/gradschool/faculty/graduate-faculty/> for a list of qualified faculty at the "Full" or "Associate" levels. Depending on the student's home campus, advisory committee members will be assigned to the student's qualifying exam on a rotation basis (Dallas) or will be selected in collaboration with the student, advisor, faculty member(s) and the Director of Research (Houston). Qualified faculty on either campus may serve on advisory committees regardless of the student's home campus.
- C. *Enrollment for Qualifying Exams:*
  - a. 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. Students will demonstrate their understanding of PhD tool course work and core courses through the written and oral examinations. Carefully review the PT 6971 syllabus which is posted in Canvas under "School of Physical Therapy Collaborative Space" at least one semester prior to enrolling in this course.
  - b. The qualifying exam product and due dates are documented in a Self Service Note in consultation with the advisor.
    - The written and oral examination content must 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 alone should not serve as a complete chapter in the dissertation. With prior approval from the committee students can select one of the following three options for the written qualifying exam product:

- Grant application for a project determined in consultation with the advisory committee. Page limits 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.
  - Manuscript that would be suitable for a peer-reviewed journal. The journal selection should be determined in consultation with the committee. The following are acceptable types of manuscripts:
    - Student-collected data that is ready for analysis and publication
    - Pre-existing data sets that require analysis and interpretation; student would determine the research questions based on the data
    - Study Protocol as described in the Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Journal. (PTJ)
      - For additional information read the description under “Trial Protocol” at [https://academic.oup.com/ptj/pages/Author\\_Guidelines](https://academic.oup.com/ptj/pages/Author_Guidelines).
- Ideally, the written product is due by 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. Due date for the written examination and a tentative date for the oral examination are mutually agreed on 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.
- c. Under no circumstances should the advisor or committee members assist the student during the examination semester.
  - d. Students are allowed to seek grammatical and sentence structure assistance ONLY from the Write Site within TWU.
  - e. Independently, students may seek and use statistical resources (internet, textbook, etc.) during the examination semester to prepare for the exam.
  - f. 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.
- g. The oral examination is scheduled for a 2-hour time period and consists of ~30- to 45-minute formal presentation followed by oral questions by the advisory committee. The student is expected to orally defend his/her work. The topic of the oral examination is clarification and expansion of the written qualification product and general topic.
- h. Qualifying exam rubrics are used by the advisory committee to judge the quality of the written and oral qualifying examinations. These rubrics can be found under "forms" on the TWU-School of Physical Therapy website and should be reviewed by the student prior to submission of the qualifying exam (<https://www.twu.edu/physical-therapy/current-students/phd-forms/>).
- i. Both the written and oral exams must be completed in the same semester.
- j. Student MUST pass the qualifying exam before registering for PT 6983 Dissertation (I).
- k. 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.
- D. *Following Failure of Qualifying Examination(s):*  
 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 will have one opportunity to retake each exam once. The student must re-enroll in PT 6971, Integration of Theory & Research in Physical Therapy, to continue with the examination process in the following semester. It is up to the student's advisor and committee to determine the need for any concurrent remediation enrollment documented in the Self Service NOTE section. Remediation should be guided by the 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 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.
- E. *Following Successful Examinations - Research Committee for the Dissertation:*  
 Immediately following completion of the oral qualifying exam, the student must secure their dissertation research committee members. The role of this research

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.

As part of the admission to candidacy process, the Dean of the Graduate School will appoint a research committee from a list of faculty members suggested by the student in consultation with his/her advisor, Coordinator for Post Professional Studies, and/or Coordinator of Research. Faculty members on the qualifying examination advisory committee may or may not continue their service on the research committee. A faculty member has the right to exclude him or herself from any dissertation appointment. In addition, the student, Coordinator of Post Professional Studies, Research Coordinator, or Associate Director 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. The second and third committee members must have at least Associate Graduate Faculty status. An optional fourth member is allowed. This 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 paperwork. This will be an uncompensated appointment to serve on the research committee. This external committee member must be approved to serve by the graduate school.

## **I. Admission to Candidacy**

Students, in conjunction with their major advisor, request admission to candidacy by using the appropriate form found on the Graduate School webpage (<https://www.twu.edu/gradschool/forms/>). Admission to candidacy requires the following:

- Unconditional admission to the Graduate School;
- An active degree audit (degree plan) in SelfServe;
- Demonstration of professional promise;
- Good academic standing;
- Completion of research tools;

- Satisfaction of the residence requirement;
- Successful completion of qualifying examination.

The admission to candidacy proceeds as follows:

1. The major advisor verifies that the above conditions have been met. If so, the process proceeds.
2. The Request for Admission to Candidacy form is completed by the major advisor and signed by the Director of the School of PT.
3. The completed, signed form is sent to the Graduate School with the list of the dissertation research committee members and the CV of an optional external to TWU member.
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
  - Chair (advisor)
  - Title of dissertation
  - Collaborators outside TWU involved the dissertation (people and/or organizations)
  - Grant funding
  - Education from bachelor's degree (university name and location)
  - Residence (current city, state) and may also provide country of origin.

#### **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.
- Once a student is a doctoral candidate and has completed his/her degree plan with the exception of dissertation, the student must register for PT 6983 Dissertation (I) or PT 6993 Dissertation (II) continuously in any semester enrolled. 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 his or her enrollment in dissertation be deemed "continuous." However, if a student elects to not enroll in the summer, it should be understood that the faculty mentor will not be available for assistance, and TWU equipment and/or facilities may be available for student use.

- Students may stop dissertation enrollment at any time for any reason; however, they are then prohibited on 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.
- If the student completes the requirements of PT 6983 Dissertation (I) early in a semester that their prospectus is approved by the Graduate School, the student can begin collecting dissertation data with an approved IRB protocol during the remainder of the semester. In this scenario, the student would not have to wait until he/she enrolled in PT 6993 Dissertation (II) to collect data.
- If students want to collect data during semester breaks (i.e., between Spring and Summer, Summer and Fall, Christmas break), 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, they must be registered in PT 6993 Dissertation (II) for Summer.
  - To collect data between summer and fall, they must be registered in PT 6993 Dissertation (II) for Fall.
  - To collect data over Christmas 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 and there is not time to complete all required edits before the end of the semester, the student may register for a final 1-hour independent study to complete the edits in the following semester. This is only an option if the student successfully defended their dissertation.

## **K. Research Committee for Dissertations**

### 1. *Purpose:*

- The purpose of the research committee is to evaluate the student's total progress and achievement and to ensure maintenance of high scholarship standards.

## 2. *Selection of Research Committee Members:*

- The student and major advisor meet to discuss potential committee members based on faculty expertise and the research topic chosen by the student.
- The research committee is formed in consultation with the student, advisor, Coordinator of Post Professional Studies/Research Coordinator, and the Associate Director.
- The research committee for dissertations must consist of not fewer than three voting members of the graduate faculty of TWU, at least two of whom represent the School of Physical Therapy. Ordinarily, a person selected to serve on a committee should hold a regular, full-time academic appointment at TWU and should be a member of the graduate faculty. A person selected to serve on a PhD committee is expected to hold a post professional doctoral degree.
- If the list contains the name of a non-TWU faculty member, the Graduate School must review his/her CV. To qualify to serve on a PhD committee, the non-TWU faculty member must hold a doctoral degree and have appropriate research experience and expertise. The Graduate School must approve and appoint external members of the committee.
- The student contacts prospective research committee members to discuss their willingness to serve on the committee, and to obtain their consent to serve on the research committee for the dissertation.
- Faculty members on the qualifying examination advisory committee may or may not continue their service on the research committee.
- A faculty member has the right to exclude him or herself from any dissertation appointment. In addition, the student, Coordinator of Post Professional Studies, Research Coordinator, or Associate Director has the authority to exclude any potential faculty member from a dissertation appointment.

## 3. *Authority and Responsibilities:*

- The research committee 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 Director or Associate Director of the School of Physical Therapy.
- The student's advisor serves and the research committee chair. The chair serves as the committee spokesperson in dealing with the student. The student should have no uncertainty concerning the person with whom to deal in the day-to-day

preparation of the major study, and it should seldom be necessary for the student to hold conferences concerning minor matters with the individual members between committee meetings.

- The student will meet with the committee as needed to prepare the dissertation proposal. Once the student has successfully defended the dissertation proposal and the prospectus is written, the Prospectus Cover Sheet is completed and signed by the major advisor, the committee members, the Director of the School and the Dean of the College. The signed Cover Sheet and prospectus are submitted to the Graduate School. It is at this point that the Graduate School is made aware of the student's Research Committee chair and membership. The Prospectus Cover Sheet can be found on the Graduate School webpage: <https://www.twu.edu/gradschool/forms/>
- The committee chair ensures that the student follows Texas Woman's University Institutional Review Board guidelines established in accordance with the Department of Health and Human Services regulations. The committee chair also ensures that the student understands that data collection cannot begin until there is an approved/signed prospectus on file in the Graduate School.
- The committee accepts or rejects the completed major study in accordance with high standards of scholarship.
- 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).

#### 4. *Changes in Committee Appointment:*

- If necessary, changes in committee membership can be made. The student, committee member, Coordinator of Post Professional Studies, or Associate Director may initiate a request for a change in committee appointment. The person requesting the change makes the request in writing. The request is routed to all parties, from the student to the Graduate School.
- Academic courtesy holds that, before an official change is made, the person requesting the change should inform all parties concerned.

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

- The School of Physical Therapy strongly recommends a minimum of 2 submissions to peer-reviewed journals within the first year after graduation based on the dissertation, as well as dissemination of results at a national-level conference. Toward that goal, the advisor and the student should agree on authorship of manuscripts prior to the beginning of the dissertation. If the advisor does not bring up the subject, it is the student's responsibility to clarify what the student's contribution will be and what the student will receive as benefit. 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 mentor. In no case should publication or presentation of any part of the work be attempted without the written consent of the advisor. The authorship agreement can be found at <https://www.twu.edu/physical-therapy/current-students/phd-forms/>.
- 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 major research advisor 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 mentor's responsibility.

## **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. Each 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 should start early in the student's degree program.
- An early decision is the general format type. The School of Physical Therapy allows two dissertation format types (Traditional and Manuscript). The decision about which option to use must be made by the student and advisor, not by the student alone.
- Regardless of format type, every dissertation consists of three sections: front matter, body, and back matter. The number of chapters and components included in each section will vary by student according to the particulars of the project and the format type (Traditional or Manuscript). The overview below indicates the proper order of each of the components within each of the sections. The number of manuscripts in a dissertation is up to the chair and committee.

Dissertation Formats

Front Matter	Body		Back Matter
	Traditional	Manuscript	
Abstract	Ch. 1: Introduction	Ch. 1: Introduction	References Appendices
Title Page	Ch. 2: Literature Review	Ch. 2: Literature Review	
Table of Contents	Ch. 3: Methods	Ch. 3: Manuscript One (with the following sections as appropriate)	
List of Figures	Ch. 4: Results	- Title	
List of Tables	Ch. 5: Discussion	- Abstract	
Acknowledgments		- Introduction	
Dedication		- Methods	
		- Results	
		- Discussion	
		- References	
		Ch. 4: Manuscript Two (same sections as above)	
		Ch. 5: Manuscript Three (same sections as above)	
		Ch. 6: Conclusion	

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

- The dissertation *proposal*, is generally considered to be the first 2 or 3 chapters of the dissertation that consists of an introduction, review of the literature and detailed description of the proposed research methods and procedures. The exact structure of the proposal is up to the committee chair. Students may choose to meet with the research committee before writing the proposal (pre-

proposal meeting) to orient the entire committee on the research carried out to date and future plans.

- When the dissertation proposal is completed, it is circulated by the candidate's research committee chair and to other members of the dissertation research committee (hereafter called the committee) for reading and criticism. The proposal must be delivered to each committee member no less than 10 working days before the committee meets to discuss it.
- A formal meeting of the committee is called with the candidate, the proposal is discussed, and criticisms are considered. The dissertation proposal meeting is a closed meeting in that only the faculty committee members and the doctoral candidate attend. The dissertation research committee may (a) approve the proposal as submitted, (b) request that the requisite changes be incorporated under the direction of the candidate's advisor with no further meeting of the committee being necessary for approval, or (c) request that a rewritten proposal be again submitted and another formal meeting of the committee be held to consider its merits for approval.
- Once the committee approves the proposal, the student generates the *prospectus*. The dissertation prospectus is an abbreviated dissertation proposal no longer than 10 pages plus references and appendixes. The prospectus includes a brief introduction, statement of purpose, selected literature review, research methods and procedures.
- The advisor may choose to have the student defend the prospectus itself rather than the more extensive proposal. This requirement to write the proposal versus the prospectus to be reviewed and criticized by the committee is made by the advisor but regardless of the decision, the student must be adequately familiar with the literature and methodological details to effectively defend the proposed study.
- The committee reviews the prospectus to ensure it accurately reflects the more detailed dissertation proposal approved by the committee. If acceptable, the committee members sign the prospectus cover letter. If the advisor chose to have the student defend the prospectus (rather than the proposal), then the prospectus is approved and signed at the time of the formal committee meeting.
- The following items are submitted to the Graduate School:
  - Signed prospectus coversheet
  - Prospectus

- Responsible conduct of research (RCR) through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) completion certificate for student and committee chair (faculty certificate may be on file).
  - IRB submission or approval
  - Upon receipt and review, the Graduate School will send an approval letter after which the student may then implement the dissertation study.
3. *Institutional Review Board - Student enrolled in PT 6983 or PT 6993:*
- Following the research committee's approval of the dissertation proposal, 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 found on TWU's IRB web page (<https://twu.edu/institutional-review-board-irb/>).
  - All PhD students must complete human protections training through CITI and a certificate of completion must accompany the IRB application.
  - All IRBs are submitted online through the Cayuse system. (<https://twu.edu/institutional-review-board-irb/cayuse-human-ethics-cayuse-irb/>)
  - IRB application pre-approval process (before submission in Cayuse).
    - Houston PhD students must submit their completed IRB application to their chair for internal faculty review prior to submitting to the IRB.
    - Dallas PhD students must have advisor approval before submitting their IRB application.
  - IRB approval (or dual review if needed) is required before proceeding further with the dissertation.
  - **It is vital to keep all signed consent forms for later submission to the IRB.**
  - Dual IRB approval may be required if a student is collaborating with an outside institution for their dissertation study. It is the student's responsibility to contact the IRB to determine the need for a dual IRB approval.
  - During data collection, students must report any and all changes to protocol or unexpected results from research to the committee chair and the IRB immediately. Candidates must keep the chair informed of data collection process while it is ongoing.
4. *Dissertation studies involving interventions - Student enrolled in PT 6983 or PT 6993.*
- Remember to apply at [clinicaltrials.gov](http://clinicaltrials.gov) prior to data collection for any research that involves an intervention. Speak to the chair as to whether or not the study requires submission to this database.

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, 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 student perform additional statistical tests, analyses, or improve/expand in other areas as deemed necessary by the committee prior to the final dissertation defense. One or more additional data meetings may be necessary for mixed methods or qualitative research.

6. *Writing and Editing of 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 *Guide to the Preparation and Processing of Dissertation, Thesis, and Professional Papers* to facilitate the student's efforts in achieving these goals. The purpose of the guide is to provide graduate students and committee members with general guidelines for the preparation, format, and submission of papers. It is available through the Graduate School at [https://twu.edu/media/documents/graduate-school/Guide-to-the-Preparation-and-Processing-of-Dissertations,-Theses-and-Professional-Papers\(revised-May-25-2021\).pdf](https://twu.edu/media/documents/graduate-school/Guide-to-the-Preparation-and-Processing-of-Dissertations,-Theses-and-Professional-Papers(revised-May-25-2021).pdf).

The student's submission of all chapters of the dissertation is first reviewed by his or her dissertation chair. Once all required revisions have been completed, the dissertation is then forwarded to the remaining committee members. They then provide further revision suggestions. At every level of review, members of the committee are expected to provide prompt review and return of feedback within 10 working days. Once all revisions are made, the oral dissertation defense can be scheduled.

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. The dissertation oral defense rubric is available at: <https://twu.edu/physical-therapy/current-students/phd-forms/>.

The defense of the dissertation is a scholarly community activity and as such, the oral examination is open to all faculty and the public. Following the student's oral

presentation, the chair will invite questions from members of the committee followed by members of the audience.

- When preparing for the public oral presentation and defense, the student works with the dissertation chair to ensure the:
  - date and time scheduled as early as possible in the final semester of enrollment.
  - student understands the consequences of academic calendar deadlines.
  - entire presentation and questions/answers/discussion is 50 minutes.
  - necessary video-conferencing or Zoom is scheduled. In addition, live-stream may be available to broadcast the defense on the internet.
  - public is invited at least 2 weeks prior to the public event. Invite 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.

The committee is responsible for examining the candidate. When the committee has examined the written dissertation and found it acceptable with or without revisions, a formal private meeting occurs lasting 2 hours where the student orally defends what he/she has written and orally presented and committee members ask additional questions. The Graduate School refers to this meeting as the Final Examination and the following steps occur:

- At the meeting, the candidate must digitally submit to the chair a:
  - completed Record of PhD Student Publications & Presentations (form available at <https://twu.edu/physical-therapy/current-students/phd-forms/>) and
  - 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.
- 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 recommends the candidate be approved for the degree by the Dean for Graduate Studies and Research. The committee and the Director of the School of Physical Therapy signs the Certificate of Completion for Thesis/Dissertation form (<https://twu.edu/media/documents/graduate-school/Certificate-of-Completion-for-Thesis-&-Dissertation-2020.pdf>)

- *Qualified approval*: Suggested changes are made under the direction of the chair without another meeting of the full committee, and the committee then will recommend that the Dean for Graduate Studies and Research approve granting the degree. Note: If a data analysis meeting was held and requested tests or analyses were made as requested at that time, no request for additional statistical tests or analyses can be required at this time. 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 then forwards the form to the Director for approval.
- *Qualified disapproval*: The research needs to be repeated or modified, or the major study rewritten extensively and resubmitted at second private meeting with the dissertation research committee. If a second formal defense of the major study is scheduled, two such meetings may not be scheduled in the same semester (2 consecutive summer terms are considered one semester).
- *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 the category of qualified disapproval or unqualified disapproval. The dissertation defense and final examination may be repeated only once.

- Once the committee and the Director of the School of Physical Therapy sign the Certificate of Completion for Thesis/Dissertation form, candidates will upload the committee-approved copy of their dissertation along with all required paperwork to the online TWU Thesis and Dissertation Submission System at <https://twu-etd.tdl.org/> (no paper copy should be submitted to the Graduate School).
- PhD students are required to attach their CV as a digital supplemental file.
- All other forms such as Certificate of Completion for Thesis & Dissertation, Survey of Earned Doctorate Certificate of Completion, Fee sheet, File Closed letter, and/or Publishing Agreements will be uploaded as Administrative files.
- The Graduate Reader/Editor and other Graduate School staff will review the file to assure submitted documents meet Graduate School requirements. From there it will be accepted or sent back for the candidate to corrections within 5 class days. It is likely that the Graduate Reader/Editor will return the dissertation to the candidate and request that he/she work closely with the chair to correct errors and consider suggestions for improvement.

- Upon successful completion of digital submission the student will receive an email from the Administrator acknowledging successful completion of the digital process and their earned PhD.

## **N. Request for Reduced Tuition**

Texas residents are eligible for a reduced tuition rate when enrolling for dissertation only, providing those hours are the final credits required for the degree. Reduced tuition may be assigned for one semester or one summer session only. Any subsequent enrollment will be at the standard tuition rate (form available at <https://twu.edu/gradschool/forms/>).

## **O. Doctor of Philosophy Flow Sheet and Graduation Check List**

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

1. Campus-specific PhD Admissions Committee conditionally accepts applicant and assigns student an advisor (may be temporary). The 8-year clock starts with first PhD course enrolled. If earlier transfer courses are applied to the degree, the 8-year clock starts from the earliest date.
2. Student completes up to the first 12 credit hours of coursework. If GPA 3.0 or higher, student will apply for unconditional acceptance to program.
3. After completing 12 credit hours of coursework but no later than 18 credit hours, student and advisor will construct an initial degree plan and NOTE within in the Self-service system. Present research ideas to advisor.
4. Student and advisor begin preliminary planning for the dissertation. Student successfully completes the residency requirements and most other coursework.
5. Qualifying examination advisory committee (not formally appointed by the Graduate School) 3-member committee appointed or formed.
6. Once all “tools” completed and the majority of the core courses, student and advisor plan for written and oral qualifying examinations. Student successfully complete the qualifying examinations. These must be passed at least one academic year before the PhD degree is expected to be conferred.
7. Student and advisor select dissertation research committee.
8. When all coursework is complete except the dissertation, advisor completes degree audit in Self-service system.
9. Student and chair apply to Graduate School for Admission to Candidacy and the Graduate School formal appoints the dissertation research committee. Advisor usually serves as chair of this committee.

10. Student is now a doctoral candidate.
11. Candidate enrolls in PT 6983 Dissertation (I) and may repeated as needed.  
Candidate can enroll in PT 6983 in any semester: Fall, Spring, and/or Summer (10-week) semesters. Continuous enrollment in dissertation (PT 6983 or PT 6993) is required from this point onward if candidate is working on dissertation activities. The candidate may pause dissertation enrollment for any reason, but during that time may not work on the dissertation.
12. Candidate writes Proposal and Prospectus.
13. Candidate and chair schedule Proposal/Prospectus defense meeting.
14. After the committee has approved the research prospectus and begun the Institutional Review Board process, the chair submits candidate's RCR training certificate the 10-page prospectus to the Director of the School of PT who then forwards it for Graduate School for approval.
15. Candidate enrolls in PT 6993 Dissertation (II) and may be repeated as necessary. The candidate can enroll in PT 6993 in any semester (Fall, Spring, and/or 10-week Summer session).
16. When all coursework is complete except the dissertation and no later than the semester prior to graduation, the Graduate School will perform the official degree audit in Self-service system.
17. Prior to last semester, candidate applies for reduced tuition if PT 6993 Dissertation is the only remaining course. See the TWU Academic Calendar for deadlines <https://twu.edu/registrar/academic-calendars/>.
18. In last semester, candidate applies for graduation; see TWU Academic Calendar for deadlines.
19. Candidate and chair schedule and conduct data meeting with full committee (optional but strongly recommended)
20. Candidate submits dissertation to committee for approval.
21. If committee is satisfied with the dissertation, the candidate and chair invite the public and TWU community to the public oral defense at least 2 weeks prior to the event.
22. Candidate privately orally presents his/her dissertation and the committee examines the candidate.
23. Candidate completes and submits Record of PhD Publications & Presentations form and CV to chair at dissertation defense, who uploads the documents to the appropriate School of PT PhD Google Drive shared folder.

24. Candidate uploads dissertation and other required materials for graduation to the Graduate School online system for format and editing review; see TWU Academic Calendar for deadlines.

Graduation Requirements for Graduate Students and a Graduation Checklist are available on the Graduate School web page (<https://twu.edu/gradschool/forms/>).

#### **IV. CERTIFICATE PROGRAM OF STUDY**

The women's health certificate program in physical therapy at TWU is designed for clinicians seeking recognition of advanced competency, but without the 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, in 1- or 2-week sessions, 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: <http://www.abpts.org/home.aspx>.

##### **A. Advisor**

Students in the certificate program do not have an advisor appointed by the Graduate School and do not have an advisory research committee. Instead, the Coordinator of Post Professional Studies and/or the designated faculty member will work with students to assure they are making progress toward obtaining the certificate. This monitoring process begins when the student and certificate advisor complete the form entitled "Texas Woman's University-Graduate School Completion of Graduate School Certificate" at the beginning of the certificate program. This form, available on the TWU Graduate School web page, is used for planning purposes and is held in the student's file until the completion of the certificate program. Upon completion of the 12-credit-hour certificate program, the certificate advisor then checks the form against the student transcript and files it with the Graduate School.

##### **B. Clinical or Licensure Requirements**

The certificate program is clinical in nature and thus requires state licensure for some or all courses, depending on the certificate program.

##### **C. 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.

#### **D. General Course Offerings and Sequencing**

The women's health certificate program typically offers one or more 3-credit-hour courses each semester. Note, a specified sequence may be required or the student may start a series of courses at any point as offered. For details, contact the School or consult the School of Physical Therapy web site.

#### **E. 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.

#### **F. Certificate of Advanced Studies in Women's Health Physical Therapy**

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 can be applied as evidence of continued competence for licensure (CCU) renewal (see [Texas Physical Therapy Association](#)) 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.

- PT 6603 Female Anatomy for Physical Therapists
- PT 6613 Women's Health for Physical Therapists
- PT 6623 Physical Therapy Management of Women's Health I
- PT 6633 Physical Therapy Management of Women's Health II

## **G. Certificate of Completion**

In the semester of the final certificate course the Coordinator of Post Professional Studies or Certificate contact person 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 organization 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 at <https://twu.edu/physical-therapy/graduate-programs/residency-programs/neurologic-residency---houston/>

### **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 at <https://twu.edu/physical-therapy/graduate-programs/residency-programs/neurologic-residency---dallas/>

### **C. Irving/Plano- 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 at <https://twu.edu/physical-therapy/graduate-programs/residency-programs/womens-health-residency---dallasplano/>

## **VI. POST-PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

Those seeking financial assistance should first contact TWU Office of Student Financial Aid on the Denton campus, either by phone or through their web page, <https://www.twu.edu/finaid/>.

Apply for scholarships via the Pioneer Scholarship System:

<https://twu.edu/finaid/types-of-aid/scholarships/>. Prospective PhD students may apply prior to any admission decision and may email [scholarships@twu.edu](mailto:scholarships@twu.edu) regarding any questions. 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. They are very restrictive and few students qualify (e.g., Adopt-a-Doc awards through APTA Sections/Academies, Foundation for Physical Therapy PODS scholarships).

## **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. Stipends vary according to assignment and educational level of the applicant. Information regarding appointment procedures and remuneration is also located in the Graduate Catalog. 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 professional paper, thesis, or dissertation. The assistant receives a stipend for contributing to the teaching and research mission of the University.

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 e-mailed 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 at <https://twu.edu/gradschool/graduate-assistants/applying-for-graduate-assistantships/>

## **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. Face Coverings:**

Because we are a "Campus with a Heart," we strongly encourage wearing a face covering over the nose and mouth in public spaces such as hallways, classrooms, instructional areas, and other common areas to protect fellow students, staff and faculty members when appropriate.

### **C. Disability Access Policy Statement:**

Texas Woman's University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If students anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please contact me via email/phone or during office hours, so that we may privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, please register with Disability Services for Students (DSS). After registration, contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. DSS contact information: [Disability Services \(www.twu.edu/dss\)](http://www.twu.edu/dss); [dss@twu.edu](mailto:dss@twu.edu); 940-898-3835; CFO Ste. 106

#### **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/>) 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, you 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. Title IX: Pregnant and Parenting Students**

Title IX is a federal law which 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 (<https://twu.edu/pregnancy-accommodation-form/>) to coordinate academic needs.