CARLOW UNIVERSITY
Devoted to the Future of You.

Doctor of Physical Therapy

A Curriculum Built Around You and the Patients You'll Serve

What Makes the Carlow DPT Experience Unique?

Learn it. Connect it. Apply it.

Carlow's DPT curriculum brings together foundational science, hands-on clinical skills, evidence-informed practice, professional development, and compassionate care.
Our curriculum was designed to help you connect what you learn in class with what you do in the lab and, ultimately, how you care for patients.

1. Focused Eight-Week Sessions

Instead of taking all semester courses at once, students generally take four to five courses, approximately nine to ten credits, during each eight-week session.
This structure is designed to help you focus on fewer subjects at a time, make connections across courses, and create more opportunity to absorb and reflect on complex material.

2. Connected Learning, Not Isolated Courses

Our curriculum uses two forms of integration:

- Horizontal integration: Connect concepts across courses studied at the same time. For example, biomechanics informs learning in movement science, pain science, and therapeutic modalities.
- Vertical integration: Build on prior learning as you progress from foundational concepts to advanced clinical skills and complex patient cases.

You will repeatedly connect knowledge, clinical reasoning, and professional responsibilities as your abilities grow.

3. Hands-On Learning and Progressive Clinical Reasoning

You will build your skills step by step, from foundational anatomy and movement science to examination, evaluation, intervention, and advanced clinical decision-making.

Coursework addresses musculoskeletal, neuromuscular, cardiopulmonary, and other health conditions. Case-based learning, laboratory practice, simulation, and standardized patients help you prepare for the challenges of clinical practice.

4. Interprofessional Learning Experiences

Physical therapy is a team profession. Through interprofessional education courses in the first year, you learn alongside students from other healthcare disciplines, including occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, and physician assistant programs.

You will strengthen your communication, collaboration, and understanding of how different professionals contribute to patient care.

5. Lifestyle Medicine and Community Health

Health is shaped by more than a diagnosis. Through lifestyle medicine, health promotion, and community-focused learning, you explore how wellness, physical activity, and social determinants of health influence individuals and populations.

These experiences prepare you to think beyond treating impairments and consider the broader factors that affect health, participation, and recovery.

6. Health Humanities: The Human Side of Healing

What does it mean to live with pain, experience loss, or navigate recovery?

Courses in the Art of Healing sequence use art, cinema, and literature to explore pain, grief, suffering, and the human experience of illness. These experiences encourage reflection, empathy, and a deeper understanding of the people you will serve.

Because excellent care requires more than technical skill, our curriculum makes room for the Heart.

7. Leadership, Policy, and Entrepreneurship

Your future may take you into clinical practice, leadership, education, business, advocacy, or other areas of the profession.

Courses in healthcare leadership, finance, policy, ethics, and entrepreneurship introduce you to the systems that shape care and the opportunities physical therapists have to influence them.

You will explore how to lead, collaborate, evaluate healthcare challenges, and contribute to the future of physical therapy.

8. Evidence-Informed Practice

Good clinicians keep asking questions.

You will learn to understand research, evaluate its quality and relevance, and apply evidence thoughtfully to patient care. Clinical decisions integrate the best available research, professional expertise, and the patient's values and preferences.

This approach helps prepare you to adapt as evidence and standards of practice evolve.

9. Clinical Education That Brings It All Together

Integrated Clinical Experiences (ICE): Apply developing knowledge and skills in real-world settings and begin connecting classroom learning with patient care.

Terminal Clinical Experiences (TCE): Progress to full-time clinical education, integrating clinical reasoning, hands-on skills, communication, and professionalism under supervision.

CARLOW UNIVERSITY
Devoted to the Future of You.

Doctor of Physical Therapy

10. Second-Year Pro Bono Experiences: Serve Our Community

At Carlow, learning to be a physical therapist also means learning to serve. During your second year, you will have opportunities to participate in pro bono experiences that connect you with individuals and communities in meaningful ways.

These experiences may include:

- **Sisters of Mercy at the Carlow Convent:** Engage with the Sisters of Mercy through service and opportunities to support their well-being.
- **Carlow Student-Athletes:** Work with student-athletes to support their physical health, wellness, and functional needs.
- **Carlow Day Care Center:** Engage with children and contribute to health, movement, and wellness-related activities.
- **LifeWorks, a Community Partner:** Gain experience working with individuals with intellectual disabilities, developing your understanding of inclusive care, individual needs, and meaningful community participation.

These experiences help you see beyond diagnoses and treatment plans, strengthening your ability to build relationships, recognize individual strengths, and provide compassionate, inclusive care.

11. Culminating Experiences: Demonstrate Your Readiness

Comprehensive written and practical examinations help you integrate and demonstrate the knowledge, clinical reasoning, and hands-on skills developed throughout the program as you prepare for entry-level physical therapy practice and the National Physical Therapy Examination (NPTE).

Your Carlow Experience, at a Glance

- **HEAD:** Think critically, evaluate evidence, and make informed clinical decisions.
- **HAND:** Develop the clinical skills to assess, treat, and support patients safely and effectively.
- **HEART:** Serve with empathy, compassion, and a commitment to dignity and healthcare equity.

Come to Carlow to build your skills. Leave ready to make a difference.

Accreditation Statement:
The Doctor of Physical Therapy Program at Carlow University is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), 3030 Potomac Ave., Suite 100, Alexandria, Virginia 22305-3085; telephone: 703-706-3245; email: accreditationsupport@apta.org ; website: https://www.capteonline.org. If needing to contact the program/institution directly, please call 412-578-6317 or email: dptprogram@carlow.edu

➔ Learn more about our DPT program:
carlow.edu/dpt