

DPT Class Observation for Pre-PT Students

Some students, or those seeking a second career, may be uncertain if pursuing a career in physical therapy is the right move for them. Multiple factors contribute to this uncertainty, including exposure to physical therapy settings and what it entails; academic demands of getting into a DPT program; cost of a DPT degree; time commitments; etc.

Many students or individuals interested in pursuing the DPT degree at San Diego State University (SDSU), have expressed interest in sitting in on a DPT class to observe what the level of instruction is like and how it builds on what is taught in undergraduate coursework. If you are interested in utilizing this opportunity, please refer to the information below to help you with this process.

1. **Familiarize yourself with the DPT courses that are being offered in the semester you are interested in ([SDSU DPT Curriculum](#)).** Look at the current courses, including days and times offered, and location. If there is a class that sounds interesting to you and a day that fits your schedule well, that may be a great class to try and observe!
2. **Reach out to the instructor of the class you would like to observe.** The best way to get in contact with instructors is via their email address. We highly recommend that you suggest a couple of possible dates for observation and understand that a professor may or may not allow you to come in to observe based on availability and time, as well as overall course content and schedule. A sample email message could look something like this:

Dear Dr. XXXX,

My name is XXXX and I am an undergraduate student at SDSU in the Pre-PT major. As I continue to pursue physical therapy, I would like to observe a class in SDSU's Doctor of Physical Therapy Program. I looked at the current semester course schedule and found that your course sounds interesting to me because of XXXX. I know your course meets at XXXX (time), and I would appreciate if I could sit in on the course on one of the following dates: (give three options in case there is an exam or inability for you to come on some of the days you offered). If this is okay, please let me know which day is best for me to come and observe. Thank you for your time. – XXXX

3. **Observe class.** Make sure you are on time (early) and that you are dressed appropriately for a DPT program class.
 - This may include a dress or polo shirt (tie optional) (no T-shirts); modest blouse long enough to tuck in (no low or deep-cut necklines); dress pants or slacks (no jeans); dress shoes (no sandals) or athletic shoes in good condition; enclosed low-heeled shoes.

Again, arrive early to introduce yourself to the course instructor, then find a seat in the back of the room if possible (if the course instructor does not arrive early, please introduce yourself to one of the DPT students). You may take notes if you like, but we recommend that you try to get a sense of how the class is run, the depth and level of content being taught, and the culture and collaboration among the students and faculty. You are welcome to interact with current students during any breaks or during instructor approved activities; however, professionalism and minimal to no disruption of the DPT student's learning experience is expected. The purpose of sitting in on a class is to experience what PT school might be like – so try and do that as much as you can.

1. **Tell your friends and classmates!** Being able to observe a DPT school course as an undergraduate student or individual pursuing physical therapy as a career is a great opportunity and can certainly help you progress through your undergraduate courses, apply for schools, and decide what is important to you in a DPT program. If you enjoyed the experience, recommend it to your other classmates and friends who you think may also benefit from the experience.