

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (PA-C)



Physician's assistants (PA's) are licensed clinicians who practice medicine in every specialty and setting. PA's must have a license and a supervising physician before they can practice. The exact responsibilities of a PA depends upon the type of medical setting in which they work, the understanding they have with their supervising physicians, their level of experience, and the laws of their state. PA's can develop treatment plans, perform physical exams, order and interpret laboratory tests, diagnose and treat illnesses, counsel patients on preventative health care, assist in surgery, and write prescriptions. Many PAs work in primary care areas such as general internal medicine, pediatrics, and family medicine, as well as in any specialty fields such as cardiovascular surgery, orthopedics, and emergency medicine.

PA's are educated as generalists, and their education and credentialing are based on a primary care foundation, which gives them the flexibility to be employed in all areas of medicine without additional education. With variation, PA programs generally take 27 months to complete, and students will be required to engage in 2,000 hours of clinical rotations, as well as pass a certification exam, among other requirements.

As an undergraduate Pre-PA student, it is important to carefully review the prerequisite course requirements of all programs of interest because they vary from school to school, in some cases greatly. Extracurricular requirements such as hours of clinical experiences, paid or unpaid experiences, also varies greatly. Having specific PA shadowing experience is preferred in the admissions process, and most programs may require the **GRE** or **MCAT** for admission. Please consult the **PAEA Program Directory** for specific application requirements.

We encourage you to meet with a Pre-Health Advisor at least once a semester to ensure satisfactory progress towards your goals!

COMMON CORE COURSES

Students are responsible for verifying the prerequisite coursework and policies of the schools to which they plan to apply.

Course	# of courses	USC Course(s)
General Biology	2 courses with lab	BISC 120L and BISC 220L or BISC 121L and BISC 221L
General Chemistry	2 courses with lab	CHEM 105aL and CHEM 105bL or CHEM 115aL and CHEM 115bL
Anatomy	1 course with lab	HBIO 301L
Microbiology	1 course with lab	BISC 300L
Physiology	1 course with lab	BISC 307L or HBIO 420L
Statistics	1 course	MATH 208x or QBIO 305g or BISC 305 or HP 340 or PSYC 274g
Genetics Biochemistry	1 (or 2) upper division science course is recommended by a handful of schools. Refer to individual school requirements.	BISC 325 OR CHEM 350g (Fall only) or BISC 312 (Spring only)
Organic Chemistry	1 course with lab is required by only a handful of schools.	CHEM 322aL
English	2 courses	WRIT 150 and WRIT 340
Psychology	1 course	PSYC 100Lg
Medical Terminology	1 course is generally required	OT 200

DID YOU KNOW?

- A science major is not required. Students should choose a major based on their interests and an area that they find exciting, which at the same time, will keep them academically competitive.
- Competitive applicants will have over 2,000 hours of direct patient care experience at the time they submit their application.
- Examples of clinical experience includes: emergency medical technicians (EMTs), certified nursing assistants (CNAs), medical scribes, medical assistants (MAs), etc. Patient care experience does not include front office or administrative work.
- **CASPA** is the central application service for many accredited PA programs. CASPA opens in late April.
- The PA profession is currently ranked at the top of healthcare professions.
- There are over 270 accredited PA programs in the U.S.