

Physician Assistant Advising Sheet

A physician assistant (PA) is a licensed health professional who practices medicine under the supervision of a physician as a medical team. A PA has many responsibilities that depend on the medical setting, the physician they work under, the laws of the state, and their own experience. The role of a physician assistant includes the development of treatment plans, performance of physical exams, evaluation of laboratory test, diagnosis and treatment of certain illnesses, preventative healthcare counseling, assistance in surgery, and writing up of prescriptions. PAs study general medicine and are educated with a primary care foundation, and may therefore be employed in numerous areas of medicine. PAs must have a license and supervising physician in order to work.

A PA program generally last two and a half years, as students work towards a Master's Degree. PAs are required to complete more than 400 hours in basic sciences, 75 hours in pharmacology, 175 hours in behavioral sciences and around 580 hours of clinical medicine. 2,000 hours of clinical rotations are also necessary with an emphasis in primary care. PAs must graduate from an accredited PA program, pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE), and be certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

Common Physician Assistant Prerequisite Courses

Biology	One Year of Coursework with Lab (dependent on your major)	BIOL 151 & BIOL 152
Chemistry	One Year of Coursework with Lab	CHEM 120A & CHEM 120B
Genetics	One semester of Genetics may be required at some schools.	BIOL 273
Organic Chemistry	There are a few schools that may require one semester of organic chemistry. Contact individual schools for specific requirements.	CHEM 301A (LAB: 302A)
Anatomy	One semester is generally required.	BIOL 361
Microbiology & Physiology	One semester of each course is generally required.	Microbio: BIOL 302 Physio: BIOL 310 (LAB: BIOL 301L)
Mathematics	At least one semester of Math is generally required at most PA schools. College Algebra is the typical requirement. Some PA schools may also require Statistics. Contact individual schools for specific requirements.	College Algebra: MATH 115 #1) MATH 150A & MATH 150B (Calculus 1 & 2) #2) MATH 130 & MATH 338 (short course Calc & Stats) **for stats: OR stats courses offered by your department for your major
English	One year is required for most medical schools in the country. Please note: this can be integrated in upper-division science courses that fulfill writing requirements for major.	ENGL 101 & ENGL 301
Humanities/Social Science	PA schools typically require a course in General Psychology and/or Developmental Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, and/or Public Speaking. Contact individual schools for specific requirements.	PSYC 101, PSYC 361, SOCI 101, ANTH 101, HCOM 100/102

Application Timeline



Prior to Applying:

- Take prerequisite courses and meet with advisors
- Open a Letter Collection/Chair Letter folder with the HPAO on campus
- Begin researching PA programs
- Get involved in extracurricular activities to acquire the skills and experience to stand out as an applicant
- Consider taking additional vocational coursework to earn a certificate so you can work as a paraprofessional (i.e., paramedic) and start accumulating patient contact hours.
- Prepare for and take the GRE – Register and choose a date.
- Order and collect official transcripts from ALL colleges and universities that you have attended.
- Gather Letters of Recommendation.

During the Application Cycle:

- Should be taking the GRE or waiting for your score
- Confirm deadline dates for individual PA programs.
- Begin to fill out and submit applications for PA programs.
- Work with HPAO to get chair letter sent via CASPA
- CASPA verifies primary application & begins releasing application to schools within four weeks of receipt
- Continue to work, volunteer, etc.

Last Stage of Cycle:

- Several PA programs interview candidates.
- Schedule an appointment with the HPAO and the Career Center for a mock interview.
- When interviews are completed, schools inform applicants of admission status. Admissions decision processes and timelines vary between PA programs.

Intent to Apply

The HPAO at CSUF offers this service to all PA applicants each cycle. This service helps the student obtain a Chair/Committee letter from the Health Professions Committee on campus and proof reads all letters of recommendation before writers upload to professional PA schools. The HPAO will also assist you in filling out your application. The Intent to Apply cycle always starts in February. Please contact the HPAO for more information.

Resources:

On Campus: PACT, SHPA
CSUF Career Center- <http://www.fullerton.edu/career/>
Off Campus: American Academy for Physicians Assistants (AAPA)- <https://www.aapa.org/>
Physician Assistant Education Association- <http://www.paeaonline.org/>
CASPA- <https://portal.caspaonline.org/caspaHelpPages/about-caspaoverview/>
National Commission of Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)-
<http://www.nccpa.net/>
Graduate Record Examination (GRE)- <http://www.ets.org/gre/>
Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)- <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/taking-mcat-exam/>

Your best resource on campus!

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CSUF HPAO

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