

Pre-Physician Assistant

Physician Assistants (PAs) are health professionals who deliver a broad range of medical and surgical services. PAs are licensed to practice under the supervision of a physician (MD or DO) and state law determines the scope of their practice. In general, they take medical histories, examine and treat patients, order and interpret laboratory tests and x-rays, make diagnoses, prescribe medications, administer treatments, assist in surgery, and counsel and educate patients. PAs practice in over 60 specialty areas nationally. PA programs are approximately 27 months long and include classroom instruction and clinical rotations. PAs also complete more than 2,000 hours of clinical rotations. There are currently 159 accredited PA programs in the United States. The vast majority award master's degrees. Only graduates of accredited PA programs may take the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE).

Admission Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution
- Completion of all prerequisite courses
- Competitive cumulative and prerequisite GPAs (3.4 -3.8 overall average for those accepted)
- Competitive Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score (required by some programs)
- Direct health care experience and/or shadowing (some programs require >1,000 hours)
- Letters of recommendation
- Completed application with Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) (for most programs)
- Face-to-face interview

Required Pre-PA courses: (Admission requirements and prerequisites may differ from school to school so it is important to check with schools for specific requirements.)

Courses	Required Credits	Suggested UWEC Courses
Mathematics	Statistics	MATH 246
Inorganic chemistry	At least 1 semester w/lab	CHEM 103 (4cr) and CHEM 104 (4cr) for some programs
Organic chemistry	1 semester w/lab	CHEM 325 (4cr) and CHEM 326 (4cr) for some programs
Biochemistry	1 semester	CHEM 352 (4cr) or CHEM 452 (3cr)
Biology	2 semesters w/lab	BIOL 221 & 222 & 223 (9cr)
Human Anatomy & Physiology	2 semesters w/lab	BIOL 214 & 314 (8cr)
Microbiology	1 semester w/lab	BIOL 361 (5cr)
Psychology	1 semester	PSYC 100 (3cr); PSYC 230 (3cr)

*CHEM 115 requires a strong background in high school math and chemistry

Recommended Other Courses

Biol 300/302 Genetics/Cell Biology	Nrsg 220 Medical Terminology
Other 300 level Biol courses	Comm/Journalism 202 Fundamentals of Speech
Eng 312 Rhetoric of Science	Psyc 251 Abnormal Psyc
Phil 306 Ethics of Healthcare	

Graduate Record Exam (GRE): This standardized exam is required for admission to some PA schools. The exam consists of 3 sections, Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning and Analytical Writing. It is often taken in the spring semester or summer following the junior year. Go to: <http://www.ets.org/gre> for more information on the GRE.

Non-Academic Considerations: Applicants must obtain experience in healthcare. Depending on the school to which you are applying, some programs require 500-3,000+ hours of healthcare experience. Some strictly require a certain number of hours, while other programs only recommend a number. Seek out health-related experiences, job shadowing and volunteering opportunities early! Examples of jobs – CNA, EMT, Phlebotomist.

Suggested Pre-PA Curriculum: The following program is suggested for a student in any major. It is important that students work with a pre-PA advisor each semester.

Freshman year – Fall MATH CHEM 103 BIOL 221 PSYC 100	Freshman year – Spring MATH BIOL 222 BIOL 223 CHEM 104
Sophomore year – Fall BIOL 214 CHEM 325 MATH 246 GE & Major courses	Sophomore year – Spring BIOL 314 Upper level BIOL GE & Major courses
Junior year – Fall BIOL 361 GE & Major courses (Prepare for GRE)	Junior year – Spring CHEM 352 GE & Major courses (Take GRE and apply to schools in summer)
Senior year – Fall Complete Major/Minor/GE Additional recommended courses	Senior year – Spring Complete Major/Minor/GE Additional recommended courses

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** Beginning course in mathematics depends on UWEC Mathematics Placement Exam score

UWEC Pre-PA Advisors:

Dr. Julie Anderson (anderju@uwec.edu)

Dr. Dan Herman (hermandp@uwec.edu)

More Information:

- Augsburg College (MN) www.augsburg.edu/pa/
- Carroll University (WI) www.carrollu.edu/gradprograms/physasst/default.asp
- Marquette University (WI) www.marquette.edu/physician-assistant/
- University of Wisconsin – La Crosse www.uwlax.edu/pastudies/
- University of Wisconsin – Madison www.fammed.wis.edu/pa-program
- For a list of all accredited PA schools: www.paeaonline.org/ or www.arc-pa.org/acc_programs/

Visit the *Health Careers Center* in Schofield Hall 30 or at www.uwec.edu/health-careers-center/index.htm and join the *Pre-Professional Health Club* to learn more about healthcare, professional school applications, shadowing opportunities, and PA schools.