

PRE-PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT



CONTACT INFORMATION:

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HELPFUL WEBSITES:

- UA Pre-Professional Health Advising: uakron.edu/bcas/prehealth
- Physician Assistant Education Association: paeonline.org
- PA Focus is a web-blog supported by PAEA to provide resources for those interested in learning more about PA careers: pafocus.org

Physician Assistants (PAs) are healthcare providers who are licensed to diagnose and treat illness and disease as well as prescribe medication for patients. PAs work in physician offices, hospitals, and clinics in collaboration with a licensed physician. Because of their advanced education in general medicine, modeled after physician education, PAs can treat patients with significant autonomy within the physician/PA relationship.

PAs work together with physicians as part of an integrated medical team. PAs have their own patients and, under a written agreement with a licensed physician, make clinical decisions and provide a broad range of diagnostic, therapeutic, preventive and health maintenance services. The physician-PA team relationship is fundamental to the PA profession and enhances the delivery of high-quality health care.

PAs also work in specialties outside of primary care. The PA profession is designed to be adaptable, preparing PAs to work with physicians in primary care or medical and surgical specialties and sub-specialties, as the need arises. explorehealthcareers.org

COURSEWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

| Course Number | Course Name |
|--|--|
| BIOL 111/112 | Principles of Biology I & II w/labs |
| CHEM 151/152/153/154 | Principles of Chemistry I & II w/labs |
| CHEM 263/264/265/266 | Organic Chemistry I & II w/labs |
| BIOL 130 | Principles of Microbiology <i>*BIOL 331 Microbiology may be recommended depending on major/program*</i> |
| BIOL 200/201/202/203 | Anatomy & Physiology I & II <i>*BIOL363/364 Foundations of Physiology I & BIOL 401 Human Anatomy may be recommended depending on major/program*</i> |
| PSYC 100 | Intro to Psychology |
| STAT 261/262 | Intro to Stats I & II |
| BAHA 120 | Medical Terminology |
| Highly Recommended: Genetics, Biochemistry, Developmental Psychology | |

The above coursework is based on the general requirements and recommendations of PA schools in Ohio. The list is not comprehensive and students are responsible for knowing and completing the requirements of their major and those of the PA schools to which they plan to apply.

PA SCHOOL
TIMELINE:

FRESHMAN YEAR

- Meet with the pre-health adviser
- Register your pre-physician assistant interest at www.uakron.edu/bcas/prehealth
- Explore career options as a PA
- Consider alternative career plans
- Join related student organizations

SOPHOMORE
YEAR

- Pursue shadowing, volunteer, and other related activities
- Develop relationships with faculty
- Review PA school catalogs and websites

JUNIOR YEAR

- Complete prerequisites
- Pursue shadowing, volunteer, and other related activities
- Prepare and take the GRE
- Gather letters of recommendation
- Apply for admission

SENIOR YEAR

- Pursue shadowing, volunteer, and other related activities

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process to PA school is rigorous; there are many components, and it often takes students much longer than anticipated to complete the application.

Admission committee's base decisions upon pre-requisite coursework (detailed on back), grade point average, healthcare experiences, personal references, scores on admission exams like the Graduate

Record Exam (GRE), and the applicants essay on why they want to become a physician assistant. This process is highly competitive.

There are 13 PA programs in the state of Ohio. Although each school has different application deadlines, admissions applications tend to be available in April with most application due in the fall. Most PA programs use the Central Application

Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). CASPA allows applicants to complete one online application and designate multiple schools.

Once applications are submitted, interested schools will send invitations for interviews.

EXPERIENCE & INVOLVMENT

PA schools want to see well-rounded applicants. Students should participate in shadowing experiences as well as gaining direct patient care experience.

PA schools like to see applicants with shadowing experience, as it shows that the student has a solid grasp of what is involved in the PA profession. Direct patient care is often required or strongly recommended. Some schools have a required number of shadowing/

direct care hours so it's important to start early. Direct patient care could include any of the following: nurse, nurses aide, paramedic, EMT, medical/nursing assistant, clinic aide, home health aide, orderly, etc.

It is also recommended that you document the number of hours you log and journal your experiences.

It is important to note that there is no magic formula for admission to PA school. Students need to be successful in

the classroom while also selectively participating in activities that will add to their PA school applications. Think about how the people you meet through these experiences could help you as you apply to PA school.



* All students interested in PA school should register their pre-PA interest at www.uakron.edu/bcas/prehealth. Students are encouraged to meet with the pre-health adviser early on to plan courses and experiences that will help prepare them to apply to PA school.