

# PRE-PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT INFORMATION SUMMARY

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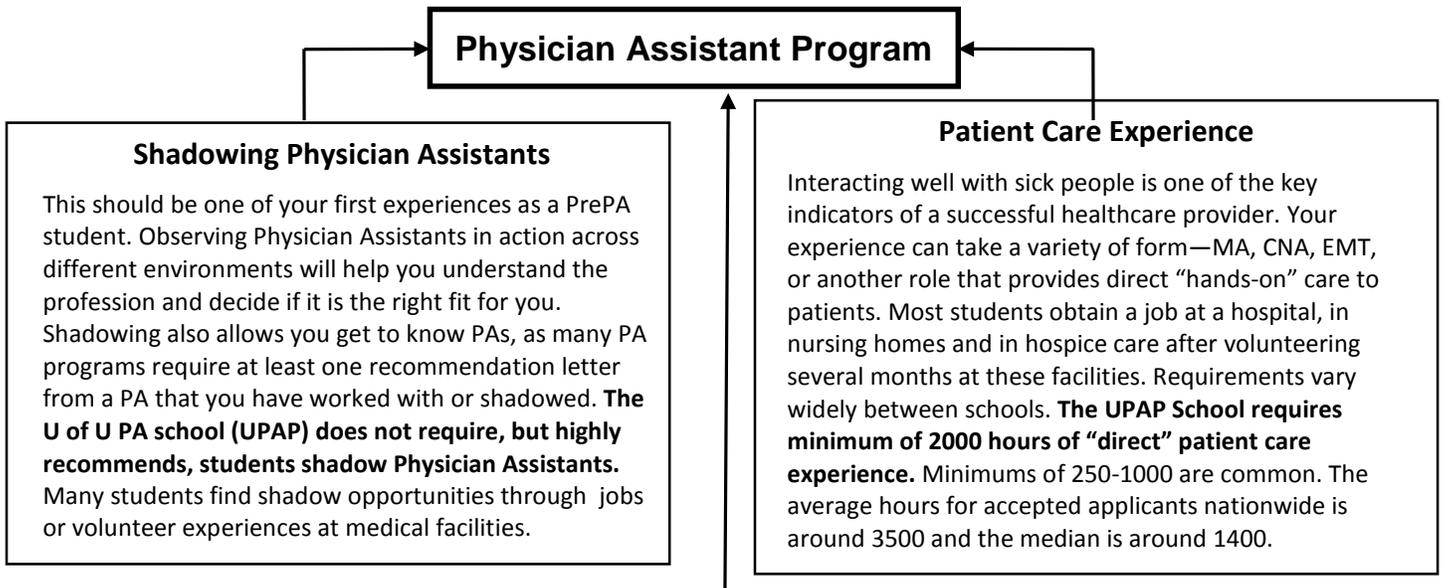
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## ❖ ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Academic preparation for most PA schools requires a Bachelor’s degree and completion of a set of prerequisite classes, usually science, which vary from school to school. The most common classes are outlined on the final page of this Summary. For your degree, any major is appropriate. There is no preference in this regard, so study something you love!

## ❖ EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Preparation for PA school involves engaging in experiences that develop and demonstrate skills in patient care, communication, leadership, community service, and familiarity with the profession. What you do outside of class is as important as what you do in class so don’t neglect these activities. Keep in mind that activities complement your coursework, but will not compensate for low grades. Both are important!



## Extracurricular Activities

As a physician assistant, you need to demonstrate various attributes and competencies, such as compassion, commitment to service, strong leadership and communication skills. The following activities will enhance your application for many PA programs.

### ▪ Community Service

Having interaction with people coming from different backgrounds than your own will strengthen your interpersonal skills and communication skills. Find various opportunities at the Bennion Community Service Center (<http://bennioncenter.org>).

### ▪ Leadership Experiences

Examples includes offices held in organizations, committee work; leadership in church activities; coordinating a project; managing, training, supervising at work or in other activities; teaching experience of any kind; peer counseling or mentoring, etc.

## Things to Remember

- Make sure you have contact information for supervisors and health professionals you shadow or work with, in case you need to have them write recommendation letters. Even if you discontinue an activity, try to keep an open relationship with them.
- Keep a record of all hours of service and experiences. Writing your reflections in a journal will be helpful when you write a personal statement.
- You can download the **PreHealth Planner Spread Sheet** from [our website](#); you will find it under Available Downloads.

TIMELINE	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	
GRE	Register & Study					Take exam												
Recommendation Letters	Request letters & get contact info. from letter writers																	
Application	<b>Prep</b> - Write draft of Personal Statement - Research Schools				CASPA Available Online in mid April till early March. However, program deadlines range from July – March. UPAP's deadline is on August 1.													
											Secondary Applications, UPAP's deadline is on Sept.3							
											Interviews							
Financial Aid											Acceptance Notifications							Priority filing for federal financial aid

## ❖ GRE

Some PA programs require the GRE. **The GRE is administered throughout the year.** The exam may be repeated, but the best strategy is to prepare thoroughly and take the GRE once. Taking the exam by spring the year before you wish to enter PA school will enable you to apply earlier. More information on the GRE, including sample questions, can be found here <https://www.ets.org/gre/>.

- August is the last GRE accepted by most schools for their following Summer or Fall entering class.
- The GRE is divided into three multiple choice sections which are scored on a scale of 130-170: Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Analytical Writing.

## ❖ APPLICATION PROCESS

Your application process can begin as early as spring or summer at the end of your junior year if you have completed the necessary requirements. Most PA programs admit students once a year, most commonly for Summer or Fall matriculation, but start dates range from May-January of the following year. You'll take the GRE (Graduate Record Exam) and submit an application at least 12 months in advance of the year for which you are applying.

## ❖ CASPA (Central Application Service for Physician Assistants)

Most US PA programs are part of **CASPA**, which is available at <https://caspa.liasoncas.com>. (The University of Texas system has a separate online system, TMDSAS, <https://www.tmdsas.com/>.) For additional resources, visit PA Focus (<http://pafocus.org/>)

- Application requirements include transcripts, personal background information, extracurricular experiences, personal statement, and fees.
- Because many schools use a rolling admission process (they begin reviewing applications and admitting before deadlines), it will enhance your chances if you **submit your application early** regardless of when you take the GRE.
- Completing the application will take at least 1 week; most students take several weeks. Make sure you will have plenty of time to fill out the application, and to have somebody **review** your entire application before you submit. PPA advisors are happy to help with this process.

To help us advise other students, we would appreciate it if you would release your information to the Health Professions Advisor. This information will always be kept confidential.

## LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Once a PA program receives your initial application, they will usually request supplementary material, including *Letters of Recommendation*. To facilitate this, most students should use the free CASPA Letter Service.

- CASPA limits applicants to 3 letters:
- **UPAP requires 3 letters**, preferably from clinicians who have supervised you in clinical settings.
- The number and types of letters varies, depending on each PA program; but generally, you will need one letter from each of the following people.
  1. **Patient Experience Supervisor**
  2. **Professor (usually Science)**
  3. **Physician Assistant you shadowed**

## ❖ PA GENERAL POLICIES REGARDING COURSEWORK

<b>CLEP Credit &amp; Correspondence Study</b>	May not be acceptable as part of the prerequisite courses
<b>AP Credits</b>	Depends on program. Check each school's requirements section online.
<b>Online Courses</b>	Accepted by most schools as long as they are not independent study courses
<b>Repeats</b>	All grades for repeated courses will be counted in your GPA on your CASPA application for PA schools
<b>Withdrawals</b>	W's should be used only for emergencies, although W's will not affect your GPA.
<b>GPA</b>	<p>Minimum requirements for Total GPA range from 2.5 - 3.0. However, <b>competitive applicants</b> admitted to PA programs usually have a Total GPA of 3.5 or higher. Some schools may also look separately at Prerequisite GPA and Total GPA.</p> <p><b>UPAP</b>—Minimum Total GPA is 3.0, and they will not review applications with a Total GPA lower than 2.7 (based on CASPA with all repeats counting). Average GPA for accepted applicants is 3.47</p>

## ❖ BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Most PA programs (including UPAP) require a Bachelor's degree before matriculating. There is no preferred major. Major in something you enjoy and will complement your career goals. Find a major you are passionate about! A handful of schools do not require a Bachelor's Degree. A searchable list of PA schools is available here: <http://directory.paeaonline.org/>.

## ❖ USEFUL WEBSITES

- Physician Assistant Education Association (<http://www.paeaonline.org>). Look under RESOURCES, the PA STUDENTS.
- Resources for PrePA and PA students: PA Focus (<http://pafocus.org/>)
- The University of Utah Physician Assistant Program (UPAP) (<http://medicine.utah.edu/dfpm/physician-assistant-studies/program/>)
  - Monthly [UPAP Info Sessions](#): From above URL choose ADMISSIONS then Information Sessions
- Pre-Physician Assistant Student Organization (PrePASO) (<http://prepaso.weebly.com/>) E-mail: [prepaso@gmail.com](mailto:prepaso@gmail.com)

## Prerequisite Course Guide

This guide is designed for applying to a **range** of PA schools. It is not a comprehensive list. Requirements will vary by school. **Shading** indicates the classes most commonly required by PA schools. See a PPA advisor for more information.

[Classes with \* may be taken at SLCC. However, not all PA schools accept prerequisites from 2 year schools]

BIOLOGY	CHEMISTRY	MATH <sup>2</sup>	Non-Science
<p><b>*1210 (4)</b> <b>Principles of Biology</b> Prereq for most bio classes.  BIOL 1610 at SLCC</p>	<p><b>OPTIONAL preparatory courses for CHEM and MATH:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>MATH 10 Math Boot Camp for Intermediate Algebra</i></li> <li>• <i>MATH 15 Math Boot Camp for Pre-Calculus</i></li> <li>• <i>CHEM 10 Chemistry Boot Camp for General Chemistry</i></li> <li>• <i>CHEM 1200 (3) Prep for College Chemistry</i></li> <li>• <i>CHEM 1208 (1) Intro to Periodic Table</i></li> <li>• <i>CHEM 2308 (1) Intro to O-Chem</i></li> </ul> <p><i>*NOTE: In order to take the proper math class, you must have ACT, SAT or math placement test scores, or successfully pass a prerequisite math course</i></p>		<p><b>*WRTG 2010 (3)</b> <b>Intermediate Writing</b> = ENGL 2010 at SLCC (Prereq: WRTG 1010)</p>
<p><b>2325 (4)</b> <b>Human Anatomy</b> (Prereq: BIOL 1210)  <b>Required by UPAP</b></p>	<p>The most common Chemistry requirement for PA programs is <b>2 semesters of General Chemistry with Labs &amp; 1 semester of Organic Chemistry</b></p>		<p><b>*1050 (4)</b> <b>College Algebra</b> (Prereq: Math 1010)</p>
<p><b>2420 (4)</b> <b>Human Physiology</b> (Prereq: BIOL &amp; CHEM 1210)  <b>Required by UPAP</b></p>	<p><b>*1210 (4)</b> <b>General Chemistry 1</b> <b>*1215 (1)</b> <b>Lab</b> (Prereq: MATH 1050)</p> <p><b>1220 (4)</b> <b>General Chemistry 2</b> <b>1225 (1)</b> <b>Lab</b> (Prereq: CHEM 1210)</p>		<p><b>1070 (3)</b> <b>Stats</b> (Prereq: B or higher in MATH 0980, C or higher in Math 1010 or 1030)</p> <p>PSYC 3000 or FCS 3210 or any other stats can be accepted.</p>
<p><b>3210 (3)</b> <b>Microbiology</b> <b>3205 (1)</b> <b>Microbiology Lab</b> (Prereq: BIOL 1210, BIOL 2020, &amp; CHEM 1210)</p>	<p><b>2310 (4)</b> <b>Organic Chemistry 1</b> (Prereq: CHEM 1220)</p> <p>However, some PA programs require any 2 to 3 semesters of Chemistry.</p>		<p><b>1 Sociology or Anthropology (BF)</b> (Required by some PA programs)</p>
<p>^One of these courses is <b>recommended by UPAP</b> &amp; many PA programs, but lab may not be required.</p>	<p><b>U of U PA School (UPAP)</b> requires any 8 credit hours of chemistry courses.</p>		
<p><b>Genetics</b></p>	<p><b>Biochemistry</b></p>		<p><b>Physics</b></p>
<p>^ One or more of these may be required or recommended by some PA programs.^</p>			