

Pre-Physician Assistant Timeline/ Overview of Requirements* (Regardless of Major)

Requirements for Physician Assistant Programs vary from program to program. The following didactic courses are required by a majority of programs in Pennsylvania.

Pre-requisite Course Overview
General Biology with lab
Biological Sciences (including human anatomy, human physiology, and microbiology) with labs
General chemistry with lab
Additional Chemistry courses (organic, inorganic, biochemistry)
Math (including statistics)
Psychology (may include general/ child/developmental/and abnormal psychology; lifespan development)
Genetics
Analytical Reading & Writing; Mosaic I; Mosaic II
Social sciences
Computer literacy

***Pre-Requisite Courses**

Preparing for Physician Assistant Programs will require you first look at programs of interest and then generate a list of courses you will need to incorporate into your undergraduate timeline. The course requirements noted in the table above is not an inclusive list.

Other requirements or electives may include courses in English, the humanities, literature, medical terminology, communications, and speech.

Office of Pre-Professional Health Studies (OPPHS)

Pre-PA Advising

Advising offered by the Office of Pre-Professional Health Studies (OPPHS) supplements the academic advising (course registration, major requirements and graduation review) provided by the advising center in the student's primary college. Students planning to apply to physician assistant programs must initiate a **portfolio** with the **OPPHS** as early as their freshman year.

The Pre-PA Timeline / Application Process

Pre-PA students should map out an individualized academic timeline based on:

- the pre-PA course requirements for the physician assistant programs to which they will eventually apply;
- courses required by their major; and University Gen Ed Requirements.
- Pre-requisite science courses should not be taken during summer sessions.

All Pre-PA students are required to:

- attend an orientation session during the Fall semester on the Temple Pre-Professional Health Evaluation Committee process as they consider or re-consider timeline possibilities.
- attend at least one workshop offered by the **OPPHS** during each semester
- schedule an advising appointment with **OPPHS** as questions arise.

Letters of Recommendation

Begin requesting letters of recommendation as you are completing classes in the sciences and have performed well in the class (A or B+). Provide your letter writers with a “Professional School Recommendation Form” available on the Health Advising web site. As you prepare to apply, an interview with a member of the Pre-Professional Health Evaluation Committee will be required before letters are released to health professional schools on your behalf.

Physician assistants (PAs)

Physician assistants (PAs) are health care professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. As part of their comprehensive responsibilities, PAs conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery, and write prescriptions. Within the physician-PA relationship, PAs exercise autonomy in medical decision making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services.

Application Process

Applications for PA programs are processed through a Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). This is an electronic, web-based system (www.caspaonline.org) that allows applicants to complete one application and designate any number of programs to receive their application. Those programs that do not participate in CASPA post their applications on their Web sites.

GPA / Science GPA

Most Pennsylvania programs require an overall GPA of 3.2, both cumulative and in the sciences.

Entrance Exam: GRE

Most PA programs require the GRE exam. The GRE is offered year round as an on-line exam. Plan to take the exam during the summer after your junior year. www.ets.org/gre/

Clinical Exposure

Many of the Pennsylvania programs require between 200 and 500 documented hours of patient contact experience, either paid or volunteer, and some programs require documentation of shadowing experience with a PA. Interested students can consider becoming EMT certified as a way of meeting this requirement.

Office Contact Information:

Office of Pre-Professional Health Studies (*OPPHS*); 1810 Liacouras Walk, Suite 100; 215 204-2513
healthadvising@temple.edu

Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) www.paeaonline.org

Visit the *OPPHS* website for updates on workshops and other opportunities.

www.temple.edu/healthadvising

Information on *about PAs and the PA Profession* noted on these pages was taken from the American Academy of Physician Assistants.
<http://www.aapa.org>