



### The Pathway to Physician Assistant School

#### GETTING STARTED

Create a **Medical Applicant Portal (MAP)** via Student Hub. MAP is an online resource for undergraduate students and alumni to identify themselves as Pre-Physician Assistant and stay informed of important dates and events. It also serves as a portfolio to help prepare students for the application process.

Students admitted to US physician assistant schools come from **all undergraduate majors**. Physician assistant schools appreciate academic diversity. You are encouraged to select a major based on your interests. Common majors include Biology, Marine Biology, Biochemistry, Behavioral Neuroscience and Health Science.

Our **website** houses a great deal of pertinent information and resources for your perusal: [undergraduate.northeastern.edu/prehealth](http://undergraduate.northeastern.edu/prehealth)



#### EXPERIENTIAL PREPARATION

**Community Engagement:** Volunteer in your local or global community. Service experiences do not need to be within the field of healthcare, but should follow your interests and demonstrate a passion for helping those in need. Explore your campus community - join organizations that tap into your own passions and interests, such as the Pre-PA Society. Demonstrate your ability to lead. Connect with faculty and build up your professional network at Northeastern and beyond.

**Research:** Though not required for physician assistant programs, research experience makes your application stand out among the applicant pool. Having a solid understanding of research allows for an informed interpretation of hypotheses, results and translation to practice.

#### ENTRANCE EXAM

Pre-Physician Assistant students will traditionally sit for the **Graduate Record Exam (GRE)**, or the **Physician Assistant College Admissions Test (PA-CAT)**, though this is not required by all programs. It is recommended that 2-3 months are dedicated to study for the GRE, while 4-6 are dedicated to the PA-CAT.



#### REQUIRED COURSEWORK

Requisite courses are **school specific**. For detailed course requirements, please review individual program websites. Browse programs using the link below:

- [Physician Assistant Education Association Program Directory](#)

Common courses include:

- **Biology** with labs (Two semesters)
- **General Chemistry** with labs (Two semesters)
- **Anatomy & Physiology** with labs (Two semesters)
- **Microbiology** with lab (Requires Genetics and Molecular Biology)
- **Math** (One Calculus & One Statistics)
- **Additional coursework** across disciplines is often required or recommended (e.g. Psychology, Organic Chemistry, Biochemistry, English, Medical Terminology, etc.)

**AP/IB credit** is sometimes not accepted for prerequisite courses. In this case, students should complete upper-level coursework to satisfy the requirement. Please refer to individual program websites for more detail on their AP/IB credit policy.

#### CLINICAL HOURS

Many programs require an approximate number of hours of paid, hands-on patient care experiences prior to applying. It is strongly recommended students obtain **2,000+ clinical hours** before applying. Examples of direct patient care positions include, but are not limited to Certified Nursing Assistant, Physical Therapy Aid, Medical Assistant, etc. Be mindful that some position hours (e.g. EMT or Medical Scribe) may not count toward your direct patient care hours as PA schools do not see these roles as totally hands-on patient care experiences. More information can be found on program websites. Clinical experiences should also include shadowing hours with a licensed Physician Assistant. It is the quality of your shadowing experience, rather than number of hours that allows you to demonstrate your understanding of the profession.

#### CONNECT WITH US

**Meet our staff** and find who your advisor is based on your path and/or last name. Sign up for our **monthly newsletter** which includes program updates and events as well as both on and off-campus opportunities for all PreHealth students! Read up on our latest **blog posts** from students, staff, and alumni!