

The Pathway to PA School for Post-Bacc Students

GETTING STARTED

Medical Applicant Portal (MAP): MAP is an online resource for post-bacc students and alumni to identify themselves as Pre-Med and stay informed of important dates and events. It also serves as a portfolio to help prepare students for the application process. Create a MAP account in StudentHub!

Connect with us: Meet your pre-health advisor, register for upcoming events, sign up for our monthly newsletter, and read up on our latest blog posts from students, staff, and alumni! Follow us on Instagram and Facebook @NUPreHealth

APPLICATION & TIMELINE

The application process for PA school **begins every year in April and is most often a year-long application process**. Applicants should have their prerequisite courses and GRE/PCAT score(s), along with recommended experiences, prior to the application. Please click on the links below to learn more about the application process: **Physician Assistant Application - CASPA**

Most students in the post-bacc certificate program should expect to be in the program for about one year prior to applying to PA school - more information and resources are on our website.

DIRECT PATIENT CARE HOURS

Many programs require an approximate number of hours of **paid, hands-on patient care experiences** prior to applying. It is strongly recommended that students obtain **2,000+ clinical hours before applying**. Examples of direct patient care positions include, but are not limited to **Certified Nursing Assistant, 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. We strongly recommend that Pre-PA students review the direct patient care requirements and expectations on the individual PA 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. Check individual programs to see if they have a shadowing requirement.

REQUIRED COURSEWORK

Requisite courses are **highly school-specific**. For detailed course requirements, please review individual program websites to build a school list. We recommend **applying to 8-12 PA programs**.

Browse programs using the link here: **Physician Assistant Education Association Program Directory**

Strongly Recommended Courses:

- 2 Semesters of Biology with labs
- General Chemistry I & II with labs
- Organic Chemistry I & II with labs
- Biochemistry with lab
- Anatomy & Physiology I & II with labs
- Microbiology with lab
- Statistics
- Psychology

Other Recommended Courses:

- Medical Terminology
- Calculus
- 2 Social Science/Humanities Courses
- Spanish (especially if applying to schools in the West or South)

ENTRANCE EXAM

Pre-PA students will traditionally take the **Graduate Record Exam (GRE)**, or the **Physician Assistant College Admissions Test (PA-CAT)**, though an admissions exam is not required by all programs. If an exam is required, we recommend that applicants dedicate 2-3 months to study for the GRE and 4-6 months for the PA-CAT. At the latest, applicants should take their admissions exam by the end of April, the year they apply.