

Northeastern University PreMed and PreHealth Advising Program



The Pathway to PA School

GETTING STARTED

Medical Applicant Portal (MAP): MAP is an online resource for undergraduate students and alumni to identify themselves as Pre-PA 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!

Selecting a Major: Students admitted to PA schools come from all undergraduate majors. PA schools appreciate academic diversity. You are encouraged to select a major based on your interests. Common majors include Biology, Behavioral Neuroscience and Health Science.

Connect with us: Meet our staff and find who your advisor is. 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



EXPERIENTIAL PREPARATION

Community Engagement: Working in healthcare requires a service orientation and commitment to your community. Engage your campus community through [student organizations](#), a [Community Service & Civic Engagement program](#), and/or a Service-Learning course. Volunteer in meaningful ways to become an engaged and educated citizen dedicated to helping others.

Research: Though not required, research experience makes your application stand out among the applicant pool. Having a solid understanding of the research process allows for an informed interpretation of hypotheses, results and translation into practice. Examples may include volunteering in academic labs, co-curricular opportunities (E.g., Directed Study, Capstone, etc.), research awards/fellowships, and/or paid employment.

Co-Op: Northeastern's Co-op Program is one way students can obtain experiential preparation. There are no designated Pre-PA co-ops. Rather, students should apply to co-op jobs based on their individual interest in, and qualifications for the position.

Global Experiences: Coursework taken through many of Northeastern's global academic programs do not pose any issues for Pre-PA students, including *NUin* and Global Scholars (beginning Fall '23), and DOCs. However, planned coursework abroad through other study abroad programs should be reviewed with your PreHealth Advisor prior to departure for consideration toward Pre-PA requirements.

REQUIRED COURSEWORK

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

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

Strongly Recommended Courses:

- 2 Semesters of Biology with labs
- General Chemistry I & II with labs (or 1 semester of a combined General Chemistry class with lab, i.e. CHEM 1161)
- Organic Chemistry I & II with labs
- Biochemistry with lab (Requires Genetics & Molecular Biology with lab, Organic Chemistry II)
- Anatomy & Physiology I & II with labs
- Microbiology with lab (Requires: Genetics & Molecular Biology with lab)
- Statistics
- Psychology

Other Recommended Courses:

- Medical Terminology or Basic Clinical Skills for the Healthcare Professional ([HLTH 1203](#))
- Calculus
- 2 Social Science/Humanities Courses
- Spanish (especially if applying to schools in the West or South)

AP/IB credit is not always accepted for prerequisite courses. In this case, students should complete upper-level coursework to satisfy the requirement. 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, 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. Check individual programs to see if they have a shadowing requirement.

ENTRANCE EXAM

Pre-Physician Assistant students will traditionally take 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.