

Physician Assistant

What is a physician assistant? A physician assistant (PA) is a healthcare worker who is able to do diagnosis and therapy of diseases, carry out preventive health services, order lab tests and x-rays. This individual typically works under the supervision of a physician (MD or DO).

More details? For more detailed information, including salaries and job prospects, visit the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: www.bls.gov/Healthcare

Can UWW help me prepare for an accredited PA school? Yes. We offer all the courses required, and we have helped several students prepare for the competitive application process..

What do I need to apply for admission to an accredited PA school?

- 1. Undergraduate degree (BS or BA):** Most applicants will have an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university before entering into PA training. The specific type of degree does not seem to matter, as long as you meet the other requirements. Currently, many people are applying for admission into these programs, so the schools can be very selective. Many applicants will be applying for a second or third time, having worked on improving their applications.
- 2. Major and minor:** Many applicants will have majored in a natural science such as biology,
- 3. Coursework:** PA schools mandate that students complete several courses in biology and chemistry before entering PA training, as preparation for the more advanced work.

Requirement	Length/Credits (minimum)	UWW courses which meet the requirements
General biology	1 year / 8-10 credits	BIO 141 and BIO 142
General chemistry	1 year / 8-10 credits	CHEM 102 and CHEM 104
Organic chemistry	Varies by school	CHEM 251, CHEM 252; CHEM 261
Statistics	1 course / 3 credits	BIO 303 or PSYCH 215
Anatomy and physiology	1 course in each, or a two semester sequence	BIO 361 and BIO 362
Microbiology	1 course	BIO 311
Biochemistry	1 course req or rec*	BIO/CHEM 456 (454?)
General psychology	1 course req or rec*	PSYCH 211
Math	Pre-calculus or calculus	MATH 152 or MATH 253

* req/rec = required or recommended

- 4. Other coursework:** Humanities and social science – minimum 3 courses each; additional psychology courses, or courses in economics, political science, anthropology, or sociology are acceptable. These courses will also count toward a student's General Education requirements. Additional courses: other courses vary by school. Many schools include advanced psychology [such as child (PSYCH 331), developmental, abnormal (PSYCH 345)] and advanced biology [genetics (BIO 251), immunology (BIO 412), development (BIO 341), endocrinology (BIO 415)].
- 5. Overall academic record:** An applicant will need to have a good overall GPA and a good science GPA. Many schools receive large numbers of applications, so they can be selective.
- 6. Entrance exam:** Most PA schools ask students to take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE).

7. **Extracurricular activities:** Applicants are expected to have participated in extracurricular activities. This is one indicator that you are able to work with other people, and even that you have taken on responsibility and leadership.
8. **'Experience of the field':** Students are expected to have direct experience with patient care. This can be met through a combination of clinical practice (volunteer work, internships) and shadowing experience.
9. **Other jobs and experiences:** All health schools are looking for applicants who have a depth of experience. This can be demonstrated by many things: competency in a foreign language, working to pay for school, participating in organized athletics, caring for a sick family member, etc. These other experiences contribute to who you are, and they also show something of your ability to persevere and succeed.

What happens then? After your professional education, you would receive a masters (MS) degree. You would also need to take the appropriate licensure exams. The school you attend will help you prepare.

Professional organization: Most physician assistants belong to the American Academy of Physician Assistants, www.aapa.org; this organization is an excellent source of information for everyone with questions about PA. Accrediting body is the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). at http://www.arc-pa.org/acc_programs

UWW Advisor: There is no designated advisor for this area.

Training in this area: (WI, MN, IL, IA)

Wisconsin:

Carroll University (Waukesha, WI)

MS program <http://www.carrollu.edu/gradprograms/physasst/default.asp>

Concordia University (Mequon, WI)

MS program <https://www.cuw.edu/programs/physicianassistant/index.html>

Marquette University (Milwaukee, WI)

MS program <http://www.marquette.edu/physician-assistant/index.shtml>

University of Wisconsin – La Crosse – Gunderson – Mayo (LaCrosse, WI)

MS program <http://www.uwlax.edu/pastudies>

University of Wisconsin - Madison, Physician Assistant Program (Madison, WI)

MS program <http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/pa-program>

Minnesota:

St. Catherine University (St. Paul, MN)

MS program <https://www2.stkate.edu/mpas/home>

Augsburg College (Minneapolis, MN)

MS program <http://www.augsburg.edu/pa>

Bethel University (St. Paul, MN)

MS program <http://gs.bethel.edu/academics/masters/physician-assistant>

Iowa:

Des Moines University (Des Moines, IA)

MS program <http://www.dmu.edu/pa>

University of Iowa, Carver College of Medicine (Iowa City, IA)

MS program <http://www.medicine.uiowa.edu/pa>

Illinois:

Midwestern University (Downers Grove, IL)

MS program <http://www.midwestern.edu/programs-and-admission/il-physician-assistant-studies.html>

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine (Chicago, IL)

MS program <http://www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/sites/pa>

Rosalind Franklin University, Chicago Medical School (North Chicago, IL)

MS program <http://www.rosalindfranklin.edu/Degreeprograms/PhysicianAssistant.aspx>

SIU School of Medicine (Carbondale, IL)

MS program <http://www.siumed.edu/paprogram>

Rush University Medical Center, College of Health Sciences (Chicago, IL)

MS program *Please search for 'Rush University Physician Assistant'*