

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

Physician Assistants are healthcare professionals who practice medicine as members of a team that includes their supervising physicians. PAs deliver a broad range of medical and surgical services to diverse populations in rural and urban settings. 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 prescribe medications. Students interested in becoming a PA should know they would be entering one of the fastest growing professions in the US, with outstanding job prospects over the next 15 to 20 years.

There are approximately 218 accredited PA programs in the United States, and the average program takes 27 months to complete. Unfortunately, the prerequisite coursework required for admission to PA programs is not standardized. While program requirements vary, it is not uncommon for PA programs to require some or all of the following courses:

Biology (1 year)	BIO/MBI 115, 116
General Chemistry (1 year)	CHM 141, 144 and CHM 142, 145
Organic Chemistry/CHM 241, 244 and CHM 242, 245	
Biochemistry (1 year)	or CHM 231 and 332†
Anatomy (1 semester)	BIO 201 or KNH 244*, 244L*
Mathematics (1 semester)	MTH 102 or higher
Statistics (1 semester)	STA 261
Microbiology (1 semester)	MBI 201
Physiology (1 semester)	BIO 161 or BIO 305
Psychology (2-3 semesters)	PSY 111 and 112, plus one higher level PSY course †

* Not accepted by every PA program

† Depends on the PA program

Once again, because course requirements vary, not all PA programs require all of these courses, and some may require other courses not mentioned on this list. Therefore, once you have decided to pursue a career as a PA, please research the specific PA schools to which you plan to apply in order to verify their course prerequisites.

In addition to course prerequisites, PA schools have other admissions requirements that you will need to complete during your undergraduate years at Miami. First, PA schools generally require, or strongly recommend, a certain number of hours of direct patient care experience (some require up to 1,000 hours). This number of hours varies from school to school, so please verify this requirement with the schools you are interested in

attending. Second, the majority of PA schools require that students apply to their programs using a web-based application service called CASPA (Central Application Service for Physician Assistants). For a complete listing of schools that require applicants to apply through CASPA, please visit the following website: <https://portal.caspaonline.org/>. Lastly, the majority of PA programs require students to take the Graduate Records Exam (GRE).

For additional information about preparing for a career as a Physician Assistant, please contact Ms. Tailyn Walborn via email at walborta@miamioh.edu.