

Health Professions Info Sheet

What you need to know about
becoming a

Physician Assistant (PA)

Physician assistants provide diagnostic, therapeutic, and preventive health care services under the supervision of a physician. While PA's do work under the supervision of a physician, they are often the primary healthcare provider for patients. PA's are known for working in underserved and rural populations where MD/DO physician's are often in short supply. PA's enable patients to have more consistent and effective healthcare in these areas.

Where do they work?

PA's are often found as primary care providers and have a history of practicing in rural and underserved areas. PA's can also be found in:

- Internal medicine
- Geriatrics
- Pediatrics
- Family medicine
- Surgery
- Orthopedics
- Emergency medicine

Pre-Health Advising

123A Decary Hall
University of New England
Biddeford, ME 04005

(207) 602-2792
wmills1@une.edu

Physician assistant complete two years of graduate study to earn a Master's degree after completing their undergraduate degree. The first year of the program is typically dedicated to coursework covering topics such as biochemistry, pharmacology, medical ethics, and anatomy and physiology. Clinical rotations are completed in the areas of emergency medicine, gynecology, family medicine, internal medicine, surgery, geriatrics and pediatrics. Graduates of accredited PA programs may continue their education in a specialty if desired. All states require PA's to pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam. PA's also are required to participate in continuing education to maintain their license.

Education

Entrance to PA schools is competitive. Academic requirements include:

Biology

General Chemistry

Anatomy and Physiology

English

Math

Psychology

Suggested courses microbiology, biochemistry, and physics. Many PA schools require GRE scores as well as well as healthcare experience as an undergraduate

Accepted Student Profile

Students accepted into physician assistant programs typically have:

- High GPA's
- Excellent scores on entrance exams
- Documented hours of patient contact
- Leadership experience
- CPR certification
- Shadowed a practicing PA

Application

Physician assistant schools use the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). All official transcripts and letters of recommendation will be submitted through this service.

PA schools typically require students to take the GRE (Graduate Records Examination). The exam consists of a verbal, quantitative reasoning, and writing section.

Web Resources

Physician Assistant Education Association: www.paeonline.org

American Physician Assistant Association: <http://aapa.org>

CASPA Application: <https://portal.caspaonline.org/>

GRE: <http://www.ets.org/gre/>