

PRE-PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Wright State University

What is a Physician Assistant?

A physician assistant (PA) is a graduate of an accredited PA educational program who is authorized by all fifty states to practice medicine with the supervision of a licensed physician. PAs are invaluable members of the health care team and work in concert with physicians to ensure the highest quality of care for patients.

To become a PA, a student must graduate from an accredited PA program. The typical entering student has a bachelor's degree and approximately four years of health care experience. The average PA program takes 27 months to complete. Subjects covered in PA school include anatomy, physiology, medical ethics, pathology, pharmacology, biochemistry, microbiology, behavioral sciences, physical diagnosis and differential diagnosis. To practice as a PA, individuals must pass a national PA certification exam and obtain state authorization (license, registration or certification). In order to maintain their certification to practice, PAs must complete 100 hours of continuing medical education over a two-year cycle and pass a recertification exam every six years.

Wright State University offers all the courses necessary for an individual to meet the prerequisites to any PA program. In addition, most of the required courses are offered twice per year.

CORE PRE-REQUISITES

A pre-health advisor is available to assist with individual program requirements and the application process. Each PA school has its own prerequisites, so it's important to research programs individually. Below is a list of core courses required by most schools:

Human A&P	ANT 3100, 3120
Biology	BIO 1120, 1150
Microbiology	M&I 2200 or BIO 3100/3110
Chemistry	CHM 1210, 1220
Statistics	STT 2640
O-Chemistry	CHM 2110, 2120
Growth & Dev	PSY 3410
Nutrition	BMB 2500

Electives: courses in English, Sociology and Psychology are recommended

Career Outlook

With a projected growth rate of 39%, the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts PAs will be the second fastest growing health profession in the next decade (after home health aides). Projected employment is expected to rise to a total of 103,900 practicing PAs by 2018. Today, more than 83,000 PAs work in virtually every medical and surgical setting across the country. More than one-third (39.4%) practice in hospital settings and 40% work in group or solo-physician practices. Others work in a variety of settings, including rural clinics, freestanding surgical facilities, nursing homes, school- or college-based facilities, correctional industrial settings or federally qualified and community health centers.

Interest in this profession has increased in efforts to strengthen the U.S. primary care workforce, which is declining due to a continuing underproduction of primary care physicians. PA training programs were developed to train medical generalists to assist physicians in a relatively short time period. PAs now assist physicians in family medicine (24.8%), general surgery (25.9%), general internal medicine (15.1%), emergency medicine (10.9%), Ob/Gyn (2.0%), pediatrics (3.7%) as well as in other areas of medicine.

What Can a PA Legally Do?

Physicians may delegate to PAs medical duties that are within the physician's scope of practice, the PA's training and experience and that are allowed by law.

The duties include performing physical examinations, diagnosing and treating illnesses, ordering and interpreting lab tests, assisting in surgery, providing patient education and counseling, and making rounds in nursing homes and hospitals. All states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam authorize physicians to delegate prescriptive privileges to the PAs they supervise.

Numerous studies have found that the quality of care that PAs provide is comparable to that of physicians. Additionally, according to a study published in *The American Surgeon* in 2004, PAs "are a valuable adjunct in improving quality of patient care."

What does a Competitive Applicant Look Like?

In the 2010-11 application cycle, there were a total of 16,569 applications submitted to PA schools. Of those, only 5,060 were accepted and matriculated. The average matriculant age was 26.5 with 73.8% being female and 73.5% classified as Caucasian.

Avg GPA 3.49

Avg GRE 1119

Avg healthcare hours 1,870

5 Most Common Majors:

Biology, Psychology, Health Sciences, Exercise Science (Applied Physiology), Nursing

Perks of the Profession

Excellent Income: according to the AAPA census, in 2010 the median annual earnings for a PA in Ohio was \$86,500. Median annual PA compensation for 2009 graduates by specialty were:

<i>Primary Care</i>	\$76,000
<i>Internal Medicine</i>	\$78,000
<i>Pediatrics</i>	\$80,000
<i>General Surgery</i>	\$76,250
<i>Emergency Med</i>	\$90,000

Satisfying professional career: most PAs work in physicians' offices, clinics and hospitals with increased flexibility.

Fewer years of education: PA programs are at the master's level and require approximately 27 months of post-baccalaureate training in an accredited PA program.

Predominately female: proportion of enrollees who are female continues to rise, a continuous trend over the past decade.

Essential partners in America's health care workforce: with a shortage in health care providers, health care services are being provided by physicians, PAs and other providers in a teamwork effort.

Future Roles: medical professionals are anticipating future opportunities for PAs, such as clinical trial researchers, educators of PAs, business partners or practice co-owners, epidemiologists, or public health directors.

Wright State University

College of Science &
Mathematics

For additional information please
visit our website:

<https://science-math.wright.edu/pre-health>

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PA PROGRAMS IN OHIO

Kettering College of
Medical Arts

Marietta College

Mount Union College

University of Findlay

University of
Toledo

Cuyahoga Community
College / Cleveland State
University

Ohio Dominican
University (*New)

New in 2014:
University of Dayton
Ohio State University

Additional Resources:

Physician Assistant
Education Association
(PAEA)

<http://www.PAEAonline.org>

Central Application Service
for Physician Assistant
(CASPA)

<http://www.caspaonline.org>

American Academy of
Physician Assistants
(AAPA)

www.aapa.org