Physician assistants (PA’s) are health care professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. PA’s conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery, and in virtually all states can write prescriptions. Within the physician-PA relationship, physician assistants exercise autonomy in medical decision making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services. A PA’s practice may also include education, research, and administrative services. Physician assistants are found in all areas of medicine. They practice in the areas of primary care medicine - that is family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, and obstetrics and gynecology - as well in surgery and the surgical subspecialties.

The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov) projects a 50 percent increase in the number of PA jobs between 2004 and 2014, making it the third fastest-growing profession in the country.

**Prerequisite Courses Required by Most Physician Assistant Programs:**

- One year of General Biology
- One year of Human Anatomy & Physiology
- One year of General (Inorganic) Chemistry
- One term of Microbiology

**NOTE:** Science courses should be those designed for science majors

**Additional Prerequisite Courses Required by Some Physician Assistant Programs:**

- College math and/or calculus and/or statistics
- College English
- Organic Chemistry
- Biochemistry
- Genetics
- Behavioral Sciences such as Psychology
- Minimum credit requirements in the humanities and/or social sciences

The above lists are not exhaustive. Check individual schools for requirements. Note that most professional schools require that an A, B, or C be earned in all required preparatory courses. Admission to physician assistant programs is limited and competitive.

- In 2015, matriculated students to Pacific University had an average science GPA of 3.59 and an average last 45 semester hour GPA of 3.79. For the 2016 application year, matriculated OHSU students had an average overall GPA of 3.48.

**Health Care Experience:**
Most physician assistant programs require applicants to have previous health care experience. One to two years of responsible, health care experience working directly (hands on) with patients, such as, nurse, EMT, medic, social worker, athletic trainer, medical technologist, or a number of other health care fields, is minimally required, but please note most matriculants have earned many more hours than the minimum.

**GRE:**
Some PA programs require students to take the GRE. The GRE General Test measures verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and analytical writing skills that have been acquired over a long period of time and that are not related to any specific field of study. The General Test is offered year-round at computer-based test centers. For more information and to locate a test center visit: www.ets.org.
## Requirements for Admission to OHSU Physician Assistant Program

Below is an outline of Oregon Health & Science University prerequisite courses and admissions requirements (subject to change at any time).

### Prerequisite Coursework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OHSU Prerequisite Courses</th>
<th>Equivalent PSU Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statistics:</strong></td>
<td>• STAT 243 (4) – Intro to Probability &amp; Statistics (the prerequisite is second year high school algebra or equivalent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offered through Math, Stats, Bio, Psy/Soc departments. Business statistics is not accepted.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chemistry:</strong></td>
<td>• CH 221/227, CH 222/228, CH 223/229 (15) – General Chemistry (the prerequisite course is MTH111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full sequence with lab.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biology:</strong></td>
<td>• BI 211, 212, 213 w/ Lab (15) – Principles of Biology (CH 221 must be completed prior to, or taken concurrently w/ BI 211)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General biology: full sequence with lab.</td>
<td>• BI 234/235 w/Lab (6) – Microbiology with Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One term of microbiology with lab.</td>
<td>• BI 301, 302, 303 (12) – Human Anatomy &amp; Physiology w/Lab (the prerequisite is one year of college level biology and a previous course in chemistry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human anatomy &amp; physiology sequence with lab.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: Human anatomy &amp; physiology sequence needs to be completed within seven years of planned PA program matriculation. Online A&amp;P courses are not acceptable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper division natural science course work:</strong> Which might include <strong>highly recommended</strong> 300 and 400 level courses in:</td>
<td>• CH 334, 335, 336 (Labs- CH337/338) (16) – Organic Chemistry <em>Discuss options with adviser</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Organic Chemistry</td>
<td>• CH 350 (4) - Biochemistry (prerequisite: a sequence in General Chemistry CH 221, 222, &amp; 223 with lab and Organic Chemistry CH 331, 332 with lab OR CH 334, 335, &amp; 336 with lab)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Genetics</td>
<td>• BI 341 (4) - Genetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Biochemistry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Immunology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*A total of 40 quarter hours in relevant lower and upper division Biology, Chemistry and Physics are required. Can include General Biology and General Chemistry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychology:</strong></td>
<td>• PSY 200 (4) – Psychology as a Natural Science OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One course in general or developmental psychology</td>
<td>• PSY 204 (4) – Psychology as a Social Science OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>• PSY 311 (4) – Human Development (prerequisite PSY 200 or 204)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional OHSU PA Program Admissions Requirements:

- **BS or BA** (must be earned prior to matriculation). No particular major is preferred, but a broad educational background is encouraged. Courses must be completed by Dec 31 for matriculation the following June.
- **Minimum cumulative** undergraduate GPA of 2.8.
- **GRE** General Test Required (scores older than 5 years will not be considered) – no minimum score required.
- **Graduates of non-U.S. Colleges and Universities** - all non-Canadian international graduates must provide transcripts reflecting one year of full-time study (30 semester hours, 45 quarter hours) in an accredited U.S. college or university. The year of study must include a minimum of 15 semester hours or 20 quarter hours of natural sciences (chemistry, biology- including A&P with lab and Microbiology with lab) and 6 semester hours or 9 quarter hours of English. International students must provide an evaluation of their academic credentials prepared by an international credentialing agency. Please see OHSU website for list of qualifying agencies. In addition, a TOEFL exam may be required.
- **Application deadlines:** CASPA deadline is September 1 for OHSU, but you can submit your application as early as April 17. In addition to the CASPA application, the OHSU PA Program also requires submission of a supplemental application. The supplemental application must be received by OHSU on or before September 1. OHSU employs rolling admissions.
- **Required Health Care Experience:** A minimum of one year (about 2000 hours) of health care experience in a position of responsibility is expected of all applicants. Preference is given to candidates with health care experience that involves direct (hands-on) patient care. Shadowing experience, although highly valued, does not count towards the total number of hours. Applicants should enter any shadowing or intern types of opportunities under the health care related area of their CASPA application. For more detailed information, please visit OHSU's PA program website: [http://www.ohsu.edu/pa/](http://www.ohsu.edu/pa/)

### OHSU PA Program Contact:
Colleen Schierholtz, Director of Admissions
Email: schierhc@ohsu.edu
Web: [www.ohsu.edu/pa](http://www.ohsu.edu/pa)
Phone: 503-494-1408
## Requirements for Admission to Pacific University Physician Assistant Program

Below is an outline of Pacific University's prerequisite courses and other admissions requirements (subject to change at any time).

### Prerequisite Coursework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pacific Prerequisite Courses</th>
<th>Equivalent PSU Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statistics:</strong> 3 semester hours – one course from one of the following departments: PSY, SOC, STAT, MATH</td>
<td>• STAT 243 (4) – Intro to Probability &amp; Statistics (the prerequisite is second year high school algebra or equivalent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chemistry:</strong> 11 semester hours (16.5 quarter credits)</td>
<td>• CH 221/227, CH 222/228, CH 223/229 (15) – General Chemistry (MTH 111 is a prerequisite for this course) AND • CH 334 (4) – Organic Chemistry I (CH 221-223 with lab is the prerequisite) OR • CH 350 (4) – Biochemistry (prerequisite: General Chemistry CH 221, 222, &amp; 223 with lab and Organic Chemistry CH 331, 332 OR CH 334, 335, &amp; 336 with lab)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biology:</strong> 11 semester hours (16.5 quarter credits)</td>
<td>• BI 234 (4) – Microbiology • BI 235 (2) – Microbiology Lab (recommended) • BI 301, 302, 303 (12) – Human Anatomy &amp; Physiology w/Lab: The prerequisite is one year of college level biology BI 211, 212, &amp; 213 and a previous course in chemistry. Note that CH221 is the prerequisite (or co-requisite) for BI 211.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Psychology or Sociology:</strong> 3 semester hours (4.5 quarter credits)</td>
<td>• PSY 200 (4) – Psychology as a Natural Science OR • PSY 204 (4) – Psychology as a Social Science OR • SOC 200 (4) – Introduction to Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Recommended Coursework</strong></td>
<td>• PSY 311 (4) – Human Development (recommended) • PSY 434 (4) – Introduction to Psychopathology (recommended) • WR227 (4) – Introduction to Technical Writing • Medical Terminology – not offered at PSU, check community colleges • Spanish Language courses • CPR Certification – not offered at PSU – check with Red Cross</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional Pacific University PA Program Admissions Requirements:

- **Prerequisite course work & science/statistics GPA:** must be a 2.75 or higher to apply. Courses must be completed by May 1 of the matriculation year. Program begins in May.
- **GRE** – not required
- **International applicants:** For those applicants whose first language is not English you may be required to take the TOEFL and submit your official scores.
- **Application deadlines:** Applications can be submitted beginning April 17. To be considered for regular admission, the CASPA application must be "submitted" online by September 1 and the supplemental application must be submitted by September 1.
- **Professional Evaluations:** two professional evaluations; recommended that one is from a (non-relative/personal) Physician (MD/DO), Physician Assistant (PA-C), or Nurse Practitioner (NP) with whom you have worked or shadowed.
- **Required Health Care Experience:** Applicants must demonstrate a minimum of 1,000 hours of direct clinical patient care experience within a health care setting, documented through the CASPA online application (caspaonline.org). Please note: The Admissions Committee will consider the total number of hours accumulated at the time you submit your CASPA application. No consideration will be given to hours projected for the future.

A wide range of experiences will be considered such as: Nurse, RN/LPN, Paramedic, EMT, Corpsman, Medical Assistant, Nurses’ Aide, Medical Technologist/Technician, Respiratory Therapist, Physical Therapist/Assistant, Occupational Therapist/Assistant, Speech Therapist/Assistant, Psychologist/Therapist/Counselor, Medical Office Manager, Hospital/Clinic/Nursing Home Facility Volunteer, Home- Health Aide, Outreach Worker, Social Worker, Acupuncturist, Chiropractor, Naturopath, Massage Therapist In Health Care Setting, Patient Educator, Dental Assistant and others. Shadow experience with a Physician Assistant will count towards the requirement, but will not fulfill the requirement completely.

### Pacific University PA Program Contact:
Leah Baldwin, Assistant Director of Graduate & Professional Program Admissions
Email: leahbaldwin@pacificu.edu
Phone: 503-352-7224
Web: www.pacificu.edu/pa
Applying to Physician Assistant Programs

**Application Process:**
Students typically apply to physician assistant programs about a year before they expect to matriculate to the PA programs (e.g. in the summer before their last academic year in college). Some students wait until their final year of college to apply to PA programs, to ensure that all prerequisites have been completed and that the required health care experience has been fulfilled. If students wish to have a year between completing the undergraduate program and beginning a PA program, this is commonly referred to as a “glide year” or “gap year”; many students spend it gaining relevant experience in health care and/or taking additional recommended coursework.

Students apply to PA school by completing and submitting a **primary application** through a central application service. The Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). CASPA will verify your application for accuracy, calculate your G.P.A., and send your materials to the physician assistant programs you designate. Individual deadlines are determined by the Physician Assistant programs, NOT by CASPA. Each PA program determines what is required by their deadline date. Reference forms are available electronically or in paper form. Electronic references are easier to track. Be aware the some PA programs require supplemental applications.

**Central Application Service:**
The Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA)
Web: [https://portal.caspaonline.org/](https://portal.caspaonline.org/)

**Application Tips:**
- **Apply Early.** If you wait until the night before a program deadline to submit your application, your application may not be received by CASPA in time. You should apply at least four weeks before the earliest deadline of the program(s) that you are applying to. This will allow the necessary time to verify and process your application and send it to your designated programs in a timely manner.
- **Enter all Institutions Attended.** Enter all undergraduate, graduate, professional and foreign institutions that you have attended even if it was only for a single course or college credit awarded while you were in high school. Official transcripts will be necessary for all undergraduate, graduate and professional coursework (taken toward a bachelor's degree). Foreign coursework will need to be evaluated for U.S. equivalency if it is not in English.
- **Enter all Coursework.** You must enter all coursework including courses in which you received a grade of "W" or "Inc." Enter all in-progress and planned coursework. This will help programs decide if you are planning to take required courses in the future.
- **Be careful of duplication.** Do not duplicate your hours of experience in the Patient Contact Experience and Health Related Experience. Only report experience in one section or the other. If your position included both health related and patient contact experience, split the hours between the two sections.

**Additional Recommendations:**
- **Personally read the admission brochure and Web site** of each of the PA programs to which you plan to apply to obtain information on admissions requirements and deadlines and to determine if the school is a good fit for you.
- **Participate in volunteer, and/or shadowing experience** in the health care field and in the community at large early on in your college experience. It is important that you understand the realities of the medical field and illustrate through action your commitment to serving the community.
- **Get involved with other pre-health students on campus** – joining the Portland Pre-Health Society ([http://www.pps.pdx.edu/](http://www.pps.pdx.edu/)) is a great way to start.
- **Check periodically with the adviser** for recent changes, remaining requirements to meet and application procedures.
- **Begin the application process early** in the spring before your last academic year at PSU. Submit your application as early as possible without compromising the quality of your application. Visit the pre-PA adviser at PSU to discuss the application process.
- **Utilize free university resources** such as the pre-PA adviser, Writing Center, and Career Center for help with your personal narrative and interview preparation.
- **Begin completing financial aid forms in January**; the priority filing deadline is March 1.

**Additional Resources:**
American Academy of Physician Assistants – [www.aapa.org](http://www.aapa.org)
Physician Assistant Education Association – [www.paeaonline.org](http://www.paeaonline.org)