



PA School Prerequisites

This list of WSU Pullman courses includes common prerequisites for Physician Assistant/Associate (PA) programs. Because admissions requirements vary widely by school, you should also consult the websites of the programs where you plan to apply. The courses in the following list are arranged by topic; students will take the courses in a unique sequence based on their own particular circumstances.

Recommended Courses

Biology

- BIOL 106 – Introductory Biology: Organismal Biology
- BIOL 107 – Introductory Biology: Cell Biology and Genetics
- BIOL 220 – Medical Terminology
- BIOL 301 – General Genetics
- BIOL 315 – Gross and Microanatomy
- BIOL 353 – Advanced Human Physiology

Molecular Biosciences

- MBIOS 303 – Introductory Biochemistry
- MBIOS 304 – Microbiology and Molecular Biology Laboratory
- MBIOS 305 – General Microbiology

Chemistry

- CHEM 105 - Principles of Chemistry I
- CHEM 106 - Principles of Chemistry II or CHEM 116 Chemical Principles Honors II
- CHEM 345 – Organic Chemistry I

Math and Statistics

- Choose either MATH 106 and 108, or a calculus course:
 - MATH 106 – College Algebra
 - MATH 108 – Trigonometry
 - MATH 140 – Calculus for Life Scientists
 - MATH 171 – Calculus I
- Choose one statistics course:
 - STAT 212 – Introduction to Statistical Methods, or
 - PSYCH 311 – Statistics in Psychology

English

- ENGLISH 101 – College Composition, or
- ENGLISH 298 – Writing and Research (Honors students)

Social Sciences and Humanities

- PSYCH 105 – Introductory Psychology
- SOC 101 – Introduction to Sociology
- PHIL 365 – Biomedical Ethics

Physics

- PHYSICS 101 – General Physics I
- PHYS 111 – General Physics Lab I
- PHYS 102 – General Physics II
- PHYS 112 – General Physics Lab II

Other Courses to Consider

- ANTH 101 – Introduction to Anthropology
- BIOL 333 – Human Nutrition and Health
- BIOL 352 – Cells
- CHEM 348 – Organic Chemistry II
- ENGLISH 201 – Writing and Research
- ENGLISH 402 – Technical and Professional writing
- HD 101 – Human Development Across the Lifespan
- MBIOS 440 – Immunology
- PSYCH 333 – Psychological Disorders
- PSYCH 361 – Developmental Psychology
- SPANISH

Important!

Different PA programs apply different conditions or restrictions on undergraduate coursework. Check with your designated PA programs about:

- Minimum grades that must be earned in prerequisite classes
- Acceptability of credits earned from AP, CLEP, IB, or DSST (DANTES) exams
- Acceptability of courses taken as pass/fail or credit/no credit
- Acceptability of online coursework
- Timeframe for completion of prerequisites (e.g., within 5-7 years of matriculation)

Preparing for a Successful PA Program Application

PA programs use information gathered from the CASPA (Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants) to evaluate applicants. Each PA school will carefully review the following:

Transcripts and Test Scores

- Cumulative GPA for all courses taken at all undergraduate institutions
- Test scores from the PA-CAT, GRE, and/or situational judgement tests, if required

Letters of Evaluation

- Check with your preferred schools to learn who should write your letters and how many letters you need to submit. Tip: The best letters will always be written by people who know you well.

Experiences and Achievements

- PA programs may require 1000 to 4000 hours of paid Patient Care Experience (PCE) prior to application. To gain this level of experience, most applicants work full-time for one or more years after graduating with their bachelor's degree. Note that different schools define PCE differently.
- Other types of experiences are also valued, including shadowing, non-healthcare employment, volunteer work, extracurricular activities, healthcare experience, leadership, research, and teaching.
- The CASPA will ask you to describe and reflect on each of your experiences. A competitive application will include concise, detailed descriptions of activities along with insights into your unique skills, strengths, and interests.
- Talk to your pre-PA advisor about planning your non-academic experiences, keeping track of your time, and journaling about your development as a healthcare professional.

Personal Essay

- The personal essay is an important piece of writing that answers the question, "Why do you want to become a PA?" A competitive applicant will be able to articulate their motivations and tell a meaningful story about their pathway to profession.
- Your pre-PA advisor can offer guidance and feedback when it's time for you to write your personal essay.

Personal Interview

- After your written application is evaluated by your designated PA programs, you may be invited for an interview.
- Your pre-PA advisor is available to coach you through different interview formats and questions, professional etiquette, and coping with nervousness.