



# Pre-Physician Assistant Advising Sheet

A Physician Assistant (PA) is a licensed health professional who practices medicine under the supervision of a physician. Working as members of the healthcare team, PAs take medical histories, examine and treat patients, order and interpret laboratory tests and x-rays, make diagnoses, and prescribe medications.

PAs must attend a specialized medical training program associated with a medical school that includes classroom studies and clinical experience. An academic degree and/or certificate is awarded upon graduation. Admission to PA programs is highly competitive. Admission requirements to these programs vary from a high school diploma to a bachelor's degree.

Training programs are generally two years in length. PA training begins with a classroom or pre-clinical phase that lasts nine to twelve months. Students then spend about a year doing clinical work in areas such as family practice, inpatient medicine, general surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine, internal medicine, psychiatry, and pediatrics.

## Choosing an Undergraduate Major

For students planning on obtaining a bachelor's degree prior to applying to PA program, "Pre-Physician Assistant" is ***not*** a major at universities. You should give careful consideration to your choice of major and select an area of study that interests you. However, students should select an appropriate major that could lead to an alternative career, if necessary.

### Suggested courses for most Physician Assistant School:

One Year of General Biology with Lab

One Year of General Chemistry with Lab

One Year of Physics with Lab

One Semester of Anatomy

One Semester of Physiology

One Semester of Microbiology

One course in Math—Requirements vary by campus. Some schools require one semester of Statistics and others require a semester of Calculus. Your undergraduate major may also determine your choice of Math requirements.

### Suggested GCC courses:

BIOL 101 and 102

CHEM 101 and 102

PHYS 105 and 106 or PHYS 101, 102, 103

BIOL 120

BIOL 121

BIOL 112

MATH 136

MATH 103

### Lower Division subjects required or recommended by some U.S. Physician Assistant Schools

Public Speaking/Speech

SPCH 101

Computer Science

Basic computer knowledge is necessary for almost all physician assistant schools. Some may recommend Computer Science courses.

2 courses in Social Science

Psychology, Sociology, Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, Cultural Anthropology

One year of college level Foreign Language

Knowledge of a foreign language, specifically Spanish, is strongly recommended

**Note:** All courses should be taken for a letter grade, not Credit/No Credit.

Physician Assistant requirements vary, check with the individual campus for their specific requirements.

**Note:** Information is subject to change without notice. Check with the individual campus for the most up to date information.

Students applying to Physician Assistant programs need to plan carefully and complete the Physician Assistant requirements. Those who plan to obtain a bachelor's degree must also complete the requirements for their undergraduate major and the general education required by the undergraduate transfer institution.

#### Physician Assistant Selection Criteria

- Some schools require the **Graduate Record Exam (GRE)** or the **Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)**.
- Completion of the **prerequisite coursework**.
- **GPA** in terms of overall college grades and science grades are a major factor in the selection process. Most Physician Assistant programs require above a 3.0 GPA.
- Demonstration of **hands-on health-related experience**.
- **Community service/leadership** There are endless options for community service work, College clubs and service organizations, Church involvement, Community centers, Soup kitchens, Homeless shelters but you should find a project that fulfills you and motivates you to continue your work in the community. Your passion for community service will be clear to admissions officers if you genuinely enjoy what you are doing, and this will ultimately help your application to Physician Assistant School.
- **Letters of recommendation** from practicing physicians or physician assistants.
- **Interviews** with program faculty and selection committee members.

#### Salary Information

In 2014, the California wage was \$95,968 annually ([www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov)). The median is the point at which half of the workers earn more and half earn less.

#### Recommended Websites

Accreditation Review Commission on Education for Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA)	<a href="http://www.arc-pa.org/index.html">www.arc-pa.org/index.html</a>
American Academy of Physician Assistants	<a href="http://www.aapa.org">www.aapa.org</a>
National Commission of Certification of Physicians Assistants State of California, Physician Assistant Committee	<a href="http://www.nccpa.net">www.nccpa.net</a>
	<a href="http://www.pac.ca.gov">www.pac.ca.gov</a>

#### Accredited California Physician Assistant School Websites

Charles Drew University	M*	(323)563-5879	<a href="http://www.cdrewu.edu/CDUPrograms">www.cdrewu.edu/CDUPrograms</a>
Loma Linda University	M	(909) 558-7295	<a href="http://www.llu.edu/allied-health/sahp/pa/index.page">www.llu.edu/allied-health/sahp/pa/index.page</a>
Marshall B. Ketchum University		(714) 992-7808	<a href="http://www.ketchum.edu/index.php/admissions/physician-assistant">www.ketchum.edu/index.php/admissions/physician-assistant</a>
Samuel Merritt College	M	(510) 869-6623	<a href="http://www.samuelmerritt.edu/physician_assistant">www.samuelmerritt.edu/physician_assistant</a>
San Joaquin Valley College	A, B, M	(559) 651-2500 ext. 351	<a href="http://www.sjvc.edu/program/Physician_Assistant">www.sjvc.edu/program/Physician_Assistant</a>
Stanford University School of Medicine	C, A, M	(650)725-6959	<a href="http://pcap.stanford.edu">http://pcap.stanford.edu</a>
Touro University – California College of Health Sciences	M	(888)652-7580	<a href="http://cehs.tu.edu/paprogram/index.html">http://cehs.tu.edu/paprogram/index.html</a>
University of California, Davis	M	(916)734-3551	<a href="http://ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/nursing/education/education_pa_degree_program.html">ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/nursing/education/education_pa_degree_program.html</a>
USC Keck School of Medicine	M	(626) 457-4240	<a href="http://keck.usc.edu/Education/Academic_Department_and_Divisions/Physician_assistant_Program.aspx">http://keck.usc.edu/Education/Academic_Department_and_Divisions/Physician_assistant_Program.aspx</a>
Western University of Health Sciences	M	(909)469-5378	<a href="http://prospective.westernu.edu/physician-assistant/welcome-14/">http://prospective.westernu.edu/physician-assistant/welcome-14/</a>

#### Credentials Awarded

- C – Certificate of Completion
- A – Associate's Degree
- B – Bachelor's Degree
- M – Master's Degree

**Note: prerequisites for these programs may be different. Please contact these schools to clarify their requirements**

**\*Charles Drew PA program has been discontinued. They are currently in the process of reviewing the program and re-opening it however the soonest that would take place would be Fall 2016**