

Pre-Physician Assistant (PA) Program

Messiah College has a proud tradition of preparing students for careers as PAs. While the academic and experiential requirements *may* vary by institution, most of them have similar requirements. Prospective applicants are encouraged to research the schools to which they may apply to best plan their curriculum. The purpose of this document is to present a brief outline of what is generally expected of successful applicants to PA School, and how Messiah College prepares its students to meet and often exceed these requirements. You will note that at Messiah we have a Pre-PA **Program**. Our program is best thought of as an overlay of courses that can be scheduled as part of most majors, with the exception of engineering and nursing.

Preparing for a Career as a Physician Assistant

Description of the Profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Department of Labor <i>Occupational Outlook Handbook</i> www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm • www.explorehealthcareers.org
Course Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements vary by school • Check the <i>Physician Assistant Programs Directory</i> (www.paeonline.org/directory) • Generally, course work should include general biology, general chemistry and sometimes organic chemistry, human anatomy and physiology, microbiology, statistics, social sciences, and humanities
Application Timeline	<p>Physician assistant school directly after Messiah College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required courses completed by end of senior year (although preference may be given to applicants that complete the required courses sooner) • Apply during summer between junior and senior years or during senior year
Standardized Test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually Graduate Record Exam (GRE) (check the <i>Physician Assistant Programs Directory</i>) • Given virtually daily at computer test centers • Register on-line (www.gre.org) • Length 3 h • 3 sections : verbal (scores 200-800), quantitative (200-800), analytical writing (0-6) • Receive scores immediately
Application Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90 of the 134 physician assistant programs participate in the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) (www.caspaonline.org) • Available ≈ May 1 • Each school selects an application deadline (typically in the fall) • For physician assistant programs that do not participate in CASPA, apply directly to the school • APPLY EARLY!!!

Admissions Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPA (check the <i>Physician Assistant Programs Directory</i> for #'s) • GRE, if required (check the <i>Physician Assistant Programs Directory</i> for #'s) • Written statement • Letters of evaluation • The type of letter written on behalf of the applicant may vary. For myriad reasons that will be discussed at the time of application, applicants may have a Committee Letter of Recommendation or a Committee Packet of Information sent on their behalf. • Interview • Health-related experience (type and amount varies greatly by school; check the <i>Physician Assistant Programs Directory</i>) • Interview
Length of Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies by school (check the <i>Physician Assistant Programs Directory</i>) • Typically, 2 years
Degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physician Assistant (PA)
Additional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physician Assistant Education Association (www.paeaonline.org) • American Academy of Physician Assistants (www.aapa.org) • www.physicianassistant.net