PREPARATION FOR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES FOR PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

Important general information

Students interested in the pre-physician assistant advising track must obtain a bachelor’s degree and complete the necessary prerequisites in order to apply for a master’s-level physician assistant program. If interested in the field of physician assistant, students should consult with a pre-professional health adviser to learn about requirements that are specific to the program and/or school to which they hope to apply.

Students must apply separately to a physician assistant program/school of their choice at the appropriate time.

Students with an interest in preparing for a physician assistant program should declare an academic major while also indicating a pre-physician assistant advising track. Students do not earn a pre-physician assistant degree. If unsure of their academic majors, students should initially clarify their academic interests through regular conversations with their advisers. Those on the pre-physician assistant advising track are encouraged to major in fields of greatest interest to them.

Prerequisites for a physician assistant program

Those intending to pursue a master’s-level physician assistant program must complete a bachelor's degree before entering. It is recommended that applicants select a challenging course load of science and math courses each semester to ensure adequate preparation for the academic rigor of the physician assistant program.

Students need to complete their bachelor’s degree, the required science prerequisite courses and the Graduate Record Exam before being eligible to start a graduate physician assistant program.

Science and non-science courses required for a pre-physician assistant master’s program

The requirements for admission to the schools and colleges offering graduate-level studies for the physician assistant vary, but students wishing to study at this level should be certain to take two semesters of general biology with laboratories, two semesters of general chemistry with laboratories, a semester of organic chemistry with laboratory, as well as two semesters of human anatomy and physiology and laboratories. The science courses should be pre-professional level courses designed for science majors and should offer a laboratory experience.

Other courses such as cell biology, biochemistry, genetics, microbiology and medical terminology are highly recommended, depending on the intended physician assistant program.

Statistics, introduction to psychology and one upper-level psychology (abnormal or developmental are preferred) are non-science prerequisites for the physician assistant program.

Due to the variance in requirements for each program, it is highly recommended that students meet with a pre-professional health adviser early to develop a degree plan.