

HEALTH PROFESSIONS OFFICE**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT**

Physician Assistants (PA's) practice medicine under supervision by a licensed physician. They take histories, order and administer tests, and diagnosis and treat illnesses. They do things that would otherwise be done by physicians. In many states, they are allowed to write prescriptions. They work in clinics, hospitals, and doctors' offices, and their duties are dependent on the specialty of the supervising physician. The average starting salary is \$50,000. 34 % of PA's are in Family Practice, 9 % are in Emergency Medicine, and 8 % are in general surgery.

Physician assistants tend to spend more time with patients than do physicians. Therefore, they are able to provide more personal attention. Historically, PA's have held jobs in rural communities that would otherwise be without health care. With the development of HMO's and managed care, there is an expanding use of PA's in hospitals and doctors' offices.

Most PA programs are two-year programs. They are located at medical schools, medical centers, hospitals, and two- and four-year colleges. All programs give a certificate upon graduation; some cover the work as a part of a Bachelor's degree; an increasing number award Master's degrees upon completion of the program.

Practicing PA's must be graduates of an accredited program and be certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). To be certified, PA's must complete and pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination. In order to remain certified, they must complete 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years, and must pass a re-certification exam every six years. Currently there are 116 accredited PA programs. The requirements for admission vary greatly. Some require two years of college and direct patient care experience; others require Bachelor's degrees with patient care recommended but not required. Details about the requirements for individual programs can be found by contacting individual schools.

The requirements for California PA schools that offer a Master's degree:

USC	Bachelor's degree; GRE or MCAT examination; Clinical experience preferred
Loma Linda	Bachelor's degree; One year patient-care experience (2000 hours) preferred; no entrance exam
Samuel Merritt College	Bachelor's degree; patient-care experience preferred; no entrance exam
Touro University	Bachelor's degree; no entrance exam; patient-care experience preferred
Western University	Bachelor's degree; no entrance exam; patient-care experience preferred

Other Programs in California: (Offer either a Bachelor's degree, and Associate's degree, or a Certificate of Completion)

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science
Riverside County Regional Medical Center
San Joaquin Valley College
Stanford University School of Medicine
University of California, Davis

Course Class Requirements for California PA schools:

Please note the following list of courses does NOT include all pre-requisites for admission to PA schools. Be sure to check the admission requirements on the CASPA website (www.caspaonline.org) or the individual school's website.

General Biology	MDCB 1A/AL; MCDB 1B; EEMB 2; MCDB 1BL or EEMB 2L; EEMB 3/3L
Anatomy w/ lab	Not offered at UCSB – SBCC BIOMD 107
Physiology w/ lab	Not offered at UCSB – SBCC BIOMD 108
Microbiology w/ lab	MCDB 131/131L (or can be taken at SBCC BIOMD 127)
Chemistry w/ lab	Chem 1ABC + labs
Organic Chemistry	Chem 109AB (may not be required of all schools)
Biochemistry	MCDB 108A or MCDB 110 or Chem 142A (may not be required of all schools)
Stat	PSTAT 5A
English	Writing 2, 50
Psychology	Psy 1
Social Sciences/Humanities	12-15 quarter units

Application

Students applying to PA programs generally use the online web-based application service, CASPA (Central Application Service for Physician Assistants); however, please refer to the specific program to verify application procedures as they may vary. Furthermore, students NEED to check with the individual school(s) they are applying to for additional information about supplemental applications or other application requirements. Some schools may require both the CASPA application and a secondary application. For example some schools require that you apply through CASPA and to their Graduate School at the same time. There will be a link on the CASPA site to each school that is participating, so it should be easy to find that information.

Letters of Reference are sent directly to CASPA, then forwarded to participating schools, while GRE scores should be sent directly to each individual school.

There are currently 63 programs participating. That is about 1/2 of the programs. The service has been developed through ACCOM and they will handle the day-to-day operations.

To access the application, please refer to the following website: <http://www.caspaonline.org>

CASPA application processing begins May 5th and closes around April 1st

In addition to the CASPA application, many schools require a supplemental application; It is your responsibility to find out if the school requires one and to send it in by the application deadline, which will vary by program.