

## Physician Assistant Admissions Guide

A physician assistant is a graduate of an accredited PA educational program who is authorized by the state to practice medicine with the supervision of a licensed physician. PAs are invaluable members of the healthcare team and work in concert with physicians to ensure the highest quality of care for patients and is one of the fastest growing fields in healthcare. The following is a brief guide to PA requirements while here at The University of Alabama.

### PREREQUISITES:

Each physician's assistant graduate program establishes its own set of prerequisites. Check the websites of each individual program that you are considering in order to obtain a current list of undergraduate course prerequisites and other requirements. **Please note each program's requirements for direct patient contact hours vs. shadowing hours.**

<b>General Biology:</b>	BSC 114 and 115 (lab) and BSC 116 and 117 (lab) or honors equivalent
<b>Anatomy and Physiology:</b>	BSC 215 and BSC 216 (or BSC 400, BSC 424, and BSC 425 if majoring in Biology)
<b>Microbiology:</b>	BSC 310 and BSC 312
<b>General Chemistry:</b>	CH 101 and CH 102 or honors equivalent
<b>Organic Chemistry:</b>	CH 231, CH 232 and CH 237 (lab)
<b>Mathematics:</b>	MATH 112
<b>Statistics:</b>	PY 211, BSC 380, or CHS 425 recommended
<b>Psychology:</b>	PY 101, PY 358, PY 352
<b>Highly Recommended:</b>	NHM 101 (Human Nutrition) HD 203 (Medical Terminology) ATR 272 (First Aid and CPR)

**\*All prerequisite courses must be completed with a grade of "C-" or higher.**

### EXAM AND GPA:

**The Graduate Record Exam (GRE)** is a standardized examination that consists of four multiple-choice sections that cover basic mathematics and reading comprehension skills. The GRE is designed to measure general academic ability. It is required by most of the American PA schools. Typically, students take the GRE about one calendar year prior to their intended date of matriculation to professional school. The GRE is a nationally standardized test, similar to the ACT and SAT. A GRE score is good for three years at most schools, so taking the test in the spring of junior year does not necessarily mean that you must enter PA school right after college graduation. Average scores are:

REVISED: 150+ on Verbal and 150+ on Quantitative; 3.5 on Analytical Writing  
OLD: 500 on Verbal and 500 on Quantitative (minimum 1000); 3.5 Analytical Writing

**Grade Point Average (GPA):** Minimum GPA requirements vary from program to program, but MOST programs have a minimum 3.0 GPA requirement. In addition, most programs require that all prerequisite courses must be passed with a "C" or better.

**TIMELINE:**

<p><b>Freshman Year:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect with the Health Professions Advising Office</li> <li>• Start taking basic sciences (See chart above)</li> <li>• Declare your major (study what you love)</li> <li>• Begin getting involved with volunteer opportunities on campus and in the community</li> <li>• Start obtaining <b>Direct Patient Contact Hours</b> (this is different from shadowing)</li> <li>• Join some student organizations (Pre-PA Society)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sophomore Year:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with next sequence of courses</li> <li>• Stay involved in extracurricular activities (medical, volunteer, service, etc.)</li> <li>• Begin to think about becoming an officer in your organizations</li> <li>• Visit Health Professions Office to begin to assess competitiveness</li> <li>• Keep working on obtaining your <b>Direct Patient Contact Hours</b></li> <li>• Identify PA programs you are interested in (Fall)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Junior Year:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to Health Professions Advising Office about competitiveness</li> <li>• Register, study, and take GRE (Spring/Summer)</li> <li>• Identify 3 individuals to write letters of recommendation (Spring)</li> <li>• Complete Application CASPA (Spring/Summer)</li> <li>• Keep working on obtaining your Patient Contact Hours. <b>Program direct patient contact hour requirement <u>must</u> be complete prior to submitting application.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Senior Year:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit Application (CASPA) if you haven't already (Fall)</li> <li>• Wait to be contacted for interview</li> <li>• Finish degree requirements</li> <li>• Continue with activities</li> <li>• Talk with HPAO about Plan B if necessary</li> </ul>

**RESOURCES:**

Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA): [www.paeaonline.org](http://www.paeaonline.org)

Directory of PA programs in the United States: <http://directory.paeaonline.org/>

Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA): <http://portal.caspaonline.org>

GRE Information/Dates: [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org)

UA Health Professions Website: [www.prehealth.ua.edu](http://www.prehealth.ua.edu)

