

What Physician Assistants Do

Physician assistants, also known as PAs, practice medicine on a team under the supervision of physicians and surgeons. They are formally educated to examine patients, diagnose injuries and illnesses, and provide treatment.

Work Environment

Physician assistants work in physicians' offices, hospitals, and other healthcare settings. Most work full time.

How to Become.Org - www.learnhowtobecome.org/physician-assistant/

Requirements of Physician Assistant Programs vary from institution to institution.

Read each program's admissions information carefully. **Most programs require completion of a bachelor's degree prior to application.** These programs are very competitive and require a strong science grade point average. While not required, some students enter PA programs after completion of a BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing). Read each PA Program description carefully - attend an Open House if available - read the "Frequently Asked Questions" section of PA pages for advice.

PA School - Who Gets In?

The requirements of the Towson University/Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) Physician Assistant Program are shown here as a representation of typical requirements for admission to a PA Program. Check each school of interest for specific requirements:

[Towson University/Community College of Baltimore County](#) (CCBC) Physician Assistant Program

1. A bachelor's degree must be completed by the time of final submission of the application
2. Minimum 3.0 GPA for completed Bachelor's degrees or any graduate degree.
3. Patient contact or medical/health related experience. A minimum of 800 (1600 preferred) documented hours (examples of hours can be found on in the Towson/CCBC PA Booklet)
4. Completion of prerequisite math and science courses from a regionally accredited college or university, with a minimum of a "B" grade, as follows:
 - a. Anatomy (or Human A & P I) 1 course - 4 credits (Must include Lab) Physiology (or Human A & P II) 1 course - 4 credits (Must include Lab)
 - b. Biochemistry 2 courses - 3 credits
 - c. Microbiology 1 course - 4 credits (Must include Lab)
 - d. College Level Statistics – any discipline 3 credits (May be taken online)
 - e. Medical Terminology 2/ 3 credits (May be taken online)

The PA program does NOT accept on-line labs for science prerequisites.

Schools Offering a Major in Physician Assistant: [State Listing of PA Programs](#) ARC-PA

Types of Experiences Required by PA Schools:

PA schools expect you to describe X number of hours of experiences on the application for admission. For example, for Towson/CCBC's program, you must list a minimum of 800 documented hours of patient contact or medical/health related experience. Here are Experience Areas listed on the PA Application Service website <https://directory.paeaonline.org/>:

Patient Care Experience

Experiences in which you are directly responsible for a patient's care; for example: prescribing medication, performing procedures, directing a course of treatment, working on patients as an active nurse or EMT, etc.

Health Care Experience

Both paid and unpaid work in the health or a health-related field where you are not directly responsible for a patient's care; for example, filling prescriptions, performing clerical work, delivering patient food, cleaning patient rooms, working as a scribe or hospital volunteer, etc.

Employment

Paid work done outside of the health care field; for example: a retail or restaurant job.

Shadowing

Time spent officially following and observing a health care professional at work, preferably a physician assistant.

Research

Research projects done in addition to classroom work; research should NOT appear as credit on a school transcript.

Volunteer

Volunteer work done outside of the health care field; for example, working for Habitat for Humanity, tutoring students, participating in or working for a fundraiser walk or blood drive, etc.

Career Information

[Become a PA - the American Academy of Physician Assistants](#)

Related Majors:

- [Nurse Practitioner](#)
- [Nurse](#)
- [Physician](#)

Resources to help you learn about careers as a physician assistant:

- [Occupational Handbook](#)
- [US News - Careers from the PA Occupational site](#)
- [American Association of Physician Assistants](#)
- [Central Application Service for Physician Assistants \(CASPA\)](#)
- [Accredited Physician Assistant Programs](#)

Meet regularly with an adviser to develop your academic plan.