Physician Assistant (PA)
Preparation at the University of Oregon

Did you know?

- Physician assistants (PAs) can perform physical examinations, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret labs, perform procedures, assist in surgeries, make hospital rounds, and provide patient education and counseling.

- There are over 250 PA programs in the US with many new programs opening up every year, and class sizes that range from 25 to 58 students. A PA masters program typically takes 2 years to complete, and total tuition ranges from $40,000 to $104,000 depending on private vs public, in state vs out of state, location, etc.

- PA programs, modeled after medical school curricula, provide students with both classroom and clinical experience at an accelerated pace. PAs are trained to be versatile and collaborative and a PA’s scope of practice will continue to grow and may shift over time due professional interests.

- PAs practice medicine with physician supervision, but this does not mean a supervising physician must be present with the PA. The level of autonomy a PA has is determined at the practice level.

- PAs have the ability to prescribe medications.

Physician Assistant Application Preparation

- Completing the prerequisite courses is just one aspect of the process. You must also have a well-rounded application consisting of experience (shadowing, volunteer work, undergraduate research, life experience, etc.), letters of recommendation, GRE scores (not all programs require this), and a strong admissions essay.

- One unique requirement of most PA programs is the large number of direct patient care hours required, either paid or volunteer. The typical applicant has anywhere from 2 to 4 years of health care experience, equivalent to a minimum of 1000-2000 cumulated hours. Many PA programs list on their websites approved health care experiences that qualify as direct patient hours.

- Be sure to research individual programs about any COVID-19 related changes (Pre-rec and GRE exceptions, Pass/Fail Policy, etc).

Online Resources

- Health Professions Program Website: healthprofessions.uoregon.edu
- American Academy of Physician Assistants: aapa.org
- Physician Assistant Education Association: paeaonline.org
- Central Application Service for Physician Assistants: caspa.liaisoncas.com
- Exploring Health Careers: explorehealthcareers.org

Campus Resources

- Student organizations
- Center for Undergraduate Research and Engagement
- Tykeson College and Career Advising
- Global Education Oregon
- TAEC study support
- Holden Center
- HPP workshops
- University Career Center

Advising

Schedule an appointment with an HPP advisor online or call 541-346-9200
Or visit us in Tykeson Hall, 2nd floor, health@uoregon.edu
Sample 4-Year Plan
The chart below illustrates one way physician assistant program prerequisites\(^1\) can fit into a 4-year plan. Keep in mind that a good graduation plan is as unique as the student following it. Math placement, major, transfer credits, application timeline, personal/family commitments, and other factors will shape your graduation plan and timeline. Health Professions Advisors are here to help you create a graduation plan that works best for you!

<table>
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<th>First Year</th>
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<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
<td><strong>Summer</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Classe</td>
<td>CH 221 &amp; 227 MATH 112</td>
<td>CH 222 &amp; 228 MATH 251(^{ii})</td>
<td>CH 223 &amp; 229 MATH 243</td>
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<td>Experience</td>
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| Second Year |        |        |        |        |
| Classe      | CH 331\(^{iii}\) | BI 211 HPHY 211\(^{ii}\) | BI 212 HPHY 212\(^{ii}\) |        |
| Experience  |        |        |        |        |

| Third Year  |        |        |        |        |
| Classes     | HPHY 321 HPHY 322 | HPHY 323 HPHY 324 | HPHY 325 BI 214 |        |
| Experience  |        |        |        |        |

| Fourth Year |        |        |        |        |
| Classes     | PSY 201 or 202 | BI 320\(^{i}\) | BI 330 & 331 |        |
| Experience  |        |        |        |        |

\(^{i}\) **Prerequisites vary drastically by school.** Research specific schools that interest you to be sure you meet any additional requirements. Other required courses could include speech, organic chemistry, physics, genetics, and/or biochemistry.

\(^{ii}\) These courses are prerequisites for UO’s anatomy & physiology sequence. They are not typically prerequisites for PA school.

\(^{iii}\) Required for Pacific University or OHSU.