

Health Professions Academic Preparation

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

An undergraduate education provides students with the opportunity to grow personally and intellectually; allowing them the time and resources to discover a breadth of new ideas and topics as well as to build and to explore their own interests and passions in depth. Therefore, students should seek a broad education during their undergraduate years. There is no required major for entrance to physician assistant (PA) studies programs. **The following represents what UTSA courses can be taken to fulfill the core and program prerequisites for entry to the Master of Physician Assistant Studies program at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA).** There is some variation in requirements for other PA programs. Students should also be aware that requirements are subject to change at each individual program. Thus students are advised to consult individual programs for their specific and most current prerequisites. Students are encouraged to incorporate these requirements into their semester by semester plans for completion of their baccalaureate degree.

Program Prerequisites-Must receive C or better			
General Chemistry (6 hrs lecture; 2 hrs Lab) <i>NOTE: Although UTSA chemistry labs are worth two hours of credit each, the UTHSCSA PA Program requires that students take matching labs to both General Chemistry I and II.</i>	¹ CHE 1103 or ² CHE 1143		¹ Passing grade on Chemistry Placement Exam or C or better in CHE 1073 and completion of or concurrent enrollment in MAT 1073; ² Grade of "B" or higher in MAT 1073 and CHE 1073 or score of 60% or higher on chemistry placement exam
	CHE 1122 Lab and CHE 1120 Lab Lecture		Completion of or concurrent enrollment in CHE 1103 or CHE 1143
	¹ CHE 1113 or ² CHE 1153		¹ CHE 1103; ² "C" or better in CHE 1143 or "B" or better in CHE 1103 and instructor consent
	CHE 1132 Lab and CHE 1130 Lab Lecture		CHE 1122 and completion of or concurrent enrollment in CHE 1113 or CHE 1153
Organic Chemistry (3 hrs lecture; 1 hr lab) <i>NOTE: CHE 2603 was formerly CHE 2604.</i>	CHE 2603		CHE 1113 or CHE 1153 and CHE 1132
	CHE 2612 Lab and CHE 2610 Lab Lecture		Completion of or concurrent enrollment in CHE 2603
General Biology (6 hrs lecture; 2 hrs lab)	BIO 1404		MAT 1023 (not recommended for pre-PA students), MAT 1073 or higher; CHE 1073 or higher also recommended by UHPO
	BIO 1122 Lab		Completion of or concurrent enrollment in BIO 1404

	BIO 1413		BIO 1404
Anatomy (3 hrs lecture; 1hr lab)	¹ BIO 3123 (<i>preferred</i>) or ² BIO 2083		¹ BIO 1413; ² BIO 1404 or BIO 1233
<i>NOTES: Most institutions offer combined Anatomy and Physiology courses while UTSA offers them as separate courses. Therefore, the courses should be completed at the same institution.</i>	¹ BIO 3132 Lab or ² BIO 2091 Lab		¹ BIO 1413; ² BIO 1404 or BIO 1233
<i>BIO 3123 was formerly BIO 2123; BIO 2083 was formerly AHS 2083; BIO 3132 was formerly AHS 2132; BIO 2091 was formerly AHS 2091.</i>			
Physiology (3 hrs lecture)	¹ BIO 3413(<i>preferred</i>), ² BIO 2103 or ³ BIO 153		¹ BIO 2313, MAT 1193, and STA 1403; ² BIO 1404; ³ BIO 1404 and 1122
<i>NOTES: Please see above. For fall 2013 admission and onward UTHSCSA no longer requires that students complete a physiology lab. However, many PA programs still require both the physiology lecture and lab.</i>			
<i>BIO 2103 was formerly AHS 2103</i>			
Microbiology (3 hrs lecture)	¹ BIO 3713 (<i>preferred</i>) or ² BIO 1053		¹ BIO 1122 and BIO 1413; ² BIO 1404 or 1233
<i>NOTES: For fall 2013 admission and onward UTHSCSA no longer requires that students complete a physiology lab. However, many PA programs still require both the physiology lecture and lab.</i>			
<i>BIO 1053 was formerly AHS 1053.</i>			
Genetics (3 hrs lecture)	BIO 2313		BIO 1413 and completion of or concurrent enrollment in CHE 1103 and MAT 1193 or STA 1053 (STA 1403 for Biology majors)
Statistics (3 hrs lecture)	STA 1053 or higher		Satisfactory score on placement exam
Psychology (3 hrs lecture)	PSY 2503		PSY 1013

Please note that the previously listed UTSA courses and prerequisites are for students following the 2010-2012 Undergraduate Catalog. Students following another undergraduate catalog should consult an advisor with any questions about course numbering.

Foundation Courses: For students who are not prepared to go directly into the required courses, it will be necessary to enroll first in foundation courses, such as basic chemistry and an appropriate mathematics course. It may also be necessary to take the mathematics and chemistry placement tests to determine proficiency. For additional information, consult an advisor early in your studies.

Advanced Biology Electives Relevant to PA Education: The following subjects in biology have relevance to health professions education. Thus, taking courses such as those below during your pre-PA studies preparation is recommended.

BIO 3013 Introduction to Clinical Medicine
BIO 3433 Neurobiology
BIO 3663 Human Embryology
BIO 3913 Molecular Biology
BIO 4453 Endocrinology
BIO 4743 Immunology

BIO 3163 Histology & Cytology
BIO 3623 Neuropsychopharmacology
BIO 3813 Cellular Biology
BIO 4143 Developmental Biology
BIO 4723 Virology
BIO 4763 Parasitology

Additional Elective Courses to Consider: Health professions education is placing a greater emphasis upon course work in the social and behavioral sciences. Thus, an understanding of the broader contexts within which medicine and health education is practiced on an everyday basis can be beneficial to students.

ANT 3523 Medical Anthropology
COU 3103 Helping Skills
HIS 3453 History of Medicine in America
HTH 4503 Human Disease and Epidemiology
HTH 4533 Nutrition and Health

MGT 4953 Introduction to Healthcare Management
PSY 4253 Psychology and Health
SOC 3213 Medical Sociology
SPN 2513 Spanish for Health Careers

Application Process: Before applying to the Physician Assistant Studies program, applicants must complete the Program Prerequisites listed above. The PA program requires two separate applications; one must be made through the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) at: <https://secure.caspaonline.org/> and one must be submitted directly to UTHSCSA via the PAS Supplemental Application. For CASPA all materials, official transcripts, reference letters, and supporting documents must be **received by August 31, 2012, for July admission**. The PAS Supplemental Application, supporting documents and supplemental application fee must be submitted directly to UTHSCSA by **August 31, 2012, for admission July admission**. For some students who are in financial need, fee waivers to cover application costs are available. However, because these are limited, students should contact CASPA early on during the application cycle for further information.

To find a list of PA programs available across the country, please visit the website of the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) at <http://www.paeonline.org/>. Please consult individual programs for information regarding their specific application instructions and deadlines.

Community Service/Volunteering/Shadowing: An integral part of physician assistant preparation entails involvement in community service projects and volunteer or other work in hospital or clinical settings. These activities serve to familiarize prospective physician assistants with the realities of everyday clinical practice as well as to underscore the role of medicine in relation to broader community level concerns and issues. A list of volunteer opportunities is available on the UHPO website (www.utsa.edu/healthprofessions), and we will continue to update additional possibilities. We do not, however, have a list available for shadowing experiences. Students must exercise personal initiative and develop relationships that would allow them to have this direct contact with a Physician Assistant in everyday clinical practice.

Letters of Evaluation: Letters of evaluation are an essential part of the application to PA programs. Because selection committees depend heavily on evaluation letters to gain insight into applicants' personal strengths, weaknesses, and accomplishments, students should be sure to request letters of evaluation from individuals such as professors, work supervisors, and volunteer supervisors who know them well. Many PA programs also highly value letters from physician assistants whom students have

shadowed. Referees may submit either electronic letters of evaluation or paper letters of evaluation directly to CASPA. For further information, refer to the CASPA website.

Personal Statement: The UHPO staff will read and provide feedback to students regarding their personal statements given sufficient time, preferably two weeks prior to when comments are needed. We also recommend that students visit The Writing Center at www.utsa.edu/twc for further review.

Interviews: The UHPO can offer some advice as students prepare for interviews and, after interviews, would like to debrief with students about their impressions. The University Career Center also facilitates interview workshops and conducts mock interviews to provide students with feedback. For more information about their services, contact them at the Main Campus [UC 2.02.04 or (210) 458-4589] or Downtown Campus [BV 1.304 or (210) 458-2910].

Additional Information/Resources: The UHPO keeps and maintains resources that are available to students in our office and on our website. These include books, journals, handouts, and other resources. Useful information about physician assistant programs and the profession can be found on the websites of the Physician Assistant Education Association (<http://www.paeaonline.org/>) and the American Academy of Physician Assistants (www.aapa.org).

The Welcome Center at the UTHSCSA School of Health Professions (www.shpwelcome.uthscsa.edu) is another source of primary information for students considering remaining in San Antonio. Students may visit the center to speak directly with representatives of the School of Health Professions and to obtain all pertinent information regarding the PA program at UTHSCSA. Students can also make appointments by calling 210-567-8744 or sending an email to shpwelcome@uthscsa.edu.

BIO to Physician Assistant 3+3 Dual Degree Program: This is a joint program between The University of Texas at San Antonio and The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA) School of Health Professions. Although it may not be a good fit for all students, this program offers those with an interest in becoming a Physician Assistant the opportunity to receive early conditional acceptance to the UTHSCSA School of Health Professions and to earn both a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from UTSA and a Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree from UTHSCSA within six years. Information Sessions are held monthly. All students interested in the program may attend one of these information sessions to learn more about the program and its requirements prior to scheduling an individual appointment with an advisor to discuss. For information on when the information sessions will be offered, please see the UHPO website, call us, or visit our office.

Health Professions Advising: The UHPO provides advising and support to students interested in pursuing careers in the health professions, including PA studies. This consists of academic preparation assistance as well as information about health careers, application procedures, and entrance exams for undergraduates, post- baccalaureate students, non-degree seeking students, and alumni. Students are encouraged to seek advice and consult with the UHPO advising staff early in their college career. For more information about our appointment and walk-in schedules and our other services, please contact us:

The University Health Professions Office (UHPO)
University of Texas at San Antonio
Multidisciplinary Studies Building, Room 3.02.10 (Main Campus)

www.utsa.edu/healthprofessions

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