

Pre-Physician Assistants/Physician Associates (PAs) Specialization

PAs are health care professionals who earn a master's degree and are licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision as a mid-level healthcare provider. PAs take medical histories and conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery, prescribe medications, and do clinical research. The American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) advocates a philosophy of training healthcare clinicians who expand access to care and practice patient-centered, team-based medical care.

Most entry-level PA programs require a bachelor's degree with required courses heavy in science and healthcare experience (1,000-3,000 hours) of two types: healthcare experience (HCE) and patient care experience (PCE). The Physician Assistant College Admission Exam (PA-CAT) is required. After prerequisites are completed, application is made through the [Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants \(CASPA\)](#) to include your personal statement. Prospective applicants are invited for interview.

One difference in the medical doctor (MD) and physician assistant (PA) programs is time spent in training. MDs complete four years of medical school, followed by an internship and residency. PAs complete two to three years (23- 28 months) of classroom instruction and clinical rotations. Upon graduation of an accredited PA program, applicants sit for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) to gain licensure and can practice medicine in all 50 states across medical specialties in every medical setting. PAs must undergo routine community education hours and sit for recertification exams. Postgraduate educational programs are available.

Pre-Physician Assistant/Physician Associate Advisors

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Prerequisites for PA programs

The WTAMU **Pre-Medicine Guidelines** will be useful in comparing the two programs. **Please Note:** the prerequisites for the ten PA programs in the State of Texas vary to some degree and when comparing coursework, it is advisable to cover the requirements completely in order to qualify for application in all programs. Students should consult with their advisor for proper course selection. See the **WTAMU Biology Degree Checklist** for the B.S. Biology curriculum requirements.

Science-Required and/or Suggested courses:

Biology: Introductory, Anatomy/Physiology, Microbiology, Genetics, Nutrition
Medical Terminology, Cell Biology, Immunology, Pharmacology, Nutrition

Chemistry: Introductory, Organic, Biochemistry

Physics: Introductory

Math: Statistics

Non-Science-Required and/or Suggested courses:

English Composition/Writing, Psychology (general), Sociology, Human Sexuality

Healthcare Experience/Patient Care Experience:

Medical assistant, Emergency medical technician, Paramedic, Medic or medical corpsman, Lab assistant/phlebotomist, Registered nurse, Emergency room technician, Surgical technician, Certified nursing assistant

Websites Available:

WTAMU Pre-professional Requirements:

<https://www.wtamu.edu/academics/college-agriculture-natural-sciences/department-life-earth-environmental-sciences/programs/undergraduate/pre-professional-programs.html>

Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA).

<https://paeaonline.org/>

American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)

<https://www.aapa.org/> <https://www.aapa.org/career-central/become-a-pa/>

Texas Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA)

<https://tapa.org/> <https://tapa.org/page/texas-pa-programs>

The Physician Assistant College Admission Exam (PA-CAT)

<https://www.pa-cat.com/>

Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) [https://](https://www.nccpa.net/)

www.nccpa.net/

CASPA Character Counter

<https://charactercounter.com/caspa>