

GENERAL CAREER INFORMATION

Physician assistants, frequently called PAs, have a broad scope of duties and responsibilities, largely governed by the medical setting in which they work. Duties of PAs working under a primary care physician include:

- performing appropriate interviews and physical examinations;
- ordering and screening results of laboratory diagnostic studies;
- organizing and integrating information derived from the interview, examination, and laboratory;
- assisting with the performance of clinical procedures; instruction and counseling patients regarding preventive health care behaviors;
- monitoring responses to physician-directed programs of therapy; responding independently to life-threatening situations;
- facilitating patient access to appropriate health care services;
- making tentative assessments;
- making tentative diagnostic and therapeutic plans in such a way that the physician can perceive the medical problems and determine appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic steps;
- assisting the physician by performing diagnostic and therapeutic procedures; managing various common medical problems;
- treating minor cuts and wounds; removing casts and changing dressings.

In addition, PAs are employed as first and second assistants in surgery, particularly in cardiovascular and orthopedic surgery.

HISTORY OF THE PROFESSION

The Physician Assistant (PA) profession originated in the mid-1960's from the intuitive vision of Dr. Eugene Stead and others from Duke University, the University of Colorado, the University of Washington, and Wake Forest University. These dedicated leaders recognized a need for a unique medical education program to meet the growing needs of primary health care delivery in the United States. Their goal was to train highly skilled health care professionals to assist physicians in the delivery of quality patient care. In the process, they developed a curriculum that taught individuals a body of clinical knowledge and skills that previously had been regarded as the professional domain of physician.

The first program and the first class of six former military corpsmen and medics with combat experience began at Duke University of 1965. Since that time, the PA profession has seen tremendous growth. PAs are recognized as integral members of the health care team. PAs have been enabled to practice in 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico, and they are prominent health care providers in the uniformed services, National Health Service Corp, the Veterans Administration, and federal and state correctional facilities. In addition, they have delegated prescriptive authority in 41 states and in federal facilities. PAs are represented by the American Academy of Physician Assistants, and in Texas by the Texas Academy of Physician Assistants.

PA EDUCATION IN TEXAS

There are seven Physician Assistant programs in Texas. Baylor College of Medicine (Houston), Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (Midland, on the campus of Midland College), University of North Texas Health Science Center (Fort Worth), The University of Texas Health Sciences Center at San Antonio, The University of Texas Medical Branch (Galveston), The University of Texas – Pan American

(Edinburg), and The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (Dallas). The curriculum at all of these schools leads to the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree.

The Texas Board of Medical Examiners must license PAs in Texas. To be licensed in Texas as a PA students must graduate from an accredited PA program and pass the national certification examination administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). The Physician Assistant-Certified (PA-C) credential is a mark of professional accomplishment, indicating the achievement and maintenance of established levels of knowledge and clinical skills. The PA-C credential is widely recognized within the medical professions and beyond. In fact, all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the American territories have decided to rely on NCCPA certification as one of the criteria for licensure or regulation of physician assistants. To protect the credibility of the PA-C designation, the NCCPA certification process involves formal collegiate education, examination and ongoing pursuit of continuing medical education.

Application

There is a common electronic application for all of the Physician Assistant programs in Texas with the exception of UT Pan American. Online application is made to the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) at <http://secure.caspaonline.org>. Application deadlines vary. Some schools have secondary applications and fees in addition to the online central application. Refer to the school websites for more information.

Baylor College of Medicine (BCOM):

Physician Assistant Program
One Baylor Plaza, MS: BCM110
Houston, TX 77030
Tel: (713) 798-4842
Email: admissions@bcm.tmc.edu
<http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/pap>

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTU):

School of Allied Health Sciences
3601 4th Street
Lubbock, TX 79430
Tel: (806) 743-3220
Email: Allied.Health@ttuhsc.edu
<http://www.ttuhsc.edu/sah/mpa>

Texas Tech Physician Assistant Program in Midland

Tel: (915) 620-9905

University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNT):

Physician Assistant Studies Program
3500 Camp Bowie Blvd
Ft. Worth, TX 76107-2699
Tel: (817) 735-2204
Email: PAAdmissions@hsc.unt.edu
<http://www.hsc.unt.edu/education/pasp/admissions.cfm>

The University of Texas Health Sciences Center at San Antonio (UTSA):

Physician Assistant Studies Program

7703 Floyd Curl Dr

San Antonio, TX 78229-3900

Tel: (210) 567-2660

Email: pastudies@uthscsa.edu

<http://www.uthscsa.edu/sah/pastudies>

The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB):

School of Allied Health Sciences

301 University Boulevard

Galveston, Texas 77555-1145

Tel: (409) 772-3046

Email: PAS.Web@utmb.edu

<http://www.sahs.utmb.edu/programs/pas>

The University of Texas – Pan American (UTPA):

Physician Assistant Studies

1201 W. University Drive

Edinburg, TX 78539-2999

Tel: (956) 381-2298

<http://www.panam.edu/dept/pasp>

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas (UTSW):

Physician Assistant Program

5323 Harry Hines Blvd

Dallas, TX 75390

Tel: (214) 648-3111

<http://www2.utsouthwestern.edu/padept>

Other Informational Websites

Association of Physician Assistant Programs

<http://www.apap.org>

Texas Academy of Physician Assistants

<http://www.tapa.org>

Texas State Board of Physician Assistant Examiners

<http://www.tsbme.state.tx.us>

National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistants

<http://www.nccpa.net>

**Summary Information and Preprofessional Course Requirements for the
Physician Assistant Programs in Texas**

Students should refer to the website for individual schools and/or published materials for specific and updated information.

	BCM	TTU	UNT	UTMB	UTSA	UTSW	UTPA
General Biology w/ lab	--	8 hrs		8 hrs	8 hrs		8 hrs
General Chemistry w/ lab	8 hrs	8 hrs		8 hrs	8 hrs	8 hrs	8 hrs
Organic Chemistry w/ lab	4 hrs		4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs
Human Anatomy (A&P I)	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs
Human Physiology (A&P II)	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs
Microbiology w/ lab	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs	4 hrs
Genetics		3 hrs*	3 hrs**			3 hrs	
Immunology/Virology, Genetics or Mol Cell w/ lab				4 hrs			
Biochemistry			3 hrs***				
Psychology/Sociology	6 hrs	9 hrs	9 hrs	6 hrs	3 hrs	3 hrs	3 hrs
Statistics	3 hrs	3 hrs	3 hrs	3 hrs	3 hrs		3 hrs
English/Composition	3 hrs	6 hrs	6 hrs		6 hrs		6 hrs
Speech		3 hrs*					
Human Nutrition		3 hrs					
Medical Terminology	3 hrs*	3 hrs*					
Computer Science/Literacy		3 hrs*					
College Algebra or higher		3 hrs	3 hrs	3 hrs	3 hrs	3 hrs	3 hrs
U.S. History			6 hrs		6 hrs		
U.S. Government			6 hrs		3 hrs		
Visual/Performing Arts					3 hrs		
Humanities					3 hrs		
Admission Exam Required	GRE			GRE		GRE	
GPA Required: Overall	3.0	3.2	2.85	2.30	2.60	3.0	3.0
Minimum Prerequisite	Bac. degree	66 hr	90 hr	Bac. degree	90 hr	Bac. degree	Bac. Degree
Application deadline	Oct. 1	Dec. 1	Nov. 1	Oct. 15	Dec. 15	Oct. 1	Dec. 31
Online Application	CASPA	CASPA	CASPA	CASPA	CASPA	CASPA	Institutional Application
Degree Offered	Master's Degree	Master's Degree	Master's Degree	Master's Degree	Master's Degree	Master's Degree	Master's Degree
Size of Class	35	48	28-32		20	36	25-27
Length of Program (months)	30	27	36	24	33	31	30

- * Highly Recommended
- ** Genetics OR Immunology
- *** Biochemistry OR Cell Biology