

Physician Assistants (PAs) provide healthcare services under the supervision of physicians. PAs take medical histories, examine and treat patients, order and interpret laboratory tests and x-rays, make diagnoses, and prescribe medications. They should not be confused with medical assistants who perform routine clinical and clerical tasks. Many PA programs require completion of a Bachelor's Degree before entry. (No specific undergraduate major is required; however, science majors are common). Some PA programs are direct first year student entry with limited seats for transfer students. It takes at least 5 - 6 years to become a PA.

***Most MCC students are advised to prepare to transfer to a 4-year college or university for Biology or other science major, earn a bachelor's degree, and apply to PA graduate (master's degree) programs.***

## Degree

Physician Assistants must receive a master's degree from an accredited PA program.

## Typical Prerequisite or Recommended Courses

Two semesters of general biology with labs; two semesters of general chemistry; organic chemistry or biochemistry; calculus; microbiology; anatomy & physiology; sociology; psychology; English; statistics; medical terminology. Requirements vary by program. Advanced Placement (AP) credit might not be accepted for science coursework. Again, a bachelor's degree is required by many programs.

## ***Examples of MCC Courses That Might Be Taken Before Transfer***

- BIO 155 - Intro to Cell & Molecular Biology
- BIO 156 - Intro to Organismal Biology/Ecology
- CHE 151 & 152 - General Chem I & II
- CHE 251 & 252 - Organic Chem I & II
- BIO 202 - Microbiology
- BIO 144 & 145 - Anatomy & Physiology I & II
- HIM 104 - Medical Terminology
- ENG 101 and/or 200 - English Composition
- PSY 101 - Intro to Psychological Science
- PSY 206 - Abnormal Psychology and/or
- PSY 212 - Developmental Psy –Lifespan
- SOC 101 - Intro to Sociology
- MTH 210 - Calculus (some programs may accept MTH 200)
- MTH 160 – Statistics
- PHL 103 or 250 – Intro to Ethics or Professional Ethics

## Typical Admission Requirements

- Recent experience working in healthcare. The amount of experience required varies by college, but is generally broken down into two categories: HCE (healthcare experience) and PCE (patient care experience). A reasonable goal is to have 1,000 hours, and the more you have in direct patient care, the better
- Interviewing and shadowing a PA through daily routines
- Bachelor's Degree often required
- Strong grade point average (minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0)
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores

- Letters of recommendation (from professors, advisors, supervisors, physicians/PAs or other related healthcare providers)
- Personal statement
- Applications are often submitted through the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA)

## The PANCE (Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam)

This is a 300-question exam that students will take after graduating from an accredited PA program to receive their certification. Once this step is complete, PAs can apply for licensure in the state where they want to practice. PAs also need to take continuing medical education to maintain their licensure, and will need to take a recertification exam every 10 years.

### *Local Institutions with PA Programs*

- |                         |                                     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Canisius University   | • Nazareth University*              |
| • Clarkson University   | • Rochester Institute of Technology |
| • Daemen University     | • St. Bonaventure University        |
| • D'Youville University | • SUNY Upstate Medical University   |
| • Le Moyne College      |                                     |

\*Nazareth University anticipates matriculating its first class in January 2026 for their new graduate program

For a full list of Physician Assistant programs, see: [PAEA Accredited Programs by State](#)

Note that students can attend a different institution for a bachelor's degree and then apply to PA graduate programs.

### Additional Information

- [Bureau of Labor Statistics Info for Physician Assistants](#)
- [American Academy of PAs \(AAPA\)](#)

*Note: While every effort is made to ensure that the information in this guide is accurate, students are advised to contact transfer institutions for specific course requirements and the most up-to-date information.*