Physician Assistant Program

General Info:

- Physician Assistants (PA’s) are highly skilled members of the health care team who, under the supervision of a licensed physician, provides diagnostic and therapeutic patient care in a variety of medical specialties and practice settings.
- The typical physician assistant program lasts about two full years and usually requires at least two years of college and significant health care experience for admission.
- All PA programs must meet the same curriculum standards, but programs do follow different models and award a variety of credentials. Students should check current admission requirements before they apply.
- Some PA programs award an Associate’s, Bachelor’s, or Master’s degree as well as a certificate of completion, but such a degree is not necessary to be a licensed Physician Assistant.
- Applicants should apply early for PA training programs, preferably in the fall for starting the following summer. Deadlines vary. The Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) is available to applicants, but currently only half of California PA programs participate (with a greater percentage participating in other states.)

Excellent resources for counselors and students:

- Detailed information on PA programs can be obtained by subscribing to an online PA Programs Directory, published by the Physician Assistant Education Association, at [www.paeaoonline.org](http://www.paeaoonline.org)
- Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) [https://caspa.liaisoncas.com](https://caspa.liaisoncas.com)

Accredited Physician Assistant Programs in California:

Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California –Primary Care PA Program

[https://keck.usc.edu/physician-assistant-program/](https://keck.usc.edu/physician-assistant-program/)

- A.B.A. or B.S. from an accredited institution in any discipline. Patient care experience (1500+ hrs asked for and average of 3788 hrs were submitted), non-health care volunteer work (500 hrs and there was an average of 1180 hrs submitted), and PA shadowing (20hrs) are highly recommended
- For 2016 there were 64 students admitted out of 600+ applicants
- Average GPA for interviewed PA students for science was a 3.33 and cumulative GPA of 3.43
- Average GRE scores was a 307 and average MCAT score was a 504

Loma Linda University, School of Allied Health Professions

[http://www.llu.edu/llu/sahp/pa/](http://www.llu.edu/llu/sahp/pa/)

- A.B.A. or B.S. from an accredited institution and patient care experience is required.
- There were 1025 applicants and 36 admitted into their program.
- Average GPA in was a 3.58
- No GRE scores are required
- Competitive applicants averaged 5000 hours of directly related experience.

July 2018
Samuel Merritt College

http://samuelmerritt.edu/physician_assistant
- Fall of 2017, there were 2,174 applicants and 49 were admitted.
- Average GPA 3.20-3.48
- Most competitive applicants had an average of 1000+ hours of related direct patient contact and a B.S.
- No GRE scores are required.
- BA in any area
- 50 hours min. of PA shadowing

Touro University – California College of Health Sciences

http://www.tu.edu
- Admission to the joint Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies/Master of Public Health program at the College of Health Sciences is very competitive.
- There are over 3500+ applications submitted and 44 are admitted
- Average GPA science: 3.26 overall: 3.37
- The CASPA primary application must be from a clinician, and a science faculty member.
- 500+ hours of healthcare/clinical experience
- No GRE scores are required

University of California, Davis – Master of Health Services- Physician Assistant Studies

- A.B.A. or B.S. from an accredited institution in a health field, and patient care experience is required.
- The average GPA of entering PA students was 3.45
- 1,000 hours of experience in a clinical environment with direct patient exposure.
- No GRE scores are required

Western University of Health Sciences- Primary Care Physician Assistant Program (MSPA)

http://www.westernu.edu/
- A B.S. from an accredited institution plus patient care experience is required. The applicant must also be a registered nurse currently licensed in California.
- Entering 2018 there were 1810 applicants and 98 admitted
- Average GPA for entering PA students was a 3.53 on a 4.00 scale.
- No GRE scores are required

Common PA school prerequisites:
PA programs usually require that applicants complete at least 90 quarter units of college-level work prior to enrolling in a PA program.

Pre-requisite coursework may include:

- English Composition
- Mathematics
- Sociology/anthropology
- Physiology
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Microbiology
- Organic Chemistry
- Humanities
- Physics
- Psychology
- Anatomy

FYI: Employment of physician assistants is projected to grow 37 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations. As demand for healthcare services grows, physician assistants will be needed to provide care to patients. Physician Assistants can be hired in diverse areas such as hospitals, academic medical centers, public clinics, and prisons. The median annual wage for physician assistants was $104,860 in May 2017.

Resources: