A Physician Assistant (PA) is a healthcare professional who practices medicine as part of a healthcare team with supervising physicians. The median annual salary is $98,180. PA programs are highly competitive and admission committees greatly value direct patient care experience often requiring a substantial number of hours for acceptance.

There is no “best” major for pre-PA students nor are there majors that will make a student “stand out.” Students are encouraged to pursue majors in which they are most interested and in which they believe they will excel.

### General Information
- Average Overall GPA: 3.5
- Average Science GPA: 3.5
- GRE: ~300 combined/ 4.0 writing
- Master’s Degree
- Average Program Length: 2-3 years
- Average Matriculation Age: 27

### Required Courses
- Anatomy & Physiology: BIOL 1334/1344 & 1344/1144
- Biology: BIOL 1361/1161 & 1362/1162
- Chemistry: CHEM 1331/1111 & CHEM 1332/1112
- English: ENGL 1303 & 1304
- Genetics: BIOL 3301
- Immunology: BIOL 4323 (only for UTMB)
- Medical Terminology: HLT 3325
- Microbiology: BIOL 3332/3132
- Organic Chemistry: CHEM 3331/3221
- Psychology: PSYC 1300
- Sociology: SOCI 1300
- Statistics: MATH 2311 or BIOL 4310

### DISCLAIMER
This list provides an approximate overview of requirements for PA programs within Texas. It is not meant as a definitive list. Many PA programs also do not accept AP/IB credit for pre-requisites. Please refer to PA program websites for specific requirements regarding coursework. You may also meet with an advisor in the Pre-Health Advising Center to discuss other options.

**Currently, Baylor College of Medicine does not accept the BIOL 1334/1344 A&P sequence offered by UH. It is recommended that you complete this sequence at another institution (e.g., HCC) if you intend to apply to BCM-PA.**

### CASPA
To apply to most PA programs, applicants will utilize the CASPA application service. Official transcripts, GRE scores, a personal statement, and letters of recommendation are all submitted to CASPA. CASPA opens each year in April, but programs will differ in terms of their application deadlines. Most deadlines are in the Fall for a summer start; however, some may have Spring deadlines for a winter start. You are responsible for checking the application deadlines for the programs in which you are interested.

### Letters of Evaluation
Most PA schools require two to three letters of evaluation. Requirements can vary between schools, and it is the student’s responsibility to ensure that they have collected the correct letters for their program of interest. Generally, programs expect students to provide one letter from a PA, one from a science faculty member, and one other of the student’s choosing. This can come from another PA, a physician, a research mentor, volunteer coordinator, employer, etc. While students should select what they believe will be the most compelling letter, it is often best if that letter can speak to the

### GRE
Most PA schools require that applicants take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The GRE consists of three sections: Quantitative, Verbal, and Essay section. There are no specific courses that students need to take prior to the GRE, but students should plan to dedicate roughly six to eight weeks to exam preparation. While students can opt for a commercial prep course for the GRE, self-study is often sufficient.

Students usually sit for the exam in their junior or senior year depending on their application timeline. Generally, it is recommended for a student to take the GRE January-May as they head into the application cycle. The GRE is offered via University Testing Services on a regular basis.
Students interested in becoming physician assistants must spend a significant amount of time working or volunteering in clinical settings where they are able to administer care to patients. It is not enough to volunteer in a hospital or clinic doing clerical work; experience must be “hands-on” and can include activities such as taking vitals, drawing blood, bathing or helping transport patients, administering treatment, etc. It is common for students to get certified as medical assistants, nursing assistants, EMTs or phlebotomists to build up these hours. Certification is not always required, but it can be very helpful for finding a position and can also be included on the PA application. Students should always be appropriately trained when administering medical care.

Competitive applicants to PA school generally have over 1000 hours of experience. While programs will commonly list minimum hours that are lower, they do not normally matriculate students who only have the minimum. As a result, it is not unusual for pre-PA students to take a gap year to focus on direct patient care experience.

Shadowing vs. Direct Patient Care Experience

Shadowing is a passive activity which does not count towards direct patient care; it is the act of observing the interactions between PAs and patients. While PA programs do require significantly more direct patient care hours, shadowing is often still required or recommended. The value of shadowing a PA lies in gaining knowledge of the profession and building a rapport with a PA who can then write a strong letter of recommendation. While some schools may not specify the number of shadowing hours required, students should expect to have a little over 100 hours between

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**Texas PA Program Application Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Application Deadline (Start Term)</th>
<th>Application?</th>
<th>Patient Care/Shadowing Required?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baylor College of Medicine</td>
<td>September 1 (May)</td>
<td>CASPA</td>
<td>No, but encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardin-Simmons University</td>
<td>September 1 (August)</td>
<td>CASPA</td>
<td>No, but strongly recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Tech University</td>
<td>August 1 (May)</td>
<td>CASPA/ Merlin</td>
<td>No, but encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Mary Hardin Baylor</td>
<td>August 1 (January)</td>
<td>CASPA</td>
<td>100 hours of service oriented volunteerism</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of North Texas</td>
<td>October 1 (August)</td>
<td>CASPA</td>
<td>No, but encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Texas -Rio Grande Valley</td>
<td>September 1 (August)</td>
<td>CASPA/ UTRGV Graduate School Application</td>
<td>No, but strongly recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Texas Health -San Antonio</td>
<td>October 1 (June)</td>
<td>CASPA/PAS Supplemental Application</td>
<td>No, but strongly recommended</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Texas -Southwestern</td>
<td>September 1 (May)</td>
<td>CASPA</td>
<td>Yes, but no stated minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTMB-Galveston</td>
<td>September 1 (July)</td>
<td>CASPA</td>
<td>No, but encouraged</td>
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