A Physician Assistant (PA) is a licensed health professional who practices medicine under the supervision of a physician. Working as members of the healthcare team, PAs take medical histories, examine and treat patients, order and interpret laboratory tests and x-rays, make diagnoses, and prescribe medications.

PAs must attend a specialized medical training program associated with a medical school that includes classroom studies and clinical experience. An academic degree and/or certificate are awarded upon graduation. Admission to PA programs is highly competitive. Admission requirements to these programs vary from a high school diploma to a bachelor's degree.

Training programs are generally two years in length. PA training begins with a classroom or pre-clinical phase that lasts nine to twelve months. Students then spend about a year doing clinical work in areas such as family practice, inpatient medicine, general surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine, internal medicine, psychiatry, and pediatrics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOWER DIVISION SUBJECTS REQUIRED BY MOST U.S. PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT SCHOOLS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One year of English Composition</td>
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<tr>
<td>One year of Biology</td>
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<tr>
<td>One year of Inorganic (General) Chemistry</td>
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<tr>
<td>One semester of Anatomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>One semester of Physiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>One semester of Microbiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Skills</td>
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<td>Psychology</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*All courses should be taken for a letter grade, not Pass/No Pass.

**Choosing an Undergraduate Major**
For students planning on obtaining a bachelor’s degree prior to applying to PA program, “Pre-Physician Assistant” is **not** a major at universities. You should give careful consideration to your choice of major and select an area of study that interests you. However, students should select an appropriate major that could lead to an alternative career, if necessary.

Students applying to Physician Assistant programs need to plan carefully and complete the Physician Assistant requirements. Those who plan to obtain a bachelor’s degree must also complete the requirements for their undergraduate major and the general education required by the undergraduate transfer institution.

**Note:** Information subject to change without notice. Physician Assistant requirements vary, check with the individual campus for its specific requirements and most up to date information.
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT ADMISSION INFORMATION

Physician Assistant Selection Criteria
- Some schools require the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT).
- Completion of the prerequisite coursework listed on front.
- GPA in terms of overall college grades and science grades are a major factor in the selection process. Most Physician Assistant programs require above a 3.0 GPA.
- Demonstration of hands-on health-related experience.
- Community service/leadership
- Letters of recommendation from practicing physicians or physician assistants.
- Interviews with program faculty and selection committee members.

Salary Information
In 2012, the average annual wage in California was $101,880 with most people making between $68,630 and $142,030 according to (www.cacareerzone.com)

Recommended Websites
Accreditation Review Commission on Education for Physician Assistant Inc. (ARC-PA) http://www.arc-pa.org/index.html
American Academy of Physician Assistants http://www.aapa.org/
National Commission of Certification of Physician’s Assistants http://www.nccpa.net/
State of California, Physician Assistant Committee http://www.physicianassistant.ca.gov/appinfo.htm

Accredited California Physician Assistant School Websites
Accredited Entry-level Programs http://www.arc-pa.org/Acc_Programs/acc_programs.html
Charles Drew University (C,B) www.cdrewu.edu/cosh/physician_assistant/physician_assistant.htm
Loma Linda University (M) www.llu.edu/allied-health/sahp/pa/welcome.page?
Riverside Community College (C,A) www.rcc.edu/academicPrograms/pa/index.cfm
Samuel Merritt College (M) www.samuelmerritt.edu/physician_assistant
San Joaquin Valley College (A,B,M) www.sjvc.edu/programs/programs.php?programID=26
Stanford University School of Medicine (C,A,M) http://pcap.stanford.edu
Touro University – California College of Health Sciences (M) www.tu.edu/departments.php?id=42
University of California, Davis (C) www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/fnppa/
Western University of Health Sciences (M) www.westernu.edu/xp/edu/cahp/mspas_about.xml
USC Keck School of Medicine (M) www.usc.edu/schools/medicine/departments/physician_assistant/education/requirements.html

Credentials Awarded
C – Certificate of Completion
A – Associate’s Degree
B – Bachelor’s Degree
M – Master’s Degree

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