

So You Want to be a Physician Assistant... Helpful Tips to Consider at Each Stage of Education

High School Preparation

- ❖ GPA (3.0+) – higher = better!
- ❖ ACT scores (24+) – higher = better!
- ❖ Shadowing Hours
 - Multiple health care settings:
Outpatient, hospital, nursing home
- ❖ Community Service Hours (100+)
- ❖ Establish a relationship with a mentor at Bellin to walk you through the process
- ❖ Research Universities with Your Program of Interest
 - Suggested majors:
 - Pre-Med
 - Kinesiology
 - Biology
 - Chemistry
 - Wisconsin PA programs:
 - UW-Madison
 - Marquette University
 - UW-La Crosse
 - Carroll University
 - Concordia University
 - Alverno College
(Applying for accreditation in 2019)
- ❖ Arrange and Complete Campus Visits
 - Goals: Get Them to Know Your Name; Speak to their Mission and Vision; Ask lots of questions about their program
 - People to Meet:
 - Admissions Counselor
 - Dean of College of Health Science
 - Representative from the Physician Assistant Program
 - Current Students

Undergraduate Studies

- ❖ Baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution in the US
- ❖ GPA (3.5+) – higher = better! This program is highly competitive. Average GPA of accepted applicants is 3.7.
- ❖ Strong GRE/MCAT Scores
 - Must be taken within 10 years of applying
- ❖ Direct patient health care experience
 - Minimum 1,000 hours prior to the year of matriculation.
 - Examples of how to get direct patient healthcare experience include (but not limited to):
 - Medical assistant
 - Emergency medical technician
 - Medic or medical corpsman
 - Peace Corps volunteer
 - Certified nursing assistant
 - Surgical tech
 - Registered nurse
 - Emergency room technician
- ❖ 3 Letters of Recommendation – at least one from the following:
 - Collegiate academic reference
 - Health care provider during your direct patient health care experience
- ❖ Develop a personal statement explaining why you are choosing the PA profession over other medical professions. Most schools will require this
- ❖ Participate in Undergraduate Research is a plus!
- ❖ The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) taken within 2 years of matriculation if English is not your native language.

Undergraduate Studies (cont.)

- ❖ Central Application System for Physician Assistants (CASPA) application is needed for acceptance into most PA programs.
<https://paeaonline.org/caspa/>
- ❖ Make a List of Schools for Application
 - Recommend Applying to at least 3
 - Match programs to those where your GPA and GRE scores are competitive
- ❖ Identify Prerequisite Courses for Each Program to Ensure You Meet Requirements
 - Most programs will have Biology, Microbiology, Anatomy, Physiology, Chemistry and Statistics course requirements
 - This is a helpful resource to look at school requirements:
<http://directory.paeaonline.org>
- ❖ Arrange and complete PA program campus visits
- ❖ Prepare for interviews
 - Practice! In front of a mirror or with family/friends
 - Arrive 30 minutes early
 - Attire: professional
 - Understand exactly why you want to be a PA vs a doctor or other healthcare professional and explain it clearly to the interview panel
 - Understand why you want to attend the specific school and articulate that in your interview
 - Send a thank you note to the interviewer(s)