Resources

Search PA programs
There are more than 240 PA schools in the U.S. Search these programs to find the ones that are the best fit for you and your interests.
directory.PAEAOnline.org

Apply to PA programs
Sign up for an account and complete the application and personal statement. Check with each individual program for any additional requirements.
portal.CASPAAonline.org

Stay in the know
PAFocus.org
Facebook.com/PAFocus
Twitter: @PA_Focus

About PAEA

Founded in 1972, PAEA is the only national association representing PA educational programs. We work with members, legislators, government agencies, and other health care organizations to help our member programs provide the highest quality medical education possible, leading to superior patient care and outcomes.

Contact

Physician Assistant Education Association
PAEAonline.org / info@PAEAonline.org
703-548-5538
655 K Street NW, STE 700, Washington DC, 20001
About Physician Assistants (PAs)

WHAT IS A PA?
Physician assistants — also called PAs — can be found in a variety of health care environments these days. They are licensed medical professionals who work in hospitals, doctor’s offices, and both rural and urban clinics, delivering high-quality, cost-effective medical care.

WHAT IS THE JOB OUTLOOK FOR PAs?
PAs are currently in high demand in the health care world. Employment of PAs is projected to grow 36% from 2016 to 2026, which explains why more than half of recent PA graduates have received at least three job offers. The median annual salary for a PA is over $104,000.

WHAT HEALTH CARE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY PAs?
PAs practice medicine on health care teams with physicians and other providers. PAs work in many specialties, including primary care, emergency medicine, psychiatry, and women’s health, providing a wide variety of clinical services:
• performing medical exams and procedures
• diagnosing and treating disease
• prescribing medication
• assisting in surgery

IS A PA CAREER A GOOD FIT FOR YOU?
You’ll need a strong interest in medicine – PAs have extensive medical responsibilities, including diagnosing illnesses and prescribing medicine. PAs work on health care teams alongside other providers, so working well with others is crucial. For those who want to continue to expand their skills, PAs can also change specialties. For example, you could go from working in obstetrics to neurology to cardiology, without additional schooling.

HOW CAN YOU BECOME A PA?
First, you’ll need to earn a bachelor’s degree – majoring in the health sciences is strongly recommended. Then, once enrolled in an accredited PA program, you’ll earn a master’s degree, which typically takes an average of two years to complete. This includes time in the classroom and time getting hands-on patient experience at different clinical sites. Finally, you’ll need to take a national exam to become a certified PA and get licensed in your state to practice medicine.

Preparing for PA School

WHAT CLASSES SHOULD YOU START TAKING NOW TO PREPARE?
The majority of PA programs require the following prerequisites:
• chemistry
• physiology
• anatomy
• microbiology
• biology

Many PA programs also require previous health care experience. You can get this by working as an:
• medical assistant
• medic or medical corpsman
• emergency medical technician
• paramedic
• lab assistant/phlebotomist
• registered nurse
• emergency room technician
• surgical tech
• certified nursing assistant
• Peace Corps volunteer
• other health care professional