CASPA: Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistant 2022/2023 Applicant Guide

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A Message From Our Team:
Welcome to the 2022—2023 CASPA Cycle
The PA profession is one of the most attractive and fastest growing careers in healthcare. For PA programs across the nation, this means navigating an increasing number of applicants each year. Since 2018, there has not only been an increased interest in the PA profession – the demand for PAs and PA salaries have also increased. The CASPA Team, in collaboration with our Liaison partners, are here to assist you on your journey to becoming a PA Please follow our Facebook and Twitter pages for tips and updates to the application throughout the cycle.

ABOUT CASPA, PAEA, AND LIAISON INTERNATIONAL

CASPA

The Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) is a user friendly, secure, internet-based application platform sponsored and administered exclusively by the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) and operated by PAEA's partner, Liaison International.

CASPA enables PA program applicants and authorized third parties to provide application information that can be shared by PAEA upon request with multiple PA programs to which the applicant is seeking admission. CASPA verifies academic history information entered by applicants against official transcripts and calculates applicant grade point averages (GPAs) based upon a formula established by CASPA. Applicant information in CASPA is conveniently made available to PA programs via the WebAdMIT admissions portal and is accessible to CASPA-participating PA programs. PAEA does not regulate any PA program's admissions requirements nor determine an applicant's eligibility to apply to any PA program.

PAEA

Based in Washington, DC, the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) is the only national organization in the U.S. representing PA educational programs. PAEA's mission is "Advancing excellence in PA education through leadership, scholarship, equity, and inclusion."

Liaison International

Liaison International offers unmatched insight into emerging technologies and a keen understanding of how the latest innovations can be used to help clients better fulfill their core mission. To support the CASPA service, Liaison employs customer representatives, data entry professionals, verification experts, and provides the management expertise to find, train, and motivate this pool of employees. Liaison offers a comprehensive service to several CAS applications and provides various services, including application tracking, document retention, verification services, applicant data warehousing, and customer service.

APPLICATION CYCLE AND DEADLINES

Application Cycle

A CASPA cycle runs from April each year until the following April. The 2022-2023 CASPA application cycle opens on April 28, 2022 and closes on April 1, 2023. Applicants who apply during this timeline will be considered for the January – December 2023 or January 2024 entering class of PA students, unless in the case of deferrals, which are determined by each program.

Application Deadlines

CASPA offers ten (10) deadline options for programs to choose from. Each program selects the deadline that best aligns with their individual admissions timelines and class start dates. The deadline options are listed below and can also be located in the PAEA Program Directory.

- June 15
- July 15
- August 1
- September 1
- October 1
- November 1
- December 1
- January 15
- March 1
- April 1.

Deadline Requirements

In addition to an application deadline, there are three deadline requirement options to choose from. The programs select the deadline requirement that best aligns with their admissions process. The three options are listed below and can also be found in the PAEA Program Directory.

- **Submit:** The application must be submitted by the posted deadline.
- **Complete:** The application must be submitted, and payment, all transcripts, and two of the three evaluations must be received by CASPA by the posted deadline.
- **Verified:** The application must be complete, and all GPA calculations must be completed by the posted deadline.

GETTING STARTED

Create an Account
The Applicant Portal

New and returning applicants will visit the CASPA [application portal](#) to create an account or log in to an existing application. The Applicant Portal can be accessed at any time throughout the cycle.

Re-Applicants

If you have applied or created an application in the 2020-2021 cycle and later will have the option to carry over most of the data to your application in this cycle. Some of the previously entered information will be carried over automatically, some information will require approval to be carried over with no changes, and some information will not be carried over.

Items Carried Over

Your CASPA ID and name are automatically carried over. Below outlined the information that will be carried over once they have been reviewed and approved:
- All demographic information
- Colleges and universities attended
- U.S. coursework previously verified by CASPA and the transcripts that correspond with these courses
- Experiences and achievements entered

*CASPA will **not** carry over letters of evaluation, essays, payments, and program-specific information into new cycles.

FEES

The application fee is $179 for the first designation and $56 for each additional designation. Once the application has been successfully submitted, no refunds are granted. This includes failing to meet a program's deadline. Programs deadline.

Credit Card Payment Disputes

An unauthorized credit card chargeback against a fee will result in the application being placed on hold for all programs. A chargeback is the return of funds to a consumer, typically occurring after a credit card transaction is disputed with the credit card company.

If we receive an unauthorized chargeback from your credit card company, we will notify you of the chargeback and place your application on hold. To reinstate your application, you must

send a money order that totals the full fee plus a $25 bank processing charge for each incorrect chargeback within ten business days of the notification.

If payment is not received within this timeframe, any future activity will be barred until all outstanding fees are paid, including applications for future cycles.

Fee Waivers

Each year PAEA provides a limited number of fee waivers to applicants. The fee waiver covers the fee of the first two (2) designations ($235). The applicant is responsible for fees for additional program designations beyond the amount of the first designation ($56 each). Because funds are limited, meeting eligibility criteria does not guarantee that a fee waiver will be granted. Applicants should contact customer service to inquire about availability.

To be considered for a CASPA fee waiver, the 2022-23 CASPA application must be created, complete the fee waiver application, and submit a copy of any required 2021 federal income tax returns.

Eligibility for a fee waiver requires that the applicant has an income that is 200% or less of the U.S..S Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines. If the applicant is a dependent, CASPA requires the legal guardian's most recent federal income tax return, i.e., the 2022-23 fee waiver will require a 2021 federal income tax return.

The status of the fee waiver request will be sent to both the e-mail address associated with the CASPA account and the application inbox. Applicants should **not** submit their CASPA application until they have been notified of their CASPA fee waiver application status. Fee waiver decisions are typically communicated to the applicant within 72 hours of receipt of their federal tax forms. The fee waiver application will be automatically denied if the applicant submits their application prior to this notification.

Once approval for a CASPA fee waiver has been received, applicants will have 14 calendar days to submit their application. Recipients of the fee waiver award should submit their application two at least two (2) programs to ensure the full award is used. The award cannot be used across multiple submissions. If you do not submit your application within 14 days, the fee waiver will be automatically revoked, and then you will not be able to reapply for a waiver in that cycle.

CASPA OVERVIEWS

Application Dashboard

The application is divided into four sections, with progress bars to guide you through the application. Once the Information in a section is saved, then the applicant you will automatically be directed to the next section.

There are four main sections of the CASPA application:

1. Personal information
2. Academic history
3. Supporting information
4. Program materials

A snapshot of the application dashboard homepage
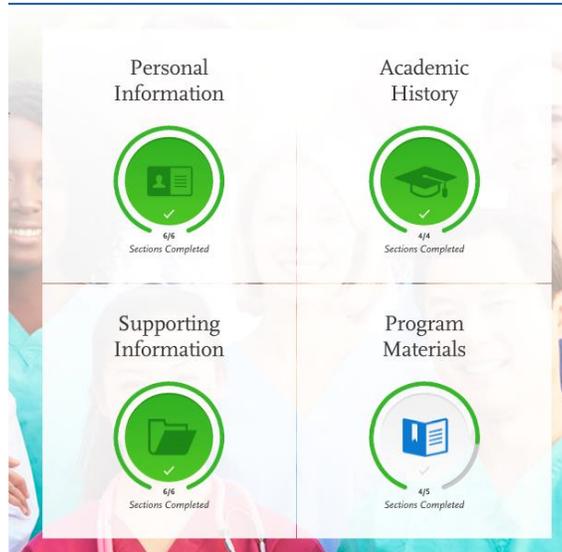
You can also access your profile and help center, apply to the Fee Waiver program, add, and remove programs, submit the application, check the status of application documents, and see their notification, all from the dashboard.

Personal Information

The Personal Information section questions collect basic biographic, contact, citizenship, race, ethnicity, and family information from the applicant. Questions are included below.

A snapshot of the overall personal information section tabs.
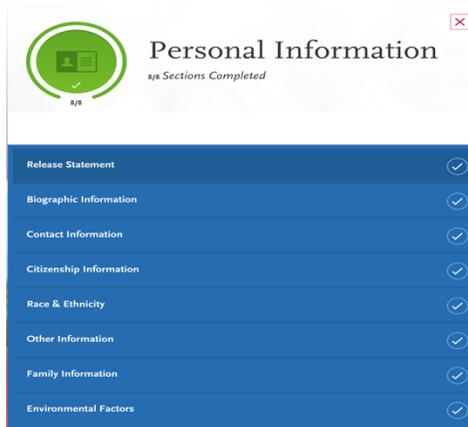
To proceed to the application, you must agree to the CASPA Applicant Agreement. You will also be given the opportunity to indicate you want to release application data to the health profession advisor as the post-secondary institutions listed in CASPA.

Biographic Information Questions
- Name (first, middle, last, suffix)
- Alternate name (first, middle, last, preferred nickname)
- Sex (male, female)
- Gender Identity
- Gender Pronouns
- Birth information (date, country, city, state, county)

Contact Information Questions
- Current address (street, city, country, state, zip, valid dates)
- Permanent address (same)
- Phone
- Email

Citizenship Information Questions
- Citizenship details (citizenship status, country, dual)
- Residency information (legal state of residence, legal country, time)
- Visa information (number, type, issued by, issued city, country, valid dates, sponsor)
- DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals)

Race and Ethnicity Questions (optional)
- Ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino origin)
- Race (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or White)

Other Information Questions
- Language proficiency (native language, additional languages, and proficiency)
- Military status and discharge type
- Academic infractions (if yes, description, charge, dates, consequence, reflection)
- License infractions (if yes, description, charge, dates, consequence, reflection)
- Environmentally disadvantaged (HRSA questions)

- Additional questions (first heard of the profession, influential factor in applying, ever matriculated or attended a PA program, medical school including foreign or any other health profession including but not limited to D.O., dentistry, physical therapy, chiropractic, podiatry, etc.)
  - If yes is selected, the name of the institution should be included in the Colleges Attended section, and the corresponding transcript should be provided. Failure to list any previously attended intuitions may result in a violation of the CASPA Applicant User Agreement.
- COVID-19 essay question (describe how COVID-19 has impacted your pathway to becoming a Physician Assistant)

Environmental Factors
- *Childhood Residency Questions*:
  - In what country/state/county/city did you spend the majority of your life, from birth to age 18?
  - What type of geographic area were you raised in?
  - Description of childhood residency.
  - Do you feel that the area where you grew up was medically underserved?
- *Family Situation Questions* (U.S. applicants only):
  - Have you or members of your immediate family ever used federal or state assistance programs?
  - What was the income level of your family during the majority of your life, from birth to age 18?
  - Did you have paid employment prior to age 18?
  - Were you able to contribute to the overall family income?)

Academic History

The Academic History section collects data on high schools and post-secondary institutions attended, the applicant is required to enter their coursework as it appears on the official transcripts from any post-secondary institution they have attended, and self-report their standardized test scores. Questions are included below.

A snapshot of the overall Academic History section tabs

High Schools Attended

- High school attended (name)
- City
- State
- Graduation status and date

Colleges Attended

Applicants are required to enter **all** post-secondary institutions attended in the CASPA regardless of dual enrollment, started at an institution and finished somewhere else, or were dismissed from a post-secondary institution. The data collected on each is below. Applicants will enter this information for each college/university they attended and will have the option to list multiple degrees. Failure to list any previously attended intuitions may result in processing delays and may trigger PAEA to further investigate the issue.

- College or university name
- Degree information
  - o Degree earned (yes, no, in progress)
  - o Degree type
  - o Degree earned date
  - o Major
  - o Minor (if applicable)
  - o Term type
  - o First term date
  - o Last term date

Transcript Entry

Applicants are required to enter all coursework taken at **all** post-secondary institutions listed in the Colleges Attended section the coursework should be entered as it appears on the official transcript from the institution. To avoid processing delays, <u>PAEA and Liaison strongly recommend that applicants use an official copy of the official transcript to enter their academic history</u>. Unofficial transcripts and Audits may differ from the official transcript. A CAS grade will be automatically calculated once this information is entered. The CAS grade is used to calculate GPAs upon verification.

- Course name
- Course title
- Subject
- Credits
- Grade

Applicants must request official transcripts to be sent directly to CASPA from the registrar's office at each college or university they attended. If transcripts are received before the CASPA application has been submitted, and the Colleges Attended section is complete, the date the transcript arrived is available online to the applicant on their status menu. CASPA does accept the submission of electronic transcripts from most post-secondary institutions. For detailed instructions on how to submit electronic transcripts, please visit the CASPA Help Center by clicking here. For detailed instructions on how to submit electronic transcripts, please visit the CASPA Help Center by clicking here. If your institution does not have an electronic transcript option, transcripts must be sent to:

CASPA
PO Box 9108
Watertown, MA 02471

CASPA will accept transcripts received after the program deadline has passed and processed the application. If the application was submitted by the published deadline and all transcripts, two evaluations, and the CASPA fee are received by the close of the application cycle in April. Programs can access the date each transcript was received by CASPA and determine whether the applicant has met the program-specific transcript deadline date and is eligible for admission. CASPA does not determine that eligibility.

SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS ON TRANSCRIPTS

U.S. and Canadian Transcripts
Applicants must arrange for CASPA to receive official transcripts directly from every U.S. Territory, U.S. regionally accredited overseas institutions, and English-speaking Canadian post-secondary institutions attended. CASPA will consider all application files "Incomplete" until all U.S.U.S. and Canadian transcripts are received. Liaison will determine the authenticity of transcripts received before applying them to your application.

Foreign Transcripts
Foreign transcripts (exceptions: English-speaking Canadian and U.S. regionally accredited overseas institutions) are not accepted by CASPA. Applicants attending a foreign institution

must list their school in the Colleges Attended section but are barred from listing their individual courses in the coursework section. This work is not verified, and no GPA will be calculated for foreign transcripts. CASPA will accept evaluation reports provided by U.S. foreign transcript evaluation companies, evaluated transcripts are not required by CASPA to verify an application. All evaluated transcripts will be shared with the programs you have applied to with the rest of your application materials.

*Please note that French-speaking Canadian institutions are considered foreign.

Listed below are the four commonly used evaluation services. CASPA does not endorse any evaluation service; however, applicants can opt to have their official evaluations sent electronically to CASPA by WES. CASPA will still accept WES evaluations in paper format. If your program requires applicants to use a specific evaluation service, please include that information.

World Education Services, Inc. P.O. Box 5087 New York, NY 10274-5087 P: 212-966-6311 F: 212-739-6100 www.wes.org	Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. P.O. Box 514070 Milwaukee, WI 53204-3470 P: 414-289-3400 F: 414-289-3411 www.ece.org	International Education Research Foundation, Inc. P.O. Box 3665 Culver City, CA 90231-3665 P: 310-258-9451 F: 310-342-7086 www.ierf.org	Josef Silny & Associates, Inc. 7101 SW 102 Avenue Miami, FL 33173 P: 305-273-1616 F: 305-273-1338 www.jsilny.com

Transcripts for Professional Coursework

CASPA defines professional coursework as, "Coursework taken during military service outside of a regionally accredited institution (e.g., Community College of the Air Force, West Point), and coursework taken at a hospital or medical center."" Professional coursework is not allowed to be reported in the Colleges Attended or Coursework sections of the application, nor is it calculated as part of an applicant's GPA. Programs wishing to collect documentation for this type of work should turn on the "Clinical/Professional" and "Military Papers" document upload options when configuring their program-level requirements on the CAS Configuration Portal. Applicants are instructed to upload hospital and military transcripts directly to their programs using these tools if the programs choose to make them available.

*Note that all work taken at a college or a school, even if of the technical/professional variety, for which letter grades and semester/quarter hour credits are received, will be included in CASPA GPA calculations.

Transcripts for Applicants

CASPA will provide PDF copies of each official transcript for review in the WebAdMIT admissions portal. If you require official transcripts to be submitted directly to your program by applicants prior to matriculation, be sure your requirements reflect your expectations for copies of official paper transcripts to be submitted directly by the applicant.

Course Subjects

PAEA provides a course subject list to help CASPA verifiers categorize transcript coursework. Access the 2022-2023 Course Subject List for review.

Standardized Exams

Applicants may choose to self-report any GRE, TOEFL, or MCAT scores in this section. They may enter multiple scores for each test. This section contains self-reported scores only, not official test scores. The data collected for exams is below.

- Test taken (yes, no)
- Date planned, or date taken
- Scores

GRE

Official GRE scores can be sent directly to CASPA by ETS at the applicant's request. This allows official GRE scores to be viewed in the WebAdMIT system. While many higher education institutions have already established a GRE code, for the purpose of the CASPA integration, each program must have a CASPA-specific GRE code.

ETS provides the *GRE*® Fee Reduction Program for individuals who can demonstrate financial need, for those who are unemployed and receiving unemployment compensation, and for national programs that work with underrepresented groups. **A GRE Fee Reduction Voucher may be used for one GRE*® *General Test and/or one GRE*® *Subject Test. For more information, please visit the ETS website by clicking here.*

TOEFL

Official TOEFL score reports are accepted by ETS and uploaded directly into the CASPA for your review in the WebAdMIT admissions portal.

MCAT

MCAT scores can be sent to CASPA electronically to CASPA. Please ensure you check the admissions requirements of the program where you are applying to confirm if they accept MCAT scores. For detailed instructions on how to send MCAT scores to CASPA, please visit the AAMC's Website.

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information section collects data on experiences/achievements/certifications as evaluations and the Essay.

A snapshot of the overall supporting information section tabs.
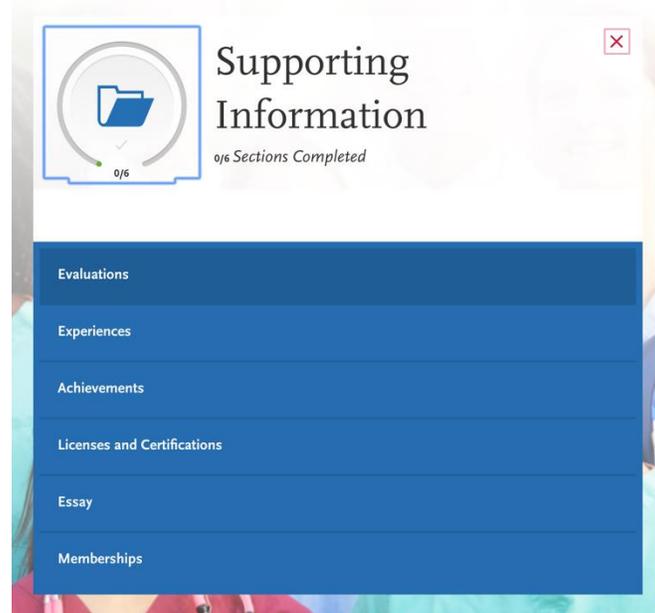
Evaluations

CASPA will accept up to five evaluations. Each evaluation request consists of:

- First name
- Last name
- Email
- Letter due date
- Personal message to an evaluator
- Waiver of evaluation
- Permission to contact reference (for CASPA)
- Permission for schools to contact reference

Evaluation Process

Once the evaluator's information has been entered and saved, an evaluation request is sent via email to the author with instructions on how to complete the request, along with a rubric. The author will also find provide instructions on how to upload their letter and complete the evaluation rubric.

Experiences/Achievements

Applicants can enter their professional experiences in several categories, or types. Allowing applicants to enter relevant employment, health care, shadowing, volunteer, research, awards and corresponding license/certifications, extracurricular activities, teaching, publications, and

membership data on their application. Once the application has been submitted, new experience may be added, however, existing experiences cannot be deleted.

- Experience type (What type of experience do you want to add?)
- Organization (name, address, country, state)
- Supervisor (name title, contact phone, contact email)
- Experience dates (start date, current experience, end date, status)
- Experience details (title, type of recognition, average weekly hours, number of weeks, total hours, description/ key responsibilities, release authorization)

Experience Types

- ### Non-Healthcare Employment
  Paid work done outside of the health care field or research lab, for example, a retail or restaurant job.

- ### Research
  Research projects completed, preferably in addition to or outside of regular classroom work.

- ### Volunteer
  Volunteer work done outside of the health care field; for example, working for Habitat for Humanity, tutoring students, participating in or working for a fundraiser walk or blood drive.

- ### Patient Care Experience
  Experiences in which you are directly responsible for a patient's care. For example, performing procedures, directing a course of treatment, designing a treatment regimen, actively working on patients as a nurse, paramedic, EMT, CNA, phlebotomist, physical therapist, or dental hygienist.

- ### Healthcare Experience
  Both paid and unpaid work in a health or health-related field where you are not directly responsible for a patient's care but may still have patient interaction; for example, filling prescriptions, performing clerical work, delivering patient food, cleaning patients and/or their rooms, administering food or medication, taking vitals or other record keeping information, or working as a scribe, CNA (depending on the job description), medical assistant, etc.

- ### Shadowing
  Time spent officially following and observing a health care professional at work, preferably in the PA field.

- ### Leadership Experience
  Experiences in which you held a leadership role within an organization, such as the president of a club, fraternity/sorority, etc.

- ### Extracurricular Activities
  Related activities you would like your selected programs to review, for example, academic clubs and competitive teams. Do not include paid work experience in this section.

- Teaching Experience
  - Experiences in which you oversaw instructing others, such as a teaching assistant, tutor, etc.

Achievements
- Type
- Name (name of presenting organization, issued date, brief description)

Achievement Types
- Awards
  - Awards received as a prize, such as trophies and medals.
- Honors
  - Honors received as a special distinction for work done, including Dean's List and memberships in honor societies.
- Publications
  - Any work that is publicized through media organizations, including newspapers and journals.
- Scholarships
  - Scholarships earned based on academic, athletic, and other achievements.

Licenses and Certifications
- Type
- Title
- Organization name

You may enter multiple entries in each listed category. This allows applicants to enter relevant employment, health care, shadowing, volunteer, research, awards, and license/certifications data on their application.

Essay
Applicants must complete an essay to submit their application. The essay question allows them 5,000 characters to explain why they are interested in being a Physician Assistant."

Memberships
- Membership type

Program Materials
The Program Materials section allows PA programs to customize the application for their applicants with custom questions, documents, and prerequisite matching.

Every program will be required to complete a "branding page" shown below. This page can host a program photo, description, and application information. The Program Details section is automatically populated with data CASPA receives from each program.

A snapshot of a program's branding page

Customized Benefits

Custom Questions

Programs may elect to use custom questions. These questions can be required or optional, drop-down, either/or, multi-option, short answer, or narrative questions. Any question that is required must be completed by applicants to submit the application to your program.

This section can include supplemental questions or additional essays.

Sample questions may include:

1. Please explain your interest in our PA program related to our program's mission.
2. What personal characteristics and skills make you well suited for our program?
3. Address any academic deficiencies on your application. Discuss your ability to be successful despite these deficiencies.

Applicants applying to Developing programs will be required to answer the following questions to ensure that all applicants understand the status of the program and the potential effect of the program not receiving accreditation:

1. Definition of a developing program: {Insert Program Name} has applied for provisional accreditation from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). PROGRAM NAME anticipates matriculating its first class in MONTH YEAR, pending achieving provisional accreditation status at the MONTH YEAR ARC-PA meeting. "Accreditation – Provisional" is an accreditation

status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students.

2. Question: I understand I am applying to a developing program defined above, which may or may not receive provisional accreditation.

3. Question: I understand that if the program does not receive provisional accreditation, PAEA will not refund my application fee, and I have reviewed and understand the refund policies of this developing program.

Documents

Programs may elect to request or require additional documents as supplements to the application. There are four prepopulated documents that programs may require and one "other" option. Documents are accepted in .doc, .docx, .rtf, .pdf, and .txt formats with a size limit of 5MB.

- Clinical/professional
- Course catalog descriptions
- CV/resume
- License
- Military documents
- Other (defined by program)
- Publications
- Shadowing/health care hour logs
- Fee Waiver Award email/Notice

Prerequisites

Programs may elect to turn on the prerequisites section. Programs will list their prerequisite courses applicants are required to match the best-fit courses from the transcript entry section of the application to the listed prerequisites. It is important to note that this information is not verified by CASPA, but programs are able to determine whether the matched courses meet your prerequisite requirements.

* In-progress courses may be selected as well as multiple courses to fulfill one prerequisite course or the default "I do not have a course to fulfill this prereq" option to complete this section.

Background Checks

Each program has the option to run background checks. PAEA and Liaison have partnered with CastleBranch to provide this service portal.

Once a criminal background check has been initiated, you will receive an email with instructions to complete the background check request. If you are using Castle Branch and need assistance, it may be helpful to contact their customer service.

Verification & Grading

Verification is the process used to ensure that all coursework was entered correctly and consistently. Since credit values, grade values, and course subjects vary widely from school to school, the verification process standardizes all coursework so programs can accurately compare applicants. This standardization is achieved by using applicant coursework to create a standard set of GPAs, ensuring that they are compared to other applicants fairly and equally.

During the verification process, the verification team conducts a course-by-course evaluation of the academic record and calculates the various GPAs. Due to the variety of grade scales across the country, CASPA utilizes a universal grade value (e.g., B+ = 3.3). Once verification is completed, the application status will move from Completed to Verified. If significant mistakes are found in the applicant's coursework during the verification process, their application will be returned to them for corrections.
It is not uncommon for the CASPA GPA to differ from the GPA that is calculated by an institution.

Once the academic record is verified, the entire application and supporting documents are available to the applicants' the designated program(s)
Verification
Verification refers to the matching of courses on the official transcripts with completed courses listed in the Transcript Entry section of the application. CASPA performs course-by-course verification once the application is considered "complete" and processes based on the order received per the date the application becomes complete. The CASPA verification staff ensures that applicant-reported coursework matches the course history on the corresponding U.S. transcript. CASPA does not verify foreign courses or transcripts, professional coursework, or planned/in-progress coursework.

The verification process may take up to four weeks from the date the application reaches the completion status. PAEA and Liaison encourages applicants to submit the application at least four weeks in advance of the earliest deadline of the programs they are applying to.

No Transcript Available
CASPA does not waive transcript requirements due to an applicant's financial obligations to a college or university. Applicants who are unable to obtain an official transcript from a college or university due to financial or other school-imposed holds cannot apply until their situation has been settled with their individual school.

For transcripts that are unavailable due to extenuating circumstances, such as school closings or transcript loss by the responsible institution, the institution or state department of education

must submit a signed letter of explanation on official letterhead stating that transcripts or records do not exist for the applicant. This must be submitted directly to CASPA customer service, and CASPA will evaluate these letters on a case-by-case basis.

Course-by-Course Transcript Verification

The verification staff checks that the applicant properly entered all coursework on every transcript, including:

- Institution
- Course title, course prefix, and number (e.g., CHEM 101)
- Term
- Year
- Course subject
- <u>Grade</u>: CASPA will not edit this field. If the applicant made an error on the number of credits, CASPA will make the correction in the Verified Grade field.
- <u>Credits</u>: CASPA will not edit this field. If the applicant made an error on the number of credits, CASPA will make the correction in the Verified Credits field. Note: If the applicant failed or repeated a course, CASPA will enter the credits attempted in the credits field, even if the course was repeated later for a higher grade. Credits are excluded only if the credits attempted, not earned, on the transcript, or the application are shown as blank, or zero (0).

Verification of Coursework

- *CASPA Verified Grade* – Indicates any changes to the applicant-reported grade. If staff makes no changes to the applicant's original grade, this field is blank.
- *CASPA Verified Credits* – Indicates any changes to the applicant-reported credits. If staff make no changes to the applicant's original credits, this field is blank.
- *CASPA (Converted) Grade* – Reflects the applicant's attempt to convert a numeric grade to a CASPA letter grade. If the applicant makes an error in the original grade, staff will overwrite the applicant's entry. If the error is made to the converted grade, the correction will appear under CASPA Verified Grade. Liaison will attempt to create an automatic conversion for as many standardized grading schemes as possible.

Discrepancies

If CASPA cannot match coursework from a transcript to the application, CASPA may have received an incomplete transcript, or the applicant failed to enter all coursework in the application. CASPA will return the application to the applicant and allow them to rectify any errors.

Once the application has been returned, it is the applicant's responsibility to make corrections and resubmit their application to CASPA.

Converting Quarters to Semesters

The CASPA system will automatically convert quarter hours to semester hours (quarter hour x .667) if quarters are reported on the transcript.

*The conversion of quarter hours to semester hours occurs only in the GPA section of the application. Conversion is not done on the Coursework section of the application.

Automatic Grade Conversion

The CASPA central processing software automatically converts the following Applicant-Reported Grades to the CASPA (converted) Grade.

CASPA Grade	A	A-	A.B.	B+	B	B-	B.C.	C+	C	C-	CD	D+	D	D-	F
Transcript Grade	A+, A	A-	A.B., B.A.	B+	B	B-	B.C., C.B.	C+	C	C-	CD, DC	D+	D	D-	E, F, W.F.

<u>Converting Numeric Grades</u>

For U.S. institutions using a numeric grading system, CASPA uses the following scale to convert numeric grades on a transcript to equivalent CASPA grades. For Canadian institutions using a numeric grading system, CASPA uses the scale on the back of the individual institution's transcript.

CASPA Weight	4	3.7	3.5	3.3	3	2.7	2.5	2.3	2	1.7	1.5	1.3	1	0.7	0
CASPA Grade	A	A-	A.B.	B+	B	B-	B.C.	C+	C	C-	CD	D+	D	D-	F

Grade on Transcript	CASPA Letter Grade
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59-0	F

<u>Transcript Verification</u>

Most U.S.U.S. colleges and universities evaluate students' work with a numeric (e.g., 4.0) or alpha grade (e.g., B+). Some colleges and universities may use programs evaluate students with a "narrative evaluation" in lieu of alpha or numeric grades. Courses that are evaluated narratively will receive a GPA of as 0.00. The programs you have applied to will have a copy of your narrative evaluation.

<u>Degree Verification</u>

CASPA verifies U.S.U.S. degrees reported as awarded in the Colleges Attended section of the application and may also appear on the official transcripts for bachelor's degrees and above.

<u>Grade Point Averages</u>

CASPA will calculate numerous GPAs. The GPA and hours will be summarized by academic year within:
- Cumulative Undergraduate (freshman through senior year)
- Baccalaureate (Coursework taken to complete the bachelor's degree and any coursework labeled as post-baccalaureate)
- Post-baccalaureate (Coursework taken after the receipt of the first bachelor's degree)
- Graduate (includes doctoral work)

Any work taken at a master's or doctoral degree level will be labeled as Graduate and will factor into a Graduate GPA. 'Professional and foreign coursework is excluded from the overall GPA calculation.

Cumulative Undergraduate
CASPA will calculate cumulative undergraduate GPA that includes all undergraduate and post-baccalaureate courses taken, both science and non-science.

Overall GPA
CASPA will calculate an overall GPA that includes all undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and graduate courses taken, both science and non-science.

Non-Science GPA
The non-science GPA includes all courses with subject codes of math, English, behavioral science, and other non-science.

Science GPA
The Science GPA includes all courses with subject codes of Biology/Zoology, Chemistry (Inorganic, Organic, and Biochemistry), Physics, and other science.

BCP GPA
The BCP GPA includes all courses taken in the categories of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. This will exclude Other Science to reflect a more accurate GPA for prerequisite courses at a glance.

GPA Calculations
CASPA calculates a standardized GPA to help participating PA programs evaluate applicants using uniform and consistent criteria. The CASPA GPAs are automatically generated by the system and are likely to be different from those calculated by the colleges and universities attended due to the CASPA grade standardization process. In this process, the CASPA grade is assigned a numeric value to calculate the CASPA GPA. Participating programs may choose to use the CASPA GPAs or re-calculate GPAS for their own use.

GPA System Rules

The CASPA central database automatically performs the following steps when calculating CASPA GPAs. CASPA verifiers do not manually perform these steps:

- Multiply the grade value of the course by the semester hours for that course. The product of this multiplication will be the quality points.
- Divide the cumulative quality points by the cumulative attempted hours.

Example:

Course	Transcript Grade	Transcript Credits Attempted	CASPA (Converted) Letter Grade	Calculation	Quality Points
MATH 1100	4.0	3	A	= 4 X 3	12
ENGL 1310	3.0	3	B	= 3 X 3	9
GEOL 1610	2.0	4	C	= 2 X 4	8
PHED 1000	1.0	3	D	= 1 X 3	3
PSCI 1040	0.0	3	F	= 0 X 3	0
TOTAL		16			32

GPA Calculation → 32 (quality points) ÷ by 16 (credit hours attempted) = 2.00 (GPA)

Repeated Coursework

Applicants are required to enter all course grades and hours for courses taken, even if the course was repeated. When entering repeated course work, applicants should identify these courses as repeated under "course type."" Applicants must enter coursework as shown on transcripts. CASPA will calculate GPAs based on credits reported on official transcripts. CASPA does **not** recognize freshmen forgiveness or academic renewal.

ENSURING INTEGRITY

PAEA CASPA Policy Regarding Investigations and Violations

The Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) is committed to ensuring the integrity and validity of the information submitted in the Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) and the processes leading up to and including enrollment in a PA program. PAEA is committed to holding individuals using CASPA to the highest standards of ethical conduct in relation to these processes. The PAEA CASPA Policy Regarding Investigations and Violations applies to the investigation of potential violations of the terms, conditions, and policies that apply to the use of CASPA occurring at any time during the processes leading up to enrollment in a PA program and the fee waiver application process.

PAEA requires applicants to present accurate and current information at the time application materials are submitted in CASPA and during all phases of the admission process for entry into a PA program. It is the policy of PAEA to investigate discrepancies in information submitted in CASPA, attempts to subvert the admission process, potential fraud, and any other irregular matters which occurs in connection with the use of CASPA and the processes leading up to and including enrollment in a PA program and the fee waiver application process.

Reports of Potential Violations and Initiation of Investigations
PAEA may, in its sole discretion, initiate an investigation when it becomes aware of discrepancies in information submitted in CASPA or receives any information indicating that an individual may have potentially committed fraud in the process of seeking admission to a CASPA-participating PA program or potentially violated any of the terms, conditions, or policies that apply to the use of CASPA. CASPA utilizes systems that detect potential discrepancies in information submitted by applicants and receives notification of potential violations from CASPA stakeholders, including but not limited to representatives of CASPA-participating PA programs.

If a PA program has reason to believe that an applicant may have potentially committed fraud in the process of seeking admission to any CASPA-participating PA program or potentially violated any of the terms, conditions, or policies that apply to the use of CASPA, a designated representative of the program should promptly send a written report of the potential violation to PAEA via email that includes all of the details of the matter to caspa@PAEAonline.org. When submitting the report of any potential violation, PA programs must include all relevant facts, dates, events, information, and documentation that relate to the potential violation. PA programs must report any potential violation to PAEA in writing as required in this policy within thirty (30) days of becoming aware of it.

PAEA reserves the right in its sole discretion not to initiate an investigation for a potential violation where a PA program's report of the potential violation occurred more than thirty (30) calendar days after it became aware of the potential violation. PAEA also reserves the right in its sole discretion not to investigate any potential violation that occurred more than one calendar year prior to the date of the report made to PAEA, regardless of when a PA program may have become aware of the potential violation.

Investigation of Potential Violations
Once an investigation is initiated, PAEA reviews the potential violation and determines in its sole discretion whether it is more likely than not that a violation has occurred, based on information submitted by the subject of the investigation; PAEA current and historical records; information provided by external parties; the terms, conditions, and policies that govern the use of CASPA; and any other available relevant information.

Communication with the Subject of an Investigation

Once PAEA determines that it is more likely than not that a violation has occurred, PAEA will

contact the subject of an investigation in order to:

- Notify the subject that an investigation has been initiated
- Provide the subject with a summary of the matter being investigated
- Inform the subject of the terms, conditions, policies, and procedures related to the investigation
- Provide the subject with an opportunity to respond

Based upon the subject's response, or failure to respond, PAEA will either develop a draft of the report to be issued to Legitimately Interested Parties, as defined below, or terminate the investigation in the event that the subject is able to provide evidence that no violation has occurred. If PAEA proceeds with the development of a draft report, this report will be sent to the subject in order to provide the subject with an opportunity to advise PAEA of any purported inaccuracies contained in the draft report. If the subject identifies purported inaccuracies in the draft report, PAEA will endeavor to resolve any disagreements it may have with the subject's view of the evidence and facts. PAEA may also decide to simply include the subject's objections to the report in the final version of the report if PAEA and the subject are unable to resolve their differences regarding the content of the report. If the subject does not advise PAEA of any inaccuracies in the draft report within the prescribed time period, PAEA will modify the report to indicate that the subject did not raise any objections to the report after being given an opportunity to do so, and PAEA will then finalize the report in order to provide it to Legitimately Interested Parties. PAEA has the ultimate sole discretion to determine the findings of fact and content included in a report in its final form.

PAEA prepares and issues a report documenting the factual findings of the investigation and may include information provided by the subject of the investigation in accordance with the procedures outlined above. With the issuance of a report, PAEA makes no judgment as to the culpability of any person with respect to matters reported and does not assess the suitability of an individual to study or practice as a PA. Rather, PAEA strives to communicate complete and accurate information to Legitimately Interested Parties. Evaluation of the accuracy of the information in the report is the responsibility of the recipient of the report.

In addition to the issuance of a report, PAEA reserves the right to take all other lawful action warranted under the circumstances in relation to the subject of an investigation, in PAEA's sole discretion, if PAEA determines that the subject violated the terms, conditions, and policies that govern the use of CASPA, or any applicable law or regulation.

Legitimately Interested Parties
Legitimately Interested Parties include all PA programs to which an individual has applied or matriculated during the current cycle and PA programs to which the individual applies or matriculates in the future, as well as duly constituted licensure and regulatory agencies and health professions educational institutions that make an official request to PAEA for a report.

If, at the time of the investigation, the individual is enrolled in a CASPA-participating PA program, the report in final form will be forwarded to the current institution of attendance and will be distributed in response to any future application or matriculation activity. The report in final form will also be issued in response to an application or matriculation at such Legitimately Interested Parties of which PAEA has knowledge. Reports may contain information relevant to academic or disciplinary proceedings, criminal investigations, and decisions relevant to entry into PA programs and professional licensure.

<u>Arbitration for Disputes</u>
Should an individual conclude that a draft report unfairly characterizes the evidence and findings of fact related to an investigation, or an agreement between parties on the content and language of the report cannot be reached, PAEA will offer the individual who is the subject of the report an opportunity to request arbitration. Such arbitration must be requested prior to the issuance of a final report. Arbitration is conducted by a single arbitrator appointed by the Washington, D.C.D.C, office of JAMS. The arbitrator acts solely on the basis of a written record submitted by both parties, and no hearing or oral arguments are held. The sole issue for arbitration shall be whether PAEA acted reasonably and in good faith in preparing the report. The arbitrator will have final authority to conclude whether: (1) the report should be distributed as written; (2) the report should be modified in accordance with the arbitrator's directions before distribution; or (3) no report should be distributed. In addition, the arbitrator determines which party is responsible for JAMS' case management fees and the arbitrator's fee. All other costs associated with arbitration (for example, attorneys' fees) are borne by the party incurring them.