

# About the PA Profession

## WHAT IS A PA?

PAs can be found in a variety of healthcare environments. 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.

PAs work in many specialties, including primary care, emergency medicine, psychiatry, and women's health, providing a wide variety of clinical services, such as:

- Performing medical exams and procedures
- Diagnosing and treating disease
- Prescribing medication
- Assisting in surgery

## JOB OUTLOOK

PAs are currently in high demand in the healthcare world. The PA profession ranks #2 on *U.S. News & World Report's* Best Healthcare Jobs list for 2023. **Employment of PAs is projected to grow 28% by 2031**, 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 \$120,000.**

## HOW TO 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 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.



## IS PA THE CAREER FOR YOU?

PAs have extensive medical responsibilities, including diagnosing illnesses and prescribing medicine. PAs work on healthcare 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.

## PREREQUISITE COURSES

- Anatomy & physiology
- Biochemistry
- Biology (general)
- Biology (microbiology)
- Chemistry (general)
- Chemistry (organic)
- English composition/ Writing
- Genetics
- Medical terminology
- Psychology (general)
- Statistics

## HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCE

You can gain healthcare experience by working as a:

- Medical assistant
- Medic or medical corpsman
- Paramedic
- Lab assistant/phlebotomist
- Registered nurse
- Emergency room technician
- Surgical technician
- CNA
- Peace Corps volunteer
- Other healthcare professional