

 THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

DEPARTMENT OF
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT
STUDIES & SERVICES

*A Tradition of
Excellence*



Physician Assistant

If you're interested in medicine and helping people, but concerned about lengthy medical school/residency requirements and expense, you might consider becoming a physician assistant. The physician assistant profession is one of the newest and most exciting health care professions.

Physician assistants (PAs) are health professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. Within the physician/PA relationship, PAs are responsible for making medical decisions and providing a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services in a variety of settings including an office, hospital emergency room, nursing home, rural satellite clinic, and/or in a patient's home. Physicians are consulted as needed and ultimately are responsible for the care provided by the physician/PA team. PAs also are involved in both patient and/or community health education.



The University of Iowa PA Program

The University of Iowa developed the Physician Assistant Program in 1972 and admitted 10 students to the first physician assistant class. In 1992, the bachelor's program was converted to a graduate-level curriculum awarding graduates the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS). The program is 28 months long. The University of Iowa's PA Program is unlike any other PA program in the country. Our unique program curriculum is purposefully designed to have the PA students complete their didactic curriculum with medical students. The innovative curriculum is intricately woven into a creative matrix of courses that prepares students to move far beyond simple memorization of facts and figures to developing skills designed to prepare them as lifelong learners.

These skills produce a clinician who can adapt to new theories and technologies as they become available. Students in our program become clinicians who know how to develop questions, collect and critique information, and critically reason conclusions using evidence-based medicine principles. Clinicians who possess these skills are capable of providing excellent patient care. In addition, they learn to think in a manner that is consistent with their supervising physicians which allows them to easily become integrated into the PA/Physician team.

Why the University of Iowa?

Iowa's program has an excellent reputation nationwide. *U.S. News & World Report* currently has the University of Iowa PA Program ranked *second* in the nation among PA graduate programs.

Since 1974, University of Iowa PA graduates have consistently performed in the top 5 to 10 percent in the country each year on the National Certifying Examination. In addition, University of Iowa PA graduates have enjoyed a first-time pass rate of 99 percent since 1974, compared with the national average of 85 percent during the same period.

The PA program curriculum is integrated with medical school classes and connected with the health sciences campus, including University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, one of the largest public university-owned teaching hospitals.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Admission is highly selective. Of the over 850 applicants each year, only 25 are admitted. The following factors are used when considering admission: 40 percent academic, 20 percent health care experience, 20 percent interpersonal communication skills, 10 percent knowledge of the PA role/profession, and 10 percent supporting documents.

The Physician Assistant Program at the University of Iowa is a non-thesis, 28-month graduate level program awarding the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree upon completion. One class of 25 students is enrolled in August each year. Under present Carver College of Medicine regulations, applications will only be accepted from U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Prerequisite requirements for the MPAS program are:

- A citizen or permanent resident of the United States of America.
- Baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution in the United States.
- Introductory and advanced (upper division) level courses.
- A minimum cumulative and science GPA of a 3.00 on a 4.00 scale, or attain a science GPA of a 3.00 on the most recently completed 40 semester hours of science coursework (A=4.00).
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) general test or the MCAT taken within the last 10 years. GRE scores should be sent to CASPA using our CASPA GRE Code, "0466 U Iowa Phys Asst CASPA". Applicants may send their MCAT results either to CASPA or to the University of Iowa PA Program.
- A minimum of 1,000 hours of direct patient health care experience.
- Three letters of recommendation (at least one from an academic and at least one from a health care supervisor) submitted through the CASPA application process.
- In addition, all applicants must be able to meet the program's technical standards.
- The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is required of all applicants for whom English is not their native language. The TOEFL requirement *may* be waived for applicants with Masters or Doctoral degrees from an accredited U.S. institution. The scores must be sent directly from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to the PA Program office. Only the IBT (Internet Based Test) form of the TOEFL will be accepted. A total score of 93 and a speaking score of 26 will be a prerequisite for entry into the program.

PRE-REQUISITE COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Biological Sciences: Required courses include a complete introductory course(s) in animal/human biology or zoology, a complete course in animal/exercise/human physiology* and at least three additional upper-level biological science courses.

*NOTE: Completion of a lower-level, combined anatomy and physiology sequence will meet the physiology requirement and anatomy will count as one of the three additional upper-level biological science courses.

Examples of Other Upper-Level Courses:

- Cell Biology**
- Genetics**
- Immunology**
- Microbiology**
- Molecular Biology**
- Anatomy
- Embryology
- Endocrinology
- Histology
- Neuroscience
- Pharmacology

** highly recommended

Chemical Sciences: A complete series of introductory courses in chemistry followed by upper-level courses in organic chemistry and introductory biochemistry.

Required Lower-Division Courses:

- Principles of Chemistry I and II

Required Upper-Division Courses:

- Organic Chemistry I
- Introductory/General Biochemistry*

* A survey course in organic/biochemistry will not satisfy this requirement.

Statistical Sciences

Required Lower-Division Course:

- General Statistics or Biostatistics

CURRICULUM



The curriculum recently underwent an exciting major renewal. The goals of this renewal effort were to develop an innovative curriculum that improved the integration of basic sciences with clinical application and experience while increasing the students' ability to individually tailor their educational experience. Given the phenomenal pace of change in technologic progress and the explosion of scientific discovery of new knowledge, tomorrow's health care practitioners must be educated in ways that will allow them to continuously adapt to the complex and continuously evolving environment of health care delivery.



The goal of the new curriculum is to develop enduring attitudes, skills, and

knowledge that will provide focus and direction in a future that cannot be predicted.

The preclinical phase begins in August and is completed with the medical students at the University of Iowa's Carver College of Medicine. It is composed of three strands – Mechanisms of Health and Disease (MOHD), Medicine and Society (MAS), and Clinical and Professional Skills (CAPS) – that run through the entire didactic phase. The strands are interwoven in a



helical spiral that assures not only integration of their material but also affords the deliberate revisiting of material in a manner that promotes progressively deeper understanding and mastery.

The interim between the second and third semester will comprise a session that includes some preclinical workshop material as well as clinical rotations in cardiology and radiology. Before clinical rotations begin, the students will have another two weeks of introduction to clinical medicine.



The program's second phase concentrates on clinical education. The primary care clinical rotations are designed to provide instruction and experience in caring for patients in a way that enables students to integrate the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes they learned in the program's didactic phase. Students complete a total of 48 weeks of clinical rotations, including general internal medicine, surgery, family medicine, pediatrics, emergency medicine, gynecology, and psychiatry. Students also select 12 weeks of



electives. Many rotations are available, including rotations such as geriatrics, cardiology, dermatology, orthopaedics and international rotations. Students pay their own way, but housing may be provided.

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Financial Information

All financial assistance available to students from general University sources is administered by the Office of Student Financial Aid in the Carver College of Medicine. Students may receive aid in the form of scholarships, grants, and loans. The program has a limited number of merit awards based on academic performance.

Several small scholarships based on financial need and/or merit are available through the University of Iowa for PA students. Several national scholarships are available, such as the National Health Service Corps scholarship or those through national PA organizations.

Application

The University of Iowa participates in the Physician Assistant Education Association's Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). To apply, go to <https://portal.caspaonline.org>.

Applications are accepted each year from mid-April with a deadline of November 1. All application materials, including all college transcripts, GRE or MCAT scores, and 3 recommendations (1 must be an academic and 1 must be a healthcare supervisor) must be received by CASPA by the November 1st deadline. Visit the CASPA website for more information.

Contact

Department of Physician Assistant Studies
and Services

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The University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242-1100

E-mail: paprogram@uiowa.edu

Phone: 319-335-8922

Website: www.medicine.uiowa.edu/pa/

Program Calendar

- Accept Applications: April (date established by CASPA)
- Deadline for Applications: November 1
- Interviews: Rolling admissions, beginning in September, continuing through January
- Notification: At conclusion of interview cycle, no later than February 1
- Classes Begin: August



The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination in employment and in its educational programs and activities on the basis of race, national origin, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or associational preference. The University also affirms its commitment to providing equal opportunities and equal access to University facilities. For additional information on nondiscrimination policies, contact:

Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity
The University of Iowa
202 Jessup Hall
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1316
Phone: 319-335-0705

If you are a person with a disability who requires reasonable accommodations in order to participate in this program, please contact the Physician Assistant Program at 319-335-8922 to discuss your needs.