

Physician Assistant Studies

Degree Offered:	M.S.P.A.S.
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General Information

Physician Assistants (PAs) are valuable members of a multidisciplinary healthcare team. The profession was established in 1965 to help physicians provide healthcare services to under-served and rural populations. While the profession remains committed to its historical mission, PAs are now employed in almost all medical and surgical specialties.

PAs are healthcare professionals licensed to practice medicine under the supervision of a physician. Individual state practice laws and hospital bylaws define the scope of practice and prescribing authority of physician assistants. To be eligible for licensure, PAs must graduate from an accredited physician assistant program and pass the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination (PANCE). To maintain licensure, PAs must complete 100 hours of continuing medical education credits every two years and pass the Physician Assistant National Recertification Examination (PANRE) every ten years. PAs may obtain additional training through postgraduate residency programs in various subspecialty areas, but these programs are not required for licensure or practice in subspecialty areas.

Admission Prerequisite Coursework and Application Information

All prerequisite courses must be successfully completed in the United States.

Requirements	Hours
BY 115 Human Anatomy	4
BY 116 Introductory Human Physiology or BY 409 Principles of Human Physiology	4
BY 123 Introductory Biology I	4
BY 124 Introductory Biology II	4
BY 261 Introduction to Microbiology or BY 271 Biology of Microorganisms	4
CH 115 General Chemistry I & CH 116 and General Chemistry I Laboratory & CH 117 and General Chemistry II & CH 118 and General Chemistry II Laboratory (CH 105, CH 106, CH 107, CH 108 accepted)	8
PY 216 Elementary Statistical Methods & 216L and Elementary Statistical Methods Laboratory or MA 180 Introduction to Statistics or HCM 360 Statistics for Managers	3-4
PY 101 Introduction to Psychology or PY 201 Honors Introduction to Psychology	3
PY 212 Developmental Psychology or PY 218 Psychopathology	3

Medical Terminology	3
HCM 350 Medical Terminology for Health Professionals	

Deadline for All Application Materials to be received by the CASPA:	Completed applications must be received by the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) no later than August 1 the year prior to the expected term of enrollment
Number of Evaluations/Letters of Recommendation Required:	Three
Entrance Tests:	GRE (TOEFL is required for international applicants whose native language is not English).

Accreditation

The Physician Assistant Studies Program is accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA).

Credentials Conferred

Diploma – The Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS) degree is awarded by the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Professional Certification

Graduates of the UAB PA program are eligible to take the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE) sponsored by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) to become a certified PA.

Essential Requirements

Fundamental tasks, behaviors, and abilities necessary to successfully complete the academic and clinical requirements of the program and to satisfy licensure/certification requirements have been outlined and are available upon request from the academic program office. Students requesting disability accommodations should contact UAB Disability Support Services (DSS) at 205-934-4205.

Program Curriculum

Course requirements are listed below with semester credit hours shown.

Didactic Curriculum

First Year		
First Term	Hours	
PA 601	4	
PA 602	4	
PA 605	4	
PA 610	3	
PA 615	1	
CDS 505	1	
GC 535	1	
		18

Total credit hours: 18

First Year		
Second Term	Hours	
PA 603		3
PA 606		6
PA 608		3
PA 611		3
PA 616		1
		16

Total credit hours: 16

First Year		
Summer Term	Hours	
PA 604		3
PA 607		6
PA 609		3
PA 613		3
PA 618		1
PA 619		2
		18

Total credit hours: 18

Second Year		
First Term	Hours	
PA 614		2
PA 617		3
PA 620		2
PA 633		2
PA 634		2
PA 635		2
		13

Total credit hours: 13

Clinical Curriculum

The clinical component of the curriculum consists of 11 clinical rotations PA 621 – PA 632 plus Senior Seminar I-III and a Master's Research Project. Regarding the clinical rotations, 7 are required core rotations including family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, general surgery, behavioral medicine, women's health, and emergency medicine; and 4 are elective rotations.

Second Year		
Second Term	Hours	
PA 621		4
PA 622		4
PA 623		4
PA 624		4
PA 643		1
		17

Total credit hours: 17

Second Year		
Summer Term	Hours	
PA 625		4
PA 626		4
PA 627		4
PA 629		4
PA 644		1

PA 698		1
		18

Total credit hours: 18

Third Year		
First Term	Hours	
PA 630		4
PA 631		4
PA 632		4
PA 645		3
		15

Total credit hours: 15

Clinical Rotations (PA 621 - PA 632)

Requirements		Hours
PA 621	Clinical Service I	4
PA 622	Clinical Service II	4
PA 623	Clinical Service III	4
PA 624	Clinical Service IV	4
PA 625	Clinical Service V	4
PA 626	Clinical Service VI	4
PA 627	Clinical Service VII	4
PA 629	Clinical Service IX	4
PA 630	Clinical Service X	4
PA 631	Clinical Service XI	4
PA 632	Clinical Service XII	4

Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies-Master of Public Health Dual Degree Option

The coordinated Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies and Master of Public Health (MSPAS-MPH) dual degree program will prepare physician assistant students for leadership roles that address community healthcare needs. The program aims to increase the number of high-quality primary care clinicians with public health expertise and thus improve access, quality and cost of care. This plan of study provides students with a thorough understanding of the social and environmental determinants of health, population disease prevention and health promotion strategies, health disparities, epidemiological research analysis and healthcare quality improvement capabilities.

Admissions Requirements

Students must meet the admissions requirements for both the MSPAS degree program as well as the MPH degree program. Click [here](#) for MSPAS admissions requirements. Click [here](#) for UAB School of Public Health admissions requirements.

In addition to meeting the stated requirements for each degree separately, applicants for the dual degree must also have completed a bachelor's degree and all prerequisites before December 30 in order to start the program in January of the following spring term.

Application Procedures

To be considered for admission to the UAB MSPAS/MPH dual degree program, candidates will need to complete and submit the following materials by the stated deadlines:

August 1: The Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) Application

August 7: The UAB PA Supplemental Application

August 7: The UAB Graduate School MPH/MSPAS Application

For more information visit the Physician Assistant Studies web page for the MSPAS-MPH degree option at <http://www.uab.edu/shp/cds/physician-assistant/mspas-mph>

Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies

Requirements	Hours	
PA 601	Human Gross Anatomy	4
PA 602	Medical Physiology	4
PA 603	Pharmacology I	3
PA 604	Pharmacology II	3
PA 605	Clinical Pathology	4
PA 606	Clinical Medicine I	6
PA 607	Clinical Medicine II	6
PA 608	Surgical Disease I	3
PA 609	Surgical Disease II	3
PA 610	Clinical Lab Medicine	3
PA 611	History and Physical Examination I	3
PA 613	Surgical Techniques	3
PA 614	Operating Room Techniques	2
PA 615	Introduction to the Profession	1
PA 616	Electrocardiography	1
PA 617	Applied Behavioral Medicine	3
PA 618	Risk Management	1
PA 619	Fundamentals of Clinical Research	2
PA 620	Analysis of Professional Literature	2
PA 633	Navigating Healthcare Delivery and Reimbursement Systems for Physician Assistants	2
PA 634	Simulated Clinical Concepts	2
PA 635	Special Populations in Medicine	2
CDS 505	Professional Skills Development	1
GC 535	Medical Genetics Across the Lifespan	1
Clinical Service		
PA 621	Clinical Service I	4
PA 622	Clinical Service II	4
PA 623	Clinical Service III	4
PA 624	Clinical Service IV	4
PA 625	Clinical Service V	4
PA 626	Clinical Service VI	4
PA 627	Clinical Service VII	4
PA 629	Clinical Service IX	4
PA 630	Clinical Service X	4
PA 631	Clinical Service XI	4
PA 632	Clinical Service XII	4
PA 643	Senior Seminar I	1
PA 644	Senior Seminar II	1
PA 645	Senior Seminar III	3
PA 698	Presentation of Research Project	1
Total Hours		115

Courses

PA 550. Introduction to Medical History Taking and Physical Examination. 3 Hours.

Introduction to the proper way to elicit a comprehensive medical history, perform a physical examination, and report the findings in a systematic and concise format.

PA 601. Human Gross Anatomy. 4 Hours.

Course provides a comprehensive survey of the gross anatomy of the human along with functional and applied anatomy as it relates to common clinical findings. It utilizes a lecture format and cadaver dissection laboratory sessions.

PA 602. Medical Physiology. 4 Hours.

Course emphasizes the normal function and control of various systems within the human body. The principles taught will serve as a foundation for understanding the etiology, management and prevention of disease processes.

PA 603. Pharmacology I. 3 Hours.

Course provides students with the pharmacologic knowledge needed to begin practice as primary care physician assistants. Delivery is via classroom lecture and supplemented with intermittent case studies requiring students to critically evaluate medical conditions and choose safe and effective medications in treating those conditions.

PA 604. Pharmacology II. 3 Hours.

Second and final course in a series that provides students with the pharmacologic knowledge needed to begin practice as primary care physician assistants. Delivered via classroom lecture and supplemented with intermittent case studies requiring students to critically evaluate medical conditions and choose safe and effective medications in treating those conditions.

Prerequisites: PA 603 [Min Grade: C]

PA 605. Clinical Pathology. 4 Hours.

Descriptions of the pathologic processes involved in common disorders and diseases; introduction to the principles of clinical medicine and clinical problem solving; and provide foundation needed for clinical courses taught later in the curriculum.

PA 606. Clinical Medicine I. 6 Hours.

Introductory course in human disease designed to describe the pathologic processes involved in common disorders and diseases; introduces students to the principles of clinical medicine and clinical problem solving; provides background needed for medical courses taught later in the curriculum.

Prerequisites: PA 601 [Min Grade: C] and PA 602 [Min Grade: C] and PA 605 [Min Grade: C] and PA 610 [Min Grade: C]

PA 607. Clinical Medicine II. 6 Hours.

Overview of the diagnosis and management of the most common clinical problems seen by primary care practitioners; employs an organ systems approach incorporating relevant anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, pathology, radiology and nutrition.

Prerequisites: PA 606 [Min Grade: C]

PA 608. Surgical Disease I. 3 Hours.

Course introduces students to common surgical disorders with early emphasis on physiologic changes, medical requirements and evaluation of patients before, during, and after surgery. It also provides basic instruction in the diagnosis, management, and complications associated with common surgical gastrointestinal and urogenital disorders.

Prerequisites: PA 601 [Min Grade: C]

PA 609. Surgical Disease II. 3 Hours.

Course delivered via didactic instruction and focuses on the pre-operative evaluation and diagnosis, and post-operative management and treatment of common disorders of the heart, lungs, and vascular systems.

Prerequisites: PA 608 [Min Grade: C]

PA 610. Clinical Lab Medicine. 3 Hours.

An introduction to laboratory diagnostics with an emphasis on pathology, microbiology, hematology, and clinical chemistry. Course utilizes lecture format, specimen handling in a clinical laboratory as well as cost effective diagnostic algorithms in problem-based case scenarios.

PA 611. History and Physical Examination I. 3 Hours.

First course in a series of two that provides students with the skills necessary to elicit a comprehensive medical history, perform a complete physical examination and systematically report their findings. A variety of teaching formats are utilized including: lectures, small group activities, video productions, and simulated patients.

PA 611L. History and Physical Examination I Lab. 0 Hours.

Laboratory required for PA 611 History and Physical Examination I.

PA 613. Surgical Techniques. 3 Hours.

Provides didactic instruction and applied technical skills in surgical techniques and various invasive medical procedures. An animal surgery laboratory, using live pigs is an essential component.

Prerequisites: PA 601 [Min Grade: C]

PA 614. Operating Room Techniques. 2 Hours.

Final course in a series providing didactic instruction and applied technical skills in surgical techniques and various invasive medical procedures. Experiences in operating rooms in Birmingham area hospitals observing the basics in surgical first assisting.

Prerequisites: PA 613 [Min Grade: C]

PA 615. Introduction to the Profession. 1 Hour.

Course is designed to introduce students to the Physician Assistant profession and to prepare them to practice as professionals in a physician/PA/patient team. It will cover roles and responsibilities of the PA including their expected legal and moral behavior, their understanding of laws governing their practice and their ethical responsibilities in being health care professionals. The course will also teach students to respect the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all human beings and to assess their own personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve their medical practice.

PA 616. Electrocardiography. 1 Hour.

Course presents the basic concepts needed to interpret the electrocardiogram and will provide opportunities to develop interpretive skills through analysis of rhythm strips and 12-lead electrocardiograms. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to systematically interpret basic rhythm strips and 12-lead electrocardiograms.

PA 617. Applied Behavioral Medicine. 3 Hours.

Course introduces students to human behavior, strategies and issues surrounding health education and theoretical models of how to change human behavior. This knowledge will enable students to incorporate health promotion and disease prevention strategies in their daily clinical practice to the benefit of their patients.

PA 618. Risk Management. 1 Hour.

Course provides an introduction to the legal, political and professional issues affecting physician assistant practice.

PA 619. Fundamentals of Clinical Research. 2 Hours.

Foundations of epidemiologic measures, reasons for patterns of disease occurrence, principles of medical surveillance, methods for investigating disease outbreaks, and principles of diagnostic tests. Review of study designs, roles of variability and bias in the interpretation of scientific literature, and principles of clinical decision-making based on medical literature.

PA 620. Analysis of Professional Literature. 2 Hours.

This course is designed to prepare students to critically evaluate medical literature and use as basis for making medical decisions.

PA 621. Clinical Service I. 4 Hours.

Supervised clinical practice experience in an assigned healthcare organization.

PA 622. Clinical Service II. 4 Hours.

Supervised clinical practice experience in an assigned healthcare organization.

PA 623. Clinical Service III. 4 Hours.

Supervised clinical practice experience in an assigned healthcare organization.

PA 624. Clinical Service IV. 4 Hours.

Supervised clinical practice experience in an assigned healthcare organization.

PA 625. Clinical Service V. 4 Hours.

Supervised clinical practice experience in an assigned healthcare organization.

PA 626. Clinical Service VI. 4 Hours.

Supervised clinical practice experience in an assigned healthcare organization.

PA 627. Clinical Service VII. 4 Hours.

Supervised clinical practice experience in an assigned healthcare organization.

PA 629. Clinical Service IX. 4 Hours.

Supervised clinical practice experience in an assigned healthcare organization.

PA 630. Clinical Service X. 4 Hours.

Supervised clinical practice experience in an assigned healthcare organization.

PA 631. Clinical Service XI. 4 Hours.

Supervised clinical practice experience in an assigned healthcare organization.

PA 632. Clinical Service XII. 4 Hours.

Supervised clinical practice experience in an assigned healthcare organization.

PA 633. Navigating Healthcare Delivery and Reimbursement Systems for Physician Assistants. 2 Hours.

Introduction to current structure and financing of the U.S. health care system; current policy issues affecting physician assistant providers; reimbursement for health care services provided by the physician assistant.

PA 634. Simulated Clinical Concepts. 2 Hours.

Laboratory simulated clinical experience to provide supervised practice in clinical skills, practical procedures, teamwork, patient management, and decision making in preparation for the students' clinical year.

PA 635. Special Populations in Medicine. 2 Hours.

Exploration of the medical needs, challenges, and health disparities of specific patient groups including geriatrics, LGBTQ, ethnic minorities, and others.

PA 637. Special Topics in Physician Assistant Studies. 1-4 Hour.

Selected advanced topics of current scientific, clinical and professional importance; specific topics designed to meet student need and interest.

PA 643. Senior Seminar I. 1 Hour.

Didactic instruction to prepare students for the Physician Assistant National Certification Exam (PANCE) and reinforce the student's clinical rotation experiences. The course content reflects areas identified as important by the Examination Content Blueprint prepared by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

PA 644. Senior Seminar II. 1 Hour.

Continuation of didactic instruction to prepare students for the Physician Assistant National Certification Exam (PANCE) and reinforce the student's clinical rotation experiences. The course content reflects areas identified as important by the Examination Content Blueprint prepared by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

PA 645. Senior Seminar III. 3 Hours.

Culminating didactic instruction to prepare students for the Physician Assistant National Certification Exam (PANCE) and reinforce the student's clinical rotation experiences. The course content reflects areas identified as important by the Examination Content Blueprint prepared by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

PA 698. Presentation of Research Project. 1 Hour.

Oral and visual presentations and structured discussion of research papers developed in PA 620.

Prerequisites: PA 619 [Min Grade: C] and PA 620 [Min Grade: C]