

Towson University Pre-Physician Assistant FCSM Advising Information

- **Select a major that interests you that you believe you can succeed in and can provide a possible backup career plan.**

The major will depend on your interest. Most students major in biology with health and kinesiology as other popular majors. However, as long as you complete the prerequisite courses required by the PA program any major is acceptable (psychology, nursing, chemistry, sports medicine, ect.).
- **Enroll in the Blackboard site for the Pre-Physician's Assistant Community.**

Click on the community tab on the Blackboard home page. In "Organization Search" box type in "Pre-Physician's Assistant". When the page comes up click on the drop-down arrow next to the name and then click "enroll".

This site is kept up to date with information about club meetings, helpful links, informational documents, training opportunities and other information that may be useful for a student interested in becoming a Physician Assistant.
- **Join the TU Pre-Physician Assistant Club**

Contact: towsonprepa@gmail.com.

This is a great student-led group that meets biweekly and presents information about applying to PA schools, brings in speakers, including PA students and admissions officers from PA schools, and information about volunteer and clinical hours.
- **Complete prerequisite coursework for the programs you are thinking of applying to.**

General coursework is listed on the back but realize that each school has slightly different requirements, so it is up to you to see what is required. This is in addition to what is required for your major for graduation.

Keep in mind that most PA schools will list a minimum GPA as 3.0 but most students that are accepted to the program have at least a 3.5.

Most schools not only look at your overall GPA but also look at your GPA for just science courses.

Most PA programs do not have grade replacement for repeated courses, this means ALL grades will count in determining your GPA.
- **Gain patient contact experience.**

The total hours can vary from 800-1600 hours but most students that are accepted will exceed the school's minimum hours. Programs prefer experiences where the student was directly responsible for patient care (EMT, CNA, GNA, ect) and each school has a list of what experiences they prefer.

Note that in most cases shadowing a physician or physician assistant are considered low-quality hours and may not be considered as patient contact experience but is still valuable to the student and will provide an application boost as long as it is paired with other types of patient contact, such as a CNA.
- **Find out if you need to take the GRE.**

Some schools do require the GRE to be taken for entrance, check with the program you are interested in to see if you need to take it. More information about the GRE can be found at https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/about

- **Most PA schools utilize CASPA (Central Application Service for Physician's Assistants) to pool their applicants.**
Information about CASPA and the deadlines for applying for each school can be found at <https://portal.caspaonline.org/caspaHelpPages/about-caspaoverview/index.html>
- List of PA programs can be found at <http://directory.paeaonline.org/>

Recommended Coursework

Remember that the following are just general guidelines on coursework. Each school can vary on the requirements, and it is up to the student to ensure that they are taking the classes that are required by the schools that they want to attend. Most schools require a minimum of a "B" or 3.0 in the prerequisite courses.

In general students should plan to take:

Biology:

Anatomy & Physiology I and II (BIOL 221/221L and BIOL 222/222L for non-Biology majors, BIOL 342 and 343 for Biology majors)

General Microbiology (BIOL 215 for non-Biology majors, BIOL 318 for Biology majors)

Chemistry:

General Chemistry I and II (CHEM 131/131L and CHEM 132/132L)

Organic Chemistry

- Essentials of Organic Chemistry (CHEM 333 and 333L) **or**
- Organic Chemistry I (CHEM 334 and 336) and Organic Chemistry II (CHEM 337 and 339)

Biochemistry (CHEM 351)

Math:

Statistics (MATH 237 or PSYC 212 preferred or MATH 231)

Other:

Medical Terminology (BIOL 210 or KNES 215)

Psychology (PSYC 101) and Human Development (PSYC 203) or Abnormal Psychology (PSYC 361)

** Note that most schools require two semesters of anatomy & physiology and one semester of microbiology. Chemistry requirements vary by school. For example, Towson requires biochemistry but Anne Arundel Community College/University of MD just requires one semester of any chemistry. Most schools require statistics, MATH 231 would be sufficient unless it specifies biostatistics, in that case take either MATH 237 or PSYC 212. Medical terminology and psychology requirements vary by school.

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