



Pre-Physician Assistant prep at Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC)

What is Pre-Physician Assistant?

Most pre-physician assistant students are either preparing for a Bachelor Degree Physician Assistant program or science majors (biology or chemistry), preparing for a Master Degree Physician Assistant program. If preparing for a Master Degree program, a student can major in almost any discipline provided the required science courses are completed when applying to professional schools. These professional schools expect non-science majors to perform very well in science courses.

What is the Pre-Physician Assistant curriculum?

Course requirements vary considerably among the numerous professional programs. Prerequisites for entry into Physician Assistant programs typically include; 20 credits of Biology (BIOL 101, 102, 121, 122, and 221 at HACC), 16 credits of chemistry (CHEM 101, 102, 203, 204 at HACC), Math to the Calculus level (Math 121 at HACC), General Psychology and one upper level Psychology, (PSYC 101 and PSYC 209, 212, or 213 at HACC). Additionally, students planning a Master Degree Physician Assistant program are expected to complete all requirements for a Bachelor Degree, with pre-physician assistant advising. Students should refer to HACC transfer check sheets, if available, and work with their HACC advisor in preparation for transfer.

What are the characteristics of a successful Pre-Physician Assistant student?

There are approximately 180 accredited Bachelor or Master Degree Physician Assistant programs in the United States and approximately 20 programs in Pennsylvania. All are highly competitive, have strict course prerequisites, and require students to plan a strategy early in their college career. To be competitive when applying to these professional schools, students should accumulate a grade point average of at **least** 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) for their courses. For the Master Degree option, students must also perform above average on GRE's. It is also competitive that pre-physician assistant students participate in an internship experience in order to become acquainted with the field prior to making formal application to selected professional programs. Leadership, community/human service and a willingness to volunteer contribute to the "personal qualities" of successful pre-physician assistant students. All interested students should visit the American Academy of Physician Assistants website, www.aapa.org, and www.paeaonline.org, for further information. Students who are interested in the Master Degree in Physician Assistant will be advantaged by transferring from HACC to a Bachelor Degree granting school with a pre-physician assistant advising option where students are advised in prerequisite courses, application procedures, and current trends in admission. It would be a further advantage to transfer to a Bachelor Degree granting school that has an affiliation with a school(s) that offers a Master Degree in Physician Assistant.