Physician Assistant

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The mission of the Physician Assistant Program at University of the Pacific is to provide students with a superior, learner-centered educational experience that will produce compassionate health care professionals committed to life-long learning and leadership in their careers and communities.

Program Offered

**Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

The MPAS degree program is a full-time 27-month program designed for professionals currently working in other areas of health care, individuals interested in a second career opportunity, and pre-health students interested in entering the fast-growing physician assistant (PA) field. Classes matriculate each January.

The goals of the Master of Physician Assistant Program are to graduate PAs who have thorough education, training, and experience in the following: understanding of health promotion, disease prevention, and mechanisms of disease, proficient application of critical thinking in medical decision making, patient-centered approach to health care practice, health care delivery through a team-based model that fosters community collaboration, and developing a commitment to life-long learning. Upon successful completion of the Program, graduates are required to pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE) as required by regulatory agencies in order to enter into practice.

Accreditation Status

The ARC-PA has granted **Accreditation-Provisional** status to the **University of the Pacific Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program** sponsored by the **University of the Pacific**.

Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program’s ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding Accreditation-Provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students.

Accreditation-Provisional does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. It is limited to no more than five years from matriculation of the first class.

Program Description

The MPAS degree program is a full-time graduate level program with an integrated curriculum that contains both didactic and clinical educational experiences. The program is 27 months (7 academic semesters), starting with a year of didactic instruction followed by clinical application educational experiences and summative evaluation. During the first year, students build a strong academic foundation of medical knowledge in preparation for clinical training. The clinical education portion of the curriculum consists of 12 – four week clinical rotations (9 core rotations and 3 elective rotations) which occur in various healthcare settings. Students have the option to choose a specialty pathway for electives. This specialty pathway allows students to spend up to 3 additional rotations in a specialty. Currently developed specialty pathways include:

- Emergency Medicine
- Family Medicine
- General Surgery and Surgical specialties (orthopedics, cardiothoracic surgery)
- Medicine Subspecialties — hospitalist, cardiology, oncology

An interprofessional team approach to patient care is vital in today’s health care environment. The curriculum provides numerous opportunities for interprofessional education with other Pacific health related programs (Dentistry, Pharmacy and Physical Therapy) and through clinical training experiences in community hospitals and clinics.

Admissions Requirements

All of the following academic admission requirements must be completed prior to submission of an application to the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). The deadline to complete an application is March 1st.

- Bachelor’s degree
Prerequisite Coursework

- All prerequisite coursework must be completed at an accredited US institution.
- A single course cannot be used to meet multiple requirements.
- No preference is given for coursework completed at 4-year institutions versus 2-year institutions.

Prerequisite Science Courses

Important! Pacific will NOT accept online or AP courses to fulfill science prerequisites.

General Chemistry: Two courses with lab. Total of 8 semester units or 12 quarter units with lab. Should be a course sequence designed for chemistry majors.

Biological Sciences: Two courses with lab. Total of 6 semester or 9 quarter units with lab. Should be a course sequence designed for biology majors.

Human Anatomy: One semester or quarter with lab is required. Total of 4 semester or 5 quarter units with lab (or combined Anatomy & Physiology).

Human Physiology: One semester or quarter with lab is required. Total of 4 semester or 5 quarter units with lab (or combined Anatomy & Physiology).

Microbiology: One semester or one quarter course. (Lab recommended, but not required.)

Prerequisite Non-Science Courses

Pacific will accept online or AP courses to fulfill non-science prerequisites.

Math: One course in Statistics (3 semester or 4 quarter units).

Psychology: Minimum of one course (3 semester or 4 quarter units). Must be a course in General or Introductory Psychology, or Abnormal Psychology, or Life Span/Developmental Psychology.

English Composition: Minimum of two (3 semester or 4 quarter unit) courses. English as a Second Language courses will not fulfill this requirement.

Prerequisite Health Care Experience

- Minimum of 1,000 hours of health care experience

Please note: Health care experience hours may be in-progress at the time of application submission, but must be completed prior to registration.

International Applicants

Please note:

- All prerequisite coursework must be completed at an accredited US institution.
- Baccalaureate degrees will be accepted from foreign institutions only if accompanied by a World Education Services (WES) evaluation of foreign training, see www.wes.org. Please request a course-by-course evaluation that includes a grade point average (GPA) and have an official copy sent directly to CASPA with your application. WES transcript evaluations must be received before an application can be evaluated. Please check with the evaluation agency for details on specific document requirements.
- The entire curriculum is taught in the English language. If English is not your first language, you may be required to take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and should submit your score with your CASPA application. The program will not accept applications with a TOEFL score less than 100. TOEFL scores are valid for two years after the test date per ETS website. We also accept IELTS (International English Language Testing System) scores. The program will not accept applications with an IELTS score less than 7.0. View the TOEFL flowchart on our website to see if it is required for you.

Other Admissions Requirements

Applicants will also be required to meet specific technical standards and complete specific health, background clearance, and toxicology clearance requirements. More details can be found on our website pacific.edu/PAprogram.

Admission Policy

Admissions Policy & Practice

Our admissions and recruitment strategy reflects the mission of the Program and is aligned with University policy on fair admission practices.

The Program is an equal opportunity institution of higher learning and is firmly committed to nondiscrimination in
its delivery of educational services and employment practices. In compliance with all applicable federal and state laws, such decisions will be made irrespective of the individual’s race, color, religion, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age (except for minors), sex, marital status, citizenship status, military service status, sexual orientation, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic condition), disability and/or any other status protected by law. When necessary, the Program will reasonably accommodate an individual (including students) with disabilities if the educational program of the school and/or safely perform all essential functions, without undue hardship to the school and/or without altering fundamental aspects of its educational program.

Admission Process Timelines

- CASPA Application window: September 1-March 1
- CASPA Application deadline: March 1
- Interviews: January - May
- Letters of acceptance mailed: As accepted, no later than June 1

Preferential Factors

The program offers some preference to the following groups:

- Veterans
- Pacific alumni
- Residents of our geographic target area

Selection Process

The Program gives some consideration to the background of the applicant and his or her suitability for successful completion of the program and to increase diversity in the student body. Additionally, in accordance with the history of the profession, we look favorably on veterans and those with significant clinical experience. We rely on thorough vetting of the applicant file via the Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistant Programs (CASPA), a subjective scoring system, and then a sequential interview process to select the most qualified applicants. Interviews will be conducted on various dates from February throughout May.

Semi-Rolling Admissions

If an applicant scores very highly in the initial screening, he or she may be granted an early interview. Applicants who are granted an early interview are eligible to be offered one of a set number of seats allocated for early acceptance. To be considered for an early interview, complete applications must be submitted to CASPA by January 1.

Applicants not offered an early interview, who meet interview criteria will be interviewed as part of the general applicant pool. All complete applications received by the March 1 deadline will be considered for interview. Once all invited candidates have been interviewed, the Admission Committee will meet to make final admission decisions.

Granting of Advanced Standing

The PA Program does not offer advanced standing. To ensure that graduates of the PA Program will be adequately prepared for clinical practice, students are expected to participate in and satisfactorily complete all aspects of the didactic and clinical curriculum.

Notification of Selection

Our primary method of communication is email. Those applicants invited for an early interview and offered a seat in the class will be notified as soon as the admissions committee has decided to offer one of the early selection seats to the applicant. For the remainder of the applicants, the admissions committee will meet once all interviews have been completed to make selections for the remainder of the seats in the class. The Program will send an acceptance email and letter offering a position, or a position on the alternate list, for the incoming class. The Program will likewise notify those candidates who were not selected as soon as practical.

Re-Application/Re-Enrollment

Classes are accepted once a year. Applicants not selected this cycle may reapply in the next application cycle. Applicants who have been in a previous class at University of the Pacific’s PA Program may apply for re-enrollment through the same process as other applicants unless conditions of dismissal from the prior class bar such action. All re-applicants will be required to submit a new application via CASPA including new evaluations and transcripts. Re-applicants are also required to interview again. All re-applicant strengths and weaknesses will be evaluated against those of other applicants in the current pool.

Admission Procedure
Applications must be submitted directly to the Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) program during our application window, which is September 1 – March 1. Applicants must have an application complete date on, or before, the deadline date. A complete date is given when an application is e-submitted and all transcripts, payments, and at least two letters of reference have been received by CASPA and attached to the application. Documents should be sent several weeks prior to this date to ensure items arrive on time. Additionally, the program does not have a supplemental application. Please do not submit documents directly to the program unless requested.

Master of Physician Assistant Studies

Students must complete a minimum of 114 units with a Pacific cumulative grade point average of 3.0 in order to earn a Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree.

First Year

Spring
MPAS 200 Clinical Medicine I - Foundations (Anatomy) 4
MPAS 201 Clinical Medicine I – Foundations (Pathophysiology) 4
MPAS 211 Pharmacology and Therapeutics I 3
MPAS 221 Behavioral Sciences I 2
MPAS 231 Professional Practice and the Health System I 1
MPAS 241 Clinical Skills I 4

Summer
MPAS 202 Clinical Medicine II 8
MPAS 212 Pharmacology and Therapeutics II 3
MPAS 222 Behavioral Sciences II 2
MPAS 232 Professional Practice and the Health System II 1
MPAS 242 Clinical Skills II 4

Fall
MPAS 203 Clinical Medicine III 8
MPAS 213 Pharmacology and Therapeutics III 3
MPAS 223 Behavioral Sciences III 2
MPAS 233 Professional Practice and the Health System III 1
MPAS 243 Clinical Skills III 4

Second Year

Spring
MPAS 205 Preparation for Clinical Practice 4
MPAS 215 Primary Care I 4
MPAS 216 Primary Care II 4
MPAS 219 Advanced Clinical Skills 4

Summer
MPAS 217 Primary Care III 4
MPAS 225 Primary Care/Pediatrics 4
MPAS 235 Primary Care/Women’s Health 4
MPAS 245 Primary Care/Behavioral and Mental Health 4

Fall

MPAS 255 Internal Medicine 4
MPAS 265 Surgery 4
MPAS 275 Emergency Medicine 4
MPAS 285 Elective Rotation 4

Third Year

Spring
MPAS 218 Periodic and Summative Evaluations/Capstone 4
MPAS 286 Elective Rotation 4
MPAS 287 Elective Rotation 4

Total Hours 114

Physician Assistant Courses

This course involves a detailed regional analysis of the structure of the human body that includes the lower/upper extremity, head/neck and trunk, thoracic/abdominal and pelvic cavities and the central nervous system. Functional correlates to the structures will also be presented and discussed. This course has a discussion component as well as a laboratory component using physical anatomy models, cadaver prosections, and computer/textbook anatomy programs/atlas.

MPAS 201. Clinical Medicine I - Foundations (Pathophysiology). 4 Units.
This course involves the detailed analysis of the structure, function and pathology of the organ systems of the body. Functional correlates to physician assistant and physical therapy care are included. This course is taught in an interdisciplinary approach with physical therapy students.

MPAS 202. Clinical Medicine II. 8 Units.
This is a two semester course that focuses on the preparation of the student in the etiology, pathophysiology, clinical manifestation, diagnosis and appropriate management of selected medical conditions, syndromes and diseases. The courses will follow an organ system approach. The following specialty areas will be interwoven as threads in applicable organ systems: pediatrics, geriatrics, genetics, nutrition, emergency medicine, and surgery. A case-based approach is used to familiarize the PA student with the variety of presentations seen and the treatment options available. The courses are integrated by organ system with the Pharmacology & Therapeutics, and Clinical Skills courses.

MPAS 203. Clinical Medicine III. 8 Units.
This is a two semester course that focuses on the preparation of the student in the etiology,
pathophysiology, clinical manifestation, diagnosis and appropriate management of selected medical conditions, syndromes and diseases. The courses will follow an organ system approach. The following specialty areas will be interwoven as threads in applicable organ systems: pediatrics, geriatrics, genetics, nutrition, emergency medicine, and surgery. A case-based approach is used to familiarize the PA student with the variety of presentations seen and the treatment options available. The courses are integrated by organ system with the Pharmacology & Therapeutics, and Clinical Skills courses.

MPAS 205. Preparation for Clinical Practice. 4 Units. This course will incorporate specific didactic and skills training during an intensive clinical preparatory period prior to the start of clinical rotations. Instruction will include participation in case-based learning in various health care settings, to include transitions of care between settings. Students will participate in simulated clinical encounters that will include communication strategies (e.g. case presentations) for dealing with challenging clinical interactions.

MPAS 211. Pharmacology and Therapeutics I. 3 Units. This is a three course series that focuses on pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics and pharmacotherapeutic concepts in the major drug classifications. Problem solving is emphasized through case studies designed to highlight proper drug selection, dosing and administration, legal requirements of prescribing, drug interactions, and physiologic implications. The courses are integrated by organ system with the Clinical Medicine and Clinical Skills courses.

MPAS 212. Pharmacology and Therapeutics II. 3 Units. This is a three course series that focuses on pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics and pharmacotherapeutic concepts in the major drug classifications. Problem solving is emphasized through case studies designed to highlight proper drug selection, dosing and administration, legal requirements of prescribing, drug interactions, and physiologic implications. The courses are integrated by organ system with the Clinical Medicine and Clinical Skills courses.

MPAS 213. Pharmacology and Therapeutics III. 3 Units. This is a three course series that focuses on pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics and pharmacotherapeutic concepts in the major drug classifications. Problem solving is emphasized through case studies designed to highlight proper drug selection, dosing and administration, legal requirements of prescribing, drug interactions, and physiologic implications. The courses are integrated by organ system with the Clinical Medicine and Clinical Skills courses.

MPAS 215. Primary Care I. 4 Units. Students will be placed in an outpatient and/or inpatient setting to obtain exposure to primary care medicine, including health maintenance, disease prevention, patient education and continuity of care. The written examinations for these will focus on family medicine.

MPAS 216. Primary Care II. 4 Units. Students will be placed in an outpatient and/or inpatient setting to obtain exposure to primary care medicine, including health maintenance, disease prevention, patient education and continuity of care. The written examinations for these will focus on family medicine.

MPAS 217. Primary Care III. 4 Units. Students will be placed in an outpatient and/or inpatient setting to obtain exposure to primary care medicine, including health maintenance, disease prevention, patient education and continuity of care. The written examinations for these will focus on family medicine.

MPAS 218. Periodic and Summative Evaluations/Capstone. 4 Units. This will be a continuing course throughout the four semesters of the clinical education phase of the program. The periodic evaluations will include written and practical examinations and skills assessments. Summative evaluations will consist of a written comprehensive examination and a practical examination (OSCE). All course elements must be completed satisfactorily in order to pass the course and be progressed to graduation. The Capstone Project will continue from the research portion of the Behavioral Sciences course. Under the supervision of a faculty member, students will pose and answer a clinical question on a practice topic of their choice by completing a critical review of the medical literature, and will write a paper suitable for publication on the topic.

MPAS 219. Advanced Clinical Skills. 4 Units. This will be a continuing course throughout the four semesters of the clinical education phase of the program. Instruction will include the application of advanced physical examination and clinical skills. Patient education and counseling through case-based learning seminars and standardized patient encounters will focus on effective communication, leadership, professional roles, interprofessional teams and scope of practice.
MPAS 221. Behavioral Sciences I. 2 Units.
This three semester course is designed to instruct the physician assistant student on behavioral and mental health disorders. Human development across the lifespan will be reviewed to include both behavior and personality development. The course will examine social determinants of health including substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty, cultural diversity, sexual identity, hospice and palliative care. Complementary and alternative medicine, health promotion & disease prevention, public health, evidence-based medicine, research designs, and critical review of the medical literature are discussed.

MPAS 222. Behavioral Sciences II. 2 Units.
This is a three semester course is designed to instruct the physician assistant student on major psychiatric and mental disorders. Human development across the lifespan will be reviewed to include both behavior and personality development. The course will examine social determinants of health including substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty, cultural diversity, sexual identity, hospice and palliative care. Complementary and alternative medicine, health promotion & disease prevention, public health, evidence-based medicine, research designs, and critical review of the medical literature are discussed.

MPAS 223. Behavioral Sciences III. 2 Units.
This is a three semester course is designed to instruct the physician assistant student on major psychiatric and mental disorders. Human development across the lifespan will be reviewed to include both behavior and personality development. The course will examine social determinants of health including substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty, cultural diversity, sexual identity, hospice and palliative care. Complementary and alternative medicine, health promotion & disease prevention, public health, evidence-based medicine, research designs, and critical review of the medical literature are discussed.

MPAS 225. Primary Care/Pediatrics. 4 Units.
Students will be placed in an outpatient and/or inpatient setting to obtain exposure to pediatric primary care medicine. The written examination for this rotation will focus on pediatric medicine.

MPAS 231. Professional Practice and the Health System I. 1 Unit.
This is a three semester course that explores the history of the PA profession and the role of the PA in today’s health care system globally, nationally, and regionally. The course includes discussion surrounding medical ethics and ethical situations, health care law, and laws that govern PA practice. Economics of health care, health delivery systems, and health organizations are covered, in addition to health informatics. Inter-professional education with other health care professions will occur through case based discussions.

MPAS 232. Professional Practice and the Health System II. 1 Unit.
This is a three semester course that explores the history of the PA profession and the role of the PA in today’s health care system globally, nationally, and regionally. The course includes discussion surrounding medical ethics and ethical situations, health care law, and laws that govern PA practice. Economics of health care, health delivery systems, and health organizations are covered, in addition to health informatics. Inter-professional education with other health care professions will occur through case based discussions.

MPAS 233. Professional Practice and the Health System III. 1 Unit.
This is a three semester course that explores the history of the PA profession and the role of the PA in today’s health care system globally, nationally, and regionally. The course includes discussion surrounding medical ethics and ethical situations, health care law, and laws that govern PA practice. Economics of health care, health delivery systems, and health organizations are covered, in addition to health informatics. Inter-professional education with other health care professions will occur through case based discussions.

MPAS 235. Primary Care/Women's Health. 4 Units.
Students will be placed in an outpatient and/or inpatient setting to obtain exposure to women’s health care. The written examinations for this rotation will focus on women’s health and reproductive health.

MPAS 241. Clinical Skills I. 4 Units.
This three semester course focuses on four main topic areas: 1. History and physical examination - the knowledge necessary to perform a complete history and physical examination including appropriate documentation; 2. Diagnostic studies – ordering, performing and interpreting clinical laboratory, imaging and other procedures (e.g. ECG, spirometry, etc.); 3. Interprofessional education – case-based interaction with students from other disciplines; and 4. Procedural skills – instructs the student in the proper performance of common procedures within the PA scope of practice.
MPAS 242. Clinical Skills II. 4 Units.
This three semester course focuses on four main topic areas: 1. History and physical examination - the knowledge necessary to perform a complete history and physical examination including appropriate documentation; 2. Diagnostic studies – ordering, performing and interpreting clinical laboratory, imaging and other procedures (e.g. ECG, spirometry, etc.); 3. Interprofessional education – case-based interaction with students from other disciplines; and 4. Procedural skills – instructs the student in the proper performance of common procedures within the PA scope of practice.

MPAS 243. Clinical Skills III. 4 Units.
This three semester course focuses on four main topic areas: 1. History and physical examination - the knowledge necessary to perform a complete history and physical examination including appropriate documentation; 2. Diagnostic studies – ordering, performing and interpreting clinical laboratory, imaging and other procedures (e.g. ECG, spirometry, etc.); 3. Interprofessional education – case-based interaction with students from other disciplines; and 4. Procedural skills – instructs the student in the proper performance of common procedures within the PA scope of practice.

MPAS 245. Primary Care/Behavioral and Mental Health. 4 Units.
Students will be placed in an outpatient and/or inpatient setting to obtain exposure to behavioral health care. The written examination for this rotation will focus on behavioral health.

MPAS 255. Internal Medicine. 4 Units.
Students will be placed in an outpatient, inpatient and/or long term care setting to obtain exposure to primary care and chronic disease management. The written examination for this rotation will cover internal medicine and geriatrics.

MPAS 265. Surgery. 4 Units.
Students will be placed with general surgeons and/or surgical specialists to obtain exposure to surgical principles. Student will obtain intraoperative experience during this rotation. Pre- and post-operative care concepts may be addressed in this rotation or any other rotation. The written examination for this rotation will focus on general surgical principles, including pre- and post-operative management.

MPAS 275. Emergency Medicine. 4 Units.
Students will be placed in a hospital based emergency room to gain exposure to urgent and emergent care. The written examination for this rotation will focus on emergency medicine

MPAS 285. General Elective I. 4 Units.
Students in good academic standing will have the opportunity to complete elective rotations in a desired area of specialty or Pathway Track, if available. Elective rotations may occur in any healthcare setting in any field in which PAs are allowed to practice within the state where the practice is located. The Program reserves the right to utilize elective rotations in the best interest of the student to address knowledge and/or skills deficiencies.

MPAS 286. General Elective II. 4 Units.
Students in good academic standing will have the opportunity to complete elective rotations in a desired area of specialty or Pathway Track, if available. Elective rotations may occur in any healthcare setting in any field in which PAs are allowed to practice within the state where the practice is located. The Program reserves the right to utilize elective rotations in the best interest of the student to address knowledge and/or skills deficiencies.

MPAS 287. General Elective III. 4 Units.
Students in good academic standing will have the opportunity to complete elective rotations in a desired area of specialty or Pathway Track, if available. Elective rotations may occur in any healthcare setting in any field in which PAs are allowed to practice within the state where the practice is located. The Program reserves the right to utilize elective rotations in the best interest of the student to address knowledge and/or skills deficiencies.