

PRE-PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

Introduction

Students interested in a career as a physician assistant may pursue any major along with completing specific prerequisites. Due to significant science requirements, most students major in Biology, Biomedical Sciences or Chemistry (Health Sciences Track). Direct-entry physician assistant graduate schools typically require the bachelor degree to be completed prior to enrolling. Students must gain a thorough understanding of the profession through a range of shadowing experiences and significant direct patient care experience through work as a Certified Nursing Assistant, EMT, Home Health Aid, etc. Some programs require a competitive score on the GRE, community service hours, and an understanding of social justice issues.

Canisius undergraduates who meet all admission requirements will be offered an interview by the [Canisius Physician Assistant program \(https://www.canisius.edu/academics/programs/physician-assistant/\)](https://www.canisius.edu/academics/programs/physician-assistant/). This does not guarantee acceptance to the program. A minimum of 500 hours of direct patient contact and 100 hours of community service are required in addition to the course prerequisites. Pre-PA students are encouraged to interact with our PA program through opportunities arranged by our pre-health clubs. The Pre-Medical Center is able to connect students to work and volunteer opportunities. Students are encouraged to complete more than the minimum requirements. Many schools require significantly more direct patient contact hours (1000+) and significant shadowing of physician assistants.

Academic admission requirements vary somewhat by physician assistant program. Students should work with the Pre-Health advisor beginning in the first college year to select appropriate coursework based on their schools of interest and plan appropriate co-curricular experiences. In addition to the information in this section, please check the general information at the pre-medical and pre-health section of the catalog (<https://catalog.canisius.edu/undergraduate/academics/curricular-information/pre-professional-programs/pre-medical-pre-health-professions/>).

Recommended Pre-Physician Assistant Courses

Academic admission requirements vary by school, but usually include the following courses:

General Biology

At least one year of general biology with laboratory:

Code	Title	Credits
BIO 111 & 111L	Introductory Biology I and Introductory Biology Laboratory I	4
BIO 112 & 112L	Introductory Biology II and Introductory Biology Laboratory II	4

Anatomy & Physiology

One year of anatomy & physiology with laboratory:

Note that a few schools may accept BIO 114/BIO 115 for this requirement however, the Canisius PA program and other local programs do not.

Code	Title	Credits
BIO 324 & 324L	Human Anatomy and Human Anatomy Lab	4
BIO 340 & 340L	Physiology and Physiology Laboratory	4

Microbiology

One semester of general microbiology with laboratory:

Code	Title	Credits
BIO 307 & 307L	Microbiology and Microbiology Laboratory	4

Chemistry

One year of general chemistry and one semester of organic chemistry with laboratories:

Note that some schools may require a second semester of Organic Chemistry (CHM 228 & CHM 228L). Please work with the Pre-Health advisor to determine chemistry coursework that aligns to your schools of interest.

Code	Title	Credits
CHM 111 & 111L	General Chemistry I and General Chemistry I Laboratory	4
CHM 112 & 112L	General Chemistry II and General Chemistry II Laboratory	4
CHM 227 & 227L	Organic Chemistry I and Organic Chemistry I Laboratory	4

Biochemistry

One semester of biochemistry. Based on your selection or your major, two semesters and/or labs may be required:

Note that CHM 228 is required for BCH 301.

Code	Title	Credits
Select one of the following:		

Option 1:		
BIO 211	Biochemistry and Cell Biology I	3
BIO 212	Biochemistry and Cell Biology II	3

Students should take both BIO 211 / BIO 212

Option 2:		
BCH 301	Introduction to Biochemistry	3
BCH 302	Cellular Biochemistry	3

Students may take one or both courses of BCH 301/ BCH 302

Psychology:

One to three semesters of psychology must include developmental psychology; psychopathology (abnormal psychology) is strongly recommended:

Code	Title	Credits
PSY 101 or PSY 102	Introduction to Psychology I and Introduction to Psychology II	3
PSY 203	Lifespan Developmental Psychology	3
PSY 303	Psychopathology	3

Mathematics

One semester of statistics:

Note that some programs also require calculus (MAT 111). Please work with the Pre-Health advisor to determine math coursework that aligns to your schools of interest.

Code	Title	Credits
PSY 201	Basic Statistics for Behavioral Sciences	3
		or
		4
or KIN 398	Statistics and Research Design	
or MAT 141	Inferential Statistics and Computers for Science	

Medical Terminology

One course in medical terminology is required by some schools:

Code	Title	Credits
HRP 111	Medical Terminology	1

Additional Pre-Physician Assistant Courses

Some schools recommend additional coursework from the following:

Biology: Immunochemistry BIO 404/BIO 404L or Genetics BIO 406/BIO 406L

Sociology: SOC 110 or SOC 111

Bio-Medical Ethics: PHI 243 or RST 345

Elective Courses

HRP 101 allows students to explore different health professions.

HRP 201 and HRP 202 allow students to explore areas of medicine in more depth.

HRP 497 is a medical scribe internship in neurology.

HRP 498 is an internship in medical informatics. A medical scribe internship in neurology is also available.

HRP 498A is a medical service learning trip.