

Physician Assistant Timeline and Checklist

1st Year

- Register for the Pre-Health Program to receive a weekly newsletter with upcoming events, opportunities, and announcements.
- Attend the informational meetings for the Pre-Health Program at the beginning of Fall Quarter.
- Make an appointment with the pre-health advisor to discuss how to sequence classes, experiences that will help you prepare for Physicians Assistant school, and the different resources on campus.
- Investigate career information to identify what it means to be a PA and the admission requirements for PA.
- Start taking the core courses that need to be completed before applying for PA school. Focus on academic coursework and how to be a successful college student.
- Look for meaningful opportunities to become involved in research, job shadowing, volunteering, clubs, and mentoring. Note that direct patient care hours are incredibly important for your PA application.
- Start to develop relationships with faculty, staff advisors and faculty mentors at DePaul
- **SUMMER: Work, volunteer, or intern in the health field. It is very important to get direct patient care early on.**
- **SUMMER: Take summer courses if desired or necessary.**

2nd Year

- Attend the informational meetings for the Pre-Health Program.
- Meet with the pre-health advisor to make sure you're progressing through your requirements.
- Continue taking the core courses that are required by the PA programs. Focus on coursework and achieving a high GPA.
- Continue to investigate the career information to identify the admission requirements for PA school.
- Look for opportunities to be involved in meaningful activities (volunteering, research, etc.) that will strengthen your application.
- Attend local graduate school fairs and open houses.
- Apply for research opportunities that you can participate in over the school year or summer.
- **SUMMER: Work or volunteer in the health field, continue to be involved in direct patient care.**
- **SUMMER: Participate in summer enrichment, research, or internship program.**
- **SUMMER: Start researching PA programs and take notice if the GRE is required.**
- **SUMMER: Familiarize yourself with the CASPA.**

3rd Year (or the year prior to applying)

- Meet with pre-health advisor to make sure all coursework is on track.
- Begin compiling a list of specific programs that will meet your professional objectives.
- Complete pre-PA coursework that will be covered on the GRE and required by the programs
- Make sure you have established well maintained relationships with your staff advisors, professors, and healthcare professionals. Start to consider from whom you can receive letters of recommendations.
- Look for opportunities to continue to be involved (volunteering, research, shadowing, etc.) that will strengthen your application. Direct patient care is vital for PA; therefore make sure you check the requirements for each school.
- Attend a personal statement writing workshop and begin writing your statement early. Be prepared to make multiple drafts as this statement is critical in the review of your application.
- If needed, register for the Graduate Records Examination (GRE).
- Take the Graduate Records Examination (GRE).
- Prepare a "plan b" if you are not admitted to the schools of your choice.
- **SUMMER: If you are intending to start your chosen program immediately following graduation, you should begin the application process, including requesting letters of recommendation from your professors. The CASPA will open up early mid-April.**
- **SUMMER: Double check dates and deadlines and review, edit, and submit CASPA application early.**
- **SUMMER: Submit transcripts, complete supplemental applications, and contact those who will be submitting LORs for you to check on progress.**
- **SUMMER: Continue to work or volunteer and gain experience in direct patient care.**

4th Year

- Prepare for interviews by participating in a mock interview
- Meet with your PAC faculty mentor to discuss status of your application.
- Continue to maintain a strong GPA
- If admitted, make final decisions about your choice of school and notify schools you will not be attending.
- If admitted to PA schools, apply for financial aid (FAFSA)
- If admitted, pay seat deposit for the institution of your choice
- Let the pre-health advisor know what schools you were admitted to and which school you will matriculate.

Physician Assistant Checklist

___ 1. **RESEARCH** the Physician Assistants programs you are interested in. The first step in preparing for PA schools is finding out what programs you are interested in. A good place to start is the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). CASPA provides you with information about several physician assistants programs and their timelines. <https://portal.caspaonline.org/>

___ 2. **PREREQUISITES:** each school has different timelines and prerequisites. Research each school carefully to make sure you have met all the requirements for the application.

REQUIRED		HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
General Biology (12 quarter Hours)	General Psychology (4 quarter hours)	Biochemistry
General Chemistry (12 quarter hours)	Statistics (4 quarter hours)	Abnormal Psychology
Organic Chemistry (6-12 quarter hours)	Pre-calculus or Calculus (4 quarter hours)	English Composition
Microbiology (4 quarter hours)	Physiology with Lab	Genetics
Anatomy with lab (4 quarter hours)		Medical Terminology

***This is a typical example of what a PA school may require – make sure you check each school for their specific requirements**

___ 3. **Register** for the Pre-Health Program.

___ 4. **GPA:** The higher the GPA, the more competitive you will be. Plan on applying to at least 6-8 programs at minimum. The national average is a cumulative 3.6 GPA and a science GPA of a 3.5.

___ 5. **KNOW** the application start date and deadlines along with all prerequisites needed for each school you are interested in. The CASPA opens up in in mid-April.

___ 6. **DIRECT PATIENT CARE:** Start shadowing, volunteering and working with patients early on. Physician Assistants schools may require anywhere from 25-2000 direct patient care hours. Double check prerequisites on CASPA to make sure you are getting the amount of observation hours you need.

___ 7. **BE INVOLVED:** The more well-rounded your academic career the more competitive you will be. Be involved in activities such as research, community service, work, and extracurricular that is meaningful and unique.

___ 8. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** Most Physician Assistant schools do not require a committee letter. Therefore, line up 3-4 recommendations. The CASPA will tell you which types of recommendations they require and accept. If unsure contact the schools you are applying to, to determine what types of references they prefer. Recommendations through CASPA are electronic.

___ 9. **GRE:** Check to see if your programs of interest require the GRE. If so, register for the GRE 2-3 months prior to taking it and take the GRE at least 6-8 weeks prior to the application start date. Start studying 3 months prior to taking the GRE. A score in the 50th percentile is Verbal 151, and Quantitative: 150, and Analytical: 4.0. The average scores of students accepted to Illinois Programs are: Verbal: 153, Quantitative: 153, Analytical: 4.0. More information about the GRE can be found at www.ets.org.

___ 10. **COMPOSE:** Start to write your personal essay prior to the application in a word document. Each specific school may have a supplemental essay as well. Once you have completed your essay make sure you edit it carefully and have others edit it as well.

___ 11. **REQUEST** official transcripts to be sent to you to aid you in filling out the coursework one month prior to your application date.

___ 12. **DOUBLE CHECK/APPLY/SUBMIT:** A lot of PA schools are on the CASPA but not all of them. The earlier you apply the better. Some schools have rolling admissions. Get all your application material ready a month prior to the application open date, fill out the application, double/triple check for errors, and then submit!