## Physician Assistant

### Nature of the Work

For descriptions of this profession see:

- *Admissions* section of the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) website ([www.paeaonline.org](http://www.paeaonline.org))
- [www.explorehealthcareers.org](http://www.explorehealthcareers.org)

### Course Requirements

- Requirements vary by school
- Check the *Physician Assistant Programs Directory* ([www.paeaonline.org](http://www.paeaonline.org))
- Generally, course work should include general biology, general chemistry and sometimes organic chemistry, human anatomy and physiology, microbiology, statistics, social sciences, and humanities

### Application Timeline

Physician assistant school directly after Gettysburg College:

- Required courses completed by end of senior year (although preference may be given to applicants that complete the required courses sooner)
- Apply summer between junior and senior years

### Standardized Test

- Usually Graduate Record Exam (GRE) revised General Test ([www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre))
- Given year-round at computer-based test centers
- Length ~ 4 hours
- 3 sections: Verbal Reasoning (score 130-170), Quantitative Reasoning (score 130-170), Analytical Writing (score 0-6)
- Register on-line ([www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre))
- Free and low-cost preparation materials ([www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre))
- Unofficial scores on test day, official scores in 10-15 days

### Application Service

- Most physician assistant programs participate in the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) ([www.caspaonline.org](http://www.caspaonline.org))
- Available ~ mid-April
- Each school selects an application deadline
- For physician assistant programs that do not participate in CASPA, apply directly to the school
- APPLY EARLY!!! Do not wait until application deadlines!
| Admissions Criteria | • GPA (check the *Physician Assistant Programs Directory* for #’s)  
| | • GRE scores (check the *Physician Assistant Programs Directory* for #’s)  
| | • Written statement  
| | • Letters of evaluation  
| | • Health-related experience (type and amount varies greatly by school; check the *Physician Assistant Programs Directory*)  
| | • Interview  
| Length of Program | • Varies by school (check the *Physician Assistant Programs Directory*)  
| | • Typically ~ 2 years  
| Degree | • Most award a master’s degree  
| Additional Resources | • Physician Assistant Education Association ([www.paeaoine.org](http://www.paeaoine.org))  
| | • American Academy of Physician Assistants ([www.aapa.org](http://www.aapa.org))  
| | • PA Shadow On-line ([www.pashadowonline.com](http://www.pashadowonline.com))  

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