Simmons UNIVERSITY

Physician Assistant program admission requirements vary **_greatly_** by school. You are encouraged to research the prerequisites for your desired schools. In general, most schools will expect applicants to take GRE and to complete the following courses. For school-specific requirements, visit school websites or the PAEA Directory at directory.paea.org.

Typical Physician Assistant School Prerequisite Requirements

Subject	# of Semesters	Simmons Courses to Satisfy Prerequisites
Biology	3+ semesters	**BIOL 113**: General Biology or BIOL 115: Advanced General Biology (both SCI) **BIOL 221**: Microbiology (SCI) **At least one additional 200+ Biology course** (i.e. BIOL 218, BIOL 225, most institutions WILL NOT accept Microbiology or Anatomy and Physiology towards the two semesters of general biology. Those courses are often separate requirements and cannot double-counted.) **BIOL 336**: Genetics (Recommended, some PA schools require)
Anatomy & Physiology	2 semesters	**BIOL 231**: Anatomy & Physiology I (SCI) **BIOL 232**: Anatomy & Physiology II (SCI)
General Chemistry	2 semesters	**CHEM 111**: Principles of General Chemistry or **CHEM 113**: General Chemistry I or **CHEM 115**: Intensive General Chemistry (all SCI) **CHEM 216**: General Chemistry II & Quantitative Analysis (SCI)
Organic Chemistry	1-2 semesters	**CHEM 112**: Principles of Organic Chemistry (SCI) or **CHEM 224**: Organic Chemistry I (SCI) and **CHEM 225**: Organic Chemistry II (SCI)
Biochemistry	1 semester	**CHEM 345**: Biochemistry or **CHEM 223**: Principles of Biochemistry (SCI) ****NOTE: CHEM 224 & 225** required before **CHEM 345**
Mathematics	1 semester	**STAT 118**: Introductory Statistics and/or higher level (QL) Some programs also require a Precalculus or Calculus course
Psychology	1 semester	**PSYC 101**: Introduction to Psychological Science (or higher)
Direct Patient Care Experience	500-2,000 hours	PA programs require applicants to have significant patient care experience. Requirements vary significantly by program.

Strongly Recommended Coursework

Sociology	1 semester	***SOCI 101:** Introduction to Sociology (SH) OR **A healthcare sociology course** (options include SOCI 241, SOCI 245, SOCI 345, or similar courses) (SH)
Medical Terminology (pretty rare, mostly southern schools)	1 course	Not offered at Simmons. Could be an online course with a completion certificate.
Genetics	1 course	**BIOL 336:** Genetics (prerequisite BIOL 225, corequisite BIOL 336L) (SCI) OR **BIO 347:** Human Development and Genetics (prerequisite BIOL 113 and BIOL 104) (SCI)

General Timeline

This timeline is an example of how you _may_ wish to take courses. Timing of these courses may change due to your major/minor requirements, placement exam results, academic performance, and planned PA school entrance year. In addition to these courses, you must take classes required by Simmons and your major(s)/minor(s). Develop an academic plan with your advisors based on the courses above that is tailored to **your** needs. The sample timeline below does not include language or specific major requirements.

This schedule is designed to prepare students to start a Physician Assistant program in the September of their graduation year. In this case, the GRE exam should be taken in the calendar year prior to which you plan to enter graduate school (for example, if you are applying in Summer 2020 for entrance in Fall 2021, you should take the exam in Spring 2020). The Pre-PA track is more flexible than other Pre-Health tracks because students do not need to take science prerequisites before sitting for the GRE. If students plan to take growth year(s), there is even more flexibility in this schedule.

Year & PLAN Requirements	Fall	Spring	Summer
Year 1	**BOS 101**: Boston Course **SIM 101**: Simmons (2 cr.) **CHEM 111/113/115**: Inorganic Chemistry I **BIOL 113/115**: Biology I	**LDR 101**: Leadership Course **CHEM 216**: General Chemistry II & Quantitative Analysis **BIOL 221**: Microbiology	_**Exposure to Medicine**_ _**Community Service**_
Year 2 Integrative Learning (4 cr) Simmons 201: fall or spring, 1 cr.		**CHEM 112:** Principles of Organic Chemistry (or CHEM 224 in Fall, CHEM 225 in Spring) **BIOL 231**: Anatomy & Physiology I	_**Direct Patient Care Experience**_ _**Research**_
Year 3 Simmons 301: Excel, 1 cr.	**BIOL 232**: Anatomy & Physiology II _**GRE Preparation**_	**CHEM 223**: Principles of Biochemistry _**Take GRE Exam by mid-April**_	_**Direct Patient Care Experience**_ _**Apply by June/July**_
Year 4 Capstone (in major)	**CHEM 345**: Biochemistry (ONLY if you have taken CHEM 224 & 225, not needed if you have taken CHEM 223) _**PA School Interviews**_	_**PA School Interviews**_	_**Take a break before PA School**_
Additional Recommended & Required Coursework: These courses are offered in both Fall and Spring semesters, and therefore	**STAT 118**: Introductory Statistics (or higher, QL) **PSYC 101**: Introduction to Psychological Science (or higher) **Sociology Course**: Intro to Sociology or a Healthcare Sociology course (examples: SOCI 241, 245, 232, or 345) **At least one additional 200+ Biology course** (i.e. BIOL 218, BIOL 225, most institutions WILL NOT accept Microbiology or Anatomy and Physiology towards the two semesters of		

offer students greater flexibility when adding them to their academic plan.	general biology. Those courses are often separate requirements and cannot be double-counted.) **Language Requirement**, 2 sequential courses in the same language Remaining **Global Cultural (GC) and Aesthetic, Literary, and Artistic (ALA) Key Content Areas** (The QL, SH and SCI requirements will likely be fulfilled with the above required and recommended courses)

The Rigor of PA School

Being in Physician Assistant school is often referred to as "drinking from a water hose". Most PA schools have a didactic (classroom) year, and a clinical year. During that Didactic year, PA students learn all of the information typically taught in two years of medical school. Students are expected to absorb a lot of complex information very quickly, and apply it in their clinical rotations. For this reason, **PA school should NOT be a backup to medical school if a student is struggling academically.**

Applying to Physician Assistant Schools

Admission to physician assistant school is very competitive. Accepted applicants nationally have an overall undergraduate and prerequisite GPA of 3.5-3.6, and a GRE score at least above the 50th percentile. Many schools require a C or better (not a C-) in prerequisite courses, and some (like Northeastern) require a B or better.

Qualities of Strong Professional School Applicants:
- Apply early (early summer) of the year before the expected year of matriculation.
- Submit application to schools that best match your strengths.
- A high GPA in science and non-science courses – a competitive GPA is above a 3.5-3.6
- Competitive Scores on the GRE.
- Active in volunteer/work experience/extracurricular events
- Has significant clinical experience – shadowing & volunteer work are essential!
- Well known by professors
- Great letters of recommendation and evaluations
- It is recommended that applicants complete prerequisite courses at their home institution. If this is not possible, they should be completed at an accredited 4-year institution.

Students apply to most Physician Assistant Programs through the CASPA application (paeaonline.org/caspa). Not all PA programs use the CASPA application. Search the PAEA Directory for schools that do and do not use the application service: directory.paea.org

Direct Patient Care Experience

Physician Assistant schools require anywhere from 500-2,000 hours of direct patient care experience prior to applying. They distinguish between Healthcare Experience (working in a healthcare setting, possibly observing direct patient care), and Patient Care Experience (roles where you are responsible for a patient's care). Examples of roles that provide direct patient care experience include: CNA, EMT, respiratory therapist, clinical assistant, phlebotomist, and others.

Taking Time Off Before PA School

It is possible to spread courses further if students decide to take one or more growth years. Many Pre-PA students take growth year(s) to gain additional full-time direct patient care experience. Significant patient care experience is weighed heavily during the application process and shows dedication to the PA profession.

GPA Calculation

- The PA schools look at your GPA as calculated by CASPA. CASPA calculates Overall, Science, and Non-Science GPAs. The Science GPA includes courses in: Biology/Zoology, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Physics, and other sciences. The Non-Science GPA is made up of all other courses (including Math and behavioral sciences)
- AP credits are NOT computed into your GPA
- ALL post-secondary coursework will be used to compute your GPA for admission, even if they are not included in your Simmons GPA. Dual-enrollment and transfer courses DO count toward your GPA for admission

- "W" grades do not count in your GPA. However, avoid "W" grades. Professional schools expect students to consistently carry a full-time course load (16-18 credits).