

## *So, you want to be a Physician Assistant!*

**Check out these Websites:**     [www.aapa.org](http://www.aapa.org)     [www.paeaeducation.org](http://www.paeaeducation.org)

### **General Prerequisite Courses:**

(The courses listed are required by one or more Florida PA school)

2 semesters of general chem. with labs  
2 semesters of organic chem. with labs  
2 semesters of general biology with labs  
2 semesters of physics with labs  
Human Anatomy and Physiology I & II with labs  
Microbiology and Lab  
Genetics  
Statistics  
Behavioral Science (Psychology, Sociology, etc)  
Medical Terminology

**Note:** Two out of the three PA programs in FL **require** the completion of a Bachelor's Degree (University of Florida and Barry University). Nova Southeastern University requires a minimum of 90 credits, 30 credits at the Upper Division level). **We recommend all students finish their Bachelor's degree before going on for a professional degree.**

### **What is a Physician Assistant?**

Physician assistants (PAs) are health professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. Within the physician/PA relationship, physician assistants exercise autonomy in medical decision making and provide a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic services. PA's can be found in virtually all health care settings: hospitals, physicians' offices, HMOs, correctional institutions, military installations, VA medical centers, nursing homes, public health agencies, community clinics, research centers, urban/rural health clinics, health care education and administration offices, industrial medicine clinics, and even the White House! No matter where PA's are employed, they provide quality medical care. PA's can take medical histories, perform physical exams, order and interpret laboratory tests, diagnose and treat illnesses, counsel patients, assist in surgery, and set fractures. PA's can work as generalists in primary care or as specialist in fields such as cardiovascular surgery, orthopedics, and emergency medicine.

### **PA Education:**

The structure of education for PA students is similar to that for medical students, although shorter in duration. Most accredited programs can be completed between 24 and 27 months.

### **The "Other" Factors:**

-Minimum science GPA of 3.0 (average ~3.2)

- Entrance Exam: GRE
- Volunteering/observing/shadowing with a PA (see below)
- Leadership skills
- 3 letters of recommendation (one from a PA or physician)
- State of Residency

**Experience:**

It is important to gain experience in the PA field. UF recommends that all applicants complete at least one year (**2000 hours**) of direct (“hands-on”) patient care experience. The Florida Academy of Physician Assistants (FAPA) will assist students in contacting PA’s willing to allow students to shadow. To view the current list, visit their website [www.fapaonline.org/listshadow.asp](http://www.fapaonline.org/listshadow.asp).

**The Application:**

- CASPA (Central Application Service for Physician Assistants) – 93 out of 137 PA programs use this centralized application service ([www.caspaonline.org](http://www.caspaonline.org))
- All pre-PA students should apply in the summer between their Junior and senior year.
- You should take the GRE in the summer of your junior year. The GRE is offered everyday at Prometric testing centers ([www.GRE.org](http://www.GRE.org))

**PA Programs in Florida:**

**Barry University School of Graduate Medical Sciences- Master’s Degree**

Physician Assistant Program  
11300 NE Second Avenue, Box SGMS  
Miami Shores, FL  
33161  
Phone: 305/899-3296

**Nova Southeastern University – Master’s Degree**

Physician Assistant Program  
3200 South University Dr.  
Fort Lauderdale, FL  
33328  
Phone: 954/262-1250

**University of Florida - Master’s Degree**

Physician Assistant Program  
PO Box 100176  
Gainesville, FL  
32610-0176  
Phone: 352/265-7955

**\*\*Miami Dade College – Associates Degree**

Physician Assistant Program  
Medical Center Campus  
950 NW 20th Street  
Miami, FL  
33127-4693  
Phone: 305/237-4124