

PRE-PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

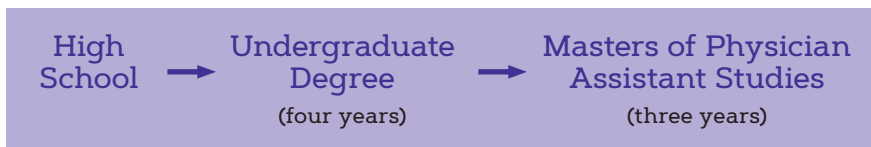
MINOR



A Physician Assistant is a medical provider who is licensed to diagnose illness and disease and to treat patients, including prescribing medication. They may serve as a principle healthcare professional with the goal to improve healthcare access and equality. They work in many different environments including hospitals, physician offices and clinics.

Physician Assistants must demonstrate strong skills in active listening and critical thinking. They should have good judgment and decision-making skills. Their role requires them to address complex problems and review information so they can evaluate options and implement solutions.

To practice as a PA, a student must graduate from an accredited PA Program with a master's degree, and pass a board certifying exam.



No specific major is required. The profession will be stronger and more enriched by being made up of people with a wide variety of backgrounds. As long as you successfully complete the prerequisite courses you can compete for admission, regardless of your major. Allow yourself to explore a wide range of different interests early in your college career. When you find something you enjoy, chances are you will do well in it. Let your own curiosity be your guide.



Perks of the Profession

EXCELLENT INCOME

As of 2021, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports median income of \$108,610.

GREAT JOB OUTLOOK

Employment of PA's is projected to grow by 28% from 2021-2031 which is much faster than the average.

SPECIALIZATION

The PA profession is based on the medical model of broad, generalist education allowing PA's to successfully integrate into any medical or surgical specialty with adequate on-the-job training and appropriate M.D. supervision. Post-graduate educational programs are available in specialty areas such as emergency medicine and psychiatry.

PA Programs in Virginia

- Eastern Virginia Medical School
- Emory and Henry College
- James Madison University
- Mary Baldwin University
- Radford University
- Randolph-Macon College
- Shenandoah University
- South University – Richmond Campus
- University of Lynchburg

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®



Students in the Pre-PA minor must take courses in:

- General Biology (2)
- Microbiology (1)
- Anatomy (1)
- Physiology (1)
- Chemistry (2)
- Organic Chemistry (1)
- Biochemistry (1)
- Psychology (2)
- Medical Terminology (1)
- Statistics (1)

Contact Information

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OTHER LINKS

Physician Assistant Education Program (PAEA)

www.paeaonline.org

American Association of Physician Assistants (AAPA)

www.aapa.org

JMU Pre-PA Minor



JMU students who are interested in becoming a physician assistant can choose to enroll in the pre-PA minor. The minor includes courses that are required for admission to graduate PA programs.

JMU alumni are represented at over 40 PA schools in 10 different states.

Much of the PA prerequisite course work is in biology and chemistry. At JMU, the majority of pre-PA students major in health sciences or biology but students from other majors, such as kinesiology and psychology, have also been successful in applying to PA programs.

Admission to PA programs is very competitive. In addition to the prerequisite course work, students will need to:

- Shadow (observe) a physician assistant to demonstrate an understanding of the profession.
- Garner patient care experience, commonly achieved through work as an EMT, nursing assistant, medical assistant and/or other hand-on care positions.
- Gain general healthcare experience through volunteer opportunities at hospitals or clinics.
- Complete the GRE exam – a standardized test assessing communication and quantitative skills
- Maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA and 3.0 science GPA (on a 4.0 grading scale). To be a competitive applicant, students generally need a much higher GPA.
- Obtain letters of recommendation, with at least one from a PA.

At JMU, Pre-Professional Health Advisors are available to guide students in course selection and in the other activities required for a PA applicant to be competitive.