



PRE-PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT



GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PA SCHOOL | *Courses, Experience, and GRE*

Course requirements for PA schools vary widely. For example, some schools require calculus and others do not. Most programs prefer students with broad, well-rounded backgrounds and value a liberal arts education. A science major is not necessarily required for professional programs; in fact, a major or minor in the arts, humanities, or social sciences may be attractive to some PA schools. However, you must balance the requirements of your major with those of PA school admissions and take a wide variety of science courses. Careful planning is essential to avoid scheduling conflicts.

It is recommended that you investigate the particular requirements of PA schools to which you are interested in applying. These can be found at paeonline.org. Regardless of a school’s particular course requirements, students applying to PA school programs must take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The content categories are:

- *Verbal Reasoning*
- *Quantitative Reasoning*
- *Analytical Writing*

Information about the exam and complete content description can be found at ets.org.

GENERAL COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

to *most* PA schools, and the courses at Hollins that satisfy them

Two semesters of General Chemistry	CHEM 101/102 or 105/214
One semester of Biochemistry.....	BIOL/CHEM 351
Two semesters of General Biology	BIOL 220/236
One semester of Microbiology.....	BIOL 312
Two semesters of English Composition	ENG 100/Others

In addition, many schools require the following.

Two semesters of Organic Chemistry.....	CHEM 221/222
Precalculus or Calculus	MATH 140 or 241/242
Intro to Psychology	PSY 141
Intro to Sociology	SOC 110/113
Intro to Statistics.....	STAT 140
Advanced Biochemistry	BIOL/CHEM 352
Genetics.....	BIOL 314
Comparative Anatomy	BIOL 315
Cultural Anthropology.....	ANTH 145
Medical Terminology	
Foreign Language competency	

Please check with the particular program on what they require or recommend their applicants to complete.

Because the GRE does not depend on you completing a certain number of prerequisite courses prior to taking it, please plan to take it when your schedule permits. If you plan to apply Early Decision, you can take the GRE no later than July 31 before your senior year. Dates for the exam run year-round, but you must schedule your test weeks in advance at a special testing site. It takes 10-15 days to receive your score. Information about dates, locations, and fees can be found at ets.org.

APPLYING TO PA SCHOOL

Application deadlines vary but are typically in the fall. However, it is **strongly** advised that you apply early. Most PA schools accept applications on a rolling basis and the earlier you apply the better your chances of being accepted.

In addition to transcripts and test scores, you will need letters of recommendation from your professors. You must request these from professors who can honestly comment on your potential to successfully navigate a PA program. The pre-health advisor will coordinate the collection and collation of the letters and their submission. Most medical schools use the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) system for recommendation letter submission. Information about CASPA, participating colleges, fees, and deadlines can be found at paeonline.org.

Many schools also have an “experience” component to the application in which the program wants you to demonstrate exposure to healthcare and patient care in some capacity. Some programs are satisfied with hours shadowing a PA. Others want you to have direct contact with patients, which can be difficult without certain credentials. You might consider taking additional vocational coursework to earn a certificate so you can work as a paraprofessional (i.e. paramedic, community health worker, medical assistant, or phlebotomist) to get exposure to working in a healthcare setting. If you don’t get accepted to a PA program prior to graduation from Hollins, this can certainly be a good area to focus on during a “gap year.” Information about the PA profession, the application process, and more can be found at pafocus.org.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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