Physician Assistants (PAs) are health care professionals that are either licensed or credentialed to practice medicine with physician supervision. The original PA curriculum was based on the fast track training of physicians during World War II. The scope of PA practice includes: obtaining the patient history and performing a physical examination, diagnosing and treating illness, ordering and interpreting diagnostic tests, patient education and counseling, assisting in surgery, and prescribing medications. PAs are also involved in education, administration and research.

Students interested in pursuing a career as a Physician Assistant will eventually need to earn a master’s degree. The Master of Science Physician Assistant Studies program prepares students to become highly qualified physician assistants, who will serve as tomorrow’s leaders in the provision of patient-centered care, education and professional service. The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) has granted Accreditation – Continued to the University of Pittsburgh Physician Assistant Program sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh. Continued accreditation is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA Standards.

Graduates of the professional program are eligible to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certification Exam (PANCE) administered by the National Commission on Certification of the Physician Assistant (NCCPA). All States and the District of Columbia have legislation governing the qualifications or practice of physician assistants. All jurisdictions require physician assistants to pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination. Only those successfully completing the examination may use the credential “Physician Assistant-Certified.” To remain certified, PAs must complete 100 hours of continuing medical education every 2 years. Every 10 years, they must pass a recertification examination (PANRE).

Pitt-Bradford student interested in this field should obtain a Bachelor degree in a major like Biology or Chemistry while fulfilling the Pre-Physician Assistant requirements in preparation for graduate school.

**Required Skills:**
Communication (Oral & Written)
Patience
Problem Solving
Ethics
Customer Service
Team Work
Critical Thinking

**Possible Employers:**
Family Practice
Internal Medicine
Women’s Health
Emergency Medicine
Pediatrics
Orthopedics
Cardiovascular

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:**
American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) www.aapa.org
Physician Assistant Education Association www.paeonline.org
Pennsylvania Society of Physician Assistants www.pspa.net
New York State Society of Physician Assistants www.nysspa.org

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CAREERS IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT AT:**
American Academy of Physician Assistant www.aapa.org/about-pas/faq-about-pas
Career Spotlight: Physician Assistant www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3yFy7nFakxM
Occupational Outlook Handbook www.bls.gov/oco/ocos081.htm
Career Services www.upb.pitt.edu/career.aspx
Pre-Physician Assistant – Curriculum Guide

Student Name:  

PS#  

Note: Students can identify their career goals by choosing the Pre-Physician Assistant advising track, but they still must choose an official Pitt-Bradford major. Pre-Physician Assistant is not an official major. Most Pre-Physician Assistant students choose to major in Biology.

Students interested in pursuing a career as a Physician Assistant will eventually need to earn a master’s degree. Pitt-Bradford student interested in this field should obtain a Bachelor degree in a major like Biology or Chemistry while fulfilling the Pre-Physician Assistant requirements in preparation for graduate school. Students are also encouraged to participate in an internship with a local physician to give them that extra edge needed for admission to a graduate program.

**PRE-PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PRE-REQUISITES**

- BIOL 0101 Introduction to Cell and Molecular Biology
- BIOL 0102 Introduction to Biodiversity
- BIOL 0203 Genetics
- BIOL 0212 Anatomy and Physiology I
- BIOL 0213 Anatomy and Physiology II
- BIOL 1302 Microbiology
- CHEM 0101 General Chemistry I
- CHEM 0102 General Chemistry II
- ENG 0101 English Composition I
- ENG 0102 English Composition II
- MATH 0098 College Algebra II
- PSY 0101 Introduction to Psychology
- PSY 0201 OR MATH 0133 Statistics

*In addition to the above requirements, many PA programs also recommend the following course:*

- BIOL 1320 Cell Biology
- CHEM 0206/0207 Organic Chemistry I and Lab
- CHEM 0208/0209 Organic Chemistry II and Lab
- CHEM 1306 Biochemistry
- Upper Level Psychology

**PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS INFORMATION**

Graduate school admission requirements vary at each school. Students are encouraged to contact the graduate school of choice early in their college career to make sure all admission requirements are met during their undergraduate education. Many programs will require work experience in a health care environment.

Physician Assistant Graduate Programs can be highly competitive. In general most graduate program will look at the following:

- College Grade Point Average (3.2 or higher)
- Prerequisite Courses GPA (3.2 or higher)
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Scores
- Patient Care Experience
- Letters of Recommendation
- Personal Interviews

Program Contacts: Dr. Lauren Yaich, yaich@pitt.edu, 814.362.0260, 232D Swarts Hall

**GENERAL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

2.0 Cumulative Grade Point Average, 120 Earned Credit Hours, 30 Hours of Upper Level Courses (1000 level or above)

NOTE: This guide is unofficial. Completing the requirements on this sheet does NOT guarantee degree completion. Official degree completion information can be found in MY.PITT.EDU. Contact your Faculty Advisor and/or the Registrar’s Office with questions or concerns.