

The Physician Assistant Program is a 24 or 36-month, full-time educational program divided into an academic and a clinical phase. The academic or didactic phase of the program is 42 weeks and consists of four components: (1) basic sciences, (2) behavioral sciences, (3) clinical medicine, and (4) pre-clinical skills. The educational setting is an interdisciplinary environment with courses taken with medical students, nurse practitioner students, and other health sciences students.

The clinical phase consists of a series of rotations that take place in a variety of inpatient and outpatient settings throughout the DC, Virginia and Maryland area. Students participate in the care of patients under physician supervision. There are three required 8-week rotations; six required 4-week rotations; and a 6-week final preceptorship that integrate all previous academic and clinical training.

The curriculum also includes an innovative and nationally recognized community service component that introduces students to healthcare and social services in underserved areas of the Washington metropolitan area. It enables students to learn what services are available to the community, how individuals access these services, and how to make appropriate referrals, while promoting an understanding of community factors that have an impact on the population's health status.

### HISTORY OF THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

The George Washington University Hospital began to employ a number of ex-military corpsmen in 1969. They were capable of suturing minor injuries, helping to apply and remove casts, administering medications, drawing blood, starting intravenous fluids, taking electrocardiograms, performing simple hematological I and urine tests, and staining blood and bacteriologic smears. The interpretation of tests was always the responsibility of the physician.

This experience was inordinately successful. A systems analysis in 1970 revealed that these ex-military corpsmen were accepted by housestaff and faculty alike. All were impressed with the judgment and capability of these young men. The program was then expanded. The corpsmen were hired into the clinic where they performed functions similar to those established in the Emergency Room. The GW Physician Assistant Program, established in September 1972, was built on this successful experience and was among the first in the nation to be established in an academic medical center.

In 1986 the University Board of Trustees approved a joint Physician Assistant/Master of Public Health Degree (PA/MPH), option for students interested in the clinical application of preventive medicine. It was envisioned that this would be taught in an integrated and simultaneous fashion. It was recognized that there were few precedents at GW for a joint undergraduate (PA) and graduate (MPH) program and that there were no other PA/MPH programs in the nation. Now all students earn a Master of Science in Health Sciences (MSHS) degree or a joint Master of Science in Health Sciences and Master of Public Health Degree (MSHS and MPH).

The GW Physician Assistant Program is now a part of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and has graduated more than 1,200 physician assistants. It has had continuous national accreditation since its inception. The program has changed its curriculum to reflect the medical needs of the nation while still providing the "technically skilled personnel" originally conceived.

### PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION

Healthcare has become one of the top concerns of the United States and, indeed, has become one of the world's largest and fastest-growing industries. Explosive growth in technology and research has brought greater complexity and expectations in healthcare delivery, resulting in soaring costs. With this complexity comes the need for skills to understand, evaluate, and manage new information. Patients' high expectations increase the demands for choice and quality in the delivery of services and technology.

Physician assistants (PAs) are highly qualified health professionals who are prepared, through a demanding academic and clinical curriculum, to provide healthcare services under physician supervision. PAs gather and evaluate medical data and participate in the process of clinical decision making, diagnosis, and therapeutic management. In a primary care setting, the PA is typically the initial contact for the patient, taking the history, performing the physical examination, and ordering appropriate laboratory and radiological tests. In a specialty setting, the PA may assist in surgery or in complex diagnostic procedures, participate in patient rounds, and provide a variety of diagnostic and therapeutic services. As a knowledgeable and skilled member of the healthcare team, the PA improves the patient's access to healthcare and enhances the physician's effectiveness.

The GW Physician Assistant Program focuses on preparing health professionals who will extend and complement the capabilities of physicians in the delivery of healthcare. The faculty believe that it is essential for all PA graduates to be well-rounded clinicians, prepared for a variety of medial careers. The GW Physician Assistant Program offers two graduate level programs: the traditional two-year program leading to a Master of Science in Health Sciences degree (MSHS) and the three-year joint program leading to both an MSHS and a Master of Public Health degree (MPH). Applicants to the joint PA/MPH program must meet admission requirements for both the MSHS program and the MPH program.

It is important that GW PA students demonstrate effectively the capacity to recognize the unique role of the PA and the scope of the professional responsibility inherent to the role. Every PA student should show proficiency in a common body of basic science knowledge and master the principles, knowledge, skills, and procedures of seven major medical disciplines: internal medicine, surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine, psychiatry, and primary care (ambulatory) medicine. This requires that every candidate should meet basic technical standards by having the capacity to observe and communicate; sufficient motor ability to perform physical examinations, basic laboratory, diagnostic, and therapeutic procedures; emotional stability to exercise good judgment and work effectively in stressful situations; and the intellectual ability to integrate and synthesize data, solve problems, and formulate treatment plans. Reasonable accommodations will be made for applicants with disabilities who can meet the requirements noted above, if these accommodations can be accomplished without altering the essential elements of the physician assistant curriculum.

## PA DEGREE PROGRAMS

### MSHS PROGRAM

This “traditional” program prepares individuals for clinical careers. The curriculum emphasizes a scholarly approach to medicine, development of organizational and critical-thinking skills, and evidence-based medicine.

### MSHS/MPH PROGRAM

Applicants with a strong interest in public health may want to consider the joint PA/MPH program. This unique three-year program provides both clinical and academic preparation for careers in medicine and public health. Students in this curriculum receive advanced training in the design of health studies, epidemiological methods, application of computers to public health, community medicine, and techniques of health promotion. Students in this program also design a special research project in collaboration with faculty of the School of Public Health and Health Services and local, national, or international public health organizations.

## CLINICAL AFFILIATIONS

Formal affiliations for mandatory clinical training have been established with more than 300 sites in the Northeast and MidAtlantic area. Other sites are possible for electives.

## PROGRAMS OF STUDY

### MSHS Physician Assistant

		Credits
<b>Fall I</b>		
PA 116	Medical Terminology	0
PA 219	The Role of the PA in American Health Care	2
PA 229	Human Behavior	2
PA 234	Clinical Assessment I	2
PA 237	Clinical Ethics for Physician Assistants	1
HSci 237	Microbiology for Health Sciences Students	2
ANAT 215	Anatomy for Health Science Students	4
BIOC 211	Biochemistry for Health Science Students	3
PHYL 211	Physiology for Health Science Students	3
HSci 270	Research for Health Professionals	3
<b>Spring I</b>		
PA 225	Clinical Medicine	5
HSci 206	Clinical Decision Making	2
HSci 233	Pathology for Health Science Students	4
PHAR 207	Pharmacology for Health Science Students	3
PHAR 208	Pharmacology in Disease Pathophysiology	1
HSci 271	Research for Health Professionals	3
PA 215	Community Service (Optional Elective)	3
<b>Summer I</b>		
PA 235	Clinical Assessment II	2
PA 245	Introduction to Primary Care Medicine	2
PA 246	Clinical Applications	3
PA 248	Introduction to Electrocardiography	1
PA 250	Evidence-based Medicine I	1
<b>Clinical Curriculum (Fall II, Spring II, Summer II)</b>		
PA 251	Evidence-based Medicine II	1
PA 252	Evidence-based Medicine III	1
PA 260	Long-term and Palliative Care Clinical Practicum	2
PA 261	Inpatient Medicine Clinical Practicum	4
PA 262	Ambulatory Care Clinical Practicum	4
PA 263	Surgical Inpatient Clinical Practicum	4
PA 264	Women’s Health Clinical Practicum	2
PA 265	Pediatrics Clinical Practicum	2
PA 266	Emergency Medicine Clinical Practicum	2
PA 267	Behavioral Medicine Clinical Practicum	2
PA 268	Clinical Elective Practicum	2
PA 269	Final Preceptorship Clinical Practicum	4

<b>MSHS/MPH Physician Assistant/Master of Public Health</b>		
Fall I		
BIOC 211	Biochemistry for Health Science Students	3
PHYL 211	Physiology for Health Science Students	3
PUBH 205	Policy Approaches to Public Health	2
PUBH 361	Introduction to COPC	3
PUBH 209	PA/MPH Clinical Leadership Seminar	3
PUBH 384	Community Health Informatics	2
Spring I		
PHAR 207*	Pharmacology for Health Science Students	3
PUBH 202*	Biostatistics Applications	3
PUBH 203*	Principles in Practice of Epidemiology	3
PUBH 366*	COPC Policy and Issues	2
PUBH 376	Preventing Health Disparities	2
PUBH 382	Planning and Administration of HPDP Programs	2
Summer I		
PUBH 204	Environmental and Occupational Health	2
PubH 207	Social Behavioral Approached to Public Health	2
PUBH 214.22	Practicum	2
Fall II		
PA 116	Medical Terminology	0
PA 219	The Role of the PA in Health Care	2
PA 237	Clinical Ethics for Physician Assistants	1
ANAT 215	Anatomy for Health Science Students	4
HSci 237	Microbiology for Health Sciences Students	2
PA 229	Human Behavior	2
PA 234	Clinical Assessment I	2
PUBH 208	Management Approaches to Public Health	3
Spring II		
PA 225	Manifestations of Disease	5
HSci 233	Pathology for Health Science Students	4
HSci 206	Clinical Decision Making	2
PHAR 208	Pharmacology in Disease Pathophysiology	1
PUBH 367	Community Health Management	2
PUBH 383	Evaluation of HPDP Programs	3
Summer II		
PA 235	Clinical Assessment II	2
PA 245	Introduction to Primary Care	2
PA 246	Clinical Application	3
PA 248	Introduction to Electrocardiography	1
PA 250	Evidence-based Medicine I	1

<b>Clinical Curriculum (Fall III, Spring III, Summer III)</b>		
PA 251	Evidence-based Medicine II	1
PA 252	Evidence-based Medicine III	1
PA 260	Long-term and Palliative Care Clinical Practicum	2
PA 261	Inpatient Medicine Clinical Practicum	4
PA 262	Ambulatory Care Clinical Practicum	4
PA 263	Surgical Inpatient Clinical Practicum	4
PA 264	Women's Health Clinical Practicum	2
PA 265	Pediatrics Clinical Practicum	2
PA 266	Emergency Medicine Clinical Practicum	2
PA 267	Behavioral Medicine Clinical Practicum	2
PA 269	Final Preceptorship Clinical Practicum	4
PubH 363	Intro to PH Communication and Marketing	3
PubH 215.22	Culminating Experience	2

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

### GW PA ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must have a bachelor's degree with a minimum science and cumulative grade point average of 3.0 and complete the following minimum prerequisites from an accredited institution of higher learning in the United States:

- \* Two semesters of biological sciences (human anatomy and physiology strongly recommended, botany not acceptable)
- \* Two semesters of chemistry (one semester should either be organic or biochemistry. Biochemistry is strongly recommended)
- \* Two semesters of psychology (general psychology required, abnormal psychology strongly recommended)

All prerequisites must be completed with a grade of B- or better. Applicants may apply to the program with one outstanding prerequisite but prerequisites must be completed prior to the beginning of the program. College seniors are eligible to apply provided that they will have fulfilled all the baccalaureate requirements before matriculating in August.

The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) must have been taken within the past five years, except for those applicants already awarded a post-baccalaureate degree. Official GRE Reports must be received by October 1st deadline.

Six months of patient care experience is required, one year of health direct related experience is highly recommended.

### CAPSA PROCESS AND FEES

The GW PA program participates in CASPA, the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants. This is a web-based

centralized application process which allows one to apply to multiple PA programs. CASPA will verify your application for accuracy, electronically process it, and send your materials to the physician assistant programs you designate.

CASPA processing begins when application materials and payment are received. The PA programs review completed applications, conduct interviews, and make final admission decisions. Submitting materials early will ensure timely processing and help avoid delays. The CASPA application and official transcripts should be submitted and postmarked in accordance with the CASPA web site instructions.

The fee for using CASPA is based on the number of programs the applicant designates. A limited number of application fee waivers are available. Meeting CASPA's eligibility criterion for a fee waiver does not guarantee a waiver will be granted for supplemental program fees. A fee will be charged for the secondary application.

For more CASPA information, please go to the following website: <http://www.caspaonline.org>

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The job market continues to be bright for PAs, according to annual surveys of recent GW graduates, as well as a national survey of all PA graduates. GW PA graduates are heavily recruited, due to their strong academic and clinical training and the reputation of GW's PA Program and Medical Center. Graduates have found employment in all areas of medicine. The PA Program has a large group of dedicated alumni who help with employment opportunities, both locally and nationwide.

## TUITION/FINANCIAL AID

Tuition and fees are subject to change each year. Students also should budget for related costs, such as housing, meals, books, supplies, and transportation. Detailed financial aid information will be provided at the time of interview.

## FACULTY

The core faculty are experienced PA educators and clinicians. They have expertise in a broad range of areas, including clinical medicine, clinical research, health policy and health services management. They have experience and affiliations with a variety of clinical settings. The faculty also are active in PA professional organizations, including the American Academy of Physician Assistants, the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants, the Physician Assistant Education Association, and state and local PA associations. The GW PA Program also utilizes the many resources of other faculty from the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the School of Public Health and Health Services who are national and international experts in their fields.

## INFORMATION SESSIONS

The GW PA Program provides regular information sessions for prospective students who wish to discuss the program and the PA profession. To register or for more information, call the program at 202-994-7644 or go to the following web page: <http://www.gwumc.edu/healthsci>

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

### For program specific questions:

The George Washington University PA Program  
900 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, NW Suite 6148  
Washington, DC 20037  
Tel: 202-994-7644  
Fax: 202-994-7647  
Email: [paadm@gwumc.edu](mailto:paadm@gwumc.edu)

### Admission application or information:

Health Sciences Admissions Office  
900 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, NW Suite 6142  
Washington, DC 20037  
Tel: 202-994-8528  
Fax: 202-994-0870  
Email: [hsphora@gwu.edu](mailto:hsphora@gwu.edu)  
Web Site: <http://www.gwumc.edu/healthsci>

### UNIVERSITY POLICY ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The George Washington University does not unlawfully discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation. This policy covers all programs, services, policies, and procedures of the University, including admissions to educational programs and employment. The University is subject to the District of Columbia Human Rights Law.

Inquiries concerning the application of this policy and federal laws and regulations concerning discrimination in education or employment programs and activities may be addressed to The Associate Vice President for Human Resources, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C. 20052, (202) 994-4433, or the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education.

Disabled students who need special information should call the Office of Disabled Student Services (202) 994-8250 (TTD/voice).