**Guidelines for Physician Assistant Programs**

According to the NAAHP, there has been a large growth in the PA profession. The number of PA programs has increased by 28% from 2012 to 2016. “The US Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates 30 percent job growth into 2024, adding approximately 28,000 jobs over the next eight years.” Benefits of becoming a PA include being able to practice in any area of medicine and earning a salary competitive with an annual average salary of $97,000.

A career as a Physician Assistant is increasingly appealing to many people, making entry into PA programs somewhat competitive. Here we have identified some important factors that will help make your application a success.

1. **Common Prerequisite Coursework**

Below is a list of the commonly required courses by most PA programs. It is important to remember that these preprofessional course requirements are not a major. You will need to complete these courses under the major you choose. Additionally, very few PA programs are identical in their requirements. The following is just a guideline. To be certain you are taking the correct required courses, check with the program you are interested in applying to and use the PA School Prerequisite Worksheet available on the Hendrix website.

**PA Program Required Courses:**

BIOL 150 *Cell Biology*

CHEM 110 & 120 *General Chemistry I & II w/labs*

BIOL 205 & 215 *Human Anatomy and Physiology w/labs*

BIOL 340 *Microbiology w/lab*

PSYC 290 or MATH 215 *Statistics*

1 Psychology course

**Other frequently required/recommended courses:**

BIOL 250 *Genetics*

CHEM 240 *Organic Chemistry I*

CHEM 330 *Biochemistry*

Additional social/behavioral science courses

Medical Terminology\*

Public Speaking\*

\*This course is not offered at Hendrix. You would be expected to complete it at another institution either online or in the classroom.

1. **Get involved!**

Community service, health care experiences, and leadership activities are essential. You need lots of experience working with people for people.

1. **Obtain paid patient contact experience and observe physician assistants.**

Many schools require several hundred hours of paid patient contact. Having this experience is just as critical as your GPA. Programs want to know that you have a sense of what it will mean to be a Physician Assistant, and that you are committed. Some examples of how you can gain this type of experience include working as a phlebotomist, EMT, a patient transporter or hospital registration technician.

1. **Keep your academic record strong.**

Few individuals get admitted with the minimal requirements, which usually includes a minimum GPA of 3.0. More often programs are looking for the most highly qualified students and will therefore have higher expectations and standards, admitting students with qualifications and GPAs higher than the minimum requirements. When choosing your schools to apply to, check to make sure you will meet or exceed the requirements.

1. **Develop relationships.**

Get to know health care providers, faculty and work/volunteer supervisors. All of these individuals can be a resource for you to obtain new and valuable opportunities. Always maintain a good rapport with these contacts as well. You never know when you will need a letter of recommendation, and you want to make sure they can provide you with a great letter, not a mediocre one.

1. **Stay up on current healthcare issues.**

Read newspapers and reliable sources such as The New York Times, The Economist, USA Today, The Commonwealth Fund Website (<http://www.commonwealthfund.org)> or The Kaiser Family Foundation (<http://www.kff.org)>.

1. **Make an appointment with advisors.**

To discuss preparing for a PA program, you should discuss this with your advisor and also contact Dr. Brenda Houck via email ([houck@hendrix.edu)](mailto:houck@hendrix.edu)) or phone (450-3861). Or make an appointment at <https://houck.youcanbook.me>