

Physician Assistant Studies - Master of Science

The rigor of this training program and the skills and responsibility necessary for clinical practice as a physician assistant (PA) require the program to seek applicants with a strong academic background, along with refined interpersonal skills and maturity. Prior healthcare experience is also an indicator of a career commitment to clinical practice.

While academic preparation is the primary criterion used in the admissions review process, nonacademic factors may contribute to the strength of an application. These may include qualities such as demonstrated leadership, involvement, and/or adding a diverse dimension to our campus community. Diversity is essential to our university and profession. Individuals from underrepresented, disadvantaged, or marginalized communities, and military veterans, are encouraged to apply.

The program's admission process will consider each applicant's strengths and select for admission those applicants best qualified to meet the program's mission: "In collaboration with nationally renowned partners, we develop exemplary PAs, in an inclusive culture, who equitably optimize the health of our region." To align with this mission, current employees of Gundersen Health System, Mayo Clinic, Marshfield Clinic, or UW-L who are interested in advancing their career as a PA are encouraged to apply.

Program requirements

Admission

Application process

To be considered for admission applicants must have all of the following completed:

1. An application with the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) including three letters of reference. CASPA is a national application service that collects and verifies application materials and calculates various GPAs before forwarding the applicants file to the programs selected by the applicant. For details, visit CASPA (https://help.liaisonedu.com/CASPA_Applicant_Help_Center/).
2. A UWL - Gundersen - Mayo - Marshfield PA Program Supplemental Application.
3. Submission of the program application fee.
4. International applicants have additional requirements. (<https://www.uwlax.edu/grad/physician-assistant-studies/admission-requirements/>)

To be considered for an interview, all references, transcripts, and GRE scores must be received by CASPA by August 1. The program application fee must be submitted to UWL by August 1 as well. CASPA stops accepting materials after the deadline passes. For details, visit CASPA (https://help.liaisonedu.com/CASPA_Applicant_Help_Center/).

Admission requirements

1. An earned bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
2. A minimum cumulative GPA (as calculated by CASPA) of 3.00 calculated on a 4-point scale.
3. A minimum science (as defined and calculated by CASPA) GPA of 3.00 on a 4-point scale.
4. Submission of Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores is required with scores forwarded to UWL and the PA program. GRE scores are used as another measure of academic aptitude along with GPA. Thus, there is no minimum required score.

Interview selection factors

An interview is required for admission to the program. Factors considered in the interview selection include the following:

- Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA), as calculated by CASPA
- Science GPA, as calculated by CASPA
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Scores
- Current employment at Gundersen Health System, Mayo Clinic, or Marshfield Clinic (minimum employment of at least 12 months at the time of application submission)
- UWL students currently enrolled at least part-time (> 6 credits) and on track to earn a bachelor's degree prior to the program start **or** those who have graduated from UWL within 12 months of application submission

Final admission selection

- Written application including references
- Background predictive of potential for future practice in the service areas of the program's partner institutions
- Knowledge of the PA profession and the profession's role in the healthcare system
- Interpersonal skills
- Quality and extent of healthcare related experience
- Rigor of undergraduate education

Strong GPA and GRE scores are necessary to gain an interview, and ultimately, admission.

Any offer of admission will be contingent on acceptance of the candidate by the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Office of Admissions, and successful completion of all degrees and current coursework, including prerequisites.

Program prerequisites

Applicants must have the following coursework completed prior to beginning the PAS program. Students may apply with outstanding prerequisite courses so long as they demonstrate a plan to complete those courses before matriculating in the program.

Biology: At least 11 semester hours of biology in the following areas including at least two lab courses:

- **Anatomy and Physiology:** One semester of human anatomy AND one semester of human physiology; OR a two-semester sequence of combined human anatomy which must be at the 200/sophomore level or above. Though vertebrate and mammalian anatomy and physiology are acceptable, human anatomy and physiology is strongly preferred.
- **Microbiology:** One semester at the 200/sophomore level or above.

- **Chemistry:** A minimum of 11 semester hours of chemistry including the following courses, at least two of which must include a laboratory:
 - *General Chemistry:* One semester of general or introductory chemistry.
 - *Organic Chemistry:* One semester at the 200/sophomore level or above.
 - *Biochemistry:* One semester at the 300/junior level or above. Molecular or cellular at the 300 level or above is an acceptable alternative.

Mathematics: A minimum of two semesters of mathematics including:

- *Pre-calculus/Calculus:* One semester of college algebra with trigonometry or pre-calculus or calculus.
- *Statistics:* One semester of statistics.

Psychology: A minimum of one semester of general, introductory, developmental, or abnormal psychology.

Health Care Experience: Prior direct patient care health experience is expected but not required. Such experience provides evidence of a career commitment to healthcare as a PA. In the program's competitive admission process, the length and depth of healthcare experience is a selection factor.

Technical Standards of Performance: Applicants must also meet the program's technical standards of performance in the areas of observation, communication, motor function, intellectual/conceptual, integrative and quantitative ability, and behavioral and social attributes. The Physician Assistant Program has posted these standards online. Applicants may have accommodations to meet these standards.

Applicable UWL courses:

Code	Title	Credits
Biology		
BIO 312	Human Anatomy and Physiology I (BIO 103 or BIO 105 and CHM 103 are prereqs)	4
BIO 313	Human Anatomy and Physiology II	4
Microbiology		
MIC 230	Fundamentals of Microbiology (BIO 103 or BIO 105 and CHM 103 are prereqs)	4
Chemistry		
CHM 103	General Chemistry I	5
CHM 104	General Chemistry II	5
Organic chemistry		
Select either:		
CHM 300	Fundamental Organic Chemistry	4
OR		
CHM 303 & CHM 304	Organic Chemistry Theory I and Organic Chemistry Theory II	6
Biochemistry		
Select either:		
CHM 325	Fundamental Biochemistry ¹	4
OR		
CHM 417 & CHM 418	Biochemistry I: Macromolecules and Biochemistry II: Metabolism and Genetic Information	7
Mathematics		
MTH 151	Precalculus	4-5

or MTH 207	Calculus I	
Statistics		
STAT 145	Elementary Statistics	4
or STAT 305	Statistical Methods	
Psychology		
Select one from:		
PSY 100	General Psychology	3
PSY 212	Lifespan Development	3
PSY 204	Abnormal Psychology	3
PSY 356	Infancy and Childhood	3
PSY 357	Adolescence	3
PSY 358	Adulthood	3

¹ BIO 435 or BIO 315 are acceptable alternatives.

Professional PAS curriculum

The PA Program curriculum includes a total of 108 required credits including 64 credits of didactic and professional development and 44 credits of supervised clinical experiences. Matriculating students are enrolled full-time as a cohort and pre-clinical courses are offered once per year. Students must successfully complete the pre-clinical year to advance to the clinical year.

The clinical year is also full-time and composed of required (PAS 720-732) and specialty rotations (PAS 734) as well as a professional development seminar series. The rotations do not need to be completed in a specific order and sequence is subject to availability of clinical sites.

Pre-clinical year courses (listed in order of enrollment)

59 credits

Code	Title	Credits
PAS 509	Human Gross Anatomy	3
PAS 510	Applied Human Gross Anatomy	3
PAS 626	Physiology for the Medical Professional	4
PAS 640	Introduction to the Physician Assistant Profession	1
PAS 680	Pathology	1
PAS 630	Clinical Pharmacology I	3
PAS 642	Medical History and Physical Exam	3
PAS 643	Applied Medical History and Physical Exam	1
PAS 654	Evidence Based Practice for PAs	2
PAS 681	Medical Diagnostics	1
PAS 682	Internal Medicine: Cardiology	3
PAS 683	Gastroenterology	2
PAS 685	Pulmonology	2
PAS 703	Endocrinology	1
PAS 707	Hematology	1
PAS 711	Clinical Neuroscience I	2
PAS 800	Clinical Assessment I	1
PAS 637	Clinical Practice Skills I	1
PAS 649	Health Care Administration, Law, and Ethics	1
PAS 717	Rheumatology	1
PAS 628	Infectious Diseases	2
PAS 631	Clinical Pharmacology II	2
PAS 647	Applied Clinical Practice Skills	2

PAS 652	Clinical Procedures (one credit repeated twice)	2
PAS 701	Nephrology	1
PAS 709	Emergency Medicine	1
PAS 712	Clinical Neuroscience II	2
PAS 760	Obstetrics - Maternal/Fetal Care	1
PAS 762	Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine	1
PAS 763	Genitourinary Medicine	1
PAS 764	Applied Genitourinary Medicine	1
PAS 770	Principles of Surgical Medicine	1
PAS 771	Orthopedics	1
PAS 772	Principles of Surgical Medicine III: Surgical Subspecialties of Otorhinolaryngology and Ophthalmology	1
PAS 773	Dermatology	1
PAS 801	Clinical Assessment II	1
PAS 700	Society and Population Health	1
Total Credits		59

Clinical rotations

44 credits

Completion of required rotations (PAS 720-732) and specialty rotations (PAS 734) do not need to be completed in a specific order. Sequence is subject to availability of specific sites.

Code	Title	Credits
Required clinical rotations		
PAS 720	Family Medicine Rotation	4
PAS 722	Internal Medicine Rotation	4
PAS 724	General Surgery Rotation	4
PAS 726	Women's Health Rotation	4
PAS 728	Pediatric Rotation	4
PAS 730	Behavioral Health Rotation	4
PAS 732	Emergency Medicine Rotation	4
Specialty clinical rotations		
PAS 734	Specialty Medicine Rotation (four credits repeated four times)	16
Total Credits		44

Professional Development

5 credits

Code	Title	Credits
PAS 790	PA Professional Development I Seminar	1
PAS 792	PA Professional Development II Seminar	2
PAS 794	PA Professional Development III Seminar	1
PAS 802	Summative Assessment	1
Total Credits		5

University requirements

University graduate degree requirements

After being admitted to the program of one's choice, candidates for a graduate degree must:

1. Complete any preliminary course work and deficiencies.
2. Complete all courses and other program requirements, including residence requirements prescribed for the degree desired in the

respective school or college within a seven-year period from the date of initial enrollment, with the exception of students enrolled in the Student Affairs Administration and Leadership Ed.D. (SAA Ed.D.) graduate program. SAA Ed.D. students must complete all degree requirements within ten years from the time of initial enrollment in the graduate program.

3. Earn a minimum of 30 credits for a master's degree; 54 credits for a doctorate or post-master's degree. Earn at least one-half of the minimum number of credits required in the program in graduate-only level courses (700, 800, 900, and non-slash 600 level courses). Some UWL graduate programs require more than 30 graduate credits. Please review the individual program requirements (<http://catalog.uwlax.edu/graduate/programrequirements/>) listed in the catalog for the exact number of credits required.
4. Earn a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00.
5. Satisfy dissertation, thesis, seminar paper, terminal/graduate projects and internships, or comprehensive examination, where applicable. A dissertation or thesis approved by the committee must be submitted to Graduate & Extended Learning for editorial review and approval by the Dean of Graduate & Extended Learning. The recommended initial submission date for review is two weeks before commencement. Ordinarily, a seminar paper or project report does not have to be approved by the Dean of Graduate & Extended Learning. However, if the seminar paper or project report is to be archived in Murphy Library, the student must follow the same rules as they apply to the dissertation/thesis requiring approval from the Dean of Graduate & Extended Learning. For further research/dissertation/thesis guidelines (<https://www.uwlax.edu/gel/graduate-education/thesis-and-dissertation/>), see Graduate & Extended Learning.
6. File a completed "Intent to Graduate" form online via the WINGS Student Center immediately following registration for the final semester or summer term in residence. December graduates and winter intersession should file by May 1. May and summer graduates should file by December 1.
7. Pay the graduation fee and remove all other indebtedness to the university. Payment of graduation fees does not imply readiness for graduation and does not take the place of applying for graduation.
8. Complete all requirements within 30 days after the official ending date of a term in order for a degree to be awarded for that term. (See #5 above for separate deadline for written capstone experience.)

Sample degree plan

Course schedule by semester:

Pre-Clinical Year				
Summer	Credits Fall	Credits Winter	Credits Spring	Credits
PAS 509	3 PAS 630	3 PAS 649	1 PAS 628	2
PAS 510	3 PAS 642	3 PAS 637	1 PAS 631	2
PAS 626	4 PAS 643	1 PAS 717	1 PAS 647	2
PAS 640	1 PAS 654	2	PAS 701	1
PAS 680	1 PAS 681	1	PAS 709	1
	PAS 682	3	PAS 712	2
	PAS 683	2	PAS 760	1
	PAS 685	2	PAS 762	1
	PAS 703	1	PAS 763	1
	PAS 707	1	PAS 764	1
	PAS 711	2	PAS 770	1
	PAS 800	1	PAS 771	1
			PAS 772	1
			PAS 773	1

			PAS 801	1
	12	22	3	19
Clinical Year				
Summer	Credits	Fall	Credits	Winter
PAS 652 (2) ¹	1	Clinical rotations, four 4-week rotations. Select four of the following:	16	Winter Intersession and Spring Semester
Clinical rotations, three 4-week rotations. Select three of the following:	12	PAS 720	4	Clinical rotations, four 4-week rotations. Select four of the following:
PAS 720	4	PAS 722	4	PAS 720
PAS 722	4	PAS 724	4	PAS 722
PAS 724	4	PAS 726	4	PAS 724
PAS 726	4	PAS 728	4	PAS 726
PAS 728	4	PAS 730	4	PAS 728
PAS 730	4	PAS 732	4	PAS 730
PAS 732	4	PAS 734	4	PAS 732
PAS 734	4	PAS 792	2	PAS 734
PAS 700	1			PAS 794
PAS 790	1			PAS 802
	15		18	18

Total Credits: 107

¹ PAS 652 will be taken in the Summer after Pre-Clinical Spring semester for a total of two credits.