Pre-Requisite Coursework for Physician Assistant Graduate Programs

**PRE-HEALTH**  
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**ADVISING:**  
Schedule appointments via e-Campus advising; Click on “Professional/Honors” tab located at top-right.

Pre-requisites for Physician Assistant (PA) graduate programs vary by school. This worksheet is only a guide to the requirements of most programs, and you are advised to work closely with the pre-health advisor as you pursue a pre-PA curriculum. To understand pre-requisites and other program requirements, it is important to utilize available resources such as the official PA Program Directory (PAfocus.org) and—when necessary—to consult with PA programs directly. Pre-requisites should be taken before applying to PA programs, and it is strongly recommended that the courses listed below be taken during the regular semesters at URI (not summer and not online). Note: Many PA programs require a C or better in the pre-requisite courses.

**Pre-Admission Clinical Experience:** A critical component of a competitive PA school applicant is prior clinical experience in the health care field, which includes direct patient care. Hands-on experience is highly recommended and required by most programs, and the number of direct patient care hours required prior to application ranges from the hundreds to thousands and should also include some PA shadowing. Programs also vary in the kinds of direct patient care experience they accept as fulfillment for this requirement. It is recommended that students begin clinical experiences as early as possible and consult with the pre-health advisor and PA programs about accepted forms of experience.

**BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES:** Two semesters are required. Additional upper-level coursework in biology is often required. The minimum recommendation is:

- BIO 101/103 (3+1 credits)  
- BIO 102/104 (3+1 credits)

**ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY:** *Note: Priority registration for these two courses is given to certain majors.

- BIO 121* (4 credits)  
- BIO 242* w/ 244 (3+1 credits)  
   *Pre-req: BIO 121

*Open to bio, kinesiology, nursing, pharmacy, pre-physical therapy, clinical lab science, dietetics, and biomedical engineering majors only.

**CHEMISTRY:**

Two semesters of general chemistry:

- CHM 101 w/ 102 (3+1 credits)  
- CHM 112 w/ 114 (3+1 credits)

**CHEMISTRY:**

At least one semester of organic chemistry:

- CHM 124 w/ 126 (3+1 credits)

**BIOCHEMISTRY:** Required by most programs.

- BCH 311* (3 credits)  
   *Pre-req: One semester organic chemistry

**MICROBIOLOGY:** Required by most programs.

- MIC 201 or 211 (4 credits)

**STATISTICS:** Required by most programs.

- STA 307, 308, 409 or 411 (3 credits)

**MATHEMATICS:** Some programs require one semester of math in addition to, or instead of, statistics. Depending on the program, the minimum may most commonly be met by precalculus or calculus:

- MTH 111 or 131 (3 credits)

**SOCIAL SCIENCES:** Requirements vary but often include 6 credits of coursework in the behavioral/social sciences, often with one semester specified of psychology. Two courses are recommended, one from each of the following groups:

- PSY 113, 232*, 254* or 255  
- PSY 113, 232*, 254*, 255; SOC 100, 224; or other related

*Pre-req: PSY 113

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“Pre-Health/Pre-PA” is **not a major** and students from any major can opt to follow the pre-PA curriculum in conjunction with their major and general education requirements. Professional schools expect applicants to have maintained a challenging, broad-based undergraduate course load. However, you should be careful to never take more credits than you can manage successfully. Note: The pre-health advisor is supplemental to, not in place of, the major advisor. If you have an advisor hold on e-Campus, please see your major advisor.

Students preparing for PA school must complete all requirements for their chosen major, general education requirements, and the pre-requisites listed above. In addition to (or in conjunction with) those requirements, the courses listed below are wise choices for students preparing for a health profession. Pre-health students are also strongly encouraged to participate in the Honors Program.

**OTHER SUGGESTED COURSEWORK:**

*Strongly recommended, but not required:*

BIO 341 Principles of Cell Biology  
BIO 352/353 Genetics  
BIO 300/301 Physiology of Exercise  
MIC 333 Immunology and Serology

*Other good options, not required:*

BCH 435 Introduction to the Biology and Genetics of Cancer  
BIO 201 Animal Physiology  
BIO 302 Animal Development  
BIO 404 Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy  
BIO 445 Endocrinology  
MIC 334 Virology  
MIC 491/BCH 491 Research in Microbiology or Biochemistry  
NFS 207 Introduction to Nutrition (N)  
NSF 210 Applied General Nutrition (N)

**Note:** Courses marked with (A), (L), (S), or (N) may fulfill fine arts and literature, letters, social science, or natural science general education requirements, respectively. For students pursuing a Bachelor of Arts, be mindful of the one-course-per-discipline rule, i.e., you may not have all six credits come from the same course code.

**Courses to Consider for Gen Eds** & **Free Electives:**

- BPS 201 How Drugs Work (N)  
- BPS 203 Herbal Medicines and Functional Foods (N)  
- ENG 357 Literature and Medicine (A)  
- HIS 116 History of Western Science (L)  
- HIS 117 History of Medicine (L)  
- HIS 351 Historical Perspectives on Women and Health (L)  
- HDF 200 Life Span Development  
- HDF 314 Introduction to Gerontology  
- HPR xxx Various Honors Program classes. See web.  
  → note: HPR 309 Global Challenge of Emerging Infectious Disease (N)  
- PHL 212 Ethics (L)  
- PHL 215 Science and Inquiry (L)  
- PHL 314 Ethical Problems in Society and Medicine (L)  
- PHP 114 Responsible Health Care (S)  
- PHP 143 Sustainable Solutions for Global Health (S) (N)  
- PSY 113 General Psychology (S)  
- PSY 232 Developmental Psychology (S)  
- PSY 254 Behavior Problems and Personality Disorders (S)  
- PSY 255 Health Psychology (S)  
- PSY 200 Quantitative Methods in Psychology  
- SOC 100 General Sociology (S)  
- SOC 224 Health, Illness, and Medical Care  
- SOC 300 Topics in Sociology (subject varies)  
- THN 360 Impact of Death on Behavior (L)

**APPLICATION PROCESS:** The Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) opens in April, and all applicants are encouraged to begin preparing their CASPA application as early as possible to submit for regular rolling admissions. Visit PAfocus.org and portal.caspaonline.org for application instructions and support.

**APPLICATION ASSISTANCE:** The Pre-Health Professions Advising Program hosts info sessions throughout the year on topics related to the application process, and advisors are also available to review your draft application, including your personal statement. Please contact uriprehealth@etal.uri.edu for application review assistance.

**URI-JWU ARTICULATION AGREEMENT:** This partnership between URI and the Johnson & Wales University (JWU) master’s program in Physician Assistant Studies has three main benefits to URI pre-PA students:

- It guarantees an interview to URI applicants who meet the program’s minimum requirements for admission.
- It reserves some spaces each year in the JWU PA program for URI applicants who meet the program’s minimum admission requirements and are interviewed through this agreement.
- It establishes a URI-JWU Early Identification Program (EIP), whereby URI students may apply in the spring of their sophomore year for a spot in the JWU PA program following their 4th (senior) year of study at URI.

For additional information about this articulation agreement, please email uriprehealth@etal.uri.edu.

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