

Pre-Physician Assistant (PA) Prerequisite Guide

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
CENTER FOR CAREER AND
EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

This guide is designed to assist in planning coursework to fulfill common PA school prerequisites, but some programs have varying prerequisites. It is **essential to research specific admissions requirements**. Take these courses during the fall and/or spring semesters at URI; avoid summer and online. **Recommended**: maintain 3.6 GPA or higher; grades at "C" or higher.

Pre-Physician Assistant (or, Pre-Health) is not a major at URI; consider using this guide to create a plan with an academic advisor to integrate these into major/minor requirement(s).

Course	Name	Credits	Prerequisites & Notes
Biology Requirements			
BIO 101 or BIO 110 and BIO 103	Principles of Biology or Fundamentals of Biology and Lab	4	Preferred: BIO 101
BIO 102 and BIO 104	Principles of Biology II and Lab	3	BIO 101[110]/103
BIO 220 and BIO 221	Fundamentals of Human Anatomy and Physiology I and Lab	4	
BIO 222 and BIO 223	Fundamentals of Human Anatomy and Physiology II and Lab	4	BIO 220/221
CMB 201 and CMB 202 or CMB 211	Introductory Medical Microbiology and Lab or Integrative Microbiology	4	Preferred: CMB 211 1 semester of BIO, 1 year of CHM
BIO/CMB 352	General Genetics	4	BIO 101 or 110 and BIO 102
Math Requirements			
MTH 103	Applied Precalculus	3	Optional: higher level MTH course
STA 307, 308 or 409	Intro Biostatistics, Intro Statistics or Statistical Methods in Research	4	MTH 103, 131 or 141
Chemistry Requirements			
CHM 101 and 102	General Chemistry Lecture I and Lab	4	
CHM 112 and 114	General Chemistry Lecture II and Lab	4	
CHM 124 and 126 or CHM 227	Introduction to Organic Chemistry and Lab or Organic Chemistry Lecture I	3 or 4	CHM 101 or CHM 103 with a C- or better

Course	Name	Credits	Prerequisites & Notes
Biochemistry Requirements			
CMB 311	Introductory Biochemistry	3	CHM 101 & 102 + CHM 227 or CHM 124
Medical Terminology Requirements			
KIN 222	Medical Terminology	2	Online only
Social Science Requirements			
Psychology	Suggestions: PSY 113, 232, 254 or 255	3	
Sociology	Suggestions: SOC 100, 204 or 224	3	
Writing/English Requirements			
WRT 104 or 106	Writing to Inform and Explain or Introduction to Research Writing	3	
WRT, ENG or LIT	Any WRT, ENG or LIT course	3	Exception: Creative Writing
Some PA Programs Recommend or Prefer:			
NUT 207	General Nutrition	3	
CSC 101	Computing Concepts	4	

Summer Suggestions

- Avoid taking prerequisites required for PA school admission
- Gain experience (see the guide below for suggestions)
- Consider studying abroad
- Consider a summer enrichment program i.e.: Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP).
- Explore PA programs and understand their requirements
- Be prepared: create your ideal timeline for applying, listen to podcasts, shadow PA's

AP Credits: PA programs have different policies regarding AP credits. Students with AP credit in biology, chemistry, or physics are **encouraged to take an upper-level course with a lab in the same subject** to demonstrate competency. Many programs (including JWU) **do not accept any AP credit**. Research programs for their policy.

Pre-Physician Assistant Experiential Learning Guide

In addition to completing the necessary coursework, competitive applicants typically engage in **clinical/ direct patient care experience, shadowing, and on campus involvement/leadership.**

PA programs expect applicants to enter with hands-on experience in patient care (competitive range: 3,000 – 4,000 hours). This requirement ensures that future PAs have a solid foundation in direct patient interaction, medical decision-making, and the realities of working in healthcare settings.

Clinical/Direct Patient Care:

Direct interaction with patients providing hands-on care (performing procedures, administering medications, etc.)

When looking for roles, look at the job description for details on patient care duties opposed to only the job title:

- Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA)
- Patient Care Technician (or Care Navigator)
- Medical Assistant (MA)
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Paramedic
- Phlebotomist
- Physical Therapy Aide / Tech
- Respiratory Therapist
- Rehabilitation Aide
- Surgical Technologist
- Technician: Dialysis, X-Ray, Orthopedic, EKG,
- Home Health Aide (HHA)
- Hospice Aide/Palliative Care Assistant
- Clinical Research Assistant (patient care interaction)

On Campus Involvement/Leadership

- Undergraduate Teaching Assistant (UTA)
- EMT Course Instructor
- URI Student Ambassador
- Tutor, Writing Consultant or Academic Coach (AEC)
- Pre-Health Peer Advisor
- Pre-PA Club
- Resident Assistant (RA)
- Student Athlete
- Student Clubs and Organizations (over 150!)
- URI 101 Mentor

Growth Year Options

- Full time roles in any of the positions listed on this page

Shadowing

Reach out Physician Assistants in multiple fields to request shadowing hours. Use LinkedIn, company websites, and your network.