The Pre-Physician Assistant program of study at East Tennessee State University prepares students for application to a two-year Physician Assistant master’s degree (MS-PA) program. Completion of a bachelor's degree is required for acceptance to physician assistant school.

### Employment Opportunities

- **86,700** jobs in 2012
- **120,000** jobs projected in 2022

**Median Annual Wage**

- **$90,930** in 2012


### Careers as a physician assistant

Physician assistants, also known as PAs, practice medicine under the direction and supervision of physicians and surgeons. They are formally trained to examine patients, diagnose injuries and illnesses, and provide treatment.

Physician assistants are different from medical assistants. Medical assistants do routine clinical and clerical tasks; they do not practice medicine.

Physician assistants work in all areas of medicine, including primary care and family medicine, emergency medicine, and psychiatry. The work of physician assistants is largely determined by their specialties and the needs of their supervising physicians.

### Advisement

**Pre-physician assistant is not a major.** Therefore, you must choose a major (and minor, if appropriate) by the time you earn 60 credit hours. Students may major in their field of choice. Some schools, however, feel that students who major in Biology or Chemistry will be the most prepared for entry into physician assistant school. Students should speak with a Medical Professions advisor before/when declaring a major.

**You must meet with your advisor each semester.** You are required to meet with your pre-professional and major advisors each term before registering for the next. Students who receive scholarships, participate in specialized ETSU programs (such as athletics or Honors College programs) must also seek advisement from those departments. Serious consequences can occur if students fail to meet with advisors (e.g., failure to graduate on time, missing appropriate courses to prepare for application, etc.).
### Core Preparation Courses *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>BIOL 1110/1111, BIOL 1120/1121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Chemistry</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>CHEM 1110/1111, CHEM 1120/1121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Chemistry</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>CHEM 2010/2011, CHEM 2020/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BIOL 4147/4157 or BIOL 4167/4177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>HSCI 3320/3321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy and Physiology</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>HSCI 2010/2011, HSCI 2020/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>ENGL 1010, 1020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SPCH 1300, 2300, or 2320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MATH 1530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PSYC 1310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Terminology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>COBH 2750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Genetics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>BIOL 3100/3141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional Recommended Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calculus</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>MATH 1910 and 1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NTFD 2420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>HSCI 3540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Aid &amp; Emergency Care</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>COBH 2030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students should maintain a minimum of 17-19 credit hours per semester.

* Consult your advisor before choosing a speech course.

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### What does it take to get into physician assistant school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Science GPA</th>
<th>GRE Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>152.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These courses vary between PA schools - check admission requirements for each school of interest.

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### the application process

Students should begin the application process to physician assistant school during their junior year of college. Most schools use the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). You may utilize the site to determine the application deadline for the school(s) of your choice. The website address is [https://portal.caspaonline.org](https://portal.caspaonline.org).

During the application process, most schools will require three letters of recommendation to be submitted, one of which must be from a doctor or physician assistant. Therefore, it is imperative that you establish a strong relationship with the person you are shadowing.

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### Suggested two-year schedule for pre-physician assistant students

**Freshman**

**Fall**

- CHEM 1110/1111
- BIOL 1110/1111
- MATH 1530
- ENGL 1010
- PREH 1350

**Spring**

- CHEM 1120/1121
- BIOL 1120/1121
- PSYC 1310
- ENGL 1020

**Sophomore**

**Fall**

- CHEM 2010/2011
- HSCI 2010/2011
- SPCH*
- PSYC ELECTIVE
- COBH 2750

**Spring**

- HSCI 2020/2021
- CHEM 2020/2021
- ELECTIVE
- ELECTIVE
- ELECTIVE

Students should consult their advisor before choosing a speech course.

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### Contact Information

Medical Professions Advisement Office
423.439.5602
ARC in Culp Center
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Alpha Epsilon Delta – National Pre-Health Honor Society (AED)
AED functions as a health pre-professional honor society encouraging excellence in scholarship. It emphasizes the importance of health education and promotes cooperation and contact among professionals.

Pre-Physician Assistant Student Organization (PASO)
The Pre-Physician Assistant Student Organization provides an avenue for pre-physician assistant students to develop a community within their field of study and through interdisciplinary programs. Members have access to social events, school tours, shadowing/volunteer opportunities, and guest lectures.

Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA)
HOSA provides students with knowledge and understanding of various health care careers. It also provides students with opportunities to compete in various state and regional events to learn about current health issues.

Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS)
This organization is open to all ETSU students. MAPS aims to provide students with valuable opportunities in the community to enhance their knowledge in the health field they are planning to enter. Opportunities include job shadowing, volunteering, and research. MAPS is also geared toward forming friendships among members.

What else can I be doing now to strengthen my application to physician assistant school?

RELATED EXPERIENCE
Students are encouraged to explore the physician assistant profession either through employment or as a volunteer. Physician assistant schools want to know that a student has worked in the field, observed what is involved, and still has the desire to continue in that profession. Students should gain as much experience as possible without sacrificing grades. Most physician assistant programs require extensive direct patient care experience prior to application. The typical requirement is around 1000 documented hours (or 6 months of employment) of clinical experience. Many physician assistants have experience as certified nursing assistants, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), paramedics, or other allied health professions involving direct patient care before applying to a physician assistant program.

EXTRACURRICULARS
The admissions committees of physician assistant schools are interested in seeing a range of extracurricular activities, especially those demanding a significant leadership role. Students should demonstrate their ability to balance full academic schedules with extracurricular involvement on and off campus and/or through employment opportunities. ETSU has many organizations that students can join. Students should visit the SORC located on the first floor of the Culp center or www.etsu.edu/sorc for more information regarding extracurricular activities. It is not beneficial to simply join an organization; you must demonstrate leadership qualities!

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE
Physician assistant schools are looking for candidates who demonstrate a commitment to community service. Students should seek volunteer projects that focus on giving back to the community, especially those within the physician assistant profession.

ONLINE ETIQUETTE
Please consider personal email addresses when corresponding with professional schools. First impressions are often based on correspondence and email addresses should be appropriate for professional communication. Messages and images sent electronically are reflections of judgment and potential suitability for professional careers. Inappropriate behaviors shared on an accessible venue can be viewed and shared by anyone, possibly compromising your chances of admission to physician assistant school.

WATCH WHAT YOU POST!