

Master of Physician Assistant Studies

Admission Emphasis

The admission requirements are consistent with the Program mission to prepare competent PAs to serve as primary care providers in rural areas. Along with the mission, the goal is to improve access to health care, help alleviate shortages of primary care providers and deliver comprehensive, affordable health care services to people in rural communities. Consequently, acceptance is a competitive selection process with an emphasis on the proven adult learner with recent clinical health care experience and insight and inclination to meet the Program mission. Admission to the Physician Assistant Program is a competitive selection process. Each applicant is reviewed individually and evaluated on their own merits.

How To Apply (<https://med.und.edu/education-training/physician-assistant/how-to-apply.html>)

Applicants

The UND PA Program seeks applicants with:

1. Academic Preparation including:

- solid achievement in undergraduate coursework.
- quality performance in prerequisite coursework.
- health-related or science-based degrees and/or advanced degree.
- ability to learn in an adult learner model, or accelerated environment.
- completion of upper level science prerequisite courses within the past 7 years.
- demonstrate recent proficiency in progressively rigorous prerequisite core science coursework.

2. Dedication and experience with rural populations including:

- prior clinical health care experience with rural populations,
- residence in rural geographic areas,
- North Dakota residents are given highest preference followed by those in bordering states (MN, MT, SD) and the region (IA, NE, WI, WY)

3. Health care experience including:

- levels of previous clinical health care experience that involves critical thinking and decision making.
- direct patient care exceeding the minimum 1,000 paid hours requirement.
- evidence of health care team effectiveness.
- strong references from physicians, physician assistants, and other clinical supervisors.

Please note that decisions of the Admission Committee are not appealable and acceptance into the UND PA Program and successful completion of the program does not imply or guarantee that the student will be able to pass the national certification exam or obtain state licensure upon graduation.

Prerequisites

Admission to the Physician Assistant Program within the School of Medicine & Health Sciences at the University of North Dakota is a competitive selection process. Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee progression in the application process.

Applications, clinical experience, transcripts, or previous coursework will not be reviewed until they are made available to us as a complete, verified application through CASPA. It is the applicant's responsibility to evaluate if coursework and experience meet the published standards. Also, it is the applicant's

responsibility to contact CASPA directly to verify the receipt of all application materials by CASPA and the current status of their application.

In addition to meeting these program requirements, you must also meet the UND School of Graduate Studies admissions requirements (<https://und.edu/admissions/graduate/requirements.html>) to apply for this program.

All admission requirements must be completed by the September 1 application deadline unless denoted below. No in-progress requirements will be considered.

Degree Requirements

- A bachelor's degree or graduate degree at a regionally accredited institution within the United States. Degree must be completed by December 31 of the application year. Preference is given to health or science degree and/or advanced degrees.
- A minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale) is required. Consideration is given with more recent transcripts showing significant improvement in science coursework.

The University of North Dakota Physician Assistant Program does not accept transfer students from other PA programs. Advanced placement and transfer of credits is not allowed.

Prerequisite Coursework Requirements

- Grade of B or higher (3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale) unless denoted below.
 - *The UND DPAS recognizes that some applicants have taken courses which were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Given this unprecedented event, we may accept S/U courses in prerequisites if that grade was mandated by the school without student choice. Our admission process is a holistic review of your application including previous academic performance to determine success. Please provide rationale of S/U courses in your CASPA application under the custom questions section.*
- Completed at a regionally accredited institution within the United States (regional accreditation by HLC MSCHE, NECHE, NWCCU, SACSCOC, WSCUC).
- CLEP (College Level Examination Programs) or "test out" courses are not accepted.
- Upper-level university science coursework is preferred. Upper-level coursework is non-introductory, typically with course numbers indicating at least junior or senior status.
- Preference is given to candidates whose core science coursework has been completed within 7 years of the application deadline. The most competitive applicants are those who demonstrate recent proficiency in progressively rigorous prerequisite core science coursework.

Prerequisite Coursework

- **Human Anatomy** (At least 3 semester credits). Lab preferred
- **Human Physiology** (At least 3 semester credits). Lab preferred
 - *Note: If a combined course such as anatomy and physiology (i.e. A&P I and II) is taken, 2 courses of at least 3 semester credits each are required.*
- **Microbiology** (At least 2 semester credits). Lab preferred
- **Statistics** (At least 3 semester credits). Preferably statistics for psychology, sociology, or biology
- **At least 6 semester credits of additional upper-level University science.** Taking these courses with their respective labs (if offered) is preferred. Clinical courses taken toward health care certification do not meet this requirement. Courses to consider include:
 - Biochemistry*
 - Biochemistry of Proteins and Information Flow*
 - Genetics
 - Cell Biology
 - Developmental Biology
 - Endocrinology
 - Systems Biology

- Physiology of Organs and Systems
- Molecular Genetics
- Molecular Biology of the Cell
- Organic Chemistry I*
- Organic Chemistry II*
- Introduction to Immunology

* Courses denoted with an asterisk (*) a grade of C is acceptable

Other Recommended Coursework

- Medical Terminology
- Pharmacology
- Psychology
- Additional upper level science coursework (with labs)

Additional coursework beyond the minimum academic preparation requirements will strengthen an application, especially if the courses are highly correlated with medicine such as immunology, pathophysiology, gerontology, epidemiology, human nutrition, and additional courses in anatomy, physiology, chemistry, and psychology.

Health Care Requirements

A minimum of 1,000 paid hours of health care experience must be completed within the United States and be related to direct (hands-on), supervised patient care showing commitment to a career in medicine. Experience should involve assessment and treatment relating to Western (allopathic) medicine and medical professional judgment. Hours accrued in a student/learner role are not acceptable. The most competitive candidates are those who demonstrate their commitment to direct patient care through their recent and current work experience. Admission preference is considered for applicants who have prior health care experience in rural populations.

All health care disciplines are certainly valuable to the practice of medicine. The most successful candidates have clinical health care experiences which are rich in high-level, direct patient care and decision-making responsibilities. Clinical health care experiences which lack similar skills do not fully prepare students for successful completion of the accelerated program or the professional board exam. Examples of preferred health care experience can be found on the [FAQ page](#).

Clinical Preceptorships

Students **may not** apply with a preceptor. To maintain compliance with ARC-PA standards, prospective and enrolled students must not be required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors. Upon acceptance into the program, students will work with the UND DPAS clinical education team for all primary care and specialty rotation placements. Students **may not** contact any known or prospective preceptors, or attempt to establish their own clinical rotations. Clinical rotations may occur in any geographical area that the program deems fit to meet program requirements and national accreditation standards which are of utmost priority.

Application Process

Additional instruction on the application process can be found on the [How to Apply page](#).

UND PA Program gives preference to applicants who demonstrate:

- Rural commitment in residence and/or healthcare experience.
- Regional ties: North Dakota residents are given highest preference followed by those in bordering states (MN, MT, SD) and the region (IA, NE, WI, WY)
- Healthcare experience in high-level, direct patient care.
- Degree in health or science field and/or an advanced degree.
- Academic coursework which is of high rigor, completed within the last 7 years, and includes associated lab.

MPAS Degree Requirements

Students seeking the Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree at the University of North Dakota must satisfy all general requirements set forth by the School of Graduate Studies as well as these particular requirements set forth by the Department of Physician Assistant Studies.

1. Successfully complete all graded courses with a grade of at least a B.
2. Satisfactorily complete all required clinical rotations as defined by the DPAS.
3. Satisfactorily complete all clinical experience logs including cases, time, and procedures/skills as required by DPAS.
4. Successfully complete a scholarly project and related poster presentation approved by the academic advisor and graduate director.
5. Fulfill expectations of professional behavior.
6. Pass clinical testing administered during the clinical medicine courses and at the program's conclusion.
7. Pass the cumulative objective exam administered at the program's conclusion.

Required Courses

Current Course List (Class of 2025)

Code	Title	Credits
PA 507	Medical Human Anatomy Radiology I	3
PA 508	Medical Human Anatomy Radiology II	3
PA 510	Human Physiology Pathophysiology I	4
PA 511	Human Physiology Pathophysiology II	4
PA 512	History and Physical Exam I	2
PA 513	History and Physical Exam II	2
PA 516	EKG Interpretation	1
PA 517	Pharmacology I	2
PA 518	Pharmacology II	2
PA 521	Diagnostic Studies I	2
PA 522	Diagnostic Studies II	2
PA 523	Diagnostic Studies III	2
PA 525	Scholarly Project Development I	3
PA 540	Clinical Medicine: Primary Care I - Didactic	5
PA 541	Clinical Medicine: Primary Care I Clinical	5
PA 550	Clinical Medicine: Primary Care II - Didactic	5
PA 551	Clinical Medicine: Primary Care II - Clinical	4
PA 560	Clinical Medicine: Primary Care III - Didactic	3
PA 561	Clinical Medicine: Primary Care III - Clinical	4
PA 566	Professional Practice I (Professional Issues & Role Development I)	2
PA 567	Professional Practice II (Professional Issues & Role Development II)	1
PA 568	Professional Practice III	1
PA 569	Professional Practice IV	1
PA 570	Clinical Medicine - Primary Care Clinical Continuation	7
PA 571	Rural/Underserved Primary Care Clinical	3
PA 580	Specialty Clerkship	6
PA 581	Emergency Department Clerkship	4
PA 582	Surgery Clerkship	4
PA 995	Scholarly Project	3
Total Credits		90

Future Course list (Class of 2026)*

Code	Title	Credits
PA 507	Medical Human Anatomy Radiology I	3
PA 508	Medical Human Anatomy Radiology II	3
PA 510	Human Physiology Pathophysiology I	4
PA 511	Human Physiology Pathophysiology II	4

PA 512	History and Physical Exam I	2
PA 513	History and Physical Exam II	2
PA 516	EKG Interpretation	1
PA 517	Pharmacology I	2
PA 518	Pharmacology II	2
PA 521	Diagnostic Studies I	2
PA 522	Diagnostic Studies II	2
PA 523	Diagnostic Studies III	2
PA 525	Scholarly Project Development I	2
PA 526	Scholarly Project Development II	2
PA 540	Clinical Medicine: Primary Care I - Didactic	5
PA 541	Clinical Medicine: Primary Care I Clinical	4
PA 550	Clinical Medicine: Primary Care II - Didactic	5
PA 551	Clinical Medicine: Primary Care II - Clinical	4
PA 560	Clinical Medicine: Primary Care III - Didactic	3
PA 561	Clinical Medicine: Primary Care III - Clinical	3
PA 565	Professional Conduct and Commitment	1
PA 566	Professional Practice I	1
PA 567	Professional Practice II	1
PA 568	Professional Practice III	1
PA 569	Professional Practice IV	1
PA 570	Clinical Medicine - Primary Care Clinical Continuation	3
PA 571	Rural/Underserved Primary Care Clinical	3
PA 580	Specialty Clerkship	10
PA 581	Emergency Department Clerkship	4
PA 582	Surgery Clerkship	4
PA 583	Hospital Medicine Clerkship	2
PA 995	Scholarly Project	2
Total Credits		90

*Class of 2026 and all upcoming classes will be following this course list.

Additional Information

For more information, regarding the UND PA Program, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (<https://med.und.edu/education-training/physician-assistant/pa-faq.html>) page. If there are any other questions not answered there please contact und.med.paprogram@UND.edu or 701.777.2344.