THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA **USA PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES**
PRE-HEALTH ADVISING **Mobile, Alabama**
ACADEMIC ADVISING AND TRANSFER SERVICES
www.southalabama.edu/departments/academicsuccess/pre-health/

APPLICATION TO USA PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

The USA Department of Physician Assistant Studies (USA PAS) offers a Master of Health Science (MHS) degree that prepares graduates for professional practice and is designed as an entry-level PA degree. They are seeking applicants who have a proven record of community involvement, strong academic records, and high scores on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), as well as documented direct patient care hours. Forty (40) students are matriculated into the USA PAS program each May.

Students apply April 25th – October 1st in the year prior to their planned start date. The application process is completed electronically through the Centralized Application Service of Physician Assistants (CASPA). Students also must complete a Supplemental Application which can be found at the USA PAS website and uploaded to CASPA. The deadline for submission and verification of all materials including letters of recommendation and the supplemental application is October 1st.

STATISTICS FOR THE 2018 USA PAS ENTERING CLASS

	IN-STATE	TOTAL
Total Applications Received		1380
Interviewed		110
Applicants Matriculated	19	40
Average GPA		3.70
Average Science GPA		3.65
Average Last 60 Hours GPA		3.75
Average GRE – Verbal		154
Average GRE – Quantitative		152
Average Patient Care Hours		3359
Average Volunteer Hours		399
Average PA Shadowing Hours		98

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR USA PAS

USA PAS seeks applicants with a wide range of talents and academic backgrounds. Because of this, all majors, both science and non-science, are considered for acceptance. A bachelor's degree is required for admission. Applicants must also complete the minimum required course work with grades of "C" or higher in each course[1] (see below). All prerequisite courses must be completed one semester prior to matriculation (completed by December to enter the following May). Please refer to the USA Major Guides for information about course requirements for specific majors.

- General Chemistry with Lab: Two semesters[2]
- General Biology with Lab: One semester[2]
- Organic Chemistry with Lab: One semester[2]
- Mathematics: One semester[3]
- Anatomy and Physiology: Two semesters[2]
- General Microbiology: One semester[2]
- Medical Terminology: One semester
- General Psychology: One semester
- Statistics: One semester

[1]U.S. AP and IB credits will be accepted with proper denotation on the undergraduate transcript and only after transcript evaluation and with approval from the USA PAS department.
[2]All math and science courses have required prerequisites. Entrance to these courses will be based on Math ACT or SAT score and/or prior coursework.
[3]Completion of math courses will be dependent on Math ACT or SAT score. Minimum of pre-calculus algebra is required.

BONUS COURSES

Bonus courses are not required by the USA PAS but if completed with a "C" or above will strengthen the application.

- Genetics: One semester[2]
- Biochemistry: One semester[2]
- Immunology: One semester[2]
- Pathophysiology: One semester[2]
- Pharmacology: One semester[2]

RECOMMENDED ACADEMIC PLAN

FIRST YEAR	CREDIT HOURS
CAS 100	2
EH 101 & EH 102	6
MA 112 or higher	3
CH 131/L & CH 132/L	8
BLY 121/L	4
PSY 120[4]	3
CA 110	3
Courses for Major or Minor	3
TOTAL	32

SECOND YEAR	
BMD 251 & BMD 252[5]	8
CH 201/L	4
EMS 210	3
English Literature	3
Fine Arts	3
History (US or Western Civilization)	3
Courses for Major/Minor	6
TOTAL	30

THIRD YEAR	
ST 210	3
BLY 213[6]	3
Social Science	3
Humanities	3
Courses for Major/Minor	18
TOTAL	30

FOURTH YEAR	
Completion of Major and Minor Courses required for the degree	30
TOTAL	30

[4]Human development courses may be accepted
[5]BMD 311 and BMD 334 will also satisfy this requirement.
[6]BMD 210, BMD 402, or BLY 314 will also satisfy this requirement.

GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATION (GRE)

In addition to maintaining a strong GPA, completing required coursework, and obtaining direct patient care hours, students will need to take the GRE. Students should plan on taking the GRE during their third year. The GRE is composed of three sections: Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Analytical Writing. The Verbal and Quantitative Reasoning sections are each scored on a 130-170 scale in one-point increments. The Analytical Writing section is scored on a 0-6 scale in half-point increments. USA PAS requires a minimum GRE score of 145 in both verbal and quantitative sections in an individual attempt. Scores are not mixed from separate attempts. The Educational Testing Service website (ets.org) contains useful information on preparing for and taking the GRE.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

USA PAS requires three letters of recommendation as part of the application package. One must be from a Medical Doctor (MD), Doctor of Osteopathy (DO) or Physician Assistant (PA). These letters need to be included with your CASPA application.

PRE-PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Pre-Health Advising is dedicated to supporting the success of students working toward a graduate education in physician assistant studies. Pre-health advisors are available to help students craft a workable plan by providing structure, guidance, and information about University and Pre-Physician Assistant Resources.

CHOOSING A MAJOR

There is no perfect "pre-physician assistant" major at the University of South Alabama. A student can major in any subject area and apply to a physician assistant program. If the desired career path changes, students need to be in a major that will allow them opportunities for success. Academic and Pre-Health advisors work together to help students with the coordination of courses for both the major and physician assistant studies.

IMPORTANCE OF GPA

Physician Assistant programs will require students to provide their academic GPA which includes all grades earned at any institute of higher learning, including dual enrollment. USA PAS applicants must have a minimum overall GPA, Science GPA and Last 60-hour GPA of 3.0.

SHADOWING ACTIVITIES

Physician Assistant programs desire students with diverse backgrounds and experiences, strong GPAs (especially in math and sciences), sustained volunteer activities, leadership skills, shadowing, and direct patient care experience. USA PAS requires a minimum of 500 hours of direct patient care obtained through volunteer or paid employment. Further information regarding what constitutes "direct patient care" can be found at the USA Department of Physician Assistant Studies website.

Pre-physician assistant students are entering fields with very strong and well established service orientations. Students need to get involved in service at the start of the college career. There are volunteer activities that students can participate in during the semester, as well as during the summer break. Physician assistants will be part of a team as a health professional, and one way to learn how to be part of a team is to get involved and develop leadership skills.

Students also need to be culturally aware and actively pursue experiences that allow them to learn about themselves and others. It is important for pre-physician assistant students to choose experiences that will allow them to stand out, demonstrate their value, and enable them to work with diverse populations at home and abroad. For instance, if a student studies abroad at some point during the academic career, the student will learn the issues affecting the health and well-being of populations in other countries.

PRE-PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT SOCIETY

The Pre-Physician Assistant Society at USA is an undergraduate student-run organization affiliated with the USA Department of Physician Assistant Studies. Students are strongly encouraged to become an active member of the society. Membership in the Pre-PA Society provides students opportunities to meet other students who are interested in the physician assistant program and to learn more about the physician assistant profession. This is an active group involved in community service, improving academics, and the development of a network of like-minded people.

ALPHA EPSILON DELTA (AED)

Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED) is the national honor society for pre-health students. The University of South Alabama has a very active AED chapter, Alabama Zeta. In addition to providing service activities for pre-health students, health care professionals and professional school admissions officers present at bi-monthly meetings. All pre-health students are encouraged to become actively involved in the University's chapter of AED. In order to become a national member, students must have a minimum 3.2 GPA and have been a local member of the Zeta chapter for three consecutive semesters.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA)
https://paeaonline.org