

# PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES, MSPAS

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**More Information:** <https://case.edu/medicine/physician-assistant/>

**Degree:** Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS)

## Program Overview

The CWRU PA Program is designed to train well-rounded generalist PAs built on the cornerstones of clinical mastery, professionalism, leadership and community engagement. Our goal is to challenge students so that they affect positive change through treating disease, promoting health, and understanding the social and behavioral context of illness.

Students are immersed in a graduate school atmosphere characterized by independent study and collegial interaction with faculty to educate physician assistants, who are prepared to not only treat disease and disease states, but to also promote health prevention and maintenance and to examine the social and behavioral context of illness. Experiential learning, community service, interprofessional learning and clinical relevance inform learning processes. Pre-clinical clerkships and clinical experiences are integrated across the twenty-seven months of the curriculum.

The innovative program design utilizes a hybrid blend of learning methodologies and styles. Organization and sequencing of coursework is both horizontally and vertically integrated facilitating a connected flow of systems and conditions, creating a curricular thread intended to enhance the development of critical thinking and problem-solving. Planned redundancies help build a strong pre-clinical knowledge base. Through demonstrations, case discussions and simulation activities, students learn critical thinking and how to synthesize information to formulate and implement a patient management plan. Simulation activities allow the students to participate in scenarios that closely approximate real-life patient encounters and, through a team-based approach (small group), create their care plans. Hands-on activities enhance the student's ability to develop their critical thinking and technical skills. Experiential learning through community engagement introduces students to some of the concepts of team-based care and population health.

## Program Requirements

The Case Western Reserve University PA program is a 102 credit-hour professional degree program that spans the course of 27 months. The program is a generalist program preparing learners to be leaders in PA practice in a variety of clinical settings. This intensive full-time graduate curriculum awards a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS) from the School of Medicine upon completion. The curriculum enables graduates to sit for the PA National Certifying Examination (administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants) and obtain a state license.

The educational philosophy of the PA program emphasizes the practice of evidence-based, patient-centered medical care as well as

accountability to patients, society and the profession through experiential learning and active community involvement.

The first 15 months of the program are didactic in nature, divided into four semesters. This is followed by 12 months of clinical instruction comprised of twelve, four-week clinical rotations. Early clinical exposure is accomplished through pre-clinical clerkships in the first year. The PA program begins each year in May and ends in August. Students are recruited from the CASPA system.

The program design utilizes a hybrid blend of learning methodologies and styles including:

- Experiential learning in the community-The community is the "learning lab" of the PA program. Wellness, prevention, professionalism, communication skills and philanthropy are best taught directly in the community with patients in their own environment.
- Pre-clinical Clerkships-In the second semester, students begin pre-clinical clerkships in which they are placed in clinical sites in the community for one half-day a week to practice their clinical skills, acclimate to the clinical environment and learn how to function within a team. The focus of this experience is to hone the students' clinical skills in history taking, physical exam, oral presentation, medical documentation, communication, and professionalism. It also serves as an early critical-thinking activity.
- Medical writing across the curriculum (MWAC) is introduced in the didactic phase through student reflections and progress in the clinical phase to the creation of a scientific poster, patient-safety paper, and oral case presentations.
- Asynchronous learning
- Clinical simulations
- Case-based learning and clinical correlations

Our curriculum's organization and sequencing of coursework is both horizontally and vertically integrated to create a connected flow of systems and conditions, creating a curricular thread intended to enhance the development of critical thinking and problem-solving. Planned redundancies help build a strong pre-clinical knowledge base.

## Sample Plan of Study

### First Year

Summer		Hours
PAST 401	Foundations of Clinical Medicine-Principles of Interviewing	3
PAST 403	Diagnostic Methods-Clinical Lab	1
PAST 404	Clinical Correlations	1
PAST 411	Professional Issues for PA's-History & Roles of the PA I	1
PAST 410	Cadaver Dissection-based Human Anatomy with Histology and Physiologic Correlations	6

**Hours 12**

### Fall

PAST 402	Physical Diagnosis	4
PAST 405	Medical Microbiology & Infectious Disease	2
PAST 420	Pharmacology I	2
PAST 430	Principles of Internal Medicine	7

PAST 440	Pre-Clinical Clerkships I	1
PAST 477	Human Physiology	4
<b>Hours</b>		<b>20</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
PAST 406	Ethics in Healthcare Delivery	1
PAST 412	Professional Issues for Physician Assistants II	2
PAST 421	Pharmacology II	3
PAST 431	Principles of Clinical Medicine-Surgery & Emergency Medicine	4
PAST 432	Principles of Clinical Medicine-OB/GYN	3
PAST 433	Principles of Clinical Medicine-Pediatrics	3
PAST 434	Principles of Clinical Medicine-Behavioral Medicine	2
PAST 441	Pre-Clinical Clerkships II	1
<b>Hours</b>		<b>19</b>
<b>Second Year</b>		
<b>Summer</b>		
PAST 407	Clinical Procedures	4
PAST 413	Professional Issues for Physician Assistants III	2
PAST 450	Culture and Health	2
PAST 451	Introduction to Public Health	1
PAST 452	Introduction to Evidence Based Medicine	2
PAST 453 or PAST 454	Medical Spanish Elective or Research Methods Elective	1
<b>Hours</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>63</b>

## Clinical Curriculum Year

Code	Title	Hours
PAST 500	Clinical Residency: Emergency Medicine	3
PAST 501	Clinical Residency: Family Medicine	3
PAST 502	Clinical Residency: Geriatrics	3
PAST 503	Clinical Residency: Internal Medicine	3
PAST 504	Clinical Residency: Obstetrics & Gynecology	3
PAST 505	Clinical Residency: Pediatrics	3
PAST 506	Clinical Residency: Behavioral and Mental Health	3
PAST 507	Clinical Residency: Surgery	3
PAST 508	Clinical Residency: Primary Care Elective	3
PAST 509	Clinical Residency: Inpatient Medicine Elective	3
PAST 510	Clinical Residency: Elective	3
PAST 511	Clinical Residency: Elective	3
PAST 600	Capstone Quality Improvement Project & Comprehensive Examination	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>39</b>

Required Clinical Experience Credit hours = 39 hours

**Total Credit Hours to Complete Program: 102**