MERCER UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Physician Assistant Program
Frequently Asked Questions

Application Cycle for the class entering January 2028:
November 1, 2026 – April 1, 2027

Admissions Requirements

Prior to acceptance, applicants must complete:

- Undergraduate degree (Bachelor's) must be received from a regionally-accredited college/university prior to matriculation into the program.

- Required cumulative overall Grade Point Average (GPA) of *3.0* on a 4.0 scale.

- Required Science (BCP) Grade Point Average (GPA) of *2.9* on a 4.0 scale.

- Completion of all prerequisites prior to matriculation. Applicants may be conditionally accepted with up to four (4) outstanding prerequisite courses pending; however, all prerequisites must be completed prior to enrollment in the Physician Assistant program. The CASPA application must include a plan for completing the remaining prerequisites prior to enrollment. The prerequisites for Mercer's PA Program are:

    - two course General Chemistry series with labs
    - one course of Organic Chemistry (lab optional)
    - one course of Biochemistry (lab optional)
    - two course General Biology series with labs
    - two course series of Human Anatomy and Physiology with lab (or A&P 1 *and* A&P2)
    - one course of Microbiology with lab
    - two course English Composition or intensive Writing course series
    - one course of Statistics or Biostatistics
    - one course of General or Introductory Psychology

    Notes about prerequisites:
    - Anatomy, Physiology, and Microbiology must have been taken within the last 10 years.
    - Survey courses are not acceptable towards the prerequisite coursework.
    - Online coursework will not satisfy laboratory course requirements.
    - Only grades of C or better are acceptable for prerequisite coursework.

- Required Patient Care Experience Hours: Applicants are required to complete a minimum of 1,000 hours of direct, hands-on patient care experience. Please see PCE requirements for more information.

- Three letters of reference must be submitted to **CASPA**. At least one letter must come from a practicing physician assistant or physician (MD/DO) and one must come from a college professor or instructor. The third letter can come from a non-relative professional.

- Completion of the CASPer assessment. Applicants will need to register for the assessment at https://acuityinsights.app/ and will need to sign up for CSP 20100, Professional Health Sciences. Direct your results to Mercer University and the scores will be sent to PA Admissions in approximately 2 weeks from the test date.

- Applications are reviewed holistically. Applicants who meet the minimum academic requirements are evaluated on their personal statement, letters of reference, and supplemental essay to determine interview invitations. Final admissions decisions are based on the overall application and interview performance.

- Applicants must also meet the PA Program's Technical Standards in order to be considered for admission into the program.

What materials are required to apply to the Physician Assistant Program?

PLEASE NOTE: It is highly recommended to submit your application early in the cycle and ensure that all required documents are in progress or submitted no later than 2-3 weeks prior to the final deadline of April 1st. The CASPA verification process and the distribution of Casper scores necessitate 2-3 weeks for completion. Only applications that have been deemed complete and verified by CASPA will be reviewed after April 1st.

- Primary application must be submitted online through **CASPA**: www.caspaonline.org. All official transcripts must be submitted to CASPA.
- Supplemental application must be submitted online via the Mercer website: http://chp.mercer.edu/admissions/admissions-requirements/physician-assistant/
- Supplemental Application fee ($25) must be submitted to our office prior to the deadline. Please use the following link: https://mercer.nbsstore.net/college-of-health-professions-supplemental-application-physician-assistant-program
- GRE scores are optional, not required. However, if you wish to have your scores considered with your application, please request your scores at least two weeks prior to the deadline so they will be received in time. Official GRE scores must be sent from ETS to CASPA using the institution code 0441 (Mercer U Phys Asst CASPA) in order to be considered.
- International applicants or domestic applicants with credentials from institutions outside the United States are required to have those credentials evaluated by a professional evaluation service. This evaluation must include an analysis of courses, grades and grade point average, and U.S. degree equivalency. Mercer University accepts evaluations from the following three services:

  World Education Services: http://www.wes.org/ ***(Preferred)***
  Josef Silny & Associates, Inc.
  American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

  An official evaluation report must be sent to the admissions address to be included in the application. Applicants whose native language is not English must also demonstrate satisfactory proficiency in English language as measured by the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Until this procedure has been accomplished, an application for

admission cannot be considered.

What counts as Patient Care Experience?

Applicants are required to complete a minimum of 1,000 hours of direct (hands on) patient care experience. Successful applicants often exceed the minimum number of hours. Students accepted in previous admission cycles had direct patient care experience ranging from 1,000 to over 13,000 hours. Applicants without previous health care experience are often able to acquire acceptable direct patient care experience working as a medical or nursing assistant or aide in settings such as hospitals, clinics, or physicians' private practices where a wide range of patients is seen and there is an opportunity for exposure to numerous types of health care providers. Volunteer patient care experience in a long-term care or hospice setting is also acceptable.

Applicants are also encouraged to shadow a PA to learn more about the daily routine/role of the PA; however, this experience *does not* count as "direct" patient care experience.

Below are desirable, partially acceptable, and not acceptable examples of direct patient care experience:

Desirable:

- athletic trainer
- chiropractor
- clinical health educator
- dietician
- emergency room technician
- EMT/paramedic
- hospice volunteer (if experience includes direct patient care)
- hospital social worker
- licensed practical nurse
- medical assistant
- medical corpsman
- medical technician
- medical technologist
- nurse's aide
- occupational therapist
- ophthalmology assistant/tech
- patient care technician
- Peace Corps volunteer
- pharmacist
- phlebotomist
- physical therapist/PT aide/assistant
- psychologist
- registered nurse, nurse practitioner
- respiratory therapist
- surgical technician
- X-ray technician

Partially acceptable:
(PLEASE NOTE: Hours for a partially accepted position are credited at 50% with a limit of 500 hours accepted for the position.)

- audiologist
- child life associate
- dental assistant/hygienist
- exercise physiologist
- medical scribe
- optician
- pharmacy technician
- telemetry tech

NOT acceptable:

- aerobics instructor
- CPR or ACLS instructor
- laboratory-based researcher
- life guard
- massage therapist
- medical registrar
- non-clinical research positions
- patient transporter
- peer educator
- personal (fitness) trainer
- pharmaceutical representative
- shadowing
- ski patroller
- unit or medical secretary
- volunteering at marathons, blood donor clinics, fundraising for medical causes, etc.
- ward/insurance clerk
- reader or other non-medical work in waiting room or other medical setting

Although valuable to the practice of medicine, clinical experiences which lack direct patient care responsibilities are not competitive and do not prepare students for successful completion of our Physician Assistant Program.

PA/MPH Combined Degree Option

Mercer University's College of Health Professions is pleased to offer the Master of Medical Science/Master of Public Health (MMSc/MPH) combined degree program. Given the need for primary healthcare providers in rural and other medically underserved communities, the MMSc/MPH combined degree program specifically focuses on providing rural and other underserved communities with well-trained public health minded primary care providers who have the ability to address societal health concerns and evaluate community-based programming. The primary target audience includes students with strong academic records who demonstrate an interest in community-based health promotion and primary care practice. Applicants must apply to each program separately, according to the guidelines in the Admissions Process and Requirements section for the PA and MPH programs. After successful admission to the PA program, the student with a strong academic record who demonstrates interest in community-based health promotion and primary care practice will apply to the MPH program. The admissions requirements for the combined degree are the same as for each individual degree.

Can I work while I am in the PA program?

The intensity and continuity of the Physician Assistant Program requires the full-time attendance and attention of students. The curriculum is demanding and does not allow extra time for employment. The administration, therefore, views outside employment with disfavor as such employment may interfere with the quality of a student's academic performance.

Where can I find information about housing for students?

For information about on and off-campus housing options for Physician Assistant students please visit the homepage for campus life (http://campuslife.merceratlanta.org).

How much will the Physician Assistant Program cost?

Tuition (per semester) *	$ 14,200
Technology Fee (per semester)	$ 250
Didactic Education Fee	$ 2,500
Clinical Education Fee I	$ 2,500
Clinical Education Fee II	$ 2,000
Total *estimated* cost for students entering the Physician Assistant Program in January 2028	**$108,150***

** Tuition is fixed per cohort of Physician Assistant students while they are in the PA Program. Tuition per cohort and fees are estimated and are subject to change upon the recommendation and approval of the Board of Trustees in Spring 2027.*

***Other fees include fees for lab, medical equipment, and other costs associated with background screenings/drug tests and immunizations as required by the PA Program and its clinical affiliates.*

****This estimate does not include other expenses (i.e. laptop and PDA, housing, transportation, professional organization dues). We recommend you budget an additional $6,000 to cover expenses associated with the 15 months of clinical internship. Please visit https://chp.mercer.edu/admissions/tuition-and-financial-planning/ for more details regarding anticipated expenses.*

Who can I contact for financial aid information?

Student Financial Planning Office:	(678) 547 – 6444
Student Financial Planning Website:	https://financialaid.mercer.edu/
FAFSA on the Web	www.fafsa.ed.gov

Where can I find information about GRE and CASPA application fee assistance?

For information about GRE fee assistance, please visit:
https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register/fees/reductions

For information about the CASPA Fee Assistance Program, please email CASPAinfo@CASPAonline.org or call (617) 612-2080.

Mercer University Physician Assistant Program Curriculum

PA Year 1 Spring	Cr Hrs	PA Year 1 Summer	Cr Hrs	PA Year 1 Fall	Cr Hrs
PA 520 Human Anatomy & Lab	4	PA 581 Clinical Medicine 1 & Lab	8	PA 582 Clinical Medicine 2 & Lab	8
PA 521 Physiology/Pathophysiology	3	PA 533 Pharmacotherapy 1	3	PA 534 Pharmacotherapy 2	3
PA 580 Physical Diagnosis & Lab	6	PA 545 Diagnostic Interpretation 1/ECG	3	PA 542 Diagnostic Interpretation 2	2
PA 530 Principles of Pharmacology	3	PA 550 Behavioral Medicine	3	PA 573 Surgical Medicine	3
PA 511 Clinical Decision Making 1	1	PA 512 Clinical Decision Making 2	1	PA 513 Clinical Decision Making 3	1
PA 501 Medical Communication	1	PA 561 Biostatistics for Clinicians	2	PA 570 Emergency Medicine	3
PA 523 Concepts in Medical Science	2			PA 562 Evidence-Based Medicine for Clinical Practice	2
	20		**20**		**22**
PA Year 2 Spring		**PA Year 2 Summer**		**PA Year 2 Fall**	
PA 584 Clinical Medicine 3	4	PA 603 Hospital Medicine Practicum	5	PA 606 Emergency Medicine Practicum	5
PA 572 Medical Nutrition	1	PA 604 Women's Health Practicum	5	PA 607 Surgical Practicum	5
PA 595 Medical Ethics and Professional Practice	2	PA 605 Pediatric Medicine Practicum	5	PA 608 Behavioral Medicine Practicum	5
PA 590 Point of Care Ultrasound	1				
PA 601 Family Practice Practicum	5				
PA 602 Internal Medicine Practicum	5				
	18		**15**		**15**
PA Year 3 Spring					
PA 609 Orthopedic Medicine Practicum	5				
PA 611 Elective 1 Practicum	5				
PA 612 Elective 2 Practicum	5				
PA 650 Senior Seminar	3				
	18				
					Total: 128 Credit Hours