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| **The Physician Assistant:**  “A physician assistant (PA) is a medical professional who works as part of a team with a doctor. A PA is a graduate of an accredited PA educational program who is nationally certified and state-licensed to practice medicine with the supervision of a physician.” ([What is a PA](http://www.aapa.org/the_pa_profession/what_is_a_pa.aspx)?)    The Prerequisites:  The necessary prerequisite courses vary significantly among institutions. Below are courses often required by PA programs:  ***1 year general biology Bio 111 Bio 112***  ***1 year (or semester) physics Physics 111 Physics 112***  ***1 year general chemistry Chem 111 Chem 211***  ***1 year (or semester) organic chemisty Chem 221 Chem 321***  ***1 semester Biochem Chem 361***  ***1 semester Anatomy Bio 221***  ***1 semester Physiology Bio 315 (requires Bio 212)***  ***1 semester Microbiology Bio 225***  ***Psychology or Sociology***  ***Statistics Psych 201***  PA programs also expect applicants to have significant healthcare experience, such as working as an EMT, nursing aide, phlebotomist, etc. School’s expectations regarding clinical experience vary significantly, so interested students should consult websites of PA programs they are interested in attending.  Students can learn more about becoming a PA at the [AAPA](http://www.aapa.org/landingquestion.aspx?id=288) or [PAEA](http://www.paeaonline.org/).  There is now a centralized application service for physician assistant programs, [CAPSA](https://portal.caspaonline.org/).  This allows applicants to submit one application for multiple programs. Admission to programs is competitive, and applicants should have a minimum GPA of 3.3. The standardized test required for entrance into most PA programs is the [GRE](http://www.ets.org/gre). Most programs take 26 months (3 academic years) to complete and include classroom and clinical coursework. | | | | |
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