

University of Southern Mississippi
College of Science and Technology
Pre-Physician Assistant Curriculum 6/2009

The “pre-physician assistant curriculum” is just *a list of courses that are required for admission to a Physician Assistant (PA) Program. It is NOT an academic major, a minor, or an emphasis area.*

Admission to a PA program is very competitive; successful applicants generally exceed the minimum criteria for admission. Although there are accommodations for early admission, students wishing to apply typically earn a Baccalaureate degree and complete a series of prerequisite courses as part of a *preprofessional program*, for example at Southern Miss.

The closest PA program is at the University of South Alabama in Mobile; students earn a Master’s degree: <http://www.southalabama.edu/alliedhealth/pa/>

The prerequisites for admission to PA programs are somewhat different, depending on the school, so the student will need to determine the specific preprofessional curriculum to be followed.

Students must consult the specific admission requirements and application deadlines for the school(s) to which they plan to apply.

Strategy for Success

- Students should focus on doing well in their academic studies.
- Students should become involved with extracurricular activities, including meaningful **community service learning** and **volunteer activities** that will demonstrate effective interactions with diverse people and effective time management skills. Students should maintain a record of the dates and total hours spent performing such activities.
- Students should get some **hands-on exposure** to medicine (sights, sounds, smells, feel).

University of South Alabama PA Program

Required courses:

- one course in general biology with laboratory (BSC 110/L) ; note that admission to upper level biological sciences classes at Southern Miss requires a second course (BSC 111/L)
- one course in anatomy
- one course in microbiology (BSC 380/L)
- one course in physiology (BSC 451 or BSC 450)
- two courses in general chemistry with laboratory (CHE 106/L, CHE 107/L)
- one course in organic chemistry with laboratory (CHE 255/L)
- one course in mathematics (college algebra minimum); note that most majors in the College of Science and Technology require Calculus (MAT 314 or MAT 167)
- one course in psychology (PSY 110)
- one course in statistics
- one course in medical terminology (MTC 201)

Additional “bonus” courses:

- genetics (BSC 370)
- immunology (BSC 486/L)
- biochemistry (CHE 420 **OR** CHE 421)
- one course in physics (PHY 111/L); many majors in CoST require a second course (PHY 112/L)
- pathophysiology
- pharmacology

Progress toward a Baccalaureate Degree

Course work toward a baccalaureate degree at Southern Miss must be planned so the student meets all the requirements for the preprofessional curriculum, a major, a minor if appropriate, the University General Education Curriculum, and the College core. At Southern Miss, a minimum of 124 hours is needed for most baccalaureate degrees, with 45 of these hours from courses at the 300-level or above.

Students may follow a modified ***suggested course sequence*** as detailed for the **Pre-medical** or **Pre-dental curricula**, as appropriate; however, such suggested course sequences are merely guidelines. Students must consult the USM Undergraduate Bulletin, the USM Class Schedule Guide for each semester, and their academic advisor. During the last semester of the Sophomore year, students should develop a more detailed plan for the Junior and Senior years because many upper level courses are offered in specific semesters (Fall or Spring only) and/or on a rotating two-year cycle.

The application process to a PA program *should begin* at the end of the Junior year. Requirements for admission:

- Completion of the baccalaureate degree prior to the starting date of the PA program; minimum overall undergraduate GPA of 3.0 on 4.0 scale
- Completion of prerequisite course work with a grade of C or higher in each course
- Completion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) within the past five years with a minimum score of 1000 on the combined verbal and quantitative sections; the Analytical Writing section is also required. Link: www.gre.org
- At least one letter of reference must be from a Medical Doctor (MD), Doctor of Osteopathy (DO), or Physician Assistant (PA).

For more information about a career as a health care professional, you may contact:

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