

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES (M.S.)

The Physician Assistant program at the University of St. Francis in Albuquerque, New Mexico is a Master of Science graduate program that focuses on preparing students for practice as physician assistants (PA). Consistent with the mission of St. Francis, physician assistant students are educated to provide health care to a variety of patient populations with an emphasis on the underserved.

The University of St. Francis Physician Assistant program is a full-time 27-month professional medical education program. The program consists of 15 months of classroom and clinical skills laboratory instruction. This is followed by 12 months of supervised clinical learning with licensed healthcare professionals including physicians, physician assistants, and other advanced practice clinicians. Students must complete the entire 27-month program at the University of St. Francis. Upon successful completion of the program, students are awarded a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies.

Physician Assistant Profession

The American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) defines physician assistants “as health care professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision”. As part of their comprehensive responsibilities physician assistants provide patients with services ranging from primary care medicine to specialized surgical care. PAs perform physical examinations, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret lab tests, assist in surgical procedures and counsel patients on preventative health issues.

Physician Assistant Program Mission and Vision

The mission of the PA program is to educate highly qualified physician assistants preparing them to become competent, compassionate and comprehensive health care providers for practice in primary care fields. Our vision is that our graduates will be leaders in the health care community, continuously striving for excellence in their professional endeavors.

Guided by our vision and values, we achieve our mission by:

1. Selecting highly qualified candidates for admission to the program.
2. Providing a comprehensive medical education that enables students to become competent health care providers.
3. Preparing students to serve diverse populations in a variety of clinical settings.
4. Promoting leadership roles in the profession and community.

Academic Standards for Promotion and Graduation

The USF Physician Assistant Studies program is designed to provide for the integration of classroom and clinical learning experiences considered necessary for competency as health care providers. To maintain good academic standing for progression in the program, the student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or better. A minimum cumulative grade point average of B (3.00 GPA) is required for progression from the didactic year to the clinical learning year and for graduation from the program. Therefore, the failure of more than one course with a grade below a C

(70%), elective or required, may make the student liable for dismissal from the program. Students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or better in order to be awarded the Master of Science degree.

Accreditation

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) has granted Accreditation-Continued status to the Physician Assistant Program sponsored by the University of St. Francis. Accreditation-Continued is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA Standards. Accreditation remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the Standards. The approximate date for the next validation review of the program by the ARC-PA will be **September 2030**. The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation Standards and ARC-PA policy.

Commitment

The USF Physician Assistant Studies program is committed to excellence in education. As in any learning process, the content and methodology in our program reflect a mixture of objectivity, intuition and good faith. Our faculty and staff want to provide a creative environment for individual learning and growth, within a curriculum that by necessity is highly structured and intense. Viewing learning as a reciprocal, collaborative interaction between faculty and students, we endeavor to be responsive to perceived needs for change and welcome comments and suggestions from all who participate in the program for its ongoing evaluation and continued growth. The Physician Assistant Program is a particularly important program to USF as it is truly representative and in concert with the Franciscan mission and values of Respect, Compassion, Service and Integrity. We are proud to report at this time that our five year first time taker average pass rate for the NCCPA Board Certification examination is 99%. Our physician assistant graduates are practicing across the US in all medical fields.

Curriculum

Year One - Classroom and Laboratory Based Instruction

The didactic curriculum¹ is 15 months in length (5 quarters) consisting of nearly 1,000 instructor contact hours.

Code	Title	Hours
PAMS 600	Introduction to the Physician Assistant Profession	2
PAMS 601	Gross Anatomy	7
PAMS 604	Pharmacotherapeutics I	4
PAMS 605	Pharmacotherapeutics II	4
PAMS 606	Essentials of Clinical Lab Medicine	4
PAMS 607	Clinical Nutrition	2
PAMS 608	Medical Physiology I	4
PAMS 609	Medical Physiology II	4
PAMS 610	Medical Genetics	2
PAMS 611	Pharmacotherapeutics III	4
PAMS 612	Epidemiology and Public Health	4
PAMS 614	Behavioral Medicine	4
PAMS 621	Clinical Assessment I	7
PAMS 622	Clinical Assessment II	7
PAMS 623	Clinical Assessment III	7
PAMS 626	Essentials of Radiology	4

PAMS 627	Clinical Pediatrics	4
PAMS 630	Diseases of Organ Systems I	4
PAMS 631	Diseases of Organ Systems II	4
PAMS 632	Diseases of Organ Systems III	4
PAMS 635	Fundamentals of Surgery	4
PAMS 636	Obstetrics & Gynecology	4
PAMS 654	Topics in Contemporary Medicine	4
PAMS 660	Didactic Summative Evaluation	5
PAMS 696	Research Foundations	2
PAMS 697	Study of Medical Literature	2
PAMS 698	Research Independent Study	2
PAMS 799	Capstone Research Project	2

¹ Note: Scheduling of classes is subject to change.

Year Two - Clinical Rotations

The clinical phase¹ is 12 months in length with approximately 2,000 hours of patient care. Eight clinical learning rotations, each six weeks in length, are conducted at a variety of clinical sites. Scheduling of clinical learning rotations will be subject to change.

Code	Title	Hours
PAMS 700	Internal Medicine	8
PAMS 705	General Surgery	8
PAMS 710	Family Medicine	8
PAMS 715	Emergency Medicine	8
PAMS 720	Women's Health	8
PAMS 725	Pediatrics	8
PAMS 735	Behavioral Aspects of Medicine	8
PAMS 750	Elective Clinical Rotation	8
PAMS 790	Comprehensive Clinical Review	2

¹ Note: Scheduling of classes is subject to change.