

## Pre-Physician Assistant at JWU

**Coursework:** JWU courses for PA entry overview

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:e3751761-e886-4610-ab58-d5a86f1f47d2>

**Shadowing:** START EARLY! Prior to holiday breaks, contact any medical contacts you may have (pediatrician is a good place to start and then start asking others) and ask about possibility of shadowing. Shoot for at least 20-50 hours, with at least 2 different PAs. Most schools recognize that Covid has made difficult & some flexibility, but still required. Document in log (see FAQ).

**Patient Contact Care:** START EARLY! PA schools require a lot of experience interacting with patients, with more than 1000+ hours being the norm for successful entry (some schools like Bryant University require 2000+ hours)! Good options are: EMT (emergency medical technician), CNA (certified nursing assistant), phlebotomist, and medical scribe. In some contexts, medical assistant work may count (see FAQ). \* Consider using your job for internship credit, contact Experiential Learning as approach junior-year status or beyond for this.

**Community Volunteering:** Service in just about any capacity is encouraged! Food pantries, online crisis counseling, tutoring, hospital volunteering, religious volunteering, Greek-life volunteer projects, etc.. Document in log (see FAQ).

**GRE Testing:** Schools vary in whether or not GRE required. Start thinking early about whether or not the schools you will be applying to do as often > \$200 each attempt. If so, consider buying a GRE prep study book or study program early (Magoosh, Kaplan, & Princeton Review are definitely helpful, but expensive!). See FAQ for more details.

**Scientific Research:** Not required, but some successful candidates take part in a scientific research project. Undergraduate research opportunities are often available within your major (advertised when they become available) or by applying to outside summer research fellowships (go to AMCAS, How to Gain Experience). \* Also, you can contact JWU Experiential Learning as approach junior-year status or beyond to search for research opportunities as part of an internship.

**International Medical Outreach:** Not required, but some successful candidates take part in volunteer travel programs outside of the US. Have known students who worked in medical camps in Peru and Vietnam over school breaks. *Be careful as some may have significant costs.* See link below:

<https://www.volunteeringolutions.com/blog/recommended-pre-med-volunteer-projects-abroad/>

**Programs:** Look into programs early as start dates and requirements vary. In-state, public schools are often most affordable and best chance of acceptance, although few states have them currently.

See link for program listings: <http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/accredited-programs/>

**Application Process:**

**Begin ~1 ½ years before hope to begin PA school**

**GRE:** If taking, plan on taking 1 ½ years (often late Winter) before you plan to matriculate into PA school as will give you time to re-take if necessary.

**Write CASPA Personal Statement:**

Start 1 year (often Spring) before you plan to matriculate. Take help from writing tutors/faculty on personal statements!

**CASPA Application:** Portal opens each year in April. Best to have application submitted no later 1 year (often late Spring/early Summer) before you plan to matriculate.

**CASPA Recommendation:**

3-4 total: 1-2 faculty (at least 1 science) and 1-2 healthcare (often someone who managed your patient contact care experience).

**Interviews:** Top candidates will be asked for interviews 3-9 months prior to matriculation. Ask for help to prep from faculty or Experiential Learning!

**JWU BIO & HSC Majors Articulation Agreement with JWU PA:** (see link below)

<https://catalog.jwu.edu/admissions/applying/biology-mspas-articulation-agreement/>

For JWUBIO & HSC majors that successfully complete their coursework and pre-requisites for the program may exert their usage of a one-time, guaranteed interview with JWU PA (which catapults a student into the top ~10% of applicants).

Please note, all required coursework (including Microbiology + lab, Anatomy + lab, Physiology + lab, Statistics, and Genetics as of 2022 application cycle), shadowing, and patient contact care hours should be completed or planned to be completed in the next term. Overall cumulative GPA > 3.3 after CASPA GPA adjustment (see FAQs), HSC majors must have completed at least 1 term of Organic Chemistry + Lab and 1 term of Developmental Psychology.

\* Also, NO collegiate grade of any sort less than a C is allowed for this agreement, even if a course was re-taken for a higher grade or at another institution!

**JWU Articulation Specifics:**

Eligible BIO or HSC majors who wish to use their one-time interview slot to JWU PA must first:

- a. contact krosler@jwu.edu by 8/1, one year before planned matriculation, of their desire to use their one-time automatic interview & receive confirmation of their intent
- b. successfully submit their CASPA (including transcript requests) no later than 8/15, one year before planned matriculation.

\* Interviews for these students are usually in October, one year before planned matriculation.

**IMPORTANT Pre-PA FAQs:**

1. Keep log on your computer of your experiences, including names of persons you work with as you will need to document your experience later in your application.
2. Science mastery and grades, especially the BCPs (Biology [BIO], Chemistry [CHM], and Physics [PHY] courses) should be strong as possible in order to be competitive for any of these programs!  
Take advantage of tutoring & consider re-taking a course if grade less than/equal to a C, especially in the core sciences.
3. Please be aware that ALL collegiate grades will be counted when you applied (even if you re-take a course) and will be converted to standardized CASPA system which adjusts your JWU GPA slightly (ex. B+ at JWU = 3.5 → adjusted CASPA system B+ = 3.3).  
To calculate yours, MAKE A COPY of the linked sheet and save a copy for your keeping: [Adjusted GPA Calculator.xlsx](#)
4. In 2020, the average adjusted overall GPA for PA school admissions is 3.6, overall BCP GPA of 3.5 in 2020. US acceptance rate is ~31%.  
For more statistics, see: <https://www.thepalife.com/who-gets-in/>
5. Most accepted students have taken one to several gap years in order to improve their applications, gain experience, and save up money before actually applying. More maturity is a big positive in the PA applicant field as often had more experience with patients & readier for the rigors of an intensive, quick program. As of 2020, the average age of acceptance was 25 years of age.  
<https://www.thepalife.com/who-gets-in/>
6. GRE specifics: Shoot for a GRE % in both sections ~ 45% or above. [https://www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/register/](https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register/)  
Note, no subject tests are required. *If not taking the GRE, please realize that no GRE requirement drastically increases the applicant pool, sometimes making acceptance more challenging.*

7. Patient Contact Care Specifics:

- a. Please note that pharmacy or PT aides do NOT count at JWU PA & may not count at other schools, regardless of what PA forums say!
  - b. EMT, CNA, Phlebotomy: Please research certification programs as there are a lot of variations in how long programs take/expense as well as job availability. CNAs can sometimes find “free” training programs in exchange for work at nursing home, etc..
  - c. Medical Scribe: Students who are good typists and want to learn a lot about pharmacology can sometimes be trained by Scribe America (<https://www.scribeamerica.com/career-opportunities/>) or LifeSpan (search for medical scribe positions, often Brown Emergency Medicine). Alternatively, you can take a course. One example is: <https://medicalscribes.org/how-to-become-a-medical-scribe/>
  - d. Medical Assistant: Usually no certification is required as often providers will train you but licensed programs exist. Be careful though if working as some PA programs DO NOT count “front of the house” work (ie. appointment booking, insurance, etc.). To be confident that your time as a medical assistant will count, negotiate with the employer “back of the house” work (ie. taking vitals, running tests, collecting samples, etc.).
8. If you are not a strong candidate by graduation, some students continue to take courses (or re-take) through accredited programs online or in-person. Some great examples are Portage Education <https://portagelearning.com/> and UC Berkely Extension [Sciences, Mathematics and Biotechnology | UC Berkeley Extension](#)  
Some students also go into post-bac programs (often expensive) that are designed to give experience, help with GRE testing, and take classes; some give promises of interviews at their PA school upon successful completion. One example of many is at Tuft’s University is <https://medicine.tufts.edu/education/physician-assistant> or search “Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Northeastern.”
9. Some students whose applications are not as high upon receiving their BS re-assess their desire for PA as there are many ways to be successful and in the medical field.
- a. Pathology Assistant: Pathologists' Assistants interact with pathologists in a manner similar to physician’s assistants in surgical and medical practice. [https://www.pathassist.org/page/Become\\_PA](https://www.pathassist.org/page/Become_PA)
  - b. Nursing: Some also consider entering a post-bac or accelerated nursing program to gain their RN (often takes only ~16 months) or a masters in nursing to gain their MSN (these programs allow students to gain their RN in ~16 months and then continue on in a research project for a few other months). Both are designed to cover a copious amount of material in a very short amount of time. No breaks are scheduled and a day of classes may be longer than traditional programs. Some students find programs that are combinations of RN or MSN and allow entry into nurse practitioner (NP or DNP) programs following some experience. Finding programs will take some leg-work, but some programs that you can search for with various options nearby are MCPHS, Simmons University, UMass Dartmouth and Boston, MGH (<https://www.mghihp.edu/application-requirements/absn>).  
More infor can be found with these links: <https://www.registerednursing.org/degree/accelerated-nursing-programs/>  
<https://www.nursepractitionerschools.com/faq/can-a-non-nurse-become-an-np>

And because everyone wants to know:

In 2020, Pathology Assistants’ averaged \$87k. RNs earned an average of around \$75k. Those taking the time to earn an MSN in a specific field had average salary of about \$86k for those with an MSN (<https://nursejournal.org/msn-degree/5-best-paying-msn-degree-nursing-jobs-and-careers/>). Nurse practitioners averaged \$112k. PA also averaged at \$112k.