

## PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES (PAS) MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

The PAS master's degree program is designed to prepare leaders in the Physician Assistant profession. Our mission at the University of Texas Health Science Center's School of Health Professions is to prepare primary care clinicians to meet the needs of the underserved populations of South Texas. The program provides students with a firm foundation in interpersonal skills, critical thinking, patient evaluation and treatment, research, and practice management. The program seeks to instill the process of lifelong learning with a strong emphasis on service to the community and the profession.

Physician Assistants (PAs) practice medicine with the supervision of physicians. PAs are formally trained to provide diagnostic, therapeutic, and preventive healthcare services, as delegated by a physician. They may be the principal care providers in rural or inner-city clinics. The PA confers with the supervising physician and other medical professionals as needed and as required by law.

Working as cost-effective and productive members of the healthcare team, they take medical histories, examine and treat patients, order and interpret laboratory tests and x rays, and make diagnoses. They treat minor injuries by suturing, splinting, and casting. PAs record progress notes, instruct and counsel patients, and order or carry out treatment. Prescriptive privileges are delegated by state medical boards. In Texas, Physician Assistants may prescribe medications according to their practice environment, and as delegated by the supervising physician. PAs may be responsible for ordering medical supplies or equipment and supervising other medical personnel within their practices.



Employment of PAs is expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations. Physicians and healthcare facilities are expected to employ more PAs in primary care, medicine and surgery, with many job opportunities in rural or inner-city healthcare facilities. Projected rapid job growth reflects the great need for affordable health care, and an emphasis on cost containment. PAs should find a growing

number of jobs in institutional settings such as hospitals, academic medical centers, public clinics, and prisons. In May, 2010, the median annual wage of Physician Assistants was \$86,410. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$57,450, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$117,720. In Texas, the hourly wage was \$46.61 and the average annual earnings were \$96,940.

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The master's degree in Physician Assistant Studies consists of 119.5 credit hours of coursework. Year One covers basic sciences, and may include classes with other health professions programs. In Year Two, interdisciplinary courses with medical students are offered. Students spend the final months of Year Three in clinical training in the community. Graduates are eligible to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) given by the National Commission for Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). Achieving a passing grade on the PANCE is required for licensure in all states.

### CURRICULUM

The PAS curriculum consists of didactic, laboratory, and clinical instruction conducted on the Health Science Center campus. During the final phase, students complete 12 four-week supervised clinical practice rotations in San Antonio and throughout South Texas. Rotations are full-time clinical experiences (40+ hours per week) and earn 4.0 semester credit hours each. A pass-fail summative examination is administered during the final fall semester; students must pass the summative examination to qualify for graduation.

### ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS & PREREQUISITES

Requirements for admission into the Master of Physician Assistant Studies program include:

- Completion of all prerequisite coursework by the application deadline of August 31, with a grade of C or better:
  - 8 hours of biology with laboratory (no botany, ecology, or environmental science)
  - 4 hours of human anatomy with laboratory
  - 3 hours of human physiology
  - 8 hours of general chemistry with lab
  - 4 hours of organic chemistry with lab
  - 3 hours of statistics
  - 3 hours of microbiology
  - 3 hours of developmental psychology
  - 3 hours of genetics

Note that no prerequisites can be in progress after the application deadline.
- Completion of a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university by the time of matriculation in July.
- Overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
- Science GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
- Proof of current Basic Life Support certification (if admitted)



Admission to the Physician Assistant Studies Program is highly competitive. Selection is based on objective criteria that reflect leadership, work/health care experience, community service, written communication skills, a commitment to the PA profession, south Texas, and primary care. Composite GPA and race/ethnicity/diversity factors are also considered. Bilingual skills, especially Spanish, are considered valuable. A small number of applicants will be invited for a personal interview. Final selection will be based on an overall assessment of the applicant, including the personal interview.

### PA STUDIES PROGRAM COSTS

Tuition and required fees for the program are detailed in the *HSC Catalog*. All students are required to purchase a laptop from the Health Science Center computer store. In addition to the required tuition and fees of approximately \$31,200 (in-state students), costs for other expenses such as the required laptop, textbooks, course manuals, equipment, uniforms or scrubs, examination fees, and supplies are approximately \$7,628. There is no on-campus housing at the HSC and program expenses do not reflect day-to-day living expenses. Costs for travel, lodging, and other living expenses during the Supervised Clinical Practice year are also not included in the estimate. All students are required to do a minimum of two rural/remote rotations and must plan to meet those expenses.

### APPLICATION PROCESS & ORIENTATION

The Physician Assistant Studies Program requires two separate applications: one must be made through the [Central Application Service for Physician Assistants](#) (CASPA) and one must be submitted directly to UTHSCSA via the [PAS Supplemental Application](#). For the CASPA application, all materials, official transcripts, reference letters, and supporting documents must be received by August 31, 2012, for admission in July 2013. A limited number of fee waivers are available from CASPA. Contact CASPA at:

P.O. Box 9108  
Watertown, MA 02471  
Phone: 617-612-2080  
E-mail: [CaspaInfo@caspaonline.org](mailto:CaspaInfo@caspaonline.org)

In addition to the CASPA application, a PAS Supplemental Application, supporting documents, and a \$45 supplemental application fee must be submitted directly to UTHSCSA by August 31, 2012, for admission in July 2013. A hard copy may be requested from the Registrar's Office by calling 210-567-2621 or through e-mail at [AppCenter@uthscsa.edu](mailto:AppCenter@uthscsa.edu). Submit these materials to:

UT Health Science Center  
Registrar's Office - Health Professions  
7703 Floyd Curl Drive, MC 7702  
San Antonio, TX 78229-3900

Review of completed applications begins upon receipt. Interviews are held November through January. Class selection is typically complete by late January. Students who are accepted for matriculation will be required to submit official transcripts to the Registrar's Office prior to matriculation. Final acceptance is contingent on the applicant successfully completing a criminal background check.

All applicants are invited and encouraged to attend an on-campus applicant orientation held monthly from April through August. E-mail [PAStudies@uthscsa.edu](mailto:PAStudies@uthscsa.edu) or call the PA Studies Department to arrange to attend. Applicants are encouraged to seek advisement from their college counselors or the Health Professions Welcome Center. For additional information, see the policies and procedures in the School of Health Professions section of the *UTHSCSA Catalog*: [http://studentservices.uthscsa.edu/GI\\_catalog.aspx](http://studentservices.uthscsa.edu/GI_catalog.aspx)



### CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions about prerequisite courses, waivers, equivalencies and transcript evaluations:

#### School of Health Professions Welcome Center

E-mail: [SHPwelcome@uthscsa.edu](mailto:SHPwelcome@uthscsa.edu)  
Phone: 210-567-8744 or toll free 1-866-802-6288  
<http://SHPwelcome.uthscsa.edu>

#### Physician Assistant Studies Department

E-mail: [PAStudies@uthscsa.edu](mailto:PAStudies@uthscsa.edu)  
Phone: 210-567-8810

#### Registrar's Office

E-mail: [AppCenter@uthscsa.edu](mailto:AppCenter@uthscsa.edu)  
Phone: 210-567-2621

[http://studentservices.uthscsa.edu/prospects\\_application\\_center.aspx](http://studentservices.uthscsa.edu/prospects_application_center.aspx)