

Rush University

PA Program

Information Packet

2025-2026 Application Cycle

Accreditation

Rush University Accreditation Status

Rush University received its initial accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (formerly the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education) in 1974. In its accreditation review, the HLC assesses institutions' academic quality and educational effectiveness, emphasizing institutional structures, processes, and resources.

Rush University's most recent accreditation review was in 2019 and received continuing accreditation status through 2029.

Rush University PA Program Accreditation Status

All PA programs are accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). Additionally, all Illinois PA programs must maintain approval from the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) to enroll students.

The IBHE approved the Rush University College of Health Sciences Master of Science in Physician Assistant in October 2009.

At its **March 2024** meeting, the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) placed the **Rush University Physician Assistant Program** sponsored by **Rush University** on **Accreditation-Probation** status until its next review in **March 2026**.

Probation accreditation is a temporary accreditation status initially of not less than two years. However, that period may be extended by the ARC-PA for up to an additional two years if the ARC-PA finds that the program is making substantial progress toward meeting all applicable standards but requires additional time to come into full compliance. Probation accreditation status is granted, at the sole discretion of the ARC-PA, when a program holding an accreditation status of Accreditation - Provisional or Accreditation - Continued does not, in the judgment of the ARC-PA, meet the *Standards* or when the capability of the program to provide an acceptable educational experience for its students is threatened.

Once placed on probation, a program that fails to comply with accreditation requirements in a timely manner, as specified by the ARC-PA, may be scheduled for a focused site visit and is subject to having its accreditation withdrawn.

Specific questions regarding the Program and its plans should be directed to the Program Director and/or the appropriate institutional official(s).

The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at <https://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-Rush-university/>.

Rush University PA Program National Certification Board Scores

Graduation Class	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of 1st Time Takers	29	29	28	30	25	28	32
First Time Pass Rate	100%	100%	93%	100%	92%	100%	Pending June 2025
National Pass Rate	98%	93%	95%	93%	92%	92%	92%

The program's overall first-time taker pass rate is 98%

The program's overall PANCE pass rate is 100%

Rush University PA Program Student Graduation, Deceleration, and Attrition Rates

Graduation Class	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Number of Graduates	29	28	30	25	28	32	32 Pending	32 Pending
Number of Decelerations	2 (7%)	0	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
Number of Withdrawals	1 (3%)	2 (7%)	0	4 (13%)	0	0	2 (6%)	1 (3%)
Number Dismissed	0	0	0	1 (3%)	0	0	0	0
Class Graduation Rate	97%	93%	100%	83%	97%	100%	Pending	Pending
Program Overall Graduation Rate	95%	95%	95%	94%	95%	95%	Pending	Pending

Since the first graduating class in 2013, the program has had an overall 95% graduation rate.

Deceleration is the loss of a student from the entering cohort who remains matriculated in the PA Program.

This table calculates class deceleration, withdrawal, and graduation rates based on the year of program admission.

General Information About the PA Profession

As defined by the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA), PAs are nationally certified, state-licensed health professionals who practice medicine as members of a team with physicians and other health care providers. PAs are vital members of the health care team who demonstrate excellence in problem-solving ability, communication skills, and clinical judgment. PAs work in all health care specialties and areas, such as hospitals, clinics, operating rooms, and the outpatient setting. PAs also work in public sector health care areas, such as the prison and military systems.

For more information about the PA profession, go to www.aapa.org

The scope of a PA's responsibilities varies according to their practice setting. Generally, PAs have comprehensive patient care responsibilities including, but not limited to, conducting physical exams, ordering and interpreting diagnostic tests, diagnosing illness, developing and monitoring treatment plans, prescribing medications, providing patient education and preventive counseling, performing procedures, and assisting in surgery. PAs work collaboratively as integral members of the health care team in the care of patients.

After successfully completing an accredited PA program, all graduates must take a comprehensive exam provided by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). Once a PA passes the PA National Certifying Exam (PANCE), they may apply for licensure according to individual state guidelines. Each state has a practice act outlining legislative rules for PA practice. See an individual state's practice act or contact the state PA association for more information regarding practice in each state.

For specific questions regarding the national PA board exam, visit: www.NCCPA.net.

For more information about state-specific PA licensing and regulation requirements, visit: [AAPA State Laws and Regulations](#).

PA Career Opportunities, Job Outlook, and Salary

Job prospects for the PA profession are strong. In 2024, the US News and World Report ranked the PA profession as the #2 best health care job and #3 in the 100 best jobs.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics expects PA jobs to increase by 28% from 2023 to 2033, much faster than average for all occupations. This makes PA one of the top 10 professions for future job growth in the next ten years.

PA salaries are competitive, and PA job security is excellent. According to the AAPA, in 2023, over 168,000 certified PAs are practicing medicine in the U. S. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a median national salary for all PAs of \$130,000. According to the AAPA, the median salary for a new graduate with less than one year of experience is \$110,000.

For more information regarding the job profile and salary outlook for the PA profession, go to:

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm

The American Academy of Physician Associates: www.aapa.org/

For More Information about the PA Profession

The American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) – The national professional society for PAS. Their website offers valuable information for individuals interested in a career as a PA.

The AAPA also offers current information regarding state regulations and practice laws for PAs. Information by state is available at:

<https://www.aapa.org/advocacy-central/state-advocacy/state-licensing/>

The Student Academy of the American Academy of Physician Associates (SAAAPA) – A great site for current and prospective PA students with useful and current information related to being a PA student and the PA profession, at:

<https://www.aapa.org/about/aapa-governance-leadership/student-academy/>

The Illinois Academy of Physician Assistants (IAPA) – the state organization representing PAs in Illinois. The IAPA offers great resources for practicing PAs and interested applicants at:

<http://www.illinoispa.org/>

About the Rush University PA Program

Rush's PA Program is designed to provide students with an outstanding education in preparation for a career as a PA with a foundation for leadership and service. Graduates are granted a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies degree.

Our 30-month curriculum is innovative and unique, with enhanced rotations that maximize clinical training and patient care experiences. Rush University Medical Center offers extensive resources and settings to provide students with an excellent educational experience.

- The 12-month didactic phase uses lectures, case-based discussions, and skills lab training to prepare students for clinical rotations.
- Our unique, 18-month clinical phase prepares students to practice as generalists while providing an extended immersion in a specific area of clinical practice. Students complete 12 months of core rotations and then progress to 6 months of advanced rotations.
 - Current areas of advanced clinical training include cardiothoracic surgery, orthopedics, vascular surgery, emergency medicine, pediatrics, behavioral health, internal medicine, primary care, pulmonary and critical care medicine, interventional radiology, urology, neurosurgery, geriatrics, and physical medicine and rehabilitation.

The PA Program's Mission, Vision, and Goals

Mission Statement

The Rush University PA Program's mission is to educate advanced healthcare providers to practice evidence-based medicine with competence, professionalism, and compassion driven by academic excellence and service to diverse communities.

Program Vision

The Rush University PA Program strives to be a national leader in educating exceptionally qualified PAs to transform clinical and professional practice.

Goals

The goals of the Rush University PA Program are:

- Matriculate and retain qualified students from diverse backgrounds.
- Prepare competent PAs with the medical knowledge, clinical skills, and professional behaviors required for entry-level practice.
- Prepare students to work on interprofessional health care teams.
- Support the institution and community through student service activities.

In addition to maintaining these values, the PA Program is committed to fulfilling the mission, vision, and values of the College of Health Sciences and Rush University Medical Center.

Reasons to Attend PA School at Rush University

Rush University is a nationally recognized academic medical center located in the heart of Chicago's Medical District.

Rush's Medical Center has outstanding clinical facilities, including a 376-bed hospital, the Midwest Orthopedics at RUSH, and the Rubschlager Cancer, Neurosciences, and Digestive Diseases Center.

In 2024, the U.S. News & World Report lists Rush University Medical Center in its Best Hospitals Honor Roll and as the #1 Best Regional Hospital in Illinois and in the Chicago Metro area.

The Leapfrog Group has named Rush University Medical Center among the top hospitals in the country for quality, safety, and efficiency 19 consecutive times.

Rush University is nationally recognized for preparing outstanding health care professionals in medicine, nursing, and the allied health fields.

The PA Program ranks 50th in the nation according to U.S. News & World Report in 2023.

Rush University uses a unique Teacher-Practitioner model, which integrates patient care, research, and service into the teaching-learning process.

The faculty are dedicated to providing our students with the best training and education possible.

The PA Program has small class sizes of approximately 30 students. The low student-faculty numbers provide individualized attention and enhance the student learning experience.

Rush's PA students are an integrated group in the hospital training system.

Our program has a 95% overall graduation rate and a first-time PANCE pass rate of 98%, greatly exceeding the national average.

Rush PA Program Performance on Goals

The Rush PA Program reviews its goals annually to ensure they align with the University, College, and Program’s Mission and Vision. The program revised its goals in 2024.

As part of its ongoing program review process, the program assesses its performance on each goal using the outcomes and benchmarks listed below.

1. Matriculate and retain qualified students from diverse backgrounds.

- **Outcome measure related to Diverse Students:** Admissions demographics.
- **Benchmark:** At least 25% of matriculants will meet the criteria for the program’s Additional Factors for Admissions Consideration, which include military veterans, persons from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, first person to attend a higher education training program, and recommended graduates from the Rush Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences program.
- **Results:**

Class	Percentage of Students Meeting Additional Factors for Admissions Consideration
Class of 2026 (to matriculate May 2024)	62.50% (20/32)
Class of 2025 (matriculated May 2023)	37.5% (12/32)
Class of 2024 (matriculated May 2022)	59.4% (19/32)
Class of 2023 (matriculated May 2021)	37.9% (11/29)

- **Outcome measure related to Retention:** Student Attrition rate, as defined by the percentage of students from an entering cohort who leave the program due to withdrawal or dismissal.
- **Benchmark:** The annual attrition rate will be less than 10%.
- **Results:**

Class	Attrition Rate
Class of 2023	6% (2/32)
Class of 2022	20% (6/30)
Class of 2021	0% (0/30)
Class of 2020	7% (2/30)
Class of 2019	3% (1/30)

- **Outcome measure related to Retention:** Student Graduation rate, as defined by the percentage of students from the entering cohort that graduate from the program.
- **Benchmark:** The annual student graduation rate will be 95% or higher.
- **Results:**

Class	Graduation Rate
Class of 2023	94% (30/32)
Class of 2022	80% (24/30)
Class of 2021	100% (30/30)
Class of 2020	93% (28/30)
Class of 2019	97% (29/30)

*The program’s ARC-PA attrition table can be found on the program website here:
<https://www.Rushu.Rush.edu/sites/default/files/2024-04/pa-attrition-graduation-0424.pdf>

2. **Prepare competent PAs with the medical knowledge, clinical skills, and professional behaviors required for entry-level practice.**

- Outcome Measure: NCCPA PANCE pass rate.
- Benchmark: The program will have a 100% first-time and overall NCCPA PANCE pass rate each year.
- Results:

Class	Number of takers	First-time NCCPA PANCE pass rate – Rush PA Program	First-time NCCPA PANCE pass rate – National Average	Overall NCCPA PANCE pass rate – Rush PA Program	Overall NCCPA PANCE pass rate – National Average
Class of 2023	29	100%	92%	100%	89%
Class of 2022	24	92%	92%	100%	89%
Class of 2021	30	100%	93%	100%	91%
Class of 2020	28	93%	95%	100%	93%
Class of 2019	29	100%	93%	100%	91%

- Outcome Measure: The program’s Summative Evaluation, which assesses students on their ability to meet the program's Terminal Program Competencies through a multiple-choice examination, case-based OSCE, station OSCE, and professionalism assessment.
- Benchmark: All students will pass the summative evaluation before progressing to graduation.
- Results:

Class	Number of takers	Pass Rate of Summative Evaluation
Class of 2023	30	100%
Class of 2022	24	100%
Class of 2021	30	100%
Class of 2020	28	100%
Class of 2019	29	100%

- Outcome Measure: The percentage of graduates licensed and employed as a PA within one year of graduation.
- Benchmark: All graduates will be licensed and employed as a PA within one year of graduation.
- Results: The program has not previously collected data on time to employment but will begin collecting this data in the 2024 Alumni Survey for analysis in 2025.

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3. Prepare graduates to work on interprofessional healthcare teams.

- **Outcome Measure:** Amount of time students work in interprofessional teams in the didactic year.
- **Benchmark:** Students will spend at least 20 hours working on an interprofessional team during the didactic year.
- **Results:** In the 2023-2024 academic year, didactic students spent on average 20 hours working on an interprofessional team in the course “IPE 502 - Interprofessional Patient Centered Teams” across the fall and spring terms, working directly with students in the following disciplines: occupational therapy, dietetics, vascular ultrasound, health systems management, nursing, medicine, perfusion, respiratory therapy, imaging sciences, medical lab sciences, speech language pathology, and audiology. Students also work on interprofessional teams in Rush community service programs, and the program will begin collecting this data beginning in 2024 for analysis in the 2025 performance on goals.
- **Outcome Measure:** Percentage of clinical rotation (SCPE) sites in which students work directly with learners from other disciplines such as medical students, APRN students, residents, and fellows.
- **Benchmark:** At least 50% of the PA program’s clinical rotation (SCPE) sites will provide PA students the opportunity to work directly with learners from other disciplines.
- **Results:** 72% of current Rush PA program clinical rotation (SCPE) sites provide students this opportunity.
- **Outcome Measure:** Preceptor evaluations of students during the third year of the PA program that rate students on “Works effectively as a member of the health care team.”
- **Benchmark:** Students will have an average score of 3 (“Average”) or higher on this evaluation item.
- **Results:** The Class of 2023 had an average evaluation item score of 4.86 out of 5 (“Excellent”) on this evaluation item regarding collaboration with the healthcare team.

4. Support the institution and community through student service activities.

- **Outcome Measure:** Number of community service hours completed by students annually.
- **Benchmark:** The total number of service hours for all students will exceed 1000 hours per year.
- **Results:**

Academic Year	Service to the Institution	Service to the Community	Total Service Hours
2023-2024	353 hours	1,412 hours	1,765 hours
2022-2023	366 hours	1,346 hours	1,712 hours
2021-2022	254 hours	940 hours	1,194 hours

TERMINAL PA PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES

Upon completing the program, graduates will demonstrate the following:

- a. The ability to comprehend, evaluate, and apply information relevant to PA practice.
- b. Technical proficiency in skills necessary for clinical practice.
- c. Behaviors and interpersonal communication skills consistent with the professional standards of the PA profession.

The criteria for terminal learning outcome assessment are:

<p>Core Medical Knowledge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of medical science concepts in anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, and pharmacology 2. Knowledge of the etiologies, risk factors, epidemiology, and clinical manifestations of medical conditions across the lifespan 3. Application of knowledge relevant to medical practice in the patient care setting 4. Ability to analyze, critique, report, and apply clinical research literature in clinical practice 5. Ability to utilize current and emerging research in the medical literature to make evidence-based patient care decisions
<p>Critical Thinking and Application of Clinical Knowledge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to formulate comprehensive and accurate differential diagnoses and develop management plans appropriate to a patient’s clinical presentation 2. Derive problem lists and treatment plans appropriate to patient care needs 3. Manage acute and chronic conditions in medicine and surgery across the lifespan 4. Implement, assess, and modify treatment plans as required in the course of patient management.
<p>Procedural Competency</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perform detailed and accurate history and physical examinations, order, perform, interpret diagnostic studies, and appropriately record medical data. 2. Perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures to evaluate and treat routine and life-threatening medical and surgical problems. 3. Perform comprehensive and problem-focused physical examinations as clinically indicated. 4. Accurately order and interpret diagnostic tests. 5. Identify indications, contraindications, and risks to procedures and diagnostic studies
<p>Professionalism</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Act in a manner that exemplifies good judgment, honesty, intelligence, respect for others, and a clear commitment to the health and well-being of their patients. 2. Function as integral members of the interprofessional health care team, providing high-quality patient care in collaboration with other team members. 3. Provide care to diverse patient populations in ambulatory, inpatient, and long-term care settings. 4. Convey professionalism, ethical integrity, caring, and compassion in all interactions with patients and colleagues 5. Consistently adhere to regulatory guidelines governing professional practice
<p>Communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counsel and educate patients across the lifespan regarding problem-oriented conditions and health maintenance. 2. Initiate and follow up on patient referrals to specialty health care providers as indicated in a timely manner 3. Able to take a medical history appropriate to ambulatory, inpatient, and long-term care settings and across the life span, and to effectively record clinical encounters in documentation platforms 4. Communicate clinical thinking in a clear, understandable, and timely manner to patients and their families, physicians and other clinical colleagues, and clinical support staff.
<p>Systems-based Practice</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate capacity to consult and refer to specialty practitioners as indicated 2. Demonstrate cost-effective clinical practice 3. Work as an effective member of a health care team in the practice of medicine

Admission Selection Criteria 2025-2026 Application Cycle Requirements for PA Program Admission

Admission to the PA program is extremely competitive. The program bases its admissions decisions on the following: candidates' general and science course GPA, type and quality of prior health care experience, experience working with or shadowing PAs, leadership and community service activities, professionalism, communication skills, letters of reference, and personal statement quality. The following are specific admissions requirements to keep in mind.

1. **A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university before enrollment into the program.**
Candidates can begin applying in their senior year of college, provided that they successfully graduate by the program's start date in May. Candidates must have their bachelor's degree before enrolling in the program.
2. **A minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for both total and science GPAs.**
The higher a candidate's GPAs, the more competitive the application. GPAs of 3.3 or higher in both total and science GPAs are competitive. GPAs of 3.5 or higher for both total and science GPAs are highly competitive.
3. **Documented hands-on, direct patient contact experience in a healthcare setting, accrued within seven years of application submission.**
A minimum of 1,000 hours of direct patient contact experience as a paid employee is required at the time of application submission. Having more than 1,500 hours is competitive, and more than 2,500 hours is highly competitive. Working with PAs, Nurse Practitioners, or physicians is not required but is highly competitive.
4. **A completed application submitted to the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA).** The following items are submitted directly to CASPA:
 - a. **Official transcripts from every U.S. college or university attended.** For coursework completed outside the United States, candidates need to submit an international course evaluation from either World Education Services (WES, <https://www.wes.org/>) or Education Credential Evaluators (ECE, <https://www.ece.org/>).
 - b. **Letters of Reference.** We require three letters of reference. We recommend references be from educators, PAs, MDs, or other professionals that candidates have worked with who can speak to medical skills, academic performance potential, commitment to service, and leadership capacity. At least one reference should be from a physician, PA, or other health professionals, and one should be from a college or university instructor. Personal references from family and friends are not competitive for admission to the program. Refer to CASPA for instructions on completing the online evaluation.
 - c. **Personal statement.** This statement should describe why the candidate wants to be a PA.
5. The following **prerequisite courses** must be completed with a grade of "C" or higher.

Prerequisite Course Summary

Prerequisite	Minimum Semester Credit Hours	Minimum Quarter Credit Hours
Human Anatomy	3	4
Human Physiology	3	4
OR a two-course sequence combined Human Anatomy & Physiology course	5 combined	7 combined
Biochemistry	3	4
Microbiology (with lab preferred but not required)	3	4
Psychology or equivalent course work in the behavioral sciences	3	4
Statistics	3	4

Human Anatomy, Human Physiology, Biochemistry, and Microbiology must be taken within seven years of planned matriculation in the program. If a candidate plans to start the program in 2025, these courses must be taken by the Summer 2018 term or later.

- 5a. Please note the following **exceptions to the letter grade requirements for classes taken during the COVID-19 pandemic**:
- We accept passing grades taken in a Pass/Fail system for any course taken from May to December 2020.
 - We accept passing grades taken in a Pass/Fail system for up to two required prerequisite courses taken from May to December 2020.
 - Candidates must have letter grades for four of the six prerequisites for courses taken during the pandemic. Grades should be in the standard letter grading system for all other terms.
6. Having **leadership and/or community service** experience is highly valued and greatly contributes to the competitiveness of a candidate's application. Current activities are also more competitive.
7. Final admissions decisions are based on an **interview** with members of the PA program faculty and other university faculty and leaders.
- a. Candidates who are invited for an admissions interview must complete a supplemental application and pay a \$40 supplementary fee. Information regarding this supplement is provided with an interview invitation.
 - b. All interview sessions will be held virtually.
8. All applicants must meet the minimum requirements to perform the essential functions of a PA. **See the [Technical Standards](#) sheet, pages 24-25, for more information.**
9. Admission is contingent upon successful completion of a health assessment, criminal background check, and drug screening processes before matriculation. Information regarding this requirement is discussed during interviews.
10. Applicants with coursework or a bachelor's degree conferred outside of the United States must submit a course equivalence evaluation by either World Education Services (WES) or Education Credentials Evaluators (ECE)
11. TOEFL scores – If English is not a candidate's native language, they are required to take the TOEFL before applying to the program. Please review the Rush College of Health Sciences policy on the TOEFL at: [Rush TOEFL for International Applicants](#) for more information.

Due to the highly competitive nature of the application process, meeting posted admission criteria does not guarantee candidates a program interview.

The program admits one class per year. Attendance in the program is on a full-time basis only.

The program does not offer advanced standing, accept transfer credits, or waive any prerequisite or other admission requirement, regardless of a candidate's previous professional or academic experience.

The PA program admits students into the class on a rolling basis, which means we accept candidates to the class at each interview session. Under a rolling admissions process, it is possible to fill all seats in the class before the admission cycle closes. It is to the applicant's advantage to fulfill and submit all application materials as early as possible.

Regarding prerequisite course requirements, please note the following:

- We do not make any course acceptance decisions without a CASPA application on file. If we have any questions regarding a course's eligibility to meet our requirements, we will contact the candidate after reviewing the completed CASPA application. Candidates may be asked to provide the program with a copy of the official course syllabus, course catalog description, and a copy of the lecture topic outline. It is a good idea to keep all undergraduate course materials prior to applying to PA school.
- We accept courses taken at any U.S., regionally accredited 2- and 4-year college or university of higher education, including online courses offered through such programs.
 - We do not accept coursework taken through non-degree-granting programs.
 - Courses taken at nationally accredited institutions are evaluated towards admissions eligibility on a case-by-case basis.
 - Advanced Placement and CLEP courses are not accepted towards meeting prerequisite course requirements.
 - For all prerequisite coursework taken at a non-U.S. or Canadian degree-granting institution, a WES or ECE evaluation is required at the time of application submission.
- Candidates must have four of the six prerequisite courses completed at the time of application to be eligible for review. If a candidate has outstanding prerequisites, they must be completed with a grade of "C" or higher before the start of the program.
 - **Note:** If a candidate has only taken one of a 2-course sequence Human Anatomy/Human Physiology course to fulfill prerequisite requirements, they are missing both human anatomy and human physiology courses.
 - We do not accept combined Organic and Biochemistry courses. Biochemistry must be a stand-alone course.
- Candidates must complete all coursework with a minimum final grade of a "C" or higher by the program start date. Acceptance offers to candidates with outstanding prerequisites are conditional, pending successfully completing all course requirements. If a candidate does not complete all prerequisite courses before the program start date, they forfeit their seat in the class.
- Below is a list of the minimally expected content for the program's prerequisite courses. If a prerequisite course includes these topics, it should fulfill the program's admission requirements:
 - **Human Anatomy** – covers the structure and function of the major human organ systems. Includes the musculoskeletal, nervous, circulatory, respiratory, digestive, urinary, endocrine, and reproductive systems.
 - **Human Physiology** – discusses basic biochemical principles, including cytology, histology, immunology, and the function and interaction of the major organ systems of the human body.
 - **Biochemistry** – discusses the relation of molecular structures to the functional processes of living organisms, such as kinetics, enzymatic reactions, metabolic pathway functions, and the genetic code. Includes the structure of amino acids, nucleotides, lipids, and sugars and their corresponding macromolecular structures, such as proteins, nucleic acids, cell membranes, and polysaccharides.
 - **Microbiology** – covers the biology of microorganisms - bacteria, fungi, protozoa, and viruses - that impact human health. The course covers the identification, physiology, control, host defense, and the relationship of microorganisms to health and disease.
 - **Psychology/Behavioral Sciences** – covers the major principles of behavioral science, including factors influencing behavior, personality, and mental processes, and the science of psychological investigation. A wide range of courses related to human behavior and psychosocial dynamic are acceptable towards meeting this requirement.
 - **Statistics** – discusses statistical reasoning and methodologies. Content should include methods for data analysis, correlation and regression, sampling and experimental design, basic probability theory, normal and binomial distributions, hypothesis testing, and confidence intervals for means, proportions, and regression parameters. A wide range of courses that address statistical methodologies are accepted toward meeting this requirement.

Additional Factors for Admissions Consideration

Rush University and the PA Program are committed to creating a class environment that mirrors our community and supports access and inclusion among all students. While all candidates must meet posted minimum admissions criteria, candidates with any of the following factors indicated on their CASPA application are given priority consideration towards an admissions interview and are reviewed on a case-by-case basis:

- Military veterans
- Persons from disadvantaged economic backgrounds
- First person to attend a higher education training program in their family
- Graduates of the Rush University Bachelor of Health Science Program who meet any of these additional factors criteria and who receive endorsement from a Health Science Program faculty member.

Frequently Asked Questions

General Admissions Questions:

1. When does the CASPA admission cycle open and close?

Our admissions cycle begins at the end of April and ends on October 1. Please visit [CASPA](#) for more information on admissions cycle dates for all member programs.

2. How competitive is admission to the program?

Admission to Rush is highly competitive. In 2024-2025, we received over 3,200 applications and reviewed over 2,000 for 130 interviewees and a final class size of 32 students. Only 1% of applicants are offered a seat in the class. Successful candidates for the program usually greatly exceed our posted admissions criteria.

3. Will you screen my qualifications for admissions eligibility before I apply to the program?

No. We do not offer individualized pre-admissions counseling, and we only make admissions eligibility decisions after reviewing your official CASPA record. We will gladly address questions regarding our admissions standards by phone or email.

Review this information packet carefully to self-determine the competitiveness of your experiences before applying to the program. For prerequisite course acceptability, review the descriptions of minimally expected course content [on page 13](#). If the course you are concerned about has this content, it should be acceptable.

4. Once I submit my application materials, how long before I hear if I will receive an interview?

We try to review applications as quickly as possible. It typically takes 6-8 weeks to review your verified application; however, it can take up to 12 weeks to be notified of your interview status in the program.

5. Do you give preference to Illinois residents?

No. Rush University is a private institution, and residency status is not a factor of consideration in admission decisions or tuition costs.

6. Can I work while completing the PA program?

No. The PA program is an intensive, full-time curriculum. The rigorous class and study schedule needed to succeed in the program makes working at an outside job impossible at any time during the program. For this reason, students in the program also cannot participate in any student work-study programs.

7. Can I start the program while I am finishing my undergraduate degree or prerequisite courses?

No. All degree and prerequisite coursework must be completed and verified before you can start the program, even if your degree is not related to your PA education. We recommend that all coursework be completed by the beginning of April to start the program in May.

8. Can I attend the Rush PA Program on a part-time basis?

No. We do not offer a part-time or decelerated PA Program.

9. Does Rush University offer a bachelor's degree in PA?

No. Rush University's program is an entry-level master's program, and you must have a bachelor's degree prior to enrolling in the program.

10. Does Rush University have student housing?

The university does not have on-campus housing; however, there are many housing options available in the city. For more information, contact the Office of Student Life and Engagement at (312) 942-6302 or visit the Rush University website, <https://www.Rushu.Rush.edu/Rush-experience/student-services/student-life-and-engagement>

11. Do you accept transfer students? Do you offer advanced standing to students based on prior educational or professional experience?

No. The PA program curriculum must be completed in its entirety at Rush. We do not offer advanced standing or transfer credits into the program, regardless of your prior educational or work experience.

12. How will the program's Accreditation-Probation status affect me if I am admitted to the program?

So long as you are admitted to the program under an accredited status, the probation designation will not affect your education, ability to sit for the PANCE, or obtain a state license. The program was placed on accreditation-probation status due to our not clearly evidencing our compliance with ARC-PA standards. None of the citations concerned the curriculum or program outcomes.

The faculty is working diligently to reverse this decision at our next accreditation review in March 2026. Feel free to email us with any questions or concerns regarding our accreditation status.

Health Care Experience for Admission:

1. How will I know if my health care experience is acceptable for admission to the program?

We do not define "eligible" types of health care experiences (HCE). Every application is weighed on its merits depending on how you describe your activity and interaction with patients, PAs, physicians, and other health care team members.

Do not assume that your title sufficiently describes your duties and responsibilities. Your application should clearly and briefly describe your HCE, providing details regarding the nature of your experience, responsibilities, and your interactions with PAs and other providers in the health care setting. Be concise and descriptive. Documenting your experience helps the admissions committee understand your accomplishments and level of preparedness for PA school.

Please review the [HCE description](#) on Page 12. The more you exceed the criteria described, the more competitive your application will be.

2. What types of health care experience (HCE) do successful applicants to the program have?

The clinical experiences of enrolled students include but are not limited to the following: MA, CNA, EMT, PCT, Clinical Research Coordinator, Scribe, Athletic Trainer, ER Tech, Nurse, Paramedic, Sonographer, Respiratory Therapist, and Dietitian.

3. Is working with or shadowing PAs required for admission?

No. However, working with PAs will give you an understanding of a PA's role on the health care team. We consider having experience working directly with PAs in the clinical setting before applying to PA school to be highly competitive.

Shadowing a PA is not required, but it is very beneficial to understand the PA role, especially if you do not work with one in the clinical setting.

All successful applicants have extensive hours and experience working with or shadowing PAs, Nurse Practitioners, and MDs.

4. What are other factors to consider when seeking health care experience?

Some additional factors to consider include:

- The experience should entail working as much as possible with PAs, nurse practitioners, and/or physicians in a health care setting.
- Currency of health care experience matters. Candidates who do not have health care experience within seven years before applying to the program are not considered eligible for admission to the program.
- Health care hours attained in a clinical training program – for example, patient contact hours during nursing or medical school – **do not** count towards the requirement.

5. Does the PA program assist applicants in finding clinical work or shadowing experience?

No. We cannot help candidates find clinical or shadowing experiences.

Other Admissions Questions:

1. How strongly does Rush value applicant leadership and service experience?

While not a requirement for admission, we value leadership and service experience in our students. Having prior leadership and service experience will strengthen the competitiveness of your application.

2. What are some examples of leadership experience?

Many types of activities count as leadership. Being a team leader of any kind, whether at school, work, or in your community, counts. Other things to consider include training others at work or school, mentoring, event planning or organizing, or leading a school or community campaign.

3. What are some examples of service experience?

Many types of activities count as service, including volunteering for a school or community project, charity, or service organization. Participating in a medical mission or health fair activity, or tutoring are other examples of service experience.

4. How can I strengthen my GPA?

There are many ways to strengthen your GPA, but also many factors to consider, such as time and cost. In general, retaking classes that you did not do well in previously can help, but only if your grades improve. Please carefully consider your resources before deciding to retake classes, and only do so if you know you can be successful.

5. What is the profile of the typical successful Rush University PA Program applicant?

These are the performance profiles of the four most recently admitted classes, listed by graduation date.

Class of 2023
Starting Class Size: 29 Students, Female: 21, Male: 8. Median Age: 25 Years
URM in Medicine: 21%
Median GPA Total: 3.50, Lowest GPA Total: 3.04, Highest GPA Total: 3.83
Median GPA Science: 3.50, Lowest GPA Science: 3.13, Highest GPA Science: 3.76
GRE Not Required
Median Health Care Hours: 4,972, Lowest Health Care Hours: 1,500, Highest Health Care Hours: 13,000
Class of 2024
Starting Class Size: 32 Students, Female: 23, Male: 9. Median Age: 25 Years
URM in Medicine: 19%
Median GPA Total: 3.50 Lowest GPA Total: 3.10, Highest GPA Total: 3.89
Median GPA Science: 3.40, Lowest GPA Science: 3.11, Highest GPA Science: 3.86
GRE Not Required
Median Health Care Hours: 4,343, Lowest Health Care Hours: 1,450, Highest Health Care Hours: 18,000
Class of 2025
Starting Class Size: 32 Students, Female: 31, Male: 1. Median Age: 25 Years
URM in Medicine: 22%
Median GPA Total: 3.60 Lowest GPA Total: 3.32, Highest GPA Total: 3.91
Median GPA Science: 3.50, Lowest GPA Science: 3.02, Highest GPA Science: 3.89
GRE Not Required
Class of 2026
Starting Class Size: 32 Students, Female: 27, Male: 5. Median Age: 26 Years
URM in Medicine: 31%
Median GPA Total: 3.69, Lowest GPA Total: 3.04, Highest GPA Total: 3.97
Median GPA Science: 3.63, Lowest GPA Science: 3.0, Highest GPA Science: 3.96
GRE Not Required
Median Health Care Hours: 3,810, Lowest Health Care Hours: 2093, Highest Health Care Hours: >10,000

URM = underrepresented minority. Rush University currently defines URM in medicine as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latin, Native American, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

The Rush Student Experience:

1. When do classes start? What's the program calendar?

We admit one class of students annually. Classes start at the beginning of May each year, and new students cannot enroll in the program once the class has started.

The academic calendar is available here: [Rush Academic Calendars](#). Note that clinical rotation schedules do not follow the Rush academic calendar.

2. Will I take classes with other Rush students?

Yes. As part of the core curriculum, several classes are co-taught with students from different College of Health Sciences programs. Also, the University offers an interprofessional learning course for all students from all programs during their first year in the program, which is mandatory.

3. What is the purpose of the third-year clinical rotations?

The third-year rotations are intended to provide enhanced patient care experiences that allow students to gain the knowledge and skills to work with confidence as new PA graduates. The additional six months of training gives students more patient management experience, enhanced clinical knowledge, and greater PA leadership opportunities before graduation. Rush's advanced practice rotations set our PA program apart from the others.

4. Do I need to provide my own placement sites or preceptors for rotations?

No. The program faculty have sole responsibility for finding clinical placement sites and preceptors. You may make recommendations for new sites or preceptors. However, making a recommendation does not guarantee that the placement will occur.

5. Will I be on rotation with students from other programs?

Yes. During clinical rotations, you will work as a health care team member. On many rotations, you will work alongside learners from other health care disciplines and institutions.

6. Where are clinical rotation sites located?

We provide our students with a wide variety of experiences in various clinical settings, including hospitals, outpatient clinics, and private practices. All students are required to complete some rotations outside of Rush, and we consider a 90-minute or a 90-mile drive from our campus to be a local rotation area.

7. Will I need a car during PA school?

For the first year of the program, no. Most people use Chicago's extensive public transportation system to get to campus.

During clinical rotations, **you must have access to a car**. We are unable to place students on rotations based on transportation availability.

8. Are your graduates employed?

All graduates have reported working as PAs. 30% of our graduates have been employed at Rush after graduation.

9. Are your graduates well prepared to pass the PANCE?

Yes. The program has a 98% first-time taker pass rate on the PANCE and an overall 100% pass rate for all graduates.

Thank you for your interest in the Rush University PA Program!

Academic Year 2025-2026 Curriculum

Program Year 1- Core Didactic Curriculum Courses

Term I – Summer		Semester Hours	Instructional Method
PHA 510	Human Physiology	2	Blended
PHA 511	Human Anatomy	4	Blended
PHA 512	History & Physical Examination	3	In-person
PHA 513	PA Professional Issues	2	Blended
PHA 514	Clinical Medicine I	5	Blended
Term II – Fall		Semester Hours	Instructional Method
IPE 502	Interprofessional Healthcare Teams	0	Synchronous Online
PHA 520	Principles of Clinical Pharmacology I	3	Blended
PHA 521	Research & Statistics	2	Blended
PHA 522	Diagnostic Reasoning I	2	In-person
PHA 523	Epidemiology and Public Health	2	Synchronous Online
PHA 524	Clinical Medicine II	6	Blended
PHA 525	Principles of Advanced Practice I	2	In-person
Term III – Spring		Semester Hours	Instructional Method
IPE 502	Interprofessional Healthcare Teams	0	Synchronous Online
CHS 605	Ethics in Health Care	2	Asynchronous Online
PHA 530	Principles of Clinical Pharmacology II	3	Blended
PHA 532	Diagnostic Reasoning II	2	In-person
PHA 533	Psychosocial Medicine	2	In-person
PHA 534	Clinical Medicine III	6	Blended
PHA 535	Principles of Advanced Practice II	2	Blended
PHA 536	Emergency and Surgical Medicine	2	In-person
Total Credit Hours for Program Year 1:		52	

Rush University PA Program Hybrid Curriculum:

The program implemented a blended teaching model in 2022. Depending on the term, 30% or more of the classes may be conducted online, complemented by interactive or skills-based training activities in person. We feel this model gives faculty and students flexibility while maintaining the program's rigors. We are a full-time, Chicago-based, on-campus program and all of our institution's learning resource centers are open for students.

Clinical training activities are in person at all rotation sites.

Program Year 2 – Clinical Curriculum Courses

Second Year Rotations Sample Sequence - Individual Rotations Will Vary

Term I – Summer	Rotation Duration	Semester Hours
PHA 581 Family Medicine	4 weeks	4
PHA 582 Internal Medicine I	4 weeks	4
PHA 583 Internal Medicine II	4 weeks	4
PHA 584 General Surgery I	4 weeks	4
Term II – Fall	Rotation Duration	Semester Hours
PHA 585 General Surgery II	4 weeks	4
PHA 586 Obstetrics and Gynecology	4 weeks	4
PHA 587 Pediatrics	4 weeks	4
PHA 588 Behavioral Health	4 weeks	4
Term III – Spring	Rotation Duration	Semester Hours
PHA 589 Long Term Care/Geriatrics	4 weeks	4
PHA 590 Emergency Medicine	4 weeks	4
PHA 591 Elective I	4 weeks	4
PHA 592 Elective II	4 weeks	4

Total Credit Hours for Program Year 2: 48

Program Year 3 – Advanced Clinical Curriculum Courses

Term I – Summer	Rotation Duration	Semester Hours
PHA 593 Advanced Clinical Practice I	15 weeks	15
PHA 595 Master’s Research Project I	15 weeks	1
Term II – Fall	Rotation Duration	Semester Hours
PHA 594 Advanced Clinical Practice II	15 weeks	15
PHA 596 Master’s Research Project II	15 weeks	1
3rd Year: Total Semester Credits		32

PA Program Total Credits for 30 Months 132

For More Information

Rush University is excited to offer PA training in our renowned medical facility.

For more information about the Rush University PA Program visit our website or contact the program via email or phone.

Email pa_admissions@rush.edu

Phone (312) 563-3234

Website <http://www.rushu.rush.edu/pa-program>

CASPA admissions process: Contact [CASPA](#) directly.

Rush University or the admissions policies of the College of Health Sciences at Rush University:
Contact the admissionsoffice directly at (312) 942-7120.

Open House Events: Visit the Rush University [Information Session](#) page to sign up for an upcoming PA Program Open House event.

We strongly encourage you to review our FAQ sheet as well. Many of the questions we commonly get are answered in the FAQ sheet.

The Rush University PA Program's Commitment to Service

Rush University is in the Medical District of Chicago, a major metropolitan area representing some of the nation's most diverse and medically underserved populations. Since its inception, the PA Program has committed to advancing Rush's community service initiatives.

Rush has a long-standing connection to the community through its Community Engagement and the Rush Community Service Initiatives Program (RCSIP).

RCSIP provides students with a resource for community-based volunteer experiences throughout the Chicago area. RCSIP projects give students valuable experience by serving the underserved and disenfranchised, and fostering collaboration with community representatives, Rush faculty, and fellow students from various programs.

The following is a brief list of some the RCSIP activities in which PA students participate.

Clinical Programs

Franciscan House of Mary & Joseph
 Community Health Clinic
 Medical Mobile Van
 Chicago Community Church
 Freedom Center
 RU Caring
 Facing Forward Wellness Center
 Oakley Square Wellness Center
 Haymarket Clinic
 Youth Advocates
 20/20

Non-Clinical Programs

BUDDIES
 Special BUDDIES
 Sankofa Initiative
 Richard T. Crane Medical Preparatory High School CTE Program
 Incarceration Medicine Initiative
 RU Crafty
 Tobacco Cessation Initiative
 Asthma Clinic
 Food Surplus Distribution

AND MANY MORE!!!

2025-2026 Estimate of Costs

The PA Program charges a flat tuition fee by term based on the 30-month curriculum. There are no additional fees associated with attending Rush.

Tuition for the 2024-2025 academic year is \$109,912. The total tuition amount is evenly divided across each term of the program, equal to \$13,739 per term.

Estimated cost information is provided for planning purposes only.

For more information about financial aid, visit <https://www.Rushu.Rush.edu/student-life/student-affairs/office-student-financial-aid>. Individual financial need is based on personal preferences and circumstances.

To determine your specific financial aid needs, speak with a representative in the Office of Financial Aid at: **(312) 942-6256**, or email them at: financial_aid@rush.edu.

Estimated Costs	First Year	Second Year	Third Year
Books, Equipment, and Supplies	\$1407.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
Tuition:	\$41,207.00	\$41,207.00	\$27,478.00
ESTIMATED TOTALS:	\$42,624.00	\$41,717.00	\$27,978.00

*** Note all costs are subject to change without notice; tuition is subject to change at a rate of 2-5% annually.*

PA Program Scholarships

Rush University and the College of Health Sciences offer scholarship awards to incoming PA students annually. In 2024, the PA Program awarded over \$250,000 in scholarships to incoming students, benefiting more than one-third of the class. The PA Program's scholarships are:

PA Program Scholarships - a merit- and need-based scholarship to offset the cost of tuition. Merit is determined by undergraduate performance, and need is determined by FAFSA. Total award amount is approximately \$150,000 annually. All incoming students are eligible for this scholarship.

CHS Leadership Scholarship - a College of Health Sciences award that recognizes incoming students with demonstrated leadership experience and a commitment to further developing their leadership skills during the program. Additional consideration is given to experiences demonstrating dedication to building team member resilience. The award amount is equivalent to the total cost of tuition and is divided among qualified recipients. All incoming students are eligible for this scholarship.

Grainger Scholarship - a competitive scholarship award to promote leadership and service. Successful awardees design a community service project that aims to aid an underrepresented or underserved community in Chicago. Scholarship application is provided upon admission to the program. The award is \$40,000 to two incoming students annually.

Information regarding CHS scholarships is available here: [CHS Scholarships](#). Contact the College of Health Sciences Admissions Office at chs_admissions@rush.edu if you have questions.

For information regarding general financial aid options, contact the Office of Financial Aid at: financial_aid@rush.edu or **(312) 942-6256**.

College of Health Sciences Technical Standards

The following are the universal technical standards that apply to all clinical training students in the Rush University College of Health Sciences. These standards apply to all students enrolled in the PA Program.

PA Program Technical Standards:

Rush University is committed to diversity and to attracting and educating students who will make the population of health care professionals representative of the national population.

Our core values — ICARE — Innovation, Collaboration, Accountability, Respect and Excellence, translate into our work with all students, including those with disabilities. Rush actively collaborates with students to develop innovative ways to ensure accessibility and creates a respectful accountable culture through our confidential and specialized disability support. Rush is committed to excellence in accessibility; we encourage students with disabilities to disclose and seek accommodations.

The following technical functions are required of all students enrolled in the PA Program.

Acquire Information:

- Acquire information from demonstrations and experiences in courses such as lecture, group, and physical demonstrations.
- Acquire information from written documents and computer systems (e.g., literature searches & data retrieval).
- Identify information presented in accessible images from paper, slides, videos with audio description, and transparencies.
- Identify information presented in images from paper, slides, videos, and transparencies.
- Recognize and assess patient changes in mood, activity, cognition, verbal, and non-verbal communication.

Use and Interpret:

- Use and interpret information from assessment techniques/maneuvers.
- Use and interpret information related to physiologic phenomena generated from diagnostic tools.

Motor:

- Possess psychomotor skills necessary to provide or assist in holistic PA care and perform or assist with procedures and treatments.
- Practice in a safe manner and appropriately provide PA care and assessment in emergencies and life support procedures and perform universal precautions against contamination.

Communication:

- Communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and families.
- Communicate effectively with faculty, preceptors, and all members of the healthcare team during practicum and other learning experiences.
- Accurately elicit information including a medical history and other information to adequately and effectively evaluate a population's, client's or patient's condition.

PA Program Technical Standards, continued:

Intellectual Ability:

- Measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize data related to diagnosis and treatment of patients and populations.
- Exercise proper judgment and complete responsibilities in a timely and accurate manner according to the “program name” role.
- Synthesize information, problem solve, and think critically to judge the most appropriate theory, assessment, or treatment strategy.

Behavioral:

- Maintain mature, sensitive, effective relationships with clients/patients, families, students, faculty, staff, preceptors and other professionals under all circumstances.
- Exercise skills of diplomacy to advocate for patients in need.
- Possess emotional stability to function under stress and adapt to rapidly changing environments inherent to the classroom and practice settings.

Character:

- Demonstrate concern for others, integrity, accountability, interest, and motivation are necessary personal qualities.
- Demonstrate intent and desire to follow the Rush University and PA Code of Ethics.

All students in the PA Program must meet the technical standards delineated above, with or without accommodation.

Upon reviewing the technical standards, a student who needs accommodation(s) to engage in the program fully should contact the Office of Student Disability Services for assistance. All communications with the Office of Student Disability Services are confidential.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services may be reached at: <https://www.rushu.rush.edu/office-student-accessibility-services>.

Given the clinical nature of our programs, time may be needed to implement accommodations. Accommodations are never retroactive; therefore, timely requests are essential and encouraged.

Thank you for your interest in the Rush University PA Program!