

# **PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT**

(Degree types / credentials vary)

*2009 - 2010*

## **HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND PRELAW CENTER**

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#### **IMPORTANT:**

This document was prepared for Indiana University Bloomington students by the Health Professions and Prelaw Center. Please note that specific requirements and policies can change at any time without notice. Students are responsible for obtaining the most current information directly from the application services, and the schools and programs in which they have an interest. Refer to each program's web pages, bulletins, and other publications for the most current information.

## I. GENERAL PA INFORMATION

### A. Description of the Profession

- Physician assistants (PAs) are health care professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. As part of their comprehensive responsibilities, PAs conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses and injuries, order and interpret lab tests and x-rays, counsel on preventative health care, assist in surgery, and write prescriptions. PAs work in all areas of medicine, and so practice in primary care (e.g., family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology) as well as surgery and the surgical sub-specialties. **Skills and characteristics important to this profession:** Critical thinking and problem-solving skills, empathy, ability to work quickly and make good decisions under pressure, excellent time management skills, effective interpersonal communication, the ability to work with a team of care givers, willingness to invest in continued education as healthcare methodology and technology changes. These and other professional development components are a critical part of any undergraduate degree. Click the Professional Development link on the HPPLC home page for further suggestions.
- The American Academy of Physician Assistants provides this helpful FAQ:  
Q: **"Where do PAs 'draw the line' as far as what they can treat and what a physician can treat?"**  
A: "What a physician assistant does varies with training, experience, and state law. In addition, the scope of the PA's practice corresponds to the supervising physician's practice. In general, a physician assistant will see many of the same types of patients as the physician. The cases handled by physicians are generally the more complicated medical cases or those cases which require care that is not a routine part of the PA's scope of work. Referral to the physician, or close consultation between the patient-PA-physician, is done for unusual or hard to manage cases. Physician assistants are taught to 'know [their] limits' and refer [patients] to physicians appropriately..."
- What are the **differences between PAs and nurse practitioners (NPs)?**
  - PA and NP are competing professions, and so patient care responsibilities are often similar.
  - NPs, however, may operate their own medical practices and can often, depending on certain circumstances, function more independently than PAs, both in terms of setting and the kinds of responsibilities they undertake. It is also true, however, that in some settings (e.g., rural clinics) a PA may be the primary health care provider when the supervising physician is not present.
  - The length of initial training is roughly the same for NPs and for PAs enrolled in master's degree programs.
  - Both NPs and PAs may need to be on call, but PAs may have more predictable schedules, depending on the setting and the supervising physician.
  - PAs are covered by the physician's insurance. Depending on the setting, NPs often must have their own insurance.
  - PAs can specialize by simply working and training with different kinds of physicians. For NPs, different NP training programs offer different specializations from the start, and in order to specialize in different areas further schooling and certification processes may be necessary.
  - PAs are trained via a medical school approach to diagnosis and treatment, whereas NP training employs a model similar to that of RN training. For example, PA training generally focuses on the efficient gathering of information, assessment of symptoms related to the physical ailment, and the reaching of a diagnosis; whereas NP training instills a more holistic approach to diagnosis—one which entails the assessment of the patient's whole physical, emotional, psychological, and cultural circumstances. It is true that a busy NP may appear to be simply assessing physical symptoms and rendering a diagnosis, but the underlying philosophy of the NP's training is nonetheless "holistic."
  - The following quotation, from the article, "What's the Difference Between PAs and NPs?" (*Journal of the American Academy of Physician Assistants*, V.19, No. 10 OCT 2006), is revealing: "While PAs embrace the physician-PA team concept and physician supervision, NPs generally use the term 'collaboration,' meaning a close working relationship between different professions. That said, NPs do view themselves as part of an interdisciplinary health care team."
  - It is important to remember that the differences and similarities noted above are highly contingent upon many variables, including the specific setting, state regulations, and the preferences of any supervising physicians.

## **B. Description of PA Programs**

- **Indiana University does not offer a physician assistant program. Butler University and the University of Saint Frances offer the only PA programs in Indiana.** Requirements for becoming a certified or licensed PA vary by state. Different PA programs award different types of credentials, including certificates of completion, associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, or master's degrees. Which credential you pursue depends on your current level of education and other circumstances, as well as your career goals. **Most people pursue master's programs, and the PA profession as a whole is moving in that direction.** Further information below.
- Because of the close working relationship PAs have with physicians, PAs are educated in a medical model designed to complement physician training. The average PA program curriculum runs approximately 26 months. There are currently about 140 accredited programs in the US.
- Education consists of classroom and laboratory instruction in the basic medical and behavioral sciences (such as anatomy, pharmacology, pathophysiology, clinical medicine, and physical diagnosis), followed by clinical rotations in internal medicine, family medicine, surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine, and geriatric medicine. master's degree programs usually include a research component as well. PAs specialize by working with different kinds of physicians, so it is possible to gain multiple specializations over time.
- PA is slowly moving towards master's-level training. For the time being, though, there are still two paths to PA studies.

**A)** By far the most common, flexible, and practical path is to earn a master of science PA degree. This path involves first earning an undergraduate degree while also completing the prerequisite courses for whichever graduate-level PA programs the student is interested in, and then applying to such programs (e.g., master of science degree programs or, less commonly, graduate-level PA certificate programs) during senior year of the undergraduate degree. Biology, chemistry, and nutrition science have historically been the common choices of major, but this is a matter of preference. If you choose the master's route you should probably major in whatever you are most interested, while working in your PA prerequisites and professional development activities. Prerequisite courses can be worked into most undergraduate majors.

**B)** Far less commonly, some students enter an undergraduate preprofessional program which, *depending on the state's licensure rules*, may itself prepare the student to take the given state's PA licensure exam. The undergraduate PA path could also lead to an undergraduate PA certificate or associate's degree, either of which might in turn prepare the student to sit *for a given state's* licensure exams. Or such a path may be designed to prepare the student for post-undergraduate PA training, such as a master's degree or graduate-level PA certificate. Currently, only about 18 US physician assistant programs do not offer master's degrees.

## **C. Researching PA Training Paths and Career Possibilities**

Researching PA can be a complex, lengthy process, but carefully following the suggestions below can make it much simpler and more efficient.

- It's important that you begin shadowing / observing PAs immediately, and observe as many different PAs in as many different settings as possible. Also conduct extensive ongoing observation with a PA with whom you establish a good rapport so that s/he is in a position to write the strongest possible letter of reference for you. Keep a journal of your observations and interactions, and follow the suggestions in **Section VI.B (Shadowing and Observation)** of this document.
- Be aware that minimum admission requirements are usually irrelevant. You must learn what kind of GPA, GRE score (if required), patient care experience, and so on, is required to be truly *competitive* for admission, and not merely eligible to apply.
- Note that many pre-PA students choose to—or simply find they must—defer their application for a year or more while they garner more patient care experience, complete their program research, work in additional prerequisites, and so on.
- The American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) provides a simple list of accredited PA programs at [www.aapa.org/pgmlist.php3](http://www.aapa.org/pgmlist.php3). You can in turn use this list to perform a search for program web sites.
- Refer to the HPPLC document, *Questions To Ask Health Professions Programs*, which can help you build your own list of research questions.

- Thoroughly read the HPPLC document, *CASPA and Letter of Recommendation Information for Physician Assistant Programs*.
- In a loose leaf binder, word processing document, or spreadsheet, keep a log for each school you contact. Record information for each program so you can do side-by-side comparisons. Also record both your questions and the answers you get from program representatives or other sources.
- Use the resources referenced in this document to conduct your initial research into PA programs. Talk with an admissions representative from each program you are considering. Discuss your situation and your goals with them, and ask whether they feel their program would be a good fit for you. Even if you are not sure whether you will have met all admission requirements upon graduating, do not rule out a given program. PA programs want to speak with potential applicants to discuss their circumstances and what they might do to become a viable candidate.
- Be politely persistent over the phone and through email, as administrative staffing is sometimes small and it can be very difficult for them to quickly field questions during especially busy times of the year (e.g., at the height of the application cycle, or near graduation). Phone calls may be most efficient. Record the names and extension numbers of the people you talk with, even reception staff. Ask if they can suggest the best times / days / methods of reaching the other people you wish to speak with.
- When you gather information during a phone call, confirm the person's email address (and extension, if they will provide it), and then follow-up with a polite, professionally written email to make sure you correctly understood what they told you. This way you won't have to ask the same questions twice. Also, it's just a good idea to have at least an informal email confirmation with regard to prerequisites and other admission requirements / preferences, transfer credit, whether a given IU course will fulfill a given program's requirement, and so on.
- One of the simplest ways to become more familiar with PA education and career possibilities is to explore and read through related web resources. Much of your research has already been done for you, so take advantage of it! In **Section VII** of this document you will find a list of web links to PA professional organizations, career web sites, and other resources you should utilize during your research process.
- Take program rankings with a grain of salt. They can be of some use, but each list has its own ranking methodology and its own list of ranking criteria. Therefore, such rankings are inherently imperfect. We suggest you go to the main library and ask the reference desk to direct you to these resources. For instance, *US News and World Report* has an oft-cited annual rankings list of graduate schools. But, again, do not over-rely on such rankings lists, which can be very subjective, and which don't always use the most relevant criteria when comparing programs.
- Remember that there are different routes to a PA credential, and that credentialing varies by state. It is critical, even if you are not certain you are pre-PA, that you immediately begin to research the specific admission requirements for the PA programs in which you are interested. Direct any specific questions about a program's admission requirements to the program itself.
- Remember that IU offers no PA program. **Admission requirements vary across programs, and there is no particular undergraduate major required for admission to PA master's programs. Having said this, on the next page you will find a list of possible courses to consider.** While prerequisites vary, the courses listed in the grid are either required or recommended prerequisites for many master's-level PA programs.
- Be aware that **many PA programs will not accept Advanced Placement (AP) credit, credit-by-exam, or exemption from degree requirements in place of admission requirements**, or may only accept such credit under specific circumstances. Contact programs to ask about any related items on your transcript, and to confirm their policies.
- **We strongly encourage you to review further information about this program**, including links to web resources, on the HPPLC web page ([www.hpplc.indiana.edu](http://www.hpplc.indiana.edu)) and at the end of this document.
- **We also suggest you sign up for the HPPLC email list** associated with your program of interest, also found on our home page. Feel free to sign up for more than one list.  
*See next page for course information.*

## II. COURSES REQUIRED FOR ADMISSION WILL VARY BY PROGRAM

**IMPORTANT:** Below is a grid of *possible* pre-PA courses. **Before consulting the grid, carefully read Section 1.C of this handout, *Researching PA Training Paths and Career Possibilities*.** The information there is critical to your preparation. Also read the important notes below the grid.

Courses to Consider for PA Preparation (Course designations are for IUB)		Credit Hours
<b>Written Communication</b>		
Elementary Composition	(ENG-W 131 or 170)	3
Second Writing Course	(Course will vary by degree / major)	3
<b>Biology<sup>1</sup></b>		
Biological Mechanisms	(BIOL-L 112)	3
Biology Laboratory	(BIOL-L 113)	3
Genetics	(BIOL-L 311)	3
Microbiology lecture / lab	(BIOL-M 200 and M215, or M250 and M255)	3, 1 / 3, 2
<b>Chemistry<sup>1</sup></b>		
Principles of Chemistry and Biochemistry	(CHEM-C 117)	5
Organic Chemistry 1 lectures <sup>2</sup>	(CHEM-C 341)	3
Organic Chemistry 2 lectures <sup>3</sup>	(CHEM-C 342)	3
Organic Chemistry I Laboratory <sup>3</sup>	(CHEM-C 343)	2
Organic Chemistry 2 Laboratory <sup>4</sup>	(CHEM-C 344)	2
Intermediate Inorganic Chemistry	(CHEM-N 330)	5
Biological Chemistry (Biochemistry)	(CHEM-C 483)	3
<b>Anatomy, Physiology, Medical Terminology</b>		
Anatomy <sup>5</sup>	(ANAT-A 215)	5
Physiology <sup>5</sup>	(PHSL-P 215)	5
Medical Terminology	(CLAS-C 209)	2
<b>Math and Statistics<sup>1</sup></b>		
College-Level Algebra or Higher	(Minimum course varies by PA program)	3 - 4
Statistics	(MATH/PSY/SPEA-K 300 or MATH/PSY/SPEA-K 310 or STAT-S 300)	3
<b>Social and Behavioral Science</b>		
Introduction to Psychology	(PSY-P 101 or equivalent)	3
Developmental Psychology	(HPER-F 150 or EDUC-P 314 <sup>8</sup> or PSY-P 315 <sup>8</sup> )	3
Additional Social / Behavioral Science	(If required, course type will vary by program)	3
<b>Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Certification<sup>6</sup></b>		
First Aid and Emergency Care <sup>7</sup>	(HPER-H 160)	3
EMT Training	(HPER-H401 and 404, taken together)	3, 1
<b>Other Coursework</b>		
Humanities	(See Part III, next page)	varies

### IMPORTANT NOTES:

- 1) Refer to course descriptions in the College of Arts and Sciences Bulletin/Supplement for prerequisite information.
- 2) Check with individual PA programs to see if they accept CHEM-R 340 in place of CHEM-C 341.
- 3) It is recommended that students enroll concurrently in CHEM-C 342 and C-343.
- 4) CHEM-C 344 can be taken either before or after N330.
- 5) Anat, physl, and med terms all require large amounts of memorization, and physiology includes a significant critical thinking component. It is recommended that you avoid taking anatomy and physiology at the same time.
- 6) EMT certification is advantageous for admission to most PA programs; most applicants are certified EMTs. Taking the courses listed in the grid and passing the certification exam is one way to earn your EMT. For a list of other training providers in Indiana, visit <https://oas.in.gov/hs/training/public/calendar.do>. Under "Categories," click the "EMS Training" link. The list is continually updated, and other states should have similar listings. Prices range from about \$400-\$600, and programs can last weeks or months depending upon how often classes meet.
- 7) First aid certification earned through the Red Cross, hospitals, etc. does not exempt students from H160. First Responder certification may in rare cases allow exemption from H160. H160 is the official prerequisite or corequisite for H401 / 404 because it garners students some of the training hours ultimately required for EMT certification.
- 8) Prerequisite or corequisite for EDUC-P 314 is PSY-P 101 or P155. Prereq for PSY-P315 is P101 and 102, or P155.

### III. ADDITIONAL COURSE OPTIONS AND NOTES

- Note that while some PA programs require a minimum grade as low as a C- in prerequisites, others require a B or higher. In any case, these minimums will often not be competitive for admission. Check with programs for specifics.
- **IMPORTANT: Some PA programs may not accept Advanced Placement (AP) credit, credit-by-exam, or exemption from degree requirements in place of admission requirements**, or may only accept such credit under specific circumstances. Confirm with each program you are considering.
- Less commonly required course include computer science, medical ethics, molecular biology, physics (Butler requires physics), and perhaps others.
- Well-rounded applicants can be at an advantage during the admission process. We suggest you work a variety of coursework into your preparation, including humanities. At the same time, some programs prefer additional upper-level science beyond the required prerequisites. For additional course recommendations and / or requirements, check the web page of each program in which you're interested, and contact them with questions.

### IV. OTHER ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

#### A. Overview

- In addition to specific undergraduate prerequisite courses, many graduate PA programs require that you take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), some will accept the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT), and some require neither. Letters of recommendation, a personal statement, and an admissions interview are also commonly required. Priority is usually given to applicants with extensive healthcare experience and other patient contact, leadership experience, and other professional development and experience. To be a competitive applicant, you must build a substantial portfolio of these activities. GPA remains an important factor as well. You will need to research each program you are interested in and assemble a list of requirements, preferences, and recommendations.
- The typical applicant to graduate-level PA programs is 24 years old and has significant health care experience / patient contact. This is not to say that those who are younger or who have less experience cannot become viable applicants. Nurses, CNAs, EMTs, and paramedics commonly apply to PA programs, but PAs come from a wide variety of professional backgrounds, including non-health fields.
- Admission philosophies vary across programs. Some prefer that students have a more well-rounded set of experiences, including humanities and social science courses, volunteer experience, and the like; others prefer that applicants have professional healthcare experience and a deeper science background; and other programs do not have a set of such preferences. Researching programs and talking to admissions representatives is the best way to learn about their admission philosophies.
- Admission is very competitive, and applicants must develop excellent science and analytical skills.

#### B. Shadowing and Observation

- Because many programs require a letter of reference from a PA with whom you have spent considerable time observing, discussing the profession, and so on, it is extremely important that you begin doing so now. Shadowing / observation is also the best way to determine whether a PA career is something you wish to pursue.
- Students interested in PA should take advantage of any connections they might have, such as family members or friends of the family who are members of the profession or who know a PA. These connections can sometimes open the door to shadowing, service, or internship opportunities. Also, pre-PA students can scour the yellow pages for health care providers who might employ PAs. Mail, email, or hand deliver to each office a professionally written résumé and a well-written cover letter in which you talk a little about yourself and your goals, and why you are interested in the PA profession and in shadowing. Doing this can help you establish some credibility. Later, make a follow-up phone call to see if they received your résumé or if they have had a chance to review it for consideration. In light of HIPAA, [www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/), students are finding it more challenging to find providers who are willing to allow shadowing. Persistence is your best strategy. If you have the option of utilizing summers for shadowing in Indianapolis or another location, you should pursue those avenues as well.
- Keep an informal journal of your observations. Some of the details and experiences therein could become part of your personal statement and/or be used during admission interviews. Refer to the Professional Development section of the HPPLC web page for further suggestions.

### C. Health Care Experience, Volunteering, and Other Professional Development

- Applicants to graduate-level programs are usually expected to have substantial healthcare experience / patient contact. As part of their admission requirements, many PA programs require a certain amount of health care experience and patient contact. For those programs that do require it, minimums will vary: some require as little as 100 hours, some as many as 3000. 1000 hours of experience is commonly preferred or required. *The more such experience you garner, oftentimes the more competitive you will be with regard to this admission component.*
- Many PA programs favor applicants with extensive volunteer experience, leadership skills, and other professional development experience. Professional Development is a critical part of any undergraduate degree. Visit the Professional Development section of the HPPLC home page for detailed suggestions.
- To help you become competitive for admission to a variety of programs, we strongly suggest you build a substantial portfolio of the above activities. Refer to each program's web page for specific requirements, preferences, and recommendations.

### D. GPA

- The minimum GPA required to apply to a given program varies from 2.0 to 3.0, but remember that while obtaining the minimum required GPA may make you eligible to apply, it is not likely to be very competitive for admission to most programs. Admission to most PA programs is very competitive, and applicants must develop excellent science and analytical skills.

### E. Admissions Test

- Many graduate PA programs require that you take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), some will accept the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) and some will not, and some require no admissions test. The GRE is the more flexible option. HPPLC offers MCAT prep courses and the School of Continuing Studies offers GRE prep courses. Check with the programs you intend to apply to and ask what range of test scores have been *competitive* for admission in the past. Remember that minimum scores may not be competitive. Remember too that many programs require EMT certification prior to admission.

### F. Application Information

- About 3/4 of all US PA programs require applicants to submit an application, letters of reference, and other materials through the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). See details and deadlines at the CASPA home page, <https://portal.caspaonline.org/>. CASPA programs may also require that additional forms be submitted directly to the school itself.
- The CASPA application deadline is April 1<sup>st</sup>, but **many PA programs actually have earlier deadlines. Additionally, you should submit your application at the beginning of program application cycles instead of waiting until the deadlines.** Applying late in the cycle will greatly decrease your chances of being admitted to those programs with rolling admission deadlines (i.e., those that begin to fill spaces as soon as the application cycle opens for a given year).
- Students applying to PA programs now or in the future should become familiar with the information in the HPPLC handout, *Additional Letter of Recommendation Information for Physician Assistant Programs*, available in the HPPLC office or from the PA page on our web site.
- **If you have specific questions about CASPA procedures, please contact CASPA directly.** You can find application and contact information from their home page, <https://portal.caspaonline.org/>.
- Don't hesitate to contact PA programs directly to ask questions about their application process or anything else pertaining to their program. They expect and encourage such contact.

### G. Admission Interview

- Most PA programs require an admissions interview. Of those that do, applicants may be interviewed by individual faculty, and/or a committee of interviewers comprised of two or more staff, faculty, physicians, and/or physician assistants (some of whom may themselves be graduates of the given PA program). Some programs also have interviewees participate in group interviews or moderated group activities. For many programs, the interview process is a half-day or all-day undertaking.
- With regard to the interview, Harding University's PA web site states, "Applicants are expected to demonstrate maturity, personal initiative, an understanding of the Physician Assistant role and excellent communication skills." It's safe to say that every program desires similar qualities in applicants, and that interview questions and activities will reflect this desire. The ability to coherently discuss your personal

ethics and to demonstrate excellent critical thinking and problem solving skills via hypothetical questions will likely play a role as well. With regard to the latter, you might be asked open-ended questions that don't necessarily have a right or wrong answer. Always check program web sites to see if they include any specifics about the interview.

- You might be asked questions like the following:
  - 1) Why do you want to be a physician assistant?
  - 2) How have you confirmed your desire to pursue this particular career? What kind of career research have you undertaken? Why PA? Why not earn your MD, earn your RN, or work in another allied health field?
  - 3) Have you applied to medical school? If not, do you eventually plan to apply to medical school? (The implication being, Do you plan to commit yourself to the PA profession? Are you sure PA is indeed what you want to pursue as a career? Is PA just your Plan B?)
  - 4) Is there an area of PA specialization you would like to pursue?
  - 5) In what setting or in what kind of community would you like to work as a PA?
  - 6) Why do you want to attend our school in particular?
  - 7) If your supervising physician made a mistake (e.g., prescribed incorrect dosage or missed a potentially dangerous drug interaction issue), how would you handle the situation? What if the mistake was your own?
- You might also adapt many of the questions in the HPPLC pre-medical handout, *Sample Interview Questions* (available in Maxwell 010), to help you prepare for the PA admissions interview. The second part of the same handout contains valuable guidelines for interviewing at graduate and professional schools or programs, which you should incorporate into your interview preparation.
- It is important that you read the interview information provided on program web sites and stay in personal contact with each program you are considering.
- Utilize the web resources referenced in **Section VII** of this document. They can serve a variety of purposes, including helping you learn about the history of the PA profession, and helping you become familiar with current issues of concern to the profession (e.g., pertinent legislation and legal issues). This knowledge could come in very useful during an interview (not to mention in your personal essay).

## **H. Letters of Recommendation**

- We recommend you apply to 8 or more PA programs. Refer to the HPPLC handout, *Additional Letter of Recommendation Information for PA Programs*, available in Maxwell 010 or from the PA page of our web site. Also on our home page you will find a link to the Recommendation Service. Depending upon which programs you are applying to, it may or may not be advantageous for you to use our service.
- Remember that many programs require a letter of reference from a PA with whom you have spent considerable time shadowing, discussing the profession, and so on.
- CASPA will accept only CASPA forms electronically submitted through, or printed from, their website. **Refer to the HPPLC handout, *Additional Letter of Recommendation Information for Physician Assistant Programs*.**
- CASPA prefers electronic submission of letters of reference. Since it is best to get a letter when you are still fresh in the recommender's mind, we suggest you ask them how they want to arrange the process. Most letter writers keep an electronic copy, so they may be willing to write it and then submit it electronically to CASPA at the beginning of the application cycle in which you plan to apply. (Towards the very beginning of the cycle is best!) Clear communication with the writer is the best policy to make sure you both have a common understanding of how and when the letter will be written and submitted.

## **I. Personal Statement / Essay**

- The CASPA application requires an essay of no more than 2,970 characters (approximately 500 words), so you'll have to be judicious with your choice of words, and use no excess verbiage. Some CASPA programs may require a personal statement in addition to the application essay itself, and non-CASPA programs often require a personal statement. Confirm with your programs of choice.
- To get started on the essay / personal statement, you can refer back to your professional development journal. Visit the Professional Development section of the HPPLC web site. Also read the suggestions in the Personal Statement section of the Medicine page of our web site. Many of the suggestions will also apply to PA personal statements.

## V. ADMISSION NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS

- **HPPLC advisors strongly recommend you talk with an admissions representative from each and every program you are considering.** It is a good policy to keep in touch with the people who have a say in whether or not you are admitted (which can include office coordinators and administrative assistants!). **Carefully read section 1.C of this handout, *Researching PA Training Paths and Career Possibilities*.** The information there is critical to your preparation

## VI. CAREER INFORMATION

- **According to the US Department of Labor / Bureau of Labor Statistics,** "Median annual earnings of wage-and-salary physician assistants were \$74,980 in May 2006. The middle 50 percent earned between \$62,430 and \$89,220. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$43,100, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$102,230." Visit the Occupational Outlook Handbook PA entry [www.bls.gov/oco/ocos081.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos081.htm) for further career information.
- Further resources at <http://stats.bls.gov/home.htm> & [www.bls.gov/search/ooah.asp?ct=OOH](http://www.bls.gov/search/ooah.asp?ct=OOH)

## VII. FURTHER RESOURCES

### Butler PA Home Page

[www.butler.edu/cophs/?pg=2077&parentID=2041](http://www.butler.edu/cophs/?pg=2077&parentID=2041)

### University of Saint Frances PA Home Page

[www.sf.edu/healthscience/pa/](http://www.sf.edu/healthscience/pa/)

### Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA)

<https://portal.caspaonline.org/>

#### CASPA FAQ

[https://portal.caspaonline.org/caspa2007/faqs\\_dir.htm](https://portal.caspaonline.org/caspa2007/faqs_dir.htm)

### American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)

[www.aapa.org/](http://www.aapa.org/)

### AAPA listing of PA educational programs

[www.aapa.org/pgmlist.php3](http://www.aapa.org/pgmlist.php3)

### National Commission of Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)

[www.nccpa.net/](http://www.nccpa.net/)

### Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA)

[www.paeaonline.org/](http://www.paeaonline.org/)

### thePApage.com

[www.thepapage.com/](http://www.thepapage.com/)

### Physician Assistant History Center

[www.pahx.org/](http://www.pahx.org/)

**Professional Development** is a critical part of any undergraduate degree. Click the Professional Development link on the HPPLC home page for important suggestions.

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**The Health Professions and Prelaw Center encourages you to email our advisors** with questions. Feel free to email an individual advisor; or, if you're not sure who to contact, send a message to [hpplc@indiana.edu](mailto:hpplc@indiana.edu).

Visit the **HPPLC web site to sign up for the email list of the health profession in which you're interested.** You will occasionally receive information, including notices about upcoming meetings and campus visits by admission representatives, information about our Health Programs Fair, professional development opportunities, and other items of interest.

### IMPORTANT:

This document was prepared for Indiana University Bloomington students by the Health Professions and Prelaw Center. Please note that specific requirements and policies can change at any time without notice. Students are responsible for obtaining the most current information directly from the application services, and the schools and programs in which they have an interest. Refer to each program's web pages, bulletins, and other publications for the most current information.

