Master of Science in Physician Assistant Program
at Central Michigan University

PA Role

Today’s physician assistants (PAs) perform increasingly important responsibilities in modern medicine. PAs are licensed to practice medicine under physician supervision and provide many services that have traditionally been performed by physicians. They take patient histories, conduct physical examinations, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret laboratory tests, perform minor surgery, prescribe medications, and more.

Physician Assistant Educational Programs

Students pursuing a career as a PA must graduate from an Accreditation Review Committee on Education of the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) accredited program in order to become eligible for pursuing the certification examination. Information updates on the accreditation status of CMU’s PA Program is available at the American Academy of Physician Assistants at www.aapa.org.

Physician Assistant Program at CMU

CMU’s Physician Assistant Masters in Science Program prepares students to provide quality and cost-effective primary care in a variety of settings, with special emphasis on meeting the needs of people living in rural and medically underserved areas. As a CMU PA student learning in a team environment, you will acquire the knowledge and skills needed to effectively care for patients. You will develop the poise and confidence required of a PA by learning and working alongside seasoned professionals who have decades of medical care experience.

CMU’s PA Program is housed in the state-of-the-art Health Professions Building which offers advanced learning environments and resources including a multiservice outpatient clinic, an advanced instructional wing customized to support all styles of learning, and a laboratory and research area. Dedicated faculty coupled with a modern learning environment contribute to our students’ success, with their regularly scoring in the top 5-15 % of all students taking the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE).

Curriculum

Completion of CMU’s physician assistant graduate program curriculum takes 27 months. The first 15 months are spent primarily on campus in the classroom and laboratory, complemented with an off campus clinical mentorship experience. The remaining 12 months consist of clinical rotations in various medical specialties, such as:

Students complete the program prepared to work in many different settings, including:

- Primary Care Family Medicine
- Mental and Behavioral Health
- Internal Medicine
- Women’s Health
- General Surgery
- Long-term Care
- Pediatrics
- Emergency Medicine

Admission Process

Applicants must have completed or be near completion of an undergraduate degree and must have completed a minimum 500 patient care hours of which 100 of those hours are compensated (paid work hours). Students also need to earn a 3.0 or above in each prerequisite and a minimum 3.25 cumulative undergraduate grade point average. Lastly, all applicants are required to take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) and the scores must be sent directly from ETS to CASPA. Reference our web site for ETS codes by visiting https://www.cmich.edu/colleges/CHP/hp_academics/physician_assistant/admissions/Pages/Application-Requirements.aspx.
Undergraduate Majors of Study

Students have several options to choose from at Central Michigan University. CMU does not offer a major in ‘pre-PA’; however, a variety of health and allied health profession programs are offered as undergraduate majors or minors. Popular programs helping students prepare for professional health or medical programs at the graduate level include athletic training, biology, biochemistry, biomedical sciences, chemistry, child development, communication disorders, dietetics, health fitness, neuroscience, exercise science, kinesiology, psychology, and public health. Consult the current undergraduate bulletin for all majors and minors offered at CMU.

Admission Criteria

To be considered for admission, applicants must complete specific coursework in each of the following areas:

- Anatomy with lab
- Physiology with lab
- Biochemistry
- Introductory Psychology
- Statistics
- Pathophysiology (no substitutions)
- General Inorganic Chemistry with lab
- Organic Chemistry with lab
- Developmental Psychology
- Microbiology

Applicants must apply to the PA Program via CASPA prior to September 1, along with completing a supplemental application which is located on the PA website at https://www.cmich.edu/colleges/CHP/hp_academics/physician_assistant/admissions/Pages/Application-Requirements.aspx. The Admissions Committee reviews the applications and the most qualified applicants are invited to campus for interviews. Applicants are assessed on traits such as professional motivation, background knowledge, academic performance, inter-personal skills, diversity of life and professional experiences, and orientation to the medical practitioner role.

Financial Assistance

Information about in-state and out-of-state tuition is available at https://www.cmich.edu/colleges/CHP/hp_academics/physician_assistant/admissions/Pages/Scholarships-and-Financial-Aid.aspx. Financial aid for PA students is also discussed on the same webpage, including competitive fellowships, scholarships, and loans. Additional information about graduate fellowships is available through the College of Graduate Studies at www.grad.cmich.edu, and also visit the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid at: https://www.cmich.edu/ess/OSFA/Pages/default.aspx for information about other financial assistance.

At its March 2014 meeting, the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) has placed the Central Michigan University Physician Assistant Program sponsored by Central Michigan University on Accreditation-Probation until its focused visit review in March 2016. Probation is a temporary status of accreditation limited to two years and conferred when a program does not meet the Standards and when the capability of a program to provide an acceptable educational experience for its students is threatened. Once placed on probation, a program that still 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/or risk having their accreditation withdrawn. Specific questions regarding the program and its plans should be directed to the PA Program Director (gardo1jj@cmich.edu) and/or the appropriate institutional official(s).

Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Michigan