

SCHOOL OF NURSING & HEALTH SCIENCES AND ADMISSIONS OFFICE
Combined BS/MS in Physician Assistant Studies Major
Selective Admission Criteria

To be considered for selection into this major, all applicants must have gained admission to the College, completed placement requirements, and met the admission standards and essential functions established by the Combined BS/MS in Physician Assistant Studies major.

High School Student - Conditional Seat (Effective beginning with Fall 2020 admission)

Up to 10 conditional seats will be offered to high school applicants desiring entrance into the five-year Combined BS/MS in Physician Assistant Studies major who:

1. Gain admission to the College and complete placement requirements. Placement is determined through placement testing, transfer courses, qualifying SAT or ACT scores, or any combination of the three. (See <https://www.pct.edu/admissions/admission-to-penn-college/meet-placement-requirements> for details.)
2. Place non-developmental for math, reading, and English
3. Document 40 hours of health care exposure hours, including eight with a practicing certified Physician Assistant (PA-C), via the electronic logging system. (See <https://secure.pct.edu/patracking/login.aspx> for details.)
4. Successfully complete the following high school courses with a “B” or higher:
 - a. Three math courses which include advanced algebra/algebra II
 - b. Three science courses which include at least one biology with a lab and one chemistry with a lab
5. Earn an SAT total score of 1200 or higher or ACT composite score of 25 or higher
6. Have an unweighted cumulative high school GPA of 3.5 or higher
7. Achieve a CASPer Exam z-score greater than -1 (minus one)

In cases where there are more qualified high school conditional seat applicants than available seats, entrance into the major will be determined by ranking applicants for selection first by SAT/ACT, then by unweighted cumulative high school GPA, and lastly by CASPer Exam z-score. In cases where there is a tie, applicants with the highest criteria in the order listed will be offered acceptance. Students who do not receive a conditional seat will be placed in the pre-Combined BS/MS in Physician Assistant Studies major.

Those who receive conditional seats as high school students are accepted as a cohort for a specific year. These students must progress academically with their cohort and maintain both a Penn College graduation GPA and science grade calculation of 3.6. Additionally, a total of 316 health care exposure hours, 16 of which must be spent shadowing a practicing certified Physician Assistant (PA-C), must be completed and logged into the Penn College electronic logging system by **March 1st** of the **6th semester of the major**. Student progress, including cumulative graduation GPA and the cumulative science grade calculation, is reviewed at the completion of each semester. A student who fails to meet these conditions will relinquish his/her conditional seat and be placed into the pre-Combined BS/MS in Physician Assistant Studies major and will be subject to the pre-Combined BS/MS in Physician Assistant Studies Selective Admission Criteria for entry into the professional phase of the major.

Pre-PA, Transfer, Current, & Re-enroll Students (Effective beginning with selections for entry into the major for Fall 2021.)

For Fall 2020, refer to [Fall 2020 Selective Admission Criteria](#)

To be considered for selection, all other applicants (pre-PA students, change of major students, and transfer students) must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Successfully complete the first five semesters of the pre-Combined BS/MS in Physician Assistant Studies major – OR - the first five semesters of the Penn College Bachelor of Science in Health Science major (anticipated start date Fall 2020)—OR—have earned a bachelor’s degree from an accredited United States-based institution and satisfactorily completed all of the pre-requisite courses* listed below with a “B” or higher:
 - a. General Chemistry I & II with labs
 - b. General Biology I & II with labs
 - c. Anatomy & Physiology I & II with labs
 - d. One semester each: Biochemistry, Organic Chemistry with lab, Microbiology with lab, Physics, and Genetics
2. Complete and log 316 health care exposure hours via the Penn College electronic logging system. Of these hours, 16 must be spent shadowing a practicing certified Physician Assistant (PA-C).
3. CASPer Exam z-score greater than -1 (minus one).

**All pre-requisite courses must be completed at an accredited United States-based institution without exception.*

Selection Requirements for Pre-PA, Transfer, Current, & Re-enroll Students: This major has limited seating capacity of 30 students per cohort. Entrance into the major will be determined through a selective ranking process to determine the top candidates for admission based on the following four criteria:

Category 1: Grade Point Calculation of Pre-requisite Science Courses (60%) – from the following courses: Note: all courses must have been completed within the last five years from the start of the semester of entry to the College. The Program Director, in consultation with the Dean of Nursing & Health Sciences, reserves the right to grant exceptions to the five-year limit on a case-by-case basis.

For the purposes of ranking, the grade for multiple attempts of the same course will be averaged together, including those grades that fall below a 2.0. The number of course attempts allowed will follow College policy.

BIO 108 Principles of Biology I	CHM 111 General Chemistry I
BIO 109 Principles of Biology II	CHM 121 General Chemistry II
BIO 115 Human Anatomy and Physiology I	CHM 210/211 Organic Chemistry I & Lab
BIO 125 Human Anatomy and Physiology II	CHM 370 Biochemistry
BIO 201 Microbiology	

Category 2: Cumulative Overall Grade Point Calculation (10%) – from the first five semesters of the pre-Combined BS/MS in Physician Assistant Studies major, or the first five semesters of the Penn College Bachelor of Science in Health Science major (anticipated start date Fall 2020), or from an earned bachelor’s degree that qualifies applicant for selection (see pre-program requirements above).

Category 3: CASPer Exam (15%) – the following point system will be used for scoring the CASPer exam results:

CASPer Z Score	Points awarded
-1.0 to -0.5	9
>-0.5 to 0	10
>0 to 0.5	11
>0.5 to 1.0	12
>1.0 to 1.5	13
>1.5 to 2.0	14
>2.0	15

Category 4: Health Care Exposure Hours (15%) – the following weight multiplier will be used for scoring the completed health care exposure hours:

Types of Hours	Weighted Multiplier
Direct Patient Care	1.5
Partial Care of Patient	1.0
Observation	0.5

NOTE: Students who are in progress to complete their bachelor’s degree who are selected and accept their seat into the Combined BS/MS in Physician Assistant Studies major must successfully complete all prerequisite coursework (semesters one through six of the Combined BS/MS in Physician Assistant Studies, or semesters one through six of the Penn College Bachelor of Science in Health Science (anticipated start date Fall 2020) prior to the start of year four (didactic year) or their seat will be forfeited.

Students not selected, or who decline their seat, into the Combined BS/MS in Physician Assistant Studies major may enroll into the Bachelor of Science in Health Science major (anticipated start date Fall 2020). Students who successfully complete the four-year Bachelor of Science in Health Science degree (anticipated start date Fall 2020) are eligible to reapply for selection in the Combined BS/MS Physician Assistant Studies major.

International Students

Additional English language proficiency requirements must be met to be considered for selection:

1. TOEFL iBT®: minimum Total score of 100 (0-120) AND minimum Speaking score of 22 (0-30); or
2. IELTS: minimum composite score of 7.0 (0-9)

Other Related Information

CASPer Exam

A student can register for the CASPer exam through the following website: <https://takecasper.com/>. Students may only take the CASPer exam **one time** in the open application cycle. The student is responsible for the cost of this exam. Current fees are posted on the CASPer website.

Selection Dates & Application Deadline

High School - Conditional Seat – All selection requirements must be completed and received by **March 1** for consideration for the **August cohort start** for semester one of the five-year major.

Pre-PA, Transfer, Current, & Re-Enroll Students – All selection requirements must be completed and received by **March 1** for consideration for the **August cohort start** for the professional phase (years four and five of the major).

Health Care Exposure Hours

Health care exposure hours can be acquired through any combination of experiences provided they meet the criteria to be included in one of the following three categories: (1) Direct Patient Care, (2) Partial Care of Patient, and (3) Observation. These categories are weighted based on the most hands-on patient contact (category one) being most preferred, and the least hands-on patient contact (category three) being least preferred. Only health care exposure hours attained within the past five years will be accepted, and all hours will be reviewed for suitability by either the Program Director or his designee. Prospective students with more than 316 hours should log their BEST 316 to ensure the highest possible score. Logged hours can be edited as often as necessary until the application deadline, so as hours in a higher category are earned, they can be entered into the system, and hours from a lesser category can be removed. Of the 316 required hours, 16 must be spent shadowing a practicing certified physician assistant (PA-C); these 16 hours are required but will not be scored.

High School Student Definition

For the purposes of conditional seat consideration, a student is classified as a high school student if his/her graduation date is within two years of the starting semester and he/she has not enrolled in any college course work after graduation, excluding the summer following high school graduation if enrollment at Penn College is the first immediate Fall. For example, a student applying directly to the Combined BS/MS in Physician Assistant Studies major for Fall 2020 will be classified as a high school student if his/her graduation date falls between August 2018 and August 2020, and the preceding conditions around college course work are met.

Central Application Service for Physician Assistants - (CASPA)

Penn College will begin using CASPA with our current application process for admission into the Combined BS/MS Physician Assistant Studies major beginning with either the March 2021 or March 2022 selection. Once the implementation date is confirmed, students seeking admission into the major will be notified.

Appeals Process

A student may appeal a selection decision. The student must submit a written summary of circumstances to the Dean of the School of Nursing & Health Sciences no later than five business days following the student's receipt of written notification of non-selection into the major. To be considered, appeals must be typed, signed, dated, and include a current mailing address. A selection appeal committee will be convened to review the appeal. The student will receive a written notification of the decision within five business days following the Dean's receipt of the formal appeal. Decisions by the appeal committee are final with no further appeal.

** Typically, any changes to these admission requirements are made prior to the student's enrollment at Penn College; however, in special circumstances, such as an observed change in program outcomes, the College President may approve more immediate changes to ensure student success. In such cases, students will receive timely written notice of the change.*