

MASTER OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES (MPAS)

The Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program was established through the collaborative efforts of Sam Houston State University and the Texas State University System. The program is housed in the Health Professions Building on the SHSU Health & Medical Sciences campus in Conroe, Texas. The facility is located adjacent to the College of Osteopathic Medicine, fostering opportunities for interprofessional collaboration and learning.

Each August, the program admits a new cohort of students, attracting a diverse pool of applicants with a particular focus on recruiting from regions in the eastern half of Texas that are currently underserved in healthcare access. Students benefit from a dynamic combination of classroom learning and hands-on clinical experiences, with rotations at community clinics and world-renowned hospitals throughout the Houston area. These experiences will enhance the knowledge, skills, and competencies developed throughout the curriculum. The significant local and national demand for qualified medical practitioners who practice within collaborative healthcare teams underscores the importance of this initiative, particularly as ours will be the first Physician Assistant program within the Texas State University System. We are dedicated to educating students from varied backgrounds, communities, and geographic regions to meet the healthcare needs of Texas. Our mission is to prepare competent, compassionate clinicians who pursue excellence, work collaboratively, address the needs of underserved populations, and embrace innovation and scientific discovery.

Physician Assistants (PAs) are licensed medical professionals who practice across a broad spectrum of specialties and healthcare settings, providing high-quality, patient-centered care. Through rigorous medical education and extensive clinical training, PAs develop expertise in obtaining comprehensive patient histories, performing thorough physical examinations, interpreting diagnostic studies, formulating medical diagnoses, developing treatment plans, prescribing medications, and performing therapeutic and procedural interventions. Their versatile training enables them to deliver evidence-based care and effectively meet the healthcare needs of diverse patient populations.

PAs are highly adaptable clinicians who perform effectively in dynamic healthcare environments and collaborate closely with physicians and other healthcare professionals to optimize patient outcomes. Through strong clinical judgment, leadership skills, and a commitment to lifelong learning and evidence-based practice, PAs play a vital role in improving health outcomes, expanding access to care, and addressing the evolving needs of an increasingly complex healthcare system.

Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates will:

1. Elicit a comprehensive medical history and perform a focused and/or comprehensive physical examination based on the patient's chief complaint. (Medical Knowledge, Clinical & Technical Skills, Clinical Reasoning & Problem-Solving Abilities)
2. Be able to formulate a differential diagnosis for medical and behavioral conditions commonly encountered in primary care using foundational knowledge from the basic and clinical sciences. (Medical Knowledge, Clinical Reasoning & Problem-Solving)
3. Apply critical thinking principles to formulate a treatment management plan for preventive, acute, and chronic conditions by integrating current medical literature and evidence-based medicine. (Medical Knowledge, Clinical Reasoning & Problem-Solving, Practice-Based Learning)
4. Select, order, and interpret appropriate diagnostic studies and recommend effective treatment. (Clinical & Technical Skills, Clinical & Problem-Solving Abilities)
5. Communicate respectfully with patients, families, and caregivers considering the patient's emotional state, cultural background, and socio-economic factors to facilitate shared medical decision making. (Interpersonal Skills, Professional Behaviors, Society & Population Health)
6. Demonstrate effective and respectful communication with healthcare providers and interdisciplinary team members to promote collaboration and patient centered care. (Interpersonal Skills, Professional Behaviors)
7. Educate patients on health conditions, treatment options, health promotion, disease prevention, and lifestyle risk factors. (Medical Knowledge, Interpersonal Skills, Society & Population Health)

Accreditation

The ARC-PA has granted Accreditation-Provisional status to the Sam Houston State University, Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program sponsored by Sam Houston State University. Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding Accreditation Provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of Students. Accreditation-Provisional does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. It is limited to no more than five years from matriculation of the first class. The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website (<https://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-sam-houston-state-university/>.html).

Admission Requirements

1. Evidence of U.S. citizenship, permanent U.S. residence, or current DACA recipient.
2. Bachelor's Degree (or higher) from regionally accredited U.S. institution or equivalent prior to matriculation; Completed prerequisite coursework GPA of ≥ 3.0 ; Minimum overall cumulative GPA of ≥ 3.0 or overall graduate GPA of ≥ 3.0 (4.0 scale).

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3. Minimum cumulative science GPA of ≥ 3.0 or graduate sciences GPA of ≥ 3.0 .

4. Three letters of recommendation.

5. Prerequisite Requirements:

- Science: General Biology I, II (3 SCH each), Genetics (3 SCH), Microbiology (3 SCH), Anatomy and Physiology I, II (4 SCH each), General Chemistry I, II (3 SCH each), Organic Chemistry or Biochemistry (3 SCH). All prerequisite Science courses must be taken for Science majors. Science courses for non-majors will not be accepted.
- Math: Statistics (3 SCH)
- Humanities: Psychology, Introductory or Abnormal (3 SCH)

Note: Prerequisites must be completed prior to matriculation. Credit by examination is accepted for Psychology. Pass or credit grades will not be accepted for any Science work.

- At least 15 U.S. semester credit hours completed within the past 10 years.
- Application to the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (<https://caspa.cas.myliaison.com/applicant/login/>) (CASPA).
- SHSU Graduate Admissions Application Fee (<https://www.shsu.edu/admissions/apply/graduate-steps-checklist/>).

Code	Title	Hours
Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS)		
Required Courses		
PHAS 5101	Studies in the Physician Assistant Profession	1
PHAS 5102	Introduction to Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics	1
PHAS 5103	Legal and Ethical Issues in Healthcare	1
PHAS 5104	Research and Statistical Methods	1
PHAS 5105	Health Policy and Health Management	1
PHAS 5106	Clinical Radiology	1
PHAS 5111	Clinical Reasoning I	1
PHAS 5112	Clinical Lab Methods	1
PHAS 5113	Electrocardiogram (ECG) Seminar	1
PHAS 5121	Clinical Reasoning II	1
PHAS 5131	Clinical Reasoning III	1
PHAS 5201	Patient Encounter I	2
PHAS 5202	Biomedical Science and Genetics	2
PHAS 5203	Preventive and Community Health	2
PHAS 5221	Clinical Clerkship	2
PHAS 5232	Behavioral, Social, & Mental Healthcare	2
PHAS 5233	Clinical Preparation	2
PHAS 5311	Medical Physiology and Pathophysiology I	3
PHAS 5312	Patient Encounter II	3
PHAS 5313	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics I	3
PHAS 5321	Medical Physiology and Pathophysiology II	3
PHAS 5322	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics II	3
PHAS 5331	Medical Physiology and Pathophysiology III	3
PHAS 5332	Patient Encounter III	3
PHAS 5333	Pharmacology and Pharmacotherapeutics III	3
PHAS 5411	Clinical Medicine I	4
PHAS 5421	Clinical Medicine II	4
PHAS 5431	Clinical Medicine III	4
PHAS 6141	Capstone I	1
PHAS 6142	Capstone II	1
PHAS 6151	Capstone III	1
PHAS 6301	PANCE Prep	3
PHAS 6410	Family Medicine Rotation	4
PHAS 6411	Internal Medicine Rotation	4

PHAS 6412	Emergency Medicine Rotation	4
PHAS 6413	Surgery Rotation	4
PHAS 6414	Women’s Health Rotation	4
PHAS 6415	Pediatric Medicine Rotation	4
PHAS 6416	Mental and Behavioral Health Rotation	4
PHAS 6417	Clinical Elective Rotation	4
PHAS 6510	Anatomy	5

Total Hours **102**

First Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours	Summer	Hours
PHAS 5101		1 PHAS 5111		1 PHAS 5106	1
PHAS 5102		1 PHAS 5311		3 PHAS 5121	1
PHAS 5103		1 PHAS 5312		3 PHAS 5221	2
PHAS 5104		1 PHAS 5313		3 PHAS 5321	3
PHAS 5105		1 PHAS 5411		4 PHAS 5322	3
PHAS 5112		1 PHAS 6510		5 PHAS 5421	4
PHAS 5201		2			
PHAS 5202		2			
PHAS 5203		2			
PHAS 5232		2			
		14		19	14

Second Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours	Summer	Hours
PHAS 5113		1 Clinical Rotations ¹		4 Clinical Rotations ¹	4
PHAS 5131		1 Clinical Rotations ¹		4 Clinical Rotations ¹	4
PHAS 5233		2 Clinical Rotations ¹		4 PHAS 6142	1
PHAS 5331		3 PHAS 6141		1	
PHAS 5332		3			
PHAS 5333		3			
PHAS 5431		4			
		17		13	9

Third Year

Fall	Hours
Clinical Rotations ¹	4
Clinical Rotations ¹	4
Clinical Rotations ¹	4
PHAS 6151	1
PHAS 6301	3
16	

Total Hours: 102

¹ See Clinical Rotations course list below.

Code	Title	Hours
Clinical Rotations¹		
Rotation Order Differs for Each Student:		
PHAS 6410	Family Medicine Rotation	
PHAS 6411	Internal Medicine Rotation	
PHAS 6412	Emergency Medicine Rotation	
PHAS 6413	Surgery Rotation	
PHAS 6414	Women’s Health Rotation	

PHAS 6415	Pediatric Medicine Rotation
PHAS 6416	Mental and Behavioral Health Rotation
PHAS 6417	Clinical Elective Rotation

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) marketable skills initiative is part of the state's **60x30TX plan** and was designed to help students articulate their skills to employers. Marketable skills are those skills valued by employers and/or graduate programs that can be applied in a variety of work or education settings and may include interpersonal, cognitive, and applied skill areas.

The Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) is designed to provide graduates with the following marketable skills:

- Clinical Competence; comprehensive histories and physical exams, developing a differential diagnosis and treatment plan, ordering and interpreting diagnostic tests, and performing procedures.
- Communicating effectively with patients, families, and healthcare teams, delivering patient education in a clear and empathetic manner, and navigating sensitive conversations (e.g., delivering bad news, discussing lifestyle changes).
- Functioning across various medical specialties and settings.
- Working as part of an interdisciplinary team, consulting and referring patients appropriately, understanding roles of nurses, pharmacists, physicians, and social workers. Delivering care that respects background and health beliefs, reducing disparities through equitable healthcare practices, providing care in underserved or rural areas.