

interviewing and presentation.

713 Executive Practicum (3:9) (Prerequisites: APRN 501, 502, 503)
This practicum course will expose learners to a leadership role and assist the learner to develop a healthcare capstone plan. Learners will work individually with a preceptor and faculty advisor and develop their own leadership plan that can be completed and presented.

GRADUATE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

Director: James F. Hull Jr., MPAS, DFAAPA, PA-C

MISSION STATEMENT

The Francis Marion University Physician Assistant Program seeks to educate excellent primary care physician assistants to become compassionate, ethical, and clinically skillful graduates who are ready to provide healthcare services with personal and professional integrity.

ACCREDITATION STATUS

The ARC-PA has granted Accreditation-Provisional status to the Francis Marion University Physician Assistant Program sponsored by Francis Marion 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.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All applications to the program must be submitted to Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) at www.caspaonline.org.

To complete the application a student must:

- Complete a Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution with at least a 3.0 GPA based on a 4.0 scale;
- Submit official transcript(s) of all undergraduate and graduate work from accredited institutions to CASPA only;
- Submit scores, to CASPA only, from the Graduate Record Examination taken within the last five years. Only the General Test is required. Combined scores above 290 with a minimum of 140 on each of the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning sections are recommended. GRE code for CASPA is 0553;
- Provide 3 letters of recommendation from former professors or professional associates/supervisors who can attest to the academic potential of the applicant. Letters from faculty members in academic settings are preferred;
- Applicants should have at least 250 hours of clinical work. The clinical experience can be voluntary work, shadowing experiences provided through employment, or a combination of these;
- Have at least an overall 3.0 GPA, on a 4.0 scale, in the prerequisites.

Prerequisite Courses to be completed before matriculation:

- Four credits of general biology with lab;
- Eight credits of anatomy and physiology with labs (this may be taken as two combined anatomy & physiology courses with labs, or one anatomy course with lab and one physiology course with lab);
- Four credits of microbiology with lab;
- Eight credits of general chemistry with lab;

- Four credits of organic chemistry with lab;
- Three credits of statistics or biostatistics;
- Six credits of psychology (at least 1 course preferably in abnormal or lifespan development at 200 or above level);
- One credit of healthcare terminology;
- The program does not grant advanced placement, accept transfer credit from a student previously enrolled in another PA program, nor does it accept experiential credit. All students accepted into the PA program must satisfy all requirements of the didactic and clinical years of study.

Additional Admission Criteria:

1. Provide a criminal background check before interview;
2. Fill out and return the Supplemental Application;
3. Provide a personal statement of 400-750 words explaining the student's reason for applying to the FMU PA Program and describing his/her clinical experience;
4. Pay the nonrefundable graduate application fee of \$37;
5. Provide proof of immunizations prior to matriculation;
6. Students are strongly discouraged from working while enrolled in the program.

Completed applications are reviewed for merit by the Physician Assistant Admissions Committee. Determination of merit is based upon consideration of all components of the application packet. In the admissions decision process, the committee considers both the merit of each application received and the number of places available in the program at the time of application. Offers for admission are given to those applicants who show the most promise of success in graduate studies. Top applicants will be invited for an interview before any final decision of acceptance is made.

Applications should be submitted by February 1 of each year for a start in the fall semester of that year. Application materials received after the application deadline may still be considered for admission contingent upon the availability of positions within the program. It is the applicant's responsibility to gather all materials to complete his/her application. Only completed applications (with all required materials) will be reviewed for possible interview.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

To receive a Master of Science Degree in Physician Assistant Studies from FMU, a student must fulfill the following requirements:

The program is designed in two stages. In the first stage, students will develop the required knowledge base during four semesters. The second stage involves three semesters of clinical rotations in different medical practices, so students will gain the practical application of knowledge and skills under supervision of qualified practitioners.

Preclinical courses

Semester I **16 hours**
PA 501 Anatomy and Physical Assessment Basics
PA 508 Physiology and Pharmacology Basics
PA 510 Fundamentals of Medicine and Role of the Physician Assistant
PA 513 Interpersonal Communication and History Taking
PA 506/APRN 506 Health Systems and Risk Management

Semester II **15 hours**
PA 521 Integrative Pathophysiology and Pharmacotherapeutics I
PA 523 Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis, and Application I
PA 525 Clinical Interventions and Diagnostics I

PA 505/APRN 505 Population Health and Epidemiology

Semester III **15 hours**

PA 631 Integrative Pathophysiology and Pharmacotherapeutics II

PA 633 Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis, and Application II

PA 635 Clinical Interventions and Diagnostics II

PA 603/

APRN 503 Advanced Research and Evidence-based Practice

Semester IV **15 hours**

PA 641 Integrative Pathophysiology and Pharmacotherapeutics III

PA 643 Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis, and Application III

PA 645 Clinical Interventions and Diagnostics III

PA 607/

APRN 707 Clinical Decision-Making and Ethics Clinical Year

Semester V **12 hours**

PA *Clinical Rotations (3) (4 credits each)

Semester VI **12 hours**

PA *Clinical Rotations (3) (4 credits each)

Semester VII **13 hours**

PA *Clinical Rotations (3) (4 credit hours)

PA 720 Physician Assistant Capstone

*Rotations will cover PA 710 Family Medicine, PA 711 Obstetrics and Gynecology, PA 712 Pediatrics, PA 713 Psychiatry, PA 714 Emergency Medicine, PA 715 Internal Medicine - Inpatient, PA 716 Internal Medicine - Outpatient, PA 717 General Surgery, and PA 718 Clinical Elective.

Policies for progression through the program are those of the graduate academic programs in the FMU catalog. In order for a student to successfully progress through the Physician Assistant program, the student must complete his or her degree within a six-year period, achieve course grades of C or better, and maintain a 3.0 cumulative grade point average. There are a limited number of spaces in the Physician Assistant program and minimally qualified applicants may not be accepted.

COURSE REPETITION

Only a grade lower than B can be raised by repetition of the course; a re-examination is not permitted. Any course that is repeated must be retaken at FMU. A course may be repeated only once. Physician Assistant students may repeat only one course. That one course may be repeated only with written approval from the program director. Only the higher grade of the repeated course will be counted in the calculation of the grade point average.

An application for provisional accreditation has been submitted by FMU to the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) and provisional accreditation will be received before the program starts. Graduates will be eligible to take the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) for certification by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

GRADUATE COURSES IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES (PA)

501 Anatomy and Physical Assessment Basics (4:3-3) F. This course integrates the basic disciplines of human anatomy, developmental biology and embryology, histology, and organ systems. The course emphasizes human structure-function relationships at multiple levels of organization, specifically cell, tissue, organ, and system. Introductory clinical correlations to surface landmarks and physical examination basics are provided.

505 Population Health and Epidemiology (3) F. This course focuses on different healthcare needs related to geographic, racial, and cultural differences in society. The learner will review local, national, and global healthcare needs, with emphasis on a needs assessment of a local region.

506 Health Systems and Risk Management (3) S. This course addresses quality assurance methodology and legal responsibilities of advanced practice patient care. Reporting systems, issues that affect advanced practice role, financing, coding, and credentialing criteria will be discussed. Best practice protocols, use of benchmarking, and safe work environments will be emphasized to ensure risk reduction for patients, families, and populations.

508 Physiology and Pharmacology Basics (4:3-3) F. This course provides a comprehensive introduction to the physiologic functions and mechanisms of actions of the major organ systems within the human body. This foundation in human physiology is paired with introductory content in pharmacology and the correlation between these two sciences. A practical approach to pharmacology concepts will emphasize mechanisms of action, drug-receptor interactions, drug-drug interactions, pharmacokinetic principles, drug development and safety, as well as clinical implications for dosing and administration.

510 Fundamentals of Medicine and Role of the Physician Assistant (3) F. This course provides a strong foundation in the concepts underlying health and disease at both the individual and population levels. The course begins with the essential elements of human structure and function and progresses through body systems. The student will learn to follow best practices for approaching patients with illness or health maintenance goals; reinforce clinical reasoning skills; recognize and use guidelines for preventive care and disease screening; and achieve an understanding of appropriate use of diagnostic and therapeutic interventions for clinical care. As these foundational concepts are introduced, the role of the physician assistant (PA) is explored, including history of the profession, financing and delivery systems, PA and medical professional organizations, professionalism, diversity, and health equity, as well as other social, cultural, economic, and political structures in society and in the PA profession.

513 Interpersonal Communication and History Taking (2) F. This course provides an introduction to medical history taking and offers practical strategies for effective, patient-centered interpersonal communication. Special topics emphasize technical skills and attitudes of the learner which optimize interpersonal communication and rapport building with patients. Learners will be instructed in the appropriate formats for documentation of patient history as well as techniques to enhance the effectiveness of both history taking and patient education.

521 Integrative Pathophysiology and Pharmacotherapeutics I (5) S. (Prerequisite: 508) This course builds upon foundational material delivered in PA 508, Physiology and Pharmacology Basics, and builds the learner's capacity to identify pathophysiologic alterations and disease to the appropriate selection of pharmacologic intervention. The course follows an organ-system based sequencing established with concurrent courses 523 and 525, which provides alignment as pathophysiologic mechanisms are further explored and therapeutic drug classes are introduced. Each drug class is explored with attention on mechanisms of action, safety, tolerability, efficacy, selection and dosing, and adjustments for special populations. Organ systems covered in PA 521 are cardiac, pulmonary, gastrointestinal and genitourinary. This is consistent with the systems covered in PA 523 and 525.

523 Clinical Assessment, Diagnosis and Application I (4:2-6) S. (Prerequisites: 501, 508 and 510) This course provides foundational knowledge, introduces practical skills, and develops professional attitudes and behaviors relevant to the clinical assessment of a patient. Students are instructed in physical examination and learn to apply evidence-based history taking and documentation. Instruction in the art of assessment is complemented by topics in evidence-based medicine and clinical problem solving. An emphasis of the course is the integration of physical examination and medical history taking with basic and other clinical sciences. Students must synthesize knowledge to demonstrate a rationale for interpretation of data and selection of interventions. The course will also incorporate common diagnostic, prognostic, therapeutic, and palliative procedures