



## CAREER & INTERNSHIP CENTER

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Division of Student Life

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# Pre-Physician Assistant (PA) Exploration & Preparation Guide

## Exploration

- ☑ Enroll in GEN ST 297 *Pre-Health 101* Seminar in the Fall
- ☑ Visit UW's Pre-Health portal: [prehealth.uw.edu](http://prehealth.uw.edu)
- ☑ Review UW Health Sciences "A Pathway for Every Passion" brochure and [explorehealthcareers.org](http://explorehealthcareers.org)
- ☑ Schedule an appointment with your general advisor (UAA/Departmental/OMA&D) to discuss course planning
- ☑ Attend Pre-Health Course and Major Planning Workshop/Participate in workshops and Small Group Coaching Sessions
- ☑ Schedule an appointment with a Pre-Health Career Coach

## Preparation

### Clinical Experience

In addition to courses, students should actively gain clinical exposure. Students are encouraged to get both **professional-facing (shadowing)** and **patient-facing time**. Both are instrumental in demonstrating that students are a good fit for the profession with capabilities to be a good PA as well as being able to work and empathize with patients. Most importantly, we encourage students to start journaling their clinical experiences so they can reflect on them later in the application process. **Because many PA schools require prior healthcare experience with hands-on patient care, it is important that students get substantial time in their clinical experiences.**

### Leadership

Leadership can be demonstrated in many ways. Students are encouraged to reflect on what leadership looks like in medicine and how their involvement in clubs, volunteering, employment, research, sports, and Greek Life may help them demonstrate that they have the leadership skills they will need.

### Research

While research experience is not a requirement for PA school, many students use research experience to explore the intersection of science and medicine. Staff in the Undergraduate Research Program (171 Mary Gates Hall) provide workshops and seminars on how to get started, identify, and explore different research opportunities at the UW.

### Establishing Relationships

Letter of Recommendations are a vital part of a student's PA school application. Professional schools vary in terms of how many letters they require and from whom. Establishing relationships with faculty, professors, TAs, mentors, principal investigators, and supervisors early on can help with creating strong letter of recommendations.

### Required & Recommended Coursework

Every PA school has different expectations in terms of coursework that is required or recommended. We encourage students to start researching PA school requirements to better inform themselves of what specific classes they need to take. Students may need to exceed the requirements of some schools to meet the requirements of other schools. The following courses listed below are some courses that are required by most PA schools (as listed by the American Academy of PAs (AAPA)).

CHEM 142 (General Chemistry)  
CHEM 152 (General Chemistry)  
CHEM 162 (General Chemistry)

MICROM 301/442 (Microbiology)  
MICROM 302/443 (Microbiology)

BIO 180 (Introductory Biology)  
BIO 200 (Introductory Biology)  
BIO 220 (Introductory Biology)

Anatomy  
Physiology  
+Lab

Additional required or recommended classes may include:

- Biochemistry
- Genetics
- English
- Statistics
- Social Sciences
  - Psychology
  - Sociology
  - Anthropology

# How to use this Pre-PA Planning Worksheet:

- The template below includes four years of coursework and preparation, and may require two “gap years”.
- Many students take multiple years after graduation to travel/work/mature before they are ready to apply.
- Most pre-requisite courses are available at community colleges, and can be taken during summers or post-graduation.
- Research your target schools to learn more about what courses they require or recommend (e.g. Calculus, English).
- Use summers to spread course requirements over the entire year, or get more research/clinical/leadership experience.

	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
<b>General Education Requirements:</b>				
<b>Coursework for Major:</b>				
<b>PA School Pre-requisites:</b>	CHEM 142	CHEM 152	CHEM 162	
<b>Co-Curricular Activities:</b>	GEN ST 297: Pre-Health 101	RSO exploration	Establish relationships with faculty	Preliminary search of pharm schools

	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
<b>General Education Requirements:</b>				
<b>Coursework for Major:</b>				
<b>PA School Pre-requisites:</b>	BIOL 180	BIOL 200	BIOL 220	
<b>Co-Curricular Activities:</b>	Identify future letter writers	RSO exploration	Clinical exposure	Leadership development

	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
<b>General Education Requirements:</b>				
<b>Coursework for Major:</b>				
<b>PA School Pre-requisites:</b>	MICROM 301/ MICROM 302	Anatomy & Physiology I	Anatomy & Physiology II	
<b>Co-Curricular Activities:</b>	RSO Exploration	Clinical exposure	Leadership development	Research your target schools

	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
<b>General Education Requirements:</b>				
<b>Coursework for Major:</b>				
<b>PA School Pre-requisites:</b>				
<b>Co-Curricular Activities:</b>	Request letter of recommendations	GEN ST 297: Pre-Health App Seminar	Study for GRE	Take GRE

	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
<b>General Education Requirements:</b>				
<b>Coursework for Major:</b>				
<b>PA School Pre-requisites:</b>				
<b>Co-Curricular Activities:</b>	Continue getting hands-on patient care experience (2000-4000+ hours)			Apply to PA Schools