

# Pre-Physician Assistant

College of Arts & Sciences  
McCannel Hall, Room 280  
2891 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave N, Stop 7143  
Grand Forks, ND 58202



The Pre-Physician Assistant Program is not a major or degree-granting program. In order to graduate with a degree from UND, you will need to:

- Choose a [major](#) and complete the specific requirements determined by the department responsible for that major. PA programs do not require any particular major.
- Complete the [Essential Studies requirements](#)
- Complete 120 semester credits (36 numbered 300 or above and 30 from UND)

## PA programs consider the following when reviewing applications:

### 1. Academics

PA schools have varying pre-requisites, all of which have been taken into consideration to inform the UND Physician Assistant Program curriculum so that you are prepared to apply to any PA school you ultimately decide to. The national average GPA of 2022 PA school matriculants was 3.58 (cumulative) and 3.53 (science). To be a competitive applicant, you should aim for such a cumulative and science GPA and excel in all your courses.

### 2. GRE

Roughly half of the PA programs in the US require the GRE. Plan to take the GRE in May or June the calendar year before you plan to begin PA school (third year if on a four year plan). Everyone studies differently, but we recommend you that you start studying 1-3 months prior to the exam. We encourage students to take a lighter course load (~12 credits) the semester prior to taking the GRE to allow for dedicated study time. As a Kaplan partner, UND students have access to the Kaplan GRE review courses and materials at a discounted rate. The national average GRE scores of 2020 PA school matriculants were:

Verbal: 153.4 (60<sup>th</sup>-64<sup>th</sup> percentile)

Quantitative: 153.3 (51<sup>st</sup>-55<sup>th</sup> percentile)

Analytical: 4.0 (60<sup>th</sup> percentile)

### 3. Life Experiences

Admissions committees want to know that you have made an informed career decision and are knowledgeable about health-related professions. In addition, they are looking for applicants who have demonstrated a dedication to service. One way that they assess your non-academic qualities is to look at how you spend your time outside of the classroom, so set yourself apart! Although formal documentation is not needed, be sure to keep track of your experiences and include dates, times, activities, meaningful experiences, and the name and contact information of your supervisor (if applicable).

a. **Direct Patient Care** → 1,000-2,000+ hours

- Work or volunteer in a position in which you give direct medical care to patients, have a chance to observe and work with PA's and other health care team members
- Work settings can include hospital, rehab, clinic, group care home (nursing, disabled children or adults, Alzheimer's unit, VA), hospice, home health, support services, phlebotomy, EMS
- Due to the nature of this profession, applicants can apply with varying numbers of hours as many PA's will start their medical careers in other professions. Make sure you research your professional program of interest so you are familiar with their hour requirements.

b. **Shadowing** → 20+ hours

- The majority of hours need to be with primary care PA's (family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics). The remainder of your hours can be with specialists.
- Be sure to include both rural and city experiences. Regionally, experiences in Grand Forks, Fargo, Bismarck, Minot, Crookston, and Moorhead are considered city experiences.

c. **Community Service/Involvement**

Demonstrate your desire to serve others and give back to your community. These experiences do not necessarily need to be related to healthcare. Participate in things that are of genuine interest to you (either in a paid position or as a volunteer) and that you can speak passionately about in your application and interview. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Lifeguard, first responders
- Coaching/teaching sports (for park boards, travelling leagues, Special Olympics)
- Camp counseling (church camps, day camps, medical camps, music camps)
- Volunteering at your local city mission, free clinic, humane society
- College organizations (clubs, honor societies, sororities/fraternities)
- College tutoring or TA positions
- Medical missions trips

d. **Research**

UND has numerous research opportunities for undergraduate students. Research experience is generally not required by PA programs, but can help to strengthen your application.

# UND Pre-PA Course Planner

## UND courses required by most PA programs

- BIOL 150/L: General Biology I
- BIOL 151/L: General Biology II
- CHEM 121/L: General Chemistry I
- CHEM 122/L: General Chemistry II
- Organic Chemistry (choose one)
  - CHEM 341/L & 342/L: OChem I & II
  - CHEM 340/L: Survey of OChem <sup>1</sup>
- BIMD 301: Biochemistry
- BIMD 220/L: Anatomy & Physiology I
- BIMD 221/L: Anatomy & Physiology II
- BIMD 302/L: General Microbiology
- BIOL 315: Genetics
- MED 205: Medical Terminology
- Math (choose one)
  - MATH 146: Applied Calculus
  - MATH 165: Calculus I
  - AP credit for Calculus
- A Statistics course (choose one) \*
  - PSYC 241: Introduction to Statistics
  - SOC 326: Sociological Statistics
  - ECON 210: Business/Economic Statistics
  - MATH 321: Applied Statistical Methods
  - BIOL 470: Biometry
  - PHE 306: Epidemiology and Biostatistics
  - Other statistics course
- ENGL 110: College Composition I
- ENGL 130: College Composition II
- PSYC 111: Introduction to Psychology
- PSYC 250: Developmental Psychology
- PSYC 270: Abnormal Psychology

<sup>1</sup> Some PA programs do not accept survey courses. Be sure to check the requirements of programs you wish to apply to if you are considering taking CHEM 340 over CHEM 341 & 342.

## UND electives good for PA program preparation

*Some may be required by certain PA programs; check individual requirements for programs of interest.*

- BIMD 328: Introduction to Immunology
- BIOL 341: Cell Biology
- BIOL 390: Endocrinology
- BIOL 415: Genomics
- BIOL 420: Neuroscience
- BIOL 369/L: Histology
- BIOL 442: Physiology of Organs/Systems
- PPT 315: Human Pharmacology
- Physics (choose one)
  - PHYS 161: Introductory College Physics I
  - PHYS 211: College Physics I
- COMM 212: Interpersonal Communication
- COMM 380: Health Communication
- N&D 240: Fundamentals of Nutrition
- WGS 200: Introduction to Gender Studies
- Public Health courses
  - PHE 101: Introduction to Public Health
  - PHE 102: Epidemiology in Public Health
  - PHE 103: Introduction to Global Health
- Ethics courses
  - PHIL 120: Introduction to Ethics
  - PHIL 251: Ethics in Healthcare
  - PHIL 245: Death and Dying
  - PHIL 245: Death and Dying
- SOC 110: Introduction to Sociology
- An advanced writing/humanities course
- A foreign language

## Sample Four Year Plan

*This is just an example to aid in your academic planning. Consult with your assigned advisor on how best to combine the pre-physician assistant curriculum with your major requirements.*

|                    | Fall  | Spring  | Summer   |
|--------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>First Year</b>  | BIOL 150/L<br>CHEM 121/L<br>MATH 103 <sup>1</sup><br>Courses from Group 1   | BIOL 151/L<br>CHEM 122/L<br>Courses from Group 1                                    | Life Experiences<br>Direct patient care<br>Shadowing<br>Volunteering<br>Research                                 |
| <b>Second Year</b> | CHEM 341/L <sup>2</sup><br>BIOL 315<br>Courses from Group 1 or 2  | CHEM 342/L <sup>2</sup><br>BIMD 220/L<br>BIOL 341<br>Courses from Group 1 or 2      | Life Experiences<br>Direct patient care<br>Shadowing<br>Volunteering<br>Research                                 |
| <b>Third Year</b>  | BIMD 221/L<br>Courses from Group 1, 2, or 3   | BIMD 301<br>BIMD 302/L<br>Courses from Group 1, 2, or 3<br>~12 credits for GRE prep | <b>GRE</b> (take ~May 15 <sup>th</sup> )<br><br><b>1<sup>o</sup> Apps Due</b><br>(Submit ~May 30 <sup>th</sup> ) |
| <b>Fourth Year</b> | Courses from Group 3<br><br><b>2<sup>o</sup> Apps Due</b><br>(Submit ASAP)<br><br><b>Interviews Begin</b><br>(~Oct-Feb) | Courses from Group 3  |  |

<sup>1</sup> MATH 103 waived if ACT Math > 26 or AP Calc > 3 or equivalent college level math course

<sup>2</sup> OChem requirements vary across PA programs. To meet the requirements of most regional PA programs, we recommend CHEM 341 & 342: OChem I & II over CHEM 340: Survey of OChem.

**Group 1** courses are **required**: COMM 110, ENGL 110, ENGL 130, PSYC 111, PSYC 250, PSYC 270, MATH 146, a statistics class

**Group 2** courses are good **electives**: COMM 212, COMM 380, N&D 240, WGS 200, a public health course, an ethics course, SOC 110, an advanced writing/humanities course, a foreign language

**Groups 3** courses are **upper level science electives**:

Fall courses: BIMD 328, BIOL 378, BIOL 364/L, BIOL 390, BIOL 420, BIOL 442, PPT 315

Spring courses: BIOL 341, BIOL 369/L, BIOL 415, PPT 315