Physician Assistant, M.H.S.

Degree Offered

- Master's in Health Sciences (MHS)

Nature of the Program

The Physician Assistant Studies curriculum is designed to provide a foundation in medical sciences, followed by an in-depth study of systems-based clinical medicine. The program consists of 4 semesters of didactic coursework followed by 12 months of clinical rotations. The clinical phase includes rotations in family medicine, cardiology, pediatrics, internal medicine, general surgery, emergency medicine, women's health, behavioral medicine, and rural medicine. Consistent with our mission, the program has a focus on population health, health disparity, and rural and Appalachian health issues.

ADMINISTRATION

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

- Jennifer Momen - MD, MPH, FAAP (State University of New York at Buffalo, West Virginia University)
  Associate Professor

MEDICAL DIRECTOR

- Jeremiah Hayanga - MD, MPH, FACS, FRCS, FCCP, FCCM
  Professor

DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL EDUCATION

- Forrest Olgers - DPAS, MPAS, MBA, PA-C (University of Pittsburgh)
  Assistant Professor

FACULTY

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

- Jennifer Momen - MD, MPH, FAAP (SUNY at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine, West Virginia University
  Program Director

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

- David Baldwin - MSPA, PA-C (Mountain State University/University of Charleston)
- Allison McNamara - MS, PA-C (Alderson Broaddus University)
- Forrest Olgers - DPAS, MPAS, MBA, PA-C (University of Pittsburgh)
  Director of Clinical Education
- Kassandra Olgers - MPAS, PA-C (Alderson Broaddus University)

PROFESSOR

- Jeremiah Hayanga - MD, MPH, FACS, FRCS, FCCP, FCCM
  Medical Director

Admissions for 2026-2027

In order to be eligible for admission, a bachelor's degree in any discipline from an accredited U.S. institution is required. In addition, students must fulfill the following:

- Submit GRE test scores (Institution Code 4275).
- Have a minimum cumulative undergraduate and prerequisite grade point average of 3.2.
- Complete all prerequisite courses with a grade of C or higher.
- Complete 80 hours of experience in a clinical setting (paid or unpaid). Health care experience obtained to meet requirements for any course or degree program may not be counted toward the 80 hours of experience in a clinical setting. Examples of qualifying health care experience include shadowing a physician or physician assistant and working as a patient care aid, medical assistant, respiratory/occupational/physical therapist, paramedic, emergency medical technician, or scribe. Applicants logging more than the minimum of 80 hours will not receive additional preference in the admission selection process. Please note that individuals with hands-on patient care experience and those with decision-making responsibility

will receive additional preference (see *Selection Process* section for details). All healthcare experience must have been obtained no earlier than the freshman year of college.
- Three letters of recommendation (one from a college or university professor, one from a supervisor of the clinical experience including evidence of how the student contributed to the delivery of care, and a third from either of the two preceding categories).

Prerequisite Courses

The following courses are required in order to be eligible for admission to the program:

- Biology with lab - 4 credits
- General Chemistry with lab - 8 credits
- Organic Chemistry or Biochemistry with lab - 4 credits
- *Human Anatomy with lab - 4 credits
- *Human Physiology - 3 credits
- Microbiology - 3 credits
- Psychology - 3 credits
- Statistics - 3 credits
- Medical Terminology - 1 credit

Total Credits: 33

Please note the following information about prerequisite courses:

- Prerequisite courses must be completed at a regionally accredited 2- or 4-year U.S. college or university within the 10 years prior to the date of matriculation.
- A prerequisite course may be retaken, and if a higher grade is earned upon retaking a course, the second grade will be used to calculate the prerequisite GPA. However, both grades will be reflected in the cumulative GPA.
- Credit hours represent semester hours.
- Advanced placement (AP) courses will not be accepted for prerequisite requirements.
- Combined Anatomy and Physiology courses are accepted; however, an applicant must take two semesters of Anatomy and Physiology with labs to fulfill the Anatomy and Physiology requirements; mammalian anatomy lab will be acceptable, but human anatomy lab is preferred.
- An applicant may have **no more than two** prerequisites outstanding (planned) or currently in progress at the time of application. All outstanding prerequisites must be successfully completed prior to matriculation.
- There will be no waivers or exceptions to the requirements.

Important Dates

Please refer to the Physician Assistant Studies program website (http://medicine.wvu.edu/physician-assistant-studies/admission/application-process/) for more information on important dates and the application timeline.

Selection Process

INTERVIEWS

Interviews will be conducted during the summer and, at the discretion of the department, may be conducted virtually or in person. Please refer to the Physician Assistant Studies program website (http://medicine.wvu.edu/physician-assistant-studies/admission/application-process/) for more information.

FINAL SELECTION PROCESS

A total of 25 students will be admitted to each class.

Points will be awarded on the Admission Selection Rubric and candidates will be selected based upon the following criteria:

- Cumulative Undergraduate, Prerequisite, and Science GPA
- GRE scores (Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytical Writing)
- West Virginia residency status
- Interview score (average score of two interviewers)
- Strength of letters of recommendation (average score of three letters)
- Strength of CASPA statement and responses to two WVU-specific questions
- Quality and relevance of health care experience (see detail below)

Preference will be given to individuals based on previous health care experience as follows, and **in order of increasing preference**:

- No hands-on patient care (shadowing a physician or physician assistant)
- Involvement in patient care team as a scribe
- Hands-on patient care with limited need for professional judgment (patient care aid, medical assistant, physical therapy assistant)
- Patient care involving assessment and requiring some professional judgement (emergency medical technician (EMT), respiratory therapist, dietician)
- Patient care with independent decision-making and/or requiring significant professional judgement (paramedic, registered nurse)

In the event of a tie in the Admission Selection Rubric score, the following criteria will be applied in the order below until there is no longer a tie at the 25th position:

1. West Virginia residency status
2. Score on WVU mission question
3. Prerequisite GPA

Final decisions regarding admission will be made by the Admissions Committee.

Please note that applicants who are offered admission will often have academic records which exceed the published minimum standards. Data regarding the characteristics of successful applicants for the class entering each January will be provided when available.

OFFERS OF ADMISSION

Applicants accepted to the program will receive an offer of admission through their preferred email (as identified in CASPA) with a link to the online *Declaration of Acceptance* form. Those wishing to accept a seat in the class will have one week to complete the online *Declaration of Acceptance* form. Applicants accepting the offer of admission will be sent an invoice from the WVU Graduate Admissions Office for a non-refundable deposit of $1,000, which will be due within two weeks of receipt of the invoice. The deposit will be applied towards the first semester tuition. Failure to pay the deposit within the required time period will result in forfeiture of the seat.

An offer of admission may be revoked if an applicant's application materials are found to be falsified. An enrolled student may be dismissed from the program if the student's application materials are found to be falsified, consistent with applicable policies or procedures as contained in the WVU Graduate/Professional Catalog section on *Academic and Professional Standards*.

POST-ACCEPTANCE REQUIREMENTS

The physician assistant studies program at West Virginia University begins in the spring term (January). Students accepting a seat in the program must submit proof of compliance with all post-acceptance requirements to the appropriate office (as instructed in the acceptance letter) by no later than the first day of orientation (early January, prior to the start of term). Students failing to meet these requirements may not be permitted to matriculate into the program.

Students completing a Bachelor's degree or prerequisite course requirements in the fall semester preceding matriculation will be required to submit an unofficial transcript documenting degree conferral or prerequisite course completion by no later than the first day of orientation (early January, prior to the start of term). The official transcript documenting degree and/or course completion is still required and must be received no later than the last day of class for the spring semester. Failure to complete this requirement will result in dismissal from the program.

In the event that a student is offered admission to the program after December 1st, the deadlines for submission of post-acceptance requirements will be stated in the acceptance letter and will supersede the deadlines provided above.

Post-acceptance requirements include:

- Official transcript verifying bachelor's degree from an accredited U.S. institution with cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.2 or higher
- Official transcript verifying completion of all prerequisite courses within the 10 years prior to matriculation at a regionally accredited U.S. 2-or 4-year college or university with a grade of 'C' or higher and prerequisite GPA of 3.2 or higher
- Health screening form
- Proof of health insurance
- Proof of immunizations and titers
- Background check and drug screening
- Technical standards attestation

Health Sciences & Technology Academy (HSTA) Scholars
One HSTA tuition waiver will be offered by the physician assistant studies program if a HSTA scholar is selected for admission to the program through the published admission selection process. In the event that more than one HSTA scholar is accepted for admission, the applicant with the strongest academic credentials (average of cumulative undergraduate GPA and prerequisite GPA) will be awarded the tuition waiver.

Major Code: 8373

Degree Requirements

A minimum grade of "C-" is required in EACH didactic course; however, an overall GPA of 3.0 will be required to progress in the program. There will be a Committee on Academic and Professional Standards that will assign remediation plans and penalties associated with failure to meet these standards.

Code	Title	Hours
A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required.		
PA 507	Human Anatomy 1	3
PA 510	Physician Assistant Practice	1
PA 511	Evidence-Based PA Practice 1	2
PA 512	Physical Diagnosis	3
PA 517	Genomic Medicine	1
PA 518	Health and Disease Across the Lifespan	3
PA 522	Clinical Procedures 1	3
PA 523	Clinical Medicine & Pharmacotherapeutics 1	4
PA 524	Diagnostic Medicine 1	2
PA 527	Human Anatomy 2	3
PA 528	Principles of Behavioral Health for PA	1
PA 531	Evidence-Based PA Practice 2	2
PA 533	Clinical Medicine & Pharmacotherapeutics 2	4
PA 534	Diagnostic Medicine 2	2
PA 536	Clinical Reasoning for PA	1
PA 537	Acute Care Medicine for PA	1
PA 538	Obstetrics/Gynecology & Surgery for PA	2
PA 542	Clinical Procedures 2	2
PA 543	Clinical Medicine & Pharmacotherapeutics 3	4
PA 544	Clinical Medicine & Pharmacotherapeutics 4	4
PA 545	Clinical Medicine & Pharmacotherapeutics 5	4
PA 546	Rural Medicine for PA	1
PA 547	Neurobiology	4
PA 553	PA Practice in Pediatrics & Geriatrics	2
PA 610	Family Medicine PA Practice	4
PA 620	Internal Medicine PA Practice	8
PA 625	Cardiology PA Practice	4
PA 630	Pediatric PA Practice	4
PA 640	Women's Health PA Practice	4
PA 650	Surgery PA Practice	4
PA 660	Behavioral Medicine PA Practice	4
PA 670	Emergency Medicine PA Practice	4
PA 680	Elective PA Practice	4
or PA 682	Rural PA Practice 2	
PA 681	Elective PA Practice 2	3
PA 685	Rural PA Practice	4
PA 686	PA Summative Evaluation	1
PCOL 516	Pharmacology for PA	3
PSIO 516	Medical Physiology for PA	4
Total Hours		114

Suggested Plan of Study

First Year

		Spring	Hours	Summer	Hours
		PA 507	3	PA 522	3
		PA 510	1	PA 523	4
		PA 512	3	PA 524	2
		PA 518	3	PA 527	3
		PA 528	1		
		PCOL 516	3		
		PSIO 516	4		
		18		12	

Second Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours	Summer	Hours
PA 511	2	PA 517	1	PA 610	4
PA 533	4	PA 531	2	PA 620	8
PA 534	2	PA 542	2	PA 681	3
PA 536	1	PA 544	4		
PA 537	1	PA 545	4		
PA 538	2	PA 546	1		
PA 543	4	PA 547	4		
PA 553	2				
	18		18		15

Third Year

Fall	Hours	Spring	Hours
PA 630	4	PA 625	4
PA 640	4	PA 660	4
PA 650	4	PA 670	4
PA 685	4	PA 680 or 682	4
		PA 686	1
	16		17

Total credit hours: 114

Major Learning Outcomes

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

Graduates of the physician assistant studies program will demonstrate competencies in each of six domains as noted below.

MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE

- Applies the underlying pathophysiologic processes of commonly encountered medical and surgical conditions
- Recognizes signs and symptoms of disease and illness
- Correctly interprets findings of diagnostics studies
- Identifies risk factors for acute and chronic medical conditions
- Respects the effect of the patient's environment and stress on health outcomes and quality of life
- Appreciates the importance of using evidence-based interventions for disease prevention and health maintenance

INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Communicates with patients and other members of the healthcare team in a professional and respectful manner
- Recognizes the unique contributions of other health care providers to patient care

- Demonstrates rapport with patients while obtaining and providing information
- Partners with patients in formulating a treatment plan
- Collaborates effectively with all members of the healthcare team
- Effectively counsels patients and provides education using a method tailored to the patient

CLINICAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Obtains a thorough and accurate medical history
- Demonstrates proper technique while performing physical examination
- Performs medical and surgical procedures with attention to detail and safety
- Identifies relevant information from the medical record and accurately documents patient encounters and procedures

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS

- Understands the legal requirements for practice as a physician assistant
- Demonstrates respect, compassion, and sensitivity in patient interactions
- Applies ethical principles to the care of patients
- Maintains patient confidentiality in all venues
- Respects the doctrines of informed consent and shared decision-making
- Seeks opportunities for professional development and scholarship
- Demonstrates willingness to teach and learn from fellow health professionals

PRACTICE-BASED LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

- Identifies and utilizes evidence-based resources to answer clinical questions
- Recognizes and addresses deficits in knowledge and clinical skills, as well as personal biases which may affect patient care
- Advocates effectively for patients as they navigate the health care system
- Respects and works to overcome the challenges facing patients in underserved areas
- Considers effects on the patient and healthcare system when ordering medication, diagnostic studies, or therapeutic interventions

CLINICAL REASONING AND PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

- Formulates a differential diagnosis using patient data including history, physical examination, and diagnostic studies
- Utilizes diagnostic studies most likely to be useful in patient evaluation
- Suggests appropriate treatment modalities for medical and surgical conditions, including pharmacologic treatment and behavioral modifications
- Identifies the appropriate site of care based on clinical presentation and patient demographics
- Recognizes the possible causes of a patient’s failure to respond to treatment

Accreditation

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) has granted **Accreditation-Continued** status to the **West Virginia University Division of Physician Assistant Studies Program** sponsored by **West Virginia University.** Accreditation Continued is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA *Standards*.

Accreditation remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the *Standards*. The approximate date for the next validation review of the program by the ARC-PA will be **June 2034**. The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation *Standards* and ARC-PA policy.

The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at https://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-wv-university/ (https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.arc-pa.org%2Faccreditation-history-wv-university%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cjpeasak%40hsc.wvu.edu%7C1860017317e34329533208dca679afa1%7Ca2d1f95f851044248ae15c596bdbd578%7C0%7C0%7C638568289826732079%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C%7C&sdata=JRHsczTw4fNNr0L6PJJKiCWPM%2FeTNdMDfAcWfklHNFM%3D&reserved=0)