

# Physician Assistant Studies Accelerated Entry Pathway (PAS-AEP)

## **Degree Type**

PASAEPP

The Physician Assistant (PA) Profession:

A Physician Assistant (PA) is a nationally certified medical provider who is licensed to diagnose and treat illness and disease, and prescribe medication for patients. PAs work in physician offices, hospitals, and clinics in collaboration with a licensed physician. The physician-PA relationship is fundamental to the profession and enhances the delivery of health care.

At College of Saint Mary, the CSM Physician Assistant Studies prepares students to become licensed Physician Assistants. The PAS-AEP is a competitive program that prepares students for the physician assistant profession in just 5 years.

PAS-AEP Program Details:

The PAS Accelerated Entry Pathway is for students at College of Saint Mary who have been accepted for admission to the college AND who have completed the process to receive pre- PAS status. Both external applicants and current CSM students may apply for the PAS-AEP. Once application materials are received, they will be reviewed by the PAS Admissions Committee comprised of the Physician Assistant Studies program faculty and the program coordinator. Qualified applicants will be considered for an interview and possible acceptance into the PAS-AEP. The application process is a competitive process, and due to the limited number of available seats (30) in each PAS-AEP Cohort, not all applicants meeting the minimum admission criteria will be offered acceptance into the pathway.

Length of Program

Students accepted into the PAS-AEP are assigned a level (1–3) according to the extent to which they have completed prerequisite courses necessary to prepare for the graduate Physician Assistant Studies program. Levels 4 and 5 are designated as the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program. Levels 1-3 are for students accepted into the PAS- AEP and have a pre-PAS status. Qualified applicants' transcripts will be reviewed and recommended for acceptance at the appropriate level by the Admissions Committee. Students are accepted into Levels 1, 2 or 3 only for PAS Accelerated Entry Program. Once assigned an appropriate level (1-3), PAS-AEP students may not change levels without permission from the PAS Program.

Program of Study

The majority of students in the pathway are pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Human Biology because the prerequisite courses for the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program align with the Human Biology curriculum. However, additional programs and majors at College of Saint Mary are available depending on the student's past academic experience. The PAS program coordinator along with the CSM faculty advisor will work with the student to determine what program of study is most beneficial to her and her future career goals. Students in the PAS-AEP must complete all of the courses required for their undergraduate degree and the prerequisite course work with minimum acceptable grades required for the Master of Science in the Physician Assistant Studies Program regardless of the program of study they choose.

Summer coursework is typically required for students to complete levels 1-3 on schedule.

Progression Requirements and Evaluation

To progress from one Level of the PAS-AEP to the next Level, students must successfully meet the following criteria. Some criteria will be evaluated after each semester and some criteria will be evaluated after the academic year of each Level. The academic year will be defined as August 1st to July 31st.

#### Level 1 to Level 2

- Minimum cumulative PAS-AEP prerequisite GPA\* of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale each semester
- B or higher in all PAS-AEP prerequisite coursework each semester
- Overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (includes all college credit coursework) each semester
- Maintain full-time status (12 credits) in fall and spring semesters
- Complete 50 total hours of clinical experience by July 31st
  - Must submit Medical/Clinical Experience Hours Tracking Form
- Meet PAS-AEP Professionalism and Personal Behavior Progression

#### Level 2 to Level 3

- Minimum cumulative PAS-AEP prerequisite GPA\* of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale each semester
- B or higher in all PAS-AEP prerequisite coursework each semester
- Overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (includes all college credit coursework) each semester
- Maintain full-time status (12 credits) in fall and spring semester
- Complete 100 total hours of clinical experience by July 31st
  - Must submit Medical/Clinical Experience Hours Tracking Form
- Meet PAS-AEP Professionalism and Personal Behavior Progression

#### Level 3 to Level 4 PAS first year status

- Minimum cumulative PAS-AEP prerequisite GPA\* of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale each semester
- B or higher in all PAS-AEP prerequisite coursework each semester
- Overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (includes all college credit coursework) each semester
- Maintain full-time status (12 credits) in fall and spring semester
- Complete 150 total hours of clinical experience by July 31st
  - Must complete Medical/Clinical Experience Hours Tracking Form
  - Must have 300 total hours of clinical experience overall to progress to Level 4
- Meet PAS-AEP Professionalism and Personal Behavior Progression
- Possess or have the capability to earn a Bachelor's degree by the start of the second semester of Level 4 of the MSPAS program
- Complete all MSPAS matriculation requirements within 6 months of entry into Level 4. This includes requirements for immunizations, tuberculosis screening, physical examination, criminal background check, urine drug screening, and health insurance requirements.
- Meet the minimum technical standards for the MSPAS program
- Present Portfolio and meet with the PAS Admissions Committee for final progression evaluation from Level 3 to Level 4
  - Must complete Essay by March 1st
  - Must submit Three Professional Recommendation Rubrics via dynamic forms by March 1st
  - Must submit Resume or CV by March 1st
  - Must dress professionally during scheduled Pre-PAS Level 3 visits (March-April)

#### **Evaluation of Progression**

The PAS program coordinator will request a list of early alerts (if any exist) on the PAS-AEP students for review from the Registrar's Office and advisors each semester.

Student files will be reviewed after **each semester** to determine if the student has met the following requirements:

- Minimum cumulative PAS-AEP prerequisite GPA\* of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
- B or higher in each PAS-AEP prerequisite course
- Overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (includes all college credit coursework)
- Full-time status (12 credits) in fall and spring semesters

Student files will be reviewed at the end of each **academic year** to determine if the student has met the following:

- Completion of required clinical experience for that level

Any student not meeting the posted requirements at any time during the evaluation will not be allowed to continue in the PAS-AEP. The student's advisor will then meet with the student to determine the best plan of study to complete a bachelor's degree. The student may apply to the PAS Program through CASPA (Central Application Service for Physician Assistants) once admission requirements are completed or planned.

\*PAS-AEP Prerequisite GPA - Cumulative GPA of all PAS-AEP prerequisite courses including transfer credit.

#### **PAS-AEP Professionalism and Personal Behavior Progression Evaluation:**

Continued demonstration of professionalism and positive personal behaviors are a PAS-AEP progression requirement, PAS admission decision criteria, and is important to be successful in the PAS program. During the PAS-AEP evaluation for progression, all documented unprofessional behavior or violations of the CSM Code of Conduct as a pre-PAS student, both on and off campus, will be considered and included in the process.

Unprofessional behavior may result in a student not meeting the requirements to continue to Level 4. Any student not meeting professional progression requirements may apply to the PAS Program through CASPA once admission requirements are completed or planned. All students are reminded that drug and alcohol offenses, felony convictions, and other similar violations of the law will result in absolute denial of admission to Level 4.

Students must display a professional attitude and positive personal behavior for progression.

#### **Final progression evaluation (Level 3 to 4)**

Students will be asked to present their PAS-AEP Portfolio in the spring semester of Level 3. Student files will be reviewed after the spring semester for satisfactory presentation of their portfolio, clinical experience requirements, and academic requirements. Any student who does not meet these standards will not progress to Level 4.

If a student does not meet the final progression requirements to Level 4, the student may apply through the direct path to the PAS program through CASPA, once admission requirements are completed or planned. Applying through CASPA is a competitive process and does not guarantee admission.

### PAS-AEP Prerequisite Course Requirements

A grade of B or higher must be received in each of the following requirements for all students in the PAS-AEP. No CLEP, pass/no pass, or advanced placement credit will be accepted.

- General Chemistry with lab (minimum 8 semester credits)
  - Two semesters in a sequenced course
- Organic Chemistry with lab
  - Two semesters in a sequenced course (required for Biochemistry)
- Biochemistry with Lab
- Advanced Human Anatomy and Physiology I and II with labs
- Microbiology with lab
- Genetics with lab
- Pathophysiology
- Abnormal Psychology (minimum 3 semester credits)
- Developmental/ Lifespan Psychology (minimum 3 semester credits)
- Statistics
- Medical Terminology (Either a college/university course or certified program will be acceptable.)

Prerequisite coursework considered as transfer credit will be evaluated on an individual basis.

### Student Deferral Policy

Student athletes in good standing who wish to compete in sports for four years, can receive an automatic deferral to the next cohort and start the MSPAS program one year later (4+2 years). Students cannot participate in athletics while enrolled in the graduate level MSPAS program. Students in good standing who wish to extend their college education for personal reasons or other student activities can submit a request for a deferral to be considered.

**\*\*THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES ACCELERATED ENTRY PATHWAY ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE IN ORDER TO MEET THE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS.**

## Accreditation

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) has granted **Accreditation-Continued** status to the **College of St. Mary - NE Physician Assistant Program** sponsored by **College of St. Mary - NE**. 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 **March 2031**. 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 <http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-college-of-st-mary/>.

---

**Total Credits**

**234**

---