Students prepare for entry to a physician assistant program by obtaining a baccalaureate degree, completing the prerequisite course work for entry into specific programs, and by obtaining a broad variety of volunteer clinical experience. Students may complete undergraduate degrees in any area.

Information about the field can be obtained from the American Academy of Physician Assistants website www.aapa.org/. Specific information on each physician assistant program can be obtained from listings of entry level PA programs at www.arc-pa.org/acc_programs/ and www.paeonline.org/index.php?ht=d/ContentDir/pid/255

Students are encouraged to review prerequisite courses early in their academic planning and to develop a plan of study within the first quarter of entry to Western.

Pre-Physician Assistant is not a major at WWU.

Program Checkpoints:

Freshman/Sophomore Years:
- Meet with a Pre-Physician Assistant advisor to complete a plan of study.
- Complete:
  - MATH through 114 (see GUR note¹). (Prerequisite for chemistry requirements)
  - Chemistry series, (Chem 121, 122, 123) (see GUR note²).
  - PSY 101 (see GUR note³), plus another 1-2 courses in psychology such as PSY 230 or 250⁴ (depending on requirements of PA schools being prepared for).
  - BIOL 204, 205.
  - Statistics (MATH 240, KIN 307).
  - Other GURs.

Junior Year:
- Work on completing:
  - BIOL 348, BIOL 349 (see warning below⁵).
  - BIOL 245 (Prereq: BIOL 101 or 205)
  - Other PA school prerequisites⁶, e.g., organic chemistry Chem 251 (Prereq: CHEM 121); Biochemistry Chem 375 (Prereq: CHEM 251 or 351, 352, 353); ENGL 302; Genetics BIOL 321 (BIOL majors only or override).

¹ Math 114 or Math 115 fulfills QSR GUR requirement.
² Completion of Chemistry series fulfills Natural Sciences GUR requirement.
³ PSY 101 contributes to fulfillment of SSC GUR requirement.
⁴ Select a behavioral science course beyond Psychology 101 by examining the requirements of PA schools you are interested in being qualified to apply to, to see if they have any specific requirements.
⁵ Only HHD and Biology/Anthropology majors are allowed to register for Biol 348 at WWU. Students in other majors requiring Biol 348 for professional school may be granted an override if they request one from the instructor at least three weeks prior to phase I of registration.

Please contact your major department advisor for major and graduation requirement advising.

*Updated: June 2017*
Clinical experience hours. See your pre-PA advisor for assistance setting up clinical experience hours.

Major requirements.

• Prepare for the Graduate Records Examination (GRE), if schools you are preparing to be qualified to apply to require it.

Senior Year:

• Take the GRE in the fall, if schools you are preparing to be qualified to apply to require it.
• Request letters of recommendation from professors, administrators and professionals.
• Complete remaining PA school prerequisites.
• Complete major requirements.
• Two quarters before graduation, meet with major faculty advisor for major evaluation and apply for graduation.

6 This list of other PA school requirements is general. You must examine the requirements of PA schools you wish to qualify to apply to, and ensure you complete their requirements by discussing these requirements with your advisor so they can be included in your plan of study.

7 Direct patient care experience is required by most schools. The hours of experience required of most schools range up to 1000 hours (a few schools, including University of Washington MEDEX, require 2000 hours). Direct patient care can be obtained by being a certified nurse assistant (CNA), EMT, or various certified technology positions in healthcare. Check the schools you are interested in applying to for their acceptable direct patient care experience, and hour requirement. For many students at Western, the best way to gain this experience is to work as a CNA. To become a CNA, take a training course at a community or vocational college, then pass a state exam. Following this, work can commonly be obtained at elderly care facilities.

Please contact your major department advisor for major and graduation requirement advising.

Updated: June 2017