

# Physician Assistant Studies

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[isu.edu/pa](https://isu.edu/pa)

Learning Outcomes (<https://isu.edu/pa/curriculum/>) for didactic and clinical coursework may be found at: [isu.edu/pa/curriculum/](https://isu.edu/pa/curriculum/) (<https://isu.edu/pa/curriculum/>)

## Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS)

Physician Assistants (PAs) are highly skilled health practitioners who work under physician supervision to provide patient care services. PAs take complete medical histories, perform physical examinations, order and interpret diagnostic studies, such as laboratory tests and x-rays, and diagnose and treat patients. Physician Assistants improve the accessibility of health care of under-served individuals in both urban and rural settings. The Physician Assistant Program at Idaho State University is the only PA Program in the State of Idaho.

### The Program

The Physician Assistant (PA) Program at Idaho State University awards the Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degree and a PA certificate upon completion of its 24 month graduate curriculum. A class of 72 students is enrolled each fall semester with 24 seats located at the Pocatello campus, 36 seats located at the Meridian campus, and 12 seats located at the College of Idaho campus in Caldwell.

The program maintains continued accreditation by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc., (ARC-PA). Graduates of the program are eligible to take the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination (PANCE), which is administered by the National Commission for Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

### Vision & Mission

Idaho State University Department of Physician Assistant Studies is the preferred educational destination for individuals who desire to be trained in a student-centered, service-oriented environment.

The mission of the Idaho State Physician Assistant Program is to train PAs through service-oriented, multimodal, innovative learning. Graduates from ISU's PA Program will be highly competent, compassionate health care providers dedicated to serving individuals and their communities.

### Admission Requirements

1. Baccalaureate Degree: A baccalaureate degree needs to be completed by June 30th of the year you plan to enter the PA Studies program. It must be from a regionally accredited U.S. institute of higher learning.

2. Prerequisite Courses: Required courses must also be completed at a regionally accredited U.S. institute of higher learning. The required prerequisite courses are:
  3. Microbiology
  4. Biochemistry
  5. Human Anatomy (as a single course or as part of a two-semester combined anatomy and physiology course)
  6. Human Physiology (as a single course or as part of a two-semester combined anatomy and physiology course)
  7. Statistics
  8. Abnormal Psychology (or Developmental Psychology throughout the Lifespan)

Applicants must have a minimum cumulative prerequisite grade point average of 3.0 as well as a minimum grade of C in all prerequisite courses (listed above). Coursework ten years or older is not accepted as prerequisite coursework. Applicants may have up to two prerequisite courses in progress during spring of the year they plan to enter the program. This coursework and any degree work must be completed by June 30 of the year of admission.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Highly Recommended Upper Level Biology Courses</b>		
(Note: This is not meant to be all inclusive and includes suggestions only.)		
<b>Advanced Anatomy</b>		
BIOL 4420	Musculo-Skeletal Anatomy	2
BIOL 4470	Cross-Sectional Anatomy	2
<b>Advanced Human Physiology</b>		
BIOL 4449	Human Physiology I	4
BIOL 4456	Human Physiology II	4
BIOL 4464	Lectures in Human Physiology	4
BIOL 4486	Human Systemic Physiology	5
<b>Immunology</b>		
BIOL 4451	Immunology	3
BIOL 4454	Advanced Immunology	3
<b>Genetics</b>		
BIOL 3358	Genetics	3
BIOL 4461	Microbial Genetics	3
<b>Endocrinology</b>		
BIOL 4443	Endocrinology	3

- Other health-related courses from departments such as Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Health Education, and Gender Studies.
- Proficiency in a second language, especially Spanish

Additional considerations for admission include:

- Maturity
- Work and health care experience
- Evidence of the ability to achieve academic success in a rigorous academic program
- Interpersonal skills and the ability to relate effectively with patients, peers, and at a professional level

- Evidence of a desire to practice primary care in Idaho, particularly among the medically underserved

### Required Applications

**Central Application Services for Physician Assistants** (<https://caspa.liasoncas.com/>)

The CASPA application must be completed by the PA program application deadline of November 1. As part of the CASPA application process, you will be required to submit three letters of recommendation and official transcripts.

**Graduate Record Exam (GRE)** (<http://www.ets.org>)

The GRE is an important admission requirement as the scores are used for ranking applicants. Please go to the ETS website for information about testing locations and scheduling the exam.

The GRE must be taken by November 1. The ISU GRE School Code is 4355 and the Department Code is 0634.

**CASPer Test** (<https://takecasper.com/>)

The CASPer Test assesses non-cognitive skills and interpersonal characteristics important for successful students and graduates of the program and is used to complement the other applicant screening tools. CASPer results will be evaluated during various steps of the admissions process. This may include but is not limited to the CASPA application review process for determining whether or not to call an applicant for an interview and the review of applicant interview performance results.

The CASPer Test must be taken on or before November 1. Results are valid for one admissions cycle.

**ISU Graduate School Application** ([www.isu.edu/graduate](http://www.isu.edu/graduate))

The ISU Graduate School application (also called the "Supplemental Application") is required for admission to the PA program. When applying to the Graduate School, select the Fall semester. Please refer to the ISU Graduate School for information regarding the application, requirements, and fees.

CASPA DOES NOT forward transcripts to the Graduate School or the PA program. A separate set of official transcripts must be requested for ISU's Graduate School.

Official transcripts are to be sent from the granting institution directly to the Graduate School at the following address:

ISU Graduate School  
921 S 8th Ave, Stop 8075  
Pocatello, ID 83209-8075  
[gradadmissions@isu.edu](mailto:gradadmissions@isu.edu)

The Graduate School application deadline is November 1.

### Technical Standards

All entering students must meet the required list of Technical Standards. A complete list of technical standards covering essential capacities for observation, communication, sensory and motor function, intellectual, conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities, behavioral and social attributes, and other student performance requirements is available from the program or on the program's website at <https://www.isu.edu/pa/admission/technical-standards/> (<https://www.isu.edu/pa/admission/technical-standards/>).

### Curriculum

The ISU PA Program Graduate Curriculum is twenty-four (24) months in length, divided into twelve (12) months of didactic (3 semesters) and twelve (12) months of clinical education (3 semesters).

The Didactic Curriculum is comprised of foundation courses in the fall semester, followed in the spring and summer semesters by modules that provide an immersion experience in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases commonly encountered in primary care medicine.

Elective coursework in Medical Spanish is available to Physician Assistant students. The Department of Global Studies and Languages offers a graduate certificate in Spanish for Health Professions along with other elective courses. This is an excellent opportunity for students as well as graduates to enhance their credentials.

Clinical Year Rotation goals are designed to meet the needs of the student and to address the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) accreditation standards. The Clinical Year staff places students in eight rotations that best address PA student educational objectives and at sites that promote continued, quality, preceptor relations with the ISU PA Program. There are seven required content areas, including Internal Medicine, Outpatient Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Emergency Medicine, Surgery, and Psychiatry. One rotation will be an elective. Students are expected to travel during the clinical year and to pay for the expenses incurred for this travel.

There are three Capstone Assessment Courses in the second year of the PA Program. Together they represent a comprehensive assessment of the students. The Capstone Assessment III course is the third one in the series and students are required to study for and pass multiple objective examinations.

**Didactic Year**

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits	Summer	Credits
BIOL 5529	4	PAS 6629	4	PAS 6639	2
BIOL 5563	4	PAS 6631	2	PAS 6643	4
BIOL 5564	4	PAS 6632	2	PAS 6646	2
PAS 6601	7	PAS 6633	2	PAS 6650	1
PAS 6602	3	PAS 6634	2	PAS 6651	2
PAS 6603	6	PAS 6635	3	PAS 6652	1
PAS 6604	2	PAS 6636	4	PAS 6653	2
SPAN 5510	1-2	PAS 6637	4	PAS 6654	8
		PAS 6640	2	PAS 6657	1
		PAS 6641	2		
		PAS 6642	3		
		PAS 6656	1		
			31-32	31	23

Total Credits: 85-86

**Clinical Year**

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits	Summer	Credits
PAS 6661	4	PAS 6664	4	PAS 6667	4
PAS 6662	4	PAS 6665	4	PAS 6668	4
PAS 6663	4	PAS 6666	4	PAS 6673	1
PAS 6671	2	PAS 6672	1		
	14		13		9

Total Credits: 36

### Medical Spanish elective offerings available to MPAS students

The Department of Global Studies and Languages, in cooperation with the Division of Health Sciences, has created a new cooperative, interdisciplinary major in Spanish for the Health Professions (SHP), as well as a SHP graduate certificate. The hybrid undergraduate degree and graduate certificate are designed to increase graduate marketability and to better serve the health care needs of our state, region, and country.

Matriculated PA students may take individual SHP courses or pursue a Graduate Certificate in SHP. Dr. Helen Tarp, Director of the SHP Program, has a joint appointment with the Department of Languages and Literature and the Department of PAS. She teaches regularly scheduled Spanish courses for PAS students during the Didactic Year as well as other Spanish coursework in the Literature and Languages Department.

### Access to individual Spanish for Health Professions courses

These SHP courses are designed to be flexible enough to fit a PA student's schedule and also enhance what the PA student is learning in the MPAS curriculum. Here are examples of the course offerings: SPAN 5594 Topics in Language and Culture for the Professions I (1-3 cr) and SPAN 5595 Topics in Language and Culture for the Professions II (1-3 cr) are variable-credit courses covering special topics such as Spanish Medical Terminology, Spanish for Pharmacy, for OBGYN, Diabetes Management, Oral Health, Mental Health, Emergency Room/Trauma, the Physical Exam, and Nutrition. These courses are hybrid courses combining online coursework and a workshop experience with mock patients. SPAN 5501, Spanish for the Physician Assistant, is an eight-week course designed specifically for PAS to enable students to conduct a medical history and physical exam for a Spanish-speaking patient. PA students wishing to take these courses S/U may take them as undergraduate courses (SPAN 4494, SPAN 4495, SPAN 4499). More information can be found at: <https://www.isu.edu/globalstudies/spanish-for-health-professions/>.

### Graduate Certificate in SHP (minimum of 9 credits)

Coursework credits counting toward the Graduate Certificate can be earned by PAS coursework/clinical rotations, as well as coursework and experience obtained after graduation from the PA program while continuing pursuit of the Certificate. There are three core areas of instruction: the Language Core, Health Professions Core, and Culture Core. The assessments in the three cores of instruction are designed to provide students with a thorough grounding in all three areas and to have their proficiency be a significant, tangible contribution to their MPAS degree. The Department of Global Studies and Languages provides the Language Core and elements of the Culture Core, which are delivered by faculty with qualifications in medical interpretation and translation. The Culture Core and diversity courses are provided by several departments in the College of

Arts and Letters. For more details see: <https://www.isu.edu/globalstudies/spanish-for-health-professions/graduate-certificate/>.

### International Rotation and Medical Mission experiences

In addition to course offerings and the Graduate Certificate in SHP, MPAS students are eligible to participate in two medical missions to Spanish-speaking countries (Dominican Republic and Peru) and an international clinical rotation in Belize. These international experiences are strictly voluntary. SHP credit (SPAN 5593 Spanish Internship, SPAN 5505 Spanish Exchange, or SPAN 5580 Special Topics) is available for these experiences.

### Courses

#### **PAS 5589 Individual Problems in PAS: 1-3 semester hours.**

Assigned on the basis of interest, preparation, and faculty availability. Participation in this course in no way influences opportunity to be accepted into the PA Program. May be repeated for up to 3 credits. PREREQ: Approval of PA Director.

#### **PAS 5599 Experimental Course: 1-6 semester hours.**

The content of this course is not described in the catalog. Title and number of credits are announced in the Class Schedule. Experimental courses may be offered no more than three times with the same title and content. May be repeated.

#### **PAS 6601 Introduction to Physician Assistant: 7 semester hours.**

Provides an introduction to the physician assistant profession, health promotion/disease prevention, medical ethics, medical imaging, laboratory medicine, and medical decision-making.

#### **PAS 6602 Evidence-Based Medicine and Biostatistics: 3 semester hours.**

Emphasizes use of current research evidence in medical decision-making, a practice known as evidence-based medicine. Topics include critical analysis of the medical literature, biostatistics, and application of EBM to patient care.

#### **PAS 6603 Clinical Assessment: 6 semester hours.**

Provides an introduction to medical interviewing and techniques for performing and recording a complete medical history and physical examination.

#### **PAS 6604 Pharmacology: 2 semester hours.**

An introduction to foundational concepts of therapeutic pharmacology, with emphasis on pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics.

#### **PAS 6629 Allergy/Immunology, Head/Ear/Nose/Throat, Ophthalmology: 4 semester hours.**

This course, along with others, has been integrated by the program as a whole in order to present a comprehensive medical education to the PA student with the goal of presenting all NCCPA blueprint material in addition to other information we feel is important. This integration helps students achieve a broad competence so that they graduate with the ability to provide a wide range of care to patients. This approach is in keeping with our mission of preparing competent and ethical PAs who provide high quality primary care to underserved populations. Additionally, it accomplishes the mission of ISU as a designated educator of health professions in Idaho. This module's scope encompasses Allergy/Immunology, Head/Eye/Ear/Nose/Throat (HEENT), and Ophthalmology. It covers allergies and immunodeficiency and autoimmune disorders (in general terms) as well as transplantation. It goes over laboratory and allergy testing concepts and the pathophysiology of allergy. It delves into ENT medical conditions that may be faced by a physician assistant in general practice or in the emergency room. It deals with physical exam skills specific to the head, ears, eyes, nose, throat and neck. It addresses ophthalmologic conditions specific to the eye as well as systemic conditions affecting the eye along with emergent problems and the appropriate care. Anatomy, physiology of the HEENT and neck will be covered. Therapeutics of the HEENT system are also covered along with allergy/immunology.



**PAS 6657 Comprehensive Evaluation: 1 semester hour.**

An end-of-didactic-year comprehensive evaluation of the physician assistant student's knowledge, skills, abilities, and professional behavior. The student must receive a grade of satisfactory in order to progress to the clinical year of the program.

**PAS 6660 Clinical Rotation I: 4 semester hours.**

Supervised clinical practicum in medical practice settings. PREREQ: Successful completion of all PAS didactic year requirements.

**PAS 6661 Clinical Rotation I: 4 semester hours.**

Supervised clinical practicum in primary care or specialty care in medical practice settings. May also include assignments and objective examinations. Graded by letter grades. PREREQ: Successful completion of all PAS didactic year requirements.

**PAS 6662 Clinical Rotation II: 4 semester hours.**

Supervised clinical practicum in primary care or specialty care in medical practice settings. May also include assignments and objective examinations. Graded by letter grades. PREREQ: Successful completion of all PAS didactic year requirements.

**PAS 6663 Clinical Rotation III: 4 semester hours.**

Supervised clinical practicum in primary care or specialty care in medical practice settings. May also include assignments and objective examinations. Graded by letter grades. PREREQ: Successful completion of all PAS didactic year requirements.

**PAS 6664 Clinical Rotation IV: 4 semester hours.**

Supervised clinical practicum in primary care or specialty care in medical practice settings. May also include assignments and objective examinations. Graded by letter grades. PREREQ: Successful completion of all PAS didactic year requirements.

**PAS 6665 Clinical Rotation V: 4 semester hours.**

Supervised clinical practicum in primary care or specialty care in medical practice settings. May also include assignments and objective examinations. Graded by letter grades. PREREQ: Successful completion of all PAS didactic year requirements.

**PAS 6666 Clinical Rotation VI: 4 semester hours.**

Supervised clinical practicum in primary care or specialty care in medical practice settings. May also include assignments and objective examinations. Graded by letter grades. PREREQ: Successful completion of all PAS didactic year requirements.

**PAS 6667 Clinical Rotation VII: 4 semester hours.**

Supervised clinical practicum in primary care or specialty care in medical practice settings. May also include assignments and objective examinations. Graded by letter grades. PREREQ: Successful completion of all PAS didactic year requirements.

**PAS 6668 Clinical Rotation VIII: 4 semester hours.**

Supervised clinical practicum in primary care or specialty care in medical practice settings. May also include assignments and objective examinations. Graded by letter grades. PREREQ: Successful completion of all PAS didactic year requirements.

**PAS 6671 Capstone Assessment I: 2 semester hours.**

There are three Capstone Assessment courses in the second year of the PA program. Together they represent a comprehensive assessment of the students. Capstone Assessment I course is the first one in the series and may include assignments and/or objective examinations. Additionally, students are required to complete a project under the direction of the PA program faculty. This project will consist of the development of an evidence-based case concept vignette presentation, development of a public health-based education, primary research or other project under direction of their graduate advisor. PREREQ: PAS 6657.

**PAS 6672 Capstone Assessment II: 1 semester hour.**

There are three Capstone Assessment courses in the second year of the PA program. Together they represent a comprehensive assessment of the students. Capstone Assessment II course is the second one in the series and may include assignments and/or objective assignments. Additionally they are required to complete and present a medical case study under the direction of the PA program faculty.

**PAS 6673 Capstone Assessment III: 1 semester hour.**

There are three Capstone Assessment courses in the second year of the PA program. Together they represent a comprehensive assessment of the students. The Capstone Assessment III course is the third one in the series and students are required to study for and pass multiple objective examinations.

**PAS 6689 Graduate Special Topics: 1-4 semester hours.**

Special topics in specific areas of physician assistant studies which may include didactic and/or clinical studies. May be repeated up to 14 credits.

**PAS 6699 Experimental Course: 1-6 semester hours.**

The content of this course is not described in the catalog. Title and number of credits are announced in the Class Schedule. Experimental courses may be offered no more than three times with the same title and content. May be repeated.