



**Rochester Institute of Technology
College of Health Sciences & Technology
Physician Assistant Program**

ORIGIN OF THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROFESSION

The physician assistants (PA) profession began at Duke University by Dr. Eugene Stead in the mid 1960s. Military corpsmen were trained to offset the shortage of physicians. Traditionally, PA's worked as primary care practitioners, commonly located in medically under-served areas. Approximately 80,000 PAs are in practice in the United States, and are represented in virtually all disciplines of medicine.

NATURE OF WORK AND ENVIRONMENT

PAs are educated with an emphasis in primary care and practice in a wide variety of settings and specialties including hospitals, private and group practices, clinics, correctional facilities, research centers, nursing homes, and university health centers. PAs provide diagnostic and therapeutic health care, in conjunction with a supervising physician. They perform tasks that have, in the past, been performed by physicians, such as: eliciting medical histories and conducting physical examinations, ordering laboratory and radiological testing, diagnosing common illnesses and determining treatment, assisting in surgery, prescribe medications, casting and suturing, counseling and educating patients, promoting "wellness" and disease prevention. PAs duties vary depending on the state and the specialty in which they practice. Specialties include: internal medicine, emergency medicine, geriatrics, pediatrics, obstetrics/gynecology, general surgery, orthopedics, neurosurgery, neonatology, forensics, radiology, etc. Post-graduate PA residency programs assist graduate PAs in acquiring specialized training in these fields.

SALARY & JOB OPPORTUNITIES

PAs are well known to provide high quality, cost-effective patient care. The 2010 PA Census, conducted by the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), noted the median salary for PA's is \$90,000. Salaries vary from region to region and with practice specialty. The local and national healthcare arenas eagerly welcome new graduates from programs such as ours. Other additional information can be obtained at the AAPA web site: <http://www.aapa.org>

JOB ADVANCEMENT

PAs have opportunities to explore several specialties without needing additional formal education. Given the broad basic foundation of education that PAs receive, many PAs choose to work in various disciplines of medicine throughout their career. Other career options for PAs may include administration, research, education, and positions in the pharmaceutical and medical equipment industries.

JOB & PROFESSION OUTLOOK

The American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) is the national professional society representing physician assistants in every area of medicine. Founded in 1968, the Academy has a federated structure of 57 chartered chapters representing PAs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the federal services. <http://www.aapa.org>. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects that the number of PA jobs will increase by 27 percent between 2006 and 2016 and predicts the total number of jobs in the country will grow by 10% over this 10-year period.

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Founded in 1829, RIT is an internationally recognized leader in professional and career-oriented education enrolling nearly 17,000 students in nine colleges. A private, coeducational university in upstate New York, RIT offers academic programs that combine outstanding teaching, a strong foundation in the liberal arts and sciences, modern classroom facilities, and work experience gained through the university's cooperative education program, internships, and other opportunities. The College of Health Sciences and Technology encompasses the Physician Assistant Program, in addition to several other clinically-relevant academic programs. Students in the College of Health Sciences and Technology receive a unique education, one that will prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals by providing innovative educational and clinical learning experiences, with a strong background in translational research and discovery and the application of evidence-based practices in community health.

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM

The RIT PA Program, currently culminating with a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree, is transitioning to a graduate (BS/MS) program. The five-year BS/MS degree program will slowly transition in over a period of several years. During the transition, we will continue to accept a limited number of transfer students into the second and third years of the four-year BS program. As the program is currently delivered, the pre-professional phase (years 1 & 2) involve courses in basic sciences, mathematics, and the liberal arts. The professional phase (years 3 & 4) is fully accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) and encompasses 21 months. Students participate in the program during the summer between these last two years. The professional phase includes 9 months of clinical course work and 12 months of clinical rotations. The required rotations are in Inpatient Medicine, Family Medicine, Orthopedics, Emergency Medicine, OB/GYN, Pediatrics, General Surgery, Geriatrics, and Psychiatry. The program also requires one elective rotation. The five-year graduate BS/MS degree program curricula will include new coursework, which include expanding the current professional phase; 3rd year to encompass the 3rd and 4th years of didactic medical education. The final (5th) year will culminate with clinical rotations.

Qualified transfer students are accepted, on a space available basis, into the program. Prior health care experience and/or shadowing are strongly recommended, but are not required for admission.

* Transcript evaluations and rendering of transfer credit are addressed at the time of admission only.

* Anatomy and Physiology courses must be taken within the last five years to be eligible for transfer into the program.

* In the pre-professional phase, Advanced Placement (AP) credit for liberal arts courses are evaluated and approved by the College of Liberal Arts. Advanced Placement (AP) credit for Calculus, Statistics, and institute electives, are awarded, as applicable within the College of Health Sciences and Technology. Advanced Placement (AP) credit is not accepted for Biology and Chemistry as course substitutions, but institute elective credit is awarded for these courses, as applicable.

* Advanced Placement (AP) or credit for experiential learning is not awarded for courses in the professional phase (years 3, 4, 5) of the program.

* Students must be proficient in word processing, internet browsing, and presentation software (i.e., PowerPoint®) upon entering the professional phase of the program.

Additional information regarding Advanced Placement (AP) credit in the pre-professional phase can be found at: http://www.rit.edu/~670www/advisingstudentservices_apcredits.php3. Information regarding Institute policies and procedures for student withdrawal, refunds of tuition and fees, academic credit and standards can be found at: <http://www.rit.edu/programs/ugrad/> Information regarding policies and procedures for student grievances can be found (Section D17) at: <http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/Manual/>.

CLASS SIZE & ACADEMIC STANDARDS

There are approximately 25-35 students enrolled in each class year of the program. Therefore, the number of openings for all students is limited and competitive. **All prospective applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) to qualify for admission consideration and students in the BS/MS degree program must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 once enrolled in the program.**

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT DURING PA EDUCATION

Many PA students work during the first two years of their PA education. Most students find that balancing academics, extra-curricular activities, and working 8-10 hours/week is possible. Careful attention must always remain focused on academics due to program academic standards currently requiring students in the BS/MS degree program to maintain a minimum quarterly and cumulative GPA of 3.0 throughout the program. Due to the academic rigor of the PA Program, students in the professional phase (years 3, 4) are strongly encouraged not to work. Students on clinical rotations in their fifth year are not permitted to work due to the responsibilities and requirements of their off-campus clinical experiences.

PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

The RIT PA program enrolled its first students in September 1993. The Program received initial accreditation in 1994 and currently maintains full accreditation from the Accreditation Review Committee on Physician Assistant Education (ARC-PA). PAs must graduate from an accredited program to be eligible to take the Physician Assistant National Board Examination (PANCE), required for practice in many states, including New York State.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) administers the national board examination for PAs. Certification is required in many states to practice. In addition, a practicing PA must retake the national board examination every six years, as well as complete 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years. RIT's PA Program is proud to have a 93% overall First Time Board Pass Rate over the fifteen graduating classes to date. Average First Time Pass Rates over the recent years are as follows: Class of 2010 (100%), Class of 2009 (92%), Class of 2008 (96%), Class of 2007 (96%), Class of 2006 (88%), Class of 2005 (100%).

HOUSING EXPENSES

These costs vary according to the needs of individual students. Suitable living on-campus (dorms, apartments, etc.) are generally available for average housing fees. Please refer to the RIT Undergraduate Bulletin and online @ <http://www.rit.edu> for more information. In the fifth year of the program, students complete ten clinical rotations which require, from time to time, that the student be away from the Rochester area. Sometimes these clinical sites are within driving distance, but at other times, the student will need to stay near the clinical site for the 5 weeks of the rotation. Because of this, there may be slightly elevated housing costs during this fifth year. The PA program assists the student in finding suitable housing during this clinical year. Ultimately the responsibility for housing, travel, and food, is that of the student. Students are not reimbursed during their time on clinical rotations. Senior students are considered full time students during this clinical training year and are responsible for tuition costs.

TRANSPORTATION / PARKING

In the professional phase (years 3, 4, 5) of the program, the student can expect to be off campus a portion of the time. The student is responsible for transportation during these years. Because of this, a car is

recommended in the start of the third year, and certainly during the fifth year. Parking fees may be incurred as students begin clinical training in hospitals. Car-pooling is recommended, when applicable.

TUITION & TEXTBOOKS

Current information regarding tuition and related fees can be accessed at http://finweb.rit.edu/bursar/tuition_fees.html. In the professional phase of the PA Program (third, fourth, and fifth years), the coursework and clinical experiences are exclusively medical in nature. Additional textbooks are required in various areas of didactic and clinical instruction. These additional books and reference materials typically run around \$ 1300.00, but vary from student to student.

EQUIPMENT

Each student is required to purchase equipment for the start of the third year of the program. The student is expected to bring his/her own equipment to classes in good working order. The PA program works with various medical suppliers to ensure that equipment costs to the third year students will be the lowest possible, while ensuring their quality. These items generally range \$ 700.00 to \$ 900.00. This is a one-time only cost, and these items will be useful for many years to come in the clinical fields of medicine.

DIDACTIC COMPETENCY EXAMINATIONS

A written competency examination will be given to students at the completion of the fourth and fifth years of the Program. The Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Tool (PACKRAT) is a nationally recognized competency examination for PA students. This standardized examination provides excellent feedback to students and faculty regarding comprehensive knowledge bases and problem-solving abilities of the students. The content and approach has been created to simulate the computer-based Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE). Many students have found this to be excellent preparation for clinical rotations and the PANCE. The cost to each student is currently \$40.00/exam.

DRUG TESTING / CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

In accordance with various state laws and regulations, clinical affiliates may require a PA student to undergo drug testing and a criminal background check prior to beginning a clinical rotation. These additional authorizations and their associated fees must be completed by the student at the students' expense. A PA student may not be allowed to participate in a clinical rotation, by the clinical affiliates, based on the results of this drug testing and criminal background check. As a PA professional proceeds in his/her healthcare career, s/he can expect regular criminal background checks, random drug testing, and credential verification as part of the participation, hiring, and employment process.

CARDIO-PULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR) CERTIFICATION

Students are required to have current CPR certification prior to the start of clinical rotations in the fifth year. Adult, Child, Infant Community CPR is arranged through the PA Program in conjunction with the American Heart Association. The cost for this certification is \$20.00.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS & IMMUNIZATIONS

A history and physical examination (including various blood work, titers, TB testing, and current immunizations) are required prior to the start of clinical rotations. TB testing is also required prior to the start of the third year. Students must arrange for these examinations several months in advance of the start of clinical rotations. Costs may range from \$ 150.00 – 250.00 depending on insurance coverage. Although the PA program cannot mandate that each student obtain the Hepatitis B vaccine, however it is **very strongly recommended** prior to the start of the third year. Lack of this vaccination may preclude students from most clinical training sites. Students may obtain this three injection vaccination series at the RIT

Student Health Center or through private medical coverage. Costs may vary dependent upon health insurance coverage.

PA PROGRAM ADMISSIONS

The application fee for this Undergraduate Program is \$ 50.00. Deadlines for completed applications:

Transfer applicants	December 1st for the following fall class.
Freshmen applicants (Early Decision)	December 1st for the following fall class.
Freshmen applicants (Regular Decision)	February 1st for the following fall class.

All admissions materials and applications should be forwarded to:

Rochester Institute of Technology
Office of Admissions
Bausch & Lomb Center
60 Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, New York 14623-5604
<http://www.rit.edu/adm/index.html>

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Technical Standards for Candidates for the Physician Assistant Program incorporate minimum capabilities and skills (observation, communication, motor, intellectual, and behavioral attributes) required to practice as a physician assistant. These standards are listed below:

**TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR CANDIDATES AND STUDENTS FOR THE
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

All candidates and students for the Physician Assistant (PA) Program must possess certain capabilities and skills, with or without reasonable accommodation. These include the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze, and synthesize data. They must have functional use of the senses of vision, hearing, and equilibrium. Their exteroceptive (touch, pain, temperature) and proprioceptive (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis, and vibratory) senses must be sufficiently intact to enable them to carry out all activities required for a complete PA education. Candidates must have motor function capabilities to meet the demands of PA education and the demands of total patient care. The candidate for the PA Program must possess the following capabilities and skills:

- 1. Observation:** The ability to observe is required for demonstrations, visual presentations in lectures and laboratories, laboratory evidence and microbiological cultures, microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissue in normal and pathologic states. Candidates and students must be able to observe patients accurately and completely, both at a distance and closely. This ability requires functional vision and somatic sensation and is enhanced by a sense of smell.
- 2. Communications:** Candidates and students should be able to speak intelligibly, to hear sufficiently, and to observe patients closely in order to elicit and transmit information, describe changes in mood, activity, and posture, and perceive non-verbal communications. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients including not only speech,

but reading and writing. Communication in oral and written form with the health care team must be effective and efficient.

3. **Motor:** Candidates and students should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation and percussion, as well as carry out diagnostic maneuvers. A candidate should have motor function sufficient to execute movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients. Such skills require coordination of gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and sensation.

4. **Intellectual** - Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities: Problem solving is a critical skill demanded of P.A. s and this requires all these abilities. Candidates and students must also be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and the spatial relationships of structures.

5. **Behavioral and Social Attributes:** Candidates and students must have the emotional health to fully use his/her intellectual ability, exercise good judgment, complete all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients.

The practice of medicine requires physician assistant candidates and students be able to develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and colleagues. To provide high quality patient care, physician assistant candidates and students must possess characteristics of adaptability, flexibility, and be able to function in the face of uncertainty. The healthcare environment requires candidates and students be able to tolerate physical and emotional stress and continue to function effectively and efficiently. He/she must have a high level of compassion for others, motivation to serve, integrity, and a consciousness of social values. Candidates and students must possess sufficient interpersonal skills to interact positively with people from all levels of society, all ethnic backgrounds, and all belief systems.

Candidates for admission to the PA Program are encouraged to ask questions about the program's technical standards for clarification and to determine whether they can meet the requirements with or without reasonable accommodation. Any information and inquiries about disabilities are handled in a confidential manner, to the extent possible within the accommodation process, and should be directed to the PA Program Director.

The Physician Assistant Program faculty recognize its responsibility to present candidates and students for the P.A. degree who have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of high quality patient care. The responsibility for these technical standards is primarily placed on the PA Program Interview Committee to select entering PA students who will be the candidates for the PA degree.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM MISSION

The Rochester Institute of Technology Physician Assistant Program, built on a foundation of liberal arts and sciences, will prepare students to provide compassionate, high quality patient and health care services. Fundamental to the Program, is a commitment to develop within students and faculty, the values and skills necessary for the pursuit of life-long learning and dedication to community service.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM EDUCATIONAL GOALS

1. Graduates will possess the didactic and clinical knowledge that is essential for patient care as a physician assistant and which fosters sound judgment, intellectual honesty, critical thinking, the tools for life-long learning, and career-long pursuit of excellence.
2. Graduates will possess clinical and technical competence and skills necessary for the practice of physician assistant, utilizing practice-based learning and understanding that the PA is an integral member of the health care team.
3. Graduates will conduct themselves in a professional manner, utilizing appropriate interpersonal communication skills, personal integrity, and an attitude of respect for self and others.
4. PA students will demonstrate success through goal-oriented and career focused behaviors during their educational journey.
5. Graduates will meet standardized requirements to become certified and maintain certification as physician assistants. Along with this, graduates will enthusiastically participate in their profession while incorporating an understanding of systems-based practice.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM FACULTY & STAFF

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