



RIT | College of Health Sciences and Technology Physician Assistant

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, PAs worked as primary care practitioners, commonly located in medically under-served areas. Approximately 123,000 PAs are in practice in the United States, and are represented in virtually all disciplines of medicine. The PA profession celebrated its 50th year in 2017.

NATURE OF WORK AND ENVIRONMENT

PAs are medical providers who diagnose illness, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and often serve as a patient's principal healthcare professional. With thousands of hours of medical training, PAs are versatile and collaborative. PAs practice in every state and in every medical setting and specialty, improving healthcare access and quality. PA duties vary depending on the state and the specialty in which they practice. Generally, PAs can take medical histories and conduct physical examinations, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, develop treatment plans, prescribe medication, counsel on preventive care, perform clinical procedures, and assist in surgery. Specific duties depend on the work setting, level of experience, specialty, and state laws. Specialties include: internal medicine, emergency medicine, geriatrics, pediatrics, women's health, general surgery, orthopedics, neurosurgery, neonatology, forensics, behavioral health, radiology, and many more. PAs are committed to team practice with physicians and other healthcare providers. The PA profession is well established, highly trusted, and essential to the U.S. healthcare workforce.

SALARY & JOB OPPORTUNITIES

PAs are well known to provide high quality, cost-effective patient care. The most recent PA national statistics from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), noted the median salary for all PAs is \$108,000. 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 medical specialties without needing additional formal education. Given the broad foundation of education that PAs receive, many choose to work in various disciplines of medicine throughout their career. Other career options may include post-graduate PA residency programs, administration, research, education, and the pharmaceutical and medical equipment industries.

JOB & PROFESSION OUTLOOK

The American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) is the national professional society representing physician assistants. Founded in 1968, the Academy represents PAs across all medical and surgical subspecialties in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the majority of the U.S. territories and within the uniformed services. *U.S. News and World Report* list the PA profession as #2 of the Best Healthcare Jobs in the country (2020) and #1 in the Best 100 Jobs List (2021). The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) notes the PA profession as the #9 Fastest Growing Jobs in America (2021). *Forbes* magazine ranked PAs as #8 Highest Paying Jobs in America (2021).

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Founded in 1829, RIT is an internationally recognized leader in professional and career-oriented education enrolling 19,000 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 (PA) 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 pre-professional phase (years 1 & 2) involve courses in basic sciences, mathematics, and the liberal arts. The professional phase includes the 3rd and 4th years of didactic medical education (18 months) and the final (5th) year culminates with clinical rotations (12 months). The professional phase is fully accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA). Students begin the clinical rotations during the summer between years 4 and 5. The required rotations are in Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Orthopedics, Emergency Medicine, Women's Health, Pediatrics, General Surgery, Behavioral Health, and two elective 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 prior to admission 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 or Chemistry. * Advanced Placement (AP) or credit for experiential learning is not awarded for courses in the professional phase (years 3, 4, 5) of the program.

Additional information regarding Advanced Placement (AP) credit in the pre-professional phase can be found at: <http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/advising/student-resources>. Information regarding Institute policies and procedures for student withdrawal, refunds of tuition and fees,

academic credit and standards, and student grievances can be found at <http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/Manual/>.

CLASS SIZE & ACADEMIC STANDARDS

There are approximately 30-36 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.**

PA STUDENT EMPLOYMENT & CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Many PA students work during the first two years of the program. Most of these students find that balancing academics, co-curricular activities, and working 8-10 hours/week is possible. Nonetheless, attention must always remain focused on the academic expectations of the PA program, which require students to maintain a minimum term and cumulative GPA of 3.0 (BS/MS degree) throughout the program. Given the rigorous program of study, students in the professional phase of the program are strongly advised meet with their academic advisor to discuss their participation in outside employment and co-curricular activities. Students in the professional phase, including clinical rotations, must ensure that employment and/or co-curricular activities do not interfere with academic preparation, performance, clinical responsibilities, and scheduling as per clinical affiliates and program requirements. Outside commitments that are not managed effectively can dramatically affect successful progression within the program and on clinical rotations. Given the rapidly changing environment in day-to-day clinical responsibilities, patient cases and/or clinical responsibilities must be given paramount priority.

PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

RIT's Physician Assistant (PA) Program officially began in September 1993 with 54 students. RIT has graduated over 500 alumni who are practicing in many different clinical disciplines, geographic settings, and in many states and countries across the globe. The PA Program has remained accredited since 1994. Initial accreditation was by the Commission on Accreditation Allied Health Educational Programs (CAAHEP) and then by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) from 2001 to present. Based on the most recent review in June/September 2019, the ARC-PA granted continuation of accreditation. Details described by the Commission in their following statement:

*The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) has granted **Accreditation-Continued** status to the **Rochester Institute of Technology Physician Assistant Program** sponsored by **Rochester Institute of Technology**. 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 **September 2027**. The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation Standards and ARC-PA policy.*

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 ten years, as well as complete 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years.

HOUSING EXPENSES

These costs vary according to the needs of individual students. Suitable living on-campus (resident halls, apartments, etc.) are generally available for average housing fees. Please refer to the RIT Undergraduate Bulletin and online at <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. PA students on clinical rotations (year 5) are considered full time students 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 \$2,000, 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 \$800 to \$1,300. This is a one-time only cost, and these items will be useful for many years to come in the clinical fields of medicine.

PA CLINICAL KNOWLEDGE RATING & ASSESSMENT TOOL (PACKRAT) EXAM

A written competency examination will be given to students in the fourth year 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/exam.

END OF ROTATION EXAMS™: A written exam will be given to students at the completion of each core rotation. The End of Rotation Exam™ is a computerized, standardized exam assessing medical knowledge of the student. The cost is currently \$35 per exam.

END OF CURRICULUM EXAM™: A written summative exam will be given to students as part of the Summative Evaluation. The End of Curriculum™ exam is a computerized, standardized exam assessing medical knowledge of the student. The cost is currently \$99 per exam.

PANCE BOARD REVIEW COURSE: A 3-day PANCE exam review course is arranged by the program and attendance is required. This course will provide a system-based approach review and over 1,000 practice board questions with a 100% guarantee. The cost is currently \$245.

CLINICAL AFFILIATE REGISTRATION/SUBSCRIPTION: Beginning May 2021, each senior student on clinical rotations will be required to pay ~ \$60 as a registration/subscription fee for the administrative services rendered by the clinical affiliate. This fee will cover the ten clinical rotations required.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

In accordance with various state laws and regulations, most of our clinical affiliates require PA students to undergo a criminal background check prior to beginning a clinical rotation. A PA student may not be allowed to participate in a clinical rotation (s), by the clinical affiliates, based on the results of a criminal background check. As a PA professional advances in his/her healthcare career, s/he can expect regular criminal background checks and credential verification as part of the participation, hiring, and employment process. The RIT PA Program requires that all PA students have an initial criminal background check prior to entering the professional phase of the program (year 3) and once again prior to the start of clinical rotations (end of year 4). The cost to each student for these screenings is \$170.00.

DRUG TESTING

In accordance with various state laws and regulations, some clinical affiliates may require PA students to undergo drug testing 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(s), by the clinical affiliates, based on the results of this drug testing. As a PA professional advances in his/her healthcare career, s/he can expect regular, random drug testing, and credential verification as part of the participation, hiring, and employment process.

BASIC AND ADVANCED CARDIAC LIFE SUPPORT (BLS)/(ACLS) CERTIFICATION

Students are required to have current CPR /ACLS certification prior to the start of clinical rotations in the fifth year. This training is arranged through the PA Program in conjunction with the American Heart Association and hospital affiliates. The cost for this certification is \$100-\$150.

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 \$ 300 – 400 depending on insurance coverage. Although the PA program cannot mandate that each student obtain the Hepatitis B vaccine, 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 upon health insurance coverage.

PA PROGRAM ADMISSIONS

The application fee for this program is \$ 65. Deadlines for completed applications:

Transfer applicants	December 1st for the following fall class.
Freshmen applicants (Early Decision I) class.	November 1st for the following fall class.
Freshmen applicants (Early Decision II)	January 1st for the following fall class.
Freshmen applicants (Regular Decision)	January 15th 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:

All candidates and students for the Physician Assistant (P.A.) 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, with or without accommodation, 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 P.A. education. Candidates must have motor function capabilities to meet the demands of P.A. education and the demands of total patient care. The candidate for the PA Program must possess the following capabilities and skills:

I. **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 communicate intelligibly, 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. 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 (with or without accommodation) 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, and 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 recognizes the responsibility to present candidates and students for the P.A. degree that 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 P.A. Program Interview Committee to select entering P.A. students who will be the candidates for the P.A. degree.

7/16

PA Program Mission

Rochester Institute of Technology's Physician Assistant Program provides a foundation of science and liberal arts; and prepares students to provide compassionate, patient-centered healthcare. The Program, is committed to developing the ethical values, medical knowledge, professionalism, and interpersonal communication skills essential for inter-professional, team-based, clinical practice.

PA Program Educational Goals

Medical Knowledge

Graduates will demonstrate core medical knowledge of established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and apply this knowledge to patient care.

Interpersonal & Communication Skills

Graduates will demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, families, physicians, and members of the healthcare team.

Patient Care

Graduates will provide effective, safe, high-quality, and equitable patient care in diverse settings across the life span.

Professionalism

Graduates will practice with integrity, ethical and legal responsibility, and sensitivity to diverse patient populations.

Practice-based Learning and Improvement

Graduates will critically analyze their practice experiences with Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) and quality assurance processes to improve patient care.

Systems-based Practice

Graduates will demonstrate awareness of and responsiveness to the healthcare system, while keeping the patient at the center of cost-effective, safe care.

(Adapted from the 2012 *Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession*,
written by the AAPA, ARC-PA, PAEA, and NCCPA)

11/2017

ALL INQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

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E-mail: llwscl@rit.eduWeb site: <http://www.rit.edu/healthsciences/graduate-programs/physician-assistant>**PA Program Faculty & Staff**

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