

# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES (CUW)

Concordia University Wisconsin offers a Physician Assistant Studies program. The program is based on a liberal arts foundation and encompasses twenty six months of professional education beyond a bachelor's degree.

## Mission Statement

The Physician Assistant program at CUW prepares students to become competent physician assistants who provide high quality health care in a respectful, culturally sensitive, caring and knowledgeable manner. CUW PA graduates are committed to caring for patients in mind, body and spirit with an emphasis on continual lifelong learning.

## Professional Accreditation

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) has granted Accreditation-Continued status to the Concordia University Wisconsin Physician Assistant Program sponsored by Concordia University Wisconsin. 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remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the Standards.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 2026.

The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation Standards and ARC-PA policy.

Information on accreditation is available at [www.arc-pa.org](http://www.arc-pa.org) (<http://www.arc-pa.org/>) or at: Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc., 12000 Findley Road, Suite 150, Johns Creek, GA 30097, (770) 476-1224.

## Credentials Awarded

Upon successful completion of the PA program, students will be awarded a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS) from Concordia University Wisconsin. The graduate is then eligible to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE). This examination is administered through the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). The program has received Accreditation-Continued until 2026, (See accreditation statement) which allows for the graduates of this program to sit for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE).

## Program Learning Outcomes

### 1. Medical Knowledge

- Identify etiology, epidemiology, and risk factors in evaluating medical conditions, including the signs and symptoms
- Select and interpret appropriate lab and diagnostic studies
- Given a chief complaint, establish a differential diagnosis and utilize historical information, PE findings, lab and diagnostic results to narrow that differential to a most likely diagnosis
- Manage common medical conditions, including pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic modalities

- Implement health promotion and disease prevention, including appropriate screening recommendations

### 2. Interpersonal & Communications Skills

- Interact professionally and effectively with patients, patient families, and members of the health care team
- Counsel all patients in a respectful and appropriate manner, following health literacy guidelines
- Participate in HIPAA training and follow HIPAA guidelines at all times

### 3. Patient Care

- Provide care that is effective, safe, high quality, and equitable
- Allocate resources appropriately to provide patient centered care
- Perform technical skills and procedures essential to primary care
- Provide education on health promotion and disease prevention

### 4. Professionalism

- Treat all people with respect, compassion, and dignity
- Accept accountability and admit errors, maintain self-awareness of limitations, and seek guidance and collaboration as needed
- Complete medical records thoroughly, honestly, and punctually
- Demonstrate regular attendance at conferences, active enhancement of medical knowledge, and a positive response to constructive criticism

### 5. Practice-based/Systems Based Learning and Improvement

- Apply scientific principles and evidence based medicine to medical conditions and patient care
- Balance resources and costs with risk/benefit analysis in patient care
- Work effectively in inter-professional teams to enhance patient safety and improve quality of care
- Participate in identifying systems errors and potential systems solutions
- Access legal and regulatory requirements of PA practice in whatever location that graduate is practicing

## Curriculum

Code	Title	Hours
PHAS 5500	Human Anatomy for Physician Assistants	6
PHAS 5505	Evidence Based Medicine	1
PHAS 5510	Physician Assistant Seminar I	1
PHAS 5540	Molecular Mechanisms	3
PHAS 5545	Public Health and Epidemiology	2
PHAS 5600	Neuroanatomy	2
PHAS 5605	Behavioral Medicine	2
PHAS 5610	Physician Assistant Seminar II	2
PHAS 5615	Clinical Skills I	1
PHAS 5620	Physical Assessment I	2
PHAS 5625	Clinical Medicine I	6
PHAS 5630	Pathophysiology and Pharmacology I	5
PHAS 5635	Medical Diagnostics I	3
PHAS 5700	Surgical Medicine	3
PHAS 5710	Physician Assistant Seminar III	2
PHAS 5715	Clinical Skills II	1

PHAS 5720	Physical Assessment II	2
PHAS 5725	Clinical Medicine II	6
PHAS 5730	Pathophysiology and Pharmacology II	5
PHAS 5735	Medical Diagnostics II	3
PHAS 5800	Introduction to Clinical Practice	3
PHAS 5815	Clinical Skills III	1
PHAS 5840	Emergency Medicine	4
PHAS 5845	Pediatrics	3
PHAS 5850	Obstetrics and Gynecology	2
PHAS 6500	Family Medicine Clinical Practicum I	4
PHAS 6505	Family Medicine Clinical Practicum II	4
PHAS 6510	Internal Medicine Clinical Practicum I	4
PHAS 6515	Internal Medicine Clinical Practicum II	4
PHAS 6520	Women's Health Clinical Practicum	4
PHAS 6525	Pediatric Medicine Clinical Practicum	4
PHAS 6530	Emergency Medicine Clinical Practicum	4
PHAS 6535	Surgical Medicine Clinical Practicum	4
PHAS 6540	Behavioral Medicine Clinical Practicum	4
PHAS 6545	Elective Clinical Practicum I	4
PHAS 6550	Elective Clinical Practicum II	4
PHAS 6610	Physician Assistant Seminar IV	2
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>117</b>

The program retains the right to make curricular changes as needed in order to provide the optimal education program.

**Advanced Placement:** Concordia University Wisconsin's Physician Assistant program does not accept advanced placement, transfer credit or experiential learning to matriculating students. All PA program courses must be completed at Concordia University in sequence.

**Employment:** The PA program strongly discourages working while attending the program. The PA program is an intensive didactic and clinical educational program that involves an average of at least 40 to 50 hours per week, in addition to study, laboratory, and other activities. Most students find they cannot be academically successful in the program if they attempt to work. During the clinical year, students are not allowed to work due to the number of hours required in the clinical setting which includes being on call. Students are not allowed to be substituted for staff at any time during their education.

## General Academic Information

The Concordia University Wisconsin PA Program is a full time 26 consecutive month curriculum. The didactic phase is held at the Mequon Campus and provides the foundation for the clinical year. Spanning the first 15 months of the program, the didactic phase consists of courses in the basic sciences and clinical/behavioral medicine. Areas of study include human anatomy with cadaver lab, physical examination and history taking, pharmacology, physiology/pathophysiology, clinical skills, and topics and issues related to the profession. The clinical portion of the program will be in urban, rural, and medically underserved settings throughout Wisconsin as well as possible out-of-state locations with physician, PA and Nurse Practitioners preceptors.

## Clinicals

The clinical phase of the curriculum is made up of rotations in family medicine, internal medicine, general surgery, women's health, behavioral medicine, pediatrics, emergency medicine and two electives. Rotations

are mainly located throughout Wisconsin. Students are responsible for their lodging, transportation, and meals. The Director of Clinical Education is responsible for deciding which clinical site the student will be assigned to for each rotation. The Director of Clinical Education places the student where they feel the best fit will occur based on the student's level of skill and knowledge.

## Entrance Requirements

Admission to the Physician Assistant program is competitive. Concordia University Wisconsin will admit one class of 30 full-time students in May of each academic year.

Candidates for admission must meet the following requirements:

- Baccalaureate Degree (*must be earned prior to matriculation from a regionally accredited university or college*).
- Minimum 3.2 cumulative GPA or higher, AND
- Minimum 3.2 prerequisite science GPA or higher
- Note: All prerequisite courses must be successfully completed with a grade of "C" or higher from a regionally accredited college or university.
- *All prerequisite science coursework must be completed at the time of application.*
- One non-science prerequisite course may be pending at the time of application, but must be completed prior to matriculation in the program.
- Labs must be taken on campus and not online.
- Classes that are audited are not accepted for prerequisite courses.
- Transcripts must be in English. If the transcripts are not in English, transcripts will need to be evaluated through the required service designated by CASPA (<https://caspa.liaisoncas.com/>)
- Please note, the deadline for application is for Verified applications. Submit your applications at least 4-6 weeks earlier than the deadline to allow time for verification of information in your application. Applicants must have completed all prerequisite courses prior to application date. At the time of application there may not be any prerequisite science courses pending or in progress.
- Documentation of 500 hours of patient care experience. Examples of patient care experience include but is not limited to: nursing, CNA, ER tech, EMT/paramedic
- Complete a minimum of 24 hour minimum shadowing of a Physician Assistant.
  - Shadowing must be completed and documented to the program either via email if the CASPA (<https://caspa.liaisoncas.com/>) application has been submitted or on the CASPA (<https://caspa.liaisoncas.com/>) application by September 1.
  - The program does not find or suggest sites for applicants to complete the shadowing requirement.
- Letters of Reference are required as part of the application process:
  - One letter of reference must be from a PA, and should speak to your understanding of the role of a PA.
  - One letter of reference must be from an employer/supervisor of your patient care experience, and should speak to your interaction and care of patients.
  - At least one more letter (may be more than one) can be professional in nature, academic in nature, or a character reference.

- Applicant must be able to perform the Technical Standards for Physician Assistants

## Prerequisites

- General Chemistry - Two semesters of sequenced courses with labs
- Organic Chemistry- One semester with lab
- Biochemistry - One semester with or without lab
- Microbiology - One semester with lab
- Human Anatomy & Physiology - Two semesters with lab
  - May be separate Anatomy (with lab) and Physiology courses
  - OR may be combined A&P I and II courses including labs.
  - Anatomy must be with lab and done on-campus, not online
- Biology - Two semesters with lab
- Genetics - One semester with or without lab
- Psychology - One semester
- Statistics - One semester
- College algebra or higher - One semester
- Medical Terminology - One semester

## Highly recommended courses

- Nutrition
- Pharmacology
- Immunology
- Additional Psychology classes

## Additionally

- A & P and Medical Terminology are *recommended* within five years of applying to the program.
- No advanced placement or transfer credit is granted if transferring from another PA or graduate program.
- No course credit is given for experiential learning.
- As a potential candidate, the admissions committee will look at the following for acceptance into the program:
  - Cumulative and prerequisite science GPA
  - Reference letters
  - Personal statement
  - Interview evaluation report
  - Applicant's desire to become a PA
  - Evidence of academic potential, motivation, personal maturity, self-assurance, and good interpersonal skills
  - Healthcare experience
  - Volunteerism, service to others

Questions about specific prerequisites courses should be directed to the Graduate Admission Office.

A felony conviction may affect a graduate's ability to attain state licensure or placed on clinical rotations.

## Technical Standards for Admissions and Retention

The Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW) has specific technical standards that apply to all candidates for admission and those who are selected to enter the program. Students selected to enter the program must have the capacity to complete the entire course curriculum to achieve the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies degree.

Some accommodations may be able to be made for some disabilities in some of these areas, but the Physician Assistant's (PA) role in the

provision of health care requires that he or she be able to perform in an independent manner that does not compromise patient care.

In order to perform the functions required of a physician assistant in a variety of clinical situations and render competent patient care stipulated by the faculty, accreditation agencies, and the standards of practice as a PA, candidates/students for the program must meet the following technical standards:

1. **Observation:** Students must be able to observe demonstrations, visual presentations, lectures, and laboratory studies in the basic medical and clinical settings. The candidate must be able to accurately observe a patient both close and at a distance; this requires functional use of vision, sensation, and smell. Adequate visual capabilities are necessary for proper evaluation and treatment integration, including the assessment of symmetry, range of motion, and tissue texture changes.
2. **Communication:** Students must be able to speak, hear, and observe patients to gather pertinent data, describe their observations (including activity and function, mood, and posture) and be able to perceive nonverbal communications. Students must be able to effectively communicate with patients, families, faculty, and colleagues from different cultural backgrounds in oral, written, computer and telephonic formats.
3. **Motor and Sensory:** Students must have gross and fine motor function and coordination in order to auscultate, palpate, and percuss as well as the ability to use appropriate diagnostic techniques and instruments to provide routine and emergent medical care and common diagnostic procedures such as, but not limited to performance of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, advanced cardiac life support, administering intravenous medications, suturing of simple and complex wounds, treatment of respiratory distress or bleeding, routine obstetric and gynecologic care, as well as assisting in surgery. Students should have adequate sensory skills, including tactile sensory and proprioceptive capability. Students must be able to transport themselves from one location to another in a timely fashion in order to facilitate patient care responsibilities and to receive educational training. Strength, mobility and endurance: Students must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads.
4. **Cognitive, Integrative, and Quantitative Skill:** Students must exhibit skills in problem solving, and critical thinking, measurement, calculation, and comprehension of three dimensional relationships consistent with medical practice. Students must be able to assimilate and learn large amounts of complex, technically detailed information in the form of lectures, discussions, videos, handouts, and clinical exam demonstrations and to synthesize and apply concepts arising from it to create diagnostic and therapeutic plans.
5. **Behavioral and Social Skills:** Students must possess sufficient emotional health to allow them to optimally utilize intellectual, cognitive, and reasoning judgment required of medical professionals and be able to quickly complete all duties and responsibilities commensurate with effective diagnosis and treatment of patients of all ages. Students must be able to demonstrate empathy, sensitivity, and the ability to quickly establish rapport with patients, exhibiting adequate interpersonal communication skills, compassion, concern for others, honesty, and integrity. Students must be able to tolerate physically demanding workloads (which may involve nights, weekends, and on call), noisy environments, and long hours. Students need to be able to maintain composure and emotional stability in challenging and stressful, changing circumstances and to deal effectively with uncertain, possibly emotionally charged situations. Students must be able to accept constructive criticism

and respond via appropriate behavior modification. Students must be able to complete all assignments and activities as assigned by the program. Students must be able to attend all classes, labs, examinations, and rotations on time and act in a professional manner.

6. **Zoom Lectures/Meetings/Presentations:** Standards for joining a video meeting/lecture/presentation via Zoom ensures all students are conveying professionalism. The following details must be met during each Zoom event:
- Students must be able to participate, and actively engage, in on-line learning experiences.
  - Cameras must be kept on at all times. If you need to turn your camera off, please direct message the faculty hosting the event.
  - Audio should be muted, unless otherwise indicated.
  - Be aware of the environment you are in. What is visible in the background should be appropriate and professional.
  - Display your first and last name to your Zoom frame.

The PA program at Concordia University Wisconsin has the freedom and ultimate responsibility for selection and evaluation of students, design, implementation and evaluation of curriculum, and determination of who will be awarded a degree and certificate of completion. Admission, retention, program completion, and graduation decisions are made based on satisfactory academic and clinical performance and upon nonacademic, behavioral factors which serve to ensure overall success in the PA profession.

Candidates for admission to the Concordia University Wisconsin's PA program will be required, if admitted, to certify in writing that they understand and meet the above technical standards. Candidates who feel that they may not or cannot meet these technical standards will need to contact the Academic Resource Center (ARC) in Luther 200 to see if reasonable accommodations as determined by the ARC and their disability policies can be made. <https://www.cuw.edu/academics/services/student-academic-resources/academic-resource-center/academic-services/index.html> (<https://www.cuw.edu/academics/services/student-academic-resources/academic-resource-center/academic-services/>)

Concordia University will attempt, to the best of its ability, to develop mechanisms by which otherwise qualified candidates for admission can be accommodated; however, the integrity of the curriculum and the need to provide optimal patient care must be maintained in order to ensure that all parts of PA education are delivered to all students.

## Admission Policy for Students/Alumni of Concordia University System & St. Norbert College

Current students and alumni of Concordia University system schools and current students and alumni of St. Norbert College will be guaranteed up to three interview opportunities for the PA program if they meet the following requirements: have a verified CASPA application by the deadline, have a cumulative GPA AND prerequisite science GPA of 3.4, and have completed all of the additional required entrance requirements.

## Application Process

Admission to the Physician Assistant program is competitive. Concordia University Wisconsin will admit one class of 30 full-time students in May of each academic year.

The Physician Assistant Studies Program at Concordia University of Wisconsin participates in the Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). Applicants for the Master of Physician

Assistant Studies program should apply online using the CASPA application. To learn more about the CASPA Application process, visit the <http://portal.caspaonline.org> CASPA website.

In addition to the online application, please submit:

- **Personal Statement:** Your personal statement will be completed as part of the CASPA application, and should speak to your desire to pursue a career as a Physician Assistant.
- **Letters of Reference:** Three letters of reference are required as part of the application process. One letter of reference must be from a PA with whom you have shadowed, and should speak to your understanding of the role of a PA. One letter of reference must be from an employer/supervisor of your patient care experience, and should speak to your interaction and care of patients. At least one more letter (may be more than one) can be professional, academic, or a character reference.
- **Official Transcripts:** Submit official transcripts from all previously attended universities directly to CASPA. Students with international transcripts must have them evaluated by a foreign transcript evaluation service, and the official scores must be submitted directly from the evaluation service to CASPA.
- **Patient Care & Shadowing:** Complete a minimum of 500 hours of patient care experience and a minimum of 24 hours of job shadowing.
- Graduate entrance exams such as the GRE are not required
- The TOEFL iBT® exam will be required unless the applicant is a graduate of a United States college or university. The minimum required score for the TOEFL iBT® is 100.

All parts of the completed application are given consideration. The admissions committee also evaluates the applicant's desire to become a physician assistant, evidence of academic potential, motivation, personal maturity, self-assurance, good interpersonal skills, and when applicable, the interview evaluation report.

At this time we are unable to enroll F-1 international students in the Physician Assistant Program.

## Anti-Discrimination Policy

As a matter of policy, Concordia University admits students of any age, race, color, gender, and national and ethnic origin. Admitted students enjoy the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally offered to all Concordia students. Further, Concordia University does not discriminate according to age, race, color, gender, and national and ethnic origin in administering admissions and educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

## Applicant Interviews

Completed and verified applications undergo preliminary evaluation as they are received to make sure the minimum entrance requirements are met. After the admission deadline, qualified applicants will be reviewed by committee members and select candidates will be chosen to attend a campus interview.

An on-campus interview will give the applicant an opportunity to learn more about Concordia University Wisconsin's PA program and will give the program faculty an opportunity to meet and talk with the applicant.

During the interview process, the curriculum, program expectations as well as other information will be discussed. Interviews take place with at least two faculty members. After completion of the interview, the

PA program admissions committee reviews each applicant and a final decision is made.

Applicants who have been selected to come in for an interview who still need to complete a non-science prerequisite will have to provide documentation when they will be taking the prerequisite course and that they will be able to complete the coursework prior to matriculation if accepted into the program.

Applicants who have been selected to enroll in the program after the interview process who still need to complete prerequisite coursework and/or their Bachelor's degree will be conditionally accepted into the program. Those applicants who do not successfully pass prerequisite courses with a grade of "C" or higher, (a grade of C - is not allowed), do not complete all prerequisite courses, or do not complete their Bachelor's degree prior to the first day of class, will not be allowed to matriculate into the program. Being offered an opportunity to interview for a seat in the program, does not guarantee admission or acceptance to enroll.

## **Background Checks**

All students accepted into the PA program will be required to have and pass a background check prior to being fully accepted into the program.

## **Cost**

Students pay a semester-based tuition, for seven semesters, which is posted on the Concordia University Wisconsin website. Winterim sessions are included at no additional charge. Housing and transportation expenses are not included in tuition and fees. Additional program specific fees and equipment costs will be associated with the program.

During the clinical rotation portion of the curriculum, students may be required to leave the Milwaukee area. It is difficult to estimate these expenses, as it cannot be predetermined where the students will complete their clinical internships. Additionally, during the academic work, students will need to have transportation available to come to and leave campus for lectures, labs, and clinical experiences.

Concordia University Wisconsin student liability insurance is included in the tuition.

## **Financial Aid**

Federal student loans are available to graduate students seeking degrees who are US citizens or permanent residents. Students may apply online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) (<http://www.fafsa.gov>). Concordia's school code is 003842. Students are eligible for Federal Student loans and Graduate PLUS loans to cover the cost of tuition, books, fees, transportation, and living expenses.