

Rush University

PA Program

**Prospective Student
Information Packet**



2026-2027 Application Cycle

The Rush University PA Program:

The Rush University PA Program is a rigorous full-time program that prepares students for careers as PAs. Graduates are awarded a Master of Science (MS) in Physician Assistant (PA) Studies degree.

Our 30-month curriculum is innovative and distinctive, featuring an extended clinical phase that provides additional clinical training and patient care experiences. The association with Rush University Medical Center offers extensive resources and diverse clinical settings to provide students with an excellent and comprehensive educational experience.

The program admits one class of 32 students per year. Attendance in the program is on a full-time basis only.

Program Curriculum:

• Didactic Phase (12 months):

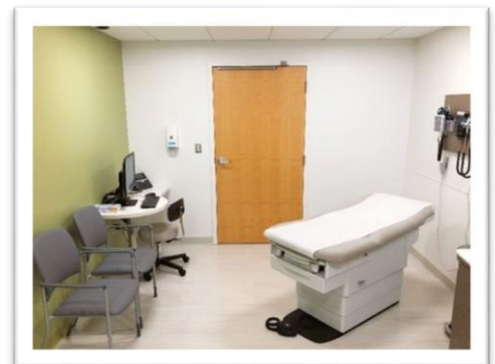
- The first year of the curriculum integrates lectures, case-based discussions, and hands-on skills laboratory training to build the foundational medical knowledge and clinical skills necessary for patient care and clinical rotations.
- All in-person didactic coursework occurs at Rush University's Armour Academic Center. We do not have a distant campus.

• Clinical Phase (18 months):

- Students complete 12 months of core clinical rotations, followed by 6 months of advanced rotations that allow for focused training within a specific area of clinical practice.
- Current advanced training opportunities include internal medicine, primary care, general surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, critical care medicine, cardiothoracic vascular surgery, orthopedic surgery, emergency medicine, pediatrics, behavioral health, and physical medicine and rehabilitation.
 - *Availability of advanced rotations may vary and is dependent on clinical site capacity and preceptor availability. Toward the midpoint of the second year, students rank their top areas of interest for advanced rotations, and placements are determined through a program-led matching process that considers student preferences, program standing, and clinical site availability. Placement in a specific specialty is not guaranteed.*
- Clinical rotations take place up to 90 minutes or 90 miles from Rush University's Armour Academic Center.

Program Highlights:

- Faculty with diverse clinical practice backgrounds and health care leadership experience across a wide range of specialties
- Direct engagement with an academic medical center, including lectures by practicing clinicians, access to Grand Rounds, Lunch & Learn sessions, and other interdisciplinary educational events
- Collaborative learning hub (CLUB) classrooms
- Human cadaver dissection laboratory
- High-fidelity medical simulation curriculum
- In-house standardize patient (SP) center
- Point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) training
- Small group hands-on procedural skills training
- Interprofessional education coursework and rotation experiences

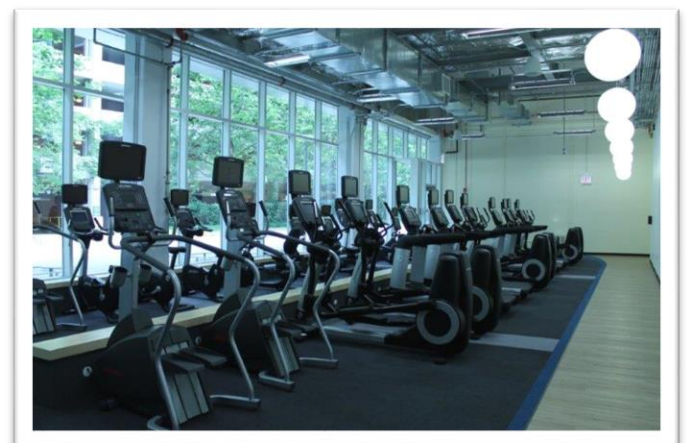
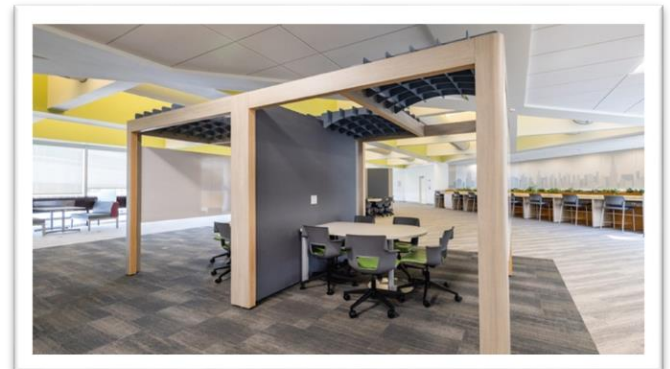


- Professional advocacy exposure, including discussions of PA practice issues and an Advocacy/Lobby Day at the state capitol
- Service and community engagement opportunities, including international global health trips
- Student leadership opportunities through program, university and college organizations
- Medical Challenge Bowl Team – State and National Competition
- PA Peer Mentorship Program (“Big Sib”)
- Dedicated faculty advising



Student Resources and Services:

- [Center for Academic Excellence](#)
 - Provides academic coaching (study skills, test-taking, time management), writing, mathematics and stats support, to help students succeed in rigorous coursework
- Rush University Cultural Center
 - A welcoming space for students to explore diverse identities, build community, and engage in educational, social, and cultural experiences that enrich their experience
- [Rush University Library](#)
 - Access to extensive electronic journals, databases, research support
 - 24/7 study spaces – silent and collaborative
 - Online study room reservations
- [Rush Center for Clinical Wellness](#)
 - Confidential counseling, wellness coaching, and mental health support services for students
- [Office of Student Accessibility Services](#)
 - Coordinates accommodations, support services, and resources for students with disabilities to ensure equitable access to coursework and clinical experiences
- [Rush Community Service Initiatives Program \(RCSIP\)](#)
 - Opportunities for students to participate in health care and non-health care service projects within Rush and the surrounding community
- [Financial Aid and Wellness Counseling](#)
 - Support and guidance for navigating financial aid and loans
- Rush Health and Fitness Center
 - Fitness studio, cardio, strength training and stretching areas, and men’s and women’s locker rooms with shower



The PA Program's Mission, Vision, and Goals Statements:

Mission Statement

The Rush University PA Program mission is to prepare qualified PAs to practice patient-centered, evidence-based medicine with competence and professionalism driven by academic excellence and service to diverse communities.

Program Vision

The Rush PA program strives to be a national leader in educating exceptionally qualified PAs in clinical and professional practice.

Goals

The goals of the Rush PA program are as follows:

1. Matriculate and retain cohorts with competitive academic and clinical admission qualifications.
2. Deliver a curriculum that produces cohorts with nationally distinguished board exam outcomes.
3. Prepare students to work collaboratively in interprofessional health care teams.
4. Demonstrate student engagement in service to the institution and community.

In addition to maintaining these values, the PA Program is committed to fulfilling the mission, vision, and values of the College of Health Sciences and Rush University Medical Center.



University & PA Program Accreditation:

Rush University Accreditation Status

Rush University received its initial accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (formerly the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education) in 1974. In its accreditation review, the HLC assesses institutions' academic quality and educational effectiveness, emphasizing institutional structures, processes, and resources.

Rush University's most recent accreditation review was in 2019 and received continuing accreditation status through 2029.

Rush University PA Program Accreditation Status

All PA programs are accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). Additionally, all Illinois PA programs must maintain approval from the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) to enroll students.

The IBHE approved the Rush University College of Health Sciences Master of Science in Physician Assistant in October 2009.

At its **March 2024** meeting, the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) placed the **Rush University Physician Assistant Program** sponsored by **Rush University** on **Accreditation-Probation** status until its next review in **April 2026**. *The Program anticipates an update by June 2026.*

Probation accreditation is a temporary accreditation status initially of not less than two years. However, that period may be extended by the ARC-PA for up to an additional two years if the ARC-PA finds that the program is making substantial progress toward meeting all applicable standards but requires additional time to come into full compliance. Probation accreditation status is granted, at the sole discretion of the ARC-PA, when a program holding an accreditation status of Accreditation - Provisional or Accreditation - Continued does not, in the judgment of the ARC-PA, meet the *Standards* or when the capability of the program to provide an acceptable educational experience for its students is threatened.

Once placed on probation, a program that fails to comply with accreditation requirements in a timely manner, as specified by the ARC-PA, may be scheduled for a focused site visit and is subject to having its accreditation withdrawn.

Specific questions regarding the Program and its plans should be directed to the Program Director and/or the appropriate institutional official(s).

The program's accreditation history can be viewed on the ARC-PA website at <https://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation-history-Rush-university/>.

2026-2027 Estimated Total Cost of Attendance:

The following information is intended to help prospective students estimate their total cost of attendance. The Cost of Attendance (COA) is determined by combining direct expenses, which are directly billed to students by Rush University, and estimated indirect cost-of-living expenses that students will incur. The COA reflects the maximum amount of financial aid students can receive in a given academic year during their enrollment at Rush University.

Direct Expenses

The direct expenses for attending Rush University include tuition and insurance. All charges are divided between the eight semesters of the program. Tuition is subject to annual changes. Check with the program or the Office of Financial Aid for projected tuition rate changes.

Students are required to participate in the school's student health insurance program unless they have a comparable plan that covers them and have received approval for a waiver from the Rush Student Business Office. If there are any questions related to student health insurance, contact SBO@rush.edu.

Estimated Indirect Cost of Living Expenses

Costs of living are the estimated expenses that students will incur during enrollment that are not paid directly to Rush University. These costs include items such as housing expenses, food, and transportation to campus and SCPE sites. They are determined based on analysis of sample data from the Chicago area.

Tuition is billed directly to the student's account by the University. Actual expenses will vary depending on individual circumstances, so students are encouraged to assess their own anticipated costs while enrolled and budget accordingly. Please note that federal student loans are not available during periods when students are not enrolled (for example, when on a leave of absence).

All categories included as part of the financial aid cost of attendance are increased annually by a standard cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase. The exact amount can vary depending on the publication of the COLA increase by the Social Security Administration.

The table below summarizes the direct and estimated indirect costs of living for attending the PA Program at Rush University. Unless otherwise noted as uncovered, enrolled students can expect the listed amounts to be applied towards their financial aid loan amounts.

Estimated Total Cost of Attendance for the “Typical Student”: \$253,091.74

Note: The typical student may complete one out of state elective, which is included in this overall total cost. Refer to the breakdown below.

Category	Term 1 Summer	Terms 2 through 4 Fall, Spring, Summer	Terms 5 through 7 Fall, Spring, Summer	Term 8 Fall	Total
Direct Expenses Cost					
Tuition	\$14,151	\$42,453	\$42,453	\$14,151	\$113,208
Student Health Insurance*	\$2,330	\$6,990	\$6,990	\$2,330	\$18,640
<i>*Health insurance is a mandatory fee, but students can request to waive the insurance upon proof that they have a comparable private insurance plan.</i>					

Indirect Cost of Living (See table below for Away Rotation Cost)					
Living allowance - includes food and housing	\$7,896	\$23,688	\$23,688	\$7,896	\$63,168
Books, Supplies, and Equipment	\$565	\$1,695	\$1,572	\$0	\$3,832
Miscellaneous	\$2,824	\$8,472	\$8,472	\$2,824	\$22,592
General Transportation	\$2,224	\$4,448	\$2,224	\$2,224	\$11,120
Transportation to Clinical Rotations	\$0	\$2,610	\$5,220	\$2,610	\$10,440
Federal Loan Fees	\$528	\$1,584	\$1,584	\$528	\$4,224

Out-of-pocket expenses (Not eligible for financial aid coverage)					
Onboarding fees, Annual drug test, annual TB test	\$161.74	\$103.00	\$103.00	\$0	\$367.74
PANCE Registration	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$550.00	\$550.00

Category	Terms 5 through 8 Fall, Spring, Summer, Fall
Travel / Lodging for Away Rotations	
Housing Cost*	\$2,857
Transportation (Flight)	\$355
Transportation (To/from site location)**	\$1,740
Total	\$4,952

**This is the average cost for a 1-bedroom queen bed Airbnb for one single away rotation.*

***Average cost for 10 miles round trip for one month at the 2026 IRS mileage rate.*

CTA UPASS: All students receive a UPASS each term upon enrollment in the program, until graduation. The total cost for CTA UPASS enrollment is \$1,680, and is paid for by the College of Health Sciences.

A \$50.00 non-waivable fee will apply anytime a student requires a replacement UPASS.

****Please note that these cost estimates are based on the current academic year and may change before the next year's matriculation.**

Students can also request additional funding for personal expenses such as the purchase of computer technology, unexpected medical expenses, and dependent care expenses through the Office of Student Financial Aid. Those exact costs may vary by student, and not all students request these funds.

For information regarding general financial aid options, contact the Office of Financial Aid at: financial_aid@rush.edu or (312) 942-6256.

For details regarding the cost of attendance, please visit the Office of Financial Aid's Cost of Attendance website, available [here](#).

PA Program Scholarships:

The College of Health Sciences and the PA Program provide scholarships to first-year PA students annually. Awards include application-based scholarships, for which students apply, and program-awarded scholarships, which are determined by the program based on established selection criteria. Applications for the application-based scholarships are submitted prior to matriculation, and award decisions for all scholarships are made during the summer term. Students are encouraged to apply for both the CHS Leadership Scholarship and the Grainger Foundation PA Scholarship, as interested. The application-based scholarship cycle opens April 1st with a deadline of April 30th each year.

PA Program Scholarship (Program Awarded) – Merit and need based scholarships intended to help offset the cost of tuition. Recipients are selected through an internal scoring process that evaluates both merit, based on standardized program defined criteria, and demonstrated financial need, as determined in collaboration with the Office of Financial Aid. Approximately \$150,000 is awarded annually and divided among selected students. All incoming students are automatically considered.

CHS Leadership Scholarship (Application-Based) – The College of Health Sciences (CHS) Leadership Scholarship is a competitive, application-based award that recognizes incoming students who demonstrate strong leadership experience and a commitment to continued leadership development throughout the program and in their professional career. The total scholarship funding available each year is equivalent to the cost of one full program tuition and is divided among the selected recipients. All incoming students are eligible to apply. Selection is conducted through a blinded review process.

Grainger Foundation PA Scholarship (Application-Based) – The Grainger Foundation PA Scholarship is a competitive, application-based award that promotes the development, implementation, and evaluation of a community service project aimed at supporting an underrepresented or underserved community in the Chicago area. Up to two incoming students are selected each year to receive \$40,000 toward the cost of attendance. All incoming students are eligible to apply. Previous leadership or community service experience is not required, although prior experience is beneficial. Selection is conducted through a blinded review process.

For questions, contact PA_Admissions@rush.edu.

Performance – Board Exam “PANCE”:

The program’s overall first-time taker PANCE pass rate is 97.4% and the overall PANCE pass rate is 100%. The national average for first-time taker PANCE pass rate is 92%. Please see our five-year summary below:

Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination Exam Performance Summary Report

Program Name: Rush University

Program Number: 6016

Test Taker Status: All Test Takers

Definitions of the report headings are provided at the end of the report.
All information is current as of the date the report was generated unless otherwise specified.

Class	Class Graduation Year	Group	Number of Candidates Who Took PANCE	Number of Exam Attempts	Number of Exams Passed	Program Exam Pass Rate	National Exam Pass Rate for the Class Graduation Year	% of Candidates Who Ultimately Passed PANCE
Class 2021	2021	All Takers	30	30	30	100%	91%	100%
		First Time Takers	30	30	30	100%	93%	100%
Class 2022	2022	All Takers	24	26	24	92%	89%	100%
		First Time Takers	24	24	22	92%	92%	100%
Class 2023	2023	All Takers	30	30	30	100%	89%	100%
		First Time Takers	30	30	30	100%	92%	100%
Class 2024	2024	All Takers	32	34	32	94%	89%	100%
		First Time Takers	32	32	30	94%	92%	100%
Class 2025	2025	All Takers	27	29	27	93%	88%	100%
		First Time Takers	27	27	25	93%	91%	100%

**At the time of publication, one member of the Class of 2025 had yet to take the PANCE.*

Graduation & Attrition Rates:

Data Points	Graduated Classes		
	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
Maximum entering class size (as approved by ARC-PA)	40	40	40
Entering class size	32	32	32
Graduates	30	32	28
*Attrition rate	6.25%	0%	12.5%
**Graduation rate	93.4%	100%	87.5%

Performance on Goals:

The Rush PA Program reviews its goals annually to ensure they align with the University, College, and Program's Mission and Vision. The program revised its goals in 2026. As part of ongoing assessment of the program, the program assesses its performance on each goal using the outcomes and benchmarks listed below.

Goal #1: Matriculate and retain cohorts with competitive academic and clinical admission qualifications.

Outcome #1 - Competitive academic qualifications: Class Average, Total GPA

- **Benchmarks:**
 - Minimum: Total GPA ≥ 3.3
 - Strength: Total GPA ≥ 3.5 , sustained over 3 years

- **Results:**

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
3.52	3.50	3.51	3.57
<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met Strength</i>

Outcome #2 - Competitive academic qualifications: Class Average, Science GPA

- **Benchmarks:**
 - Minimum: Science GPA ≥ 3.3
 - Strength: Total Science ≥ 3.5 , sustained over 3 years

- **Results:**

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
3.36	3.38	3.41	3.50
<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>

Outcome #3 - Competitive clinical admission data: Class average, Health care experience hours (HCE)

- **Benchmarks:**
 - Minimum: $\geq 1,500$
 - Strength: $\geq 2,500$ sustained over 3 years
- **Results:**

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
4837	5043	5159	2761
<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met Strength</i>

Outcome #4- Competitive clinical admission data: Graduation Rate

- **Benchmarks:**
 - Minimum: Meet or exceed the national graduation rate (Most recently, 94%)
 - Strength: Meet or exceed the national graduation rate by $\geq 2\%$ ($\geq 96\%$), sustained over 3 years
- **Results:**

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
80% (24/30)	100% (29/29)	100% (32/32)	88% (28/32)
<i>Goal Not Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Not Met</i>

Goal #2: Deliver a curriculum that produces cohorts with nationally distinguished board exam outcomes.

Outcome #1 - Cohort first-time board pass rate at or above the national average.

- **Benchmarks:**
 - Minimum: Meet or exceed the national average
 - Strength: Exceed the national average by $\geq 2\%$ sustained over 3 years
- **Results:**

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
National avg: 92% Class avg: 92%	National avg: 92% Class avg: 100%	National avg: 92% Class avg: 94%	National avg: 91% Class avg: 93% (at the time of publication)
<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met (at the time of publication) Strength</i>

Goal #3: Prepare students to work collaboratively in interprofessional health care teams.

Outcome #1 - Class average for *collaborates effectively with the health care team* on final preceptor evaluation in program; final two rotations.

- **Benchmarks:**
 - Minimum: A class average of ≥ 3
 - Strength: A class average ≥ 4 , sustained over 3 years

- **Results:**

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
4.70	4.84	4.86	4.96
<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met Strength</i>

Outcome #2 - Class average for collaboration as a member of an interprofessional health care team on end of program survey.

- **Benchmarks:**
 - Minimum: A class average of ≥ 4
 - Strength: A class average ≥ 4.5 , sustained over 3 years

- **Results:**

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
N/A	N/A	N/A	4.70
N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Goal Met</i>

Goal #4: Demonstrate student engagement in service to the institution and community.

Outcome #1 – Cohort percentage over service hour minimum.

- **Benchmarks:**
 - Minimum: Cohorts exceeds by $\geq 10\%$
 - Strength: Cohorts exceeds by $\geq 20\%$, sustained over 3 years

- **Results:**

Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
39.32% (+308.25h)	72.59% (+792.5h)	21.67% (+249.75h)	53.1% (+554.2h)
<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met</i>	<i>Goal Met Strength</i>

Terminal Program Competencies:

ARC-PA Standards A2.05, B1.01, B4.03 2026-2027

This document outlines the terminal program competencies that all students in the Rush University PA Program must achieve to graduate. The didactic and clinical curriculum prepares students to attain entry-level knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors across five core domains: medical knowledge, interpersonal skills, clinical and technical skills, professional behaviors, and clinical reasoning and problem-solving.

Program learning outcomes support the development and assessment of these competencies. Students must demonstrate attainment of all competencies during the final four months of the program through the summative evaluation process. Refer to the Summative Evaluation section of the PA Program Handbook for detailed performance expectations. Students should refer to the End of Curriculum Content Area List and the NCCPA PANCE Blueprint for the comprehensive list of common conditions and be familiar with the laboratory and diagnostic studies associated with each.

1. Medical Knowledge

- 1.1. Demonstrate knowledge of scientific concepts in medicine.
- 1.2. Outline the signs, symptoms, and physical examination findings for common conditions.
- 1.3. Recognize the indications, contraindications, complications, normal and abnormal findings for laboratory and diagnostic studies.

2. Clinical Reasoning and Problem-Solving Abilities

- 2.1. Devise a differential and identify the most likely diagnosis based on age, clinical presentation, laboratory, and diagnostic studies.
- 2.2. Develop management plans for acute, chronic, and emergent conditions, incorporating appropriate:
 - a) Clinical interventions
 - b) Clinical therapeutics
- 2.3. Determine appropriate preventative health care plans.
- 2.4. Apply evidence-based knowledge in the delivery of patient care.

3. Clinical and Technical Skills

- 3.1. Obtain an appropriate history based on age and clinical presentation.
- 3.2. Perform an appropriate physical examination based on age and clinical presentation.
- 3.3. Order and interpret laboratory and diagnostic studies.
- 3.4. Document patient encounters in the medical record.
- 3.5. Provide pertinent patient education and counseling.
- 3.6. Demonstrate effective interpersonal and communication skills during patient interactions.
- 3.7. Perform the designated technical skills accurately and safely.
 - a) Chest compressions
 - b) Basic airway management
 - c) Basic suturing
 - d) Injections
 - e) Incision and drainage

4. Professional Behaviors and Interpersonal Skills

- 4.1. Exhibit professional behaviors and interpersonal skills across the following areas:
 - a) Communication
 - b) Appearance and Demeanor
 - c) Dependability and Engagement
 - d) Self-Awareness and Accountability
 - e) Honesty and Ethics
 - f) Teamwork and Collaboration
- 4.2. Demonstrate knowledge of professional and legal responsibilities in PA practice.

PA Program Technical Standards:

Rush University is committed to diversity and to attracting and educating students who will make the population of health care professionals representative of the national population.

Our core values — ICARE — Innovation, Collaboration, Accountability, Respect and Excellence, translate into our work with all students, including those with disabilities. Rush actively collaborates with students to develop innovative ways to ensure accessibility and creates a respectful accountable culture through our confidential and specialized disability support. Rush is committed to excellence in accessibility; we encourage students with disabilities to disclose and seek accommodations.

The following technical functions are required of all students enrolled in the PA Program.

Acquire Information:

- Acquire information from demonstrations and experiences in courses such as lecture, group, and physical demonstrations.
- Acquire information from written documents and computer systems (e.g., literature searches & data retrieval).
- Identify information presented in accessible images from paper, slides, videos with audio description, and transparencies.
- Identify information presented in images from paper, slides, videos, and transparencies.
- Recognize and assess patient changes in mood, activity, cognition, verbal, and non-verbal communication.

Use and Interpret:

- Use and interpret information from assessment techniques/maneuvers.
- Use and interpret information related to physiologic phenomena generated from diagnostic tools.

Motor:

- Possess psychomotor skills necessary to provide or assist in holistic PA care and perform or assist with procedures and treatments.
- Practice in a safe manner and appropriately provide PA care and assessment in emergencies and life support procedures and perform universal precautions against contamination.

Communication:

- Communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and families.
- Communicate effectively with faculty, preceptors, and all members of the health care team during practicum and other learning experiences.
- Accurately elicit information including a medical history and other information to adequately and effectively evaluate a population's, client's or patient's condition

Intellectual Ability:

- Measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize data related to diagnosis and treatment of patients and populations.
- Exercise proper judgment and complete responsibilities in a timely and accurate manner according to the "program name" role.
- Synthesize information, problem solve, and think critically to judge the most appropriate theory, assessment, or treatment strategy.

Behavioral:

- Maintain mature, sensitive, effective relationships with clients/patients, families, students, faculty, staff, preceptors and other professionals under all circumstances.
- Exercise skills of diplomacy to advocate for patients in need.
- Possess emotional stability to function under stress and adapt to rapidly changing environments inherent to the classroom and practice settings.

Character:

- Demonstrate concern for others, integrity, accountability, interest, and motivation are necessary personal qualities.
- Demonstrate intent and desire to follow the Rush University and PA Code of Ethics.

All students in the PA Program must meet the technical standards delineated above, with or without accommodation.

Upon reviewing the technical standards, a student who needs accommodation(s) to engage in the program, should contact the Office of Student Disability Services for assistance. All communications with the Office of Student Disability Services are confidential.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services may be reached at: <https://www.rushu.rush.edu/office-student-accessibility-services>.

Given the clinical nature of our programs, time may be needed to implement accommodations. Accommodations are never retroactive; therefore, timely requests are essential and encouraged

Immunization, Health Screening and Onboarding Requirements:

Immunizations:

Rush University and the PA Program adhere to the CDC and State of Illinois standards on vaccinations for health care workers. Information on the CDC guidelines are available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/imz-schedules/adult-age.html>. The State of Illinois guidelines are available here: <https://dph.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idph/documents/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/respiratory-disease/adult-combined-schedule-08072025.pdf>.

The required immunizations are due two weeks prior to the first day of orientation:

<u>Required</u>	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Not Required</u>	
1. Influenza, inactivated (every year) 2. Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (every 10 years) 3. Measles, Mumps, Rubella 4. Varicella 5. Hepatitis B 6. Meningococcal Serogroup ACWY	1. COVID-19* <i>*Not required by Rush University but required by some of the PA Program's clinical rotation sites.</i>	1. Influenza, live attenuated 2. Respiratory Syncytial Virus 3. Recombinant Zoster 4. Human Papillomavirus 5. Pneumococcal	6. Hepatitis A 7. Meningococcal 8. Serogroup B 9. Haemophilus influenzae type b 10. Mpox 11. Inactivated Poliovirus Vaccine

In addition to the required immunization schedule, students must submit documented proof of immunity, *as demonstrated by serologic titers*, for the following:

- Hepatitis B
- Measles (Rubeola), Mumps, Rubella
- Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (Tdap)
- Varicella

Providing a vaccination history is **not** sufficient to document immunity. Waivers for non-conversion are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the Rush Employee Health standards.

Medical and Religious Exemptions:

Students may pursue medical and/or religious exemptions for required immunizations. A separate written request is recommended for each immunization. Medical exemptions are requested from a licensed health care provider, and religious exemptions are requested from an authorized religious leader. For annual immunizations, these letters must be updated each year. Rush University reserves the sole discretion to review and approve all medical and religious exemption requests for program immunization requirements.

Students with approved exemptions may matriculate and participate in didactic coursework; however, immunization requirements vary by clinical site and may change based on site policies or circumstances. Students must comply with all health and immunization requirements established by clinical rotation sites. Clinical sites may not accept medical or religious exemptions, and the program is not required to provide alternate rotation assignments based on personal preferences or exemption status. Therefore, the program cannot guarantee that approved exemptions will not affect clinical placement or progression. This may result in delays in a student's ability to complete the program.

During the clinical years, students are required to provide updated health records. Certain rotations may specify that students must be in compliance with other requirements such as additional drug screens or vaccinations, such as COVID-19. If required, this is an out-of-pocket expense for the student. The program will inform students of any necessary procedures to meet such requirements in advance of the rotation start date.

There are no international clinical rotation experiences. For students who volunteer on a global health trip, there may be additional recommended immunizations as outlined in the PA Program Handbook.

Student health records are confidential and will remain on file through CastleBranch. However, each student is required to sign a release of information that permits the program to provide affiliated clinical practice sites, agencies, and preceptors proof of the student's health status, as needed.

For more information regarding this policy, please refer to the PA Program Handbook and Clinical Rotation Handbooks posted on the PA Program website. If you have any, please reach out to PA_admissions@rush.edu.

Health Screenings:

Due two weeks prior to the first day of orientation:

- History and physical examination by a licensed health care provider completed on the Program's form
- A two-step PPD, T-Spot, Quantiferon Gold, or T-SPOT.TB test done within three months of matriculation (then yearly thereafter)
- Drug screening (then yearly thereafter)
- Criminal background check

Required Curricular Components:

Program Year 1- Core Didactic Curriculum Courses:

Term I – Summer		Semester Hours	Instructional Method
PHA 510	Human Physiology	2	In-person
PHA 511	Human Anatomy	5	Blended
PHA 512	History & Physical Examination	3	In-person
PHA 513	PA Professional Practice	1	Blended
PHA 514	Clinical Medicine I	5	Blended

Term II – Fall		Semester Hours	Instructional Method
IPE 502	Interprofessional Health care Teams	0	Synchronous Online
PHA 520	Principles of Clinical Pharmacology I	3	In-person
PHA 521	Research & Statistics	2	Blended
PHA 522	Clinical Reasoning I	2	In-person
PHA 523	Epidemiology and Public Health	2	In-person
PHA 524	Clinical Medicine II	6	Blended
PHA 525	Principles of Advanced Practice I	2	In-person

Term III – Spring		Semester Hours	Instructional Method
IPE 502	Interprofessional Health care Teams	0	Synchronous Online
CHS 605	Ethics in Health Care	2	Asynchronous Online
PHA 530	Principles of Clinical Pharmacology II	3	In-person
PHA 532	Clinical Reasoning II	2	In-person
PHA 533	Psychosocial Medicine	2	In-person
PHA 534	Clinical Medicine III	6	Blended
PHA 535	Principles of Advanced Practice II	2	In-person
PHA 536	Emergency and Surgical Medicine	2	In-person

Total Credit Hours for Program Year 1: 52

Rush University PA Program Hybrid Curriculum:

The program implemented a blended teaching model in 2022, where some course instruction occurs online in a synchronous or asynchronous format. All clinical and technical skills-based training activities take place in person.

We are a full-time, Chicago-based, on-campus program and all of our institution's learning resource centers are open for students.

Program Year 2 – Clinical Curriculum Courses:

Clinical training activities are in person at all rotation sites.

Second Year Rotations Sample Sequence - Individual Rotations Will Vary

Term I – Summer	Rotation Duration	Semester Hours
PHA 581 Family Medicine	4 weeks	4
PHA 582 Internal Medicine I	4 weeks	4
PHA 583 Internal Medicine II	4 weeks	4
PHA 584 General Surgery I	4 weeks	4
Term II – Fall	Rotation Duration	Semester Hours
PHA 585 General Surgery II	4 weeks	4
PHA 586 Obstetrics and Gynecology	4 weeks	4
PHA 587 Pediatrics	4 weeks	4
PHA 588 Behavioral Health	4 weeks	4
Term III – Spring	Rotation Duration	Semester Hours
PHA 589 Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation	4 weeks	4
PHA 590 Emergency Medicine	4 weeks	4
PHA 591 Elective I	4 weeks	4
PHA 592 Elective II	4 weeks	4

Total Credit Hours for Program Year 2: 48

Program Year 3 – Clinical Curriculum Courses:

Term I – Summer	Rotation Duration	Semester Hours
PHA 593 Advanced Clinical Practice I		15
Rotation 1 – Track Core	5 weeks	
Rotation 2 – Track Core	5 weeks	
PHA 595 Master’s Research Project I	15 weeks	1
Term II – Fall	Rotation Duration	Semester Hours
PHA 594 Advanced Clinical Practice II		15
Rotation 3 – Track Core	5 weeks	
Rotation 4 – Track Core	5 weeks	
Rotation 5 – Track Elective*	5 weeks	
<i>*The third-year elective rotation may be assigned to rotation 1-5; each student schedule varies</i>		
PHA 596 Master’s Research Project II	15 weeks	1

3rd Year: Total Semester Credits 32

PA Program Total Credits for 30 Months	132
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Relevant Policies:

Clinical Rotation Travel Policy:

The PA Program requires students to travel up to 90 miles or a 90-minute drive from the Rush University campus for clinical rotations. A student may choose to complete elective rotations that exceed this travel radius. These elective rotations must be approved in advance by the course director to ensure alignment with learning outcomes and program standards as outlined below. All costs incurred are the sole responsibility of the student.

Elective Rotation Policy:

The PA program offers two 4-week elective rotations during the second year of the program and one 5-week elective rotation during the third year of the program. The program has established elective rotation options both within the Rush system as well as at other local health care systems and practices in a variety of disciplines, including but not limited to emergency medicine, primary care, medicine subspecialties, and surgical subspecialties. Students rank their preferred elective options for their assigned elective rotation dates. As below, students may request to establish a new preceptor or site for an elective rotation following the policy.

Clinical Rotation Policy:

The PA Faculty have the sole responsibility for providing and soliciting clinical sites and preceptors. Prospective and enrolled students are not required to provide or solicit clinical sites or preceptors. Students are permitted to ask a clinician if they would be a willing preceptor for elective rotations, only. If a student identifies a willing preceptor, they can make this request to their designated clinical course director, but placement is not guaranteed. The PA program will vet the preceptor and site to ensure alignment with learning outcomes and program standards.

Required Academic Standards:

The program has published academic standards and policies which are required to maintain enrollment and progress in the curriculum. Please refer to the PA Program Handbook and Clinical Rotation Handbooks for further information all requirements.

Program Completion Deadline:

Students are expected to complete the program within its prescribed 30-month curriculum. The maximum amount of time allowed to complete all program requirements is 42 months.

Due to the sequential nature of the curriculum, students must complete and pass all courses in any given semester to be eligible to enroll in courses for the subsequent semester. Students must successfully pass all didactic courses before being permitted to progress to the clinical phase of the program.

If a student is on an approved deceleration, the maximum amount of time a student may remain in the program is one year beyond the expected program duration, or 42 months. Failing to complete the program within the maximum time allotted will result in a withdrawal from the program. Students at risk of failing to complete the program must meet with the Program Director to develop a plan to successfully complete the program.

Additional Policies of Interest to Prospective Students:

Please refer to the PA Program Handbook and Clinical Rotation Handbooks posted on the website for further information related to the following:

- Remediation
- Deceleration
- Withdrawal
- Dismissal
- Grievances
- Student Appeals

Admission Selection Criteria: 2026-2027 Cycle

Admission to the PA program is highly competitive. The program bases its interview decisions on the following: candidates' total and science course GPA, type and quality of health care experiences, experience working with or shadowing PAs, leadership and community service activities, letters of reference and personal statement quality.

The program does not offer advanced standing, accept transfer credits, or waive any prerequisite or other admission requirement, regardless of a candidate's previous professional or academic experience.

Requirements for PA Program Admission:

1. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university
2. Completion of prerequisite courses with a C or better (4 due at time of application)
3. GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for both total and science
4. 1,000 hours of direct patient care experience in a health care setting
5. A completed application submitted to the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA)
 - o Three letters of recommendation
6. TOEFL Exam (If applicable)

See below for further details

Additional Information on Requirements:

1. **A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university**
 - o Degree must be completed, as evidenced by official transcripts from every college or university **two weeks before the first date of program orientation.**
 - o No preference is given based on an applicant's academic major, course of study, degree title, or area of concentration.
 - o For coursework completed outside the United States, candidates must submit an international course evaluation from either World Education Services (WES, <https://www.wes.org/>) or Education Credential Evaluators (ECE, <https://www.ece.org/>) **at the time of application submission.**
 - o Please note that the first date of orientation is typically the first week of May.
2. **Completion of prerequisite courses with a C or better (4 due at time of application)**

Prerequisite	Minimum Semester Credit Hours	Minimum Quarter Credit Hours
Human Anatomy (lab required)	3	4
Human Physiology (lab preferred, not required)	3	4
OR a two-course sequence combined Human Anatomy & Physiology course (lab required)	5 combined	7 combined
Biochemistry (lab preferred, not required)	3	4
Microbiology (lab preferred, not required)	3	4
Psychology (lab not required)	3	4
Statistics (lab not required)	3	4

- o Courses **all** must be completed within 7 years of matriculation.
- o Four of six must be completed at the time of application submission.
 - **Note:** If a candidate has only taken one of a 2-course sequence Human Anatomy/Human Physiology course to fulfill prerequisite requirements, they are missing both human anatomy and human physiology courses.
 - Acceptance offers to candidates with outstanding prerequisites are conditional, pending successfully completing all course requirements. If a candidate does not complete all prerequisite courses before the program start date, they forfeit their seat in the class.
- o Courses may be taken in-person or online.
- o Courses must have obtained a final letter grade; **no pass/fail coursework**

- Please note the following exception to the letter grade requirements for classes taken during the COVID-19 pandemic **only**:
 - *We will accept a “Pass” in a Pass/Fail system for any course taken from May to December 2020.*
 - *We will accept a “Pass” in a Pass/Fail system for up to **two** required prerequisite courses taken from May to December 2020.*
 - *Candidates must have letter grades for four of the six prerequisites for courses taken during the pandemic.*
- A single course cannot be used to fulfill more than one prerequisite.
- We accept courses completed at any U.S., regionally accredited 2- or 4-year college or university, including those offered in online formats. Courses taken at nationally accredited institutions are evaluated toward admissions eligibility on a case-by-case basis.
- Coursework completed through self-paced or asynchronous online course providers (ie Portage Learning) may be considered, provided the student receives a transcript **with both a final letter grade (not pass/fail) and credit hour**, by a U.S., regionally accredited institution
 - The course(s) must also otherwise meet course requirements as outlined.
- Coursework completed through non-degree-granting programs or training programs is not accepted. This includes, but is not limited to, certificate or vocational training programs such as EMT, CNA, paramedic, medical assistant, or other workforce training programs, as well as coursework offered through employers, private training organizations, continuing education units (CEUs), or other non-academic providers.
- Courses taken at an accredited college or university, including community colleges, are accepted as long as they are listed on an official college transcript and were completed for academic credit. This applies even if the student was not enrolled in a degree program at the time the coursework was completed. The course(s) must also otherwise meet course requirements as outlined.
- Advanced Placement and CLEP courses are **not** accepted towards meeting prerequisite course requirements.

Please note:

The program does not pre-approve or individually evaluate courses for prerequisite requirements prior to receipt of a completed application through CASPA. Applicants are responsible for determining whether their coursework meets requirements before applying.

Prerequisite coursework will be reviewed by the admissions team only after a complete CASPA application has been received. Applicants will be contacted if any coursework does not meet eligibility requirements. Candidates may be asked to provide the program with a copy of the official course syllabus, course catalog description, and a copy of the lecture topic outline. We recommend retaining all undergraduate course materials prior to applying to PA school.

The admissions office does **not** provide course-by-course evaluations or transcript reviews via email or phone, and such requests will not be accommodated.

- The following outlines the **minimum expected content** for prerequisite coursework. If a course substantially covers the topics listed, it will generally meet the program’s requirements.
 - **Human Anatomy (lab required):**
 - Covers the structure of the human body and major organ systems
 - Topics should include musculoskeletal, nervous, circulatory, respiratory, digestive, urinary, endocrine, integument and reproductive systems
 - A laboratory component **is required** and may include cadaver dissection or anatomical

models

- Courses labeled as “introductory” or “survey” in Human Anatomy are generally not accepted, as they often do not provide the depth and comprehensive coverage expected for prerequisite coursework.
- **Human Physiology (lab preferred, not required):**
 - Focuses on the function and interaction of human organ systems, including principles of homeostasis and cellular physiology
 - Topics should include systems such as the nervous, cardiovascular, respiratory, renal, endocrine, and gastrointestinal systems
 - Content should emphasize normal physiological function rather than disease states
 - Courses labeled as “introductory” or “survey” in Human Physiology are generally not accepted, as they often do not provide the depth and comprehensive coverage expected for prerequisite coursework.
 - *Pathophysiology courses do not fulfill this requirement*
- **Combined 2-part Human Anatomy & Physiology Sequence (lab required)**
 - A two-course sequence (ie Anatomy & Physiology I and II) may be used to fulfill the Human Anatomy and Human Physiology requirements
 - Coursework should include both structural and functional coverage of all major organ systems, as outlined above
 - A laboratory component is required and may include cadaver dissection or anatomical models
- **Biochemistry (lab preferred, not required):**
 - Examines the relationship between molecular structure and function in living systems
 - Topics should include enzyme kinetics, metabolism, and the structure/function of biomolecules (proteins, lipids, carbohydrates, nucleic acids). May also include concepts related to gene expression and regulation at a biochemical level.
 - Must be a standalone course; combined Organic Chemistry or Molecular Biology courses are not accepted
 - Introductory-level courses (ie “Introduction to Biochemistry”) are acceptable, provided the course content aligns with the topics outlined above.
 - *Courses focused primarily on molecular biology or cell biology do not fulfill this requirement*
- **Microbiology (lab preferred, not required):**
 - Covers microorganisms relevant to human health, including bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa
 - Topics should include microbial structure, physiology, identification, control, and or host-pathogen interactions
 - Introductory-level courses (ie “Introduction to Microbiology”) are acceptable, provided the course content aligns with the topics outlined above.
 - Courses with a clinical or health-focused emphasis are strongly recommended
- **Psychology (lab not required):**
 - Introduces core principles of human behavior, cognition, and mental processes
 - Coursework should include topics such as learning, memory, development, personality, and psychological disorders
 - Introductory-level courses (ie “Introduction to Psychology”) are acceptable, provided the course content aligns with the topics outlined above.
 - A wide range of psychology courses may fulfill this requirement, provided they focus on

human behavior and mental processes (ie General Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Abnormal Psychology)

▪ **Statistics (lab not required):**

- Covers statistical reasoning and methods used in data analysis and interpretation
- Topics should include probability, hypothesis testing, distributions, correlation/regression, confidence intervals, and interpretation of data
- Emphasis should be on the application and interpretation of statistical concepts rather than purely mathematical theory
- Courses may be offered through statistics, psychology, or other disciplines, provided appropriate statistical content is included
- Introductory-level courses (ie “Introduction to Statistics”) are acceptable, provided the course content aligns with the topics outlined above.

3. GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for both total and science

- The higher a candidate’s GPAs, the more competitive the application.
 - **Competitive:** GPAs of 3.3 or higher for both total and science
 - **Highly Competitive:** GPAs of 3.5 or higher for both total and science

4. 1,000 hours of direct patient care experience in a health care setting

- 1,000 hours is required at the time of CASPA application submission
- Hours must be accrued within seven years of application submission
- Hours must be **paid** employment; hours accrued during a training program are not eligible.
- The higher a candidate’s number of hours, the more competitive the application.
 - **Competitive:** 1,500+ hours at the time of submission
 - **Highly Competitive:** 2,500+ hours at the time of submission
- Roles in which applicants describe working directly with PAs are more competitive.
- **The program does not pre-approve individual experiences.**
 - Applicants are responsible for determining whether their health care experience aligns with the content below.

Health care Experience Types:

The program evaluates health care experiences along a continuum of non-competitive to highly competitive. This determination is based not on job title, but on the level of patient involvement, roles and responsibilities performed, and degree of engagement in the delivery of care, **solely** as described by the applicant on the CASPA application. Because responsibilities can vary **significantly** across similar job titles, settings, and institutions, the admissions committee cannot make assumptions about an applicant’s scope of practice.

As a result, experiences that are not described in sufficient detail may be difficult to fully evaluate and may be considered less competitive due to lack of information.

Eligible health care experience must be obtained within physician-directed medical specialties and involve direct patient care. Hours completed in non-physician disciplines, including but not limited to dentistry, optometry, and physical therapy, are not competitive.

Highly competitive experiences involve **direct, hands-on, in-person** patient care and active participation amongst the medical team. These roles often include working closely with licensed medical providers and performing assessments and clinical tasks such as obtaining histories, vital signs, assisting with examinations, procedures, performing laboratory and diagnostic testing, administering medications, assisting with patient mobility or activities of daily living, *to name a few*. Additional responsibilities may include providing patient education, medical documentation, counseling and demonstrating the trust of supervising clinicians. Examples of roles that may demonstrate these characteristics include registered nurses, EMTs/paramedics, emergency room technicians,

patient care technicians, medical assistants and dietitians; however, the specific duties performed are more important than the job title itself.

Experiences that involve limited or indirect patient interaction are generally considered less competitive. These may include roles that are primarily task-specific, involve minimal hands-on care, or focus on clerical or operational responsibilities. Examples may include phlebotomy, patient transport, pharmacy technician roles, scribes, or medical assistant positions that are primarily administrative. However, if these roles include substantial direct patient care responsibilities, they may be evaluated as more competitive.

As an example, medical scribing is a role in which responsibilities can vary widely. Positions that are limited to documentation and observation, without direct patient interaction or hands-on responsibilities, are generally considered less competitive. In contrast, applicants who serve as scribes while also participating in direct, hands-on patient care activities may demonstrate a more competitive level of experience. This example underscores the importance of clearly describing the full scope of responsibilities within any given role.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to clearly and thoroughly describe their exact roles, responsibilities, and level of patient interaction when reporting experiences. The more specific detail provided, the better the admissions committee can assess the competitiveness of the experience.

A diversity of roles, clinical settings, and patient populations, as well as demonstrated leadership or growth within a position, and working directly with PAs are also considered more competitive.

5. A completed application submitted to the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA)

- Three letters of recommendation
 - We recommend references be from educators, PAs, MDs, or other professionals that candidates have worked with who can speak to medical skills, academic performance potential, commitment to service, and leadership capacity.
 - **At least one reference must be from a PA, physician, or other health professional, and one should be from a college or university instructor.**
 - Personal references from family and friends are not competitive for admission to the program.
 - Refer to CASPA for instructions on completing the online evaluation.

6. TOEFL exam

1. If English is not a candidate's native language, they are required to take the TOEFL before applying to the program.
2. Please review the Rush College of Health Sciences policy on the TOEFL at: [Rush TOEFL for International Applicants](#) for more information.

Having leadership and/or community service experience is highly valued and greatly contributes to the competitiveness of a candidate's application. Current activities are also more competitive.

Additional Factors for Admissions Consideration:

While all candidates must meet posted minimum admissions criteria, candidates with any of the following factors indicated on their CASPA application are given a priority review of their application, for consideration of an interview. The additional factors are then utilized again if there are ties in the interview score, for consideration of acceptance into the program.

- Military veterans
- Persons from disadvantaged economic backgrounds
- First person to attend a higher education training program in their family
- Graduates of the Rush University Bachelor of Health Science Program endorsed by the Program Director

Interview Processes and Practices:

Final admissions decisions are based on an interview with members of the PA program faculty and other university faculty and leaders.

Approximately 130 candidates are invited to interview with the Program during each admissions cycle. Due to the competitive nature of the application process, meeting the minimum admission criteria does not guarantee an interview.

For the 2026–27 application cycle, interviews will be conducted via Zoom from June through February.

Interview invitations are communicated via the email addresses listed in CASPA and contain a detailed schedule and additional instructions for the interview date.

Candidates who are invited for an admissions interview must complete a supplemental application and pay a \$40 supplementary fee. Information regarding this supplement is provided with an interview invitation.

The interview day includes:

- An information session about the Program
- A multiple-mini-interview (MMI) style format
- A closed-door student Q&A session

Group interviews are not conducted.

Admissions decisions are based on the candidate's overall interview score. Following the interview, candidates will be designated one of three outcomes: accept, waitlist, or deny.

- **Accept:**
 - An accept indicates that a candidate is being offered a seat in the entering class.
 - Admission is contingent upon successful completion of admission requirements, a health assessment, criminal background check, and drug screening processes due two weeks prior to the first day of orientation.
- **Waitlist:**
 - A waitlist means the candidate may be offered a seat if spaces become available.
 - Placement on the waitlist does not guarantee admission.
- **Deny:**
 - A deny indicates that the candidate will not be offered admission for the current cycle.

The PA program admits students into the class on a rolling basis, which means we accept candidates to the class at each interview session. Under a rolling admissions process, it is possible to fill all seats in the class before the admission cycle closes. It is to the applicant's advantage to fulfill and submit all application materials as early as possible.

Deferral of Admission:

Deferral of admission is generally not permitted. However, requests may be considered in the event of extraordinary personal or medical circumstances. Applicants seeking a deferral must submit a formal request, which will be reviewed by the program's faculty admissions committee. Approval is not guaranteed.

If granted, deferrals are contingent upon specific conditions, which may include continued accrual of health care experience hours and maintenance of all admission requirements. Any prerequisite coursework that exceeds the program's established 7-year time limit during the deferral period must be repeated.

For deferrals requested due to medical circumstances, appropriate documentation from a licensed provider may be required to support the request and to confirm the applicant’s readiness to begin the program at the conclusion of the deferral period.

If a deferral request is not approved, the applicant must reapply and complete the interview process again for future consideration.

Class Demographics:

Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026	Class of 2027
Starting Class Size: 29 Students	Starting Class Size: 32 Students	Starting Class Size: 32 Students	Starting Class Size: 32 Students	Starting Class Size: 31 Students
Male: 8 Female: 21	Male: 9 Female: 23	Male: 1 Female: 31	Male: 5 Female: 27	Male: 4 Female: 27
Median Age: 25 Years	Median Age: 25 Years	Median Age: 25 Years	Median Age: 26 Years	Median Age: 25 Years
Percent Meeting Additional Factors: 38%	Percent Meeting Additional Factors: 59%	Percent Meeting Additional Factors: 38%	Percent Meeting Additional Factors: 63%	Percent Meeting Additional Factors: 69%
Median Total GPA: 3.50	Median Total GPA: 3.50	Median Total GPA: 3.60	Median Total GPA: 3.69	Median Total GPA: 3.63
Median Science GPA: 3.50	Median Science GPA: 3.40	Median Science GPA: 3.50	Median Science GPA: 3.63	Median Science GPA: 3.54
Median HCE Hours: 4,972	Median HCE Hours: 4,343	Median HCE Hours: 3,563	Median HCE Hours: 3,810	Median HCE Hours: 3,728

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. When does the CASPA admission cycle open and close?

Our admissions cycle begins April 27th and ends on October 1st. Please visit [CASPA](#) for more information on admissions cycle dates for all member programs.

2. How competitive is admission to the program?

Admission to Rush is highly competitive. In 2025-2026, we received over 3,195 total applications and reviewed 2,007 for a final class size of 32 students. Only 1% of applicants are offered a seat in the class. Successful candidates for the program usually greatly exceed our posted admissions criteria.

3. Will you screen my qualifications (prereqs, HCE, etc) for admissions eligibility before I apply to the program?

No. We do not offer individualized pre-admissions counseling, and we only make admissions eligibility decisions after reviewing your official CASPA record. Review this information packet carefully to self-determine the competitiveness of your experiences before applying to the program.

4. Do you require the GRE or Casper test? Are applicants more competitive if they have completed one or both?

No, we do not require the GRE or Casper test. Scores on these examinations are not considered for admissions decisions.

5. Do you require PA shadowing hours?

PA shadowing hours are not required. However, applicants who do not work directly with PAs as part of their health care experience are strongly encouraged to obtain shadowing experience to demonstrate an understanding of the profession and scope of practice. Greater depth of exposure, including a higher number of hours and experience across multiple specialties or practice settings, is viewed as more competitive. Virtual shadowing and PA mentorship experiences are also considered valuable.

6. Once I submit my application materials, how long before I hear if I will receive an interview?

It typically takes 6-8 weeks to review your verified application; however, it can take up to 12 weeks to be notified of your interview status in the program.

7. Do you give preference to Illinois residents?

No. Rush University is a private institution, and residency status is not a factor of consideration in admission decisions or tuition costs.

8. Can I work while completing the PA program?

No. The PA program is an intensive, full-time curriculum. The rigorous class and study schedule needed to succeed in the program makes working at an outside job nearly impossible at any time during the program. For this reason, students in the program also cannot participate in any student work-study programs.

9. Can I start the program while I am finishing my undergraduate degree or prerequisite courses?

No. All degree and prerequisite coursework must be completed and verified at least two weeks prior to the first day of orientation, in order to matriculate into the program.

10. Can I attend the Rush PA Program on a part-time basis?

No. We do not offer a part-time PA Program.

11. Does Rush University offer a bachelor's or doctoral degree in PA?

No. Rush University's program is an entry-level master's program.

12. Does Rush University have student housing?

The university does not have on-campus housing; however, there are many housing options available in the city. For more information, contact the Office of Student Life and Engagement at (312) 942-6302 or visit the Rush University website, <https://www.rushu.rush.edu/student-life/student-affairs/student-life-engagement/rush-university-housing-resources>

13. Will I need a car during PA school?

For the first year of the program, not necessarily as there are ample public transportation options for commuting. During clinical rotations, you must have access to a car. We are unable to place students on rotations based on transportation availability.

14. Do you accept transfer students? Do you offer advanced standing to students based on prior educational or professional experience?

No. The PA program curriculum must be completed in its entirety at Rush. We do not offer advanced standing or transfer credits into the program, regardless of your prior educational or work experience.

15. How will the program's Accreditation-Probation status affect me if I am admitted?

Accreditation-Probation is an accredited status. Students admitted while the program holds this status are not impacted in their education or eligibility to sit for the PANCE or obtain state licensure. For more information, please attend an open house session.

For More Information:

Email: pa_admissions@rush.edu

Phone (312) 563-3234

Website <http://www.rushu.rush.edu/pa-program>

CASPA admissions process: Contact [CASPA](#) directly.

Rush University or the admissions policies of the College of Health Sciences at Rush University: Contact the admissions office directly at (312) 942-7120.

Open House Events: Visit the Rush University [Information Session](#) page to sign up for an upcoming PA Program Open House event.

Thank you for your interest in the Rush University PA Program!