

POLICIES AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PA PROGRAM ADMISSION PROCESS, 2010

Gundersen Lutheran Medical Foundation

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

Mayo School of Health Sciences

Physician Assistant Program
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CASPA and the Supplemental Application

The UW-L – Gundersen – Mayo PA Program is a participating program in the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). To be considered as an applicant you must complete **ALL THREE PARTS** consisting of the **CASPA application including all 3 references, the Supplemental Application and the GRE score**. The electronic version of the Supplemental Application has been optimized for use with Acrobat Reader 6.0.

Application Deadline:

All materials **must** be in the Admissions office by:

September 1, 2009

Websites and phone numbers:

CASPA Application

<https://secure.caspaonline.org/>

Supplemental Application

http://perth.uwlax.edu/pastudies/admissions/application_forms.htm

Free download of Acrobat Reader 6.0

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

ADMISSION PROCESS AND POLICIES

The rigor, intensity of this program, the skills and responsibility necessary for practice as a physician assistant require the program to seek applicants with a strong academic background, along with refined interpersonal skills and maturity. Prior healthcare experience is also an indicator of a career commitment to clinical practice. The program's admission process will consider each applicant's strengths and select for admission those applicants best qualified to meet the program's mission.

Factors considered in the interview selection include the following: (1) Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) as calculated by CASPA; (2) Science GPA as calculated by CASPA; (3) Graduate Record Examination Scores.

The admission selection process will include the following: (1) Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) as calculated by CASPA; (2) Science GPA as calculated by CASPA; (3) Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Scores; (4) Written application including references; (5) Background predictive of potential for future practice in the service areas of the program's partner institutions; (6) Knowledge of the PA profession and the profession's role in the healthcare system; (7) Interpersonal Skills; (8) Quality and Extent of Healthcare related experience.

Interviews are scheduled for November 13, 2009 and November 20, 2009. Interviews dates will be assigned and no exceptions will be given. The application deadline is September 1, 2009, for the class that will matriculate in June 2008. **To be considered for interview the applicant's CASPA file must be complete, GRE scores must have been received by UW-L along the Supplemental Application by September 1, 2009.**

Classes will begin after Memorial Day in 2010. Any offer of admission will be contingent on acceptance of the candidate by the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Office of Admissions, and successful completion of all degrees and current course work, including prerequisites. Applicants need NOT make application for Graduate Admission to UW-L until AFTER the PA Program extends an offer of admission to the applicant.

Academic Prerequisites

The following are the program's academic prerequisites. All candidates **must** have met **all** of these prerequisites. At the time of application, candidates must either have the prerequisites completed, or be able to demonstrate a plan to complete the prerequisites prior to enrollment in the program in June of 2010.

Biology: At least 14 sem hrs of biology in the following areas including at least two lab courses:

1. Anatomy and Physiology: 1 sem of human anatomy AND 1 sem of human physiology; OR a 2 sem sequence of combined human anatomy (BIO 312 & 313) which must be at the 200 (sophomore) level or above. Though vertebrate and mammalian anatomy & physiology are acceptable, human anatomy and physiology is strongly preferred.
2. Microbiology: 1 sem of microbiology (MIC 230) at the 200 (sophomore) level or above
3. Health related upper division biological science: 1 sem of any of the following at the 300 (junior) level or above: Genetics (BIO 306 or 466), immunology (MIC 406), vertebrate/mammalian embryology (BIO 408), endocrinology (BIO 424), histology, pathophysiology (BIO 443), neuroscience (BIO 465), parasitology (BIO 406), mycology (BIO 413), or biology of cancer (BIO 432).

Chemistry: A minimum of 11 sem hrs of chemistry including the following courses, at least two of which must include a laboratory:

1. General Chemistry: 1 sem of General or Introductory Chemistry (CHM 103 or 104)
2. Organic Chemistry: 1 sem of Organic Chemistry (CHM 300 or CHM 303 & 304) at the 200 (sophomore) level or above
3. Biochemistry: 1 sem of Biochemistry (CHM 325 or CHM 417 & 418) at the 300 (junior) level or above. Molecular (BIO 435) or cellular biology (BIO 315) at the 300 level or above are acceptable alternatives.

Mathematics: A minimum of two semesters of Mathematics including:

1. Pre-calculus/Calculus: 1 sem of College Algebra with Trigonometry or Pre-calculus (MTH 151) or Calculus (MTH 207)
2. Statistics: 1 sem of Statistics (MTH 205 or 305)

Psychology: A minimum of one semester of general, introductory, developmental or abnormal psychology (PSY 100, 210, 212, 304, 310, 311, or 312)

Course numbers shown are for UW-L. Comparable courses taken at other regionally accredited institutions are also acceptable. For courses taken at other public institutions in Wisconsin comparability of courses can be determined using the following website:

<http://www.uwsa.edu/tis/>

Academic Aptitude: A minimum cumulative GPA on all post-high school courses of 3.00 calculated on a 4-point scale is required. A minimum science (as defined by CASPA) GPA of 3.00 is required.

GRE scores are used as another measure of academic aptitude along with GPA.

Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

Applicants must take the **GRE General Test**. No GRE Subject Tests are required. The applicant must provide scores to the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse and the PA Program using GRE institution code **1914**, and GRE Department & Major Field Code **0609 Medical Sciences**. **GRE scores must be received by the application deadline.** There is no minimum GRE score required for admission. Applicants are encouraged to self-report their GRE scores in the CASPA application, and provide an unofficial copy of GRE scores with the Supplemental Application. However, official scores reported directly from GRE to UW-L are required.

Healthcare Experience

Prior direct patient care health experience is expected. Such experience provides evidence of a career commitment to healthcare as a PA. In the program's competitive admission process, the length and depth of healthcare experience is a selection factor. Though the program does not require a minimum length of prior healthcare experience, the length and quality of this experience are definite considerations in the admission process. A clear understanding of the role of the PA in the healthcare system is also required.

Advanced Placement in the Program

The program does not grant advanced placement in the PA program professional curriculum, or accept transfer credit for any course in the professional curriculum **regardless** the candidate's prior education or experience.

Technical Standards of Performance

Applicants must meet the "Technical Standards of Performance" in the areas of Observation, Communication, Motor Function, Intellectual/ Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities, and Behavioral and Social Attributes, as described on page iv.

Requirements for International Applicants

For international applicants the program has several additional admission requirements. International applicants are those who have completed more than one semester of their post-secondary education outside the United States, for whom English is their second language, or who are not US citizens. These requirements are:

1. Applicants who have completed more than one semester of post-secondary course work originally transcribed at institutions located outside of the United States **must have these transcripts translated and evaluated for equivalence on a course-by-course basis by one of the following CASPA approved services:**

- World Education Services, Inc;
- Josef Silny & Associates, Inc, International Educational Consultants;
- Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc;
- International Education Research Foundation Inc;
- Spantran Educational Services, Inc.

Additional contact information for these services is available at: https://secure.caspaonline.org/html/ins_gen_instructions.htm. In addition to sending a copy of the evaluation to CASPA, a copy of the complete evaluation must be enclosed with the Supplemental Application.

2. Fluency in written and spoken English is essential for success in the program and to ensure patient safety. Students need to demonstrate objective competency in English; if it is their second language, the competency must be demonstrated within the past two years by satisfactory performance on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL: <http://www.ets.org/toefl/>). Official Scores must be forwarded to the program using Institutional Code

1914 and Department Code **42**. Unofficial copies of the scores must also be forwarded to the program with the submission of the Supplemental Application.

3. Applicants to the PA Program must be citizens of the United States, or hold a permanent US immigrant visa (green card), or other visa status appropriate for education. Such applicants should recognize the regional mission of the program in the service areas of the program's partner institutions. The UW-L Office of International Education can provide assistance in coordinating the applications of applicants who are not US citizens or permanent residents of the US.

Criminal Background History

Regulations in many states require review of the criminal histories of those having direct contact with patients in healthcare and other settings. Currently this is a requirement for contact in the healthcare setting in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Because the UW-L - Gundersen - Mayo PA Program's curriculum requires students to participate in the care of patients in various healthcare settings in both Minnesota and Wisconsin, the program facilitates the processing of these background checks for students once they are entering their clinical year. Upon entrance students are required to do their own background check through information that is handed out by the program during their orientation days. If the student's criminal background history prevents placement in clinical sites necessary to complete the program's curriculum, the student's ability to graduate from and status with the program may be jeopardized.

Additional information regarding this process for Wisconsin is available at the following website: <http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/caregiver/>. Information regarding Minnesota Background Studies can be obtained from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing at (651) 296-3971.

CASPA and SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

CASPA Application: The CASPA application is available at <https://secure.caspaonline.org/> or by calling (240) 497-1895. The program's CASPA deadline means that **all elements required for the CASPA application must be RECEIVED by CASPA no later than September 1 for an Interview. This includes the application itself, transcripts from all post-secondary institutions and THREE letters of reference.**

UW-L - Gundersen - Mayo PA Program Supplemental Application: This application supplements rather than duplicates the information provided through the CASPA application to provide a complete description of the applicant's academic record specific to our program's prerequisites, work and life experiences, life goals and suitability specifically to this program. The Supplemental Application Form must be completed in its entirety for an applicant to be considered for admission to the program. **It must arrive in the Health Professions Admissions office no later than September 1 for an Interview.**

The electronic Supplemental Application File (*.pdf) allows completion of the application on computer using Acrobat Reader 6.0. However, you can not save your work on the form with Reader 6.0 and then finish completing it at a later time. You must complete the entire form in one computer session and then print a hard copy to send to the PA program. Therefore, it is recommended that you print an initial copy of the form to allow you to develop a rough draft of the tabular data and narratives. It is also recommended that you finalize your responses for the "Personal Narratives" section (pages 2

and 3) using a word processor before entering them in Reader 6.0. You may then copy the text from the word processor and paste it in the Supplemental Application using Reader 6.0. Font size is set at 12 point and margins at ¾ inch in Reader 6.0 and should not be changed. The completed supplemental application must then be printed on plain white paper, signed and mailed as described below.

Failure to complete all sections of the application form will jeopardize consideration of the application.

Instructions for Each Supplemental Application Section

Applicant Identification

Please provide the name, address, phone numbers and email address information. The CASPA application number is needed for identification and record keeping purposes. Your name is also required on pages 2 – 4 of the form.

Degree Prerequisite

As a UW-L graduate program it is required that applicants complete a baccalaureate degree prior to enrolling in the program.

Prerequisite Courses

In the “*Prerequisite Course*” section identify the courses you have taken or will be taking to meet each of the PA Program course prerequisites as described on page *i* of these instructions. You must identify a course for each of these prerequisites, or request special consideration as described on page *ii* of these instructions. List only one course on each line of the table. For biology and chemistry courses, if a laboratory was a required component of the course, or if a laboratory was required under a separate course number for the course, place a check in the “Lab” column. Labs required for these courses, but requiring separate registration, are not to be listed as a separate course in this table. Identify the university at which each course was taken. In the “Year” column indicate the year the course was taken (*eg* 2001). List the semester (or quarter) the course was taken (*eg* Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer). In the credits column report the number of *semester* hour credits assigned to the course. Please report quarter credit hours as semester hours noting that 1 quarter hour = ⅔ semester hours. If you are currently completing a prerequisite, list the grade as “CE” for Current Enrollment. If you plan to take a prerequisite in a coming semester list “PE” for Planned Enrollment in the grade column.

Residency History

Complete this table on page 1 of the application to provide a description of your prior residency history. List each community in which you have lived for longer than one month since your birth in chronological order. Provide the approximate current population for each community of residence.

Personal Narratives

The personal narratives allow candidates to expand upon their CASPA “Personal Comments/Personal Statement” but should not duplicate that statement. The supplemental narrative describes aspects of the applicants’ past educational and professional experiences, career goals and allows candidates to demonstrate suitability specifically to this program. In doing so the candidates are able to demonstrate their writing style and various non-academic traits. Candidates should address the issues requested, and be neat and concise in their narrative style. In the electronic version of the form font size and margins are fixed. Font sizes smaller than 12 pt and text that extends beyond a ¾ ” margin is difficult to read, particularly after it is copied. Confine your responses to the two pages provided in this application form numbering your response to each of the questions. In the Acrobat version of the form character limits have been set that allow full use of the page. With the font and character limits you must be sure that all of your narrative has been printed on the copy you submit.

Professional Disciplinary Action History

The mission of the PA Program is to educate PAs for clinical practice. A requirement for practice as a PA is certification, licensure or registration with the appropriate regulatory agencies. These agencies require applicants to respond to questions about past professional and criminal activities. Application to the PA Program requires you to answer the listed items, similar to those required for regulatory approval in many states. Please answer each of these questions by checking either YES or NO and provide additional details on a separate page as appropriate. If this section of the application is not completed, your application will be considered incomplete.

Signature and Date

Applications submitted without signature and date are incomplete and will not be considered.

Application Fee

This Supplemental Application must be accompanied by a non-refundable application fee of \$40. Please include this fee in the form of a check or money order made payable to UW-La Crosse.

Submission of the Supplemental Application

It is the applicant’s responsibility to collect all of the components of the supplemental application file and forward them in one envelope **which must be postmarked no later than September 1, 2009 for an Interview.**

- The typed 4-page Supplemental Application
- Any required attachments including the following if needed:
 - 1) International transcript course by course evaluations,
 - 2) TOEFL and,
 - 3) Explanations for Professional Disciplinary History items.
- Application fee of \$40, check or money order made payable to UW-La Crosse
- A copy of your GRE scores.

Resumes and non-CASPA references will not be considered. Please understand that supplemental application materials will be copied to allow review by multiple members of the admissions committee at the program’s three partner institutions. Thus, it is important that they be legible even after copying. The appearance of your application is the first impression you leave with the admissions committee. We **require** all the applications to be typed or computer printed with dark type. We also recommend that the completed application be returned by mail without folding or stapling in a 9" x 12" (or larger) envelope.

**Mail to: UW- La Crosse Business Services Office
PA Program Application
1725 State Street, 125 Graff Main Hall
La Crosse, WI 54601**

Once an applicant’s file is received and processed, the applicant will be sent an email notification reporting the receipt of the file and indicating its completeness.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE FOR APPLICANTS

The granting of a degree and certificate of completion to a physician assistant student signifies that the holder is an individual prepared for employment as a PA. In such a professional role, the physician assistant provides medical services with the supervision of a doctor of medicine or osteopathy in accordance with the applicable laws of medical practice. The services must, for the safety and welfare of the patient, be of the same professional quality that would be rendered by the supervising physician. The physician assistant must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care.

Therefore candidates for the PA profession and the PA program must have somatic sensation and the functional use of the senses of vision and hearing. Candidates' diagnostic skills will also be lessened without the functional use of the senses of equilibrium, smell and taste. Additionally, they must have sufficient exteroceptive sense (touch, pain, and temperature), sufficient proprioceptive sense (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis, and vibratory) and sufficient motor function to permit them to carry out the activities described in the sections that follow. They must be able to integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) employed, consistently, quickly, and accurately, and they must have the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze and synthesize data.

A candidate for the PA profession and this program must have abilities and skills of five varieties including observation, communication, motor, conceptual, integrative and quantitative, and behavioral and social. Technological compensation can be made for some handicaps in certain of these areas, but such a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner.

1. Observation

The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and experiments in the basic sciences, including but not limited to physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations in animals, microbiologic cultures, and microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states. A candidate must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and somatic sensation. It is enhanced by the functional use of the sense of smell.

2. Communication

A candidate should be able to speak, hear, and observe patients in order to elicit information, describe changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive nonverbal

communications. A candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients. Communication includes not only speech, but reading and writing. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the health care team.

3. Motor

Candidates should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers. A candidate should be able to do basic laboratory tests (urinalysis, CBC, etc.), carry out diagnostic procedures (proctoscopy, paracentesis, etc.) and read EKGs and X-rays. A candidate should be able to execute motor movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment of patients. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of physician assistants are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the opening of obstructed airways, the suturing of simple wounds, and the performance of simple obstetrical maneuvers. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional use of the senses of touch and vision.

4. Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Abilities

These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis and synthesis. Problem solving, the critical skill demanded of physician assistants, requires all of these intellectual abilities. In addition the candidate should be able to comprehend three dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures.

5. Behavioral and Social Attributes

A candidate must possess the emotional health and stability required for full utilization of his intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that are assessed during the admissions and education processes.