

## **Pre- Physician Assistant at Mercer University**

Students at Mercer University who are interested in preparing to apply to physician assistant programs may do so in several ways. First, Mercer University offers a Guaranteed Admission Plus Degree Program (GAPDP) for eligible students who are interested in eventually attending the Physician Assistant Program at Mercer University's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (<http://cophs.mercer.edu/pa.htm>), which is located on Mercer's Atlanta campus. The Guaranteed Admission Plus Degree Program is described below.

Mercer students who are not in the Guaranteed Admission Plus Degree Program may apply to Mercer's Physician Assistant Program at the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (COPHS) via the normal application process. Students interested in this option should complete the prerequisites for admission to the COPHS Physician Assistant Program and earn bachelor's degrees. These students should familiarize themselves with the admission requirements and procedures for Mercer's Physician Assistant Program.

Mercer students may also apply to physician assistant programs other than the one offered by Mercer's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Students who are considering applying to programs other than Mercer's should note that not all physician assistant programs share the same admission requirements; thus, these students may need to take courses in addition to or instead of those required for admission to Mercer's Physician Assistant Program. Pre-physician assistant students are advised to verify the admission requirements of each program to which they might apply.

Pre-physician assistant students should note that an undergraduate degree is required for admission to most physician assistant programs. The pre-physician assistant curriculum is not an academic major; any pre-physician assistant student who plans to complete a bachelor's degree on Mercer's Macon campus must choose an academic major and complete the requirements for that major, in addition to the courses required for admission to physician assistant programs.

### **The Guaranteed Admission Plus Degree Program**

The Guaranteed Admission Plus Degree Program (GAPDP) is designed for students admitted to or enrolled at Mercer University's College of Liberal Arts (CLA) in Macon. In order to participate in the GAPDP, a student must complete ALL of his/her pre-physician assistant coursework at Mercer's CLA; students who take college courses at institutions other than Mercer after they graduate from high school are no longer eligible for the GAPDP. In order to meet the minimum requirements for admission to Mercer's Physician Assistant Program, a GAPDP student must satisfy all pre-physician assistant requirements, complete all of the general education requirements for the CLA (with the exception of the senior capstone course), and complete 90 semester hours in-residence at Mercer's CLA by the end of the spring semester of his/her third year at Mercer.

Note that, with the approval of the COPHS Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions, dual enrollment credit (i.e., college courses taken by a student while s/he is still in high school) may be accepted to fulfill the pre-physician assistant requirements, though no class in which a student earned a grade below a "C" will transfer to Mercer. Similarly, AP, IB, and CLEP credits may be used to fulfill pre-physician assistant requirements. However, dual enrollment, AP, IB, and CLEP credits do not count toward the 90 semester hours required in-residence. Additionally, physical education and military science courses cannot be used to satisfy the 90-hour requirement.

Students interested in and eligible for the Guaranteed Admission Plus Degree Program must complete the "GAPDP Request for Participation" form (at the end of this document) and submit it to the pre-professional advisor (Dr. Carol Bokros, Academic and Advising Services, Penfield Hall, Macon campus) by the end of October of their first semester at Mercer.

After completing 30 semester hours and before completing 60 semester hours, a GAPDP student must declare a major in the CLA. A GAPDP student may choose to pursue any major offered by the CLA. GAPDP students are expected to make progress towards their declared majors, including taking 300-level courses in their selected majors.

A GAPDP student must maintain an overall grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0, as well as a 3.0 GPA in all natural science courses for the pre-physician assistant core and the student's major. Grades of "C" or above must be earned in all pre-physician assistant courses. Students may not elect to be graded on an "S/U" basis in those natural science courses required for the GAPDP. If a student repeats a course, both the first and second grades earned in the course will be used in calculating the student's overall and natural science GPAs when determining the student's eligibility to remain in the GAPDP. The COPHS Student Affairs and Admissions Office will review the overall and natural science GPAs of each GAPDP student after his/her second year as an undergraduate (August of year 2) and after both the fall and spring semesters of his/her third year; if either one of these GPAs is below 3.0 at any of these times, the student will no longer be eligible to participate in the GAPDP.

Starting in the fall of his/her first year at Mercer, a GAPDP student must participate in the academic advising and career seminar programs provided jointly by the pre-professional advisor on Mercer's Macon campus and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions at the COPHS. These programs will include a presentation for first-year students in the fall semester of each year, during which the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions will outline the requirements of the GAPDP.

Prior to matriculation in Mercer's Physician Assistant Program at the COPHS, each GAPDP student must complete 1000 documented hours of clinical experience involving direct patient care. This experience may be gained by working in a variety of professions; examples include working as a paramedic, a nursing assistant, or a phlebotomist. Other professions involving direct patient care are listed on the COPHS website about Mercer's Physician Assistant Program (<http://cophs.mercer.edu/pa.htm>).

GAPDP students are required to apply to the COPHS through CASPA, the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (<https://portal.caspaonline.org/>). **Please note that the CASPA deadlines may change every year, so it is important to maintain contact with the pre-professional advisor and/ or the COPHS. The application deadline for the class entering January 2010 is March 1, 2009. The application deadline for the class entering January 2011 will be January 1, 2010.** Each student must also submit a supplemental application to the COPHS. Each student will be required to have three letters of reference submitted on his/her behalf, one of which must be from a physician assistant or a medical doctor and another which must be from a university instructor. GAPDP students will need to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test (<http://www.ets.org/gre>; use school code 5025 and department code 0699) and earn a minimum combined score of 1,000 on the GRE's verbal and quantitative sections before matriculation. Final acceptance into the Physician Assistant Program is contingent upon a successful interview with the program's faculty during a GAPDP student's junior year.

Once a GAPDP student is accepted to the COPHS and has successfully completed 32 hours of study at the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, that student will be eligible to receive the Bachelor of Science in Health Science degree from Mercer's College of Liberal Arts. Pre-PA GAPDP students are therefore eligible to graduate in August of their first year of study at the COPHS. A student must apply for summer graduation from the University Registrar during the fall semester BEFORE the start of the physician assistant program. The application for graduation can be found on the University website (<http://www2.mercer.edu/Registrar/default.htm>); students should complete the "Macon and Centers Graduation Application"; the deadline to apply for August 2010 graduation is November 6, 2009.

Any student who is pursuing a pre-physician assistant curriculum at Mercer should sign up for Healthvoc-L, the e-mail list for students interested in health-related vocations. Students may subscribe to this service by sending an e-mail to [mailserv@mercer.edu](mailto:mailserv@mercer.edu). The body of the message should contain the following text:

**subscribe healthvoc-L  
end**

Most announcements related to advising, academic and career programs, and seminars will be sent only to this list. *Note that students are required to use their Mercer University e-mail addresses for all electronic correspondence regarding the GAPDP.*

### **The GAPDP Pre-Physician Assistant Curriculum**

GAPDP students must take the following courses, plus additional elective courses, to reach the total of at least 90 semester hours in-residence and to meet the minimum requirements for admission to the Physician Assistant Program at the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences:

Biology:            BIO 202 and 203: Human Anatomy and Physiology I and II  
                          BIO 211 and 212: Introduction to Biology I and II  
                          BIO 303: Microbiology  
                          BIO/CHM 465: Biochemistry I  
Chemistry:        CHM 111 and 112: General Chemistry I and II  
                          CHM 221 and 222: Organic Chemistry I and II  
Composition:     FYS 101: Composing the Self  
                          FYS 102: Engaging the World  
Mathematics:     MAT 126: Elementary Statistical Methods  
Psychology:      PSY 101: Introduction to Psychology  
                          PSY 245: Developmental Psychology

In addition, GAPDP students must complete all College of Liberal Arts general education requirements, excluding the senior capstone course, and should make progress in their declared majors, including taking 300-level courses in their majors.

**Note that the classes listed above fulfill the requirements for admission to the Physician Assistant Program at Mercer's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences; other programs may have different requirements. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the admission requirements of the particular programs in which they are interested.**

**Pre-Physician Assistant Advising**

Pre-physician assistant students are advised to remain in contact with Mercer's pre-professional advisor, as well as with the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. When selecting courses to take within his/her declared major, a student should consult with his/her advisor in the department of his/her major. Each individual student is ultimately responsible for knowing and meeting the requirements of the Guaranteed Admission Plus Degree Program.

**Sample Three-Year Schedule for Pre-Physician Assistant Students**

The schedules below are relevant for GAPDP students. Mercer students who plan on applying to the Physician Assistant Program at the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (COPHS) via the normal admission process must complete bachelor's degrees.

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
Schedule for Students Who Are Exempt from Precalculus (MAT 133)	CHM 111	CHM 112	CHM 221	CHM 222	BIO/CHM 465	ELEC
	UNV 101	BIO 211	BIO 212	BIO 303	BIO 202	BIO 203
	FYS 101	FYS 102	ELEC	ELEC	ELEC	ELEC
	ELEC	ELEC	ELEC	ELEC	ELEC	ELEC
Schedule for Precalculus-Ready (MAT 133) Students	CHM 111/CHM 099	CHM 112	CHM 221	CHM 222	BIO/CHM 465	ELEC
	MAT 133	BIO 211	BIO 212	BIO 303	BIO 202	BIO 203
	FYS 101	FYS 102	ELEC	ELEC	ELEC	ELEC
	UNV 101	ELEC	ELEC	ELEC	ELEC	ELEC

Note: "ELEC" indicates the opportunity for a student to register for MAT 126, PSY 101, PSY 245, one of the required general education courses, and/or a course from his/her selected major. Some courses that are required for admission to Mercer's Physician Assistant Program will also fulfill general education requirements (for example, PSY 101 may be counted as one of the social science electives needed to fulfill Mercer's general education requirements). GAPDP students are expected to make progress toward completing their declared majors, including taking 300-level courses in their majors. GAPDP students must complete 90 semester hours in residence at Mercer's CLA by the end of the spring semester of their third year at Mercer.

**Checklist for Pre-Physician Assistant Students**

Pre-physician assistant students in the Guaranteed Admission Plus Degree Program must complete the following courses (or their equivalents, if the student has dual-enrollment and/or AP or IB credits) and earn at least 90 semester hours of credit in-residence at Mercer. Courses offered by the College of Liberal Arts that satisfy the GAPDP requirements are listed below.

Credits earned	<p><b>Behavioral Sciences, Social Sciences, and Cultural Studies</b> (6 semester hours) (see the College of Liberal Arts General Education Requirements for a list of classes that fulfill these requirements)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> PSY 101: Introduction to Psychology*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Elective _____</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Biology</b> (25 semester hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> BIO 202: Human Anatomy and Physiology I</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> BIO 203: Human Anatomy and Physiology II</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> BIO 211: Introduction to Biology I</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> BIO 212: Introduction to Biology II</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> BIO 303: Microbiology</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> BIO/CHM 465: Biochemistry I</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Chemistry</b> (16 semester hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CHM 111: General Chemistry I</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CHM 112: General Chemistry II</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CHM 221: Organic Chemistry I</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CHM 222: Organic Chemistry II</li> </ul>
	<p><b>First-Year Seminar</b> (9 semester hours)*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> FYS 101: Composing the Self and UNV 101: The First-Year Student Experience <i>or</i> FYS-X 101</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> FYS 102 <i>or</i> FYS 102X: Engaging the World</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Foreign Language Competency*</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> FRE, GER, GRK, LAT, or SPN 111</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> FRE, GER, GRK, LAT, or SPN 112</li> </ul> <p><i>or</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Earn an acceptable score on the appropriate foreign language exam to place into FRE, GER, GRK, LAT, or SPN 251 or above, or provide evidence of comparable competency in a language that is not taught at Mercer</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Humanities and Fine Arts</b> (18 semester hours) (see the College of Liberal Arts General Education Requirements for a list of classes that fulfill these requirements)*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> CHR 101: Old Testament <i>or</i> CHR 150: New Testament</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> HIS 111: The Making of the West <i>or</i> HIS 112: The West and the Modern World</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A literature course</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A philosophy course (recommended: PHI 195: Introduction to Ethics)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A fine arts course</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Elective _____</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Mathematics</b> (3 semester hours)*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> MAT 126: Elementary Statistical Methods</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Scientific Inquiry</b> (3 semester hours)*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> SCI 105: Scientific Inquiry</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Additional Courses to Meet the Minimum of 90 Credits, Including Upper-Level Courses in a Selected Major</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> PSY 245: Developmental Psychology</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> _____</li> </ul>
	<b>Total Credits</b> (must equal at least 90)

**Note: GAPDP students who use dual enrollment and/or AP or IB credits to satisfy some of the pre-physician assistant and/or general education requirements must take additional courses in order to complete 90 credit hours in-residence at Mercer's College of Liberal Arts. Physical education and military science courses cannot be used to satisfy the 90-hour in-residence requirement.**

\* Those courses with an asterisk next to them meet both a pre-physician assistant requirement and a general education requirement. Note that any one of the laboratory science courses required of pre-physician assistant students will meet the general education requirement for four semester hours of a laboratory science.

**Request for Participation in the Guaranteed Admission Plus Degree Program  
at Mercer University's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences  
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT**

First Name:

Last Name:

Student ID Number:

**Contact Information**

Permanent Home Address:

Permanent Phone Number:


Local Address:

Local Phone Number:


E-mail Address\*:

\*Please note that your Mercer e-mail address will be used for all official announcements.

Medical Experiences:

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Briefly describe why you are interested in a career as a physician assistant:

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_