

Master of Science in Physician Assistant Program (MSPA)

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Overview

The Master of Science in Physician Assistant Program embraces the team-based, collaborative and interprofessional approach to patient care. Students work together in course work, special interprofessional case study groups, research and clinical skills scenarios. Collaboration extends, but is not limited to, students from occupational therapy, physical therapy, medicine, nursing, and social work. Our PA program's curriculum best prepares our graduates to practice the highest quality patient care in a rapidly changing health care environment.

Mission of the Physician Assistant Program

The mission of the MSPA Program at Mary Baldwin University is to academically and clinically prepare students for PA practice as compassionate, effective, qualified clinicians able to serve in a variety of medical specialty areas and settings in collaboration with licensed physicians. This is accomplished in an environment promoting diversity along with respect for self and others. The MSPA Program is committed to leadership, interprofessional education, and collaborative practice. The program's mission is realized in a dynamic and holistic learning environment dedicated to critical reasoning, engaged learning and scholarship, and innovative teaching with a strong commitment to service, especially for those in underserved or disadvantaged areas. Veritably, the program holds that the primary goal of medical training is service to humanity.

MSPA Program Goals

Within the design of the curriculum and clinical experiences, the goals of the MDCHS PA Program are to:

- Each cohort will achieve a PANCE passage rate above the national average.
- At least seventy-five percent of the graduates will achieve employment as a PA or will be enrolled in a PA residency or other post-graduate program within six months of graduation.
- Educate PAs to work and collaborate in an interprofessional environment to foster a patient-centered care approach to health care delivery. At least 80% of exit survey respondents will rate interprofessional preparedness as a 4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale.

ACCREDITATION

The information below is current as of printing, however, our most current accreditation information can be found on our website: <https://marybaldwin.edu/health-sciences/school-of-health-human-performance/master-of-science-physician-assistant/accreditation-outcomes/>

ARC-PA

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) has granted Accreditation-Continued status to the Mary Baldwin University/Murphy Deming College of Health Sciences Physician Assistant Program sponsored by Mary Baldwin University. Accreditation-Continued is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA Standards.

Accreditation remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the Standards. The approximate date for the next validation review of the program by the ARC-PA will be March 2030. The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation Standards and ARC-PA policy.

Admission Requirements/Process for the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Program

Application cycle begins: April 26 (in CASPA) Application deadline: October 1

- College Transcripts: A bachelor's degree is required from an MBU approved regionally accredited university prior to enrollment. Your official transcript(s) from your degree-granting institution(s) must be sent to the Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistant (CASPA). Transcripts available after CASPA applications are verified can be sent to us at: Murphy Deming College of Health Sciences/Mary Baldwin University, Office of Admissions, 100 Baldwin Blvd., Fishersville, VA 22939. Bachelor's degree and all prerequisite course work must be earned/completed by September 1 (with the exception of Medical Terminology which can be completed as a certificate program).
- Application: Applications will be online through the Centralized Application Service for

Physician Assistants (CASPA), once the application cycle has begun.

- Application Fee: In addition to the CASPA fee, in order to process your application, you will also need to submit a non-refundable supplemental fee of \$45.
- GRE: GRE must have been taken within 5 years of application to our program.
- Casper Assessment: Casper is a situational judgement test. It must be completed during the current application cycle/year.

Required Courses	Credit Hours	Comments
Biology	3-4	Any biology course in addition to Anatomy, Physiology, Microbiology; must include lab

Prerequisite Courses:

Human or Vertebrate Anatomy	3-4*	Must include lab
Human or Vertebrate Physiology	3-4*	Must include lab
Microbiology	3-4	Must include lab
Chemistry	3-4	Must include lab
Organic Chemistry OR Biochemistry	3-4	Lab preferred
Psychology	6	1 intro and 1 upper OR 2 upper level psychology courses; abnormal and developmental psychology are preferred
Statistics	3	Can be from biology, mathematics, psychology, or business. NOTE: if a psychology course is used to meet this requirement, it cannot also be used for the psychology requirement.
Medical Terminology	1-2	A medical terminology certificate could be used to fulfill the prerequisite requirement for this course work.

*Can be combined A/P for 8 credits, but must include labs

- GPA: A minimum of 3.0 overall GPA required. We expect that most accepted students will surpass this minimum. In addition, all prerequisite courses must reflect a “C” or better.
- References: Three references are required (submitted via CASPA).
- Observation Hours: Health care observation hours or actual health care experiences are recommended but not required. Shadowing experiences with a PA encouraged.
- Essay: The CASPA application form requires a brief personal essay.
- Interview: The Admissions Committee will send invitations to selected candidates to interview. Not all applicants will be invited to interview. An interview does not guarantee acceptance into the program. All travel expenses are the responsibility of the candidate.

Before registering for classes, students must provide:

- Criminal background checks (federal requirement for all persons working with vulnerable populations) at student expense
- Signed Technical Standards document
- Written verification of immunizations at student expense
- Written verification of health insurance at student expense
- Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Providers certification from the American Heart Association (AHA) at student expense

After classes start, and in preparation for clinical placements, students must also provide:

- Any additional requirements as stated by specific health care agencies (such as drug screening, criminal background checks, etc.) at student expense

Program Policies

Readmission with Advanced Placement

There is no provision for initial admission of students into the PA program with advanced placement.

Students who withdraw, or are suspended, must reapply through CASPA and the admissions criteria and procedures in place at the time of reapplication. This may not apply to students who are away from the university on a leave of absence or deceleration.

Students who are dismissed from MDCHS are not eligible for readmission into Mary Baldwin University.

If the decision is made to readmit, a readmission plan will be developed. This plan will address numerous factors e.g. grades, need for continuity of the academic experience, cohort support and other pedagogical concerns. Readmission is not a guarantee for successful completion of the program.

Grading, Student Standing, and Academic Probation

The PA program is a full-time program. Students will not be permitted to reduce the course

load in a semester as the professional programs are sequential and require the student to

complete them in a specific sequence and timing. Any special circumstances related to course work for students will be addressed on a case-by-case basis with the Accessibility Services Program Coordinator, the Program Director, and the faculty. The minimum passing grade for courses in the MSPA Program is **70% out of 100%.**

90-100% A 4.0 points per semester hour
 80-89% B 3.0 points per semester hour

70-79%	C	2.0 points per semester hour
60-69%	D*	1.0 points per semester hour
<60%	F*	0.0 points per semester hour
	I	Incomplete (used for extenuating circumstances)
	NR	No Grade reported (temporary)
	W	Withdrawal
	P**	Passing (used only in pass/fail grading status)

* Does not count toward graduate degree requirement: does count on grade point average.

**Does count toward graduate degree: does not count on grade point average.

Courses will be taken in semesters and assigned appropriate credit hours for contact time for lecture, lab, and clinical activities as appropriate. A course may be offered as a pass/fail grading option; however, students may not choose to take a regular, graded course for pass/fail.

All graduate courses must be passed with a grade of "C" or better. A student receiving a grade of "D" or "F" in any course will be dismissed from the program in which they are enrolled.

Students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 or better to continue in the program and graduate. During the didactic phase, students falling below a GPA of 3.0 in any given semester will be placed on academic probation. A student may remain on academic probation for one additional semester in order to reach a 3.0 overall GPA. If the 3.0 GPA is not met at that time the student will be dismissed from the program.

Students who fail to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 at the conclusion of the final didactic semester will be subject to academic review by the Academic Progress Committee. The student may face consequences which could include remediation, inability to progress to the clinical phase, or dismissal from the program. Academic probation during the clinical phase of the program is addressed more completely in the PA Clinical Education Manual.

A student on probation at the completion of the last didactic semester may be allowed to progress to the clinical phase provided the student completed all remediation successfully, has no course work with a grade lower than a "C", successfully passed all practical examinations, and demonstrated appropriate professional behaviors in class and clinical settings. The Academic Progress Committee will meet to discuss the student's readiness to proceed to the full-time clinical experience. Students on probation are ineligible for academic or programmatic awards.

Students on academic probation will follow the individual guidelines established by the

Academic Progress Committee to facilitate their academic improvement.

Program Matriculation and Completion – PA Program

At the end of each semester, faculty review the academic performance of all students. In order to progress to the next semester students must successfully complete all courses in a particular semester with a grade of "C" or better and maintain a 3.0 GPA. All practical testing during that semester must be successfully completed as per the course syllabi. The student must demonstrate appropriate professional behaviors. To enter the clinical phase, a student must successfully complete all didactic courses, successfully complete the didactic formative examinations and objective standardized clinical examinations (OSCE) given following completion of the didactic phase of the program, as well as maintain standards of professional behavior. In addition to successful completion of the didactic year, the student must be certified in basic life support for health care providers (BLS) and advanced cardiac life support (ACLS). Students must maintain CPR/ACLS certification for the entire clinical year of the program. In the event the student's certification in CPR/ACLS expires before graduation, the student must recertify.

The PA timeline for completion of all program requirements is specified as four years from the initial date of enrollment.

Transfer Credit

The PA program will consider requests for up to 6 (or equivalent) semester hours of transfer credit into the curriculum.

PROCEDURE:

These courses must have been successfully completed within the past three years with a minimum grade of "B" or better in a graduate-level program at a regionally-accredited institution of higher learning. Courses must be directly applicable to the established PA program curriculum, as determined by the faculty after thorough review of all appropriate documents (application, transcripts, recommendations and personal request letter).

Competency on the subject material will be assessed in accordance with the course requirements prior to acceptance of transfer credit. If the request for transfer of credits is from another PA educational program, it must be from another accredited program in which the student is in good standing, and with the specific recommendation of the program director, dean or other appropriate official. The faculty will determine satisfaction of program course prerequisites for transfer students from other PA programs on a case-by-case basis. Transfer candidates must fulfill the Murphy Deming College of Health Sciences prerequisites prior to matriculation.

MSPA Curriculum

Department: Physician Assistant

Type: MSPA

FIRST YEAR - SPRING SEMESTER

Item #	Title	Credits
PAS 500	HUMAN ANATOMY	5
PAS 502	PATHOPHYSIOLOGY	6
PAS 510	PROFESSIONAL WELLNESS	1
PAS 513	HISTORY AND PHYSICAL DIAGNOSIS I	4
PAS 530	INTERPROFESSIONAL SEMINAR I	1

FIRST YEAR - SUMMER SEMESTER

Item #	Title	Credits
PAS 503	PHARMACOLOGY I	4
PAS 526	CLINICAL MEDICINE I	5
PAS 527	CLINICAL MEDICINE I CASEWORK	1
PAS 528	LABORATORY & DIAGNOSTIC STUDIES	4
PAS 529	HISTORY & PHYSICAL DIAGNOSIS II	4

FIRST YEAR - FALL SEMESTER

Item #	Title	Credits
PAS 504	PHARMACOLOGY II	4
PAS 525	CRIT INQ, RESEARCH & EPIDEMIOLOGY	3
PAS 531	HISTORY & PHYSICAL DIAGNOSIS III	4
PAS 532	CLINICAL MEDICINE II	6
PAS 533	CLINICAL MEDICINE II CASEWORK	1
PAS 540	INTERPROFESSIONAL SEMINAR II	1

SECOND YEAR - SPRING SEMESTER

Item #	Title	Credits
PAS 620	POLICY, ETHICS & POPULATIONS	3
PAS 622	PRE-CLINICAL COMP ASSESSMENT	2
PAS 625	CLINICAL MEDICINE III	5
PAS 626	CLINICAL REASONING	4
PAS 627	CLINICAL SKILLS & PROCEDURES	4
PAS 640	INTERPROFESSIONAL SEMINAR 3	1

SECOND YEAR - CLINICAL PHASE

Item #	Title	Credits
PAS 641	BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE	6
PAS 642	EMERGENCY MEDICINE	6
PAS 643	FAMILY MEDICINE	6
PAS 644	INTERNAL MEDICINE	6
PAS 645	PEDIATRICS	6

THIRD YEAR - CLINICAL PHASE

Item #	Title	Credits
PAS 623	ADV COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT	1
PAS 648	CLINICAL ELECTIVE	6
PAS 646	SURGERY	6
PAS 647	WOMEN'S HEALTH	6
	Total credits:	122