

## **Physician Assistant Studies** **Leading to a Master of Science Degree**

### **School of Physician Assistant Studies Mission**

The mission of the Alderson Broaddus University College of Medical Science, School of Physician Assistant Studies is to academically and clinically prepare physician assistants who deliver high-quality, patient-centered, primary and specialty care, with physician collaboration, to diverse populations.

### **The School of Physician Assistant Studies strives to:**

1. Select highly qualified applicants through a non-discriminatory admissions process
2. Provide an educational experience to produce competent physician assistants trained to provide quality healthcare to diverse populations in primary and specialty settings
3. Emphasize the importance of life-long learning skills and the need to adapt to an ever evolving healthcare environment
4. Continuously evaluate program effectiveness in an effort to increase student achievement and improve program quality

### **Program Learning Objectives**

In alignment with national Physician Assistant education standards, graduates from the School of Physician Assistant Studies will achieve high quality academic and clinical competence for professional practice. The following six core competencies drive the curriculum, and students will be continuously evaluated on each throughout their training.

### **Medical Knowledge (MK)**

Medical Knowledge includes an understanding of pathophysiology, patient presentation, differential diagnosis, patient management, surgical principles, health promotion and disease prevention. Graduates of the AB School of Physician Assistant Studies program will demonstrate core knowledge about established and evolving biomedical and clinical sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care in their area of practice. In addition, physician assistants are expected to demonstrate an investigatory and analytic thinking approach to clinical situations. Physician assistants are expected to:

- MK1: Understand etiologies, risk factors, underlying pathologic processes, signs and symptoms, epidemiology and interventions for prevention for medical conditions
- MK2: Manage general medical and surgical conditions to include understanding the indications, contraindications, side effects, interactions, and adverse reactions of pharmacologic agents and other relevant treatment modalities
- MK3: Identify the appropriate site of care for presenting conditions, including identifying emergent cases and those requiring referral or admission, as well as providing appropriate care for chronic conditions
- MK4: Differentiate between the normal and the abnormal in anatomic, physiological, laboratory findings and other diagnostic data
- MK5: Appropriately use history and physical findings and proper selection and interpretation of diagnostic studies to detect conditions and formulate a differential diagnosis

### **Interpersonal & Communications Skills (I&CS)**

Interpersonal & Communication Skills encompass verbal, nonverbal and written exchange of information. Graduates of the AB School of Physician Assistant Studies program will demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in effective information exchange with patients, patients' families, physicians, professional associates, and the health care system. Physician assistants are expected to:

- I&CS1: Create and sustain a therapeutic and ethically sound relationship with patients

- I&CS2: Use effective listening, nonverbal, explanatory, questioning, and writing skills to elicit and provide information within the context of the individual patient interaction
- I&CS3: Work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals as a member or leader of a health care team
- I&CS4: Apply an understanding of human behavior
- I&CS5: Accurately and adequately document and record information regarding the care process for medical, legal, quality and financial purposes

### **Patient Care (PC)**

Patient care includes age-appropriate assessment, evaluation and management. Graduates of the AB School of Physician Assistant Studies program will demonstrate care that is effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient and equitable for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of wellness.

Physician assistants are expected to:

- PC1: Demonstrate caring and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families, physicians and other health care professionals to provide patient-centered care
- PC2: Gather essential and accurate information about their patients and make informed decisions about diagnostic and therapeutic interventions based on patient information and preferences, up-to-date scientific evidence, and clinical judgment
- PC3: Develop and carry out patient management plans
- PC4: Counsel/educate patients and their families and provide services aimed at preventing health problems or maintaining health
- PC5: Competently perform medical and surgical procedures considered essential in the area of practice

### **Professionalism (PROF)**

Professionalism is the expression of positive values and ideals as care is delivered. Foremost, it involves prioritizing the interests of those being served above one's own. Graduates of the AB School of Physician Assistant Studies program will demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to a diverse patient population and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements. Physician assistants are expected to demonstrate:

- PROF1: Understanding of legal and regulatory requirements, as well as the appropriate role of the physician assistant
- PROF2: Professional relationships with physician supervisors and other healthcare providers with respect, compassion, and integrity
- PROF3: Responsiveness, accountability, and sensitivity to the needs of patients, society and the profession, including patients' culture, age, gender, and disabilities
- PROF4: Commitment to excellence and on-going professional development, including continuous self-reflection, critical curiosity, and initiative
- PROF5: Commitment to ethical principles pertaining to provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and business practices

### **Practice-Based Learning and Improvement (PBLI)**

Practice-based Learning & Improvement includes the processes through which clinicians engage in critical analysis of their own practice experience, medical literature, and other information resources for the purpose of self-improvement. Graduates of the AB School of Physician Assistant Studies program will be able to assess, evaluate, and improve their patient care practices. Physician assistants are expected to:

- PBLI1: Locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies related to their patients' health problems

- PBLI2: Apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical studies and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness
- PBLI3: Apply information technology to manage information, access on-line medical information, and support their own education
- PBLI4: Facilitate the learning of students and/or other health care professionals
- PBLI5: Recognize and appropriately address gender, cultural, cognitive, emotional, and other biases; gaps in medical knowledge; and physical limitations in themselves and others

### **Systems-Based Practice (SBP)**

Systems-based Practice encompasses the societal, organizational and economic environments in which health care is delivered. Graduates of the AB School of Physician Assistant Studies program will demonstrate awareness of and responsiveness to the larger system of health care to provide patient care that is of optimal value. PAs should work to improve the larger health care system of which their practices are a part. Physician assistants are expected to:

- SBP1: Use information technology and clinical data systems to support effective and efficient patient care decisions and patient education
- SBP2: Effectively interact with different types of medical practice and delivery systems
- SBP3: Understand the funding sources and payment systems that provide coverage for patient care
- SBP4: Advocate for quality patient care and assist patients in dealing with system complexities
- SBP5: Accept responsibility for promoting a safe environment for patient care and recognizing and correcting systems-based factors that negatively impact it

### **Application Process**

The Alderson Broaddus University College of Medical Science, School of Physician Assistant Studies participates in the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) for the receipt and processing of all applications on **a rolling admissions cycle**. This means that applications are processed and interviews are arranged as applications are received, NOT after the application deadline has passed.

**The deadline for the CASPA application for the Alderson Broaddus University School of Physician Assistant Studies is March 1 of each year.**

It is to the applicant's benefit to apply early and complete the application as soon as possible. With submission of an application later in the process (before the deadline) your application will still be considered, processed, and interviews arranged; however, after the class fills, applicants will be evaluated for a wait list.

The CASPA application can be accessed at <https://caspa.liasoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>. Questions concerning the CASPA application should be discussed directly with CASPA customer service by e-mailing [caspainfo@caspaonline.org](mailto:caspainfo@caspaonline.org) or by calling 617-612-2080.

All required materials must be received by CASPA before the application can be sent to Alderson Broaddus University. CASPA does not send original documents to Alderson Broaddus University. If an applicant is admitted into the Program, he/she must have all official University transcripts sent directly to Alderson Broaddus University. Applicants must submit three recommendation forms/letters (CASPA Electronic Evaluations).

Supplemental Application - The supplemental application must also be received by the CASPA application deadline of March 1st. There is no fee for the supplemental application.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

**Bachelor's Degree** - Prior to matriculation, applicants must have earned a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited University/College, or a bachelor's degree certified through World Education Services.

**Undergraduate Grade Point Average** - The minimum required GPA for admission to the PA program is 3.00. The Cumulative Undergraduate GPA and Undergraduate Science GPA are calculated by CASPA and must be at least a 3.00. The PA program Prerequisite course GPA is calculated by the Alderson Broaddus University and a minimum GPA of 3.00 is required for consideration.

## **Prerequisite Course Requirements:**

<b>Courses</b>	<b>Semester Hours</b>
Human Anatomy and Physiology 1 and 2 with lab (or Human Anatomy with lab for 3-4 semester hours and Human Physiology with lab for 3-4 semester hours)	6-8
*Microbiology with lab	4
*Chemistry with lab	4
Statistics	3
**Organic Chemistry with lab or Biochemistry with lab	4
**Upper level sciences	8

\*Must be science major level.

\*\*Must be biology, chemistry or exercise science courses which would be major level--typically taken in the junior or senior undergraduate year.

All prerequisite coursework must be completed prior to matriculation. If a candidate is selected for admission into the Program with incomplete prerequisite courses, it is a provisional acceptance and the student must provide proof of successful completion of the courses prior to matriculation into the Program. Successful applicants must maintain minimal GPA requirements through matriculation.

Science prerequisite coursework older than seven years is typically not considered.

Prerequisite courses must have a letter grade. Pass/fail courses will not be accepted. Advanced Placement (AP) credits from high school and/or bypass credits do not typically fulfill any of the above prerequisite requirements.

**Standardized Testing** - The GRE is required for consideration; the University's code number is 5005.

**Shadowing Requirement** - A minimum of 40 hours of shadowing must be completed by matriculation. The applicant must shadow a Physician Assistant to meet the requirement.

**Computer Skills** - Applicants are expected to possess word processing and internet browsing skills upon entry into the Program.

**International Applicants** - For applicants who have earned degrees outside the United States, the following must be completed prior to applying:

1. Achievement of satisfactory scores (550 paper based, 173 computer based, or 61 internet based) on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) if the applicant's native language is not English.

2. Completion of the prerequisite coursework required of all applicants at an accredited institution of higher education in the United States, even if these courses were previously taken in the applicant's native country.
3. Evaluation of foreign transcripts to ascertain equivalencies to United States educational standards: World Education Services, [www.wes.org](http://www.wes.org).

## Admissions Process

A maximum class of 36 students is admitted once each year. Classes begin in May.

### Interview Selection Factors:

1. CASPA cumulative undergraduate grade point average
2. CASPA cumulative undergraduate science grade point average
3. Prerequisite coursework grade point average
4. CASPA recommendation forms/letters (electronic evaluations) strength
5. CASPA personal statement
6. GRE Score
7. Healthcare experience (not required)
8. Alderson Broaddus University bachelor's degree (weighted, not required)
9. Graduate from a collaborating institution (e.g. Waynesburg University), (weighted, not required)

### Admission Selection Factors:

1. Interview selection score
2. Personal interview
3. Shadowing Physician Assistant for 40 hours

The School of Physician Assistant Studies at Alderson Broaddus University does allow applicants to apply, interview, and be considered for admission if some prerequisites or bachelor's degree requirements are pending. A plan for completion must be in place. All must be complete by matriculation. If offered admission into the School of Physician Assistant Studies, a \$500 non-refundable deposit is required. Once the applicant matriculates, the deposit will be credited to tuition.

Applicants accepted into the School of Physician Assistant Studies must complete all courses. No program requirements will be met by transfer credit, examination, advanced placement, or life experience. Any course work completed in the School of Anatomical Science will not transfer for credit into the School of Physician Assistant Studies.

## Background Checks and Drug Testing

Alderson Broaddus University School of Physician Assistant Studies obtains criminal background check information on applicants to the Program. Candidates who do not provide accurate, truthful and complete information regarding their criminal history on the Program application may not be offered admission into the Program or may have their offers of admission withdrawn. If the University learns that a student failed to provide accurate, truthful and complete information about the student's criminal history after being admitted into the University, the University may suspend or expel the student from the Program and the University or take any other appropriate disciplinary action against the student as determined under the discretion of the Student Progress Committee.

The Program also requires applicants to submit to a urine drug screen. Any applicant who has a positive test result will be referred to the Student Progress Committee for review. A positive drug test result may result in the applicant not being offered admission into the Program or having any offer for admission withdrawn.

Further, all students enrolled in the School of Physician Assistant Studies must complete required clinical clerkships in order to graduate from the Program. Many of the health care providers with whom the University affiliates to provide clerkship opportunities for students require that criminal background checks and drug tests be conducted for students. Information obtained from the criminal background checks and/or drug testing may result in health care providers refusing to accept students for clerkship opportunities.

The University has no control over the decisions made by health care providers regarding whether a student will be excluded from participating in a clerkship opportunity because of the student's criminal history or drug testing results.

All students who accept the offer for admission into the University's School of Physician Assistant Studies, by their enrollment in the Program, agree (1) that they have been advised herein that they may be excluded by health care providers from participation in certain clerkships, through no fault or control of the University, which may delay or prevent their completion of the School of Physician Assistant Studies; and (2) that they will hold the University harmless and not bring any type of legal action against the University for any damages of any nature whatsoever that they may sustain as a result of their inability to be placed in required clerkships due to the results of their criminal background checks or their drug tests.

Students enrolled in the Program with positive criminal background checks or drug test results will be referred to the Student Progress Committee for review. The Committee, where appropriate, will take disciplinary action in accordance with the University's applicable policies and procedures, including possible suspension or expulsion from the Program. The costs of all criminal background checks and drug testing required by the University and any clinical health care provider for a clerkship must be paid for by the student. Some clinical sites also require fingerprinting, the cost of which is also the responsibility of the student.

## **Program Expenses**

Program expenses are based on current tuition and fees for the 27-month Program. Yearly increases are typical and likely to occur. Clinical phase travel and housing expenses are based on estimated living expenses, mileage costs to and from clinical locations, and expenses related to local hotel housing during call back days.

All program expenses are updated annually and can be found at: <https://ab.edu/financial-aid/price-of-attendance/#ms-pa>.

## **Refunds**

**Program Withdrawals:** If a student drops from the program up through the regular registration period, the student is not charged for that course. However, if a student withdraws from the program following the regular registration period, he/she will be charged for the tuition.

**Withdrawal from the University:** For students who withdraw from the University during the fall, spring, or summer semester, pro rata refunds of tuition, room, and board will be given through the ninth week of the semester. All financial aid awarded for the semester will be pro-rated as well. No refunds will be given to students who withdraw after the ninth week, or to students who are dismissed or suspended from the University.

The pro-rating will be based on a 15-week semester rounding of the refund down to the nearest 10% of the time after; deducting any unpaid charges owed by the student, which the student has been charged; adding an administrative fee of 5% of the charges assessed or \$100, whichever is less.