**Program Objectives and Purpose**

The Mercy College Graduate Program in Physician Assistant Studies is a full-time program designed to provide graduates with the skills needed to practice at an entry-level proficiency with their clinical supervisors while observing all appropriate ethical and legal boundaries. Physician assistants perform a wide array of medical duties and work in a variety of medical settings, ranging from primary care to various sub-specialties. Physician assistant education also prepares graduates to practice in emergency medicine or any surgical sub-specialty. Physician assistants are able to attend to many medical emergencies, act as first or second assistants in major surgery and provide pre and postoperative care.

The Physician Assistant Program at Mercy College embodies the principles of primary care medicine known as the biopsychosocial model of medical education. With this model, students learn to integrate knowledge from biologic science, family systems theory and population/community-based medicine in order to deliver comprehensive primary healthcare. Primary care medicine utilizes broad-based medical knowledge incorporating several specialties, including but not limited to internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics, gynecology and psychiatry. Graduates of this Program are educated to practice in any field of medicine they choose.

The Program grants a dual B.S. degree in Health Sciences and a Master of Science degree in Physician Assistant Studies. Those who do not have a baccalaureate degree must first complete 90 credits, including all general education requirements. All students must complete 33 credits of specific prerequisite courses prior to beginning the Physician Assistant Program.

The Mercy College PA Program emphasizes research and writing as well as skills necessary to practice clinical medicine. As a Master’s degree-awarding Program, many of the required natural science courses are completed before entering the Program, which enables the curriculum to focus on the advanced study of medicine and public health. It further allows for the addition of a three-month study on the principles of community and population-based research, ending with the presentation of a capstone project based on participation in a community-based research initiative.
Expectations of the Graduate

Graduates are required to perform the following tasks with competence:

- Elicit a detailed and accurate medical history; perform an appropriate physical examination; determine acute and chronic problems and delineate health maintenance needs on any patient within any setting.
- Determine appropriate diagnostic tools; interpret the results of routine laboratory procedures, radiographic and electrocardiograph studies.
- Develop treatment plans for common medical problems, and write medical orders.
- Perform routine medical procedures including but not limited to injections, immunizations, suturing, wound care, intravenous catheterization, cast application, and incision and drainage of superficial infections, intubation, LP, EKG interpretation.
- Counsel and educate patients regarding prescribed therapeutic regimens, health maintenance and disease prevention, normal growth and development, family planning, lifestyle risks, lifestyle adjustments due to illness, and other health concerns.
- Perform independent evaluations and initiate therapeutic procedures in life-threatening events.
- Acquire the skills necessary for effective participation in research project.
- Develop competence in oral and written communication skills.
- Assume leadership roles within the profession and the community.

Entrance Requirements

The requirements for entrance into the Physician Assistant Program are 90 credits of a general education curriculum, an overall grade point average of 3.0 and a 3.2 grade point average in the CASPA-designated science courses. While these GPAs are a minimum entry requirement, admission is very competitive and applicants with higher GPAs have a comparative advantage for admission.

Core Prerequisite Courses

- Biology (19 credits) – General Biology I & II, Clinical Microbiology, Human Physiology
- Chemistry (11 credits) – General Chemistry I & II, Biochemistry
- Math (3 credits) – Statistics
- Advanced Human Biologic Science such as Pathophysiology, Genetics, Neuroscience, Virology, Immunology or Human Anatomy

Biochemistry, Microbiology and Human Physiology MUST be taken within five years of beginning the Program. In addition, two of these three courses MUST be completed at a 4-year institution. If these courses have been completed more than five years ago, then they must be repeated. Advanced Human Biologic Science MUST be taken at a 4-year institution.

Application Criteria

- Completed Mercy College application, along with CASPA fee.
- Three letters of recommendation, at least one from a registered physician assistant, physician or a work supervisor. The recommendations should give evidence of academic and professional qualifications for graduate study. Recommendations should be dated within six months from the date of the application.
- A personal statement, detailing the applicant’s reasons for pursuing a degree in Physician Assistant Studies.
- Official transcripts from all colleges attended.
- 500 hours of direct patient care (volunteer or work) experience in a health care setting are required for the PA Program. Additionally, 250 hours of the 500 hours must be completed in a primary care setting, e.g., outpatient internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics or OB/GYN.
- Completed Supplemental application along with fee.
• Applicants who do not have a baccalaureate degree must have completed 90 credits, including all general education requirements. Please note that no more than 75 credits can be from a two-year college.
• At least two of the following courses (human physiology, microbiology, biochemistry) MUST be completed at a four-year institution. The advanced human biologic science course MUST be completed at a four-year institution.
• Human physiology, microbiology and biochemistry MUST be completed within five years of beginning the Program. Applicants who have completed these courses more than five years prior to the beginning of the Program must repeat the course(s).
• TOEFL examination must be passed by all applicants whose native language is not English.
  ** Six credits of English Language must be taken in the United States.

Selection Criteria
All applications will be reviewed and ranked according to the overall GPA and the CASPA-designated science courses GPA. Qualified applicants will be invited for a personal interview with representatives of the Graduate Program in Physician Assistant Studies. Acceptance decisions will be based on applicant academic achievement, length and scope of medical or community experience, interview, essay and letters of recommendation.

Applicants with foreign credentials and whose first language is not English are required to complete six credits of college-level English composition to satisfy the dual degree requirements, or successfully pass the English CLEP exam.

Non-discrimination Clause
The policy of Mercy College, both historically and currently, is that discrimination against any individual for reasons of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, or handicap is specifically prohibited. Accordingly, equal access to educational programs, employment opportunities, and all other College activities are extended to all students.

Advanced Placement and Part-Time Study
Students move through the curriculum as a cohort. There is no opportunity for part-time study. Transfer credit for courses previously completed will not be accepted.

Accreditation Status
The Mercy College Graduate Program in Physician Assistant Studies has been granted full accreditation by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. The next accreditation is scheduled for 2017.

Program Design
The Mercy College Graduate Program in Physician Assistant Studies is a full-time weekday program that takes 27 months to complete. The Program is divided into three terms of didactic instruction, three terms of clinical rotations and a final term for the master’s capstone project. The didactic phase of the Program is taught during the day, Monday-Friday. Some evening and weekend sessions are held during the first 3 terms. For the clinical or second year, students will be required to take on-call shifts, including nights and weekends, as required by the clerkship objectives and by the hosting institution. The clinical year includes rotations in some of the most prestigious and diverse hospitals and medical care settings in the tri-state area.

Is working a possibility during PA School?
Each term contains a full course load, so working full-time or part-time is not advised.

Counseling/Mentorship
All students are assigned a faculty advisor to guide them through the Program.
When can I apply to the Program?
The deadline to apply is November 1, 2017.

When do the prerequisites have to be completed?
All pre-requisites must be completed prior to beginning the Program.

Can prerequisite courses be taken at a community college?
We will accept a few prerequisite courses from community colleges but an application is strongest when these courses are completed at a four-year institution. At least two of the three core courses: human physiology, microbiology and biochemistry MUST be completed at a four-year college or university. The advanced human biologic science course (300 level or higher) MUST also be completed at a four-year institution.

When will interviews be conducted?
Generally, 3-4 times per year.

Is there a rolling admission?
No. Offers of admission are for the academic year stated.

How are applicants notified of acceptance?
Applicants will be notified in writing after all of the interview sessions have been completed.

What qualities are most helpful for success in the PA Program?
• Strong human physiology background
• Health care background
• Good writing skills
• Integrity
• Flexibility
• Stability
• Strong Interpersonal Skills

Approximate cost of the Program
• Tuition and fees
  o $984 per credit (90 credit Program) + Registration fees ($2,500) = $91,060
• Books, medical equipment, uniforms = $4,000
• Supplemental application fee = $40
• CASPA Application fee = $175
• Miscellaneous = $600

Is financial aid available?
Mercy College has a Graduate Financial Aid office to help students put together a financial aid package. For more information call (718) 678-8144.

Can I still apply to the Program if I do not have a Bachelor’s degree?
Yes. A Bachelors Degree is not required to apply to the Program. The requirements for entrance into the Physician Assistant Program are 90 credits of a general education curriculum, an overall grade point average of 3.0, and a 3.2 grade point average in the CASPA-designated science courses. The prerequisite courses include: General Biology I & II, Clinical Microbiology, Human Physiology, an advanced (300 level) human biology course, General Chemistry I & II, Biochemistry, and Mathematics or Statistics
Is the GRE required?
Standardized tests are not required.

International Applicants
- Canadian transcripts issued in English are not considered foreign and do not need to be evaluated.
  - However, French-Canadian transcripts must be evaluated
- CASPA does not accept Caribbean Medical School transcripts, even if issued in English. They must be evaluated.
- CASPA only accepts the following credential evaluation services:
  - World Education Services, Inc (WES); www.wes.org
  - Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc.; www.ece.org
  - Josef Silny & Associates, Inc; www.jsilny.com
  - International Education Research Foundation, Inc; www.ierf.org

Clinical Training and Hospital Affiliations
The clinical year includes rotations in some of the most prestigious and diverse hospitals and medical care settings in the Tri-State area, including but not limited to:

- Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, NY
- Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, Manhattan, NY
- Danbury Hospital, Danbury, CT
- Elmhurst Hospital Center, Elmhurst, NY
- Forest Hills Hospital, Queens, NY
- Gouverneur Hospital, Manhattan, NY
- Helen Hayes Hospital, West Haverstraw, NY
- Lincoln Hospital, Bronx, NY
- Mount Vernon Hospital, Mount Vernon, NY
- Parker Jewish Institute, New Hyde Park, NY
- Sound Shore Medical Center, New Rochelle, NY
- St. Barnabas Hospital, Bronx, NY
- St. Francis Hospital, Poughkeepsie, NY
- VIP Community Service, Bronx, NY
- Westchester Medical Center, Valhalla, NY
- White Plains Medical Center, White Plains, NY