Admissions Requirements and Process

The following information represents the most comprehensive and up-to-date policies and standards for those interested in applying for the PA Program this **current admission cycle**.

The LSUHSC-New Orleans PA Program does not review individual transcripts to determine course qualifications for applicants. The program will not meet with or advise applicants on an individual basis due to time constraints and volume of requests. The Information Sessions provide answers to many questions potential applicants have regarding the program, including admissions requirements and process.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to be aware of the information in this document and meet all published deadlines and requirements to apply to the program. If an application file is not complete and verified by the August 1st deadline, it will not be considered, regardless of the original CASPA submission date. **Please pay close attention to the instructions, requirements, and deadlines in this guidebook to ensure a complete and competitive application.**

Falsification or deliberate exclusion of information (personal or academic) during any portion of the application process, including the CASPA application, will be cause for immediate withdrawal of your application for the current cycle and future consideration for acceptance into the LSUHSC-NO PA Program.

Application Process

The PA Program will admit students only once a year (in January). An application file will be considered complete and reviewable by the PA Program Admissions Committee after satisfactorily completing the following steps:

Step 1: Review All Admission Requirements Outlined Below

It is the applicant's responsibility to be familiar with the information contained in this publication (and any subsequent revisions applicable to this admission cycle) and to ensure they meet all the Admissions Requirements outlined therein.

Step 2: Complete the CASPA Application

All applications must be processed through the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). GRE and/or PA-CAT Scores must be sent directly to the CASPA website and/or the LSUHSC New Orleans PA Program. Unsolicited information or letters of recommendation will not be added to any application. The LSUHSC-NO PA Program does not have a supplemental application. **All application materials will be gathered by CASPA and sent to the program after completion and all information is verified.**

- Applications are accepted beginning late April and must be **electronically submitted to CASPA AND verified by August 1st** for entry into the class that will start the following January.
- The PA Program reserves the right to verify credentials documented in the applicant's application.
- You should review and adhere to the CASPA Admissions Code of Cooperation and Professional Code of Conduct.
- The application fee is determined by CASPA. LSUHSC-NO PA Program does not require a

supplemental application fee.

- Waiver of Fees: If the CASPA fee is prohibitive to applying, please review the "Fee Waiver Division" information at the CASPA website to determine if you qualify for this service (See CASPA FAQ section).
    - This waiver is offered by CASPA and with limited funding. Waivers are granted until funding is depleted. Please contact CASPA for more information.
- **Personal Narrative:** Applicants are asked to write *"a brief statement expressing your motivation or desire to become a physician assistant"*, which should be written at a graduate level and demonstrate that you have an in-depth understanding of the PA role and functions.
    - The personal narrative should reflect your current motivation and reflect on your career pursuits.
    - Applicants are also encouraged to explain any aspects of their application that may need further clarification (e.g., gaps in education or work history; academic inconsistency, difficulty or poor performance; etc.).
- **Letters of Reference:** Although CASPA only requires two (2) letters of reference to consider an application complete, LSUHSC-NO PA Program **requires three (3) references**. All three **MUST** be submitted before your application will be considered complete and reviewable by the PA Program Admissions Committee.
    - References should be selected from individuals who are well-acquainted with the applicant academically, personally, and/or professionally over a period of time.
    - References should be from a variety of sources.
    - References from family members are **STRONGLY DISCOURAGED.**
    - Unsolicited information or letters of recommendation sent directly to the program will **not** be added to any application.

Special Instructions

- Updating Completed Courses: If you have already submitted your CASPA application but have completed coursework that will fulfill the pre-requisites, it is the applicant's responsibility to update the CASPA transcript as outlined in the "After the Application" section.
    - The final day to access and update your CASPA application is determined by CASPA.
- **Reapplying:** If reapplying to our program, it is the applicant's responsibility to make sure the newest application reflects your most recent transcripts, healthcare experience, and certifications.
    - No assumptions will be made by the admissions staff regarding these areas.

Contact CASPA with any questions (617.612.2080) **caspainfo@caspaonline.org**

CASPA®

It is the responsibility of the applicant to complete all areas of the CASPA application. Applications will be eliminated for the following reasons:

- Failure of application verification and mailing by CASPA by the published deadline.
- Aptitude scores and grade point averages do not reach the required minimums.
- Missing transcripts or letters of recommendation.
- Inability to complete course prerequisites prior to matriculation.
- Failure to complete and/or submit official score reports from GRE or PA-CAT by the deadline.
- Failure to meet and/or maintain the program technical standards.
- Failure to accumulate 80 hours minimum of healthcare experience.

Selection Process

All applications submitted by Louisiana residents that meet the minimum requirements will be further reviewed by the Admissions Committee. These applications will be scored based upon GPAs (cumulative, science, and pre-requisite), PA-CAT or GRE scores, the amount of direct healthcare hours acquired, PA shadowing experience, personal statement quality, and quality of references. The committee will also review select out-of-state residents who meet the following criteria: attain overall and science GPA of 3.5 or higher, achieve composite scores of at least 520 on the PA-CAT or 300 on the GRE (with 3.5 on analytical writing component), have all prerequisite coursework complete, have at least 80 hours of healthcare experience, and have logged at least 40 hours of PA shadowing. Interview preference is given to Louisiana residents.

Based upon these factors, the Admissions Committee will invite the most qualified individuals for interviews. All invitations for interviews are generated and communicated to qualified applicants through CASPA and the LSUHSC-NO PA Program via email. The dates for interviews are decided by the PA Program and published in advance. Invitees are required to acknowledge their acceptance of the offer for interview within two business days of the interview invitation being sent.

These interviews will be conducted using a multiple mini-interview approach to assess the following program values and care provider attributes:

- Communication
- Critical Analysis
- Teamwork
- Emotional Awareness
- PA Role Awareness
- Integrity
- Resilience
- Professionalism
- Maturity
- Empathy
- Discretion

Each interviewer then completes an Interview Form that generates a mean score that is factored into the Final Acceptance Rank Score.

Interview dates for the 2026 Application Cycle are July 15, August 4-6, August 10 – 12.

Acceptance

The Program Director and the Admissions Committee will then review all materials and recommend one of the following:

- Acceptance (for those who have completed all prerequisites and are highly recommended for admission)
- Conditional acceptance (for those who need to complete prerequisites)
- Wait list (applicants who meet the minimum requirement and who may be offered acceptance if the best qualified candidates do not fill all available seats)
- Non-admission (applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements or who are not competitive within the applicant pool)

Notifications and Communication

Upon submission of any of the application requirements, applicants will receive electronic notification of their application status from the LSUHSC-NO PA Program. Due to the high volume of applications, **e-mail is the best mode of communication** with the program office. You are required to regularly check your account and update the PA Program with regards to any e-mail address changes in a reasonable period of time. Failure to respond to program requests in a timely manner may result in loss of eligibility for program admission. Notification of acceptance will be communicated via email four to six weeks after all interviews have been completed.

Application Important Dates

It is the applicant's responsibility to follow up with CASPA and LSUHSC-NO to make sure all requirements are met, and documents are received in a timely manner to comply with the published deadlines.

Please note the following **DEADLINES** for matriculation:

PA Class Entering	CASPA Application Deadline	PA Class Graduation
January 2027	August 1st, 2026	May 2029

EARLY APPLICATION does not guarantee an interview or give the applicant any advantage. All applications will be considered if submitted and verified by August 1st.

IT IS BEST TO APPLY TO OUR PROGRAM SHORTLY AFTER YOU HAVE COMPLETED ALL PREREQUISITE COURSES AND HAVE THE FINAL GRADES LISTED ON YOUR TRANSCRIPT.

Residency

Residents of the State of Louisiana are given preference in the admissions processes of all LSU Health Sciences Center certificate and degree programs. For certain highly competitive curricula, non-resident applications will not be accepted.

Residents of the State of Louisiana are given preference in the admissions process of the PA Program at LSU Health Sciences Center – New Orleans.

Residence status is determined by the Office of the Registrar and is based upon guidelines established by The LSU System in Permanent Memoranda 31.

Applicants who are not residents of Louisiana will be required to meet the following criteria in addition to all other published requirements:

- Application must be verified and submitted through CASPA by the published deadline.
- Overall and Science GPA must be at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale.
- Standardized examination must be taken – PA-CAT or GRE. If the out-of-state applicant chooses to take the PA-CAT, he or she must achieve a composite score of 520 to be considered. If the out-of-state applicant chooses to take the GRE, he or she must achieve a composite score of 300 and 3.5 (analytical) to be considered.
- All prerequisite coursework must be completed prior to application submission.
- A minimum of 40 hours of PA Shadowing Hours is required.
- A minimum of 80 hours of healthcare experience is required.

Admission Requirements

GPA

All applications must have a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale AND a minimum overall science GPA of 3.0 at the time of application.

Note: Although 3.0 is the minimum GPA required, students with higher GPAs are more competitive.

All course grades are used in GPA calculations. Refer to CASPA information for method of calculating GPAs.

Standardized Examinations

Applicants are required to take a standardized exam. The applicant may choose from one of the following two exams – Physician Assistant College Admission Test (PA-CAT) ***or*** Graduate Record Examination Test (GRE).

Physician Assistant College Admission Test (PA-CAT):

All applicants seeking admission to the LSUHSC-NO PA Program are highly encouraged to take the PA-CAT. The PA-CAT is a specialized test designed to measure applicant knowledge in key prerequisite science subjects typically required for PA school. The PA-CAT measures general academic ability and scientific knowledge necessary for success in the demanding Physician Assistant curriculum. The following topics are covered on the PA-CAT: Anatomy, Physiology, General Biology, Biochemistry, General and Organic Chemistry, Microbiology, Behavioral Sciences, Genetics, Statistics. For information about the PA-CAT and to schedule your exam, visit their website at www.PA-CAT.com

- Once registered for the exam, ensure Louisiana State University – New Orleans is selected as the institution to receive your official score report in your PA-CAT Candidate Portal.
- It is highly recommended you take the PA-CAT in April, May or June. This will allow your score report to be received prior to August 1st deadline.
- LSUHSC-NO recommends a composite score of 520 or higher to be competitive with others in the overall applicant pool. Applicants who are not Louisiana residents are required to achieve a composite score of 520 or higher to be considered.

Graduate Record Examination Test (GRE):

If the applicant chooses to take the GRE, the program requires that official scores are submitted to CASPA and verified by the August 1st deadline. When filling out the application, you will be asked for an Institutional Code. The institutional code for LSUHSC-NO PA Program is 0202. The program recommends a minimum composite score of 300 and 3.5 on the analytical writing components of the GRE General Test to be competitive with others in the overall applicant pool. Applicants who are not Louisiana residents are required to achieve a minimum composite score of 300 and 3.5 on the analytical writing component to be considered.

Citizenship

Applicants must be a United States Citizen or permanent resident. Despite recent advances in the PA concept in other countries, it is a unique profession to the United States healthcare environment. As such, we train physician assistants to work with the U.S. healthcare system and want to ensure graduates of the PA Program are eligible to continue in the U.S. upon completion of their training.

Bachelor's Degree

Applicants must have completed all undergraduate degree requirements and have been issued a bachelor's degree prior to matriculation. The applicant's bachelor's degree **must be** issued by a regionally accredited U.S. college or university. Official transcripts from the awarding institution must specify the date upon which the degree was issued.

> NOTE: A bachelor's degree must be completed before December 31st of the year prior to the anticipated matriculation.

Prerequisite Coursework

Applicants must have completed the following required courses and have earned a grade of "C" or better. Applicants must have completed the required courses within the past ten years. All courses must be taken at a regionally accredited college or university; online courses are accepted. Pre-requisite coursework is mutually exclusive and cannot fulfill multiple requirements. For Louisiana residents, some coursework may be in progress at the time of application. All courses must be completed by December 31 prior to matriculation. Competitive applicants will have all coursework completed at the time of application. **ALL science courses must be for science majors.**

- General Chemistry I and II (with labs) - 8 credits
- Microbiology or Bacteriology (with lab) - 4 credits
- Anatomy (with lab) (human or comparative) - 4 credits
    - Anatomy & Physiology I & II (with labs) may be taken to meet this requirement, the courses must be taken in sequence, and all 8 credits must be completed to fulfill the pre-requisite requirements.
- Physiology (with lab) (general, human, or comparative) - 4 credits
    - **Note:** LSU A&M students: Biol 2160 will meet this requirement. A 3000 or 4000 level physiology course (with lab) will also meet this requirement.
    - Anatomy & Physiology I & II (with labs) may be taken to meet this requirement, the courses must be taken in sequence, and all 8 credits must be completed to fulfill the pre-requisite requirements.
- Biological Science Electives – 8 credits
    - These courses should have a biological science prefix, be 300/3000+ level courses, and be related to medicine or the human body in some form or fashion. (Please see institutional checklists for examples of accepted courses.)
    - Professional courses (i.e. occupational therapy, physical therapy, medical lab sciences) will not fulfill this requirement.
- Genetics - 3 credits
- Organic Chemistry or Biochemistry (with lab) - 4 credits
- College algebra or higher - 3 credits

- Statistics (with analysis of variance and/or multiple regression) - 3 credits
- Behavioral Sciences - 6 credits
    - Sociology or Psychology courses

All prerequisite coursework must be completed within the last ten years. Coursework completed greater than ten years prior to application will not be accepted.

Healthcare Experience

The program requires a minimum of eighty hours of documented healthcare experience; however, more hours are highly recommended. This experience may be either paid or volunteer and should include exposure to advanced practice providers. We reward healthcare experience based on your CASPA application descriptions, so it is important that you carefully follow the CASPA guidelines when describing the type of experience you have accumulated.

Below you will find examples of acceptable healthcare experience:

- Emergency Medical Technician
- Licensed Vocation Nurse
- Medical Assistant
- Medical Scribe
- Medical Technologist
- Military Medical Corpsman
- Nursing Assistant
- Paramedic
- Psychiatric Technician
- Radiologic Technician
- Respiratory Therapist
- Chiropractor

Current American Heart Association Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers (AHA BLS) certification must be obtained and maintained throughout matriculation if accepted.

Physician Assistant Shadowing Experiences

Physician Assistant Shadowing Experiences are not required for applicants who are Louisiana residents, but highly recommended. This experience not only gives the applicant an insight into the profession on an intimate level but also affords the applicant an opportunity to see if she or he is a 'good-fit' for the profession.

If PA shadowing is not done, it is recommended that you research the profession and talk about the PA profession with a Physician Assistant before interviewing. Your knowledge of the profession and your reasons for selecting this career are likely to play a role in the interview process.

Applicants who are not Louisiana residents are required to have at least 40 hours of PA shadowing experience.

Technical Standards

All applicants must be able to master the Technical Standards prior to and throughout the program.

This description defines the capabilities that are necessary for an individual to successfully complete the LSUHSC-NO PA Program curricula.

Medical education requires that the accumulation of knowledge be accompanied by the acquisition of skills and professional attitudes and behavior. Allied health school faculties have a responsibility to society to matriculate and graduate the best possible physician assistants, and thus admission to the PA Program is offered to those who present the highest qualifications for the study and practice of medicine. Technical standards presented in this document are prerequisite for admission, progression, and graduation from LSU Health – New Orleans School of Allied Health in New Orleans. To accomplish its mission, LSUHSC-NO PA Program has developed a curriculum consisting of core courses and clerkships, required rotations, and elective rotations. The faculty and administration of the school have developed essential functions with which all students must comply independently in order to satisfy PA program curriculum demands. All core courses in the curriculum are required so that students can develop the essential knowledge and skills necessary to function in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care.

The LSUHSC-NO PA Program maintains a strong institutional commitment to equal education opportunities for qualified students with disabilities who apply for admissions to the program or who are already enrolled. The technical standards are not intended to deter any candidate for whom reasonable accommodations will allow the fulfillment of the complete curriculum. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act LSUHSC-NO has determined that certain technical standards must be met by prospective candidates and students. A candidate for the Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree must possess aptitude, abilities, and skills in the five areas discussed below as advised by the Special Advisory Panel on Technical Standards for Medical School Admissions convened by the AAMC. (memorandum 79-4).

The Technical Standards listed are identical to the technical standards required of students matriculating in the LSUHSC-NO School of Medicine and conform to these standards. This description defines the capabilities that are necessary for an individual to successfully complete the LSUHSC-NO PA Program curricula.

Observation:
The individual must be able to observe demonstrations and participate in experiments of science, including but not limited: to dissection of cadavers, examination of specimens in anatomy, pathology and neuroanatomy laboratories, physiologic and pharmacologic demonstrations, microbiologic cultures, and microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissues. PA students must be capable of viewing and interpreting diagnostic modalities and to detect and interpret non-verbal communication from patients.

Communication:
Students should be able to communicate with patients in order to elicit information, detect changes in mood, activity and to establish therapeutic relationships. Students should be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and all members of the health care team both in person, in writing and through telecommunication.

Motor Function and Coordination:
Individuals must possess the capacity to perform physical examinations and diagnostic maneuvers. Individuals must be able to perform motor activities required in providing general and emergency

treatment to patients, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation, administering intravenous medication, applying pressure to stop bleeding, opening obstructed airways, suturing simple wounds, and performing routine obstetrical maneuvers.

Intellectual Abilities: Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative:
Individuals must have sufficient cognitive abilities and effective learning techniques to assimilate detailed and complex information presented in the PA school curriculum. Individuals must be able to learn through a variety of modalities including classroom instruction; small group, team and collaborative activities; individual study; preparation and presentation of reports and use of computer and information technology. Individuals must be able to memorize, measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, and transmit information by multiple mechanisms. Problem solving, a critical skill demanded of physician assistants, may require all of these intellectual abilities. Individuals must meet applicable safety standards for the environment and follow universal precaution procedures.

Behavioral and Social Attributes:
Individuals must possess the emotional health required for the appropriate use of their intellectual and mental abilities, including logical thinking, good judgment, impulse control, empathy, interest, and motivation. These abilities should be sufficient to assure the development and maintenance of therapeutic relationships with patients and those who care for them. Individuals must be able to maintain emotional health despite stress, uncertainty, and physically taxing workloads and to adapt to changing situations while handling the responsibilities associated with medical education and patient care. Individuals must accept responsibility for learning, exercising good judgment and promptly completing all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients.

The technical standards outlined above must be met with or without accommodation. Students who, after review of these technical standards, determine that they require reasonable accommodation to fully engage in the program should contact the Office of Disability Services at (504) 568-2211 or ods@lsuhsc.edu to confidentially discuss their accommodation needs. Given the clinical nature of our programs, time may be needed to create and implement the accommodations. Accommodations are never retroactive; therefore, timely requests are encouraged.

LSUHSC-NO PA Program will consider for admission, progression, and graduation individuals who demonstrate the knowledge and the ability to perform or learn to perform the skills described in this document. Individuals will be assessed not only on their scholastic accomplishments, but also on their physical and emotional capacities to meet the requirements of the school's curriculum and to graduate as skilled and effective practitioners of medicine.