The Physician Assistant Program is offered by the School of Allied Health in the College of Applied Sciences and Arts in collaboration with the Department of Family and Community Medicine of the School of Medicine. The program utilizes a problem-based learning curriculum and clinical rotations to prepare primary care physician assistants to practice medicine with physician supervision. The PA Program also offers a Master's degree Completion Program (MCP) for Bachelor's degree prepared PAs who wish to earn a Master's Degree. (See information about the Completion Program after the professional program information.)

The physician assistant is often the first health care provider to see a patient and perform a variety of tasks including collecting historical and physical examination data from the patient and ordering appropriate laboratory and diagnostic tests. The physician assistant synthesizes patient information and participates in formulating and executing a treatment plan to meet the patient's needs. A physician assistant can evaluate psychological aspects of a patient’s health, counsel when appropriate, and teach patients about primary health problems. The physician assistant makes referrals when indicated and can perform procedures, such as EKGs, venipuncture, casting, suturing, and injections. The physician assistant prescribes medications as delegated by the supervising physician, according to state law. Graduates of the PA Program are trained as primary care providers and awarded the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPA) degree.

Admission

To be considered for enrollment in the Physician Assistant Program, prospective students must be admitted to the Graduate School and have had completed the program prerequisites and other requirements. This program requires a nonrefundable $50.00 application fee that must be submitted with the application for Admissions to Graduate Study in the Physician Assistant Program. Applicants may pay this fee by credit card if applying electronically or by personal check, cashier's check, or money order made out to SIU, and payable through a U.S. Bank.

Degree Requirements

Prospective students must have completed at SIUC or have University approved substitutions for the following prerequisite courses: Health Care Professions 105 (Medical Terminology-2 hours) or proficiency, Chemistry 140a,b (8 hours); Psychology 102 or Child Psychology 301 or Psychobiology 302 (3 hours); Physiology 310 (4-5 hours); Physiology 301 (Cadaver Anatomy-3 hours); Microbiology 201 (4 hours); Cell and Molecular Biology, Genetics and Evolution 200A (General Biology for science majors-3 hours); Introduction to Statistics (Math 282-3 hours); English Composition 101 (3 hours); Introduction to Oral Communication 101 (3 hours); Cardiac Life Support (community college or hospital). Physiology should be completed within the last five years. Graduate Record Examination or the Miller's Analogy Test scores must have been taken within the past ten years and should be submitted with application materials.

Students who have completed or will soon complete a Bachelor’s degree and prerequisite course requirements should contact the Academic Advisor at the Physician Assistant Program for application information. Enrollment in the Physician Assistant Program is limited and based on a competitive process. Applicants will be evaluated on the overall submitted application package including GPA and academic potential, motivation, familiarity with the PA role, oral and written communication skills, inter-personal skills, and potential for success in the SIUC PA Program and the PA profession. Preference will be given to applicants from rural or medically underserved areas. Approximately 50-60 students will be selected for an interview with a maximum of 30 being admitted to the professional sequence. The MSPA program is extremely rigorous and outside employment while in the Program is discouraged.

Students will be selected for the professional sequence to begin study only in the summer session. Those accepted into the Program will be notified of acceptance by the spring semester prior to the summer of entry. The curriculum is a 26 month sequence with the first 12 months consisting of problem-based learning activities, basic science and clinical medicine courses, and clinical experiences. The next 14 months consist of clinical rotations with seminars and a summer preceptorship. Students must complete a Master's Project before
During the clinical rotation phase, students may be required to relocate to other locations, called Hubsites, throughout Illinois. These include, but are not limited to: Springfield, Carbondale/Delta Region, Decatur, Mattoon, Springfield, Pekin/Decatur, Quincy, or Olney. More information can be obtained from the PA Program Advisor at: paadvisement-L@listserv.siuc.edu

Requirements for Major in Physician Assistant Studies Program

First Year Sequence (Phase I)……………………………………..54
  Physician Assistant 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507,
  511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 531, 532,
  533, 534, 535, 536, 547, 550, 582, 599

Second Year (Phase II and Phase III)……………………………36
  Physician Assistant 545, 551, 580, 581, 582, 583, 596, 599

Total……………………………………………………………………90

Curricular Guide

PHASE I

SEMESTER 1 – SUMMER (UNIT 1) – 10 CREDIT HOURS
PA 500-1  Introduction to the Profession
PA 501-3  PBL, Unit 1
PA 511-1  Pharmacology
PA 521-2  Clinical Anatomy and Integrated Science
PA 531-2  Patient Evaluation
PA 547-1  Research Methods

SEMESTER 2 – FALL (UNITS 2 & 3) – 22 CREDIT HOURS
PA 502-3; PA 503-3  PBL, Units 2 and 3
PA 506-1  Patient Education/Behavioral Science
PA 507-1  Diversity In Medical Practice
PA 512-1; PA 513-1  Pharmacology II, III
PA 522-2; PA 523-2  Clinical Anatomy and Integrated Sciences II, III
PA 532-2; PA 533-2  Patient Evaluation II, III
PA 550-2;  Clinical Mentoring – Phase I
PA 599-2  Master’s Seminar

SEMESTER 3 – SPRING (UNITS 4 & 5) – 22 CREDIT HOURS
PA 504-3; PA 505-3  PBL, Units 4 and 5
PA 506-1  Patient Education/Behavioral Science
PA 514-1; PA 515-1  Pharmacology IV, V
PA 524-2; PA 525-2  Clinical Anatomy and Integrated Sciences IV, V
PA 534-2  Clinical/Procedural Skills
PA 535-2  ACLS/EKG
PA 536-1  Introduction to the Surgical Setting
PA 550-2;  Clinical Mentoring – Phase I
PA 599-2  Master’s Seminar

PHASE II

SEMESTER 4 – SUMMER – 6 CREDIT HOURS
PA 551-1  Clinical Mentoring – Phase II
PA 580-1  PBL Tutor Group – Phase II
PA 581-3  Clinical Rotations I
PA 599-1  Master’s Seminar

SEMESTER 5 – FALL – 12 CREDIT HOURS
PA 551-2  Clinical Mentoring – Phase II
PA 580-2  PBL Tutor Group – Phase II
PA 582-6  Clinical Rotations II
PA 599-2  Master’s Seminar

SEMESTER 6 – SPRING – 12 CREDIT HOURS
PA 551-2  Clinical Mentoring – Phase II
PA 580-2  PBL Tutor Group – Phase II
PA 582-6  Clinical Rotations III
PA 599-2  Master’s Seminar
PHASE III

SEMESTER 7 – SUMMER – 6 CREDIT HOURS
PA 545-3 Health Care Systems
PA 596-3 Preceptorship

Master’s Completion Program (30 credit hours, 12 months)
This option is for those students who are PA-Cs and hold a Bachelor’s degree from an accredited PA Program and NCCPA certification. Interested candidates must be admitted to the Graduate School and complete an application to the Master’s Completion Program (MCP) available through the PA Program academic advisor at paadvisement-L@listserv.siuc.edu.

Students are awarded the MSPA degree upon satisfactory completion of all requirements. Students enrolled in the Master's Completion Program may complete the program via distance education with periodically scheduled seminars on campus, as required by the course syllabi. Descriptions of individual courses below may be found in the Course Descriptions section.

Requirements for Master's Completion Program

First Year Sequence………………………22
Physician Assistant 540, 547, 548, 549, 599
Second Year Sequence……………………… 8
Physician Assistant 545, 599
Total……………………………………………….30

MASTER’S COMPLETION PROGRAM CURRICULAR GUIDE

SEMESTER 1 – FALL - 10 CREDIT HOURS
PA 547-4 Research Methods and Evidence-Based Medicine
PA 548-4 Medicine in Practice
PA 599-2 Master’s Seminar

SEMESTER 2 – SPRING - 12 CREDIT HOURS
PA 540-4 Ethical Issues in PA Practice
PA 549-4 Medicine in Practice
PA 599-4 Masters Seminar

SEMESTER 3 – SUMMER - 8 CREDIT HOURS
PA 545-3 Health Care Systems
PA 599-5 Master’s Seminar

For information about problem-based learning and either degree option at the Physician Assistant Program, visit our web site at: www.paprogram.siuc.edu or call the Program Academic Advisor.

Courses (PA)

500-1 Introduction to the PA Profession. This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of professional issues of the Physician Assistant. Students are introduced to physician assistant history, standards of quality assurance, credentialing and licensure, regulations governing practice, business issues, and contract negotiation. Students explore opportunities in professional organizations and ways to strengthen their professional development. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

501-3 Problem Based Learning Group, Unit 1. This course is designed to focus on medical topics in cardiology and gastroenterology. Problem-based learning is utilized with emphasis on expanding the student's knowledge base, enhancing the student’s clinical reasoning skills and self-directed learning, and improving interpersonal communication skills among students and patients. Limited to six to nine students per section. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

502-3 Problem Based Learning Group, Unit 2. This course is designed to focus on internal medicine topics in respiratory medicine, dermatology, urology, and infectious disease. Problem based learning is used with emphasis on expanding the student's knowledge base, enhancing clinical reasoning skills and self-directed learning, and improving interpersonal communication skills among students and patients. Limited to six to nine students per section. Prerequisite: 501.

503-3 Problem Based Learning Group, Unit 3. This course is designed to focus on internal medicine topics in neurological and psychiatric diseases. Problem-based learned is utilized with emphasis on expanding the student’s knowledge base, enhancing the student’s clinical reasoning skills and self-directed learning, and improving interpersonal communication skills among students and patients. Limited to six to 9 students per section. Prerequisite: 502.
504-3 Problem Based Learning Group, Unit 4. This course is designed to focus on health concerns, physiological and psychosocial issues of obstetrics, gynecology, urology, and pediatric gastroenterology. Problem-based learning is utilized in expanding the student's knowledge base, clinical reasoning skills, self-directed learning, and improving interpersonal communication skills. Limited to six to nine students per section. Prerequisite: 503.

505-3 Problem Based Learning Group, Unit 5. This course is designed to focus on medical topics related to endocrinology, renal disease, and metabolism. Problem-based learning is utilized with emphasis on expanding the student's knowledge base, enhancing the student's clinical reasoning skills and self-directed learning, and improving interpersonal communication skills among students and patients. Limited to six to nine students per section. Prerequisite: 504.

506-1 to 3 Behavioral Science/Patient Education. This course explores behavioral science and patient education as it applies to the practice of medicine, as well as maintenance of health and prevention of illness. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

507-1 Diversity in Medical Practice. Students examine issues that arise when delivering medical services to persons of diverse cultures, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, gender, and socioeconomic status. Implications for providing medical services to persons who have experienced discrimination and disadvantage will be discussed. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

508-1 to 3 Holistic Medicine. This course is designed to explore the current research, practice and applications of Mind-Body-Spirit Medicine (MBSM). Students will explore the use of various techniques for use in clinical and therapeutic settings as well as for maintaining their own personal health. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

511-1 Pharmacology I. This course introduces students to the therapeutic agents most commonly used for treatment of disorders of the cardiovascular and gastrointestinal systems. The practical aspects of dosage, schedules, therapeutic effect, adverse reactions, metabolism, mechanism of action and excretion and investigated. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

512-1 Pharmacology II. This course introduces students to the therapeutic agents most commonly used involving the pulmonary and integumentary systems, as well as those medications used in infectious disease. The practical aspects of dosage, schedules, therapeutic effect, adverse reactions, metabolism, method of action and excretion and investigated. Prerequisite: 511.

513-1 Pharmacology III. This course introduces students to the therapeutic agents most commonly used in neurology and psychiatry. The practical aspects of dosage, schedules, therapeutic effect, adverse reactions, metabolism, method of action and excretion are investigated. Prerequisite: 512.

514-1 Pharmacology IV. This course introduces students to the therapeutic agents most commonly used in practice involving pregnancy, neonates, infants, sexually transmitted diseases, menopause, and prostate disorders. The practical aspects of dosage, schedules, therapeutic effect, adverse reactions, metabolism, method of action and excretion are investigated. Prerequisite: 513.

515-1 Pharmacology V. This course introduces students to the therapeutic agents most commonly used in treating diabetes, thyroid disorders, renal disease, and fluid disorders. The practical aspects of dosage, schedules, therapeutic effect, adverse reactions, metabolism, method of action and excretion are investigated. Prerequisite: 514.

521-2 Clinical Anatomy and Integrated Sciences I. This course involves the study of anatomical structures with cadaveric materials, clinical applications, physiology and pathophysiology of selected systems. Radiology, microscopy, and embryology issues will be included. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

522-2 Clinical Anatomy and Integrated Sciences II. This course involves the study of anatomical structures with cadaveric materials, clinical applications, physiology and pathophysiology of selected systems. Radiology, microscopy, and embryology issues will be included. Prerequisite: 521.

523-2 Clinical Anatomy and Integrated Sciences III. This course involves the study of anatomical structures with cadaveric materials, clinical applications, physiology and pathophysiology of selected systems. Radiology, microscopy, and embryology issues will be included. Prerequisite: 522.

524-2 Clinical Anatomy and Integrated Sciences IV. This course involves the study of anatomical structures with cadaveric materials, clinical applications, physiology and pathophysiology of selected systems. Radiology, microscopy, and embryology issues will be included. Prerequisite: 523.

525-2 Clinical Anatomy and Integrated Sciences V. This course involves the study of anatomical structures with cadaveric materials, clinical applications, physiology and pathophysiology of selected systems. Radiology, microscopy, and embryology issues will be included. Prerequisite: 524.

531-2 Patient Evaluation I. This course is designed to prepare the Physician Assistant student in taking a patient history and performing portions of the physical exam. Interview and communication skills, medical terminology, and recording patient information are also explored. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

532-2 Patient Evaluation II. This course is designed to build on student's knowledge of pertinent physical exam skills, and increase knowledge regarding the medical history and clinical procedures. Students continue to improve skills in areas of the patient interview, medical terminology, and recording patient information. Prerequisite: 531.
533-2 Patient Evaluation III. This course is designed to build on students' knowledge of physical exam skills, introduce new systems, and improve skills in areas of the patient interview, medical terminology, and recording patient information. Prerequisite: 532.

534-2 Clinical Procedural Skills. Students develop and expand their skills in performance of clinical procedural skills needed for competency in office and hospital-based practice. Topics will include central line placement, IV therapy, EKG, lumbar puncture, venipuncture, casting, suturing, and thoracentesis. Prerequisite: 533.

535-2 EKG and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS). ELG/ACLS is designed to provide the knowledge and skills needed to read EKGs and to evaluate and manage the first ten minutes of an adult ventricular fibrillation/tachycardia arrest. Students learn to manage ten core ACLS cases, a respiratory emergency, four types of cardiac arrest, four types of pre-arrest emergencies, and stroke. May substitute for two credit hours of 549. Prerequisite: 533.

536-1 Introduction to the Surgical Setting. During this course, the student will be exposed to the various aspects of the general surgical setting. Fundamentals to be introduced include pre- and post-operative care, sterile technique, gowning and gloving, and the identification of surgical instruments. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

540-4 Ethical Issues in Physician Assistant Practice. This course is for the Master's Completion student and focuses on ethical principles (beneficence, autonomy, nonmaleficence, justice, and autonomy) and the application of these to ethical dilemmas encountered in medical service provision and medical research. The student will examine federal and state legislation, policies, and practice guidelines as related to the practicing Physician Assistant. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

545-3 Health Care Systems. This course is designed to cover the following topics: delivery of health care, standards of care and guidelines as they affect practice issues, cost and effectiveness, economics of health care, insurance and health care, indigent medical care, the health workforce, access to care, health policy, and technology (electronic medical records, email, telemedicine). Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

547-1 to 4Research Methods and Evidence Based Medicine (EBM). This course focuses on scientific inquiry within the Physician Assistant practice, covering the application of basic research methodology including problem formation, research designs, sampling, measurement, data analysis technical writing and dissemination of research results, and research ethics. Students will also focus on developing evidence-based medicine (EBM) skills. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

548-4 Medicine in Practice I. Students in this course study evidence-based principles and apply them to clinical practice. They also expand their knowledge of clinical procedures and therapeutics. Students log clinical hours as well as complete didactic assignments throughout this course. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

549-4 Medicine in Practice II. Students in this course continue to build upon the study of evidence-based medicine principles learned in previous courses and apply them to clinical practice. They will also expand their knowledge of clinical procedures and therapeutics. Students log clinical hours as well as complete didactic assignments throughout this course. Prerequisite: 501, 548.

550-1 to 4 Clinical Mentoring – Phase I. Students gain clinical experience in the community setting by participating in a one-half day per week continuity clinic in Family Medicine with a designated mentor. Students register for a this course during the first fall semester of the program. They register again for this course in the spring semester, until Phase II. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

551-1 to 5 Clinical Mentoring – Phase II. Students continue to gain clinical experience in the community setting by participating in a one-half day per week continuity clinic in Family Medicine with a designated mentor. Students register for this course during the second semester of the program. They register again for this course in subsequent semesters, until the Preceptorship. Maximum hours per term is 2. Prerequisite: 550.

580-1 to 6 Problem Bases Learning (PBL) Group Phase II. Phase II students participate in a one-half day per week problem based learning tutor group, in which they engage in the Barrowsian method of problem-based learning at respective Hubsites. This course is designated to foster independence in clinical reasoning and knowledge synthesis by working through patient problems, as well as improving the application of knowledge to clinical practice. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant major.

581-3 Clinical Rotations I. This is the first (summer semester) in a three course sequence of supervised clinical experience in a variety of settings and nine specialty areas. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

582-6 Clinical Rotations II. This is the second course (fall semester) in a three course sequence of supervised clinical experience in a variety of settings and nine specialty areas. Prerequisite: 581.

583-6 Clinical Rotations III. This is the third course (spring semester) in a three course sequence of supervised clinical experience in a variety of settings and nine specialty areas. Prerequisite: 582.

585-1 to 6 Independent Study. Directed independent study in selected areas of Physician Assistant studies. Prerequisite: limited to Physician Assistant majors.

596-3 Preceptorship. The eight week preceptorship simulates the role of the Master’s prepared graduate Physician Assistant, with supervision by the clinical preceptor. This is generally completed in a primary care area of medicine. Prerequisite: 551.
599-1 to 15 Master's Seminar. This is a longitudinal course taken over several semesters in which students work on proposal design, development, construction, research, writing, and project presentation. The Master's Seminar culminates in defense of a Grand Rounds Presentation, Community Project Presentation, or a published Problem-Based Learning Module and Tutor Guide. Prerequisite: Limited to Physician Assistant majors.

601-1 Continuing Enrollment. For graduate students who have not completed the Program and are in the process of their Master's project. The student must have completed all other program requirements to be eligible to register for this course. Concurrent enrollment in any other courses is not permitted. S/U or DEF grades only. Prerequisite: Completion of all program coursework except PA 599.