

# Physician Assistant



## What do they do?

Physician Assistants work with a team of caregivers under the supervision of a physician or surgeon. PA's work in all areas of medicine, so the specific work they do will vary depending on the specialty they choose and the work their supervising physician needs them to do. Sometimes a PA might also be the primary care provider at a small clinic or in a rural area.

## Where do they work?

Most PA's work in hospitals or a physician's private office. Some work in outpatient care centers, for the government, or in education.

## Pay:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average yearly income for a Physician Assistant is \$108,610.



## Education:

A master's degree is required to become a Physician Assistant, which usually takes at least two years. An applicant should already have a bachelor's degree and some healthcare related experience.

## PA training in Madison:

UW-Madison: [www.fammed.wisc.edu/pa-program](http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/pa-program)

\*UW-Madison prefers 500-1,000 hours of patient care experience to be a competitive applicant.

High School students interested in becoming a Physician Assistant should take classes in biology, anatomy & physiology, math, statistics, physics, psychology, health and social sciences.

## Accreditation:

Education programs for Physician Assistants are accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc:

[www.arc-pa.org](http://www.arc-pa.org)



## Professional Associations:

Physician Assistants can join any of the following professional associations.

Physician Assistant Education Association:

[www.paeaonline.org](http://www.paeaonline.org)



Wisconsin Academy of Physician Assistants:

[www.wapa.org](http://www.wapa.org)



## Certification & License:

Graduates of an accredited physician assistant education program must pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) to become certified.

The PANCE exam is administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants:

[www.nccpa.net](http://www.nccpa.net)



At the state level, Physician Assistants must become licensed through the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services.

This includes an open book exam on Wisconsin Statutes and Administrative Code. Information on license and the exam can be found here:

[www.dsps.wi.gov](http://www.dsps.wi.gov)



## Advancement & Specializations:

With experience and clinical knowledge, a Physician Assistant can earn higher wages and responsibilities, like supervising other staff and PA students.

Certified PAs can also seek additional education so they can work in a specialty area like one of these:

- Surgery
- Emergency Medicine
- Psychiatry
- Pediatrics

## Job Outlook:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for Physician Assistants is expected to grow 37 percent between 2016-2026, which is much faster than the average across all occupations.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2017-18 Edition*, Physician Assistants, [www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm)

