PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

The Mission of the Saint Joseph’s University Physician Assistant Program is to educate future physician assistants with a foundation in equitable, person-centered, evidence-based care, with a focus on primary care (family medicine), interprofessional healthcare, and an exposure to underserved and diverse populations.

To see a complete list of mission and goals, go to https://www.sju.edu/departments/physician-assistant-studies/mission-goals/.

Programs

Master of Physician Assistant Studies (https://academiccatalog.sju.edu/health-professions/physician-assistant/mpa/)

PHA 100 PA Freshman Seminar (1 credit)
This course will address PA students’ goals, as well as provide a brief history of the PA profession and the role of PAs today. Hands-on learning of basic PA skills such as taking patient history and vital signs, HIPPA, U.S. healthcare, and cultural awareness is included.

PHA 203 Complementary & Alt Medicine (3 credits)
This course is designed to introduce students to the various complementary and alternative medicines with the therapies available to patients and their impact on traditional mainstream medicine. (Covers aromatherapy, herbs, homeopathy, chiropractic, and others.)

PHA 206 PA Shadowing & Physical Exam I (3 credits)
Students are required to shadow a PA, physician, or NP for a semester. Students keep a journal of their experiences and prepare a case study presentation. Weekly class focuses on physical exam technique and common pathology of the HEENT and skin.
Prerequisites: PHA 100

PHA 208 PA Shadowing & Physical Exam II (3 credits)
Continuation of PHA 206. Shadowing plus physical exam of the cardiorespiratory, GI, musculoskeletal, and neurological systems is learned.
Prerequisites: PHA 100 and PHA 206

PHA 300 PA Interview Seminar (1 credit)
This course examines the importance of interviewing. Communication skills, verbal and nonverbal, are addressed. Students will learn and practice the patient interview as well as the professional interview. Medical ethics will also be addressed.

PHA 303 Introduction to Pharmacology (3 credits)
PA students will be introduced to the role of drugs and drug classes as they relate to disease, mental health, and bodysystems.
Prerequisites: (CH 340 or CH 346) and (BS 205 or BS 310)

PHA 310 Medical Terminology I for PA (1 credit)
This course must be taken simultaneously with BS 310 because it follows the curriculum of BS 310 to coordinate anatomy and physiology with medical terminology of each body system.

PHA 311 Medical Terms II for the PA (1 credit)
Continuation of PHA 310.

PHA 399 Independent Study (1-3 credits)
The purpose of the independent study is to gain experience (fieldwork in service learning, skill training, or research) in theirfield of healthcare under the supervision of a PA faculty member in the physician assistant studies program.

PHA 501 Human Anatomy (4 credits)
This course focuses on the study of functional and applied human anatomy. Each topic will utilize lecture and lab experiences that include prosected human cadaver specimens. When appropriate, clinical and surgical correlations are made from a diagnostic, as well as an operative, point of view. Instruction is primarily in lecture and laboratory format. Textbooks, atlases, computer software programs, and other visual aids are available for study. Applied learning based on clinically relevant cases will be emphasized.

PHA 502 Human Physiology (3 credits)
This course will provide students with a detailed overview of the fundamental aspects of human physiology, including the normal function of the human body and its major organ systems. Understanding the normal physiologic processes will serve as a foundation for understanding altered health states and their therapeutic interventions.

PHA 503 History/Physical I (3 credits)
This is the first course of two and is designed to provide students with the fundamental grounding and cognitive knowledge to prepare them for their clinical role. The course will provide students with the skills for interviewing patients and communication skills used to conduct age-appropriate and culturally competent histories, as well as to elicit histories from difficult patients. The course will also provide students with the skills to perform a comprehensive physical exam.

PHA 504 Pharmacology I (3 credits)
This is the first of two courses designed to provide a solid foundation in pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and the physiology associated with drug action and interaction. Drugs will be discussed by class with attention given to specific drugs, indications, contraindications, dosage, mechanism of action, side effects, similarities, and differences. Emphasis will be placed on the more common drugs in treatment of common diseases, including EENT, dermatologic, infectious, respiratory, cardiovascular, hematologic, and oncologic, and covers antibiotics and antivirals.

PHA 505 PA History (1 credit)
This course will give the new student the history, roots, and models of the physician assistant profession in medicine and look at the expected future role of the PA in medicine both in the United States and globally. Students will then explore the PA relationship and the role of the PA within the medical team today. Professionalism, the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the Physician Assistant Profession, and stress management will also be addressed. Students will also be introduced to the state and national professional organizations and the resources they offer and learn about the certification and continuing medical education process.

PHA 506 Genetics for PAs (1 credit)
This one-credit online course will provide PA students with a review of the structure and function of the human genome, genes, chromosomes, DNA, inheritance patterns, and genes associated with human disease. Genetics of common complex disorders and pharmacogenetics will also be covered.
**PHA 505 Psychosocial Medicine (2 credits)**
This course will examine the factors that influence a patient’s development and will identify factors that aid in integrating psychosocial and behavioral perspectives to the practice of medicine. The physician assistant students will explore these aspects of their own personalities and evaluate how these aspects may affect interaction with their patients. Students will develop sensitivity for working with culturally diverse patient populations and outline healthcare disparities among minority groups. History taking, which is a core clinical skill, will be examined, and students will learn to elicit medical information with sensitivity and accuracy.

**PHA 521 Pathophysiology (3 credits)**
This course is designed to provide students with an overview of the pathophysiology of the various organ systems of the human body. An understanding of the pathophysiology of disease and disease states is necessary to apply basic science knowledge to a clinical situation. This course will concentrate on the basic pathophysiologic understanding of disease and its manifestations and will not emphasize areas of diagnosis or treatment.

*Prerequisites: PHA 501 and PHA 502 and PHA 503 and PHA 504 and PHA 505 and PHA 506 and PHA 507*

**PHA 522 Hist/Phys II & Clinical Skills (3 credits)**
This is the second course of two and is designed to move the student from the normal history and physical exam to a problem-focused history and physical exam in concert with abnormal findings found in various organ systems and pathologies. In addition, students will learn advanced skills required in clinical practice.

*Prerequisites: PHA 501 and PHA 502 and PHA 503 and PHA 504 and PHA 505 and PHA 506 and PHA 507*

**PHA 523 Clinical Medicine I (4 credits)**
This course is the first of two designed to educate the student concerning diseases encountered in primary care medicine. The course will cover the etiology, epidemiology, pathophysiology, clinical findings, diagnostic studies, and pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic treatment and management plans for each disease. The topics covered include infectious, pulmonary, cardiovascular, hematological, reproductive, dermatological, and EENT diseases and disorders. The course will be lecture format, with small group discussion, along with a supervised clinical long-term care experience that links the didactic phase with the clinical phase.

*Prerequisites: PHA 501 and PHA 502 and PHA 503 and PHA 504 and PHA 505 and PHA 506 and PHA 507*

**PHA 524 Pharmacology II (3 credits)**
This is the second of two courses designed to provide a solid foundation in pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and the physiology associated with drug action and interaction. Drugs will be discussed by class with attention given to specific drugs, indications, contraindications, dosage, mechanism of action, side effects, similarities, and differences. Emphasis will be placed on the common drugs in treatment of common diseases, including gastrointestinal, genitourinary, endocrine, neurological, musculoskeletal, psychiatric, and behavioral.

*Prerequisites: PHA 501 and PHA 502 and PHA 503 and PHA 504 and PHA 505 and PHA 506 and PHA 507*

**PHA 525 Diagnostics I (2 credits)**
This course is part one of a two-semester course providing students with insight into the use of laboratory studies that aid clinicians in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of diseases. Laboratory measurements and examinations provide scientific data that are essential in the management of disease. Laboratory information is important in the prevention and screening of medical disorders and can be used to diagnose or confirm a preliminary diagnosis. Students will be instructed in the selection, indication, and interpretation of laboratory tests.

*Prerequisites: PHA 501 and PHA 502 and PHA 503 and PHA 504 and PHA 505 and PHA 506 and PHA 507*

**PHA 526 Intro Rsrch/Evidence-Based Med (2 credits)**
This course is the first of the required physician assistant research sequence. The course provides an introduction to research process and its relationship to evidence-based practice. Students will obtain a basic understanding of theory-based research, methodological and ethical considerations in the design of research, and ways of evaluating evidence for practice. Learning will occur through lectures, class discussions, readings, and assignments.

*Prerequisites: PHA 501 and PHA 502 and PHA 503 and PHA 504 and PHA 505 and PHA 506 and PHA 507*

**PHA 541 Clinical Medicine II (4 credits)**
This course is the second of two designed to provide the student with a problem-focused history and physical exam in concert with abnormal findings found in various organ systems and pathologies. The course will cover the etiology, epidemiology, pathophysiology, clinical findings, diagnostic studies, and pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic treatment and management plans for each disease. The topics covered include gastrointestinal, genitourinary, endocrine, neurological, musculoskeletal, and psychiatric/behavioral diseases and disorders. The course will be lecture format, with small group discussion, along with a supervised clinical long-term care experience that links the didactic phase with the clinical phase.

*Prerequisites: PHA 521 and PHA 522 and PHA 523 and PHA 524 and PHA 525 and PHA 526*

**PHA 542 Diagnostics II (2 credits)**
This course is the second of two designed to provide the student with knowledge of laboratory testing as an adjunct to the proper diagnosis, treatment, and management of disease. Laboratory testing and interpretation are essential in formulating the correct diagnosis in all patients. The course will use slides, specimens, and clinical case studies to encourage critical thinking with corresponding proper decision making. Students will be instructed in the indication, selection, and interpretation of laboratory tests and diagnostic radiology.

*Prerequisites: PHA 521 and PHA 522 and PHA 523 and PHA 524 and PHA 525 and PHA 526*

**PHA 543 Research Methods, Design & Imp (3 credits)**
Building on the first research course and using experiences from clinical skills courses, students are required to design and implement a research project. Students will frame a research question, write a research proposal, and prepare to implement a project. This activity will provide students with the ability to translate clinical problems into research protocols by incorporating published research and class learning with clinical cases.

*Prerequisites: PHA 521 and PHA 522 and PHA 523 and PHA 524 and PHA 525 and PHA 526*
PHR 545 and PHR 546 and PHR 547
Discussion posts, and critical thinking/case-based discussions. will accomplish the stated objectives through lecture presentations, occupational therapy, health and wellness, and pharmacology. Students health-related disciplines, including but not limited to physical therapy, practice. PA students will be expected to work with students from other practice. This course has been designed to promote interprofessional education and encountered in clinical practice will be introduced, providing the student of the primary care practitioner. Major geriatric syndromes commonly broad overview of the principles of geriatric medicine from the perspective of the primary care practitioner. This course is the first of two courses that will provide the student with a broad overview of the principles of geriatric medicine from the perspective of the primary care practitioner. Major geriatric syndromes commonly encountered in clinical practice will be introduced, providing the student with practical knowledge regarding the care of geriatric patients. This course has been designed to promote interprofessional education and practice. PA students will be expected to work with students from other health-related disciplines, including but not limited to physical therapy, occupational therapy, health and wellness, and pharmacology. Students will accomplish the stated objectives through lecture presentations, discussion posts, and critical thinking/case-based discussions. Prerequisites: PHR 541 and PHR 542 and PHR 543 and PHR 544 and PHR 545 and PHR 546 and PHR 547

PHR 545 Emergency Medicine (2 credits)
This course focuses on the specialty of emergency medicine, including an understanding of pre-hospital care (EMS), the relationship between the ER and inpatient services, and the ER as a primary care setting. Emphasis is placed on the skills required to work in the ER. Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) accreditation will be required for successful completion of this course. Prerequisites: PHR 521 and PHR 522 and PHR 523 and PHR 524 and PHR 525 and PHR 526

PHR 546 Surgery (2 credits)
This course is designed to provide students with an overview of the surgical specialty. The management of acute surgical problems, critical illness, solid organ malignancies, and elective surgery procedures will be discussed, as well as pre-op and post-op care of surgical patients. Laboratory sessions will teach technical skills such as universal precautions, sterilization techniques, suturing, and minor surgical procedures. Prerequisites: PHR 521 and PHR 522 and PHR 523 and PHR 524 and PHR 525 and PHR 526

PHR 547 Women's Health (2 credits)
This course provides an introduction to women's health issues across the life span, including diagnosis, management, and treatment of commonly encountered medical issues in both gynecology and reproductive and obstetric health. Prerequisites: PHR 521 and PHR 522 and PHR 523 and PHR 524 and PHR 525 and PHR 526

PHR 601 Professional Practice Issues I (1 credit)
This is the first of a series of three courses that will address the practical challenges that PA students face as they prepare to enter the working world of the practicing physician assistant. These courses will review and reinforce the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the Physician Assistant Profession, PA governance and guidelines for licensure/credentialing, electronic medical records, billing and coding, and prescribing regulations and risk management, as well as provide a self-study in medical Spanish to improve communication skills with the growing Spanish-speaking populations in the U.S. Students will also be introduced to the U.S. healthcare system, health policy, and public health. Prerequisites: PHR 541 and PHR 542 and PHR 543 and PHR 544 and PHR 545 and PHR 546 and PHR 547

PHR 602 Issues in Geriatrics I (1 credit)
This is the first of two courses that will provide the student with a broad overview of the principles of geriatric medicine from the perspective of the primary care practitioner. Major geriatric syndromes commonly encountered in clinical practice will be introduced, providing the student with practical knowledge regarding the care of geriatric patients. This course has been designed to promote interprofessional education and practice. PA students will be expected to work with students from other health-related disciplines, including but not limited to physical therapy, occupational therapy, health and wellness, and pharmacology. Students will accomplish the stated objectives through lecture presentations, discussion posts, and critical thinking/case-based discussions. Prerequisites: PHR 541 and PHR 542 and PHR 543 and PHR 544 and PHR 545 and PHR 546 and PHR 547

PHR 603 Professional Practice Issues II (1 credit)
This is the second of a series of three courses that will address the practical challenges that PA students face as they prepare to enter the working world of the practicing physician assistant. These courses will review and reinforce the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the Physician Assistant Profession, PA governance and guidelines for licensure/credentialing, electronic medical records, billing and coding, and prescribing regulations and risk management, as well as provide a self-study in medical Spanish to improve communication skills with the growing Spanish-speaking populations in the U.S. Students will also be introduced to the U.S. healthcare system, health policy, and public health. Prerequisites: PHR 541 and PHR 542 and PHR 543 and PHR 544 and PHR 545 and PHR 546 and PHR 547

PHR 604 Capstone (2 credits)
This course encompasses three integrative elements. The first element outlines study skills that aid the student in preparing for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE). The second element consists of a comprehensive written exam, the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), and demonstration of clinical skills to satisfy the ARC-Pa standard C3. The third integrative element will provide students with the opportunity to share their research projects with colleagues, faculty, and the University at large. Students will be evaluated on the quality of the presentations. Prerequisites: PHR 526 and PHR 541 and PHR 542 and PHR 543 and PHR 544 and PHR 545 and PHR 546 and PHR 547

PHR 605 Issues in Geriatrics II (1 credit)
This is the second of two courses that will provide the student with a broad overview of the principles of geriatric medicine from the perspective of the primary care practitioner. Major geriatric syndromes commonly encountered in clinical practice will be introduced, providing the student with practical knowledge regarding the care of geriatric patients. This course has been designed to promote interprofessional education and practice. PA students will be expected to work with students from other health-related disciplines, including but not limited to physical therapy, occupational therapy, health and wellness, and pharmacology. Students will accomplish the stated objectives through lecture presentations, discussion posts, and critical thinking/case-based discussions. Prerequisites: PHR 541 and PHR 542 and PHR 543 and PHR 544 and PHR 545 and PHR 546 and PHR 547

PHR 606 Professional Practice Issues III (1 credit)
This is the third of a series of three courses that will address the practical challenges that PA students face as they prepare to enter the working world of the practicing physician assistant. These courses will review and reinforce the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct for the Physician Assistant Profession, PA governance and guidelines for licensure/credentialing, electronic medical records, billing and coding, and prescribing regulations and risk management, as well as provide a self-study in medical Spanish to improve communication skills with the growing Spanish-speaking populations in the U.S. Students will also be introduced to the U.S. healthcare system, health policy, and public health. During this semester students will be introduced to total quality assurance, registering for the PANCE, preparing their curriculum vitae (CV), preparing for the professional interview, and negotiating their employment contract. Prerequisites: PHR 541 and PHR 542 and PHR 543 and PHR 544 and PHR 545 and PHR 546 and PHR 547
PH 651 Primary Care Rotation I (5 credits)
This course is the first of two required five-week rotations that occur consecutively in which the student is assigned to a primarily outpatient setting. The goal of these rotations is to educate the physician assistant student in the diagnosis, management, and treatment of the patient in the primary care setting. These rotations can occur in both urban and rural settings.
Prerequisites: PHA 541 and PHA 542 and PHA 543 and PHA 544 and PHA 545 and PHA 546 and PHA 547

PH 652 Primary Care Rotation II (5 credits)
This course is the second of two required five-week rotations that occur consecutively in which the student is assigned to a primarily outpatient setting. The goal of these rotations is to educate the physician assistant student in the diagnosis, management, and treatment of the patient in the primary care setting. These rotations can occur in both urban and rural settings.
Prerequisites: PHA 541 and PHA 542 and PHA 543 and PHA 544 and PHA 545 and PHA 546 and PHA 547

PH 653 Internal Med Clinical Rotation (5 credits)
This five-week rotation provides the physician assistant student with the practical experience necessary to interpret and integrate information obtained through the comprehensive history and physical examination, to formulate diagnoses, to develop effective treatment plans, and to provide patient management throughout the hospital course. In addition, students will learn the indications, limitations, and methodology of inpatient diagnostic procedures and therapeutic regimens common to internal medicine.
Prerequisites: PHA 541 and PHA 542 and PHA 543 and PHA 544 and PHA 545 and PHA 546 and PHA 547

PH 654 Pediatrics Clinical Rotation (5 credits)
This five-week rotation provides the physician assistant student with clinical experience in diagnosis, evaluation, and management of primary care pediatric patients encountered in the ambulatory, as well as inpatient, settings. Emphasis is placed on the recognition of normal as well as abnormal findings, diagnosis and management of common childhood illnesses, assessment of developmental milestones, immunizations, and well-child care from birth through adolescence.
Prerequisites: PHA 541 and PHA 542 and PHA 543 and PHA 544 and PHA 545 and PHA 546 and PHA 547

PH 655 Women's Health Rotation (5 credits)
This five-week rotation provides the physician assistant student with practical clinical experience in evaluation and management of normal and abnormal conditions in women's health. In addition, students will learn to provide prenatal and postpartum care, family planning, health education, and counseling.
Prerequisites: PHA 541 and PHA 542 and PHA 543 and PHA 544 and PHA 545 and PHA 546 and PHA 547

PH 656 Behav/Mental Hlth Clin Rotation (5 credits)
This five-week rotation provides the physician assistant student with experience in a psychiatric-based facility (inpatient and/or outpatient). This student will also be provided with practical clinical experience in identification, evaluation, management, and referral of patients presenting with common and/or emergent psychiatric conditions. Students learn to recognize and treat acute and chronic health disorders, affective and cognitive disorders, and disorders associated with substance abuse.
Prerequisites: PHA 541 and PHA 542 and PHA 543 and PHA 544 and PHA 545 and PHA 546 and PHA 547

PH 657 Surgery Clinical Rotation (5 credits)
This five-week rotation provides the physician assistant student with practical clinical experience in data gathering, evaluation, and management of general surgical problems encountered in the hospital. Students participate in the management of surgical patients during the preoperative phase, assist during surgery, and provide postoperative and primary care management.
Prerequisites: PHA 541 and PHA 542 and PHA 543 and PHA 544 and PHA 545 and PHA 546 and PHA 547

PH 658 Emergency Med Clinical Rotation (5 credits)
This five-week rotation provides the physician assistant student with practical clinical experience working in an urban and/or rural acute care setting. This enables the student to develop a focused and systematic approach to the diagnosis and treatment of common medical and surgical emergencies. This rotation also teaches the student about the indications, limitations, and methodology of emergency room diagnostic procedures and therapeutic regimens. In addition, this rotation provides students with the opportunity to formulate organized and complete emergency room records, problem lists, and management plans. The student will gain experience in the emergency room fast track and emergency medical services and in treating more critical patients in the main emergency room.
Prerequisites: PHA 541 and PHA 542 and PHA 543 and PHA 544 and PHA 545 and PHA 546 and PHA 547

PH 659 Geriatric Med Clinical Rotation (4 credits)
This five-week rotation provides the physician assistant student with experience in evaluating and treating common problems and challenges encountered in geriatric medicine in a variety of outpatient and inpatient settings.
Prerequisites: PHA 541 and PHA 542 and PHA 543 and PHA 544 and PHA 545 and PHA 546 and PHA 547

PH 660 Elective Clinical Rotation I (5 credits)
The first of two five-week rotations that provide the physician assistant student with the opportunity to choose inpatient and/or outpatient experiences in areas of the core curriculum or in a specialty that may include, but is not limited to, dermatology, gastroenterology, plastic surgery, cardiothoracic surgery, radiology, ENT, urology, gerontology, pulmonology, ophthalmology, oncology, orthopedics, or infectious diseases.
Prerequisites: PHA 541 and PHA 542 and PHA 543 and PHA 544 and PHA 545 and PHA 546 and PHA 547

PH 661 Elective Clinical Rotation II (4 credits)
The second of two five-week rotations that provide the physician assistant student with the opportunity to choose inpatient and/or outpatient experiences in areas of the core curriculum or in a specialty that may include, but is not limited to, dermatology, gastroenterology, plastic surgery, cardiothoracic surgery, radiology, ENT, urology, gerontology, pulmonology, ophthalmology, oncology, orthopedics, or infectious diseases.
Prerequisites: PHA 541 and PHA 542 and PHA 543 and PHA 544 and PHA 545 and PHA 546 and PHA 547