About Harding University

Harding University graduate and professional programs are offered at the master’s, specialist and doctoral levels, providing a world-class education taught from a Christian perspective. As a community of mission, the University is committed to the development of Christian scholarship and ethics and the promotion of citizenship with a global perspective. The PA program strives to develop caring physician assistants who practice competent, patient-centered primary care in diverse environments. Find your place and your mission here.

“When this program started in 2005, it was the first program in Arkansas. We went out into a health care community that had very little knowledge of what a PA was, and we have seen that change in the last 10-12 years with a large shift in the medical community accepting and utilizing PAs.”

Mary, PA-C, Class of 2007

Contact Us

Harding University
Department of Physician Assistant Studies
915 E. Market Ave. Box 12231
Searcy, AR 72149-5615

Phone: 501-279-5642
Email: paprogram@harding.edu
Website: harding.edu/paprogram

Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies
Outcomes

Physician assistants work in a variety of settings including: primary care, urgent and emergent care, orthopedic, dermatology, geriatrics, internal medicine, cardiology, oncology, rheumatology, surgery specialties, mental health, urology, and pediatrics.

Harding has an excellent first-time pass rate on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam:
- 2015 – 94%
- 2016 – 97%
- 2017 – 100%
- 2018 – 85%

“One of the things that really impressed me with this program is the way the faculty and staff invest not only their knowledge and experience but their lives into all of their students. From an academic basis to a personal basis — even to a spiritual basis — they are trying to develop us as people and professionals and not just as students and PAs.” — Paul, PA-S, Class of 2020

Accreditation

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) has granted Accreditation-Continued to the Harding University Physician Assistant Program sponsored by Harding University. Accreditation-Continued is an accreditation status granted when a currently accredited program is in compliance with the ARC-PA Standards.

Accreditation remains in effect until the program closes or withdraws from the accreditation process or until accreditation is withdrawn for failure to comply with the Standards. The approximate date for the next validation review of the program by the ARC-PA will be September 2024. The review date is contingent upon continued compliance with the Accreditation Standards and ARC-PA policy.

Mission:
To develop caring physician assistants who practice competent patient-centered primary care in diverse environments.

Clinical Experience

Students will complete four clinical semesters in six required and two elective rotations, each lasting six weeks. These are usually within the state of Arkansas and conducted at clinical practices and hospitals. On occasion, there are opportunities for an international elective rotation or preceptorship.

Prerequisites

- General Chemistry I & II with labs: 8 hours
- Organic Chemistry or Biochemistry (no lab): 3 hours
- Microbiology with lab: 4 hours
- Human Anatomy with lab: 4 hours
- Human Physiology with lab: 4 hours
- College Algebra or Calculus or Statistics: 3 hours
- General or Developmental Psychology: 3 hours
- Psychology elective: 3 hours
- Upper-Level Biology in University Setting: 3 hours
- Medical Terminology: 1-3 hours

See website for more specific details.

Admission Requirements

- A baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution in the U.S.
- GPA of at least 3.0 on prerequisites with a C or higher in all required courses
- Cumulative undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0
- GRE within the last five years

See a list of complete requirements at harding.edu/paprogram.

About the Program

The physician assistant studies program is part of the Harding University College of Allied Health and results in a Master of Science in physician assistant studies. The curriculum is an intensive, 28-month medical education program with a focus on primary care and consists of academic and clinical components. As the first PA program in Arkansas, Harding is proud of the legacy it has established of teaching and preparing top-notch health care providers from a Christian perspective since 2005. Educated with opportunities to practice in urban and rural settings and mission fields, graduates of the program will impact their communities and the world.

About the Profession

Physician assistants are health care professionals trained to provide medical care under the supervision of a licensed Doctor of Medicine or Osteopathy. PAs are important members in the health sciences world and on health care teams in hospitals and clinics and across areas of practice. Patient care and advocacy are emphasized in PA practice.

About the Profession

The physician assistant profession is listed among the top 20 fastest-growing occupations from 2018-28 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Apply online through CASPA at caspa.liaisoncas.com.