



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND OTHER INFORMATION

2021-2022 Cycle rev 3.21

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First, the information:

- The correct term is PA or Physician Assistant. There is no apostrophe; there are no plurals (**NOT**: *Physician's Assistant*; *Physicians Assistant*).
- There are no waivers, substitutions, or exceptions to any of the published admission requirements including, but not limited to:
 - GRE – You must take the GRE in 2017 or later
 - No MCAT substitution for the GRE
 - No waiver of the GRE if you have a graduate degree
 - Five-year time limit on certain requirements: 2017 or later, no exceptions (Fall 2016 is not acceptable)
- The Admissions Director and Admissions Coordinator are solely responsible for interview invitations; faculty members are solely responsible for admissions decisions.
- CASPA requires that ALL course work completed or attempted since high school **MUST** be listed on your CASPA application. This includes international course work. Failure to disclose all course work attempted is subject to your being disqualified for admission consideration or having an offer of admission revoked.

How can I be a competitive applicant?

While GPA, clinical experience, and recommendation letters are important factors, our evaluation considers the entire application to form an impression of you. Meeting or even exceeding the minimum requirements may or may not result in an opportunity for an admissions interview. As you submit your application materials through CASPA, use your personal narrative to give us the best picture of who you are - your motivation to become a PA, the experiences that contributed to your goal, your philosophy of achieving the goal to become a provider. Your work experiences, patient care experience, and community contributions are also opportunities for you to describe your various interests.

Can I find dates for open houses and information sessions on your website?

Dates for any planned open houses will be posted on the Wingate PA website. We prefer to advise prospective students individually. All admissions advising is done via email in order to maintain complete documentation for applicants. You may email us any time with questions, including a transcript review. Applicants interested in attending the Wingate campus, please email JoAnn Smith; applicants interested in attending the Hendersonville campus, please email Susan Lance.

What major for my undergraduate degree do I need to be a competitive candidate for admission?

The choice of your undergraduate major has no bearing on an admissions decision. So long as you complete the nine prerequisites at a regionally accredited institution and fulfill the other requirements, you are eligible for consideration.

Who should write my reference letters?

We require that one of your reference letters be written by a health care provider (MD, DO, PA, or NP), and one by a college professor or college academic advisor. Excellent letters come from reference writers **who have known you for more than one year** in a capacity other than job shadowing, and can write about qualities that have been identified as standard for individuals entering the medical profession. Some examples include *adaptability, critical thinking, integrity, personal maturity, resilience*. Each letter should highlight some of these qualities and specific experiences so that when combined, the admissions committee can get a complete impression of your character. Please provide this information to the individuals who will write letters for you. If grades/GPA are included in the recommendation, context should be provided to help interpret them.

CASPA requires a minimum of two references and allows a maximum of five. We prefer to see a minimum of three letters, and strongly advise varying the "venue" of your reference writers. For example, your application will be strengthened, and a more complete picture obtained, by letters from your place of employment, school, civic organization or volunteer site, rather than four letters from providers in the practice where you work.

My undergraduate academic record was not the best. Am I wasting my time applying to your program?

While we look at each applicant's overall GPA and overall science GPA, we do not have a minimum required to move forward in the admission process. If you are a recent college graduate who has taken no post-baccalaureate coursework, your undergraduate record will be the only education we have to consider. With the increasing size and strength of our applicant pool, our critical approach to filtering candidates includes taking into consideration your undergraduate record regardless of how long ago it occurred. However, significant post-baccalaureate coursework taken at a four-year institution in a rigorous course load can go a long way in remedying your academic reputation.

What score should I earn on the GRE to be considered for admission?

We do not have minimum scores set for the GRE; however, we consider scores in the 50th percentile or higher in verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing to be competitive. The exam is used as part of your overall application package to gauge your performance on a standardized online exam. Good performance on the GRE, along with improvement of your academic record with post-baccalaureate courses, if necessary, will strengthen you as a candidate.

Where should I take my prerequisite courses?

We accept courses from any regionally accredited community college, college, or university, either online with virtual labs or in a traditional classroom and lab setting. It is to your advantage to take as full a course load as possible each semester to demonstrate your capacity for the challenging PA program curriculum.

What about retaking prerequisites to improve the grades?

Retaking courses to improve your grades is considered a positive action – an indication that you are willing to do what it takes to be as strong an applicant as possible. For example, if you earned a C in one of your prerequisites at the college or university level and repeated the course to earn a better grade, we would accept the better grade. We strongly recommend retaking the course at the same type of institution as you did originally (for example, if originally taken during your undergraduate education, then retake at a four-year institution).

Will my prerequisite courses be accepted to transfer to Wingate University?

None of your courses “transfer” to Wingate University. You will need to submit official transcripts to CASPA for all courses you have taken since high school. CASPA verifies your coursework prior to sending your application to us. When your application is reviewed, we will make a determination of your completion of our prerequisites, and whether they are within our time limits, based on CASPA's verification. After admission to the PA program, you will be required to submit official transcripts to us for your bachelor degree and all prerequisite courses which will become part of your permanent record.

When should I submit my application through CASPA?

As soon as you are confident that all of our requirements (including clinical hours) will be fulfilled by January 15, 2022 we encourage you to submit with CASPA. Any requirement that is in-progress will be noted and we will communicate directly with you until completion. Please note that the only requirement that can be pending after January 15 is the conferral of the bachelor degree. Since we use a “rolling” admissions process, there are more interview slots and seats available in the program during the early part of the cycle rather than the later part of the cycle. It is to your advantage to submit as early as possible.

Pending requirements will not delay our review of your application materials or the scheduling of any interview. There are exceptions to scheduling an interview with pending requirements, which include, but are not limited to:

- Whether the pending prerequisites will affect the applicant's likelihood of achieving the required minimum 3.20 GPA on our six science prerequisites; and
- Pending GRE retake to improve scores to a more competitive level.

How many applications do you receive?

For the 2020-2021 application cycle, we received a total of 592 applications for both campuses.

What about the two campuses for your program?

While there are more seats available on the Wingate campus, there are also more applications to this campus. The Hendersonville campus has fewer seats but the applicant pool is proportionately smaller than the Wingate campus. The Wingate University PA Program uses synchronous distance education (SDE). Most lectures originate from the Wingate campus; however, Wingate campus professors travel frequently to Hendersonville to teach and meet with students. Hendersonville professors also teach courses and certain units of courses such as Clinical Medicine. All hands-on teaching and small group sessions (Patient Assessment, Medical Procedures, and Topic Exploration) are taught by faculty on each campus. Each campus offers the same student services (counseling, student health, etc.) and teaching equipment and models. Your choice of campuses is primarily a geographic one. You must choose a campus when applying through CASPA and, if admitted, you will complete your education there. ***You cannot be considered for both campuses.***

What is the timeline on admissions?

For applications to the Wingate University PA program, the CASPA portal will open on April 29, 2021, and close December 15, 2021. Applications must be verified by CASPA on or before December 15, 2021 in order to be considered for admissions. We will begin to receive verified applications for review in May or early June. The applications will be reviewed in the order of submission to CASPA. Each applicant will receive a personal email from us with details of our review. Interviews generally begin in September and continue into February, if needed. We interview approximately eight to fourteen students per session, and the process takes about 2-3 hours, which includes an individual meeting with a faculty member and a Q&A session with current students. No later than three weeks after the interview, each applicant will receive an email with the decision: admit, wait list, or deny.

When CASPA calculates my science GPA it is below 3.2. Am I automatically denied?

CASPA calculates an overall science GPA with every science course you've completed since high school. We do not have a minimum GPA on this overall science. Your science prerequisites GPA are calculated choosing courses from your reported classes that satisfy our six prerequisites. The minimum GPA for these six science prerequisites is 3.2. If you have retaken a prerequisite, we will use the better grade, not an average of the two grades. Additionally, if you take a higher level of the subject and receive a better grade, we will use the higher grade. For example, if your grade was higher in Organic Chemistry II, we will use it instead of the lower grade earned in Organic Chemistry I.

How can I get 500 hours of clinical experience?

If you are beginning to plan for PA education and are not coming from a health care or medical background, you may consider earning a certification at a local community college as a CNA, EMT, phlebotomist, pharmacy technician, etc. While certification is not a requirement in order to obtain direct patient contact, it can certainly open doors for you. A medical assistant or a medical scribe are also good positions to gain clinical hours. These are just a few examples; we do not post a list of positions because we don't want applicants to be limited as they consider the best route for them. If you have questions as to whether what you are planning to do will count toward clinical experience, just email to ask. We accept compensated and volunteer clinical experience but prefer most of your hours to be compensated. Shadowing or observation ***are not*** accepted as clinical experience, but they ***are*** valuable experience and will add competitiveness to your application. Additionally, hours accrued for academic credit ***are not*** counted toward fulfilling the 500 hours. The minimum of 500 hours must be earned by January 15, 2022.