Patient Care Experience

PA programs are increasingly more and more difficult to get into. The more patient care experience you have prior to applying, the more competitive you will be as an applicant. Additionally, the types of patient care experience you have can help you stand out as an applicant.

**What constitutes patient care?**

* Must be direct, “hands on” patient care
  + It can often be volunteer or paid
* Examples: nursing assistant, EMT (check out Temple EMS if interested at <http://www.templeems.org/> ), ER tech, physical therapy or occupational therapy aide, medical scribe, clinical research assistant, phlebotomist, medical assistant, patient care technician, optometry technician
* While still valuable, the following are positions that typically **DO NOT** count toward your patient care hours:
  + Shadowing, non-clinical lab technician, hospital unit clerk, hospital receptionist, life guard, aerobics/fitness instructor

**A few points regarding patient care**

* Some programs may not require any or very little (i.e. <500 hours) of patient care; however, to be a competitive applicant, **aim for approximately 1000 hours** (the more, the better!)
  + There is NOTHING wrong with taking time off between undergrad and grad school to obtain patient care experience.
* Patient care is important, but DO NOT neglect your school work in order to obtain it. Grades are ultimately (usually) most important
* Having a healthcare certificate (EMT, CNA, paramedic, etc.) looks great. It also opens up many doors and makes obtaining patient care experiences easier
* Use your connections! Ask your friends, family members, etc. if they have any ‘ins’ that could help you get a patient care experience.
* Attaining patient care hours can be difficult! Exhaust all of your options. Then exhaust them again.
* If given the option, attempt to work with underserved patient populations
* Having multiple types of patient care experience also deepens your medical knowledge base and makes you a more well-rounded applicant

**Various Options for Obtaining Patient Care Hours (without a certification)**

* Apply to be a Scribe through ScribeAmerica at <https://www.scribeamerica.com/>
* Call Human Resources at different hospitals and nursing homes and ask what kind of positions they have available for students, or if they have any job openings that only require on-the-job training
* Apply for the College Volunteer Program at UPenn’s Hospital at <http://www.pennmedicine.org/hospital-university-pennsylvania/volunteer-programs/premed-program/>
* Apply for the Research Associates Program at Thomas Jefferson University -<http://www.jefferson.edu/university/jmc/departments/emergency_medicine/research.html>
* Apply for the Academic Associates Program at Cooper University Medical Center (nearby in NJ) - <http://www.cooperhealth.edu/residencies/emergency-medicine/academic-associate-program-aap>
* Apply for the Academic Associates Program at UPenn at

http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/emergency-medicine/research/programs/academic-assoc.html

* Volunteer at CHOP, the Philadelphia VA Medical Center, Einstein, Jefferson University Hospital, Cancer Treatment Center of America, or St. Christopher’s Hospital
  + http://www.chop.edu/about-us/college-volunteer-program#.Vh1VtrRViko
  + http://www.philadelphia.va.gov/giving/assignments.asp
  + <http://www.einstein.edu/volunteer/>
  + <http://hospitals.jefferson.edu/departments-and-services/volunteer-services/clinical-programs/>
  + http://www.pcacares.org/ServiceDetail.aspx?service=Cancer+Treatment+Centers+of+America+-+Volunteer
  + http://www.stchristophershospital.com/volunteering
* Emphasize that you would like a position that directly interacts with patients
* Apply to these programs early! There are many college students in Philadelphia who also want these positions

COURSEWORK

PA programs around the country all differ from each other, and each school requires various prerequisite courses. **It is important to research the programs you are interested in applying to well in advance in order to create the right class schedule.** You can never begin doing this too soon!

Temple’s new PA program requires courses that many other programs in the area do not require. If you have a major interest in Temple’s PA program, please visit

<http://www-dev.temple.edu/medicine/education/pa_application_requirements.htm#pc>

to plan accordingly.

The following are Temple specific courses for your convenience.

**Classes you most likely NEED to take**

* General Chemistry I - CHEM 1031 + 1033 (lab)
* General Chemistry II - CHEM 1032 + 1034 (lab)
* General Biology I - BIO 1011 OR BIO 1111
* General Biology II - BIO 1012 OR BIO 1112
* Anatomy & Physiology I – KN 1223
* Anatomy & Physiology II – KN 1224
* Microbiology – BIO 2001 (Clinical Microbiology) or BIO 3317 (General Microbiology)
* Introduction to Psychology
  + AND 1 advanced psychology course (Developmental or Psychopathology are typically preferred)
    - Developmental Psychology – PSY 2301
    - Psychopathology - 2201
* Medical Terminology - HIM 1101
* College Algebra (or higher) and/or Statistics

**Classes you MIGHT NEED to take**

\* Many of the below courses require you taking BIO 1111 and BIO 1112

* Genetics - BIO 2296
* Biochemistry – CHEM 4401
* Organic Chemistry I – CHEM 2201 (lab is required at some programs)

**Extra Classes that will AFFECT YOUR SCIENCE GPA**

* Many Kinesiology courses - Motor Behavior, Physiology of Physical Activity, Biomechanics, Intro to Kinesiology, Physics
  + NOT physical fitness courses or Social-Psychology of Physical Activity
* Many Public Health courses
* Many Environmental Science courses
* Many Speech and Hearing Science courses

For more information, visit the CASPA website which provides more information about how CASPA calculates your cumulative and science GPAs:

https://portal.caspaonline.org/caspaHelpPages/frequently-asked-questions/academic-history/course-subjects/

*\* Email us with any questions!*