

SIUC Physician Assistant Program

Introduction

Welcome to the SIUC PA Program Website! We are glad you are here!

The Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) Physician Assistant (PA) program began in 1997 and utilizes a problem-based learning (PBL) format for delivery of its medical curriculum. The program is housed in the School of Allied Health in the College of Applied Sciences and Arts in cooperation with the SIU School of Medicine. The SIUC PA program has been a pioneer in using PBL, simulated patients, innovative evaluation techniques, and clinical mentoring programs. SIUC has an overall national certification rate of over 99% for all PA graduates and a 100% employment rate by 3 months after graduation.

Because SIUC is a major research institution and the national trend in PA education has moved toward the Master's Degree, the PA Program has transitioned to a Master's level degree program beginning with the class entering summer of 2007. Two separate degree options will be offered. A Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPA) can be gained by on-campus study (26 months). This full program is for students who wish to become physician assistants. We have also added an online master's degree completion option for those who already hold a Bachelor's Degree and are currently practicing physician assistants. This Master's Completion Program (MCP) can be achieved in one (1) year using distance learning and a supervising Preceptor. Detailed information about each of these programs can be found by clicking on the links on this website.

Because of the change to a Master's level program, requirements for admission have also changed. Additionally, applicants will be required to complete a Bachelor's degree before being considered for admission to the PA Program.

Note For Current SIUC Students

SIUC will no longer offer a Pre-PA major and Bachelor's Degree in Physician Assistant Studies. **Any *current* SIUC students with a Pre-PA Major will need to choose a new major.** You should then contact the advisor in the new major to make an appointment to change your major and register for classes, etc. Students may want to consider the disciplines of Physiology, Biology, Chemistry, Radiological Sciences, Psychology, Nursing, or other health related undergraduate majors. Remember that in addition to a Bachelor's degree, you will have to score highly on several prerequisite courses to be considered for admission to the SIUC PA Program. Please see related information on this website.

Curriculum

The Physician Assistant Program curriculum includes intense problem-based learning modules combined with clinical experiences. These units of study are based on the most common disease states and preventive medicine guidelines utilized in medical practice in the rural areas of this state. The curriculum is designed to prepare primary care providers for medical practice in rural settings. All physician assistant courses are sequenced and are required of all students. The first year of study (Phase I: Didactic) is on campus in Carbondale. The second year (Phase II: Clinical Rotations) is held at the following Illinois locations: Carbondale/Delta, Decatur, Mattoon, Olney, Quincy, and Springfield. Second year students may be required to relocate to one of these towns. Phase III is the eight-week Preceptorship and students may complete this at a site of their choice, with faculty approval. (More complete curriculum information is available elsewhere on this website).

Applicants

Applications for the full 26 month PA program are accepted *the year prior* to matriculation, beginning July 1st of each year and close on December 1st of each year. After applications are completed, those who are accepted into the program all start in June.

Before students are accepted into the program they must complete a Bachelor's Degree, take the GRE or MAT, as well as all physician assistant support course prerequisites. Transfer credits may be accepted, and credit is not awarded for prior work experience. Consideration for admission to the Physician Assistant Program is given to candidates with high cumulative and support course grade point averages (GPAs), healthcare experience, letters of recommendation, and those from rural areas. The most qualified candidates are invited to campus for interviews. Twenty-four students are offered a position in the class each year.

Applications for the MCP program are accepted until June 1st of each year. Classes for the MCP start the fall semester each year.

Degree Awarded

Upon successful completion of both programs, a Master of Science Degree in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPA) is awarded. A Certificate of Completion in Physician Assistant Training is also awarded to students in the full 26 month program. These graduates are then candidates for national certification through the National Commission of the Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). (www.nccpa.net)

Program Advisement

To speak with an academic advisor for any questions about recommended majors, the new PA Program requirements or if you need any assistance, call (618)453-5527 or e-mail pa_advisement@siumed.edu.