

Master of Science in Physician Assistant

The 27-month Master of Science in Physician Assistant (MSPA) program will prepare students for a successful career as a physician assistant. The program consists of two distinctive parts, including the didactic phase and clinical phase. The 15-month didactic phase includes interactive sessions, group work, case-based learning, interprofessional experiences, and early clinical experiences. The 12-month clinical phase includes supervised clinical practice experiences (i.e., clinical rotations), callback sessions, and practical examinations. This full-time, cohort-style program culminates with a summative evaluation, which includes written and practical components. Through didactic instruction and supervised clinical practice experiences, students will acquire the knowledge and skills required to sit for the physician assistant national certifying exam (PANCE®) and apply for state licensure.

All MSPA courses will be fully in person, unless there are extenuating circumstances requiring a change in designated courses. These designated courses have been selected by the MSPA program for optional (online or hybrid) format. Course modality will only be changed from in-person to another modality with official approval by the Program Director.

Admission to the Program

There are nine (9) admission criteria for the CSUSB MSPA program:

- CASPA and Supplemental Applications
- Cal State Apply Application
- Bachelor's Degree
- Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Prerequisite Coursework
- Clinical Experience
- Letters of Reference
- Standardized Entrance Exams
- Technical Standards

1. Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) and Supplemental Applications

- The CASPA application and CSUSB supplemental application (embedded within CASPA) must be submitted by 8:59PM Pacific Standard Time (PST)/11:59PM Eastern Standard Time (EST) on December 1. The CASPA application requires a fee (or fee waiver), but there is no additional fee for the CSUSB supplemental application.

2. Cal State Apply Application

- Once accepted to the CSUSB MSPA Program, students are required to complete the Cal State Apply application. Fee waivers may be available.

3. Bachelor's Degree

- A bachelor's degree (in any discipline) must be completed no later than June 30 of the matriculation year.

4. Grade Point Average (GPA)

- The GPA (as calculated by CASPA) must meet the following requirements at the time of application:
 - a. 3.0 Overall GPA or 3.2 last 60 credits GPA
 - b. 3.0 Science GPA or 3.2 Prerequisite GPA

5. Prerequisite Coursework

- All prerequisite coursework must be completed with a grade of C (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) or higher at a regionally accredited institution in the United States. These courses must also be completed within 10 years of the application deadline. Applicants are permitted to have up to two prerequisite courses in progress at the time of application submission. However, no more than one science prerequisite course can be in progress after December 31 of the application year. All prerequisites must be completed no later than June 30 of the matriculation year.
- Students who complete introductory courses, accelerated courses (e.g., completed in six to eight weeks), and Pass/Fail courses (completed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) are **strongly** encouraged to take additional courses in the prerequisite content area. Online courses are accepted if they are 1) taken at a regionally accredited institution and 2) equivalent in depth and content to in-person courses.
- The seven (7) required courses include:

(1) Microbiology (minimum of 3 semester hours/units or 4 quarter hours/units):

- e.g., BIOL 2200 Microbiology for Allied Health Majors (4 units) or BIOL 3200 Microbiology (4 units)

(2) Human Anatomy and Physiology with lab (minimum of 8 semester hours/units or 10 quarter hours/units):

- Option 1: Two sequential courses covering the full human body.
 - e.g., BIOL 2230 Human Anatomy and Physiology I for Allied Health Majors (4 units) and BIOL 2240 Human Anatomy and Physiology II for Allied Health Majors (4 units)
 - e.g., BIOL 4630 Human Anatomy and Physiology I (5 units) and BIOL 4640 Human Anatomy and Physiology II (5 units)
- Option 2: Two separate courses that individually cover the full human body.

(3) Additional Biological Science (minimum of 3 semester hours/units or 4 quarter hours/units):

- e.g., BIOL 3300 Genetics (4 units), BIOL 3100 Cell Biology (4 units), BIOL 3120 Molecular Biology (4 units), or BIOL 5370 Immunology (5 units)

(4) Chemistry with lab (minimum of 4 semester hours/units or 5 quarter hours/units):

- General Chemistry: e.g., CHEM 2100 General Chemistry I (4 units) with CHEM 2100L General Chemistry I Laboratory (1 unit) or CHEM 2200 General Chemistry II (4 units) with CHEM 2200L General Chemistry II Laboratory (1 unit) or

(5) Additional Chemistry (minimum of 3 semester hours/units or 4 quarter hours/units):

- Lab not required, but highly recommended
- e.g., CHEM 2400 Organic Chemistry I Lecture (3 units), CHEM 3400 Principles of Organic Chemistry I (5 units), CHEM 4100 Biochemistry

I (5 units), or CHEM 2300 Organic Chemistry for Life Sciences (4 units).

(6) Statistics (minimum of 3 semester hours/units or 4 quarter hours/units):

- e.g., MATH 1201 Introduction to Statistical Thinking (3 units), KINE 3700 Statistics in Kinesiology (3 units), HSCI 2203 Introduction to Statistics in Health Sciences (3 units), HSCI 3205 Biostatistics for Health Science (3 units), or PSYC 2210 Psychological Statistics (4 units)

6. Clinical Experience

- A minimum of 1,000 clinical experience hours must be completed at the time of application.

7. Letters of Reference

- A minimum of three letters must be received at the time of application.
 - One letter from a practicing clinician (M.D., D.O., PA, or NP) or member of healthcare team.
 - Two letters from a:
 - Practicing Clinician,
 - Member of the healthcare team,
 - Professor (academic or research), or
 - Professional reference.

8. Standardized Entrance Exams

- No standardized entrance exams (i.e., GRE®, PA-CAT, MCAT®, CASPer®) are required for admission into the MSPA program. However, international applicants may be required to complete an English Proficiency Exam.

9. Technical Standards

- Applicants must meet the CSUSB MSPA Program Technical Standards to enroll in the program.

Transfer Credits and Exemptions

Advanced Placement (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and International Baccalaureate (IB) credits cannot be used towards the prerequisite course requirements.

Applicants who earned an advanced degree in clinical or health sciences within 10 years of the application deadline may be eligible for an exemption from prerequisite courses. All applicable coursework must be completed with a grade of B or higher (3.0 on 4.0 scale) at a regionally accredited institution in the United States. Applicants must submit all required documentation (i.e., transcripts, course descriptions) to the Admissions Chair for consideration. The Admissions Chair will review to determine if courses completed through the advanced degree will fulfill the program's prerequisite course requirements. All decisions are final.

Advanced Standing

Credits from any prior course work cannot be used to provide advanced standing within the MSPA program. All admitted students must complete the full didactic and clinical phases of the CSUSB MSPA program to graduate.

Pre-matriculation Course Requirement

The following course is a pre-matriculation course requirement (not prerequisite), which can be completed before or after application to the program.

- Medical Terminology
 - Option 1: Medical Terminology course (minimum of 1 semester or quarter hour) from a regionally accredited institution
 - Option 2: Medical Terminology certificate from a regionally accredited institution

For further details, please visit the CSUSB MSPA Program website: <https://www.csusb.edu/mspa>

Advancement to Candidacy

In order to be advanced in candidacy, the student must have:

1. Achieved classified status;
2. Complete the End-of-Didactic Curriculum Written Exam (MSPA 6202) in semester 4 before advancing to the clinical phase of the program with a score of #80%.
3. Completed each semester's required coursework with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 ("B") or greater*;
4. Met the program's requirement for engaging in student advising and demonstrating professionalism per the *MSPA Program Student Handbook*;
5. Receive approval by the program's Student Promotion Committee.

* Any student falling below a 3.0 ("B") semester average at the time of candidacy review will have their eligibility for candidacy defined within their academic probation or remediation plan.

Requirements for Graduation

1. Successfully complete all coursework according to program defined academic standards. The coursework is a total of 123 credit hours, which includes 78 credit hours in the didactic phase and 45 credit hours in the clinical phase.
2. Complete at least 70% (86 credit hours) or more of the required units of course work in residence in the program at CSUSB.
3. Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 ("B") or greater at program completion.
4. Successfully pass each component of the Summative Evaluation with an 80% or higher at the conclusion of the program to demonstrate achievement of all CSUSB MSPA Program Learning Outcomes and Competencies.
5. Complete the board review preparation course for the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination (PANCE) provided by the MSPA program.
6. Be in good professional standing with the MSPA program and CSUSB.
7. Complete the CSUSB graduation application process prior to the established deadlines.
8. Meet all CSUSB financial requirements and obligations, which includes ensuring there are no outstanding tuition payments, program fees, graduation fees, library charges, or other institutional fees.
9. Complete the MSPA program within the maximum time-to-completion, which is 150% of the program length (Please refer to the MSPA Program Student Handbook for further details). Deceleration and remediation must also be completed within this timeframe. Delays

due to approved personal or medical leaves of absence are excluded from the maximum time-to-completion requirement. (Please refer to CSUSB's "Leave of Absence" policy, which is referenced in the MSPA Program Student Handbook.)

Degree Requirements

MSPA 6100	Foundations of Clinical Medicine	4
MSPA 6110	Medical Anatomy	4
MSPA 6120	Communication in Healthcare	2
MSPA 6130	Laboratory Medicine and Diagnostics	2
MSPA 6140	Evidence Based Medicine	3
MSPA 6150	Community Health and Service	2
MSPA 6160	Professional Development and Practice I	1
MSPA 6200	Clinical Medicine I	6
MSPA 6210	Pharmacotherapeutics I	3
MSPA 6220	Patient Assessment and Communication I	3
MSPA 6230	Clinical and Diagnostic Skills I	4
MSPA 6240	Clinical Reasoning I	1
MSPA 6250	Applied Community and Behavioral Health I	2
MSPA 6161	Professional Development and Practice II	1
MSPA 6201	Clinical Medicine II	6
MSPA 6211	Pharmacotherapeutics II	3
MSPA 6221	Patient Assessment and Communication II	3
MSPA 6231	Clinical and Diagnostic Skills II	4
MSPA 6241	Clinical Reasoning II	1
MSPA 6251	Applied Community and Behavioral Health II	2
MSPA 6162	Professional Development and Practice III	1
MSPA 6202	Clinical Medicine III	6
MSPA 6212	Pharmacotherapeutics III	3
MSPA 6222	Patient Assessment and Communication III	3
MSPA 6232	Clinical and Diagnostic Skills III	3
MSPA 6242	Clinical Reasoning III	1
MSPA 6252	Applied Community and Behavioral Health III	1
MSPA 6163	Professional Development and Practice IV	1
MSPA 6400	Principles of Emergency Medicine and Surgery	2
MSPA 6500	Transition to Practice I	1
MSPA 6800	Family Medicine Clinical Rotation	4
MSPA 6801	Emergency Medicine Clinical Rotation	4
MSPA 6802	Internal Medicine Clinical Rotation	4
MSPA 6501	Transition to Practice II	1
MSPA 6803	Surgery Clinical Rotation	4
MSPA 6804	Pediatrics Clinical Rotation	4
MSPA 6805	Women's Health Clinical Rotation	4

MSPA 6806	Behavioral and Mental Health Clinical Rotation	4
MSPA 6502	Transition to Practice III	3
MSPA 6807	Clinical Rotation Elective I	4
MSPA 6808	Clinical Rotation Elective II	4
MSPA 6809	Clinical Rotation Elective III	4

Total Units 123

Culminating Experience

MSPA 6980	Comprehensive Examination	0
-----------	---------------------------	---

Total Units 0

The MSPA program's culminating experience is a comprehensive examination, which is designed to assess the clinical and technical skills, medical knowledge, clinical reasoning and problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills, and professional behaviors acquired throughout the physician assistant (PA) program. This comprehensive and integrative written and practical examination evaluates the competency and preparedness of students to function effectively as competent and compassionate healthcare providers ready to enter clinical practice.