Physician Assistant

Website (http://www.northeastern.edu/bouve/pa)

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Established in 1971, the physician assistant (PA) program has a long-standing history of, and expertise in, the education and training of physician assistants. The PA program is located in close proximity to Boston’s major academic medical centers and was the first generalist PA training program in the nation to offer a master’s degree in 1985. This rigorous, highly integrated curriculum offers our students the opportunity to obtain broad generalist training that prepares them for successful employment in all fields of clinical practice. Our instructional faculty members are practicing clinicians from throughout New England, and most have been teaching with the program for many years. The clinical year is designed to provide students with experience in diverse healthcare settings in our well-established network of clinical rotation sites.

Northeastern’s PA program graduates are employed in positions across the United States, and some have worked internationally. In addition to clinical practice, our graduates are employed in research, administration, and education.

Programs

Master of Science (MS)

- Physician Assistant Studies (http://catalog.northeastern.edu/graduate/health-sciences/physician-assistant/physician-assistant-studies-ms)

Dual Degree

- Physician Assistant Studies and Health Informatics, MS/MS (http://catalog.northeastern.edu/graduate/health-sciences/physician-assistant/msms)
- Physician Assistant Studies and Public Health, MS/MPH (http://catalog.northeastern.edu/graduate/health-sciences/physician-assistant/msmph)

Courses

Physician Assistant Courses

PA 6200. Anatomy and Physiology 1. 3 Hours.
Considers the structure of the human body, highlighting features of clinical importance. Covers the musculoskeletal, neurologic, cardiovascular, respiratory, gastrointestinal, endocrine, and renal systems. Also includes cadaver laboratory sessions.

PA 6201. Anatomy and Physiology 2. 3 Hours.
Continues PA 6200. Considers the structure of the human body, highlighting features of clinical importance. Covers the musculoskeletal, neurologic, cardiovascular, respiratory, gastrointestinal, endocrine, and renal systems.

PA 6203. Physical Diagnosis and Patient Evaluation 1. 3 Hours.
Presents techniques to elicit accurate medical histories, perform appropriate physical examinations, make case presentations, and document patient information. Covers such issues as confidentiality and use of supervision. Emphasizes cultural issues in dealing with patients and working with terminally ill patients.

PA 6204. Physical Diagnosis and Patient Evaluation 2. 3 Hours.
Continues PA 6203.

PA 6205. Pharmacology 1. 2 Hours.
Covers the classification, mechanisms of action, and uses of a spectrum of therapeutic agents. Emphasizes dose response, side effects, adverse reactions, the meaning of taking medications, and the role of culture. Required for all students.

PA 6206. Pharmacology 2. 2 Hours.
Continues PA 6205. Examines the classification, mechanisms of action, and use of a broad spectrum of therapeutic agents. Focuses on dose response, side effects, adverse reactions, and the role of patient compliance in medication effectiveness.

PA 6207. Clinical Laboratory and Diagnostic Methods. 4 Hours.
Covers radiology, clinical laboratory tests, and electrocardiography. Includes basic principles of radiology and interpretation of clinical laboratory diagnostic tests, demonstration and practice of various laboratory methods, and EKG theory and interpretation.

PA 6208. Professional Issues for Physician Assistants. 2 Hours.
Offers students the opportunity to understand their professional environment, community resources, legal parameters, and ethical situations they may face. Also addresses interpersonal dynamics in working with physicians and other healthcare providers. Some material is covered in problem-based learning sessions.

PA 6311. Principles of Medicine 1. 4 Hours.
Presents a systems approach to the principles of disease processes in people. Topics include physiology, pathophysiology, the natural history of disease, diagnostic procedures, and nutritional and therapeutic measures. Usually covers pulmonology, hematology, immunology, rheumatology, endocrinology, and cardiology.

PA 6312. Principles of Medicine 2. 4 Hours.
Continues PA 6311. Usually covers infectious disease, oncology, gastroenterology, and dermatology.

PA 6313. Principles of Medicine 3. 4 Hours.
Continues PA 6312. Uses a case study format to involve students in planning the management of common disease states. Helps students understand the clinical use of common therapeutic agents and how to maximize compliance.

PA 6320. Principles of Obstetrics and Gynecology. 2 Hours.
Presents the anatomy and physiology of the human reproductive system and the methods, effectiveness, and contraindications of contraception. Emphasizes the causes, signs, and treatments of common gynecological problems, including the significance of early cancer detection. Addresses diagnosing and treating sexually transmitted diseases. Presents physiologic and psychological changes, nutrition, prenatal care, and medical and surgical complications during pregnancy, labor, and delivery. Also covers the emotional aspects and management of the pre- and postnatal periods.
PA 6321. Principles of Surgery. 2 Hours.
Studies major and minor surgical conditions, emphasizing indications for surgical intervention and pre- and postoperative management in both ambulatory and inpatient settings, and patients’ emotional responses to major surgery.

PA 6322. Principles of Orthopedics. 2 Hours.
Discusses common orthopedic problems, including those of the hand, knee, shoulder, and back. Examines special problems of acute trauma and managing uncomplicated orthopedic cases. Also considers such topics as how to complete an adequate patient medical history and perform a physical examination of an orthopedic patient.

PA 6323. Clinical Neurology. 2 Hours.
Presents the clinical application of neuroanatomy and neurophysiology. Offers the opportunity to develop an understanding of the nervous system’s normal functioning as well as a clinical approach to assessing and managing nervous system disorders and disease states, and their effects on patients and their families.

PA 6324. Principles of Pediatrics. 2 Hours.
Presents the physiological and psychological fundamentals of child development. Focuses on the major common pediatric illnesses, including their signs, symptoms, and treatment regimens; various immunizations and medications used in pediatrics and their indication and dosage in relation to specific disorders; and management of such pediatric emergencies as cardiac arrest, anaphylaxis, convulsions, coma, and high fevers. Covers such issues as child abuse, school phobias, and childhood sexuality.

PA 6325. Principles of Psychiatry. 2 Hours.
Provides an opportunity to understand how to work with patients and families exhibiting psychiatric problems. Includes such topics as psychological growth and development, psychiatric diagnoses, and the effect of social milieu on behavior, the psychological bases of drug and alcohol abuse, the dynamics of psychosomatic problems, the role of culture in self-concepts, and family attitudes toward mental illness as well as appropriate psychotropic medications.

PA 6326. Aspects of Primary Care. 4 Hours.
Studies approaches to and management of the patient in a primary care setting. Discusses specific diseases and medical conditions common to primary care, including HIV/AIDS. Considers psychosocial aspects of disease as well as aspects of prevention.

PA 6327. Emergency Medicine and Critical Care. 2 Hours.
Presents the principles of life-support techniques. Focuses on the initial management of acute medical and traumatic conditions in hospital and prehospital situations. Instructs students in basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation techniques including BLS and ACLS. Includes such topics as airway management, hemodynamic monitoring and management, dysrhythmia recognition and treatment, cardiac arrest, hypovolemic states and management, invasive procedures, multiorgan system failure, nutritional support, and metabolic management of the ICU patient.

PA 6328. Aging and Rehabilitation Medicine. 2 Hours.
Studies techniques of effective planning and decision making for patients with significant acute and chronic problems. Discusses the purposes, techniques, and potential of rehabilitation medicine. Also focuses on biological changes of aging and appropriate theories of management.

PA 6329. Healthcare Delivery. 2 Hours.
Explores the principal components of the healthcare delivery system, emphasizing its social, political, and economic evolution and development. Discusses trends and their implications.

PA 6330. Research Design. 2 Hours.
Considers research methods and designs used in varied professional settings. Emphasizes development of research techniques, including the ability to define research problems; write hypotheses; review and interpret literature; apply research designs; organize, analyze, and present data; and draw relevant conclusions.

PA 6400. Applied Study in Medicine. 5 Hours.
Offers students the opportunity to take and record medical histories and perform physical examinations during this inpatient hospital rotation. Familiarizes students with the assessment and management of varied medical problems by attending medical rounds and conferences, performing diagnostic procedures, presenting case write-ups, recording progress notes, and working under the supervision of a physician. Emphasizes the skills of collecting, assessing, and presenting patient data for physician review; ordering appropriate laboratory and diagnostic studies; counseling patients about therapeutic procedures; and helping to coordinate the contributions of other health professionals involved in management of the patient. Requires successful completion of first-year physician assistant curriculum.

PA 6401. Applied Study in Ambulatory Medicine. 5 Hours.
Exposes students to aspects of ambulatory medical practice, emphasizing the patient as an individual and family member. Students typically encounter such common medical problems as hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease. Patient education, disease prevention, counseling, and integration of community services, as well as medical diagnosis and management, are a major part of this rotation. Requires successful completion of first-year physician assistant curriculum.

PA 6402. Applied Study in Family Practice. 5 Hours.
Affords students the opportunity to participate in providing healthcare to outpatients under the supervision of a primary care physician. Allows students to become involved in the initial assessment and management of individuals, as well as the ongoing assessment and management of patients with established diagnoses. Exposes students to common primary care problems and upper respiratory illness, constitutional complaints, and orthopedic injuries. Emphasizes assessing and managing both acute and chronic medical problems. Requires successful completion of first-year physician assistant curriculum.

PA 6403. Applied Study in Emergency Medicine. 5 Hours.
Familiarizes students with problems encountered in an emergency room. Students are responsible for taking medical histories and performing physical examinations on acute as well as nonemergent patients and presenting these to the medical preceptor. When appropriate, students perform necessary diagnostic and therapeutic measures. Exposes students, through clinical training and didactic sessions at the clinical site, to the emergency management and treatment of such conditions as trauma, shock, burns, asthma, poisoning, allergic reactions, seizures, and respiratory failure.

PA 6404. Applied Study in Obstetrics and Gynecology. 5 Hours.
Enables students to become involved with obstetrical and gynecological services provided by teaching hospitals. Emphasizes pre- and postnatal care, monitoring labor, assisting in deliveries, and developing the necessary skills to deliver a child in an emergency situation. Provides opportunities to take obstetrical histories and perform obstetrical examinations. During this rotation, students study how to assess and manage a variety of common gynecological problems and to counsel patients on family planning. Requires successful completion of first-year physician assistant curriculum.
PA 6405. Applied Study in Pediatrics. 5 Hours.
Develops students’ familiarity with outpatient pediatric problems in training clinics and private pediatric offices. Emphasizes caring for a child from birth through adolescence. Provides opportunities to take medical histories and perform pediatric physical examinations. Stresses diagnosing and managing common childhood illnesses and evaluating growth and development. Assists students in developing skills to counsel parents about immunizations, child visits, growth and development parameters, common psychosocial problems, nutrition, and accident and poisoning prevention. Students may also have the chance to learn how to administer immunizations and perform audio and visual screening. Requires successful completion of first-year physician assistant curriculum.

PA 6406. Applied Study in Surgery. 5 Hours.
Allows students to participate in varied surgical patient-care responsibilities under the supervision of a surgical resident or staff surgeon. Emphasizes general surgery, though students may have some exposure to other surgical specialties and subspecialties. Allows students to assist in surgical patients’ initial assessment, which includes obtaining accurate medical histories and performing physical examinations. As members of the surgical team, students participate in preoperative management, including patient education and procedures necessary to prepare patients for surgery. Allows students to assist surgeons in the operating room, when appropriate, and have an opportunity to become familiar with operating room procedures and equipment. Involves students in patients’ postoperative evaluation and management. When possible, students attend surgical grand rounds and other surgically oriented educational meetings. Requires successful completion of first-year physician assistant curriculum.

PA 6407. Applied Study in Mental Health. 5 Hours.
Exposes students to varied mental health problems in such settings as wards, clinics, and multiservice centers. Students are expected to perform mental status examinations and cognitive testing. Emphasizes recognizing various types of mental health problems that require referral to a specialist and managing problems that can be handled by the nonspecialist. Assists students in furthering their understanding of effective patient interactions and the mental health components of health, disease, and disability. Requires successful completion of first-year physician assistant curriculum.

PA 6408. Applied Study Elective. 5 Hours.
Provides exposure to an area of clinical medicine in which a student has a particular interest. Allows students to choose additional experience in an area covered in required rotations or select a subspecialty, such as orthopedics, cardiology, or geriatrics. Each elective rotation selection is reviewed and must be approved by the associate director. Requires successful completion of first-year physician assistant curriculum.

PA 6962. Elective. 1-4 Hours.
Offers elective credit for courses taken at other academic institutions. May be repeated without limit.

PA 6990. Thesis. 1-4 Hours.
Offers theoretical and experimental work conducted under the supervision of a departmental faculty. May be repeated without limit.