

Health Care Experience Hours

2 YEAR MSPAS APPLICANTS

What are they and why do I need them?

The Physician Assistant profession began with the vision of a few physicians after the Vietnam War. The profession and its' training was designed to provide medics the opportunity to expand their current skills with more formalized training to "assist" the physician with history taking and physical examination. This first training program began at Duke University in the 1960's.

It is with this in mind that the earliest PA programs accepted only medics and other similar medical professionals. Only students who already possessed this limited medical knowledge base were considered for admission. As time passed, there were decreasing numbers of candidates with this experience. Schools began to open their doors to undergraduate students without previous medical training. These students needed to obtain hours of health care experience and direct patient care before beginning their training. This would augment their knowledge before entering into the formal training of the Physician Assistant Program. It also gave the prospective student the opportunity to have a view of what the future will hold in this type of profession, and the opportunity to decide if it is the right career choice.

At King's College we have the philosophy that all students benefit from these health care experience hours. The experience of taking care of patients, observing clinicians and integrating themselves into health care is invaluable. The nuances of being a practitioner take time to learn and extracurricular learning is a valuable tool.

In addition to the formal academic requirements, applicants must complete a minimum of 500 health care experience hours before the CASPA application deadline. Of these 500 hours, a minimum of 300 must be Category I while the remainder can be Category II (see below). In addition, the applicant **MUST** spend a minimum of 8 hours shadowing a Physician Assistant.

These hours are not arranged for the applicant by King's College or the Physician Assistant program. It is the applicant's responsibility to acquire and complete these hours. These experiences may be paid or volunteer in nature.

Examples of Category I

Emergency Medical Technician*

Pharmacy Technician

Athletic Trainer

Medical Assistant

Certified Nursing Assistant

Home Health Aide

Physical Therapy Aide

Volunteering at camps with ill or mentally challenged clients (maximum of 10 hours per day)

Medical Scribe

***(Note: Only hours of actual patient contact can be claimed for these activities)**

Examples of Category II

Training Courses such as First Aid, CPR, Nurse's Aide, EMT

Observation of a Physician Assistant

Observation of a Physician, Nurse Practitioner, or other medical practitioners

This is not an all-inclusive list.

FAQ: HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCE

Q: What is the difference between direct and indirect health care experience?

A: Direct health care experience is hands on experience where you are involved in the patient's care. Examples include taking vital signs, administering medications and injections, recording medical records, collecting specimens, ambulating and feeding patients. Indirect health care experience includes things such as observing, secretarial work in a medical site, or taking a training course to learn a medical skill. These experiences are not hands on so you are not involved in the care of a patient.

Q: Should the hours be paid or volunteer?

A: Either are acceptable. In general it is common for direct health care experiences to be paid positions.

Q: How recent do my health care experience hours need to be?

A: There is no required timeframe.

Q: Does caring for an ill family member count as hours?

A: No, we do not accept these as health care experience hours.

Q: Does lifeguarding count as hours?

A: No. However, hours for first aid and CPR training can be claimed as indirect health care experience hours if these are part of your training.

Q: Will my application be accepted if I do not have all of my required hours by the deadlines?

A: No. These experiences must be complete and documented by the application deadline.

Q: How do I document my health care experience hours?

A: Applicants will document their health care experience hours on the CASPA application.

Q: Does babysitting count as health care experience?

A: No.

Q: Do all the hours count as direct when I work a shift as an EMT?

A: No. Only those hours spent actually providing care for patients count as health care experience hours.

Q: Does working as a personal trainer count as health care experience?

A: No.

Q: Does volunteering at a nursing home or personal care home count as health care experience?

A: As most volunteer work in these types of settings involves participating in entertainment activities such as art and crafts, these do not count as health care experiences. If you are involved in the care of these patients, they may be claimed as direct or indirect based on level of involvement (see above).

Q: Does Medical Missionary work or Medical Research count as direct health care experience?

A: Depending upon your duties, these may count as direct or indirect. Please refer to the first question above for a description of direct and indirect health care experiences.