

# Combined Degrees: Public Health MPH/Physician Assistant Studies MSPAS

## Curriculum

Please note that this program will not start until Summer 2027.

The Combined Master of Public Health and Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MPH/MSPAS) degree program is a 36-month, 149 credit, full-time program offered at the university's Providence Campus that provides students a broad foundation in the determinants of health and healthcare delivery. One new class is enrolled each year, which begins in the summer graduate term. Upon successful completion, a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies and a Master of Public Health are awarded.

In year 1, students complete the Master of Public Health program requirements. Using information across the continuum of public health knowledge, from the social determinants of health and policy to the core principles of epidemiology, biostatistics and research, students are prepared to apply public health skills within numerous different content areas. Students must successfully complete the MPH requirements in order to matriculate into the Physician Assistant component of the program.

In year 2 and 3, students complete their training in the Physician Assistant program. The first 12 months of the program are devoted to preclinical studies, and the remaining 12 months to clinical experiences in primary care and medical and surgical specialties.

The summer semester provides a foundation upon which the following fall and spring body system courses are constructed. In Applied Anatomy, small groups of students dissect cadavers, view dissections and utilize virtual anatomy software to learn gross anatomic structures that are essential to the understanding of medicine and the practice of general surgery. Applied Anatomy is integrated with Patient Care I where techniques specific to the adult history and physical examination are taught; the anatomy of a body system immediately precedes the lectures and practice labs where students learn the physical examination skills required to examine that same area of the body.

In Foundations of Medicine, students are introduced to the basics of cell physiology and genetics that are essential to the understanding of pathophysiologic mechanisms of disease and clinical medicine. A primer in microbiology and immunology prepares students for the study of infectious disease and the basics of pharmacology are a prelude to courses in pharmacotherapeutics.

Three semesters of Professional and Health Policy Issues commences in the summer with discussions ranging from the history of the PA profession, types of healthcare settings, healthcare and public health policy to the expectations of a medical workplace relative to ethical and professional behavior. Students explore the role that diet has on health and wellness across the lifespan in the Food is Medicine course series, including practical application of the principles in culinary labs.

Fall and spring courses in Clinical Medicine are body-system based encompassing all aspects of clinical medicine, diagnostic skills and pharmacotherapeutics for the particular body-system. Students work sequentially through each body system course, one at a time, learning the physiology, pathophysiology, clinical medicine, evidence-based medicine, diagnostic skills and treatment specific to that system. In Patient Care, students learn the history and physical examination skills specific to the body system being studied in that course. In weekly small-group meetings, they develop the critical thinking skills necessary to synthesize and apply the course content to real patient cases. Seminars in the practice of humanistic medicine will begin a lifelong journey as a self-reflective and empathetic, patient-centered healthcare provider. The final systems course is Emergency Medicine which includes an introduction to clinical practice. Students learn skills they will apply during their clinical rotations; they are taught phlebotomy and injection skills and how to suture, knot-tie, perform surgical scrubbing and gowning and apply splints.

The second 12 months of the program provides the experiential learning in nine clinical rotations. Each rotation is five weeks in length. These rotations occur at off-campus clinical sites (hospitals, community health centers, medical offices, etc.) to be developed by program faculty and administrators. The seven required rotations include Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatric Medicine, Women's Health, Behavioral and Mental Health,

Emergency Medicine, and Surgery. There are two five-week electives that allow students to further develop skills in the area in which they plan to practice.

The Master's Course runs the length of the clinical year. It includes lectures and discussions that prepare students for the Physician Assistant National Certification Examination, job searches and clinical practice. In the spring semester, this Master's Course culminates with the summative evaluation that ensures the student possesses the knowledge, interpersonal skills, patient care skills and professionalism required for entry into the profession.

Upon completion of the Master of Public Health program, graduates are expected to:

- Use practice- and research-based epidemiological methodologies to assess the health of a population.
- Develop a public health intervention using foundational knowledge to improve community health.
- Evaluate the impact of public health programs and policy using observational, experimental or quasi-experimental methodologies.
- Evaluate the effect of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives on individual and community health.
- Develop a comprehensive plan to create and promote an environment that supports healthy decision-making.

Upon completion of the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Students program, graduates are expected to:

- Develop rapport and an atmosphere of trust with patients and families while providing patient centered humanistic care.
- Recommend and perform clinical procedures for common medical disorders.
- Utilize and apply evidence-based medicine principles and skills to guide decision making in clinical practice.
- Engage and employ lifelong learning skills through ongoing self-reflection, active engagement, and professional development.
- Utilize effective interpersonal skills in oral and written communication with patients and families and work collaboratively with members of the healthcare team.
- Accurately elicit a medical history, perform a physical examination, formulate a differential diagnosis, and appropriately select and interpret diagnostic studies to diagnose medical conditions.
- Develop and manage appropriate treatment plans for preventative, acute, chronic and emergent disorders of patients across the life span.
- Conduct oneself in a professional and ethical manner consistent with the role and responsibilities of a physician assistant.

## Public Health

### Master of Public Health (MPH)

#### Year 1: MPH Year

HSC5020	Foundations of Public Health	3
HSC5080	Health and Healthcare *	3
HSC5100	Healthy Planet	3
HSC5120	Health Trends	3
HSC5150	Chronic Disease Prevention and Control	3
HSC5180	Discrimination and Health *	3
HSC5220	Insights into Vulnerable Populations	3
HSC5260	Advocating for Healthier Diets *	3
HSC5290	Combatting Infectious Disease	3
HSC5320	Cultural Humility to Improve Health	3
HSC5350	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging *	3
HSC5380	Policy of Addiction	3
HSC5420	Community Organizing	3
HSC6120	Improving Community Health	3
HSC6920	Public Health Capstone	3

**Total Credits** **45.0**

\* Courses may only be available online. Students should consult with their academic advisor regarding course availability and for planning purposes.

## Physician Assistant Studies

### Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies

#### Year 2: PA Didactic Year

PAS5110	Applied Anatomy	4
PAS5200	Foundations of Medicine	4
PAS5325	Patient Care I	4
PAS5345	Professional and Health Policy Issues I	2
PAS5425	Patient Care II	3
PAS5456	Professional and Health Policy Issues II	1.5
PAS5470	Introduction to Evidence-Based Practice	1
PAS5480	Food is Medicine I	1
PAS5515	Clinical Hematology	1
PAS5525	Clinical EENT	2
PAS5540	Clinical Pulmonology	3
PAS5565	Clinical Dermatology	1
PAS5575	Clinical Behavioral Medicine	1
PAS5580	Clinical Cardiology	4
PAS5736	Patient Care III	3
PAS5767	Professional and Health Policy Issues III	1.5
PAS5782	Food is Medicine II	1
PAS5810	Clinical Nephrology and Urology	3
PAS5825	Clinical Orthopedics and Rheumatology	3
PAS5830	Clinical Gastroenterology	2
PAS5845	Clinical Neurology	2
PAS5860	Clinical Endocrinology	2
PAS5870	Clinical Infectious Disease	1
PAS5880	Clinical Gynecology and Obstetrics	3
PAS5891	Clinical Pediatrics	2
PAS5910	Emergency Medicine	2
PAS5930	Problem-Based Learning	2.5
PAS5950	Clinical Geriatrics	1
PAS5960	Surgical Principles	1

#### Year 3: PA Clinical Year

PAS6200	Family Medicine Clinical Course	4.5
PAS6250	Internal Medicine Clinical Course	4.5
PAS6300	Pediatric Medicine Clinical Course	4.5
PAS6350	Women's Health Clinical Course	4.5
PAS6400	Emergency Medicine Clinical Course	4.5
PAS6450	Behavioral and Mental Health Clinical Course	4.5
PAS6500	Surgery Clinical Course	4.5
PAS6800	Master's Course **	1
Clinical Electives: Choose two of the following: ***		9
PAS6610	Clinical Elective: Internal Medicine Specialty	
PAS6620	Clinical Elective: Dermatology	
PAS6630	Clinical Elective: Surgical Specialty	
PAS6640	Clinical Elective: Pediatric Specialty	
PAS6650	Clinical Elective: Urgent Care	
PAS6710	Clinical Elective: Other Specialty	

**Total Credits** **104.0**

\*\* This course spans the clinical year; credit is awarded only in the spring semester.

\*\*\* Students choose two of the Clinical Electives or repeat a core rotation.

## Admissions Requirements

Please see a campus catalog for campus-specific admissions requirements.