PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

M.S. in Physician Assistant

A physician assistant (PA) is a licensed health professional who practices medicine with physician supervision. As part of the physician/PA team, a PA exercises autonomy in diagnosing and treating illnesses. These practitioners deliver a broad range of medical and surgical services to diverse populations in both rural and urban settings throughout the United States.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, physician assistants are in great demand and will continue to be in demand in coming years, with the field expected to grow a significant 30% within the decade. In January 2015, the PA profession was listed as the number one best job in America, according to The Huffington Post. The M.S. in Physician Assistant program at Bethel University is ready to meet that need by preparing skilled practitioners who are trained for the challenges and responsibilities of patient care in clinics, hospitals, and other medical settings.

Students will become skilled in diagnosing patients, treating diseases, prescribing medications, and assisting with preventive care. Rotations in several specialties will further develop students’ learning by applying the medical literature to practice.

Courses are taught from a Christian worldview by experienced Bethel faculty and practitioners. Faculty provide a strong foundation in the medical sciences coupled with the development of skills to think critically and compassionately to provide the best in patient care.

The PA program builds on Bethel’s reputable undergraduate majors in biology, nursing, and other sciences, extending the university’s commitment to outstanding healthcare programs.

Accreditation Statement

The ARC-PA has granted Accreditation-Provisional status to the Master of Science degree program in Physician Assistant sponsored by Bethel University.

Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program’s ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards; or when a program holding Accreditation-Provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students.

Accreditation-Provisional does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. It is limited to no more than five years from the matriculation of the first class.

Programs at Bethel University are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, and the PA program has been added to our list of approved programs with the HLC. The PA program is also registered with the Minnesota Department of Education.

Program Details

• The program is a full-time master’s-level program that meets all day, every day with some evening hours expected, as well as varying hours during clinical rotations beginning the second year.
• A supportive learning community is achieved through the cohort model—a small group of students progressing through a degree program together.
• Students participate in a systems-based didactic curriculum for the first 15 months (72 credits), preparing them to participate in 12 months of clinical rotations (40 credits) to complete the Bethel PA training experience (112 credits total).
• Bethel University’s Master of Science in Physician Assistant (PA) program is designed as a comprehensive curriculum, and all students are required to complete the prescribed didactic and clinical coursework. The PA program does not allow for exemption from courses, clinical skills, laboratories, or clinical education regardless of prior experience, degree, or credential. Students must matriculate through all aspects of the program and successfully complete all program requirements in order to graduate.

Program Goals

• To develop the skills for competent and excellent medical practice. As demonstrated by Bethel’s emphasis on being truth-seekers, graduates will possess competence in a balanced core of knowledge drawn from the fields of humanities, natural and social sciences, medical sciences, behavioral sciences, and evidence-based medicine.
• To live out ethical principles and Bethel’s academic excellence. With Bethel’s desire to make right choices as character-builders, PA students and graduates will demonstrate a commitment to personal and professional growth through lifelong and self-directed learning with an understanding of personal wellness and critical thinking skills for carrying out their calling to medical practice.
• To serve the community and all cultures. Based upon Bethel’s commitment to being world-changers as well as salt and light in the world, students and graduates will recognize the privilege of serving others regardless of color, social, ethnic, religious, or economic status, and will acknowledge a physician assistant’s role as one member of the healthcare team.
To possess integrity and compassion. Due to Bethel's motivation for being Christ-followers and reconcilers, students and graduates will act in a professional manner and integrate appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication skills in the care of patients, as well as render services in a compassionate way.

Outcomes
Graduates of the physician assistant program will be able to:

• Practice medicine as competent practitioners who can serve society, the healthcare community, and the individual patient in a compassionate manner.
• Apply clinical skills necessary to function in a changing healthcare environment.
• Demonstrate the skills of primary care PAs by contributing and providing quality healthcare to patients in a variety of clinical settings, especially in the areas designated as “medically underserved.”
• Analyze the medical literature by demonstrating an in-depth understanding of medical research methodology and applying it to patient care delivery.
• Commit to professional and public service for carrying out compassionate and holistic medical practice in light of a Christian faith and biblical perspective.
• Integrate professional values and ethical behaviors expected of the PA in a medical practice setting.
• Promote the concepts of wellness and prevention of disease for improved patient care and for healthy living.
• Synthesize new and advancing medical knowledge in an evidence-based manner for the advancement of new therapies and treatment strategies.
• Use medical information technology, as well as new and modern medical hardware and software, to improve medical care.

Degree Program in Physician Assistant

• M.S. in Physician Assistant (http://catalog.bethel.edu/academics/catalog/2015-2016/graduate/academic-programs-disciplines/physician-assistant/physician-assistant-ms)

BIOL600 • Human Gross Anatomy & Histology. 4 Credits.
Human anatomy for physician assistant students takes a regional approach to the study of human anatomy. This course will involve dissection of human cadavers by the students. Incorporated into the course content concerning anatomical structures will be a brief examination of histological structure, nervous system structure, and basic function. Corequisites: BIOL600L.

BIOL600L • Human Gross Anatomy and Histology Lab. 2 Credits.
Laboratory experience accompanying BIOL600.
Corequisites: BIOL600.

BIOL610 • Human Medical Physiology. 3 Credits.
This course is designed for graduate students to learn and gain knowledge in the physiological principles. These concepts are essential for further progress in understanding mechanisms of disease and body systems. This understanding is essential for clinical medicine. Weekly problem solving discussions will emphasize clinical application of physiologic concepts.

BIOL620 • Pharmacology & Therapeutics I. 3 Credits.
This is the first course in a series of three clinical pharmacology courses taught in a systems-based approach with the Clinical Medicine series. The course explores clinical implications of pharmacology for these topics (but not limited to): hematologic, cardiovascular, pulmonary, genitourinary, and renal.

BIOL621 • Medical Pathophysiology I. 2 Credits.
This is the first of three pathophysiology courses offered concurrently with the Clinical Medicine series. Pathophysiology at the molecular, cellular, organ, and total body levels will be applied in each organ system. Systems covered include, but are not limited to: hematologic, cardiovascular, pulmonary, genitourinary, and renal.

BIOL630 • Pharmacology & Therapeutics II. 4 Credits.
This is the second course in a series of three clinical pharmacology courses taught in a systems-based approach with the Clinical Medicine series. The course explores clinical implications of pharmacology for these topics (but not limited to): dermatologic, endocrine, neurologic, psychiatric, musculoskeletal/rheumatologic, gastrointestinal, and geriatric.

BIOL631 • Medical Pathophysiology II. 2 Credits.
This is the second of three pathophysiology courses offered concurrently with the Clinical Medicine series. Pathophysiology at the molecular, cellular, organ, and total body levels will be discussed in each body system. Systems covered include (but are not limited to): dermatologic, endocrine, neurologic, psychiatric, musculoskeletal/rheumatologic, gastrointestinal, and geriatric.

BIOL640 • Pharmacology and Therapeutics III. 2 Credits.
This is the third course in a series of three clinical pharmacology courses taught in a systems-based approach with the Clinical Medicine series. The course explores clinical implications of pharmacology focusing on, but not limited to, these areas: women's health, pediatrics, surgery, ENT/ophthalmology/allergy, and emergency medicine.
BIOL641 • Medical Pathophysiology III. 2 Credits.
This is the third of three pathophysiology courses offered concurrently with the Clinical Medicine series. Pathophysiology at the molecular, cellular, organ, and total body levels will be applied in each body system. Topics covered include, but are not limited to, women’s health, pediatrics, ENT/ophthalmology/allergy, and multisystem disorders.

PHAS601 • Introduction to History and Physical Examination. 2 Credits.
This is the first of four sequential courses designed to facilitate the development of medical history taking, physical examination skills, patient communication, clinical problem solving, clinical procedures, and ethical/legal considerations for the physician assistant. This first course focuses on history taking and physical examination in the healthy adult.
Corequisites: PHAS600L. Malpractice Fee: $90.

PHAS601L • Introduction to History and Physical Examination Lab. 1 Credits.
Laboratory experience accompanying PHAS601.
Corequisites: PHAS601. Lab fee: $50.

PHAS602 • Patient Assessment and Diagnostics I. 2 Credits.
This is the second of four sequential courses designed to facilitate the development of medical history taking, physical examination skills, patient communication, clinical problem solving, clinical procedures, and ethical/legal considerations for the physician assistant. Focus is on physical examination skills and procedures that coincide with topics in PHAS612.
Corequisites: PHAS602L. Malpractice insurance fee: $90.

PHAS602L • Patient Assessment and Diagnostics Lab I. 1 Credits.
Laboratory experience accompanying PHAS602.
Corequisites: PHAS602. Typhon logging fee: $80 (paid to Typhon Group).

PHAS603 • Patient Assessment and Diagnostics II. 3 Credits.
This is the third of four sequential courses designed to facilitate the development of medical history taking, physical examination skills, patient communication, clinical problem solving, clinical procedures, and ethical/legal considerations for the physician assistant. Focus is on physical examination skills and procedures that coincide with topics in PHAS613.
Corequisites: PHAS603L. Malpractice insurance fee: $90.

PHAS603L • Patient Assessment and Diagnostics Lab II. 1 Credits.
Laboratory experience accompanying PHAS603.
Corequisites: PHAS603. Lab fee: $50.

PHAS604 • Patient Assessment & Diagnostics III. 1 Credits.
This is the fourth of four sequential courses designed to facilitate the development of medical history taking, physical examination skills, patient communication, clinical problem solving, clinical procedures, and ethical/legal considerations for the physician assistant. Focus is on physical examination skills and procedures that coincide with topics in PHAS614.
Corequisites: PHAS604L. Malpractice insurance fee: $90.

PHAS604L • Patient Assessment and Diagnostics Lab III. 1 Credits.
Laboratory experience accompanying PHAS604.
Corequisites: PHAS604.

PHAS611 • Foundation to Clinical Medicine. 4 Credits.
Designed as an introduction to clinical medicine topics, this course will lay the foundation for future clinical medicine courses by helping the student understand and apply fundamental concepts to patient care. Topics presented include radiological imaging, infectious disease, oncology, genetics, and fundamentals of pharmacology, immunology, preventative medicine, and laboratory studies.

PHAS612 • Clinical Medicine I. 6 Credits.
This course is the first of a three-course sequence, which provides students with a systematic approach to the etiology, epidemiology, manifestations, laboratory and diagnostic studies, prognosis, and treatment of disease. This course will focus on, but is not limited to, hematological, cardiovascular, pulmonary, genitourinary, and renal systems.

PHAS613 • Clinical Medicine II. 7 Credits.
This course is the second of a three-course sequence, which provides students with a systematic approach to the etiology, epidemiology, manifestations, laboratory and diagnostic studies, and prognosis and treatment of specific diseases. This course will focus on, but is not limited to, dermatologic, endocrine, neurologic, psychiatric, musculoskeletal, rheumatologic, gastrointestinal systems, and geriatrics.

PHAS614 • Clinical Medicine III. 5 Credits.
This course is the third of a three-course sequence, which provides students with a systematic approach to the etiology, epidemiology, manifestations, laboratory and diagnostic studies, and prognosis and treatment of specific diseases. This course will focus on, but is not limited to: women’s health, pediatrics, ENT/ophthalmology/allergy, surgery, and emergency medicine.
ACLS/BCLS fee: $340, PACKRAT fee: $40.

PHAS621 • Evidence-Based Medicine and Research I. 2 Credits.
Course provides in-depth discussion and relevance of research literature. An emphasis will be placed on critical analysis of research articles. Independent thought and critical thinking skills will be addressed. Assigned readings will offer students the opportunity to examine prevailing research in the health professions.
Repeatable course This course may be repeated with different learning objectives for credit.

PHAS622L • Medical Problem Solving I. 1 Credits.
Designed for first-year physician assistant (PA) students, this laboratory course is the first of three labs for development of PA students’ clinical problem-solving and decision-making skills. Using problem-based learning methods, this course corresponds with modules of PA clinical medicine and exposes students to an array of clinical healthcare issues.

PHAS623L • Medical Problem Solving II. 1 Credits.
Developed for first-year physician assistant (PA) students, this laboratory course is the second of three courses for development of PA students’ clinical problem-solving and decision-making skills. Using problem-based learning methods, this course supplements the modules of PA clinical medicine and exposes students to an array of clinical healthcare issues.

PHAS624L • Medical Problem Solving III. 1 Credits.
Specifically for physician assistant (PA) students, this laboratory course will facilitate the development of PA students’ clinical problem-solving and decision-making skills. Utilizing problem-based learning methods, this course encompasses all of the modules of the PA clinical medicine series through active learning for an array of clinical healthcare issues.

PHAS632 • PA Professional Practice Issues I. 2 Credits.
Designed for first-year graduate physician assistant (PA) students, this introductory course is the first of two professional issues courses to develop PA students’ awareness and professional attributes. Professional history, certification, PA professional organizations, and other health delivery topics will be discussed.

PHAS633 • Cultural & Prevention Competency. 2 Credits.
This course introduces students to the history, underlying theory, and basic concepts associated with clinical prevention in the United States, espoused by the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). Recommended guidelines and strategies for early disease screening, risk identification, and risk stratification are addressed using a population-specific frame of reference designed to complement parallel learning experiences. Designed to introduce students to issues surrounding cultural awareness and issues of diversity.

PHAS634 • Christian Health Care and Applied Medical Ethics. 3 Credits.
Studies the ethical dynamics of healthcare including principles of autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice, fairness, and dignity. Ethical principles are then applied to actual clinical and professional situations including inalienable rights, reproductive technologies, allocation of healthcare, death and dying issues, confidentiality, and professional conflict from a Christian ministry standpoint of the healing professions.

PHAS641 • Evidence-Based Medicine and Research II. 2 Credits.
The second course in the PA research sequence to build upon students’ understanding of research. Each student will work with a faculty instructor and advisor to secure a research topic and establish a clear methodology for completing the project. Issues of applied statistics will be examined in this course with the opportunity to perform analysis of the project. Independent thought and critical thinking skills will be addressed.

PHAS710 • Clinical Field Placements I. 12 Credits.
First course to transition students from didactic to clinical training. Students will be assigned to a combination of clinical rotations selected from emergency medicine, family practice, internal medicine, women’s health, pediatrics, psychiatry/behavioral medicine, general surgery, and two elective rotations. Each student must participate in each of the seven core/required rotations and two elective rotations by the end of the clinical field placement series (PHAS710, PHAS720, and PHAS730).

Malpractice insurance fee: $90, site supervision fee: $50.

PHAS720 • Clinical Field Placements II. 15 Credits.
Second course to transition students from didactic to clinical training. Students will be assigned to a combination of clinical rotations selected from emergency medicine, family practice, internal medicine, women’s health, pediatrics, psychiatry/behavioral medicine, general surgery, and two elective rotations. Each student must participate in each of the seven core/required rotations and two elective rotations by the end of the clinical field placement series (PHAS710, PHAS720, and PHAS730).

Malpractice insurance fee: $90, site supervision fee: $50.

PHAS730 • Clinical Field Placements III. 9 Credits.
Third course to transition students from didactic to clinical training. Students will be assigned to a combination of clinical rotations selected from emergency medicine, family practice, internal medicine, women’s health, pediatrics, psyc-hiatry/behavioral medicine, general surgery, and two elective rotations. Each student must participate in each of the seven core/required rotations and two elective rotations by the end of the clinical field placement series (PHAS710, PHAS720, and PHAS730).

Malpractice insurance fee: $90, PACKRAT fee: $40, site supervision fee: $50.

PHAS735 • Physician Assistant Professional Practice Capstone. 2 Credits.
Designed for second-year physician assistant (PA) students, this course is the second of two professional issues courses to develop PA students’ skills in office and professional procedures prior to clerkships. Socioeconomic issues, billing and coding, risk management, and other legal issues in the PA profession will be explored, as well as an overall summative evaluation of the student.

PHAS760 • Directed Study. 1-6 Credits.
Directed study experience under the guidance of a faculty member for any independent or remedial work as needed.

Repeatable course This course may be repeated with different learning objectives for credit.
PHAS790 • Evidence-Based Medicine Project/Thesis. 2 Credits.
This course investigates the theories, paradigms, and steps necessary to select and approach a research problem. A continued emphasis on critical analysis of research articles, designing and writing research proposals, and further refinement of the research process with a final defense of project at the end of the course.