

7 Step Pre-PA Checklist

Your guide to becoming a confident, competitive PA school applicant

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Step 1: Confirm prerequisites

- Minimum GPA (many programs require 3.0+)
- Core courses
- Official transcripts ready

Pro tip: Create a spreadsheet comparing each program's specific prerequisite list- it is the applicant's responsibility to be aware of variations

Step 2: Acquire patient care experience

- Minimum hours (many programs require a minimum of 1000 hours)
- Examples: medical assistant, certified nursing assistant, paramedic
- Track hours accurately
- Visit each program's website to ensure your healthcare role is accepted as valid patient care experience

Pro tip: Perform to the best of your ability every single day- a letter of recommendation is likely to come from a provider you have worked with

Step 3: Gain shadowing hours

- Shadow PAs in different specialties
- Maintain a log with dates and hours
- Reflect on how each experience influenced your desire to become a PA

Step 4: Obtain high quality letters of recommendation

- Target at least 4-5 letter writers (in event a letter writer isn't viable)
- Plan to ask at least 1-2 months in advance of deadline
- Prepare CV/personal statement to provide them

Pro tip: All letters are not equal- specifically seek strong letter writers that can attest to your character, work ethic and perseverance

Step 5: Develop a cogent personal statement

- Clarity on "why" PA
- Include a defining life/patient experience and how this influenced/reinforced desire to become a PA
- Reinforce decision with supporting examples
- Enlist proofreaders or personal statement review services

Step 6: Audit application

- Know program requirements and how they vary inside and out

-Goal is early identification of outstanding requirements

Pro tip: Establish an ongoing process early on to ensure readiness to apply on your timeline

Step 7: Apply early

-Create CASPA account early

-Know which programs are rolling vs non rolling

-Ensure accurate entries

-Upload transcripts, essays and logs

-Stay on top of deadlines