Physician assistants are health care professionals licensed to practice medicine under the supervision of physicians, and are referred to as physician extenders and midlevel practitioners. Their practice includes all elements of patient care including taking medical histories, completing examinations, ordering diagnostic tests, and providing medical care including prescribing medications. Physician assistants may care for a wide variety of patients, assist in surgery, or specialize in a wide variety of practice areas in conjunction with their supervising physician.

Program Characteristics
- 29-month graduate program comprised of 124 credit hours.
- A new cohort of 30 students is accepted annually through a competitive application process. Coursework begins in the summer.
- Students can enroll after earning a bachelor’s degree, successfully completing specific prerequisite classes, and gaining at least 500 hours of healthcare experience.
- Based on projected needs in rural states, primary care is an emphasis of the program.
- Graduates will be eligible to seek licensure to practice in one or more of the fifty states.

Regular/CASPA Admissions Process
Apply online using the Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) at https://caspa.liaisoncas.com. Supplemental materials will be submitted directly to the MPAS office.

Admissions Requirements
- Earn a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution, in major of choice.
- Complete online CASPA application including personal statement and references.
- Earn a “C” or higher in all prerequisite classes. Required course work graded pass/fail or credit obtained by CLEP exam or Advanced Placement (AP) will not be accepted.
- Earn a minimum of 3.0 cumulative GPA on 4.0 scale.
- Submit Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores within five calendar years prior to the term of intended enrollment. Official scores must be verified through CASPA by November 1.
- Submit completed SAU Supplemental Application.
- Document at least 500 hours of health care experience with direct patient contact.
- Complete a campus interview.
- Applicants whose native language is not English must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). A passing score of 600 (written), 250 (computerized), or 100 (internet) is required to be eligible for admission to the program. Results should be sent directly from ETS to St. Ambrose University. The institutional code is 6617.
- Applicants with coursework or a degree from a college or university outside the United States must submit an official Credential Evaluation from World Education Services (wes.org).
- Individuals who are not US citizens or permanent legal residents are not eligible for admission into the MPAS program.

Early Admission/High School Senior Admissions Process
Early admit is for high school seniors planning to enroll at St. Ambrose University for their undergraduate education. To apply for Early Admit, a high school senior must:
- Be admitted to the undergraduate SAU program.
- Achieve a minimum ACT composite score of 28, with no section score below 23, or a minimum SAT composite score of 1310.
- Attain a minimum of 3.70/4.0 unweighted high school GPA.
- Complete two semesters of each: chemistry, biology, and physics; be enrolled in or have completed math through calculus. Students are encouraged to take the highest level of course offered (AP, honors, etc.).
- Shadow a physician assistant for at least eight hours.
- Obtain two letters of recommendation with at least one from a science teacher.
- Complete an interview.

See the link on the MPAS website to apply for Early Admit.
Applications due by October 1 of the Fall prior to undergraduate matriculation. We interview qualified applicants in January, and decisions for admission are released by February 15. Early Admit students must meet the following requirements as undergraduates to remain eligible for matriculation to the MPAS program:

- Maintain an overall GPA of 3.70. This requirement will be calculated after their 2nd semester at SAU and each subsequent semester.
- Meet all prerequisite class requirements needed for regular admission to the MPAS program, with all core science courses taken at SAU.
- Complete 500 healthcare hours prior to matriculation.
- Cumulative GRE score of 275 or higher prior to matriculation.

College Prerequisite Classes

- 16 credit hours in biological sciences with labs covering general biology (4 cr), human anatomy (4 cr), human physiology (4 cr) and microbiology (4 cr). Anatomy and physiology classes may be taken separately or together if part of a two-course section. If transferring these credits, take both at the same college or university.
- 15–16 credit hours in chemistry with labs to include general (inorganic) chemistry (8 cr, 2 semester sequence), organic chemistry (4 cr) and biochemistry (3–4 cr, lab recommended if available).
- 3 credit hours in statistics or biostatistics. Additional mathematics class may be needed as a prerequisite for science and statistics.
- 9 credit hours in psychology to include general psychology (3 cr), abnormal psychology (3 cr) and either lifespan or developmental psychology (3 cr).
- 6 credit hours in English composition to include an introductory course and one additional writing course.
- Medical terminology (graded).
- Recommended courses: oral communication and biomedical ethics.

Program Goals

- Maintain an accredited MPAS program.
- Maintain a level of PANCE pass rate above the national average.
- Meet primary care workforce needs, especially in rural and underserved populations.
- Demonstrate the highest standards of professionalism.
- Engage in service or assume a leadership role within the profession and the community.
- Recruit and retain qualified applicants.

Accreditation At its March 2019 meeting, the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) placed the St. Ambrose University Physician Assistant Program sponsored by St. Ambrose University on Accreditation-Probation status until its next review in March 2021.

Probation is a temporary status of accreditation conferred when a program does not meet the Standards and when the capability of the program to provide an acceptable educational experience for its students is threatened.

Once placed on probation, programs that still fail to comply with accreditation requirements in a timely manner, as specified by the ARC-PA, may be scheduled for a focused site visit and/or risk having their accreditation withdrawn.

Specific questions regarding the Program and its plans should be directed to the Program Director and/or the appropriate institutional official(s).

Message from the Program Director:

The St. Ambrose University PA program is an accredited program that continues to achieve excellent outcomes. Our program has recently completed a rigorous self-study followed by a routine site visit from our accrediting body, the ARC-PA. After this process our program received the following accreditation status: accredited-probation.

Over the next two years, we will make changes to our program’s overall evaluation and assessment processes as well as modifications to the student learning objectives in some of our courses. The program accepts these findings and we will continue to work with the ARC-PA to strengthen areas they have identified for improvement. In addition, the program will host another evaluation visit by ARC-PA during the 2020-2021 academic year. The St. Ambrose University administration is in full support of our program and will continue to support our continued development.

All students who enter a program with this accreditation status and complete all graduation requirements are eligible to take the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam and to secure employment in the field. St. Ambrose University’s PA program has a dedicated team of faculty and staff who are committed to continuing to prepare excellent, well trained physician assistants.

I am available to answer any questions you might have regarding the above information or statement from the ARC-PA.

Kerry Humes, MD  
Program Director  
humeskerryl@sau.edu

For Further Information

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The material presented here is for informational purposes and does not substitute for the catalog. Consult the official university catalog for complete program requirements.