

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY | PA SCHOLARS PROGRAM

2024-25 Frequently Asked Questions

What is the PA Scholars Program at Saint Louis University?

The PA Scholars Program is an exclusive opportunity for SLU freshmen to be guaranteed a position in the Physician Assistant Program upon graduation from specific pre-PA degree programs offered by the Doisy College of Health Sciences.

The program allows students seeking careers as physician assistants to gain valuable health care credentials prior to entrance into the graduate PA Program. This preparatory education, in conjunction with the PA Program's didactic and clinical curriculum, enriches the graduate's expertise and competence. In addition, it allows students the opportunity for a rewarding health care career should they decide not to continue in the graduate PA Program upon completion of their bachelor's degree.

Does the program offer guaranteed admission into the PA Program?

Yes. Students who successfully complete the program's requirements and maintain the required GPA for the duration of their undergraduate studies as well as complete the required, pre-approved direct patient care hours are guaranteed placement in the Physician Assistant Program, where students will work towards the degree in Master of Medical Science.

Does the PA Scholars Program shorten the length of time I spend in school?

No. When a PA Scholar obtains admission to SLU's Physician Assistant Program, that admission is labeled as "contingent" upon successful completion of the pre-PA bachelor's degree program for which they enroll in the Doisy College of Health Sciences at SLU. We believe that a traditional, full-length course of undergraduate study remains one of the best preparations for success.

Which majors/programs of study can I pursue as a PA Scholar?

At this time, the following majors within the Doisy College of Health Sciences (DCHS) are approved for PA Scholars:

- Athletic Training*
- Health Sciences
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging
- Medical Sciences
- Nuclear Medicine Technology
- Nutrition and Dietetics**
- Radiation Therapy

* Athletic Training is a 3+2, 5-year master's program. Students would enter the graduate PA Program in their 6th year.

** A degree in Nutrition and Dietetics requires admittance to a post-baccalaureate, accredited internship for eligibility to become a Registered Dietician. PA Scholars may elect to seek an accredited internship following completion of their bachelor's degree and start in the PA Program after the internship or complete the internship following completion of the PA program.

How will my Advanced Placement and advanced credit courses transfer?

In keeping with their high level of academic achievement, students who wish to become PA Scholars are encouraged to take Advanced Placement and/or advanced credit courses in high school whenever possible. However, no AP or advanced credit will be awarded to incoming PA Scholars for biology, chemistry or physics. It is in the best interest of every future physician assistant student to take these courses in college regardless of past experience.

Can I wait and become a PA Scholar once I am a current SLU student?

No. Only new freshman applicants can be considered for acceptance into the program.

What if I change my major or decide that I do not want to continue on to the Physician Assistant Program?

Students may continue on as PA Scholars provided they choose another approved, pre-PA major within DCHS (see previous section where majors are identified). Some PA Scholars will end up changing their mind about the program entirely. Some withdraw from the program to explore completely new interests, while others remain in their original bachelor's degree path but pursue different post-baccalaureate options upon graduation. Remember that there is no penalty for withdrawing from the program but applying to become a PA Scholar is an opportunity that you only have as an incoming freshman. If you withdraw from the PA Scholars program, you will have to apply to the graduate PA Program through the standard application process, with no guarantee of admission.

What are the requirements to remain in the program?

Once accepted as PA Scholars, students are expected to maintain full-time enrollment at SLU and to meet the following requirements:

1. Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.3 through completion of the bachelor's program.
2. Obtain a "B" or higher in all prerequisite courses.
3. Complete all prerequisite courses at SLU.
4. Obtain pre-approved direct patient care hours:
 - o 100 hours by August 1 after their sophomore year at SLU
 - o 250 hours by the end of their junior year at SLU
 - o 500 hours by the end of their senior year at SLU

The method of obtaining these hours must be approved by the DCHS Recruitment Specialist prior to beginning the experience. Documentation of direct patient care hours must be submitted by the last day of each semester to the DCHS Recruitment Specialist.

5. Attend a PA Program information session between September of their junior year and November of their senior year at SLU. Meetings are to be determined each year.
6. PA Scholars will be required to complete the online Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) and SLU Supplemental Application by November 1 of their senior year at SLU. This process ensures students are captured in the national database for PA programs.

Current application rate for both applications is approximately \$230 (CASPA - \$179, SLU Supplemental - \$45).

7. Attend a SLU PA interview session during January or February of their senior year at SLU. Dates will vary. An interview is not conducted, but scholars will meet current students and graduates as well as other applicants.
8. Attend additional PA Program activities as communicated via the PA Program.

Can I study abroad as a PA Scholar?

Yes. PA Scholars are encouraged to study abroad. PA Scholars will work with their DCHS undergraduate academic advisor to determine a time that is most optimal for study abroad.

What other benefits do PA Scholars enjoy?

PA Scholars enjoy numerous other program benefits, including:

- One-on-one advising through a DCHS academic advisor assigned to their specific undergraduate program.
- Participation in the Pre-PA Club.
- Attend select events hosted by the PA Program student organization beginning in their junior year at SLU.