



DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

Physician Assistant Program

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

DISTANCE EDUCATION FAQs 2017

What is the UW-Madison Physician Assistant Distance Education Program?

The UW-Madison PA Program has developed two distance education options that allows selected students to remain in their home communities while completing their education as physician assistants.

Who is eligible for the distance options?

Qualifications include a desire to be part of this innovative opportunity, strength in all areas of the traditional admissions criteria, and evidence of potential for success in this asynchronous method of delivering instruction. Wisconsin residents are given preference for this option.

- **Medically Underserved Area (MUA) Option:** *Consideration will be given to those expressing an interest in serving in a medically underserved area or with a medically underserved population. Up to 10 qualified students will be admitted and final selection of students will be made by the PA Program Admissions Committee.*
- **Local Option:** *Successful applicants will have extensive health care experience and live within driving distance of the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. Up to 6 qualified students will be admitted and final selection of students will be made by the PA Program Admissions Committee.*

What is the admission process for the distance program?

Students requesting consideration for either distance option (MUA or Local) complete the same CASPA application and program specific supplemental information as traditional applicants. In addition, potential distance students must indicate on the application they are applying for a distance option and are also required to submit an essay addressing their motivation and aptitude for the distance learning option they are applying to.

How do the distance education options differ from the traditional program?

The traditional program consists of twenty-four months of full-time didactic and clinical instruction and requires campus residency.

Both distance education options extend the length of the program by one year and consist of 36 months of didactic study and clinical instruction. The didactic component is completed over the course of 24 months. All distance students spend the first summer in residence on the Madison campus. The balance of didactic instruction is completed on a part-time basis in the student's home community through distance modalities. The clinical component consists of 12 months of full-time, community-based clinical instruction. While every effort will

be made to place students in clinical sites near their home communities, final decisions for placement will be based on availability of qualified preceptors. Distance students will pay university tuition based on the number of credits they are enrolled in each semester.

What are the campus residency requirements?

Both DE options require 12 weeks of campus residency in the first summer session. Campus residency requirements differ for each option with the start of the first fall semester.

- ***URM*** - Each of the following semesters will require two, 3-4 day periods of campus residency. The summer of their clinical year will also require a one-week campus-based clinical orientation. Although efforts will be made to refer students to campus housing, final responsibility for securing housing rests with the student.
- ***Local*** – Students enrolled in this option must live within driving distance of campus so that they may attend clinical skills labs, and other requirements that require in-person participation, as they occur throughout the traditional campus schedule. The summer of their clinical year will also require a one-week campus-based clinical orientation

What will participation in a distance education course be like?

Distance education courses will be delivered asynchronously through a combination of video, audio and web-based materials. Distance students will receive instruction equivalent to that of campus students and will view the same material in a different format. Instruction will include individual assignments, cooperative group projects, on-line discussions, and will require students to take web-based exams to demonstrate mastery of material. Students will have frequent contact through e-mail with other students, program staff, and course instructors. Students also receive support from community mentors and exam proctors.

Technology requirements and technology support will be provided. Because the program is committed to using emerging technologies, distance students must be willing to learn or modify technology skills as needed. Distance students must be willing to meet all academic and technological requirements of the program.

What happens after I am accepted as a distance education student?

Distance students will spend the first summer in residence on the UW-Madison campus. During that time, distance students will take four courses with their campus cohort and receive orientation to technology and the learning plan. While on campus, distance students have the opportunity to get to know PA faculty and campus-based students. The program has a distance education director who works closely with each student to identify campus and community resources and provide support.

Due to the evolving nature of the distance education program, the UW-Madison Physician Assistant Program may modify distance education program structure and requirements as needed.