



Direct Patient Care Experience

The UNM Physician Assistant Program requires a minimum of **1,000** contact hours of direct patient care experience in either a patient care setting or a significant community care environment. We focus on the quality of your patient care experiences, not just the quantity of hours. Direct patient care is the process of developing practical skills, professionalism, personal qualities, experience, and competencies crucial to your professional development, your process of becoming the strongest applicant possible, your ability to thrive in the PA school clinical environment, and your future practice as a healthcare professional.

Hands-on patient care experience is preferred. The more time invested, the better. This can be in a paid position or as a volunteer. More information on defining direct patient care experience can be found on [CASPA's website](#).

Applicants who were accepted into the UNM PA Program in 2021 had an average of 7,395 hours of direct patient care. There are many ways to gain direct patient care experience. The list provided is not exhaustive but will give you options as you explore your passions, skills and interests.

- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)
- Certified Medical Assistant (CMA)
- Registered Nurse
- Patient Care Technician (PCT)
- Surgical Technician
- Radiological Technician
- Laboratory Technician
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- ER Tech
- Military Medic/Clinical Specialist Corpsman
- EMT-Intermediate
- Paramedic
- Dental Hygienist
- Dental Assistant
- Phlebotomist
- Medical Laboratory Scientist
- Athletic Trainer
- Clinical Psychologist
- Registered Behavior Therapist
- Community Health Worker
- Peer Counselor
- Medical Research
- Scribe
- Acupuncturist
- Certified Physical/Occupational Therapist
- PT/OT Assistant/Aide
- Home health with verification of job duties

Volunteer Experience

Community service and/or medical or non-medical cross cultural experiences strengthen your application.

Shadowing

Applicants should also attempt to work with or shadow a Physician Assistant whenever possible to better understand the details of the occupation. Shadowing hours do not count toward Direct Patient Care Experience.