Applicant Orientation
(for students planning to apply to allied health schools)

Tas Qadri/Casey Ellis
Pre-PA and Pre-Veterinary Advisor | Nursing and Allied Health Advisor

Office of the Vice-President for Instruction
Meet our Staff!

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About the Pre-Health Advising Office

- Our office advises all UGA students interested in healthcare careers.
  - Medicine, dentistry, optometry, allied-health (PA, PT, OT, AA), and nursing.

- We are located in 130 Memorial Hall
  - **Website**: prehealth.uga.edu
  - **Email**: premed@uga.edu
  - **Phone**: 706-542-0444

- Visit our website:
  - To join our Pre-Health UGA listserv
  - To check out our Pre-Health Event Calendar for upcoming meetings/workshops/events.
  - To make an appointment with a Pre-Health Advisor.
Upcoming Pre-Health Events

Upcoming Events Calendar:

https://prehealth.uga.edu/resources/

This is a great tool to review weekly to see all the great workshops and meetings scheduled for our allied health clubs.

It is updated regularly.
Important Upcoming Application Dates
For the 2021-2022 application cycle:

- **CASPA (PA Schools)**
  - April: Application opens

- **PTCAS (PT Schools)**
  - July: Application opens

- **OTCAS (OT Schools)**
  - July: Application opens
Orientation Overview

- Application and Timeline
- Components of Application
  - Academic History
    - Academic Transcripts and GPA
    - GRE
  - Supporting Information
    - Shadowing/Patient Care Experiences
    - Activities
    - Personal Statement/Essay
    - Letters of Evaluation
- Where should I apply?
- Interviews
- Should I take a Gap-Year?
- What if I am not competitive?
Allied Health Schools in Georgia

**PA Schools**
- Augusta University (Augusta)
- Emory University (Atlanta)
- Mercer University (Atlanta)
- Morehouse School of Medicine (Atlanta)

**PT Schools**
- Augusta University (Augusta)
- Brenau University (Gainesville)
- Emory University (Atlanta)
- Georgia Southern University-Armstrong Campus (Savannah)
- Georgia State University (Atlanta)

**OT Schools**
- Augusta University (Augusta)
- Brenau University (campuses in Gainesville and Norcross)

- Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) (Suwanee)
- South University (Savannah)
- Brenau University (Gainesville)
- South College (Atlanta Campus)

- Mercer University (Atlanta)
- Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) (Suwanee)
- University of North Georgia (Dahlonega)

- Georgia State University (Atlanta)
Application

- **Centralized Application Services**
  - CASPA (for PA school)
  - PTCAS (for PT school)
  - OTCAS (for OT school)

- Each application has an instruction manual—download it!
  - Each profession’s corresponding club also typically holds a meeting all about application services at the end of the term. Be on the lookout for announcements about these!

- Submit your application as early as possible!
  - Takes approximately 1-2 months to be verified
Supplemental Applications

- Most schools you apply to will also require that you submit a *supplemental application*.
  - This is typically an application to the institution’s graduate school
  - May also include short answer/essay questions and associated fees
  - Usually linked through the CAS system, if the school participates in that service

- All portions of the supplemental application must be submitted in order for your application to be considered complete

- Avoid repeating content from CAS essay in any potential supplemental essays/responses.
## PA Application Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Application Period</th>
<th>Matriculation Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Augusta University</td>
<td>July – October</td>
<td>May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emory University</td>
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<td>August</td>
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<tr>
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<td>November – March</td>
<td>January</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCOM</td>
<td>April - December</td>
<td>June</td>
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<td>January</td>
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<td>June</td>
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<tr>
<td>South College</td>
<td>April – March</td>
<td>Sept/Oct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brenau University</td>
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<td>January</td>
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## PT Application Timeline

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<tr>
<td>Georgia-PCOM</td>
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<td>June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgia Southern University-Armstrong Campus <em>(formerly Armstrong State)</em></td>
<td>July – October</td>
<td>May</td>
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<td>August</td>
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## OT Application Timeline

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<td>July – January</td>
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Primary Components of Application

1. Academic History
   - Overall GPA vs. Science/Prerequisite GPA
   - Transcripts

2. Exam Performance (GRE)

3. Activities/Experiences
   - Shadowing (Exposure to “provider-patient” interaction)
   - Volunteering (Commitment to helping others and community involvement)
   - Leadership (Extracurricular engagement)
   - Research

4. Personal Statement and/or Essay(s)

5. Letters of Evaluation
Academic History

- Overall GPA vs. Science/Prerequisite GPA
  - Biology, Chemistry, Physics (BCP)
  - ~3.4-3.6 GPA is average for accepted applicants

- Trends
  - Did you challenge yourself?
  - Did you improve over time?
  - Did you take your science courses at UGA?
  - Do you have only 1-2 withdrawals?

- AP credit
  - While many programs will accept AP credit, some do not so it is important to confirm with programs of interest
  - For example, Emory PT and Georgia State OT list explicitly on their website that they do NOT accept AP credit

- Transcripts:
  - Submit an official transcript from every institution you attended
  - Request transcripts early as they can take several weeks to send and process
  - Refer to the application instructions regarding where to send transcripts and how to enter coursework
PA School Admission Requirements

- Always double-check with schools you are interested in!
  - Requirements can change year-to-year

### General PA School Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Courses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>BIOL 1107/L and BIOL 1108/L</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Chemistry</td>
<td>CHEM 1211/L and CHEM 1212/L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Chemistry</td>
<td>CHEM 2211/L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiology</td>
<td>MIBO2500/L, MIBO3000/L or MIBO3500/MIBO3510L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy and Physiology</td>
<td>CBIO2200/L and CBIO2210/L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>PSYC1101 and/or PSYC3230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Recommended</td>
<td>STAT2000, BCMB3100, GENE 3200</td>
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PT School Admission Requirements

- Always double-check with schools you are interested in!
  - Requirements can change year-to-year

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<td><strong>Physics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Statistics</strong></td>
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OT School Admission Requirements

- Always double-check with schools you are interested in!
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<td>Anatomy and Physiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
</tr>
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<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifespan Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Terminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology or Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Recommended</td>
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</table>
Is AP credit accepted?

- The policies regarding acceptance of AP credit vary greatly amongst allied health programs in the state.

- For **PA** programs in state:
  - Morehouse does NOT accept AP credit
  - All other PA programs in Georgia DO accept AP credit as long as the credits appear on your college transcript; however, it is recommended to confirm out of state program policies regarding AP credit

- For **PT** programs in state:
  - Emory does NOT accept AP credit
  - Georgia State lists that they do NOT accept AP credit for PSYC and all other AP credits are subject to committee review (however they are generally NOT accepted)

- For **OT** programs in state:
  - Georgia State lists that they do NOT accept AP credit

- Important to check with individual schools you hope to apply to.
GRE

- Take the GRE no later than Spring/early Summer of the year you plan to apply
  - Offered regularly; however, it will take a couple of weeks to receive your official score report and have that sent to programs of interest.
  - Registration is rolling and can be completed via the University Testing Center on campus.

- Courses you need before the exam:
  - No specific coursework is required pre-GRE since the “General Test” is required

- GRE scores range from 260-340
  - Try to score at least 300 (50th percentile) as a composite (combined) score
  - ~150 for quantitative, ~150 for verbal, ~4.0 writing

- You can study for the GRE on your own or take a GRE prep-course
  - Key is to make a study plan and take practice tests!
Supporting Information: Activities & Experiences

- Applicants use the Supporting Information/Experiences section to provide detailed information about:
  - **Observation Hours**: Time spent officially following and observing a health care professional at work, preferably in the field you are applying to (i.e. PA, PT or OT).
  - **Patient Care Experience (for PA)**: Experiences in which you are directly responsible for a patient’s care. For example, performing procedures, directing a course of treatment, actively working on patients as a MA, paramedic, EMT, CNA, phlebotomist, etc.
  - **Employment**: Paid work done outside of the health care field; for example, a retail or restaurant job.
  - **Extracurricular Activities**: Includes research, club memberships, sports, etc. through a college or university.
  - **Research**: Research projects done in addition to classroom work; research generally should NOT appear as credit on a school transcript, but may be acceptable for some programs (refer to instructions for specific application).
  - **Volunteer**: Volunteer work done outside of the health care field; for example, working for Habitat for Humanity, tutoring students, participating in or working for a fundraiser walk or blood drive, etc.

- Anything you add is fair game for an interview!
  - Include activities in which you were actively engaged.
  - Highlight specific qualities (e.g. leadership, teamwork, compassion, etc.).
  - Try to avoid including things in which you are a passive participant.
Observation Hours and Patient Care Experience

- **Keeping track of experiences**
  - It is recommended that you keep a word document or excel file to keep track of your experiences—specifically your supervisor’s name and contact information, dates present, and hours accumulated.
  - You may also want to make note of memorable experiences to draw from later for interview/essay prompts

- **Verifying Experiences**
  - Generally, application services will request the contact information of your supervisor for observation hours and direct patient care experiences.
  - They will then contact this individual (usually via email) to electronically verify your experiences
    - No physical signatures need to be obtained by you
    - Good practice to follow up with providers before application opens to let them know this email is coming!
Supporting Information: Personal Statement/Essay

Personal Statement

- Your chance to inform committee about yourself beyond transcript.
  - Pay close attention to number of characters (not words) that you can submit
  - DO NOT exceed maximum length
  - Triple-check for grammar and spelling errors!

- Need to answer these questions:
  - Why do you want to be a PA (or OT)?
  - Why do I want to pursue a PA/OT education?
  - Why have you selected this field of healthcare?
  - What motivates you to learn more this field?
  - What do you want schools to know about you that hasn’t been disclosed in other sections of the application?
  - Explain a defining moment that helped steer you toward a career in this field
  - COVID essay included now

Essay Prompt(s)

- For PT applications (and potentially supplemental applications) you will be given an essay prompt
  - Typically limed to ~1 page (5,000 characters including spaces)
  - 2019-2020 prompt: Describe a meaningful experience in your life. Reflect on how that experience influenced your personal growth, such as your attitudes or perceptions

- Start early! Give yourself at least two months to work on your statement.
  - Have several people read it (letter-writers, advisor, etc.)
  - UGA resources: Honors College, Career Center
Supporting Information: Letters of Recommendation

- Most programs require **three letters:**
  - 1 healthcare provider (PA, PT, OT)
  - 1 professor (preferably in major or in prerequisite course)
  - Additional letter(s) from another academic professional, healthcare provider, supervisor, or someone who knows you well enough to speak positively on your behalf.

- Letters should come from people who know you!
  - Will need to describe you as an individual—behavior, character traits, maturity-level, etc.
Regarding Committee/Advisor Letters

- The Pre-Health Advising office no longer writes nor submits letters of evaluation.

- The absence of a committee or advisor letter will not negatively affect your application.
How should I ask for Letters of Evaluation?

- Ask early! January-March of year you plan to apply.
  - Keep in mind, though, that letters cannot be submitted until the application cycle officially opens.

- Email about meeting in person, then ask for letter during meeting.

- Always ask whether they can write you a positive letter!

- Provide the following to your letter-writers:
  - Resume or CV
  - Draft of personal statement (if needed for application)
  - Information about the programs you’re applying to and your goals
  - Guidelines for Letter-Writers handout (provided by Pre-Health Advising Office)
How should my Letters be submitted?

- Programs that participate in the CAS system will have evaluators submit electronically.
  - Student will be asked to provide contact information for recommender
  - Recommender will then receive an email regarding how to submit recommendation form and corresponding letter

- Work with letter-writer to ensure they have received the information via email and work to make submission as easy as possible.

- Always waive your right to view your letters of evaluation!
Where should I apply?

- Recommend applying to several schools.
  - Admissions are very fickle. Many variables affect likelihood of interview.
  - There are no true “back-up” schools.

- Consider applying to private out-of-state schools.
  - State institutions are very particular about residency, private schools are not.

- Use the **PAEA and PTCAS Program Directories, as well as individual OT webpages**
  - Overview and admissions data for accredited programs
  - Review necessary application materials
Background Check

- Report anything you think might be an issue.
  - Honor Code violations
  - Legal issues (misdemeanors, felonies, etc.)

- Not reporting is considered the same as lying.

- If you have had a violation expunged, be sure to pull record and verify.

- If something happens after you apply or are accepted, you must report.

- Bottom-line, try to keep your nose clean!
Interviews

- Interview season begins as early as August/September and will continue into the Spring.
- An invitation to interview typically means your “numbers” are good.
- Interviewers are trying to find out who you are.
  - No right/wrong answers—more about how you answer and interpersonal communication skills.
- Tips:
  - Know your application inside and out.
  - Dress conservatively (no tattoos, minimal jewelry, beards trimmed, comfy shoes)
  - Interview begins the minute you step on campus
  - Send thank-you notes within 2-weeks of interview (email or hand-written)
- Career Center conducts mock interviews
  - Schedule early! Try for Spring/Early Fall.
- Pre-Health Advising Office conducts Interview Panel every August—watch for announcement
Gap Year

- Why take a Gap Year?
  - I didn’t get in.
  - I am not ready to apply.
  - I need a break from school.

- Work on weak spots in your application.
  - Complete post-bac or Master’s program
  - Retake GRE
  - Increase clinical involvement and experience

- Key to Gap Year is planning.
  - Try to stay busy and do things that allow you to grow and cultivate new skills
What if I am not competitive?

- It’s *okay* not to get in the first time! Plenty of people have to reapply.
  - Especially true for PA school!

- Take a Gap Year to work on becoming more competitive.
  - Take additional courses or complete a graduate degree
  - Re-take the GRE
  - Seek out more volunteering and shadowing opportunities

- Consider another career in healthcare
  - Nursing, Physician Assistant, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Genetic Counseling, etc.
  - Consider talking with a career consultant further about other career paths may be best-suited to your strengths
Fee Assistance Programs

- **PA School**
  - CASPA offers a fee assistance program to assist students applying to PA school.
  - Covers only initial application fee
  - Granted on a first-come, first-served basis
  - Apply for fee assistance when application opens in April 2022

- **PT School**
  - PTCAS offers a fee assistance program to assist students applying to PT school.
    - May apply to 1 program in PTCAS for free (pay $45 for each additional program designation)
    - Granted on a first-come, first-served basis
    - Apply for fee assistance well before you submit your PTCAS application.

- **OT School**
  - OTCAS offers a fee assistance program to assist students applying to OT school.
    - Covers initial application fee, as well as the ability to apply to 1 program in OTCAS for free (pay $60 for each additional program designation)
    - Granted on a first-come, first-served basis
    - May request fee waiver as soon as an OTCAS application has been created
      - *Once approved for a waiver, though, student is required to submit OTCAS application within 14 days (including holidays and weekends)!*
Recent PA Admissions Data (2019-2020)

University of Georgia
- 105/222 (accepted/verified applicants): 47.3% acceptance rate
- Average applicant vs. accepted GPA: (Overall/Science)
  - 3.57/3.29 vs. 3.49/3.52
- Average applicant vs. accepted GRE:
  - Verbal: 154 vs. 155
  - Quantitative: 153 vs. 154
  - Analytical/Writing: 4.0
- Matriculated into 35 PA schools
  - Including: Mercer, South, Emory, GA-PCOM, Augusta, University of Alabama-Birmingham, Wake Forest, Duke, Northwestern, Nova Southeastern and many more.

National
- 8,792/26,953: 33% acceptance rate
- Average Matriculant GPA:
  - 3.57/3.51
- Average Matriculant GRE Percentiles (for previous cycle since new data not yet available):
  - Verbal: 58.94
  - Quantitative: 51.82
  - Analytical/Writing: 55.55
- Matriculant Age:
  - Median: 23; Range: 19-61; Mean: 25
- 41% re-applicant
  - up to 46% for 2017-2018 cycle
- Average designations per applicant: 7
Recent PT Admissions Data (2019-2020)

University of Georgia
- 75/109 (accepted/applicants): 68.9%
  - UGA ranked as #2 in nation for “Top Primary Institutions Attended by Accepted PTCAS Applicants”!
- Matriculated into over 36 PT schools
  - Including: All 7 DPT programs in Georgia, as well as Duke, Miami, Michigan, University of Tennessee Health Sciences, and many more.

National
- 9,707/19,025: 51%
- Average applicant vs. accepted GPA: (Overall/Prerequisite)
  - 3.58/3.30 vs. 3.39/3.52
- Average Matriculant GRE Percentiles:
  - Verbal: 51.89
  - Quantitative: 45.82
  - Analytical/Writing: 55.66
- Matriculant Age:
  - Median: 22; Range: 18-59; Mean: 22.86
- Average Designations per Applicant: 6
Recent OT Admissions Data (2019-2020)

University of Georgia
- 52 verified applicants
  - Increase from 47 verified applicants in previous admissions cycle
  - Comprehensive matriculant data and decision codes forthcoming
- Matriculated into several OT programs, including those in state, as well as Medical University of South Carolina and South Alabama

National
- Applicant and matriculant data for 2017-2018 admission cycle is still forthcoming
- For 2014 admissions cycle:
  - Doctoral Degree-Level Programs:
    - 248 students admitted
    - 1,481 total applications
  - Master’ Degree-Level Programs:
    - 6,945 students admitted
    - 40,839 total applications
Major Takeaways

- Plan out each step in advance!
- Submit your application as early as you can (but don’t rush it)!
- Always have a Plan B!
- Utilize the Pre-Health Advising Office!
  - Join the Pre-Health listserv
  - Meet with Pre-Health Advisor
  - Review our website
Questions?

Pre-Health Advising Office
Website: prehealth.uga.edu
Email: premed@uga.edu
Phone: 706-542-0444

To make an appointment with Pre-Health Advisor, please visit website or log onto to SAGE.