Central Application Service for Physician Assistants

Application Instructions

2016-2017

April 27, 2016-March 1, 2017

CASPA
PO Box 9112
Watertown, MA 02471
617.612.2080
portal.caspaonline.org
CASPA CONTACT INFORMATION

Arrange for your transcripts to be mailed to the address below:

CASPA
PO Box 9112
Watertown, MA 02471
caspainfo@caspaonline.org
617.612.2080

Follow CASPA on Facebook
www.facebook.com/CASPAOnlineApp

For answers to common questions, review the Before Applying and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the CASPA Portal. Once you submit your completed CASPA application, it is your responsibility to login frequently and check the status of your materials.

OVERVIEW

In an effort to simplify the application process for prospective PA students and to facilitate the admissions process for PA educational institutions, PAEA launched the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) in 2001. CASPA allows PA applicants to use a single Web-based application and one set of materials to apply to multiple PA programs. CASPA is a service of the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) and is administered by Liaison International, an education information technology company located in Watertown, Massachusetts.

Applicants who apply through CASPA submit a completed web-based application comprised of demographic data, colleges and universities attended, academic course history, health care experience, references, work experiences, extracurricular activities, honors, professional licenses, a personal statement and supplement question responses. It is the applicant’s responsibility to read and follow all CASPA and program-specific instructions throughout the application cycle.

2016-2017 Application Cycle
The 2016-2017 admissions cycle opens on April 27, 2016. Applicants may start and submit the CASPA application on this date. The 2016-2017 application cycle will closed on March 1, 2017.

Program Eligibility
All physician assistant (PA) educational institutions recognized by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc (ARC-PA) with accredited, provisional, or developing status are invited to participate in CASPA. Institutions that participate in CASPA agree to accept applications for
admission through the CASPA service. Developing programs must be within one year of the provisional accreditation to participate in CASPA.

**Role of CASPA**
The purpose of CASPA is to facilitate the PA admissions process for applicants and programs, promote the physician assistant profession, expose PA educational programs to a broad spectrum of applicants, and provide applicant data for institutional, regional, and national analysis.

**IMPORTANT:** CASPA does not determine whether an applicant meets the PA program requirements or is eligible for admissions.

**Complete Application**
CASPA will consider an application complete and ready for transcript verification once the following items are complete and received:
- CASPA application has been submitted
- Official transcripts from all listed U.S. and English-speaking Canadian institutions listed are received by CASPA
- Correct CASPA application fee is paid
- Minimum of two (2) letters of reference are received by CASPA

**IMPORTANT:** CASPA will accept up to five (5) evaluations per applicant, but will process a complete application when only two (2) letters of reference have been received. Once the additional evaluations are submitted, CASPA will forward it to all programs to which the applicant applied. CASPA does not hold applications for missing documents, but individual programs may not consider applicants who are incomplete based on the local admission requirements.

**Verification**
Once an application is deemed complete by CASPA, the Service will compare original transcripts to the self-reported course information on the application to verify accuracy, calculate CASPA GPAs, and submit the verified application file to the applicant’s designated PA programs.

**IMPORTANT:** CASPA processing may take up to four weeks once an application becomes complete.

**Role of PA Programs**
Programs determine whether an applicant is eligible for admission and will notify applicants directly regarding all admissions decisions. Programs reserve the right not to take all CASPA application fields into consideration in the admissions process.

**IMPORTANT:** admission policies and prerequisites vary significantly by program; please visit the program’s website to determine if you meet their prerequisite requirements for application. CASPA is not
responsible for determining program admissions requirements. Applicants should review the requirements of ALL programs prior to submitting their CASPA application.

Supplemental Materials
PA programs may also require applicants to send additional materials directly to the institution, known as supplemental materials. PA programs may not consider an applicant’s file or offer acceptance until all required materials are received. Supplemental materials may include additional application questions, paper copies of official GRE scores, original foreign transcripts, or other items. Failure to submit all required materials by the program’s deadline may jeopardize an applicant’s eligibility for admission consideration.

APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES

CASPA applicants to physician assistant programs agree to abide by certain rules and requirements.

Professional Behavior
PA applicants are expected to act professionally in all of their dealings with CASPA and the physician assistant educational institutions. Applicants are expected to properly follow instructions and meet deadlines. Responsibility, respect, good judgment and cooperation are qualities valued by the PA profession; applicants are expected to demonstrate these qualities beginning with the application process.

Applicants using CASPA agree to:

• Be responsible for researching the application procedures, admission requirements and deadline requirements for each designated physician assistant program and adhering to those requirements.
• Complete and submit their CASPA application, sign the CASPA Release to Programs statement and submit all supporting documentation to CASPA at least four weeks prior to the earliest deadline of the programs to which they are applying.
• Use the Transcript Request Form (available to applicants on the CASPA portal, www.caspaonline.org after they have listed their institutions attended) to submit transcripts to CASPA. To allow for timely processing, it is recommended that transcripts arrive at CASPA at least four weeks prior to the deadline of the earliest program to which the applicant is applying.
• Use the CASPA Payment Form (available during the submit process) to submit money order fee payments to CASPA (credit card payments preferred) and agree to submit the correct CASPA application fee.
• Provide honest, accurate and complete application information.
• Report to CASPA any changes in contact information (mailing address, email, phone number) throughout the admissions cycle. It is recommended applicants provide the same updates directly to the programs to which they have applied.
• Monitor their application’s status and the submission and receipt of all application materials to CASPA, including all transcripts and letters of recommendation. The status of the application
and supporting documents can be monitored throughout the application process within the applicant portal.

- Follow up on any incomplete application statuses and/or missing materials, such as transcripts, letters of recommendation or payments, with CASPA staff and facilitate the submission or re-submission of those materials to CASPA. If letters of recommendation are missing, the applicant should contact the individual reference to make sure the request was received and encourage timely submission. Please note that CASPA is not responsible for documents which are lost in the mail. These items must be re-submitted to CASPA in a timely manner.
- **Respond immediately** to ALL notices and questions received from CASPA staff and physician assistant programs. Applicants are responsible for checking their CASPA application inbox available on the applicant portal, as well as their personal email and voicemail for these important notices and questions.
- Print a hard copy of the completed CASPA application to save for their files.
- Communicate and initiate all contact in a professional manner when interacting with CASPA staff and admissions staff of designated programs. CASPA will not communicate with parents, spouses, friends and or other individuals in regards to an application.
- Accept or decline all interview invitations and offers of acceptance in a timely and considerate manner.
- **Log off** the CASPA web application after the completion of each entry or review session to protect against unauthorized access of application information.

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

**Equal Opportunity Statement**
The Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) and the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) value diversity and comply with all applicable local, state and federal laws related to equal opportunity and non-discrimination. As such, they do not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, age, religion, creed, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status in any of their policies, practices or procedures.

**Physician Assistant Technical Standards and Essential Functions**
Neither PAEA nor CASPA have adopted any policies or positions regarding the essential skills or technical standards necessary to practice or function as a physician assistant. However, individual PA programs generally do have these types of policies in place. A program’s technical standards and/or essential skills may describe the physical, behavioral, and/or cognitive abilities needed to complete the physician assistant curriculum at that particular institution and to competently perform as a physician assistant upon graduation. You can review technical standards on the programs’ website or by contacting your designated PA programs directly regarding program-specific policies.
CREATING AN ACCOUNT
*indicates required information

When creating an account, the following information will be provided to the admissions offices at the programs to which you apply. Providing complete and accurate information is important and some of this information will be auto-populated on the application. Below is a snapshot of the CASPA application portal.

Your Name
- Title, first or given name*, middle name, last or family name*, suffix and display name

Contact Information
- Email Address*
- Confirm Email Address*
- Preferred Phone Number*
- Alternate Phone Number

Username and Password
- Username*
- Password*
- Confirm Password*
- Security Question*
- Security Answer*

Terms and Conditions
- I agree to these terms*
RE-APPLICANTS

All applicants who applied or created an application in the 2015-2016 cycle will have the option to use the same application in this and future cycles. Certain information will be carried over, some information will require approval by the applicant in order to be carried over with no changes and some information will not be carried over.

**Items Carried Over**
CASPA will pull most application data forward, including all demographic information, colleges and universities attended, U.S. courses previously verified by staff and the transcripts that correspond with these courses, experiences and achievements entered and the personal statement. Before you are able to carry some of this information over, you will be required to review it to make sure it is up to date.

**Items Not Carried Over**
CASPA will not carry evaluations into new cycles. Applicants must request and receive new evaluation letters in every CASPA cycle.

**IMPORTANT:** while a new personal statement is not required by CASPA, programs prefer applicants to submit a new statement to demonstrate what steps they have taken to improve their application since they last applied.
MY APPLICATION DASHBOARD

There are four main sections of the CASPA application, including:

1. Personal Information
2. Academic History
3. Supporting Information
4. Program Materials

Below is a snapshot of the application dashboard homepage.
The Personal Information section questions collect basic data on the applicant’s biographic, contact, citizenship, race & ethnicity, other and family information background. Questions are included below. Below is a snapshot of the overall personal information section page with specific question tabs.

**Biographic Information Questions**
- Your Name (first, middle, last, suffix)
- Alternate Name (first, middle, last, preferred nickname)
- Sex (male, female)
- Birth Information (date, country, city, state, county)
Contact Information Questions
- Current Address (street, city, country, state, zip, valid dates)
- Permanent Address (same)
- Phone
- Email

Citizenship Information Questions
- Citizenship Details (citizenship status, country, dual)
- Residency Information (legal state of residence, legal country, time)
- Visa Information (number, type, issued by, issued city, country, valid dates, sponsor)

*Some information in this section is optional*

Race & Ethnicity Questions
- Ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino origin)
- Race (American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander or White)

*This entire section is optional*

Other Information Questions
- Language Proficiency (native language, additional languages & proficiency)
- Military Status
- Misdemeanor (if yes, description, charge, dates, consequence, reflection)
- Felony (if yes, description, charge, dates, consequence, reflection)
- License Infraction (if yes, description, charge, dates, consequence, reflection)
- Academic Infraction (if yes, description, charge, dates, consequence, reflection)
- Environmentally Disadvantaged (HRSA questions)
- Additional Questions (first heard of profession, influential factor in applying, ever matriculated or attended a PA program)

Family Information Questions
- Parent/Guardian (parent name, gender, status, occupation, residency, education, household information)
ACADEMIC HISTORY SECTION

The Academic History section collects data on high school and colleges attended, allows the applicant to enter their transcripted coursework and self-report their standardized test scores. Questions are included below. Below is a snapshot of the overall academic history section page with specific question tabs.

High Schools Attended Questions
- High Schools Attended (name)
- City
- State
- Graduation Status and Date
Colleges Attended
Applicants are required to enter all colleges and universities attended on the CASPA application. The data collected on each is below. Applicants will enter this information for each college/university they attended and also have the option to list multiple degrees.

- College or university name
- Degree information
  - Degree Earned (yes, no, in-progress)
  - Degree Type
  - Degree Earned Date
  - Major
  - Minor (if applicable)
  - Term Type
  - First Term Date
  - Last Term Date

Transcript Entry
Applicants are required to enter all coursework taken at all colleges/universities listed in the Colleges Attended section. The data collected is below. A CAS grade will be automatically calculated once this information is entered. The CAS grade is used to calculate GPAs upon verification.

- Course Name
- Course Title
- Subject
- Credits
- Grade

Standardized Exams
Applicant may choose to self-report any GRE, TOEFL, or MCAT scores in this section. They may enter multiple scores for each test. This section contains self-reported scores only, NOT official test scores. The data collected for exams is below.

- Test Taken (yes, no)
- Date Planned or Date Taken
- Scores
The Supporting Information section collects data on the applicant’s experiences/achievements/certifications and also collects up to five evaluations and the essay. Below is a snapshot of the overall supporting information section page with specific question tabs.

**Evaluations**
Applicants may request three evaluations through CASPA. They will enter the following information for each evaluator.

- First Name
- Last Name
- Email
- Letter Due Date
- Personal Message to Evaluator
- Waiver of Evaluation
- Permission to Contact Reference (for CASPA)
- Permission for Schools to Contact Reference
Once the evaluator’s data has been entered and saved, the evaluation request is sent via email to the author with instructions on how to complete the request along with a rubric.

**Experiences/Achievements/Certifications**  
Applicants may enter multiple entries in each listed category. This allows applicants to enter relevant employment, health care, shadowing, volunteer, research, awards, and license/certifications data on their application.

**Essay**  
Applicants must complete an essay in order to submit their application. The essay question allows them 5,000 characters to explain ‘why they are interested in being a physician assistant.’

**Release Statement**  
Applicants must sign off on a CASPA Release Statement and the CASPA Professional Code of Conduct in order to submit their application. They must also indicate whether or not they release their application data to their health profession advisor.
PROGRAM MATERIALS SECTION

The program materials section is a new part of the application this year. It allows programs to set custom requirements for their applicants, including:

1. Custom Questions
2. Documents
3. Prerequisites

Every program will be required to complete a ‘branding page’, shown below. This page can host a custom program photo and text, along with a program description. The program details section is auto-populated with data CASPA receives from each program. Below is a snapshot of the program’s branding page.

Custom Questions
Programs may elect to turn on custom questions. These questions can be required or optional, drop down, either/or, multi-option, short answer, or narrative questions. Any question that is required MUST be completed by applicants to submit their application to your program. If you have a supplemental application, this may be a good place to consider adding those questions.
Documents
Programs may elect to turn on documents. Each document can be required or optional. There are four pre-populated documents that programs may require and one ‘other’ option.

1. CV/Resume
2. Military Papers
3. License
4. Clinical/Professional
5. Other

Any document that is required MUST be uploaded by applicants to submit their application to your program. The Clinical/Professional document is intended to collect professional coursework information (hospital or military courses) that is not collected on the CASPA application. If you have a supplemental application, you may consider linking your supplemental for applicants to download, complete, and upload into the ‘other’ option.

Prerequisites
Programs may elect to turn on prerequisites. If this section is turned on, it is required and applicants MUST complete it to submit their application to your program. You will list your prerequisite courses and applicants will match the courses from their transcript entry section to your listed prerequisites.

It is important to note that this information is NOT verified by CASPA and the program will still be able to determine whether or not the matched courses meet your prerequisite requirements.

ADD PROGRAM TAB

The ‘Add Program’ tab is where you can manage the programs you wish to apply to. Here you can select any program until their deadline passes or deselect any program up until the time you submit your application to that particular program. Below is a snapshot of the add program tab.
SUBMIT APPLICATION TAB

The ‘Submit Application’ tab is where you can see a snapshot of the programs you selected. This is where you will pay and submit your applications, either individually or as a group. Below is a snapshot of the submit application tab.

Review your program selections here, check on status of individual program tasks, and pay for your programs selections.

Once your application is submitted, no changes or refunds can be made.
CHECK STATUS TAB

The ‘Check Status’ tab of the application is where you can see the real-time status of your transcripts and evaluations for your overall application as well as by each program you apply to. Below is a snapshot of the check status tab and how you can view the status of your application materials overall and by program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Application</th>
<th>Add Program</th>
<th>Submit Application</th>
<th>Check Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Program Status" /></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Application Materials**

- **Transcripts**: Accepted 0 of 2 - Verifying
- **Evaluations**: Requested - Accepted 1 of 3 - Completing

**My Programs**

- **Adventist University of Health Sciences**
  - **Adventist University of Health Sciences**
  - **Download PDF**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Transcripts</strong></th>
<th><strong>Evaluations</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PURDUE UNIVERSITY - WEST LAFAYETTE</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sean Stickle</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2021 - May 2023</td>
<td>Needed By All Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Arrived</td>
<td>Requested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verifying</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WORSHAM COLLEGE OF MORTUARY SCIENCE**

| Spring 2023 - Still Attending | Requested |
| Verifying | Accepted |

**IMPORTANT**: Before submitting your application, it is very important to review your program selections carefully. Once you submit your application, you have applied to all programs selected. CASPA does not issue refunds once the application has been submitted for any reason, including a passed deadline or error in choosing designations.


**Transcript Information**

Once you have entered all coursework into the CASPA application, you should request official transcripts from all U.S. and English-speaking Canadian institutions to be sent directly to CASPA. CASPA will then verify your entered coursework against your transcripts.

**IMPORTANT:** transcripts must be sent directly to CASPA by the issuing institution. They must be sealed and official. CASPA will not accept transcripts sent by applicants.

**Foreign Transcript Information**

All foreign transcripts should be evaluated by a foreign transcript evaluation service. Once completed, evaluations should be sent directly to CASPA by the evaluation service. They will then be uploaded into your application for the programs.

**IMPORTANT:** if required by the program, you may have to send an original copy of the transcript evaluation directly to the program.

**ACADEMIC UPDATE**

Once your application is submitted, your application is locked and most sections cannot be updated for the remainder of the application cycle. Once your application is in “verified” status, you will have the ability to update the coursework section of your application using a system called “Academic Update.” This allows you to change courses previously listed as “planned/in-progress” to “complete” and self-report the grades received for these classes.

**IMPORTANT:** CASPA does not re-calculate GPAs once in-progress coursework is updated on the application. GPAs can be re-calculated by programs according to their procedure. CASPA does not accept updated transcripts for in-progress coursework and does not verify the updated transcripts.
OTHER APPLICATION INFORMATION

Program Deadlines
CASPA participating programs choose from nine application submission deadlines. Each program’s submission deadline can be found on the participating programs list. The nine deadline options are listed below:

- June 15
- July 15
- August 1
- September 1
- October 1
- November 1
- December 1
- January 15
- March 1

Deadline Requirements
Programs must select one of the three requirement options below in addition to their deadline. The deadline requirement defines what is required from the applicant by the chosen deadline. Check the participating programs list for each program’s deadline definition.

1. **SUBMIT**: applicants must submit their CASPA application by 11:59pm EST on the deadline date posted. Documents are not required to be received by the deadline date.
2. **COMPLETE**: applicants must have a complete application by the deadline date posted. A complete application requires that the application is submitted and all transcripts, payments, and at least two letters of reference have been received by CASPA and attached to the application. Documents should be sent to CASPA several weeks prior to the deadline date to ensure all items arrive on time.
3. **VERIFIED**: applicants must have their application verified (GPA calculation completed) by the deadline date posted. To ensure the application is verified on time, applications must be completed (submitted, payment received, transcripts received, and two letters of recommendation received) at least four weeks in advance of the deadline date.

CASPA Shut Down Period
The CASPA shut down period occurs each year between March 1 to mid-April for enhancements and application changes to occur. The application will open on April 27, 2016 for the 2016-2017 CASPA application cycle and close on March 1, 2017.

Supplemental Applications
Some programs may require a supplemental application or supplemental application materials. Please see the program websites to be sure you submit appropriate required supplemental materials.
Fee Schedule
The fee for the first designation is $175 and $50 fee for each additional designation submitted.

Payment Information
CASPA accepts Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover. CASPA does not accept money orders, cashier’s checks, personal checks, cash or credit card payments over the phone. Please [click here](#) to view the 2016-2017 payment information.

Fee Waivers
CASPA does offer fee waivers for applicants meeting the criteria set forth by the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#). Fee waiver requests must be submitted to CASPA before submitting your application. Once you submit an application, you **will not** qualify for a fee waiver. Please [click here](#) to view the 2016-2017 fee waiver information.

**IMPORTANT:** *it is essential to apply for fee waivers early. They are issued on a first-come, first-serve basis. Fee waivers typically run out within two months of the cycle open.*

GPA
Please [click here](#) to view the 2016-2017 GPA information.

Notifications
CASPA will automatically email you for the following reasons:

- You create a new CASPA application account
- You submit your CASPA application
- Your transcript has been processed
- Your GPA has been calculated and processed
- If CASPA has received an incomplete or invalid reference(s) or transcript(s)
- If there is a problem with the “Coursework” section of your application
- You are eligible to enter your updated coursework during Academic Update

**IMPORTANT:** *it is your responsibility to frequently login and check the status of your file and materials. CASPA is not responsible for applications that are rejected by programs because of missing documents or incomplete sections.*

**IMPORTANT:** *CASPA is not responsible for any materials lost in the mail or for delays caused by registrars’ offices. You are responsible for monitoring the status of your application, as well as the receipt of your documents, and alerting CASPA of any questions or concerns you have regarding your application status in a timely manner.*
Contacting Customer Service
For assistance during the application process, it is best to contact customer service. They can be reached at 617.612.2080 or caspinfo@caspaonline.org. While it is easy and quick to send an email, application issues can be quickly remedied by making a phone call. Often, applicants miss deadlines or experience delays when sending an email. An issue is easier explained, understood, and taken care of over the phone.

Application Resources

• CASPA Application Portal
• CASPA Instructions & FAQ
• CASPA Facebook
• PA Focus