

## Direct Patient Care Clinical 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 experience may be found on [CASPA's website](#).

Applicants who matriculated into the UNM PA Program Class of 2025 had an average of 7,075 hours of direct patient care experience prior to application. 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.

- Nursing Assistant (CNA)
- Medical Assistant (MA)
- Registered Nurse (RN)
- Patient Care Technician (PCT)
- Surgical Technician
- Radiological Technician
- Pharmacy Technician
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Paramedic
- Military Medic/Corpsman
- Dental Hygienist
- Dental Assistant
- Sonographer
- Phlebotomist
- Respiratory Therapist
- Medical Scribe
- Medical Laboratory Scientist
- Athletic Trainer
- Clinical Psychologist
- Registered Behavior Therapist
- Speech Language Pathologist
- Medical Interpreter
- Community Health Worker
- Peer Counselor
- Medical Researcher
- Acupuncturist
- Physical/Occupational Therapist
- PT/OT Assistant/Aide
- Licensed Massage Therapist
- Home Health Care Provider

## Volunteer Experience

Community service experience (unpaid), which may be medical or non-medical, strengthens your application.

## Shadowing

Though not required, applicants should attempt to work with or shadow a Physician Assistant when possible to better understand the details of the occupation. Shadowing in a Primary Care setting is encouraged. Shadowing hours do not count toward Direct Patient Care Experience.