Experiences

Overview

In this section, you can enter your professional experiences in several categories, or types. Review the definitions below, consider the duties you performed, and choose the category that you think best fits the experience.

Note that since each program's definitions and requirements vary, CASPA has no specific preference as to which category you choose. These categories are broadly based on feedback from various physician assistant programs and are not a comprehensive list of every type of experience. Your experience's individual job description and responsibilities should determine the category you select; however, it is not guaranteed that your experience will be accepted by every program in the way you categorize it.

If you have any questions about your experiences fulfilling an individual program's prerequisite requirements, contact that program directly.

Although you can enter any experiences that you believe are relevant to your application, we recommend focusing on those experiences within the last 10 years and at the collegiate level and above. Enter only current and in-progress experiences (not planned experiences), and check your program's requirements regarding documentation.

Experience Types

Non-Healthcare Employment

Paid work done outside of the health care field or a research lab; for example, a retail or restaurant job.

Research

Research projects completed, preferably in addition to or outside of regular classroom work.

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.

Patient Care Experience

Experiences in which you are directly responsible for a patient's care. For example, prescribing medication, performing procedures, directing a course of treatment, designing a treatment regimen, actively working on patients as a nurse, paramedic, EMT, CNA, phlebotomist, physical therapist, dental hygienist, etc.
Healthcare Experience

Both paid and unpaid work in a health or health-related field where you are not directly responsible for a patient's care, but may still have patient interaction; for example, filling prescriptions, performing clerical work, delivering patient food, cleaning patients and/or their rooms, administering food or medication, taking vitals or other record keeping information, working as a scribe, CNA (depending on job description), medical assistant, etc.

Shadowing

Time spent officially following and observing a health care professional at work, preferably in the physician assistant field.

Leadership Experience

Experiences in which you held a leadership role within an organization, such as the president of a club, fraternity/sorority, etc.

Extracurricular Activities

Related activities you would like your selected programs to review; for example, academic clubs and competitive teams. Do not include paid work experience in this section.

Teaching Experience

Experiences in which you were in charge of instructing others, such as a teaching assistant, tutor, etc.

Enter Your Experience

1. Click Add an Experience.
2. Select the appropriate experience type from the drop-down.
3. Enter information about the organization where the experience took place.
4. Enter information about your supervisor at the organization. This is a person that programs can contact to verify that this experience occurred. If the experience was a student-organized group and there was no advisor, list a member who can verify your experience.
5. Enter the date or date range in which the experience took place. Note that your experiences will not display on your application in any specific order, regardless of the dates entered.
6. Enter additional details about the experience, including the title of the experience and the time commitments. Enter the average weekly number of hours that you completed for this experience during the date range that you indicated.
7. Select Yes or No to indicate a release authorization to allow your selected programs to contact the organization.
8. Click Save & Continue.

Note that you cannot repeat hours between Experience types. So, if position duties encompass more than one section, enter the position in both sections and divide the hours and duties accordingly.
Example

For example, a 40 hour a week position with 10 hours a week of research and 30 hours a week of direct patient care would be entered under both Research and Patient Care types with the appropriate hours and duties listed within each entry.