A HIGHER

STANDARD OF CARE

ELON PA
CARING FOR THE TOTAL PATIENT

NO. 1 BEST MASTER’S DEGREE FOR JOBS: PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES – FORBES.COM
Prepare to be a leader in your field. Elon’s 27-month, primary care-focused program employs a holistic approach to health care that emphasizes medical knowledge, interpersonal communication, patient care, professionalism and practice-and systems-linked learning.

You’ll get to know your patients as individuals and learn to care for the whole person — body, mind and spirit. Dynamic classroom experiences, discussions and lectures create a foundation of knowledge that is complemented by hands-on work with patients and medical providers who will become mentors.

You’ll graduate ready to work in one of the most in-demand professions in the nation. The Elon PA program intentionally emphasizes primary care as a means to produce graduates who will care for the growing and aging population at a time when there is a shortage of physicians.

The demand for PAs is expected to grow 38 percent by 2022, much faster than the average for other occupations, according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics. The median annual wage for physician assistants was $95,820 in May 2014.

**ACCREDITATION**

The ARC-PA has granted Accreditation-Provisional status to the Elon University Physician Assistant Program sponsored by Elon University. Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program’s ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding Accreditation-Provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the Standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students. Accreditation-Provisional does not ensure any subsequent accreditation status. It is limited to no more than five years from matriculation of the first class.

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**KERI Norris ’15**

As a young girl, Keri knew she wanted to join the medical field.

As an undergraduate at Appalachian State University, she discovered her love for the physician assistant profession.

But it was her time at Elon that taught her the value of building relationships with patients.

“The time I spent working in the field was the highlight of the program,” Keri said. “Moving from the classroom to working with real patients can be intimidating, but the faculty worked very hard to find preceptors who were enthusiastic about teaching.”

Since graduating, Keri has returned to her hometown of Spruce Pine, N.C. to work in primary care. She attributes much of her early success to her time at Elon.

“Growing up in a poverty stricken area has taught me to be become a servant of others. I have realized that, above all, patients want to feel like someone listens and cares. I have found great fulfillment in being the listener.”
INNOVATIVE
SYSTEMS-LINKED CURRICULUM
Elon’s curriculum integrates hands-on clinical practice into a strong biological and social science foundation. The PA program begins in January, which means graduates enter the job market at a different time than most schools.

As the program progresses, patient scenarios and simulated patient experiences increase in complexity. The culmination is an Advanced Clinical Reasoning course that builds on learner-centered models by guiding students to reapply knowledge and build competence in all areas of the Competencies for the Physician Assistant Profession.

The required Master’s Project supports and promotes professional development by assessing, appraising and applying evidence to address a research, patient care or policy question relevant to the industry.

A Bold Approach

Elon is the nation’s preeminent university for engaged learning. The Elon PA program intentionally infuses the curriculum with a variety of strategies to motivate students with different learning styles.

- Human anatomy is illuminated through exercises in body painting. As groups of students collaborate to reproduce the neck vasculature or musculature on the “canvas” that is a classmate’s body, the photographs in the anatomical atlas come to life.

- Pharmacology is a vast, complex topic for all student learners. Review sessions conducted in popular game formats make learning fun for students and solidify core concepts.

- In-depth work in Elon’s human donor lab and fresh tissue/clinical procedure lab introduce students to anatomic relationships and procedural/surgical skills that they will see and use while in clinical practice.
HANDS-ON EDUCATION
The Elon PA program will prepare you for success and empower you to decide how you’d like to apply your expertise. The coursework focuses on engaged learning experiences and promotes close relationships with faculty mentors. You’ll find group discussion, clinical skills labs, simulated patient experiences, lecture and patient scenario discussions are a regular part of the learning experience.

The second year of the Elon PA program is devoted to clinical education. Apply the lessons you learned in your first year to real-world scenarios as you work with preceptors who will become your mentors. These professionals include medical doctors, doctors of osteopathy, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and certified nurse midwives.

You’ll spend 15 months in this phase of your education as you rotate through seven core clinical education experiences. The time you spend working with real-world patients will help you see the world through many different perspectives and understand the complex relationships among people, cultures, beliefs and environments. The clinical education phase consists of seven required rotations.

You’ll complete 6-WEEK ROTATIONS in the following fields:

- Primary care
- Pediatrics
- Inpatient medicine
- General surgery
- Emergency medicine

You’ll complete 3-WEEK ROTATIONS in the following fields:

- Women’s health
- Behavioral medicine

Additionally, students choose two electives, which include dermatology, cardiology, hematology/oncology, orthopedics and other fields of medical study. The majority of clinical sites are located in central North Carolina.

AREZU Shekari ’15

From a young age, Arezu knew she wanted to help people, to be a medical professional. As an Elon PA student, she thrived on the program’s hands-on approach to learning. Since graduation, she’s put her skills to use as a hospitalist physician assistant at Johnston Medical Center in Smithfield, N.C.

Her time at Elon gave her the confidence to pursue the career she’s always wanted. “From day one of work, I felt prepared to do my job. While I still have plenty to learn, which comes with the job description, I know that I am doing a good job,” she said.

“The professors, guest lecturers, preceptors and all the educational tools we had at our disposal at Elon allowed me to get the best, most well-rounded education. From the realistic exam rooms to the human donor lab and the overall state-of-the-art facility, I knew when I left after graduation that I would be ready to start my career with no hesitation.”

EDUCATION
The faculty has a combined 45 years of full-time PA education teaching experience and 60+ years of full-time clinical experience representing the primary care disciplines of pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, internal medicine and a variety of clinical subspecialties. In addition to the principal faculty members, two medical directors and a client and simulated patient coordinator work with students.

PA faculty members are active in their profession beyond their work at the university. Professors regularly publish articles in scholarly journals, serve on editorial boards of journals and as peer reviewers, serve as leaders on professional boards, are members of health advisory committees for local schools, participate in accreditation site visits for other programs, are active in community events, and are frequent presenters at national conferences. All share a love for teaching, mentoring and engaging in service, research and leadership.

Elon’s medical directors bridge connections between the PA program and the surrounding medical community. Medical directors work with local providers who serve as preceptors to enhance the educational experience for PA students.

Caring for All

PA students intentionally and repeatedly work with a broad range of patients to better equip them for life after graduation. Learning through direct work with patients opens your mind to new cultures, traditions and beliefs, which will help you grow as a medical provider.

- Global Learning Opportunities (GLO) – As part of Elon’s commitment to educating globally engaged citizens, PA students may apply to complete one of their elective rotations in Belize at Hillside Clinic.
- The Client and Standardized Patient Program connects students with the surrounding community. Clients join classes so that students can evaluate and learn from people with actual health conditions. Standardized patients role-play medical patients to test students’ knowledge.
- Elon is one of 20 institutions taking part in The North Carolina Alliance for Health Professions Diversity, a partnership to increase racial and ethnic diversity in the state’s healthcare workforce.
A TRADITION OF SERVICE

Four Elon PA students won full scholarships from the Health Resources and Services Administration, which supports medical professionals who want to work in the nation’s most underserved rural and urban communities.
Jean Rattigan-Rohr, founder and director of the “It Takes A Village” Project, which helps struggling readers, delivered a symposium address illustrating how health influences a child’s school performance.

Elon PA students are well-rounded, empathetic global citizens. They’re dedicated to making the world a better place and immersing themselves in their surrounding communities. Their personal priorities reflect those commitments.

The Elon PA program hosts symposia on issues such as aiding underserved populations both locally and abroad, and creating meaningful relationships with vulnerable populations. These topics reflect the program’s commitment to primary care, particularly in medically underserved areas.

An annual symposium focused on creating meaningful relationships with underserved and vulnerable populations introduces PA students to the many cultural, social and economic forces that shape the way patients interact with their medical care providers. The symposium’s focus is on elements affecting immigrant communities and their experiences in health care, specifically language and how it impacts experiences both for patient and provider. PA students engaged and dialogued with faculty from a variety of disciplines as they discussed the intersection of education, health and poverty.

**STEPHANIE Dyck ’17**

For Stephanie, finding classmates who were both supportive and shared her values was critical in her search for the right PA program. “Having classmates who are always cheering you on and helping you learn, whether by teaching you a mnemonic device or talking you through feedback loops that aren’t making sense to you, has been a great highlight,” she said.

Upon graduation, Stephanie, a Paul Ambrose Scholar, hopes to work with underserved populations, ideally overseas. She recently attended a symposium in Washington, D.C., which focused on public health and community health advocacy.

In the meantime, Stephanie is excited about a community volunteer project she’s organizing that focuses on educating underserved populations on diabetes.

“There will always be more to learn, especially in a field like health care. School right now is truly about learning the material in a way that makes sense to my specific way of learning, while maintaining some sense of balance in my life.”

ELO.EDU/PA
A STRONG PROFESSIONAL OUTLOOK
Class of 2015 Employment

The 37 graduates of the Elon PA charter class achieved a 100 percent first-time pass rate on the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam. One hundred percent of the charter class is employed and 22 alumni chose to remain in North Carolina.

Physician assistants enjoy one of the lowest unemployment rates (1.2 percent) in the country, according to U.S. News & World Report. By decade’s end, the Bureau of Labor Statistics expects the existing field of 86,700 PAs to grow by 33,300 positions.

“IT’S ESSENTIAL TO HAVE A STRONG FOUNDATION OF MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY IT’S COMPASSION, EMPATHY AND THE DESIRE TO HELP OTHERS THAT DIFFERENTIATES A GOOD PROVIDER FROM A GREAT ONE.”

JUSTIN Ollis ‘16

Before Elon, Justin worked as an athletic trainer for 10 years. He was active, he was busy and he spent most of his time working one-on-one with clients.

When weighing schools for his physician assistant studies degree, the Greensboro, N.C. resident wanted a program that would offer opportunities for hands-on learning early and often. Elon moved to the top of his list.

While he initially hoped to become an orthopedic PA, his time at Elon has exposed him to other options that he says open up his career plans to broader options. Elon has also taught him the value of treating the whole patient and of conversations that venture beyond physical symptoms.
PREMIER TEACHING
AND LEARNING FACILITIES
The Gerald L. Francis Center was designed to meet the specifications of School of Health Sciences faculty and staff. The facility includes 50,000-square-feet dedicated to the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program and the Doctor of Physical Therapy program (DPT). Dedicated PA teaching space includes:

- A clinical skills laboratory
- Five simulated exam rooms
- A cardiopulmonary auscultation lab
- Two classrooms
- Fresh tissue/clinical procedure lab
- Six small group study rooms
- Additional equipment includes a Harvey™ Cardiopulmonary simulator, high definition cameras for use with clinical skills examinations, and state-of-the-art classroom technology.

PA faculty, students and staff benefit from an energized and collaborative relationship with Elon’s DPT program. The two departments frequently engage in shared learning opportunities and benefit from common facilities, including a human donor anatomy lab, computer lab, student lounge areas, fitness center and locker facility.

**APPLY TODAY**

The PA program enrolls a class of 36 students each January. Apply online using the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA) – caspa.liaisoncas.com.

Admission is selective – visit elon.edu/pa for a complete list of requirements and details about the admissions process.
ABOUT

ELON

Elon is the nation’s premier student-centered liberal arts university and values strong relationships between students and their faculty and staff mentors. Elon’s 6,500 students prepare to become the resilient, ambitious and ethical leaders the world needs, putting their knowledge into action on campus, in the community and around the globe. Elon is known for academic excellence across the curriculum, and for experiential learning programs in study abroad, undergraduate research, leadership, interfaith dialogue, civic engagement and community service. Elon is ranked the nation’s #1 master’s-level university for study abroad and is a top-producer of Fulbright Student Scholars. U.S. News & World Report recognizes Elon more than any other university in the nation for academic programs that “Focus on Student Success.”