

IPAP Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What is the PA-CAT and why is it required?

A1: The PA-CAT is the Physician Assistant College Admission Test. The purpose of the exam is to demonstrate knowledge in PA school prerequisite courses. There is no minimum score required for IPAP applicants because the test is relatively new, however the test developers have demonstrated a correlation between high scores on this exam and success in PA school. The SP Corps is hoping to decrease the attrition rate in Phase 1 of IPAP by selecting those students most well-prepared students. The PA-CAT is one of the tools being used to assist in that endeavor.

Q2: Do I have to take the SAT and PA-CAT?

A2: Yes, all the services who send students to IPAP (Coast Guard, Navy, Army and Air Force) have an agreement that requires the SAT to be taken within 5 years of IPAP. Because of this agreement, we cannot do away with the SAT requirement.

Q3: How long is the PA program?

A3: The program length is 29 months. The first 66 weeks are a didactic phase in Fort Sam Houston. Phase 2 is a clinical phase for 57 weeks at one of several clinical sites.

Q4: What is my service obligation after completion of IPAP?

A4: The Active Component obligation is 54 months upon graduation. Army Reserve IPAP Service Obligation is 6 years SELRES, 2 years IRR for a total of 8 years.

Q5: If I have an ADSO for another school (Ex. ROTC), does time in IPAP count towards the ADSO?

A5: No, ADSOs are paid back “first incurred, first served” and IPAP will not count towards payback, for another ADSO.

Q6: Upon graduation from IPAP, will I be able to work as a PA in the civilian environment?

A6: Yes, graduates of IPAP are required to take the PA National Certifying Exam (PANCE). This is the same exam civilian graduates take. Upon completion of the ADSO, the IPAP degree and PANCE certification would allow you to work nationwide.

Q7: I already have a college degree; do I still need to take the SAT?

A7: Yes, the SAT is required for all applicants.

Q8: I have taken the GRE, MCAT, ACT – will those count in place of the SAT?

A8: No, all applicants must have an SAT score that meets the minimum requirements within 5 years of the board.

Q9: I took some of the course prerequisites a long time ago, is there a waiver for the 10-year time limit?

A9: No. The only courses with a time limit are Anatomy and Physiology I & II (or Human Anatomy and Human Physiology) and General Chemistry 1 & 2. These must be completed within 10 years and cannot be waived.

The medical terminology course must be done within 5 years of IPAP. This course can be done for free by searching for "Basic Medical Terminology" on ATIS. Include your completion certificate in your application. Otherwise, this course must be completed at an accredited university or college.

Q10: My GPA is below the minimum requirements, (Overall cumulative GPA of 2.5 or Science GPA of 3.0), can this be waived?

A10: No.

Q11: My GT Score is less than 110. Can that be waived?

A11: No, your education center and CoC can help you raise your score.

Q12: I am an officer; do I need to have a GT score?

A12: No.

Q13: Do I need to submit all my transcripts or only from the schools where I took the prerequisites?

A13: All transcripts from any college or university ever attended must be provided to UNMC for academic evaluation. You must complete the IPAP UNICAS registration via UNMC online and request all official transcripts for their use.

Q14: Can I complete the prerequisite courses online?

A14: Yes, all the prerequisite requirements can be completed online through an accredited university or college (ex. American Military University, University of Phoenix, Thomas Edison State College etc.) None of the prerequisites require a lab, but it is highly recommended. There are several colleges that offer A&P and Chemistry online. **UNMC does not count chemistry courses taken from Kaplan, Sophia, or other similar sources!!**

Q15: I want to take the English CLEP exam, which exam do I take?

A15: You must take the College Composition Exam and score over 50 to get credit for 6 hours of English. Official scores must be sent to USARD and UNMC.

Q16: What courses can I CLEP or use AP credit for?

A16: You may CLEP or use AP credits toward College Algebra and College English (with composition). You must submit the CLEP or AP grade evaluation with your application packet to USARD and UNMC.

Q17: Does academic delay mean that I will NOT be competitive for the IPAP Board?

A17: No, academic delay allows soldiers to apply to IPAP, if they are missing up to 3 pre-requisite courses, and they can complete the course work NLT 1 Oct, (of the board year in which applying). An academic delay status doesn't decrease your chances of being selected. In fact, many primary selectees are academic delays. The application is the same, except that you must submit a memo in your packet identifying the school, course and timeline for completion of the coursework. It is always better to be fully qualified, but this is an option that will still allow you to compete for this year's board!

Q18: My GPA is low, but above the minimum (Science 3.0, cumulative 2.5). Am I competitive?

A18: Yes, GPA is only one element of your packet. The board looks at everything to include, letters of recommendation, previous performance, SAT Scores etc. The average GPA of personnel boarded and selected is generally a 3.5, but several Soldiers were selected with 2.75, with a VERY STRONG SAT! The PA-CAT scores can also be a great way to show the board you have an understanding of the science subjects even if your GPA is not as high.

Q19: My college algebra or English class is > 10 years old. Do I have to retake them?

A19: No, only the AP I & II and general chemistry I and II courses have a time requirement.

Q20: Will Statistics count towards College Algebra?

A20: No, college Algebra or higher math will work.

Q21: Can I find out if my SAT was received by USARD?

A21: We do not have the staff to follow up on all individual documents received. Once your full packet is received and processed, we will send out an email with missing documents.

Q22: I went to a foreign university; how can I use those transcripts?

A22: Foreign transcripts require an evaluation by a company that translates credit. Examples are World Education Services (WES) or Educational Credential Evaluators.

Q23: I am already an officer. Do I need to fill out the DA 61 and DA 160?

A23: Yes, all applicants must complete these forms. Examples of the forms are on the website.

Q24: When do I need to submit my request for a waiver?

A24: **You must submit ALL documentation with your initial packet, which is due at USARD NLT 1 March of each year.** Don't wait to submit your packet if you have all documents complete. **Send it ASAP**, so that our team can start reviewing and providing feedback. **The earlier that you submit your application - the better!**

Q25: How can Soldiers below the rank of E-5 compete due to lack of leadership ratings?

A25: Enlisted applicants without any NCOER's require a letter of character from their 1SG. It allows CoC to review leadership potential, etc.

Q26: I am already an officer; will I be reduced in rank?

A26: **Officers** receive constructive credit for their Commissioned Service IAW DODI 6000.13 upon successful completion of IPAP. Essentially day for day credit, while in IPAP, and one-half day of credit for each day of active commissioned service (AD and full-time National Guard duty) as a commissioned officer. The only exception to this policy is for currently serving AD or USAR SP Corps officers, who do not incur a reduction in rank.

Q27: I am a reservist; can I apply for an active-duty slot or vice versa?

A27: No, USAR Soldiers can only apply for a USAR training slots and AD Soldiers can only apply for AD training slots. If AGR, applicants may only apply to their COMPO. If USAR AGR is selected for IPAP, they must REFRAD prior to receipt of orders to IPAP NLT 60-90 days out.

Q28: I am a civilian; can I apply to this program?

Q28: No.

Q29: I am not in a medical MOS, am I still eligible to apply?

A29: Yes, all officers, warrant officers and enlisted Soldiers are eligible to apply for IPAP. Each year the board selected many different AOC/MOS's.

Q30: I am an older applicant, am I eligible?

A30: Applicants must commission by the age of 42 for active duty and 47 for Reservists. Waivers are considered on a case-by-case basis. Once a complete application is received at USARD, the waiver request is submitted.