Direct Patient Care Experience

At least 750 hours of direct patient contact experience are required to begin the program. At least 500 hours are required at the time of application. Both number of hours and quality of that experience are weighed when considering an application. The more “hands-on” activities (i.e., patient care assistant, nursing assistant, EMT, etc.) are considered high quality and the less “hands-on” activities (i.e., shadowing, receptionist, medical records) are considered low quality but are still important to include on your application. Patient care hours may be paid or volunteer. It is extremely important to provide a detailed description of the experience on your CASPA application to assure that you are given appropriate credit.

The following is a list of patient care experience with the appropriate value and is intended as a guide only and is not all-inclusive.

**High Quality**
High quality experiences require a high level of decision making and intensive hands-on responsibility for which 100% of the total hours will count toward the prerequisite hours.

Examples include, but are not limited to the following:
- Licensed or certified health care professional
- Patient care technician
- Physical therapist
- Phlebotomist
- Athletic trainer
- Mental health worker
- Substance dependency counselor
- Medical scribe
- Dentist; dental assistant
- Paramedic; EMT
- Military corpsman
- Nurse
- Certified nurse assistant (CNA)
- Nurse’s aide
- Occupational therapy aide
- Experience in medical research with human subjects
- Home health aide with health care responsibilities
- Peace Corps volunteer in a health care related assignment or other cross-cultural health care experience

**Moderate Quality**
Moderate quality experiences require a moderate level of decision making and moderate hands-on responsibility for which 50% of the total hours will count toward the prerequisite hours.

Examples include, but are not limited to the following:
- Health care related internship or training
- Bench research (with data and/or lab animals) with a human medical component
- Pharmacy technician if patient counseling, preparation of medication, and communication with doctors and PAs are entailed
- Medical transport if ambulation and monitoring of vitals and medications is involved

**Low Quality**
Low quality experiences require a low level of decision making and minimal hands-on responsibility for which 10% of the total hours will count toward the prerequisite hours. These hours are still important as it provides one with experience in a health care setting.

Examples include, but are not limited to the following:
- Shadowing physician, PA, or nurse practitioner
- Private care for a relative or friend
- Medical records processor
- Patient transport
- Pharmacy technician if duties only involve cashing out customers and administrative work
- Lifeguard
Related Humanitarian Experiences
These experiences are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Examples include:

- Shelters (Homeless, Halfway, Battered women, etc.)
- Volunteer experiences (Soup kitchens, crisis hotlines, food pantry)
- Red Cross volunteer