

PA-OPA: The Distinctions

Practitioner	Physician Assistant (PA-C) ⁱ	Orthopedic Physician's Assistants/Orthopaedic Assistants (OPA-C/OA-C) ⁱⁱ
Education Standards	A master's level graduate degree based on the physician education model that averages 26.3 months, including 59 weeks of didactic education and 54 weeks of clinical rotations. ⁱⁱⁱ	None "Although not a requirement, it is highly recommended that candidates have at least two years of college work in the sciences before sitting for the Certification Examination for Orthopaedic Physician's Assistants." iv
Accredited Educational Programs	218 ^v	0^{vi}
Accrediting Body for Educational Programs	Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant	N/A
Education Program Accreditation Participating Organizations	American Academy of Family Physicians American Academy of Pediatrics American Academy of Physician Assistants American College of Physicians American College of Surgeons American Medical Association Physician Assistant Education Association	N/A
Licensure	All 50 states & District of Columbia Guam, Northern Marianas Islands US Virgin Islands, American Samoa	Tennessee New York (Registered under Specialist Assistant Category) California (only graduates from OPA program between 1971-1974 grandfathered) ^{vii}
Certifying Body	National Commission for the Certification of Physician Assistants ^{viii}	National Board for the Certification of Orthopedic Physician Assistants/National Board for Certification of Orthopaedic Assistants (NBCOPA/NBCOA) ix
Certifying Body Participating Organizations	American Academy of Family Physicians American Academy of Pediatrics American Academy of Physician Assistants American College of Emergency Physicians American College of Physicians American College of Surgeons American Hospital Association American Medical Association American Association of Medical Colleges Physician Assistant Education Association Federation of State Medical Boards United States Department of Veterans Affairs	None
Number Certified in United States	115,500 ^x	510 ^{xi}

Practitioner	Physician Assistant (PA-C)	Orthopedic Physician's Assistants/Orthopaedic Assistants (OPA-C/OA)
Scope of Practice Legislation		
• Licensure	Yes ^{xii}	TN, NY, CA xiv
Prescribing	Yes xiii	None
Establishing Diagnosis	Yes	None
Ordering/Interpreting Diagnostic Tests	Yes	None
Reimbursement/Billing		
Medicare Part B Covered Services		
• Enrollment as provider of physician (Part B) services	Yes	No
Ordering/Referring Provider	Yes	No
Prescribing Provider	Yes	No
Assist at Surgery	Yes	No
• Evaluation and Management Services	Yes	No
Telehealth Services	Yes	No
Joint Injections	Yes	No
Fracture Care	Yes	No
• X-ray Interpretation	Yes	No
<u>Reimbursement</u>	Medicare reimburses services provided by PAs at 85% of the Physician Fee Schedule.	Some services provided by OPAs may be covered as "incident-to" a physician.
Supervision	A physician is <u>not</u> required to be on-site in order to bill Medicare for services provided by a PA-C. xv	A physician <u>must</u> be on-site in order to bill Medicare for services provided by an OPA-C. xvi

Notes:

Issued by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), the Physician Assistant-Certified® (PA-C®) designation is a mark of professional accomplishment, indicating the achievement and maintenance of established levels of knowledge and clinical skills. www.nccpa.net

ⁱⁱ Certification of Orthopaedic Physician's Assistants (OPA-C) and Orthopaedic Assistants (OA-C) is handled exclusively by the National Board for Certification of Orthopaedic Physician's Assistants (NBCOPA)/ National Board for Certification of Orthopaedic Assistants (NBCOA). http://nbcopa.org/board-certification.html

Physician Assistant Education Association, By the Numbers: Program Report 31, Washington, DC: PAEA, 2016. doi: 10.17538/PS31.2016

iv The National Board for Certification of Orthopaedic Physician's Assistants (NBCOPA) / The National Board for Certification of Orthopaedic Assistants (NBCOA) http://nbcopa.org/board-certification.html

Y Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). Accessed online January 5, 2017at http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/accredited-programs/.

vi According to the 2016-2017 University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences catalog, (the only known instutition in the United States to offer the orthopaedic assistant/OA training in recent years), this curriculum is no longer offered. Accessed online January 5, 2017 at https://www.usa.edu/files/0abb9083-d09d-4ece-9353-9e08786afd9a.pdf.

vii Orthopedics Today, March 2014, *Orthopedic assistant profession promotes policy change, recognition*, accessed January 5, 2017 online at http://www.healio.com/orthopedics/business-of-orthopedics/news/print/orthopedics-today/%7B0a95209f-954f-4b18-b2ec-ecee1c50d5a8%7D/orthopedic-assistant-profession-promotes-policy-change-recognition.

viii National Commission for the Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) http://www.nccpa.net

- xii All 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories (with the exception of Puerto Rico), license and authorize the practice of physician assistants.
- xiii All 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories that license PAs authorize prescribing by physician assistants.
- xiv The practice of OPAs is unregulated with the exception of Tennessee, a few OPAs grandfathered in California, and OPAs who are registered in New York under a broad category of "specialist assistants." OPAs may not prescribe, establish diagnoses, or order tests.
- xv Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, Chapter 15, §190 (C) http://www.cms.gov/manuals/Downloads/bp102c15.pdf
- xvi Medicare Benefit Policy Manual, Chapter 15, § 60.1(B) http://www.cms.gov/manuals/Downloads/bp102c15.pdf

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^{ix} The National Board for Certification of Orthopaedic Physician's Assistants (NBCOPA) / The National Board for Certification of Orthopaedic Assistants (NBCOA) http://nbcopa.org/board-certification.html

^x As of December 31, 2016 per NCCPA email communication. Verification of PA certification is available online at https://www.nccpa.net/verify-pa

xi As of March 20, 2012 per NBCOPA, last accessed February 2015 at http://www.asopa.org/pdfs/NBCOPACertListWeb032012.pdf. [Note: The link is no longer valid and the Certification list is not posted on the NBCOPA website. There are directions posted, should one wish to verify OPA/OA certification, at http://nbcopa.org/verification.html.]