

PHYSICIAN'S ASSISTANT (PA) PROFESSIONAL LICENSING GUIDE

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1. HOW THE PROFESSION IS ORGANIZED IN MICHIGAN

OVERVIEW

This guide looks at what you as a foreign-educated physician's assistant must do to become eligible for licensing in Michigan. At the same time, it includes some background on the larger physician's assistant profession to give you an idea of the variety of opportunities available as you work to build your career.

REGULATION OF THE PHYSICIAN'S ASSISTANT PROFESSION

The practice of physician's assistant in Michigan is regulated by the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) on behalf of the Michigan Task Force on Physician's Assistant. You must be licensed to practice as a physician's assistant (PA) in Michigan.

The guide assumes that you hold the equivalent of a U.S. master's degree in physician's assistant studies and that your Michigan license will be your first U.S. physician's assistant license. As a foreign-educated PA, you are required to first have your physician's assistant education evaluated by the Commission on Graduates on Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) to complete a visa screening program which, in part, will determine if your education was equivalent to that from a US PA program. The credentialing agency will also verify knowledge of the English language with a TOEFL or TOEFL-iBT.

You will become a Physician's Assistant by examination. The Physician's Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) is administered by the National Commission on Certifying of Physician's Assistants (NCCPA) at www.pearsonvue.com/nccpa. The cost for the exam is \$475.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING

OVERVIEW

Internationally educated Physician's Assistants need to meet several requirements to receive Licensure by Examination as a PA in Michigan.

I. EVALUATE YOUR FOREIGN DEGREE

LARA requires that you have your foreign physician's assistant degree evaluated using CGFNS.

- Apply for a Credential Evaluation Service Professional Report by either registering online or downloading the application and sending it in the mail
- Make sure that you ask for your report to be prepared for the Michigan Task Force on Physician's Assistants as this will make your record available to the State electronically
- If your Physician's Assistant education was not taught in English, your report will include a determination of English language proficiency as tested on the TOEFL examination.
- Your report is active for 12 months
- You must show proof that you graduated from high school (a photocopy of a high school diploma or exit exam will work)

If your degree is not deemed equivalent to a U.S. degree, you will be provided information about the courses or subject areas in which you are deficient. If the Educational Credentials Review results in your education being found "not equivalent", you may apply to for a re-evaluation of your educational credentials after submitting additional information about your education. You must work directly with your selected credentialing agency in correcting any deficiencies in your report; the Michigan Task Force on Physician's Assistants has no role in the re-evaluation process.

II. GET FINGERPRINTED VIA A MICHIGAN-APPROVED VENDOR FOR A CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

Directions for completing the fingerprint check are provided in the licensure application. The cost for the background check is \$64.50. Call the approved vendor to set up an appointment. It is critical that you save the receipt as proof that you have taken this step. You may need to provide it in case there are any questions about your background check.

III. SUBMIT YOUR LICENSURE APPLICATION, REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS, AND PAY APPLICATION FEE

Your application sent to the Michigan Task Force on Physician's Assistant should include:

- Licensure application from LARA that can be downloaded from www.michigan.gov/healthlicense
- Fee: \$90 paid by a check or money order drawn on a U.S. financial institution and made payable to the State of Michigan
- A course-by-course credential evaluation completed by CGFNS
- An applicant whose PA education program was taught in a language other than English shall satisfactorily complete the TOEFL or the TOEFLib
- Contact NCCPA to have your PANCE scores made electronically available to the State of Michigan
- Fingerprint/Criminal Background Check report

The licensure application and fee are valid for 2 years. If you have not met all licensing requirements within these 2 years you will need to submit a new application and pay the processing fee again.

3. TESTS

To become a licensed PA in Michigan, you must take and pass the PANCE exam.

The Physician's Assistant PANCE exam consists of 300 multiple choice questions administered in 5 blocks. You have a total of 60 minutes to complete each separate block of this exam. The passing score on the exam is 350 (test scores are reported on a scale of 200-800).

CONTENT AREAS OF THE PHYSICIAN'S ASSISTANT PANCE EXAM

The content of the PANCE measures knowledge important for independent practice as a physician's assistant in all primary employment settings. The 300 multiple choice test questions assess history taking & performing physical examinations, using laboratory & diagnostic studies, formulation most likely diagnosis, health maintenance, clinical intervention, pharmaceutical therapeutics, applying basic science concepts. The percentages show the approximate percent of questions each test taker will receive in the category:

1. History Taking & Performing Physical Examinations (16%)
2. Using Laboratory & Diagnostic Studies (14%)
3. Formulating Most Likely Diagnosis (18%)
4. Health Maintenance (10%)
5. Clinical Intervention (14%)
6. Pharmaceutical Therapeutics (18%)
7. Applying Basic Science Concepts (10%)

SCHEDULING AND TESTING SITE PROCEDURES OF THE NCCPA PHYSICIAN'S ASSISTANT EXAM

PANCE exams are delivered by computer at Pearson Vue testing centers. You may visit www.pearsonvue.com/nccpa for more information regarding Pearson's testing locations.

On the day of the test you must bring your authorization to test and acceptable form of identification. Acceptable ID is a currently valid, government-issued photo ID (passport, driver's license, etc.). You should arrive at least a half hour early; you will not be allowed to take the test if you arrive more than fifteen minutes late for your appointment. You will have a total of 5 hours to complete the exam.

FAILING THE PANCE

You can take the PANCE exam once in a 90 day period or three times a year. You have a total of six attempts at the PANCE exam, if you have exhausted your six attempts you may no longer take the PANCE.

PRACTICING FOR THE PANCE

There are many different resources that can help you prepare for the content and the computer-based testing technology. There are a variety of test preparation resources available for low cost. NCCPA offers a practice exam for \$50 that is accessible 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

4. TIME AND COSTS

Evaluating your foreign degree and achieving licensure as a Physician's Assistant in Michigan depends on many factors. A few of these include:

- The completeness of your educational and professional records (the more documentation, the better)
- The efficiency of your home country's system in compiling and transmitting your university records and verification of licensing
- Your performance on the PANCE
- Your free time and how much money you have to spend

Step	Has Foreign Degree	Does Not Have Degree and Will be Educated in the U.S.
1. Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-6 months processing time for your degree evaluation with CGFNS \$350 • If your language of instruction was not taught in English, you must provide a TOEFL \$85 • 4-6 months + \$435 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 years to obtain an associate's degree \$15,000 • 2 years in a bachelor's program \$32,000 • 2 years in a master's degree program in Physician's Assistant \$65,000 • 6 years + \$97,000
2. Submit Your Licensure Application to the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete application submitted to the board with \$90 • 4-6 weeks processing time • 4-6 weeks + \$90 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete application submitted to the board with \$90 • 4-6 weeks processing time • 4-6 weeks + \$90
3. Fingerprints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You identify a finger printing provider and make an appointment • 1 month + \$64.50 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You identify a finger printing provider and make an appointment • 1 month + \$64.50
4. Score Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact NCCPA to have your PANCE scores electronically transferred to the State of Michigan • 2 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact NCCPA to have your PANCE scores electronically transferred to the State of Michigan • 2 weeks
	<p>TOTAL About 8 months and \$589.50</p>	<p>TOTAL About 6 years and 8 months and \$97,154.50</p>

5. OTHER CAREERS AND CREDENTIALS

LOWER-LEVEL OPPORTUNITIES

You may want to consider if taking a lower-level job in healthcare in the short-term can help you meet longer-term goals of licensing as a physician's assistant.

Preparing for the PANCE Exam can take time. Working in healthcare in a different way and with fewer responsibilities may offer you some advantages, such as:

- employers paying for tuition and fees associated with the PANCE and licensing
- more energy to focus on studying
- a chance to adapt to the U.S. healthcare system and workplace culture in a lower-pressure environment

You should be honest with your employer about your long-term plans. You may find some employers have benefits such as tuition reimbursement or schedule flexibility that will support your goals.

PHYSICIAN'S ASSISTANT EDUCATIONAL LIMITED

The license is for individuals who will be completing 9 months of post-graduate supervised clinical experience in Michigan. This license also requires a credential review from CGFNS for your master's program.

HEALTHCARE INTERPRETER

If you are bilingual and a strong communicator, you may want to research opportunities for work in hospitals as an interpreter. This type of role is not regulated in Michigan, so standards for employment as well as pay and benefits may be very different depending on the employer. You are more likely to have benefits such as tuition reimbursement if you find work as a direct employee of a healthcare facility, instead of working for a company that provides interpretation services to hospitals. You may want to begin your research by directly contacting human resource departments at hospitals.

6. BEYOND LICENSING

MAINTAINING LICENSURE

Physician's Assistant must renew their license every 2 years. Licenses expire on August 31st every two years. LARA sends a notice reminding you to renew your license, so be certain to keep your contact information up-to-date with their office. You are responsible for renewing your license even if you do not receive a notice from the Department. You must renew online. The cost to renew on time is \$110. You will have sixty days after the expiration date in which you may continue to practice without a lapse in your license as long as you renew within that sixty day grace period. If you do not renew during that grace period, the expiration date of your license will revert to August 31. Be careful: if you continue to practice after your license has expired (lapsed), you could have disciplinary action taken against you. If your license does expire, you will be required to apply for relicensure to reactivate your license.

There are currently no continuing education requirements that must be met in order to renew a license. This could change in the future; any change in requirements will be posted on the LARA website.

LICENSING MOBILITY (RECIPROCITY)

The state of Michigan does not have any shared agreement to honor the physician's assistant licenses of other states. It grants licensing to physician's assistant's by either examination (the process described in this topic) or endorsement (where a physician's assistant licensed in another state must meet all Michigan requirements for licensing).

7. IMPORTANT LINKS

LICENSING AND REGULATION:

- The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) issues licenses for Speech-Language Pathologist's. Application packets (both by Examination and by Endorsement) can be downloaded on the homepage.
- The main page for the licensing of any health profession is www.michigan.gov/healthlicense. The page that specifically concerns Physician's Assistant: http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-72600_72603_27529_27550---.00.html and it includes information regarding the boards, applications and frequently asked questions.
- Contact information: Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Professional Health, PO Box 30670, Lansing MI 48909 Telephone Number 517-335-0918; Fax: 517-373-1044 Email: bplhelp@michigan.gov
- The law that regulates licensing for all health professions including can be read at <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-368-1978-15>
- The administrative rules governing Physician's Assistant practice in Michigan can be located at: http://w3.lara.state.mi.us/orr/AdminCode.aspx?AdminCode=Department&Dpt=LR&Level_1=Bureau+of+Professional+Licensing

CREDENTIAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Commission on Graduates on Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) www.CGFNS.org/

TESTING

- National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) <http://www.nccpa.net/>
- National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) Certification Testing <http://www.pearsonvue.com/nccpa/>