

# Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) Parallel Admissions Pathways

## Parallel Admissions Pathway Essay Support

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The Cumming School of Medicine recognizes that equity, diversity, and inclusion strengthens education and research environments, and acknowledges that systemic barriers continue to exist for equity-deserving applicants.

The Parallel Admissions Pathways for the Master of Physician Assistant Studies is an opportunity for applicants from underrepresented communities to share their unique perspectives and experiences with the MPAS Admissions Committee, in part, through completion of a 500-word essay. It is hoped that this essay will allow the MPAS Admissions Committee to better understand how dimensions of an applicant's identity, and an applicant's connections to their community, will better position them to enhance health as a Physician Assistant (PA).

This handout provides some guidance for applicants on how to prepare a Parallel Admissions Pathway essay, whether applying through the Equity Admissions Pathway or the Indigenous Admissions Pathway.

### **General Tips:**

1. Be **Succinct** – Stay within the 500-word limit.
2. Be **Authentic** - Don't tell us what you think we want to hear but take some time to reflect on your individual journey to date, motivations, and aspirations for the future as a Physician Assistant – even if what you reflect upon doesn't make it into the essay.
3. Be **Confident** – Consider your background in the way it may have shaped your values, skills, and experiences, and how those represent potential strengths that have prepared you for a future as a Physician Assistant
4. Be **Comfortable** – Share only what you feel comfortable sharing – we do not want you to share anything you do not wish to
5. Be **Specific** – When you are able and it is appropriate, provide concrete examples of how you have demonstrated your strengths in the past.

### **Here are some more specific suggestions for things that you may choose to include or address in your essay:**

1. *Dimensions of your identity*  
Your identity defines how you view yourself, your characteristics, and the values you hold. Sharing relevant information about your identity may help the MPAS Admissions Committee members to know you better in the context of becoming a Physician Assistant. Prior to writing this section, you might want to consider collating ideas from your background including things or experiences that shaped your unique identity. These could include your family background or history, beliefs and values, education, traditions, and experiences. Describing your unique identity provides a context for the contents of your essay.
2. *Connections and affiliations with your identified community*  
You may wish to relate your identity to a community or group that you believe you belong to, sharing connections and the ties you have. This could include providing examples of participation and/or contributions in community activities and groups; and/or, how you sustain and draw from these community connections through time (i.e. examples of how you continue to maintain involvement in your community or how your community connections impact and influence you.)

3. *Personal Privilege or structural barriers that you have seen or faced.*

You may wish to share privileges or opportunities that you have had that helped you succeed. You may also wish to include barriers that you have witnessed or encountered and how those barriers could be or have been overcome.

4. *Reasons for wishing to become a Physician Assistant*

Physician Assistants are healthcare professionals who work under the supervision of a licensed physician and in collaboration with other healthcare providers to provide patient care. By applying to the MPAS program, you have decided to join the PA profession. Sharing the reasons for your decision especially as it relates to your identity and the community you most identify with, will help members of the MPAS Admissions Committee evaluate your application.

5. *Your vision of health care for your identified community or through the lens of your community*

Provide insight on how your training as a PA may be used to the benefit of members of your community e.g. improved health outcomes, addressing community identified needs, strengthening relationships between health systems and traditionally marginalized communities, disseminating cultural knowledge and other ways of understanding health. You may want to include how you will build on your knowledge of and connection with your identified community/communities in providing effective care that addresses the identified needs of specific communities.