

Orthopaedic Physician's Assistant

The certified Orthopaedic Physician's Assistant is a professional physician extender who has met the criteria set forth by the National Board for Certification of Orthopaedic Physician's Assistants (NBCOPA) and has successfully passed the certification examination as such, and maintains certification by complying with the bylaws of the NBCOPA. The Certified Orthopaedic Physician's Assistant may use the short title OPA-C.

These guidelines are designed to direct and cue the Certified Orthopaedic Physician's Assistant to assist the orthopaedic physician complete assessment of signs, symptoms, analysis, treatment and care for the orthopaedic patient. Passage of the certification examination signifies an entry level of knowledge of the following categories in the specialty of orthopaedic medicine and surgery: Anatomy and Physiology; Pharmacology; Assessment and Treatment of Adult and Pediatric Orthopaedic Diseases and Injuries; Principals and Techniques of Operative Procedures; Functions and Application of Instrumentation and Equipment Utilized in Operative Orthopedic Procedures; Principals and Techniques of Traction, Casting and Splint Applications; Evaluation and Interpretation of Laboratory, Radiological and other Diagnostic Studies; Clinical History and Physical Assessment.



Career Description

In addition to the duties described in the occupational description above, the OPA-C shall function in practice under the authority of the supervising orthopaedic physician. Functions shall include performing skilled services and procedures within the clinical setting, out-patient and in-patient facilities where privileges have been granted accordingly. The OPA-C may function as a part of the whole patient treatment and management team. Services may be performed by the OPA-C in primary orthopaedic care, pre-operative care, intra-operative care, and post-operative care for the orthopaedic patient in accordance with established policies and procedures. The OPA-C reports to the supervising orthopaedic physician the complete patient status and shall notify accordingly of any abnormal findings, problems or complaints regarding the whole care of the patient.



Employment Characteristics

OPA-Cs work as members of the orthopaedic care team in any locale where legally responsible board certified orthopaedic physicians may appropriately direct them. OPA-Cs most often work within orthopaedic organizations that also employ general allied health professionals. OPA-Cs are commonly employed in private practice settings, with solo practicing surgeons, within hospital organizations and within surgical assisting groups. The practice of an OPA-C is often diverse given the nature of practice or hospital employed and many have subspecialty training within the field of orthopaedic medicine.



Educational Program

OPA Masters Program through University of St. Augustine

Length. The OPA Masters program is a two-year program.

The program combines a year of classroom/online learning with a full-year of orthopaedic-specific clinical rotations. The master's

program requires an undergraduate baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution. The following prerequisite courses are as follows: Medical Terminology; General College Chemistry I & II, Cell Biology; Microbiology; General Physics I & II; Anatomy & Physiology I & II; and Social Sciences. Visit www.usa.edu for all requirements and further information.



Certification

The National Board for Certification of Orthopaedic Physician's Assistants (NBCOPA), provides the certification process for OPAs in the United States. NBCOPA focuses on continued professional development and education of OPAs. The certification process incorporates a 4-year cycle of recertification and registration of continuing medical education.



Inquiries

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www.asopa.org

Certification

National Board for Certification of Orthopaedic Physician's Assistants (NBCOPA)

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6300 North River Road, Suite 727

Rosemont, IL 60018

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www.asopa.org/sections/certification.php

Educational Program (School)

University of St. Augustine

1 University Boulevard

St. Augustine, FL 32086

800 241-1027

www.usa.edu