

Tips for Shadowing a PA

1. Email etiquette when requesting to shadow a PA.

- Address the PA properly.
Ex: *Dear Rebecca Cumbee, PA-C*
- Introduce yourself in the email and provide information about yourself.
Ex: *My name is Susan and I am junior at College of Charleston. I am majoring in Biochemistry and have developed an interest in the PA profession.*
**Tip: If you met them at an event and received their information personally, do not assume that they remember you. Reference the event, and your conversation, specifically!
- Inform them you are a SCAPA ASPIRE member and that you received their contact information through the SCAPA database
- Ask if the PA is accepting shadowing opportunities currently or in the near future.
If not, ask if they know of anyone who is currently accepting potential student shadows..
- If you do not receive a response within 5 days (not including weekends), it is okay to resend the email in the chance that the email did not make it to the PA .
This will also give the PA an additional reminder that you are interested in shadowing, should they have read your email and forgotten to respond. As practicing PAs, we were in your shoes once and want to help aspiring PA students but we also have full time jobs and families, so please afford us time to respond. If you send two emails to the PA and still do not receive a response, contact other PAs in hopes that one of them has shadowing opportunities.

2. 2 Days of shadowing

- 2 days is the average allotted shadowing time per PA, some may offer more, some may offer less. PAs are here to help you gain the experience you need but please be respectful of the PAs time.

3. Shadowing Attire

- ASK! It is never inappropriate to ask what is expected of you from an attire standpoint.
- If you do not get the chance to ask the attire, dress in business professional clothes and wear closed-toed shoes. When in doubt: Dress as if you are going to interview.
Ex: For women: business suits, work dress. For men: dress slacks, buttoned up shirt, tie.

4. Facility requirements

- Depending upon where the PA practices, paperwork and certain vaccinations/testing (TB) may be required.
Tip: Most universities' student health centers offer TB testing.

5. Communication etiquette

- Some PAs may choose to give you their direct phone number for the day of contact/directions on how to get to their office. At MUSC, it is really easy to get turned around. Please do not use this number to text or call the PA after the shadowing opportunity. Unless the PA otherwise specifies,

continue to communicate via email! It is always a good idea to ask the PA how they prefer to communicate.

6. Shadowing a PA does not guarantee a Letter of Recommendation (LOR).

- Please do not assume that by shadowing a PA for one to two days, you have a guaranteed LOR. Some PAs require that you shadow them for a certain time before they write a LOR. Others may not, but a great LOR has lots of personalization, and that does not come within a single day of meeting an applicant.

7. Ask Questions

- While shadowing the PA, ask questions! You are there to learn. Ask questions at appropriate times, such as in between patients, during lunch, or after clinic.