

## Applicants for Program Expansion to a Distant Campus

### FEASIBILITY STUDY: Guide and Report Instructions©

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) requires the submission of a written report that documents the institution's preparation and planning for the establishment of a distant campus for its physician assistant (PA) program. It expects the institution to conduct a feasibility study that carefully considers its ability to deliver PA education at a distant campus in light of the institution's mission and goals and the resources needed for success.

The **feasibility study** should examine the institution's ability to provide effective PA education at a distant campus based on available resources and planning. The institution's assessment of need should include more than just anecdotal commentary. If there are other PA programs in the same geographic area as the proposed distant campus, the feasibility study should include data on the need for another campus.

The study should address fiscal, human, academic, physical, and other institutional resources listed in the *Standards*. This includes the availability of faculty, preceptors and clinical sites, particularly if the campus will be in close proximity to other PA or health education programs competing for clinical experiences.

The study should include detailed information about the activities that occurred prior to the decision to pursue the development of a distant campus, who was involved in the process, how the process was conducted, a summary of the results and how the results were analyzed and communicated to stakeholders.

#### WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

A variety of participants from within and external to the institution should be included in the feasibility study process and report preparation. Although the institution should decide who will be most appropriate to the process, individuals from the following categories may be effective participants:

#### *From within the institution:*

- Representatives from institution administration and support service offices (e.g. registrar, admissions, library, financial aid, and student services)
- Curriculum committee members
- Finance office representatives
- Faculty and staff
- Representatives from instructional technology support services

#### *From outside the institution:*

- Individuals from the proposed distant campus facilities, if the facilities to be used at the campus are not owned by the sponsoring institution, representing administration, instructional technology and curriculum delivery
- Practicing PAs from the distant campus geographic area
- Officers of area health systems and physician practice groups
- Representatives of local, state or national health care organizations, hospital systems

#### WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

#### *The body of the report should address:*

- Rationale for the proposed distant campus; considering the institution and program mission and goals
- The number and location of currently accredited PA programs in the vicinity of the proposed distant campus
- Availability of sites for supervised clinical practice experiences
- Issues specific to the design of the distant campus, such as curriculum nuances, student selection, technology requirements, etc.
- Resources available for all areas related to the fiscal, human, academic, physical, and

institutional resources listed in the *Standards*, including

- additions to the faculty (attach ARC-PA CV template for new faculty),
- new responsibilities for current program faculty,
- staff support,
- classroom space,
- laboratory space (i.e., anatomy, physical diagnosis, clinical skills)
- medical library access
- meeting rooms
- space for confidential student academic counseling
- secure storage for student files
- equipment used in didactic or clinical preparatory instruction
- Need vs. availability of resources in the planning of the distant campus
- Expenses related to the operation of the distant campus as a component of the program's entire operating budget.
- Limiting factors related to establishing the campus
- Foreseeable and possible challenges to starting and sustaining the campus as well as strategies to address these challenges
- Key project milestones, time tables, benchmarks and deadlines

*The document should end with*

- Summary of results
- Description of how results were analyzed  
Description of how results were communicated to stakeholders

## DOCUMENT FORMAT

The ARC-PA **requires** that the document be formatted as follows using a type font no smaller than 11 point.

- A. *Title Page*: List the name and location of the sponsoring institution and the distant campus, planned operational date and date of report submission
- B. *Table of Contents*: Include the page location of all major headings and subheadings

- C. *Executive Summary*: Summarize in two or three pages the process, key points and salient features detailed in the complete document.
- D. *Introduction*: Include the following:
  - Mission and goals of the institution and program
  - Period of time devoted to the process
  - How the process was conducted
  - Who was involved in the study process
  - Who was involved in the development of the document
  - Information about the institution's prior successes and experiences in similar educational initiatives, if any
- E. *Participants*: Include list of who participated in the process and development of the document.
- F. *Feasibility Study*: Address the topical areas of the study, using subheadings as identified in section D above. Wherever appropriate, list references to specific accreditation standards.
- G. *Appendices*: The budget and personnel responsibility templates and SCPE appendices for the application for expansion to a distant campus will support the study, but may not be sufficient without supplemental information. Without duplicating those appendices, the report should include detail on the following in support of the feasibility study.
  - listing of potential campus and instructional faculty
  - documentation of institutional financial support
- H. *Summary*: End with a summary of results, including a description of how results were analyzed and communicated to stakeholders.

## REPORT SUBMISSION

The institution should submit its feasibility study as a required appendix to its application, following the application directions for submission of materials.

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