



*Accreditation Review Commission on Education
for the Physician Assistant, Inc.*

NOTES TO PROGRAMS

Fall 2016

Below is important information to all programs. Some provide clarification and some refer to documents on the Accreditation Resource page of the ARC-PA website at (<http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/resources/>).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FROM JULY AND SEPTEMBER 2016 COMMISSION MEETINGS

Accreditation Actions as of October 4, 2016

Acknowledged **16** new PD, **16** New IPD, **2** new MD, **2** IMD

Action Taken On:

- 12** Continuing program applications
- 11** Provisional program applications
- 5** Provisional monitoring applications
- 6** Final Provisional applications
- 0** Focused visits
- 2** Probation visits
- 0** Expansion to a Distant Campus application
- 0** Postgraduate third year renewal reports
- 3** Program changes (class size increase)
- 6** Program reports due

Expedited Reviews – Total **33** reviews: **20** (report due); **13** (program change)

3 Referred to full commission

30 Program Informational items

([Accreditation actions](#) are posted on the ARC-PA website after each meeting, after all programs have been notified of commission decisions and after all reconsiderations and/or appeals are completed.)

The total number of accredited PA programs as of October 2016 is **218**

The total number of accredited **clinical postgraduate** programs at present is **8**.

There are **7** programs with an accreditation status of Accreditation-Probation

There are **53** programs with an accreditation status of Accreditation-Provisional

The current projected workload includes an additional **52** new PA programs for initial provisional accreditation consideration through March 2020.

POLICY CHANGES

At its September 2016 meeting, the commission approved two new policies.



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The first policy is a result of the increasing number of applications coming into the office incomplete. Programs must prepare the application according to the directions and compare the materials being shipped with the "Required Appendices" checklist at the back of the application.

11.1 Applications, Types of Site Visits and Related Processes

Applications

The application and supporting materials specific to each type of program review must be submitted on or before the deadline identified by the ARC-PA and communicated to the program. The application must include all appendices as required and be completed according to the instructions provided. Failure to complete all components of the application exactly as instructed (narratives, templates, program-created documents, etc.) and/or failure to submit a complete application as required in the instructions may result in one or more of the following actions by the ARC-PA:

- Removal of the program from the current ARC-PA agenda (all types of program applications)
- Requirement for application resubmission (all types of program applications)
- Placement of the program on administrative probation (applies only to continuing, provisional monitoring, final provisional, focused [including probation], and distant campus applications or reviews)
- Reconsideration of the program's current accreditation status (applies only to continuing, provisional monitoring, final provisional, focused [including probation], and distant campus applications or reviews)
- Forfeiture of all previously paid accreditation fees (provisional application only)

Determination of the appropriate action(s) is solely at the discretion of the ARC-PA and is not subject to appeal.

The second policy is related to approval of incremental increases in maximum entering class size.

Policy 10.2.1 Incremental Class Size Plans

Programs approved for incremental increase(s) in maximum entering class must adhere to the plans submitted to and approved by the commission for resources, including faculty hires, budget changes, physical spaces, etc., to support the requested increase before accepting the increased entering cohort.

Provisionally accredited programs approved for incremental class size increase(s) with the initial accreditation action must adhere to the plan presented in the initial accreditation application of record approved by the commission before accepting the increased entering cohort.

A program that fails to adhere to its submitted and commission-approved plan for support of incremental class size increase(s) risks a change to its accreditation status and/or loss of approval to accept larger cohorts until adherence has been demonstrated and approved by the commission, as well as other sanctions deemed appropriate by the commission.



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CHANGE IN THRESHOLD FOR PANCE REQUIRED REPORTS

The ARC-PA continues to review the PANCE first time pass rate percentages by student cohort. At its September 2016 meeting, the commission **revised the minimum PANCE pass rate requiring a report.**

Any program with a PANCE pass rate percentage of **85% or less** for the 2016 cohort must submit an analysis of PANCE performance to the ARC-PA **by July 1, 2017.**

The new pass rate was chosen because it is one standard deviation from the mean first time pass rate across programs over a review of ten years of data. The commission will re-evaluate the minimum pass rate for this report every three years.

The basis for the report is the ARC-PA's [Four Key Elements of Analysis](#). The report format is the same as that used within the self-study report. The report form is available on the [Program Change Forms](#) page of the ARC-PA website.

STANDARDS CLARIFICATION

The commission made several changes to the *Standards* at its March 2016 meeting. Programs were notified in the [Spring 2016 Notes to Programs](#). A new version of the [Standards](#) is available on the website. Applications not yet sent to programs will include the changes. Programs that are working on current applications will be asked to address the changes, if applicable to the program, at the time of their site visits.

STANDARDS INTERPRETATION

B3.02, B3.03

[Standard B3.02](#) was edited in March 2016 to include preparing graduates for “entry into” clinical practice. Edits provide consistency of language with other standards.

B3.02 *Supervised clinical practice experiences must enable students to meet program expectations and acquire the **competencies** needed for **entry into** clinical PA practice.*

ANNOTATION: It is anticipated that the program expectations of students will address the types of patient encounters essential to preparing them for entry into practice. It is required that at a minimum these will include preventive, emergent, acute, and chronic patient encounters.

[Standard B3.03](#) was edited to address “program expectations” as opposed to “program defined expectations.” This change, along with wording “acquire competencies for entry into” clinical practice provides consistency across the *Standards*:



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B3.03 *Supervised clinical practice* experiences must provide *sufficient* patient exposure to allow each student to meet program expectations and acquire the competencies needed for entry into clinical PA practice with patients seeking:

- a) medical care across the life span to include, infants, children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly,
- b) women's health (to include prenatal and gynecologic care),
- c) care for conditions requiring surgical management, including pre-operative, intra-operative, post-operative care and
- d) care for behavioral and mental health conditions.

Both of these standards require programs to clearly define requirements (expectations) for supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs). Those specific requirements must be communicated to students and preceptors prior to the SCPEs. The program then must assure that experiences provide sufficient exposure to allow each student to meet those requirements and acquire the competencies (as defined by the *Standards'* glossary) needed for entry into clinical PA practice. Meaning, the program must monitor, measure and document that each student can demonstrate s/he can do what is expected after having had the experiences. Simply indicating that a student has had a minimum number or a variety of clinical experiences is not enough. Benchmarks must measure student performance in relation to the expectations. Additionally, the program must have a plan to address students who do not achieve the level of performance required.

ARC-PA WORKSHOPS

The ARC-PA presentation, *So You Have a Site Visit in Your Future*, given at PAEA's October 2016 educational forum can be found at <http://www.arc-pa.org/site-visit-future/>. The session provided guidance to programs completing application materials and preparing for an accreditation site visit. A comprehensive **ARC-PA workshop on accreditation** will be held Sunday, June 11 – Tuesday, June 13, 2017 at The Ritz-Carlton, in Cleveland, Ohio. More details will be posted on the ARC-PA website as they become available.

The ARC-PA will hold its **Provisional Pathway Conference** in Atlanta, GA at the Atlanta Airport Marriott Gateway hotel, Thursday, January 19 and Friday, January 20, 2017. The conference is open to individuals involved in the planning of a new PA program. More information on the conference is found on the ARC-PA website: <http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/resources/workshops-and-conferences/>

ACCREDITATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM PORTAL UPDATE

Changes in the function of the program portal went live on Monday, September 12, 2016. An updated HELP manual is available on the Program Portal. It is strongly recommended that you download the new HELP manual. As always, if there are any questions, please send an email to portalfeedback@arc-pa.org or click the link "Email Feedback to the ARC-PA" on the bottom of the portal page. A summary of the portal updates can be found at <http://www.arc-pa.org/portal-update/>



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ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ARC-PA DEADLINE DECEMBER 15, 2016

All accredited PA programs must complete data entry for the required ARC-PA Program Management Portal in sufficient time to activate the SUBMIT button on the Portal dashboard which will transmit the report data. The SUBMIT button will appear on the dashboard on December 1, 2016. (Reports for programs that were first accredited in September 2016 are due March 31, 2017.)

The SCPE Directions document is available at <http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/resources/>. This document addresses entering data into the SCPE tab and creating Excel spreadsheets for required reports to the ARC-PA.

PROGRAM WEBSITE COMPLIANCE AUDIT

The ARC-PA randomly audits all accredited program websites, checking for the *Standards* required content related to all components of standards A3.14 and A3.15. Trusting that programs are adhering to requirements in the *Standards* related to these areas, the ARC-PA has not traditionally monitored programs related to these requirements at times other than when the program was on the agenda for an ARC-PA commission meeting. As part of the CHEA recognition process, however, CHEA will randomly review the websites of ARC-PA accredited programs, checking for areas of compliance with standards relating to clear and accurate publication of information as required in the *Standards*. Therefore, the ARC-PA has also begun to conduct random audits to assure compliance.

Programs not demonstrating compliance with standards A3.14 and A3.15 may be placed on Administrative Probation by the ARC-PA until such time as corrections are made and validated by the ARC-PA. This status is posted on the ARC-PA web page of accredited programs.

NEW ARC-PA STAFF

Darwin Brown, PA-C, MPH, began working with the ARC-PA as an Assistant Director, on July 1, 2016. Mr. Brown has been in voluntary service to the commission as an ARC-PA site visitor since 2006.

Melissa Coffman, Ed.D, PA-C began working with the ARC-PA as an Assistant Director on August 1, 2016. Dr. Coffman has been volunteering as a site visitor since 2014.

Patricia J. Kelly, PhD, MMSc, PA-C began working with the ARC-PA as an Assistant Director on August 1, 2016. Dr. Kelly has been in PA education for over 13 years.

See more on the News page of the website: <http://www.arc-pa.org/blog/>

STANDARDS REVIEW AND REVISION

The ARC-PA has begun the multi-year *Standards* review and revision process. Stakeholder feedback has started via email, surveys and open forums. More information will be provided via the website and email as the process continues.



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SPECIAL EDITION NOTES TO PROGRAMS: THE SELF-STUDY REPORT (SSR)

A special edition Notes to Programs on the SSR was published on the ARC-PA website and sent to all programs in spring 2015 and summer 2016. These editions addressed writing the SSR and apply to each of its modes: SSR due two-three years before a site visit, due with an application or due as a required report.

Past Notes to Programs and Portal Updates can be found at: <http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/resources/notes-and-portal-updates/>

ANNUAL PROGRAM FEES CHANGING MAY 2017

The work of the ARC-PA has increased substantially over the years. In support of that growth, the ARC-PA continues to employ individuals to assure that the accreditation process remains fair and thorough. A major *Standards* revision has begun. The Portal revisions just released will soon be accompanied by a transition to using the Portal for the SSR and application. The website transitioned to a new mobile friendly platform. Even with these advancements and increased costs, annual program fees had not increased for over three years. In March 2016, the commission determined accreditation fees needed to better support the work of the ARC-PA. The revised fee structure is available on the website at <http://www.arc-pa.org/about/accreditation-fees/>.

ARC-PA OFFICE MOVE

In August, the ARC-PA moved into a larger suite of offices in the same Johns Creek building. The new address is: ARC-PA, 12000 Findley Road, Suite 275, Johns Creek, GA 30097

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Programs that have questions or comments about these Notes or any issue related to the accreditation process are encouraged to contact the ARC-PA by email or phone. All contact information is posted on the ARC-PA website at <http://www.arc-pa.org/contact/staff/>.