ARC-PA

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

NOTES TO PROVISIONAL APPLICANT PROGRAMS
Spring 2015

WHAT ARE "NOTES TO PROGRAMS?"

Notes to Programs are written informational update summaries of important accreditation issues sent to all accredited programs twice yearly after each spring and fall commission meeting. Recently the ARC-PA began sending the *Notes to Programs* to provisional applicant programs.

The *Notes to Provisional Applicant Programs* is a new document, being sent to all provisional applicant programs actively pursuing accreditation by the ARC-PA. This document is focused on matters more germane to those faced by programs just beginning the accreditation process.

All Notes editions are posted on the ARC-PA web site Accreditation Resources page.

OTHER "NOTES" EDITIONS

In addition to this edition of *Notes to Provisional Applicant Programs*, programs are expected to read the *Notes to Programs, Spring 2015* and the special edition *Notes on the SSR, Spring 2015*. These are found on the ARC-PA web site on the Accreditation Resources page.

Even though provisional applicant programs do not submit a self-study report (SSR) with their accreditation applications, planning the process of ongoing program self-assessment in light of the requirements in the *Standards* is a key facet of program preparation. The special edition of the Notes related to the SSR addresses the self-assessment process and expectations for the resultant report.

REVISED ACCREDITATION MANUAL

In April, the Accreditation Manual was updated and is available in the Standards of Accreditation section of the ARC-PA website. Provisional applicant programs are encouraged to review this document which addresses accreditation processes, policies and the *Standards*. It includes examples of various means and materials that programs can use to demonstrate their compliance with individual standards.

STANDARDS, 4ᵀᴴ EDITION, SECTION D, PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION

Section D of the *Standards* includes the following introduction:

> INTRODUCTION
>
> Accreditation - Provisional is an accreditation status first awarded when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA *Standards.*
> Only those institutions that meet the eligibility criteria and are actively engaged in establishing a program for the education of physician assistants are eligible for provisional accreditation. The ARC-PA will not consider institutions that are not in good standing with their regional accrediting bodies.

The provisional accreditation process begins with a determination of institutional eligibility to sponsor a program. The process involves a thorough review of the planning, organization, evaluation and proposed/actual content of a program that is in the advanced planning stages. The program is eligible to continue its accreditation status of accreditation-provisional with subsequent evaluations and commission reviews as defined in ARC-PA polices and processes. After successfully completing the multi-year provisional accreditation process, the program is eligible for the status of accreditation-continued.

The program will be subject to denial of accreditation and to denial of future eligibility for accreditation in the event that any of the statements or answers made in documents or the application are false or in the event that the program violates any of the rules or regulations governing applicant programs.

This section of the *Standards* applies only to programs applying for entry into the ARC-PA accreditation process as a new provisional applicant program.

STANDARD D1.01: QUALIFIED AND PERMANENT PROGRAM DIRECTOR, HIRED AND IN PLACE

Standard D1.01 requires that a qualified permanent program director be hired and in place 12 months prior to the date of the ARC-PA meeting at which the program application will be reviewed. Programs that do not have an individual who meets the qualifications for program director as required by the *Standards* (A2.02, A2.06-A2.10) are removed from the agendas to which they were assigned.

D1.01   There *must* be a qualified program director hired by the institution on a permanent basis, a qualified medical director and a more senior institutional official assigned to be responsible for the development of the program.

ANNOTATION: Typically the institution official is a Dean, Department chairperson or individual designated by the institution president or provost. The ARC-PA does not consider a *consultant* as the individual responsible for the development of the program. A permanent program director must be in place 12 months prior to the date of the ARC-PA meeting at which the program application will be reviewed. If the person holding the position of program director changes in the twelve months prior to the date of the ARC-PA meeting at which the program application is to be reviewed, the program may be removed from the commission agenda.

The ARC-PA will not consider an interim program director in the role of permanent program director. This standard also indicates that a change in program director during that 12 month period may result in a program being removed from their assigned agendas. The ARC-PA will not consider an individual who is the medical director for the program changing roles to become program director within the 12 month period. The ARC-PA will not consider a program that plans to have one qualified individual begin the 12 months as program director until the person planned to be hired can join the program after leaving another position.

STANDARD D1.04: COMPLETE MEANS COMPLETE, ALL MEANS ALL

Standard D1.04 requires programs to have a complete curriculum design, course sequence and established evaluation methods for all didactic and clinical components of the curriculum even if instructional faculty have not yet been identified. These must be completed before the site visit.

D1.04   The program *must* have a complete curriculum design, course sequence and established evaluation methods for all didactic and clinical components of the program prior to the ARC-PA *comprehensive evaluation* site visit.

> ANNOTATION: The program is expected to submit its curriculum and course design even if the teaching faculty has not yet been identified or signed a contract. Evaluation methods are to be tied to specific didactic courses and *supervised clinical practice experiences*.

This standard is often cited for developing programs that have not addressed all components of the standard. Some programs have a curriculum design, but without a confirmed and institution approved sequence. Some programs have those components, but have not established evaluation methods for the courses. This latter issue is often related to the fact that programs have not developed the program defined expectations and instructional objectives required as addressed elsewhere in the *Standards*. Without those, it is difficult to address evaluation methods.

STANDARD D1.05: EACH MEANS EVERY AND IS ALL-INCLUSIVE

Standard D1.05 specifically addresses the fact that the detail provided for each course offered in the program is found within the application.

> D 1.05   The program *must* provide detailed information for each course offered in the program.

> > ANNOTATION: The program is expected to review carefully the requirements detailing the types and scope of information needed about each course in the program. These requirements are available in the application materials. The program is expected to provide the required course materials even if the teaching faculty has not yet been identified or signed a contract.

Program are cited for this standard when they believe that they can wait until the program is accredited before having all courses complete. Programs may only be asked to submit syllabi for selected courses as listed in Appendix 16 with the application, but the same type of detail for each course is required no later than the site visit, even if the teaching faculty have not been identified.

Sample

D 1.05   The program *must* provide detailed information for <u>each course offered</u> in the program.

> ANNOTATION: The program is expected to review carefully the requirements detailing the types and scope of information needed about each course in the program. These requirements are available in the application materials. The program is expected to provide the required course materials even if the teaching faculty has not yet been identified or signed a contract.

> At the time of the comprehensive evaluation site visit, for <u>each course and rotation offered in the program</u>, the program must have a course syllabus that includes
> - the course name
> - course description
> - course goals
> - outline of topics to be covered
> - instructional objectives
> - specific expected learning outcomes
> - faculty instructor of record if known
> - methods of student assessment/evaluation
> - plan for grading

> **Include** in **Appendix 16** the syllabi, with content as listed above for the courses addressing:
> - physical diagnosis (B2.05)

STANDARD D1.07: SUFFICIENT CLINICAL SITES AND THE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Standard D1.07 provides the general requirement for sites used for supervised clinical practice sites (SCPES) and the application provides specific details regarding these sites. **Provisional applicant programs must have signed agreements (standard A1.02) for SCPEs sites sufficient in number to accommodate the first cohort of students no later than the time of the site visit.**

D1.07   The program *must* have identified prospective clinical sites *sufficient* in number to meet the needs of the number of anticipated students.

ANNOTATION: The program is expected to have signed agreements from those facilities and individuals participating in the *supervised clinical practice experiences*.

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Appendix 10	Institutional and Program Records TEMPLATE
Appendix 11	a) Curriculum Schematic TEMPLATE b) Clinical Preparatory Instruction TEMPLATE
Appendix 12	a) Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences TEMPLATE (Excel) b) Experiences Outside the United States TEMPLATE
	a) Self-Study Report using ARC-PA provided document with included templates b) Complete Feasibility Study using ARC-PA guidelines

Appendix 12 (Provisional Applicant)
Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences (A1.02, B3.03, B3.04)
List all clinical facilities, to include institutions, clinics, private offices, etc, that will be used in the program as supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPE) of the program **FOR THE FIRST COHORT OF STUDENTS**. Indicate the type of setting for each facility and identify which sites are used to provide access to which SCPES **by inserting the number of students** each site can take yearly for the offered clinical experience. (Use an "**x**" in the Data and Setting Columns where appropriate) **DO NOT** alter the total row at bottom.

Name of Program:

At the time of the site visit, In addition to the **Supervised Clinical Practice Experience** TEMPLATE, the program must have signed affiliation agreements with facilities that have agreed to accept students for all SCPEs, based on the needs for the first cohort, for the entire clinical phase of the program.

D1.07   The program *must* have identified prospective clinical sites *sufficient* in number to meet the needs of the number of anticipated students.

ANNOTATION: The program is expected to have signed agreements from those facilities and individuals participating in the *supervised clinical practice experiences*.

☐   As the program director, I am aware of this requirement. **Enter Initials**.

Include two signed agreements from clinical facilities in **Appendix 3** as noted in A1.02.

The program's completion of the **Supervised Clinical Practice Experience** TEMPLATE in **Appendix 12** partially addressed this standard.

At the time of the site visit, In addition to the **Supervised Clinical Practice Experience** TEMPLATE, the program must have signed affiliation agreements with facilities that have agreed to accept students for the clinical rotations of the program, based on the needs for the first cohort, for all SCPEs for the entire clinical phase of the program.

THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Guidelines for the Feasibility Study are found on the ARC-PA website. They specify the required content and format for the document. Completed Feasibility Studies are to be submitted as directed in the guidelines, to AccreditationServices.

The concept behind a feasibility study is advance planning, hopefully in advance of an institution's deciding it should begin a program of study. Institutions and programs conducting their feasibility study processes "just in time" to submit a required document to the ARC-PA may find the process does not serve that purpose.

CAN OUR INSTITUTION CHANGE AGENDAS??

Provisional applicant programs are assigned to commission agendas until September 2020. The ARC-PA is not able to change a program from one agenda to another. Programs are advised to pay close attention to their planned date of student matriculation in terms of their placement on an ARC-PA agenda.

APPLICATION OF RECORD

The application submitted by the program to the ARC- PA office is considered the program's application of record. It is one component of the official program record used by the commission throughout the accreditation review process. Site visitors have been instructed not to accept any new or revised application materials from the program at the time of the visit. If, during the process of the visit, the site visitors suggest additional information or materials be submitted to the ARC-PA office, these materials should be sent with the program's response to observations.

APPLICATION DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS

All documents requiring completion contained in the application materials are to be returned to the ARC-PA offices as directed in the application materials.

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Directions for Saving and Submission of Provisional Application and Appendices

The program should save the application and each appendix in the format in which the document was created. The program should **not** save the application and appendices as pdf documents for submission.

The application and each appendix should be saved with the same name it was given by the ARC-PA, with the inclusion of an abbreviation of the program's name at the end of the document name. For example: Appendix 2 Mission of the Institution USC and Appendix 5 Personnel Responsibilities USC. The document should be saved in the appropriate folder. For example: Appendix 2 Mission of the Institution USC should be saved in the Appendix 2 folder.

The program should submit its application and appendices by mail to include:
- The *original* application and all appendices.
- Completed institutional signature page.
- In addition to the original, six paper copies of the application and all appendices.
- The original should be two sided. Sections should be divided in numbered or lettered tab inserts (not

In addition to the materials supplied for completion by the program, other documents are required. These are detailed within the application, in the list of required appendices.

Sample

Required Appendices for Provisional Application

NOTE: The word TEMPLATE indicates the program is to complete an ARC-PA designed TEMPLATE as found in the application materials. For other required data and materials the program is to include a program created document.

Include the following appendices with the application:

APPENDIX	CONTENT
Appendix 1	a) Program Datasheet TEMPLATE b) Program Budget TEMPLATE c) Physical Facilities TEMPLATE
	a) Mission of the Institution, mission and general goals of the program b) One representative sample of a signed agreement between sponsoring institution and other institution involved in providing academic instruction, if applicable c) Diagram or description of the organizational structure of the PA program to

Questions about how to submit materials or what to include in the application of record should be directed to AccreditationServices.

COMPLETING APPLICATION COMPONENTS

SAMPLE Application Packets: Application materials are sent to sponsoring institutions from the ARC-PA office, division of Accreditation Services, in time to allow the institution and program to have the one year to complete the document before it needs to be submitted to the ARC-PA office.   The SAMPLE application found on the ARC-PA is provided as a SAMPLE only, to allow individuals to see the types of application components, templates to be completed and narrative responses required. SAMPLES are protected with a watermark. They are not to be downloaded, edited, completed and returned to the office. Such documents will not be accepted as a an official application.

Microsoft Office 2010 or more recent: The ARC-PA application and all documents submitted by the program are to be completed using Microsoft Office for PC, version 2010 or more recent. The ARC-PA forms cannot be completed with Apple software, including Word for Mac. The ARC-PA does not provide an alternative application. The application components clearly indicate that the documents must be saved and submitted in the format in which they were designed. Submitting a PDF in place of a Word or Excel document is not compliant with this requirement.

IT Resource: The ARC-PA is not an informational technology (IT) resource for programs. Questions about the use of Word or Excel should be addressed to institutional IT support.

Editing Forms: Programs must use the application and templates provided by the ARC-PA and are not to simply indicate "see separate document/page" in place of narrative required entries in forms or templates.

The ARC-PA will not customize its application, forms or templates for individual programs. If a program requires additional space to complete a required response, it may attach an additional sheet of paper, labeled clearly, for that response.

Signature Page: The ARC-PA will not customize or edit the signature page of its application due to the need for consistency in what we require of all programs.

MATERIALS AT THE TIME OF THE SITE VISIT

Programs are required to have specific materials available at the time of the site visit, even if these have been submitted to the ARC-PA offices in advance of the visit. These materials are specifically detailed in the application materials following the red box statement of required materials.

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On-Site Material List for Provisional Accreditation '

The following materials **must** be available for review during the site visit, even if submitted in the appendices of the application. Site visitors may request additional materials/documents **during the visit**.

In advance of the site visit, the SV team chair should contact the program to request the program have available select student evaluation instruments in support of the C3 standards. **The SV team will determine which student evaluation instruments should be reviewed on site.**

1. The completed feasibility study must be verifiable and documents and supporting materials must be available for review during the site visit and as requested by the commission.

2. Paper copies of each document and the specific web address for each document available on the web that support the program's compliance with the Standards must be readily available for site visitors at the time of the site visit and as requested by the commission.

3. Complete web addresses for web pages designed in support of compliance with the Standards must be readily available for site visitors at the time of the site visit and as requested by the commission.

4. Paper copies of each course syllabus supporting compliance must be readily available for site visitors at the time of the site visit and as requested by the commission.

5. Paper copies of ALL signed agreements with other entities providing didactic or supervised clinical practice experiences must be readily available for site visitors at the time of the site visit and as requested by the commission.

6. Source documents for data summaries and analysis within application and appendices must be readily available for site visitors at the time of the site visit and as requested by the commission.

7. Data and activities presented in ARC-PA TEMPLATES and program-designed graphic presentations must be verifiable. Documents and materials in support of entries must be available for review during the site visit and as requested by the commission.

1) Program promotional materials and catalogs, access to the program's web site
2) Minutes from program committee meetings to include admissions, curriculum, self-study, program planning, and development (i.e., advisory committee)

EXPANSION TO A DISTANT CAMPUS POLICY 10.1

Before a program may apply to expand to a distant campus, the program must first hold the status of Accreditation-Continued. Thus, any developing, provisional applicant program should note that it will not be able to apply for expansion to a distant campus until after it has successfully completed the provisional accreditation pathway process to achieve Accreditation-continued and according to the timeline of Policy 10.1 as below.

> *A program holding the status of accreditation – continued must maintain five consecutive years of accreditation – continued status before the ARC-PA will consider an application for expansion to a distant campus.*

> *A program with the status of accreditation – probation is not eligible to request expansion to a distant campus.*

> *A program must have outcomes from the first cohort of students at any distant campus before applying to expand to another distant campus.*

INCREASE IN CLASS SIZE POLICY 10.2

Programs applying for accreditation indicate within their application the maximum entering class size for each of the first three classes. ARC-PA policy 10.2 addresses the timing related to the program requesting

an increase in class size beyond the provisional pathway process. Programs should give careful consideration to policy 10.2 in planning for resource supported growth in class size.

Before a program may apply for an increase in class size beyond that specified at the time of initial application, the program must first hold the status of Accreditation-Continued. Thus, any developing, provisional applicant program should note that it will not be able to apply for an increase in class size until after it has successfully completed the provisional accreditation pathway process to achieve Accreditation-continued and according to the timeline of Policy 10.2 points c and d, as below. The policy varies depending on whether the program has incrementally increased its class size over the first three cohorts of students during the provisional process or not.

> *A program holding the status of accreditation – continued*
>
> a) *Must maintain five consecutive years of accreditation – continued status before the ARC-PA will consider a request for an increase in maximum entering class size.*
>
> b) *Must maintain four consecutive years of accreditation-continued status from the date of the last approved class size increase before the ARC-PA will consider a request for an increase in maximum entering class size.*
>
> c) *Must maintain two years of accreditation-continued status after completing the provisional pathway, without an approved incremental class size increase while holding accreditation-provisional status, before the ARC-PA will consider a request for an increase in maximum entering class size.*
>
> d) *Must maintain five years of accreditation-continued status after completing the provisional pathway, if the program was approved for incremental class size increases while holding accreditation provisional-status, before the ARC-PA will consider a request for an increase in maximum entering class size.*

A program with the status of accreditation – probation is not eligible to request an increase in the maximum entering class size.

RELATED RESOURCES
In addition to these Notes, several resources related directly or indirectly to provisional applicant programs are available on the ARC-PA web site Accreditation Resources page.

- The power point handout from the ARC-PA presentation at the PAEA Memphis meeting in October 2013 about Program-Defined Expectations as they relate to the *Standards*.
- The Data Analysis Resource (May 2015) document addressing the components of data analysis as they relate to the *Standards*, 4th edition and, Self-Study Report.
- A document addressing Syllabi, Instructional Objectives and Learning Outcomes may be helpful to those new to PA education.

QUESTIONS?
Questions related to the provisional accreditation process should be sent via email to Accreditation Services.