ARC-PA

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

NOTES TO PROGRAMS
Spring 2018

Below are important **Notes** to all programs. Some provide clarification and some refer to documents on the ARC-PA website (http://www.arc-pa.org/).

STANDARDS CLARIFYING CHANGES

The commission made clarifications to the B3.02 and B3.03 *Standards* at its March 2018 meeting, as noted below. The clarifications provide additional information to guide programs in demonstrating compliance with these standards but do not place any new requirements on the program. **The new version of the Standards is available on the ARC-PA website.** Applications not yet sent to programs will include the changes and ask programs to include the *learning outcomes* related to each standard in an appendix. 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.

Standard B3.02 was clarified by replacing the undefined term "expectations" with the defined term (from the *Standards* glossary), "*learning outcomes*". *Learning outcomes* is defined as the knowledge, interpersonal, clinical and technical skills, professional behaviors, and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities that have been attained at the completion of a curricular component, course or program. Using "meet the program's *Learning Outcomes"* simplifies the standard as it is equivalent to "meet program expectations and acquire the *competencies*". The annotation was also eliminated with the essential content incorporated into the standard. The word "all" was added to the standard to make it clear programs must demonstrate compliance for all students.

Previous version: Standard 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.

3.2018 Clarified Standard B3.02: Supervised clinical practice experiences must enable all students to meet the program's *learning outcomes* expected of students, to include preventive, emergent, acute, and chronic patient encounters.

Standard B3.03a-d was clarified by replacing the undefined term "expectations" with the defined term, "*learning outcomes"*. *Learning outcomes* is defined as the knowledge, interpersonal, clinical and technical skills, professional behaviors, and clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities that have been attained at the completion of a curricular component, course or program. Using "meet the program's *Learning Outcomes"* simplifies the standard as it is equivalent to "*sufficient* patient exposure to allow each student

to meet program expectations and acquire the *competencies*". The word "all" was added to the standard to make it clear programs must demonstrate compliance for all students.

Previous version: Standard *B3.03a-d 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.

3.2018 Clarified Standard **B3.03** *Supervised clinical practice* experiences *must* enable all students to meet the program's *learning outcomes* expected of students, for 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.

STANDARDS REVISION
The ARC-PA continues its multi-year *Standards* review and revision process. Stakeholder feedback has been sought via email, surveys and open forums and will continue. Updated information about the process and timeline will be posted on the ARC-PA website after the standards committee meets in July 2018.

PROGRAM FEES CHANGING
At its March 2018 meeting, the commission approved the following fee changes and/or due dates.

   • The $2,000 non-refundable eligibility fee is required to verify eligibility to enter the accreditation process.
   • The non-refundable Provisional Application fee is still $15,000 but it is due with the letter of intent.
   • Agenda change fee – this is a new $2,000 fee – see fee sheet for details
   • The Distant Campus fee has increased from $4,000 to $7,500.
   • The Interval Assessment fees have increased from $5,000 to $7,500.

Complete information about fees can be found on the ARC-PA website at:
http://www.arc-pa.org/about/accreditation-fees/

DEADLINES ….ARE THEY REALLY DEADLINES? ARE THERE CONSEQUENCES TO MISSING THESE?

 YES, there are deadlines and consequences.

Program Change requests involve completion of a change form. The change requests are reviewed expedited and if needed, are scheduled for commission review on an ARC-PA March, June or September agenda. Change forms are available on the ARC-PA website:
http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/resources/program-change-forms/
NOTE: Standard E1.09 requires the program inform and/or receive written approvals from the ARC-PA **no less than six months prior** to implementation of the proposed change. Programs submitting a late change form run the risk of not having the change approved.

Expansion to a distant campus includes a site visit to the distant campus. The application deadline and site visit dates are provided to the program by ARC-PA staff. The application packet for expansion to a distant campus may only be obtained by contacting accreditationservices@arc-pa.org

Reports due to the ARC-PA for any reason and responses to observations from a site visit are due on the date noted in correspondence sent to the program.

Accreditation Applications are due, completed and accurate, in the ARC-PA office 12 weeks before a site visit. The due date is provided to the program by ARC-PA staff. Per ARC-PA policy 11.1: 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 by the due date and 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.

Programs not submitting reports or documents as required may be cited on standard E1.03.

THE ARC-PA IS SEEKING NEW SITE VISITORS

Interested applicants must be available to attend the **New Site Visitor Workshop** which will be held prior to the PAEA Education Forum at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California, **October 23-24, 2018**. Information about qualifications, application and the workshop can be found at:
http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/resources/workshops-and-conferences/
All applications are due no later than **Tuesday, May 1, 2018** and must be directed to
newsitevisitor@arc-pa.org

ARC-PA WORKSHOP ACCREDITATION AND YOU

Will be held July 22-24, 2018 at the Ritz-Carlton in Cleveland, Ohio. This workshop will provide PA program faculty an overview of the accreditation process including sessions designed to give participants the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the interpretation of individual *Standards*.

Space is limited. Priority will be given to first time registrants from programs scheduled for site visits in 2018-2019. Programs are limited to two attendees per program.

More information is available on the ARC-PA website at
http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/resources/workshops-and-conferences/

THE PORTAL

Directions for entering data into the SCPE tab of the Portal have been updated to include directions for multi-campus programs. The document contains directions for downloading a report from the SCPE tab to submit with program required reports to the ARC-PA about numbers and types of clinical sites used for supervised clinical practice experiences for both single and multi-campus programs. The resource can be found at: http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/resources/

REVISIONS TO ARC-PA POLICY 9.15: ACCREDITATION ACTIONS SUBJECT TO APPEAL AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

At the March 2018 commission meeting, the commission approved changes to the ARC-PA appeal policy and procedure. The revised policy can be found in the ARC-PA policies posted on the ARC-PA website at:
http://www.arc-pa.org/about/policies-bylaws/

INTERPRETING THE STANDARDS

Standard A3.17f: The program must define, publish and make readily available to students upon admission academic performance and progression information to include:

           f)   policies and procedures for remediation and deceleration

To meet standard A3.17f, a program must establish the related policies and procedures and then make them accessible to others in a timely fashion via defined program or institution procedures. Navigation to digital content should take little effort or time.

The application asks programs to provide a copy of the policies and procedures, unless they are available online. In that case, the program is asked to provide the URL (and page number if in an online document).

Programs that do not allow deceleration, must make this information readily available to students upon admission. In the application, the program must provide a copy of this notice, or if online, provide a link to the notice (with page number if in an online document).

Readily Available is defined by the ARC-PA as accessible to others in a timely fashion via defined program or institution procedures. Navigation to digital content should take little effort or time.

The commission, site visitors and ARC-PA staff do access program websites using the links provided by the program in its application as well as by searching the program's website for the information required to be published by the Standards. Programs are encouraged to check that links provided in its application are up to date and working. Programs should routinely evaluate their web pages to ensure all policies, procedures

and other information required by the Standards can be found with little effort or time in searching. Additionally, programs are encouraged to regularly check the consistency and accuracy of the information found among its web pages, in published documents, and on institutional web pages and documents.

Standard B1.09: For each didactic and clinical course, the program *must* define and publish *instructional objectives* that guide student acquisition of required *competencies*.

> ANNOTATION: *Instructional objectives* stated in measurable terms allow assessment of student progress in developing the *competencies* required for entry into practice. They address learning expectations of students and the level of student performance required for success.

Programs are instructed to create a composite document, for Appendix 17 of the application, to include instructional objectives as required in the body of the application. The instructional objectives are to be copied into the program created document from any relevant source (course syllabi, individual lectures or other documents) and must be organized by and labeled with the standard they address.

Instructional objectives are defined as statements describing observable actions or behaviors the student will be able to demonstrate after completing a unit of instruction. The commission uses Appendix 17 to not only verify curricular content to meet the various B standards but also to verify compliance with standard B1.09.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY EXCERPTS FROM MARCH 2018 MEETINGS
Accreditation Actions as of March 10, 2018

> Acknowledge **19** new PD, **10** New IPD, **15** new MD, **2** IMD
> Action Taken On:
> **12** Continuing program applications
> **7**   Provisional program applications
> **2**   Provisional monitoring applications
> **3**   Final Provisional - Moving from provisional accreditation
> **0**   Focused visit
> **1**   Probation visit
> **1**   Expansion to a Distant Campus application
> **0**   Program changes (class size increase)
> **4**   Program reports due
>
> Expedited Reviews – Total **70** reviews: **57** (reports due); **13** (program changes)
> **2** Referred to full commission
> **37** Program information items

(Accreditation actions are posted on the ARC-PA website after each meeting, after all programs have been notified of commission decisions and after the deadline for any appeals which may change a program's status.)

> The total number of accredited PA programs as of March 10, 2018 is **235.**
> The total number of accredited **clinical postgraduate** programs at present is **8.**
> There are **29** programs with an accreditation status of Accreditation-Probation

There are **67** programs with an accreditation status of Accreditation-Provisional

Projected Workload
- The current projected workload includes an additional **57** new PA programs for initial provisional accreditation consideration through September 2021.
- To address the increased workload the ARC-PA has implemented a systematic change to our commission agenda schedules so we may accommodate more program reviews per year. The commission has eliminated its two one-day meetings and, beginning in March 2018, will meet for three days, three times a year (March, June and September). No site visits already scheduled will be changed. Programs waiting for provisional application review will be reviewed in a more timely manner with this revised schedule.
- While the need for PA healthcare providers remains strong, the commission remains concerned about the availability of clinical education sites for all types of healthcare students and requests that our collaborating organizations, when possible, promote to their members, participation in clinical education. The ability of current and emerging programs to recruit qualified program leadership and faculty also remains worrisome to the commission.

PANCE REQUIRED REPORTS FOR LOW FIRST TIME TAKER PASS RATES
The ARC-PA continues to review the PANCE first time pass rate percentages by student cohort. Any program with a PANCE first time pass rate percentage of 85% or less for the 2017 cohort must submit an analysis of PANCE performance to the ARC-PA **by July 1, 2018**.

Any year a program's PANCE pass rate for first time takers by cohort is 85% or less requires the program submit an analysis of PANCE performance by July 1 of the following year. The NCCPA usually provides programs their previous year's data in February.

The basis for the report is the ARC-PA's Four Key Elements of Analysis which can be found in the Data Analysis Resource on the ARC-PA Resources web page. The report form is available on the **Resources** page of the ARC-PA website: http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/resources/

POSTGRADUATE PA PROGRAM ACCREDITATION
At the September 2017 commission meeting, the Commission voted to take the accreditation process for clinical postgraduate PA programs out of abeyance. A taskforce has been charged with developing a proposal for a new accreditation process, timeline and standards for postgraduate PA programs. This taskforce plans to develop a more efficient process of postgraduate accreditation while maintaining the high standards of education required by the ARC-PA.

THE ARC-PA IS PAPERLESS
The ARC-PA has completed revision of its documents, including applications and required reports, to reflect the change to a paperless way of life. You will notice that submission instructions will ask programs to submit reports via stick drive, email or by uploading to the portal, depending on the document type.

However, all programs are instructed to have one hardcopy of their application available at the time of their site visit for the visitors' use.

We feel strongly that this move to a paperless world will simplify some of our processes and will be of benefit to programs and the ARC-PA.

DOCUMENTS RELATED TO SITE VISITS - ON THE ARC-PA WEBSITE

The **Site Visit Protocol and Planning** page of the ARC-PA website http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/site-visits/site-visit-protocol/ contains information designed to help program directors and faculty organize documents and prepare for a site visit. The **Information Summary Sheet** programs must submit eight (8) weeks prior to the site visit is linked to this page.

The pages for both **Provisional Accreditation Site Visits** http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/site-visits/provisional-accreditation-site-visit-schedule/ and **Continuing Accreditation Site Visits** http://www.arc-pa.org/accreditation/site-visits/continuing-accreditation-site-visit-schedule/ have documents to be used for planning for a visit. Agenda templates linked to the pages vary by type of review so programs are cautioned to read the web pages carefully.

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. Contact information is posted on the ARC-PA website at http://www.arc-pa.org/contact/