



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

CONTINUING ACCREDITATION

ARC-PA Site Visit Rationale for Clinical Postgraduate Continuing Accreditation Site Visit Session

July 2023

An evaluation team can conduct a thorough and accurate assessment of the Clinical Postgraduate PA educational program in 1.5 days. Site visits should provide the site visit team member(s) information on the program and should provide the team the opportunity to meet and discuss the program with its administration, faculty, staff, instructors, preceptors, PA trainees, and alumni.

The primary responsibility of the site visit team is to verify, validate, and clarify, if necessary, the information supplied by the program in its application materials. The purpose of the site visit is to assess the program's demonstrated compliance with the *Standards* (3rd edition).

While the actual schedule may vary from the model below, the types of activities listed here should be included. The visitors need to have an opportunity to discuss the program with its faculty, preceptors, current PA trainees, and graduates of the program.

The Program Director is asked to consult with the site visit team chair before final scheduling occurs. This is best handled when the team chair has a copy of the proposed schedule in hand.

Day 1:

15-30 minutes

Meeting with Program Director and Medical Director

Purpose: To review the schedule for the first day, as planned by the program, and make desired adjustments when feasible and not excessively disruptive. To allow the site visitors to state briefly the function of the evaluation visit, the ARC-PA, the type of accreditation status available to the program, and what that status represents.

60-90 minutes

Review of Documents, Files, and Records Maintained by the Program on the PA Trainees and the Curriculum

Purpose: To assess the adequacy of syllabi, exams, PA trainee manuals, PA trainee files, policies and other documentation requested in the application that must be available for visitors on site.

90-120 minutes

Discussion of the Submitted Self-Study Report

Site visitors meet with the Program Director, Medical Director, key faculty for the program, and staff.

Purpose: This session provides the team an opportunity to discuss and clarify the program's self-study document and supporting materials with the program faculty in order to obtain a more complete understanding of the program's self-study process, outcomes, strengths, opportunities, threats, and goals. The focus of this session is to address the progress of the program and changes that have been made since the program's last site visit. Additional supporting documentation may need to be reviewed or provided as a result of this session

90-120 minutes **Review and Clarification of the Application and Appendices**

Site visitors meet with the Program Director, Medical Director, key faculty for the program, and staff.

Purpose: The responsibility for the format of the session rests with the site visitors. This session provides the visitors an opportunity to review thoroughly, discuss, and if necessary, clarify the program's application and supporting materials with the program officials in order to obtain a more complete understanding of the program. The program officials should be prepared to answer clarifying questions which may include reviewing program goals, philosophies, course objectives, operational procedures, PA trainee selection criteria, PA trainee evaluation protocols, preceptor selection criteria, processes for monitoring preceptors' performance, etc. Additional supporting documentation may be required to be reviewed or provided as a result of this session.

60- 90 minutes **Meeting with Instructional Faculty**

Purpose: Meet with instructional faculty members, for the purpose of assessing how they determine what they teach; their instructional methods; the frequency and means they use to assess and report to PA trainees on their individual progress, and related information.

30-60 minutes **Meeting with current PA Trainees**

Purpose: To obtain perceptions of the program from PA trainees and to gain an understanding of the organization and quality of instruction they have received. Discussion with PA trainees should allow the visitors to obtain their perceptions of the program, the curriculum, the quality of teaching, the types and frequency of evaluation of their progress, their career objectives, major challenges, and related topics. Visitors should also obtain impressions of PA trainees' practical skills, as well as their clinical understanding, knowledge, and judgment of their limitations and the character of their interaction with others in the clinical setting. (Members of the faculty are not to be present during these conversations.)

30-60 minutes **Tour of Facilities**

Purpose: To provide the site visitor(s) the opportunity to verify classroom, lab, faculty office, and educational resources necessary for a Clinical Postgraduate program.

Day 2:

30-60 minutes **Meeting with Key Senior Institutional Officials**

(Such as Chief Executive Officer, Chiefs of Service, President, Dean, whomever the Institution wishes to represent the sponsoring institution, etc.)

Purpose: To discuss issues of institutional support for the program.

30-60 minutes **Interviews with Preceptors**

Purpose: To discuss individually and sequentially, with principal instructors for any didactic courses and supervised units of instruction that are designed to teach clinical skills, the course selection and content, the instructional objectives and methods, the frequency and means of assessing and reporting to PA trainees on their progress, and related information. The conversations should allow the visitors to assess the preceptor's understanding of their teaching responsibility to the PA trainees; their contacts with the program administration; their teaching methods; the nature of supervision, direction, and evaluation they provide to PA trainees in the clinical setting.

30-60 minutes **Meeting with Graduates**

Purpose: Meet with graduates to provide the site visitors with an opportunity to assess the graduates' satisfaction with their education and their profession. Examples include the degree to which the program prepared them to assume the functions they perform on the job and their impressions of patient acceptance of them.

Closure: The site visit team indicates it has completed its report and is ready to depart the program. The site visit team may take a few moments to express thanks to the program for its assistance in allowing the team to complete its task. Transportation arrangements for the visitors should have been previously arranged. The ARC-PA does not give an oral exit report at the conclusion of the site visit.

The filed written report submitted by the team will be sent to the program from the ARC-PA within approximately 30 days of the visit in most cases. The program will be offered the opportunity to respond to any of the observations noted in the site visitor evaluation report. The purpose of the program's response is to eliminate errors of fact or challenge perceived ambiguities and misperceptions.