

The UT Health San Antonio Master of Physician Assistant Studies program is accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for Physician Assistant, Inc (ARC-PA). According to the ARC-PA eligibility requirements, only institutions “accredited by a recognized regional accrediting agency” who are “authorized by this agency to confer upon graduates of the PA program a graduate degree” are eligible for accreditation by ARC-PA, as shown below in the excerpt of its standards.



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

**Accreditation Standards for
Physician Assistant Education[®]**

Fifth Edition

First Published September 2019

Effective September 2020

Clarifications 11/2019, 9/2020, 3/2021, 3/2022, 9/2022, 3/2023 & 9/2023

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**ARC-PA STANDARDS
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

STANDARDS FORMAT 3

INTRODUCTION 3

ELIGIBILITY 4

PROGRAM REVIEW 4

SECTION A: ADMINISTRATION 5

 A1 Sponsorship 5

 Institution Responsibilities 5

 Institution Resources 6

 A2 Program Personnel 7

 Program Faculty 7

 Program Director 7

 Medical Director 8

 Instructional Faculty 8

 Administrative Support Staff 9

 A3 Operations 9

 Policies 9

 Fair Practices and Admissions 10

 Student Records 11

 Faculty Records 12

SECTION B: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION 12

 B1 Curriculum 12

 B2 Didactic Instruction 13

 B3 Supervised Clinical Practice Experience Instruction 16

 B4 Assessment of Student Learning 17

SECTION C: EVALUATION 17

 C1 Ongoing Program Self-Assessment 17

 C2 Clinical Site Evaluation 18

SECTION D: PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION 18

 D1 Provisional Accreditation Requirements 19

SECTION E: ACCREDITATION MAINTENANCE 20

 E1 Program and Sponsoring Institution Responsibilities 20

GLOSSARY 22

These *Standards* were initially adopted in 1971 and were revised in 1978, 1985, 1990, 1997, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2019. ARC-PA commissioners include individuals nominated from the collaborating organizations of the ARC-PA which include:

- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Physician Assistants
- American College of Physicians
- American College of Surgeons
- American Medical Association
- Physician Assistant Education Association

These *Standards* constitute the requirements to which an accredited program is held accountable and provide the basis on which the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA) will confer or deny program accreditation.

STANDARDS FORMAT

- The term “student(s)” as used in this document refers to those individuals enrolled in the PA program.
- *Italics* are used to reflect words and terms defined in the glossary of this document.

INTRODUCTION

The collaborating organizations cooperate with the ARC-PA to establish, maintain, and promote appropriate standards of quality for entry level education of physician assistants/associates (“PAs”) and to provide recognition for educational programs that meet the requirements outlined in these *Standards*. These *Standards* are used for the development, evaluation, and self-analysis of PA programs.

PAs are academically and clinically prepared to practice medicine on collaborative medical teams. The collaborative medical team is fundamental to the PA profession and enhances the delivery of high-quality health care. Within the collaborative medical team, PAs are medical professionals who diagnose illness, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and often serve as a patient’s principal healthcare provider. With thousands of hours of medical training, PAs are versatile and collaborative. PAs practice in every state and in every medical setting and specialty, improving healthcare access and quality.

The role of the PA demands intelligence, sound judgment, intellectual honesty, appropriate interpersonal skills, and the capacity to respond to emergencies in a calm and reasoned manner. Essential attributes of the graduate PA include an attitude of respect for self and others, adherence to the concepts of privilege and confidentiality in communicating with patients, and a commitment to the patient’s welfare.

The *Standards* recognize the continuing evolution of the PA profession and practice and endorse experiential competency-based education as a fundamental tenet of PA education. While acknowledging the interests of the sponsoring institution as the ARC-PA works with the program to meet the *Standards*, the *Standards* reflect a determination that a commonality in the core professional curriculum of programs remains desirable and necessary to offer curricula of *sufficient* depth and breadth to prepare all PA graduates for practice. The *Standards* allow programs to remain creative and innovative in program

design and the methods of curriculum delivery and evaluation that are used to enable students to achieve program *goals* and student *competencies*. Mastery of *program defined competencies* is key to preparing students for entry into clinical practice.

The PA profession has evolved over time to one requiring a high level of academic rigor. Institutions that sponsor PA programs are expected to incorporate this high level of academic rigor into their programs and award an appropriate master's degree.

The ARC-PA acknowledges ongoing changes in the delivery of health care and in the education of health professionals. The needs of patients and society *must* be considered by the ARC-PA, the sponsoring institutions, and the programs. Education *must* be provided in a manner that promotes *interprofessional* education and practice.

An environment that fosters and promotes *diversity, equity and inclusion* is considered essential to preparing PAs to provide service to others that is not exclusionary of any group, race, or culture. The various perspectives and resources offered by a diverse faculty, staff, and student body increase the overall impact the PA profession can have on patients and the global community.

ELIGIBILITY

The ARC-PA accredits only qualified PA programs offered by, or located within, institutions chartered by and physically located within, the *United States* and where students are geographically located within the *United States* for their education.

A single institution *must* be clearly identified as the sponsor of the program and *must* be authorized under applicable law to provide a program of post-secondary education. **It *must* be accredited by a *recognized regional accrediting agency* and *must* be authorized by this agency to confer upon graduates of the PA program a graduate degree.**

Sponsoring institutions applying for provisional accreditation of a new PA program *must* be accredited by, and in good standing with, a *recognized regional accrediting agency* and *must* be authorized by that agency to confer upon graduates of the PA program a graduate degree.

Sponsoring institutions which apply for provisional accreditation but whose PA program does not meet these eligibility requirements will not be considered by the ARC-PA.

PROGRAM REVIEW

Accreditation of PA programs is a process initiated by the sponsoring institution. The process includes a comprehensive review of the program relative to the *Standards*. It is the responsibility of the PA program and the sponsoring institution to demonstrate compliance with the *Standards*. Accreditation decisions are based on the ARC-PA's evaluation of information contained in the accreditation application, the report submitted by the site visit team, any additional requested reports or documents submitted to the ARC-PA by the program, and the program's accreditation history. Whether to grant or deny accreditation (or to take other action with respect to a sponsoring institution) is within the sole discretion of the ARC-PA.

Thus, the UT Health San Antonio Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program established its ARC-PA eligibility by providing the initial SACSCOC correspondence that concretized the institutions and program's relationship with SACSCOC, and which granted the UT Health San Antonio MPAS program the ability to grant a degree to students upon graduation. Additionally, as the institution undergoes periodic review with SACSCOC, the UT Health MPAS program makes ARC-PA aware of its continued relationship with SACSCOC to retain accreditation. The most recent accreditation correspondence submitted to retain eligibility is included on the next page.



January 15, 2019

UTHSCSA

JAN 24 2019

Handwritten initials

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dr. William Henrich
President
The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
7703 Floyd Curl Drive; MSC 7834
San Antonio, TX 78229-3900

Dear Dr. Henrich:

The following action regarding your institution was taken by the Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) during its meeting held on December 9, 2018:

The SACSCOC Board of Trustees reaffirmed accreditation. No additional report was requested. Your institution's next reaffirmation will take place in 2028 unless otherwise notified.

Please submit to your Commission staff member, preferably by email, a **one-page** executive summary of your institution's Quality Enhancement Plan. The summary is due **February 15, 2019**, and should include on the same page the following information: (1) the title of your Quality Enhancement Plan, (2) your institution's name, and (3) the name, title, and email address of an individual who can be contacted regarding its development or implementation. This summary will be posted to SACSCOC's website as a resource for other institutions undergoing the reaffirmation process.

All institutions are requested to submit an "Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan on Student Learning" as part of their "Fifth-Year Interim Report" due five years before their next reaffirmation review. Institutions will be notified 11 months in advance by the President of the Commission regarding its specific due date. Directions for completion of the report will be included with the notification.

We appreciate your continued support of SACSCOC's activities and work. If you have questions, please contact the SACSCOC staff member assigned to your institution.

Sincerely,

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.
President

BSW:sf

cc: Dr. Stephanie L. Kirschmann, Vice President, SACSCOC