



Program Goals & Benchmarks for Determining Success in Meeting Goals South College – Nashville Physician Assistant Program

The South College Nashville Physician Assistant (PA) program has six primary goals that are designed to support the program in achieving its mission of educating competent, compassionate, and comprehensive PAs. Determination of success in achieving each of these goals is based on factually accurate evidence as identified below.

1. Select diverse & highly qualified applicants for admission into the program.

Admission of highly qualified applicants into the South College Nashville Physician Assistant Program					
Student Preparedness	Benchmark	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Undergraduate GPA	3.40	3.43	3.60	3.70	3.6
Undergraduate Science GPA	3.30	3.38	3.50	3.65	3.55
Patient Care Experience (hours)	1,000	5,313	3,975	3,794	1,275
PA Program Graduation Rate	93.6%	96.7%	95.6%	TBD	TBD

Benchmarks re: GPA & patient care hours were developed to target averages of the program applicant pools in each of the four categories listed above. Graduation Rate benchmark adopted from [Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA), By the Numbers: Program Report 35: Data from the 2019 Program Survey, Washington, DC: PAEA; 2020. South College – Nashville PA Program has successfully met all benchmarks for Goal 1 including GPA and patient care experience for the 2021 and 2022 graduating cohorts. PA Program Graduate Rate to be determined and evaluated upon graduation of the first cohort.

Student diversity by ethnicity/race, South College Nashville Physician Assistant Program					
Student Diversity	Benchmark	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Minority students by ethnicity/race	10%	23.33%	13.95%	10%	8%

The program’s benchmark for student diversity is that at least 10% of each cohort identifies with a diverse population. Diverse refers to ethnicities and races considered to be minorities (African American, American Indian, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Hispanic).

2. Provide students with a rigorous didactic curriculum that promotes life-long learning skills and prepares them for clinical rotations.

At the end of the clinical phase of the program, students will retrospectively assess their preparedness for entry into the clinical year by completing a reflective self-assessment. The students’ self-assessments will evaluate their personal feelings and understanding of how well they were prepared for entry into the clinical phase of the program. The table below identifies each area that will be evaluated.

Student Self-Assessment of Level of Competence with Skills Taught in the PA Program*				
Area Assessed	Benchmark	Class of 2021 RR: 86% (25/29)	Class of 2022 RR: 25.6% (11/43)	Class of 2023
Obtain a detailed and accurate medical history	3.5	4.7	4.91	
Perform a comprehensive physical examination	3.5	4.8	4.91	
Develop a preliminary diagnosis and a secondary	3.5	4.7	4.73	

problem list				
Identify, order, and interpret diagnostic tests	3.5	4.6	4.64	
Accurately record, organize, and utilize the medical record	3.5	4.6	4.27	
Access and analyze patient history	3.5	4.7	4.36	
Formulate and implement treatment plans	3.5	4.6	4.45	
Recognize and manage life-threatening emergencies	3.5	4.6	4.82	
Identify and perform procedures common to primary care	3.5	4.5	4.36	
Make appropriate referrals to specialists	3.5	4.7	4.09	
Consult with a physician in situations beyond the PA's scope of expertise	3.5	4.7	4.18	
Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills as a health care professional	3.5	4.7	4.36	
Interact with patients respecting cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences	3.5	4.7	4.82	
Counsel and educate patient regarding health promotion, disease prevention, and health risk interventions	3.5	4.6	4.55	
Counsel, evaluate, and refer for psychosocial problems	3.5	4.8	4.27	
Understand and integrate the principals of information technology and evidence-based medicine into clinical practice	3.5	4.6	4.45	
Pursue life-long learning with appropriate use of medical literature	3.5	4.7	4.73	
Understand the role of the Physician Assistant in the healthcare team	3.5	4.8	4.45	
<i>Students will complete comprehensive self-assessment evaluations at the end of the clinical phase of the program. The aggregated average (mean) score for each area assessed will be based on a five-point Likert scale (1=Unsatisfactory, 2=Needs Improvement, 3=Average, 4=Above Average, 5=Excellent). The South College Nashville PA Program's benchmark is an average score equal to or greater than 3.5 in all areas.</i>				

Student & Faculty Assessment of Preparation for Clinical Rotations & Life-Long Learning				
Area Assessed	Benchmark	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023
Student Evaluation of Preparation for Rotations	3.5	4.1	4.3	4.4
Faculty Evaluation of Student Preparation for Rotations	3.5	4.3	4.6	4.6
Student Evaluation of Preparation for Life-Long Learning	3.5	4.6	4.6	TBD
Faculty Evaluation of Student Life-Long Learning	3.5	NA	4.7	TBD
<i>Average student & faculty assessment of preparation in life-long learning is assessed during each end-of-course evaluation, the bi-annual faculty evaluation of curriculum, and the student graduate exit survey. The program's benchmark for assessing student preparation in life-long learning is set at 3.5, which represents 70% and is the minimum passing score for each didactic course.</i>				

Upon completion of the first clinical rotation, each preceptor will complete an evaluation of student preparedness, which will include the “Areas Assessed” below. This evaluation will be completed for each student. Subsequently, aggregated average (mean) results for each area assessed will be added to the table below.

Preceptor Feedback of Student Preparedness for Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences*				
Area Assessed	Benchmark	Class of 2021 RR: 100% (98/98)	Class of 2022 RR: 99.34% (151/152)	Class of 2023
Medical interview	3.5	4.76	4.79	TBD
Physical examination	3.5	4.76	4.78	TBD
Oral case presentation	3.5	4.66	4.75	TBD
Written patient record	3.5	4.75	4.78	TBD
Knowledge of diagnostic studies	3.5	4.72	4.68	TBD
Problem-solving/Critical thinking	3.5	4.62	4.76	TBD
Factual knowledge and concepts	3.5	4.69	4.73	TBD
Assessment/Differential diagnosis	3.5	4.62	4.71	TBD
Ability to develop a management plan	3.5	4.62	4.72	TBD
Ability to implement a management plan	3.5	4.66	4.75	TBD
Patient education and counseling	3.5	4.86	4.81	TBD
Pharmacology and drug knowledge	3.5	4.59	4.64	TBD
Prevention/Health maintenance	3.5	4.94	4.81	TBD
Interprofessional teamwork	3.5	5.00	4.90	TBD
Practicing evidence-based medicine	3.5	4.82	4.81	TBD
Cultural awareness/inclusion	3.5	5.00	4.88	TBD
Performing Clinical Procedures	3.5	4.88	4.72	TBD

Clinical preceptors will evaluate all students at the end of their first clinical rotation. Shown is the aggregated average (mean) score for each area assessed for all rotation courses, collectively, based on a Likert scale (1=Unsatisfactory, 2=Needs Improvement, 3=Average, 4=Above Average, 5=Excellent). The South College Nashville PA Program’s benchmark is an average score equal to or greater than 3.5 in all areas.

3. Provide students with a comprehensive clinical curriculum that prepares them to pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam and become competent, compassionate, and comprehensive health care providers.

The PA program’s curriculum is a process for delivering educational excellence and offering students the most current, best-practice, evidence-based medical knowledge. The program has a process of continual assessment of the curriculum to meet this objective, and to implement revisions based on feedback from principal faculty, instructional faculty, students, clinical preceptors, and the medical director.

Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) Pass Rates and Employment Rates*					
Areas Assessed	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
South College first-time takers pass rate	96.55%	79%	TBD	TBD	TBD
National first-time takers pass rate	93%	92%	TBD	TBD	TBD
Number of South College students tested	29	43	TBD	TBD	TBD
Employment rate of South College Nash	96.55%	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Percent of students who pass the PANCE and gain employment as a PA-C. The South College Nashville benchmarks are to have a first-time takers PANCE pass rate (Data Source: NCCPA PANCE Reports) that is equal to or greater than the national average pass rate, and for 100% of graduates who pass the PANCE to be employed as a PA-C.

4. Prepare students to make significant contributions in the communities that they serve, foster their ability to improve patient care practices and promote the PA profession.

Community service allows South College Nashville Physician Assistant students to improve patient care practices and promote the PA profession. Community service focuses on personal and civic responsibility. The South College Nashville Physician Assistant program embraces community service in medically underserved and economically disadvantaged populations. Community service programs involve PA students in activities that address local needs while promoting their life-long learning skills and professional development.

Student Community Service Hours for the South College Physician Assistant Program				
Community Service Hours	Benchmark	Class of 2021*	Class of 2022	Class of 2023
Average	50	51.7	52	TBD
Minimum	50	50	50	TBD
Maximum	50	62	60	TBD

50 hours of approved community service is required of all PA Program students. *As such, the benchmark for Community Service hours for each cohort is 50 hours or greater.*
**Pending one student's data*

Membership in the Tennessee Academy of Physician Assistants and the American Academy of Physician Assistants permits South College Nashville PA students to participate in student-specific programming at local and national conferences, to network with other PA students and practicing PAs, and to receive career counseling and advice from practicing PAs.

Student Membership in Professional Organizations				
Professional Organization	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Tennessee Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA)	100%	100%	100%	100%
American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)	100%	100%	100%	100%

As all PA program students are required to have membership in AAPA and TAPA, the benchmark is for 100% of PA students to be members of TAPA and AAPA.

5. Recruit and select diverse & highly qualified faculty to provide innovative education and training of students, and ongoing assessment and improvement of the program.

Faculty Qualifications for the South College Nashville Physician Assistant Classes of 2021-2023					
Measures	Benchmark	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Average Clinical Experience of Faculty	3 years	10 years	14 years	14 years	13 years
NCCPA Certification/Board Certification	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Average number of clinical years' experience of program PA/Physician faculty, was determined by dividing total number of clinical years by number of clinical Principal Faculty onboard for each cohort.

Faculty diversity by ethnicity/race, South College Nashville Physician Assistant Classes of 2021-2024					
Faculty Diversity	Benchmark	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
Minority faculty by ethnicity/race	2 PF	1 PF	2 PF	2 PF	2 PF
<p><i>*PF = Principal Faculty</i></p> <p><i>The program's benchmark for faculty diversity is to employ at least 2PF who identify with a diverse population. Diverse refers to ethnicities and races considered to be minorities (African American, American Indian, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Hispanic).</i></p>					

The program's requirements for selecting and hiring highly qualified faculty members include a minimum of three (3) years of clinical experience. All PA faculty members must have and maintain appropriate certification, licensure, and credentials. PA's must maintain NCCPA certification and be eligible for licensure in the state of Tennessee. Physician faculty members must be eligible for licensure in the state of Tennessee. Additional consideration is given to faculty applicants who have prior experience in formal teaching and/or clinical precepting capacities.

As of April 2023, the South College Nashville PA Program has one program director (1.0 FTE), one medical director (0.5 FTE), and 10 principal faculty members (10 FTE). The faculty and medical director, collectively, possess a breadth of experience in clinical practice ranging from 11 years to 31 years. Areas of clinical practice experiences across the faculty, program director, and medical director include primary care, family medicine (civilian and military service), trauma critical care, pediatrics, geriatrics, emergency medicine, and orthopedic surgery. The Medical Director is an MD who is board certified in family medicine with 24 years of family medicine clinical practice experience. The Medical Director actively participates in the didactic phase of the program. He is the course director and lead instructor for the medical anatomy course.

As indicated, the South College Nashville PA program currently has 10.0 FTE principal faculty. The class beginning in October 2021 matriculated 60 students. The class beginning in October 2022 matriculated 60 students, which equates to a student to faculty ratio of 15/1, to include currently enrolled didactic and clinical students. The program plans to hire 2 additional principal faculty in 2023. The class beginning in October 2023 will matriculate 60 students, which equates to a student to faculty (SFR) ratio of $(120/12.0 \text{ FTE}) = 10 \text{ FTE}$ for the year and 15 for the fall quarter. The average student to faculty ratio (SFR) for all PA programs in the United States is 13.6 (Physician Assistant Education Association, By the Numbers: Program Report 35: Data from the 2019 Program Survey, Washington, DC: PAEA; 2020). The South College Nashville PA program works to be comparable.

Additional instructional faculty include clinical preceptors who are either licensed Physician Assistants who are practicing with a supervising physician who is board certified in the specific area in which the PA is practicing, or a licensed physician who is board-certified in their area of practice. All clinical preceptors are licensed by the state in which they are practicing.

The SFR is calculated annually during the Fall quarter of each year when the program (ultimately) will have three concurrent cohorts of students. The South College Nashville PA program's long-term target SFR is 13.6:1 or principal faculty sufficient in number, given its anticipated growth in successive cohorts.

The program's benchmarks for the faculty and SFR include maintaining at least 3.0 FTE PA principal faculty at all times, hiring, and maintaining professional faculty members who possess at least three (3) years of clinical experience. All PA faculty members must have and maintain appropriate certification, licensure, and credentials. PA's must maintain NCCPA certification and be eligible for licensure in the State of Tennessee. Physician faculty must be eligible for licensure in the State of Tennessee. Additionally, faculty must possess a minimum of a master's degree.

6. Maintain program accreditation from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) through a process of continuous program self-assessment.

The sixth program goal is to maintain program accreditation from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) through a process of continuous program self-assessment. Sources of information to assess this goal include compliance with ARC-PA annual reporting by due dates and avoidance of any ARC-PA levied probationary status.

ARC-PA Accreditation Status for the South College Nashville Physician Assistant Program	
Measures	Dates Obtained
Accreditation: Initial Provisional	June 2019
Accreditation: Provisional Monitoring	March 2022
Final Provisional Accreditation:	March 2024
Accreditation: Continued	March 2026
Next Accreditation Review	March 2024
<i>The benchmark for performance for this goal includes maintaining ARC-PA Accreditation-Provisional status and maintaining a good standing status at all times.</i>	