



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	Class of 2025
Undergraduate GPA	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.7
Undergraduate Science GPA	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6
Patient Care Experience (hrs.)	1,000	5,313	3,975	3,794	1,275	3,403
PA Program Graduation Rate	94.2%	96.7%	95.6%	95%	TBD	TBD

Benchmarks re: GPA & patient care hours were developed to target averages of the program applicant pools in each of the categories listed above. Graduation rate benchmark adopted from Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA) Program Report 36: Data from the 2021 Program Survey.

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	Class of 2025
Minority students by ethnicity/race	10%	23%	13%	10%	8%	11%

The program’s benchmark for student diversity is that at least 10% of each cohort identify 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 didactic 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 understanding of how well they were prepared for entry into the clinical phase of the program. Additionally, all students will take the PACKRAT to further demonstrate their preparedness for entry into the clinical year.

End of Didactic Student Survey					
Student Preparedness for Clinical Rotations	Benchmark	Cohort 2024 RR: 65%			
South College provided effective didactic instruction in anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology, covering all organ systems, and their application in clinical practice.	3.5	4.7			
South College provided effective didactic instruction in interviewing and eliciting a medical history.	3.5	4.9			
South College provided effective didactic instruction in physical examination.	3.5	4.8			
South College provided effective didactic instruction in generating differential diagnoses and ordering and interpreting diagnostic studies.	3.5	4.7			
South College provided effective didactic instruction in pharmacology and pharmacotherapeutics.	3.5	4.6			
South College provided effective didactic instruction in non-pharmacologic management in clinical practice.	3.5	4.5			
South College provided effective didactic instruction in communication with patients, their families, and other health professionals with consideration for collaborative practice/interprofessional teams.	3.5	4.4			
South College provided effective didactic instruction in communication with patients, their families, and other health professionals with consideration for life-style modifications, behavioral change, and medication adherence.	3.5	4.7			
South College provided effective didactic instruction in communication with patients, their families, and other health professionals with consideration for patient safety.	3.5	4.4			
South College provided effective didactic instruction with evidence-based / current guidelines spanning the lifetime of any given patient or patient population regarding preventative, acute, and chronic care.	3.5	4.8			
South College provided effective didactic instruction in the application of medical and social sciences within the context of clinical care	3.5	4.8			

regarding normal and abnormal development across the life span.					
South College provided effective didactic instruction in the application of social and behavioral sciences within the context of clinical care regarding violence identification and prevention.	3.5	4.1			
South College provided effective didactic instruction on physician assistant professional issues including documentation of care, coding, and billing.	3.5	4.3			
South College provided effective and relevant OSLEs and simulations in preparing students for the clinical year.	3.5	4.8			
South College provided effective didactic instruction according to its specified instructional objectives and learning outcomes.	3.5	4.8			
South College provided effective didactic instruction that prepared students for their clinical year.	3.5	4.7			
South College effectively structured the didactic curriculum to maximize student learning.	3.5	4.5			
Overall, South College's didactic curriculum is effective.	3.5	4.8			
<p>*RR – responder rates</p> <p>Students will a complete comprehensive self-assessment evaluation at the end of the didactic 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. This latest iteration reflects the best assessment of the cohorts, but does not have contiguous data from previous cohorts.</p>					

Physician Assistant Clinical Knowledge Rating and Assessment Tool (PACKRAT 1)								
Year 1 First Time Takers	Cohort 2021	National Average	Cohort 2022	National Average	Cohort 2023	National Average	Cohort 2024	National Average
Average Score	121	129	131	138	136	135	146	134
Specialties and Task (% Correct)								
Cardiology	50%	53%	60%	65%	63%	64%	69%	61%
Dermatology	37%	49%	59%	61%	61%	60%	63%	60%
Endocrinology	68%	66%	64%	70%	70%	68%	63%	60%
ENT/Ophthalmology	61%	67%	63%	62%	65%	62%	71%	66%
Gastrointestinal/Nutritional	61%	62%	48%	55%	51%	53%	63%	59%
Hematology	59%	64%	50%	57%	56%	55%	64%	46%
Infectious Diseases	23%	45%	49%	45%	49%	45%	61%	64%
Neurology	40%	45%	61%	65%	74%	65%	53%	47%
Obstetrics/Gynecology	54%	53%	55%	56%	51%	55%	48%	44%
Orthopedics/Rheumatology	60%	65%	57%	59%	55%	57%	73%	69%

Psychiatry/Behavioral Medicine	71%	71%	65%	67%	65%	66%	74%	69%
Pulmonology	41%	42%	60%	64%	63%	62%	66%	58%
Urology/Renal	70%	72%	62%	62%	65%	62%	66%	59%
Clinical Intervention	52%	57%	62%	64%	65%	63%	68%	64%
Clinical Therapeutics	49%	53%	52%	54%	57%	54%	60%	54%
Diagnosis	66%	68%	64%	68%	69%	67%	65%	62%
Diagnostic Studies	50%	52%	53%	58%	57%	57%	63%	55%
Health Maintenance	55%	58%	70%	68%	65%	66%	63%	57%
History and Physical	55%	58%	57%	60%	55%	58%	69%	62%
Scientific Concepts	50%	52%	52%	60%	55%	58%	69%	61%

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.

End of Program Student Survey					
Student Preparedness for Clinical Practice	Benchmark	Cohort 2023 RR: 47%			
The program met its stated mission: The mission of the South College Nashville Master of Health Science Physician Assistant Program is to educate highly qualified physician assistants, preparing them to become competent, compassionate, and comprehensive healthcare providers for clinical practice in rural and urban areas, focusing on underserved communities, who will mature into leaders within the medical community.	3.5	4.2			
South College provides a rigorous didactic curriculum that promotes lifelong learning skills, prepares students for clinical rotations, and prepares students to pass the Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam.	3.5	4.2			
The program adequately prepared me to understand etiologies, risk factors, pathologies, and epidemiology for medical conditions.	3.5	4.2			
The program adequately prepared me to manage general medical and surgical conditions including understanding the indications, contraindications, side effects, interactions, and adverse reactions of pharmacologic agents and other relevant treatment modalities.	3.5	4.3			
The program adequately prepared me to differentiate between the normal and the abnormal in anatomy, physiology, laboratory findings, and other diagnostic data.	3.5	4.3			
The program adequately prepared me to use effective listening, nonverbal, explanatory, questioning, and writing skills to elicit and provide information.	3.5	4.2			
The program adequately prepared me to work effectively with physicians and other health care professionals as a member of an interdisciplinary health care team.	3.5	4.1			

The program adequately prepared me to accurately and adequately document and record information regarding the care process for medical, legal, quality, and financial purposes.	3.5	3.9			
The program adequately prepared me to advocate for the highest quality of humanistic care for all patients.	3.5	4.3			
The program adequately prepared me to believe in the patient's right to participate in all health care decisions.	3.5	4.4			
The program adequately prepared me with sensitivity and responsiveness to patients' culture, age, gender, and disabilities.	3.5	4.2			
The program adequately prepared me with an understanding of legal and regulatory requirements, as well as the appropriate role of the physician assistant.	3.5	4.2			
The program adequately prepared me with a commitment to ethical principles about the provision or withholding of clinical care, confidentiality of patient information, informed consent, and business practices.	3.5	4.4			
The program adequately prepared me to locate, appraise, and integrate evidence from scientific studies related to their patients' health problems supporting the concept of evidence-based practice.	3.5	4.2			
The program adequately prepared me to apply knowledge of study designs and statistical methods to the appraisal of clinical studies and other information on diagnostic and therapeutic effectiveness.	3.5	4.2			
The program adequately prepared me to use information technology and medical economics to support patient care decisions and patient education.	3.5	4.0			
The program adequately prepared me to effectively interact with different types of medical practice and delivery systems.	3.5	3.9			
The program adequately prepared me to advance the profession by participating in professional, legislative, and community activities.	3.5	4.1			
The program adequately prepared me to enter clinical practice.	3.5	4.2			
<p>*RR – responder rates</p> <p>Students will complete a comprehensive self-assessment evaluation 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. This latest iteration reflects the best assessment of the cohorts, but does not have contiguous data from previous cohorts.</p>					

Physician Assistant National Certifying Exam (PANCE) Pass Rates and Employment Rates*

Areas Assessed	Cohort 2021	Cohort 2022	Cohort 2023	Cohort 2024	Cohort 2025
South College first-time takers pass rate	97%	79%	98%	TBD	TBD
National first-time takers pass rate	91%	92%	92%	TBD	TBD
Number of South College students tested	29	43	54	TBD	TBD
Employment rate of South College Nash	96.55%	100%	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	Cohort 2021	Cohort 2022	Cohort 2023
Average	50	51.7	52	52
Minimum	50	50	50	50
Maximum	50	62	60	69.5
50 hours of approved community service is required of all PA Program students. <i>As such, the benchmark for Community Service hours for each cohort is 50 hours or greater.</i>				

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 Organizations	Cohort 2021	Cohort 2022	Cohort 2023	Cohort 2024	Cohort 2025
Tennessee Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>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.</i>					

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	Cohort 2021	Cohort 2022	Cohort 2023	Cohort 2024	Cohort 2025
Average Clinical Experience of Faculty	3 years	10 years	14 years	14 years	13 years	13 years
NCCPA Certification/Board Certification	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>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.</i>						

Faculty diversity by ethnicity/race, South College Nashville Physician Assistant Classes of 2021-2024						
Faculty Diversity	Benchmark	Cohort 2021	Cohort 2022	Cohort 2023	Cohort 2024	Cohort 2025
Minority faculty by ethnicity/race	2 PF	1 PF	2 PF	2 PF	2 PF	2PF
<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 March 2024, the South College Nashville PA Program has one program director (1.0 FTE), one medical director (0.5 FTE), and 11 principal faculty members (11 FTE). The faculty, 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 11.0 FTE principal faculty. The class beginning in October 2021 matriculated 60 students. The class beginning in October 2022 matriculated 60 students. The class beginning in October 2023 matriculated 60 students, which equates to a student to faculty (SFR) ratio of 16/1 for the Fall quarter and 10.9/1 for all other quarters. The average student to faculty ratio (SFR) for all PA programs in the United States is 12.8 (Physician Assistant Education Association, By the Numbers: Program Report 36: Data from the 2021 Program Survey, Washington, DC: PAEA; 2023). 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 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>	