The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) requires the submission of a written report that documents the institution’s preparation and planning for a successful physician assistant (PA) program. It expects the institution to conduct a feasibility study that carefully considers its ability to sponsor a PA program in light of the institution’s mission and goals and the resources needed for success.

The feasibility study should examine the institution’s ability to deliver effective PA education based on (1) available resources, (2) careful planning and (3) the need for a program in the local, regional and/or national area. The institution’s assessment of need should include more than just anecdotal commentary. If there are other PA programs in the same geographic area, the feasibility study should include data on the need for another program.

The study should address fiscal, human, academic, physical, and other institutional resources listed in the Standards. This includes the availability of faculty, preceptors and clinical sites, particularly if the program will be in close proximity to other PA or health education programs competing for clinical learning experiences.

The study should include detailed information about the activities that occurred prior to the decision to pursue the development of a PA program, who was involved in the process, how the process was conducted, a summary of the results and a description of how the results were analyzed and communicated to stakeholders from the following categories may be effective participants:

From within the institution:
- Board of Trustees members
- Representatives from institution administration and support service offices (e.g. registrar, admissions, library, instructional technology, financial aid, and student services)
- Representatives from other academic programs
- Curriculum committee members
- Graduate school faculty/administration
- Finance office representatives
- Faculty and staff
- Representatives from the office of institutional research

From outside the institution:
- Practicing PAs from the area
- Officers of area health systems and physician practice groups
- Representatives of local, state or national health care organizations, hospital systems
- Consumers of health care

What Should Be Included?

The body of the document should address:
- Rationale for proposed program; considering the institution’s mission and goals
- Relationship between the program and ongoing institutional planning and direction
- Market demand for the program, keeping in mind other PA and health professional education programs in proximity to the proposed program
- Availability of sites for supervised clinical practice experiences
- Issues specific to the design of this program, such as curriculum nuances, types of students, impact of health disparity issues, etc.

Who Should Be Involved?

A variety of participants from within and external to the institution should be included in the feasibility study process and report preparation. Although the institution should decide who will be most appropriate to the process individuals
- Resources available for all areas related to the fiscal, human, academic, physical, and institutional resources listed in the Standards
- Need vs. availability of resources in the planning of the program
- Cost analysis for the program, including cost of planning and delivery vs. income generated; expense, revenue, and resource projections
- Limiting factors related to establishing the program
- Foreseeable and possible challenges to starting and sustaining the program, as well as strategies to address these challenges
- Key project milestones, time tables, benchmarks and deadlines

The document should end with
- Summary of results
- Description of how results were analyzed
- Description of how results were communicated to stakeholders.

**DOCUMENT FORMAT**

The ARC-PA requires that the document be formatted as follows, using a type font no smaller than 11 point.

A. **Title Page:** List the name and location of the program, planned start date, and date of report submission.

B. **Table of Contents:** Include the page location of all major headings and subheadings

C. **Executive Summary:** Summarize in two or three pages the process, key points and salient features detailed in the complete document.

D. **Introduction:** Include the following:
   - Mission and goals of the institution
   - Period of time devoted to the process
   - How the process was conducted
   - Who was involved in the study process
   - Who was involved in the development of the document
   - Information about the institution’s prior successes and experiences in similar educational initiatives, if any

E. **Participants:** Include a list of who participated in the study process and development of the document.

F. **Feasibility Study:** Address the topical areas of the study, using subheadings as identified above. Provide a thorough and detailed report on the study.

G. **Appendices:** Provide detailed supporting information on the narrative. At a minimum, there should be appendices that:
   - list potential program and instructional faculty
   - list sites and potential preceptors for supervised clinical practice experiences
   - document institutional financial support

H. **Summary:** End with a summary of results, including a description of how results were analyzed and communicated to stakeholders.

**REPORT SUBMISSION**

The institution should submit its feasibility study electronically, as an attachment, to arc-pa@arc-pa.org. It should also mail six copies, each secured with rubber bands, two sided and three-hole punched, on letter-size paper with numbered tab inserts (not post-it note tabs) for each appendix. The study is due **six months** prior to the scheduled site visit.

EFFECTIVE – 1.2013
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