University of Evansville

Physician Assistant Program

Program Goals and Outcomes

Updated January 4, 2023

The University of Evansville Physician Assistant Program (UEPA) has identified five primary goals that are consistent with its mission. The goals, benchmarks, and outcomes are discussed below.

Goal #1: Select well qualified applicants for admission in the program.

The UEPA program has a benchmark pre-admission GPA of 3.0 for all eligible applicants. In addition, the admissions committee takes into consideration the applicant's math-science GPA although no eligibility threshold has been set for admission into the program. The following table displays the average GPAs of each cohort, as calculated by the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA).

Average Pre-Admission GPAs by Cohort							
	Benchmark	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025	5-Year Average
Average Overall GPA	3.0	3.49	3.62	3.62	3.71	3.74	3.64
Standard deviation		*0.23*	*0.18*	*0.18*	*0.20*	*0.16*	
Average Prerequisite GPA	3.0	3.49	3.54	3.56	3.63	3.69	3.58
Standard deviation		*0.25*	*0.23*	*0.23*	*0.28*	*0.21*	
Average Math-Science GPA	3.0	3.35	3.50	3.48	3.61	3.67	3.52
Standard deviation		*0.29*	*0.23*	*0.25*	*0.28*	*0.18*	

The benchmark has been set at 3.0/4.0 as this is the minimum requirements for eligibility. Each cohort has a steady positive trend in average GPAs. The program has consistently surpassed the benchmark for each cohort and the 5-year average remains wells above the program's benchmark.

The UEPA program also has a direct entry option for admission into the graduate phase of the PA program. The first cohort of direct entry students matriculated into the professional phase of the program in January 2021 as part of the Class of 2023. The UEPA program requires all successful direct entry students to have a 3.5/4.0 overall undergraduate GPA and at least a 3.0/4.0 prerequisite coursework GPA. These are deemed the program benchmark, with the expectation that the direct entry students meet or exceed the average admission GPAs of all students matriculating into the program. The UEPA Program tracks but does not utilize the math-science GPA in determination of eligibility for admission of direct entry students. The following table displays the GPAs of the direct entry students claiming seats in their cohorts.

Average GPAs of Direct Entry Students Matriculating into Cohort					
	Benchmark	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Average
No of direct entry students matriculating	N/A	2	3	6	3.67
Average overall GPA	3.5/4.0	3.90	3.76	3.79	3.82
Standard deviation		*0.00*	*0.14*	*0.11*	*0.08*

	Benchmark				
Average Prerequisite GPA *Standard deviation*	3.0/4.0	3.91 *0.06*	3.68 *0.15*	3.75 *0.13*	3.78 *0.11*
Average Math-Science GPA *Standard deviation*	3.0/4.0	3.89 *0.03*	3.65 *0.18*	3.71 *0.13*	3.75 *0.11*

The average GPAs of the direct entry students has exceeded the benchmark and overall expectations each year, suggesting the UEPA Program has identified well qualified applicants for this admission pathway.

Additionally, the program recognizes there is more to a successful applicant and future physician assistant than good academic markers. Therefore, the program has adopted two admissions methods that assess a candidate's non-cognitive skills: the multiple mini-interview (MMI) format and a holistic review. The MMI and holistic review process's purpose is to identify those candidates that are well-rounded, professional, and are leaders of change within their communities. The UEPA program has utilized the MMI process since its inception with the exception the admission year 2020 when interviews were conducted virtually due to COVID-19. The following table displays the data obtained from candidates regarding the MMI process. The outcomes suggest candidates value this admissions process.

Candidate Evaluation of MMI Process					
	Benchmark	2019	2020	2021 RR=96%	2022 RR=98%
I enjoyed the MMI process more than a traditional interview	4.0/5.0	4.25	N/A**	4.50	4.24
The MMI is a fair admissions assessment	4.0/5.0	N/A*	N/A**	4.50	4.20

*Question was not assessed

**In person MMI was not conducted during this year due to COVID-19

Goal #2: Produce competent entry level physician assistants.

The program has identified two objectives for this goal. The first objective is based off data from the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE) pass rates. This is the "board certification" examination for physician assistants designed to test medical and surgical knowledge needed for entry level practice. The following table displays UEPA's first-time pass rate and overall pass rate as well as the national first-time pass rate. The program's benchmark for successful obtainment of this objective is to have the first-time pass rate greater than the national average for that year.

NCCPA PANCE Exam Performance Summary					
	Class of 2019	Class of 2020	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Average
UEPA First-Time Pass Rate	100%	100%	89%	97%	96.5%
National First-Time Pass Rate (benchmark)	93%	95%	93%	92%	93.3%
UEPA Overall Pass Rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
The first-time pass rate includes the first attempt for all candidates taking the exam for that year. The overall pass rate is the percentage of candidates that ultimately passed the PANCE.					

The program has surpassed this benchmark for all years except for Class of 2021. The average first-time pass rate for all graduated cohorts has remained above the national first-time pass rate average, and all graduates have ultimately passed the PANCE.

The second method of assessing this goal is based off data obtained from the "Student Exit Survey" administered to each graduate of the program. This survey asks graduating students to self-assess how well the program has prepared them to obtain the program defined competencies. These competencies are surrogates for "competent entry level" practice that all students must demonstrate prior to graduation. The competencies are deemed necessary skills, knowledge and professional behaviors needed for entry level clinical practice as a physician assistant. Additionally, the survey asks the graduate to evaluate their preparedness for clinical practice following completion of the program. The results are seen in the table below. The benchmark is set at a 4.0/5.0 as this corresponds to an "agree" or "strongly agree" cohort response.

Student Perceptions of Preparedness for Practice					
Area Assessed	Benchmark	Class of 2020	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	3-Year Average
Demonstrate knowledge of basic medical sciences	`4.0/5.0	4.77	4.73	4.61	4.70
Integrate and apply acquired medical knowledge to the care of patients across the life span in a variety of clinical settings	4.0/5.0	4.70	4.65	4.57	4.64
Demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the care of patients across the lifespan	4.0/5.0	4.70	4.68	4.55	4.64
Differentiate between the normal and abnormal in patient presentation and diagnostic evaluation.	4.0/5.0	4.73	4.70	4.62	4.69
Discuss the impact of racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, spiritual factors that lead to health and wellness	4.0/5.0	4.60	4.25	4.26	4.37
Identify appropriate interventions for preventive, emergent, acute, chronic, rehabilitative, palliative, and end-of-life care	4.0/5.0	4.63	4.49	4.42	4.51
Perform an accurate and thorough history and physical exam to be able to make diagnostic and therapeutic decisions	4.0/5.0	4.76	4.78	4.61	4.71
Perform basic primary care diagnostic and therapeutic procedures	4.0/5.0	4.72	4.64	4.53	4.63
Interpret basic primary care diagnostic laboratory and radiographic tests	4.0/5.0	4.63	4.67	4.47	4.59
Develop differential diagnosis and treatment plans that include pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions	4.0/5.0	4.63	4.51	4.50	4.55
Critically review literature using evidence-based medicine to make practice-based improvements	4.0/5.0	4.55	4.16	4.18	4.30

Demonstrate effective communication which results in exchange of information and collaboration with patients, families, caregivers, and other health professionals	4.0/5.0	4.70	4.61	4.53	4.61
Practice patient-centered care within the role of the physician assistant within a multidisciplinary health care team	4.0/5.0	4.80	4.71	4.55	4.69
Perform continuous self-assessment for the prevention of medical errors and risk management	4.0/5.0	4.63	4.50	4.41	4.51
Demonstrate respect, empathy, compassion, sensitivity to a patient's culture, race, age, gender and socioeconomic status while addressing any health disparities that may exist	4.0/5.0	4.87	4.73	4.49	4.69
Exhibit professional behaviors of integrity and accountability to patients and society	4.0/5.0	4.93	4.78	4.57	4.76
Possess an understanding of licensure, credentialing, reimbursement, advocacy, laws and regulations regarding medical practice	4.0/5.0	4.60	4.11	4.05	4.25
Preparedness for entry level practice as a physician assistant	4.0/5.0	4.36	4.11	4.21	4.23

The program has successfully met all benchmarks for this objective for the past 3 years.

Goal #3: Maintain student graduation rate above the national average.

The following table displays the graduation and attrition rates by cohort. The benchmarks for each of the categories is based on the most recent report from the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA), "PAEA Program Report 35: Data from the 2019 Program Survey".

Graduation and Attrition Rates by Cohort							
Category	Benchmark	Class of 2019	Class of 2020	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	5- Year Average
Total number of students in cohort	40	20	31	40	40	40	--
Number of graduates	40	19	29	38	39	39**	--
Percent voluntarily withdrew	6.6%/program* (1.8% all students)	0%	0%	0%	0%	2.5%	0.5%
Percent decelerated to next cohort	4.1%/program* (1.6% all students)	5%	0%	0%	2.5%	0%	1.5%
Percent dismissed for academic and/or professional reasons	7.6%/program* (1.9% all students)	0%	6.4%	5%	0%	0%	2.3%

Total graduation rate	93.6%/program* (93.3% all students)	95%	95%	95%	97.5%	97.5%**	96%

* Data was extracted from Table 55 of the report using the Mean % (S), or the average proportion of students of each status among the number of programs reporting attrition as well as the absolute numbers.
** Expected numbers for that cohort

The UEPA program has consistently met the benchmark for attrition and graduation rates for each cohort when compared to other program's rates with attrition. Additionally, the program has improved its deceleration and dismissal rates over the past 3 years.

Goal #4: Prepare students to provide patient-centered care and collegially work on collaborative medical teams in an interprofessional environment.

The primary assessment method for this goal is based on graduating student's feedback on the following areas related to patient-centered care and collaborative practice. The benchmark is set at a 4.0/5.0 which equates to at least an "agree" response. The last two statements in the table were not included in the student exit survey for the Class of 2020 and 2021, thus no data is available for these years.

Student Perceptions of Preparedness to Provide Patient-Centered Care and Work Collaboratively					
Area Assessed	Benchmark	Class of 2020	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	3-Year Average
Working collaboratively in an interprofessional patient-centered team within the role of a physician assistant.	4.0/5.0	4.71	4.60	4.34	4.55
Basic counseling and patient education skills that is patient-centered and culturally sensitive.	4.0/5.0	N/A	N/A	4.11	4.11
Providing medical care to patients with consideration for their disability, ethnicity or race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or spirituality, and social determinants of health.	4.0/5.0	N/A	N/A	4.00	4.00

Secondly, the UEPA program has a course designed to foster awareness of patient-centered care, interprofessional practice, and cultural competency. It is expected that all students successfully pass this course with a grade of "C" (75%) or above. The following chart displays the pass rate for this course per cohort.

Successful Completion of PA 544 Course							
Area Assessed	Benchmark	Class of 2020	Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024	5-Year Average
% of Cohort Successfully Completing PA544 Cultural Competence and IPE Course	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

All students have successfully completed this course without remediation. The data above supports the program's goals of preparing students to provide patient-centered care and working collaboratively with others.

Goal #5: Prepare physician assistants to make a difference in their communities through skills and service.

Both the university and program have a strong commitment to service. Beginning with the Class of 2022, students are expected to complete at least 10 hours of service throughout the time they are enrolled. The following table displays the average hours of service per cohort and the total hours served for each cohort.

Documented Service Hours of UEPA Students During Time Enrolled		
Area Assessed	Benchmark	Class of 2022
Average Hours Served/Student (SD)	10.0	27.8 (35.4)
Total Hours Served/Cohort	400	1,085.3
Maximum Hours Service/Student	N/A	170
% Class Above Minimum Required	≥50%	72% (28/39 students)

Over 70% of the Class of 2022 has served above the minimum required service hours commitment. This suggests that the UEPA program fosters an environment of service and helps to prepare students to become leaders of change within their communities.