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After an extensive Physician Assistant (PA) program website audit across all accredited PA programs and analyzing more than 70 different variables, PAEA developed a list of best practices for program websites. These best practices are recommendations for existing and new programs alike to use as a guide for their program's website content to ensure an exceptional user experience and meet the standards set by ARC-PA. We hope you can use this concise guide to evaluate how your website could be improved.

**Ensure a Seamless User Experience.** All program websites should include functioning links, have quick loading page times, avoid multiple tabs and click-throughs, and have program contact information readily available for users to access quickly.

**General Program Attributes.** Include general information about the program, including the following:

- Program length in months
- Anticipated number of matriculants per cohort
- Program start month
- Credentials offered or degree awarded
- International applicant relevant information
- Curriculum details
- Program total credit hours and credit hours by term
- Is the program hybrid or offers a hybrid option?

Further, admission requirements include:

- Supplemental application and associated fee if applicable
- Deadline(s) for general and supplemental application submission
- Minimum cumulative and science GPA requirements
- Required and recommended prerequisite courses
- Time period for expiration of prerequisite courses (e.g., 10 years or less accepted)
- Shadowing and healthcare experience requirements
- Letter(s) of reference specifying the number of letters and from whom the letters should be written by
- Personal statement requirements
- Any required standardized tests.



If you are a participating CASPA program, much of this information is already presented in CASPA; however, this general information is invaluable for students who are just beginning their journey to become a PA or do not yet have access to CASPA.

**Complete Breakdown of Program Cost.** Be fully transparent about the total projected costs for prospective PA students. Programs should delineate all mandatory program costs including tuition, fees, and enrollment deposit. Some programs also have a breakdown of fees with greater detail by stating what fees go directly to the university and outside the university.

**Military Support and Benefits.** Include any transitional support for veterans and other pertinent information on the website if your program is a Yellow Ribbon Program participant, offers other VA benefits and any program scholarships and grants.

**COVID-19 Information and Updates.** While most programs have a designated section for COVID-19 updates for upcoming admission cycles, many do not include other applicable admissions information, such as if in-person interviews are required during the pandemic or if virtual experience hours are accepted. A more conclusive COVID-19 section will consist of the following:

- Changes to the number of shadowing or healthcare/direct patient care hours
- Changes to the prerequisite course requirements (e.g., virtual labs permitted)
- Interview format (e.g., virtual, in-person, or hybrid options)
- Virtual shadowing hours permitted or not.

**Admission Statistics or Class Profiles.** The cost of applying to several PA programs for the average applicant adds up quickly. Having this 'snapshot' of admission summary data will help prospective PA students decide what programs to apply to based on how their academic and professional work compare to the program of interest. Standard admission summary or statistics include:

- Average GPA (cumulative and science)
- Average total healthcare hours per student
- Average total direct patient care per student
- Average total shadowing hours per student
- Average standardized test scores per student
- Program matriculants are broken down by age, gender, or ethnicity.

**ARC-PA Technical Standards.** Programs must have ARC-PA accreditation status, annual student attrition information, the most current annual NCCPA PANCE Exam Performance Summary Report, and evidence of effectiveness in meeting the program's goals listed on their websites as part of the requirements to maintain accreditation status.

**Unique Program Features.** Beyond the mission statement, values, and goals, demonstrate to potential applicants what makes your program stand out against other programs. With the vast amount of information listed on program websites, your program's distinctive characteristics can easily get lost and go unnoticed by prospective students. Do you have a



strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion? Make this known on your website not only by including a diversity, equity, and inclusion statement but layer additional attributes of this throughout the website. This aids in the program's commitment to such efforts by showcasing to students that you are devoted to this and is a key characteristic of your program.

## EXEMPLAR PA PROGRAM WEBSITES

Below are a few model websites that we have selected as sample exemplars. Each program listed is accompanied by a short explanation of what makes this website exceptional.

**East Carolina University:** The website is laid out especially well and is easy to navigate. An "Admission Requirements Checklist" makes it easy for applicants to see if they meet minimum qualifications and ensure all program materials are completed by the deadline without having to navigate through several tabs. Further, this helps to alleviate program staff from having to answer common admission questions from applicants.

**Northwestern College:** Clean website with clear tuition breakdown and what fees are paid directly to the college and what are student responsibilities (not paid to the college). The website also includes a step-by-step analysis of "how to apply,"

- Step 1: Review prerequisites
- Step 2: Apply - Complete the CASPA online application. This includes the supplemental application fee and the link to submit the fee
- Step 3: Interview
  - Outlines interview topics
- Step 4: Post-acceptance requirements
  - Includes immunization requirements, transcripts, tuition deposit
- Step 5: Begin orientation.

The step-by-step is yet another streamlined way to have students look at admission requirements without having to read through excessive text.

**Saint Elizabeth University:** All pertinent program information is easy to find without clicking through multiple tabs or using the webpage search bar. This program does an excellent job of providing a seamless user experience. Further, this program includes a unique cost comparison chart comparing their program to the other public university programs in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

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### 3 PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM WEBSITES: THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE