

Physician Assistant Education Association
International Rotations Subcommittee
Guidelines for Student Selection for International Clinical Education Experiences
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The following guidelines are intended to serve as a resource for Physician Assistant (PA) educators offering international clinical education experiences to students. Selection of appropriate students for these unique experiences has been described as an important determinant of positive outcomes for students, programs, and the clinical sites. These guidelines may inform development of program-defined policies and procedures to promote selection of appropriate students and minimize the risk of negative outcomes. Selection methods may include review of applications, essay questions, and letters of recommendation, as well conducting of interviews. These guidelines consist of suggested content for application, sources for letters of recommendation, and questions for essays or interview, then conclude with a list of additional sources of information. These guidelines are not exhaustive, so educators are encouraged to seek out other resources and references available in health professions education literature.

Suggested Content for Application

Application Overview

- *Rationale:* describes the purpose of the application and specific instructions for application completion and submission
- *Example:* Purpose, Instructions, Due Date, Submission Method

Material for Student to Review in Advance of Submitting Application

- *Rationale:* provide information that will inform individual students' decision to apply for the experience
- *Examples:* course objectives, course evaluation, description of clinical site/experience, requirements of the clinical site, estimated costs, travel information (U.S. Department of State, Centers for Disease Control, Embassy of Host Country, World Health Organization), other program/institutional policies

Explanation of Criteria for Selection

- *Rationale:* student knowledge of criteria for selection facilitates appropriate self-selection to apply; faculty knowledge of criteria for selection facilitates appropriate selection during application review
- *Examples:* academic standing including professionalism; foreign language proficiency; maturity; adaptability; prior international experience; financial considerations; recommendation from faculty advisor or others

Review and Notification Process

- *Rationale:* informs student of the process for application review and notification of status
- *Example:* Clinical faculty and the program director will review and select student participants. Students will be notified of their application status by clinical faculty prior to the start of the clinical phase of education

Student Information

- *Rationale:* summary of applicant identification information
- *Examples:* Name, Class Year, Country of Citizenship and/or Immigration Status

Site Preferences

- *Rationale:* conveys what clinical site(s) the student is interested in participating
- *Example:* review site information forms then list preferred sites in rank order

Language Skills

- *Rationale:* provides information about language skills that may or may not be required for clinical sites
- *Example:* Please list any non-English language skills. Indicate level of ability under each category listed

Past International Experiences

- *Rationale:* describes prior international experiences that may be relevant for participation in an international clinical education experience
- *Example:* Please describe any relevant international experiences and related responsibilities, including employment, volunteering, educational training, or research experiences

Estimated Expenses

- *Rationale:* Provide students with an overall estimate of costs, including specific categories such as site fees, travel documentation, health care costs, air travel, ground transportation, lodging, and food.
- *Example:* Students participating in international clinical rotations are responsible for the following expenses related to the experience; expenses for each host country and clinical site have been estimated to help inform students of the financial expense that each site may include; student may create an individualized budget for the experience based on their own research as well

Suggested Sources of Letters of Recommendation

- *Rationale:* professionals who know applicants can be valuable sources to verify that applicants meet criteria for selection and report potential concerns
- *Examples:* faculty advisor, clinical coordinator, clinical preceptor, health care provider who knew the student prior to matriculation into PA Program

Suggested Questions for Essays and/or Interviews

- *Rationale:* Essay or interview questions provide valuable information about student perspective regarding an international clinical education opportunity, including knowledge about the experience, individual goals, anticipated challenges, as well as may indicate criteria for selection and areas of concern; interviews may include assessment of behavior
- *Examples:* What are your goals for participating in an international rotation? What personal and professional challenges do you anticipate? How do you think this experience will affect your education and future practice? Describe how you have managed stress situations in the past. How do you handle conflict? Provide an example of how your cultural values affect your ability to communicate effectively with others? How do you plan to represent yourself, the program, and PA profession while abroad? How will you share your international clinical experience with others?

Additional Resources

PAEA International Clinical Rotations Resources:

<http://www.paeaonline.org/index.php?ht=d/sp/i/75202/pid/75202>

United States Department of State: <http://travel.state.gov>

Embassy of the United States: <http://usembassy.gov>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov>

World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int>

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Hudak NH, Stouder A. Prepare for landing: a student orientation for international clinical rotations. *J Physician Assist Educ.* 2014;25(1):55-58.

Kibe L. Necessity and benefits of physician assistants' participation in international clinical experiences. *J Physician Assist Educ.* 2012;23(4):50-53.

Legler C, Castillo P, Kuhns D, Pedersen K, Thomsen K, Woods D. Global clinical experiences for physician assistant students. *J Physician Assist Educ.* 2007;18(3):86-93.

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