

Physician Assistant Education Association
International Rotations Subcommittee
International Clinical Sites – Identification and Evaluation
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This resource is for Physician Assistant (PA) educators who are interested in developing sustainable, mutually beneficial partnerships with clinical sites outside of the United States for students' clinical and cultural learning. It includes guidelines for identification of clinical sites as well as approaches to initial and ongoing evaluation of sites. These guidelines may inform development of program-defined policies and procedures, which must also include adherence to accreditation standards. Other factors to consider may be unique to the PA program's educational institution, the host country and community, and information from the U.S. Department of State. These guidelines are not exhaustive, so educators are encouraged to seek out other resources and references available in their own institution, PAEA international rotations resources, health professions education literature, government organizations, and the clinical sites.

Identify

- **Contributors to the process-inform interested parties from beginning that ARC-PA standards must be met even for international sites**
 - PA Program and Educational Institution: Faculty and Staff (both internal and external to the program) Involved; Time and Effort
 - Clinical Site: Leadership, Clinical Preceptors, Staff
- **Vision for a Sustainable Partnership**
 - Goals of Institution/Program
 - Goals of Clinical Site/Host Country/Community
 - Goals of the Course and Student Experience
- **Identify Potential Quality Sites**
 - Own Institution: Established partnerships within PA program's institution; institution's international office; Recommendations from Other PA Programs; Organizations with History of Successful Student Placements; Organization Affiliations (Government, NGO, Religious, etc.); Alumni; Preceptors

Evaluate – Initial

- **Approach for Site Development**
 - Review applicable ARC-PA standards
 - Timeline; Information Gathering on Country (language, customs, immunizations, state department, health and safety, other hazards), Community, Clinical Settings; Communication Methods (initial, ongoing; language translation); References; Point of Contact and Other Key Persons
 - Similar to Development of Domestic Site; Factors Unique to International Sites include Knowledge of PA Profession or similar advanced practice provider, Course Goals, Expected

Student Involvement in Patient Care, Supervision, Housing/Transportation, Entry/Exit Requirements, Language, safety in clinical and residential settings, medical resources available in the event of illness or safety issue, how to assess student/preceptor/site successes & failures, medical insurance, malpractice coverage in foreign country

- **Initial Contact with Site**
 - Interest and Feasibility; Goals for Site, Students, and Program; Supervision and Evaluation; Logistics and Cost, legitimate rotation site –vs- student “exposure”
- **Follow-Up Discussion at Program Level**
 - Reporting; Opportunities & Challenges; Approvals
 - Initial reporting of site/plan to appropriate admin officials for tentative approval
- **Ongoing Communication with Site**
 - Initial Contact Person; Other Key Persons (Clinical, Non-Clinical)
- **Initial Site Visit**
 - In-Person, Proxy, Virtual

Evaluate – Ongoing

- **Routine Check-In**
 - Determine frequency, method of communication, and algorithm for emergencies
 - Site and Students During and Following Participation; In Advance of Subsequent Student Participants
- **Site Experience**
 - Student Preparation, Participation, Professionalism, Cultural Competence
 - Meeting goals, expectations of clinical site/community
 - Feedback for Program and Students
- **Student Experience**
 - Learning Objectives, Survey of Student Experience, Preceptor Evaluation of Student, Other Evaluative Components, Experience with Transportation/Housing, safety
 - Feedback for Program and Site
- **Program Experience**
 - Faculty Involved; Staff Involved; Time and Effort, Monetary cost
 - Feedback for Site and Institution

References & Other Resources

1. Crump JA and Sugarman J. Ethics and best practices guidelines for training experiences in global health. *Am J Trop Med Hyg.* 2010;83(6):1178-82.
2. Peluso MJ, Encadela J, Hafler JP, Margolis CZ. Guiding principles for the development of global health education curricula in undergraduate medical education. *Medical Teacher.* 2012;34:653-658
3. Legler C, Castillo P, Kuhns D, Pedersen K, Thomsen K, Woods D. Global clinical experiences for physician assistant students. *Journal of Physician Assistant Education.* 2007;18(3):86-93.

4. Petersen KJ, Hooker RS, Legler CF et al. A report on the findings of the ad hoc committee on international physician assistant education – October 2003. *Perspect Physician Assist Educ.* 2003;14(4):224-5.
5. U.S. Department of State Website. Available at: www.state.gov
6. PAEA International Clinical Rotations Subcommittee. Organizations Related to International Clinical Education. Available at: <http://www.paeaonline.org/resources/international-clinical-rotations-resources/>