

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Department of Physician Assistant Studies

Program Goals and Outcomes

1. Global Objective

The DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT upholds a curriculum that embraces the physician assistant concept. The DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT advocates the physician – physician assistant team model in the delivery of primary health care.

Outcomes- Global Objective:

The DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT is committed to the Physician-PA Team concept. Learners are taught in the ‘Medical School’ paradigm. During the clinical training phase, students are offered supervised clinical rotation experiences in private physician offices and community clinics. Seven of eight clinical instructive opportunities are in core rotations (Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, General Surgery, Internal Medicine, Ob/Gyn, Pediatrics, and Psychiatry). The experiences reinforce a dedication to practice with supervision, utilizing the strengths of both professionals. The learner is exposed to the model of the PA in a semi-autonomous role, under direct guidance of and in complement with the supervising physician.

2. Operational Objective

The DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT provides opportunities for professional training as a physician assistant to qualified students from throughout Texas and the United States. Recruitment and retention efforts consider the health care needs and cultural distinction of a diverse population.

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is the second largest Hispanic serving institution in the United States with over 28,600 enrolled. UTRGV has a minimum 3.0 GPA to be accepted into UTRGV graduate programs. UTRGV is a veteran friendly campus and the veteran’s department on campus works well with the PA department in assisting those veteran students in the PA program.

The Rio Grande Valley represents a unique opportunity to simultaneously promote education and health and to spur economic development of a region, which is not only among the fastest-growing in the United States but also the poorest in this country, with 30 percent of its native-born and 40 percent of its foreign-born residents living in poverty. The students who are accepted into the Physician Assistant program reflect the demographics of the region, with nearly 65% coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Thus, by improving student retention and

certifying exam passing rates, the Academy for Success will advance both educational and health opportunities in the Rio Grande Valley.

Outcome- Operational Objective:

The DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT is dedicated to improving access to health care for citizens within the geographical scope of program boundaries, and specifically the south Texas border region. Recruitment and retention efforts consider a candidate’s desire to practice in Medically Underserved Area (MUA) of Texas and beyond. Compassion for cultural, psycho-social, disability and personal diversity is observed in all students. Within the program of study, public service commitments oblige all students to participate in the provision of health care to medically under-served populations.

The following table illustrates the diversity of the accepted class at UTRGV for the past five years.

Race/Ethnicity	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total # accepted	50	50	64	80	100
White	12%	12%	11%	18%	20%
Hispanic	67%	65%	67%	64%	59%
African American	4%	4%	2%	1%	2%
Asian	17%	18%	17%	14%	19%

3. Functional Objective

The DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT maintains a curriculum in physician assistant studies that prepares the graduate for a national board certifying examination administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).

Meeting the Functional Objective:

The DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT maintains a curriculum that effectively prepares the student to sit for the NCCPA – PANCE examination, following graduation. Physician Assistant Department pass rates for the PANCE examination have exceeded 93% for first try examinees for the past five years combined, and 98% for subsequent try examinees. In addition to all pre-clinical didactic learning; during the Capstone phase of training, pre-graduates are required to attend a Board Review workshop encompassing the PANCE Blueprint for the examination cycle.

UTRGV-DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PANCE Pass Rates		
Year of Graduation	Pass Rate 1st Attempt	Pass Rate Overall
2018	91%	94%
2017	98%	100%
2016	98%	98%
2015	87%	100%
2014	90%	100%
Five-Year Totals	93%	98%

4. Academic Objective

The DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT retains faculty and curriculum that strives to continually improve learning experiences and the performance appraisal of students, faculty, and curricula to facilitate optimal achievement.

Outcomes- Academic Objective:

The DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT strives to maintain a continuously dynamic and evolving curriculum that encompasses contemporary learning models and techniques. Faculty have been stable within the DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT. New faculty members are appointed as needs demand, but seasoned faculty remain on board. The faculty has shifted

from the traditional classroom-lecture format to student-centered problem-solving presentation learning. State-of-the-art (electronic) learning tools are readily incorporated into learning methods. All DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT courses are supplemented with on-line and Blackboard enhancements.

Apple Corporation has recognized the UTRGV Physician Assistant Program with its prestigious Apple Distinguished Program Award. The award was given for the 2013 - 2015 cycle. The receipt of this honor began in early 2013 with the nomination of the program by Apple Corp. The award was repeated for the 2016-2018 cycle.