

Unique Standards and Documentation Required for Accredited PathA Programs

UNIQUE STANDARDS AND THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Pathologists' Assistant Standards

PREAMBLE

Objectives

The purpose of these Standards and the Description of the Profession is to establish, maintain, and promote standards of quality for educational programs in the clinical laboratory sciences and to provide recognition for educational programs which meet or exceed the minimum standards outlined in this document.

The Standards are to be used for the development and evaluation of pathologists' assistant programs. Paper reviewers and site visit teams assist in the evaluation of the program's compliance with the Standards. Lists of accredited programs are published for the information of students, employers, and the public.

Description of the Pathology Assistant Profession

The pathologists' assistant is a health professional, qualified by academic and practical training to assist in providing service in anatomic pathology under the direction and supervision of a qualified anatomic pathologist.

Pathologists' assistants function as assistants to anatomic pathologists by participating in the examination, dissection and processing of tissue samples, and by participating in gross autopsy dissection. Pathologists' assistants are employed in a variety of settings, which include community and regional hospitals, university medical centers, private pathology laboratories, and medical examiner/coroner offices.

The ability to relate to people, a capacity for calm and reasoned judgment, and a demonstration of commitment to the patient are qualities essential for pathologists' assistants. They must demonstrate ethical and moral attitudes and principles which are essential for gaining and maintaining the trust of professional associates, the support of the community, and the confidence of the patient and family. An attitude of respect for the patient and confidentiality of the patient's record and/or diagnoses must be maintained.

The high degree of responsibility assumed by the pathologists' assistant requires skills and abilities necessary to provide those services appropriate for an anatomic pathology setting.

Description Of The Career Entry Of The Pathologists' Assistant

The following services are provided under the direct supervision of a licensed and board-certified pathologist. They must include, but are not limited to:

Surgical Pathology

Assisting in the preparation and performance of surgical specimen dissection by assuring appropriate specimen accessioning, obtaining pertinent clinical information and studies, describing gross anatomic features, dissection of surgical specimens, preparation and submitting of tissues for histologic processing, obtaining and submitting specimens for additional analytic procedures (immunostaining, flow cytometry, image analysis, bacterial and viral cultures, toxicology, etc.), and assisting in photographing gross and microscopic specimens.

Autopsy Pathology

Assisting in the performance of postmortem examination by ascertaining proper legal authorization; obtaining and reviewing the patient's chart and other pertinent clinical data studies; notifying involved personnel of all special procedures and techniques required; coordinating special requests for specimens; notifying involved clinicians, and appropriate authorities and individuals; assisting in the postmortem examination; selecting and preparing tissue for histologic processing and special studies; obtaining specimens for biological and toxicological analysis; assisting in photographing gross and microscopic specimens and photomicrography; and participating in the completion of the autopsy report.

Additional Duties

Assuming duties as may be assigned relative to teaching, administrative, supervisory and budgetary functions in anatomic pathology.

20. Program Administration

A. Program Director

1. The program must have a qualified program director

2.. Responsibilities

The program director must be responsible for the organization, administration, periodic review, planning, development, evaluation and general effectiveness of the program. The program director must have input into budget preparation and must be responsible for maintaining NAACLS accreditation of the program.

3. Qualifications

The program director shall have a faculty appointment in the sponsoring institution and meet all requirements specified by the institution responsible for providing the didactic portion of the educational program and maintaining the overall operation of the program. The program director shall be a graduate of a NAACLS-accredited (AAPA approved prior to 1995) pathologists' assistant educational program with an advanced degree (masters or doctoral), or a board-certified anatomic pathologist, or hold a doctoral degree in a basic medical science. The program director shall have practical knowledge of educational methods, and current accreditation and certification procedures.

4. Faculty Appointments

The program director must have a faculty appointment at the sponsoring institution or must have a faculty appointment in each affiliated academic institution.

B. Advisory Committee

1. Composition

The program must have an advisory committee composed of individuals from the communities of interest (i.e., pathologists, other physicians, scientific consultants, academic professionals, administrators, practicing pathologists' assistants, and other professionals who have knowledge of clinical laboratory science education).

2. Responsibilities

The advisory committee shall have input into all aspects of the program and curriculum regarding relevance and effectiveness.

C. Medical Advisor/Medical Director

1. The Program must have a qualified medical advisor/director separate from the Program Director.

2. Responsibilities

The medical advisor/director shall provide continuous medical direction for clinical instruction. The medical advisor/director shall actively elicit the understanding and support of practicing physicians, and shall participate in the clinical instruction of pathology within the program.

3. Qualifications

The medical advisor/director shall have a faculty appointment in the sponsoring institution and shall be a licensed, board-certified anatomic pathologist.

21. Faculty

The program must have qualified faculty (e.g., educators, pathologists' assistant supervisors, administrators, laboratorians, and physicians).

A. Responsibilities

The faculty must participate in developing curriculum, formulating policy and procedures, teaching courses, supervising applied laboratory learning experiences, evaluating student achievement, and evaluating program effectiveness.

B. Qualifications

Program faculty must demonstrate practical knowledge and proficiency in their content areas. Faculty members must demonstrate the ability to teach effectively at a level consistent with entry into the profession.

C. Professional Development

The program must document ongoing professional development of the program faculty to demonstrate a continuing effort to increase practical knowledge and proficiency.

D. Consortium Education Coordinator (when required, one at each participating entity in a consortium or joint venture)

1. Responsibilities

The Consortium Education Coordinator, when required, is responsible for coordinating classroom teaching and applied education, evaluating program effectiveness, and must have appropriate communications with the Program Director.

2. Qualifications

The education coordinator, when required, must hold an appropriate nationally recognized certification required of a program director as stated in Standard 20, an academic degree appropriate to the program level, and at least one year of experience in clinical laboratory science education, including teaching courses, conducting and managing learning experiences, evaluation student achievement, and evaluating instructional effectiveness.

22. Curricular Requirements

A. Curricular Structure

Instruction must follow a plan which documents a structured curriculum composed of general education, basic sciences, and professional courses including applied (clinical) education. The curriculum must include clearly written program goals and course syllabi, which must include individual course goals.

The length of the educational program for the pathologists' assistant shall be a minimum of 22 months. The program must culminate in a minimum of a baccalaureate degree with documentation of completion of the clinical educational program. The curriculum shall contain both clinical and didactic elements. The evaluation procedures shall be clearly established and the criteria for the successful completion of the program made available to each student.

The curriculum must include all major subject areas currently offered in the contemporary surgical pathology and autopsy laboratories. Curriculum content

shall provide the student with a comprehensive body of knowledge and the necessary skills to accurately and reliably perform the tasks, functions and duties defined in the Preamble.

Behavioral objectives, which address cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains, must be provided for Professional Sequence courses and for courses principally taught by Program faculty. These objectives must address the scientific content areas of the program and must include clinical significance and correlation. Course objectives must show progression to the level consistent with entry into the profession.

Course Syllabi are required for cognate courses as content area must be consistent with the goals and competencies for the program.

B. Instructional Areas

Prerequisite college course work shall include general chemistry, organic chemistry and/or biochemistry, biological science, microbiology, mathematics and English composition.

The program curriculum must include the following scientific content:

Professional Sequence Courses:

Anatomic Pathology Management
Gross Autopsy Pathology Techniques
Gross Forensic Pathology/Toxicology Specimen Techniques
Gross Pediatric Pathology Techniques
Gross Surgical Pathology Techniques
Educational Methodologies

Required Cognates:

Clinical Pathology
Computerization and Information Systems
Embryology
General and Systemic Human Pathology
Histology/Microscopic Anatomy
Human Anatomy
Human Physiology
Medical Ethics
Medical Microbiology
Medical Photography
Medical Terminology
Safety Regulations

C. Learning Experience

The learning experiences needed in the curriculum must be properly sequenced and include: Instructional materials, classroom and laboratory presentations, discussion and demonstrations, supervised practice and experience, Evaluation of students to assess cognitive, affective and psychomotor objectives; problem

solving skills; and motor and clinical competencies, and the competencies necessary for graduation.

1. Student experiences must be educational and balanced so that all competencies can be achieved.
2. Student experiences at different clinical sites must be comparable to enable all students to achieve entry level competencies.
3. Policies and processes by which students may perform service work must be published and made known to all concerned in order to avoid practices in which students are substituted for regular staff. After demonstrating proficiency, students, with qualified supervision, may be permitted to perform procedures. Service work by students in clinical settings outside of academic hours must be noncompulsory.

D. Evaluations

Written criteria for passing, failing, and progression in the program must be provided. These must be given to each student at the time of entry into the program. Evaluation systems must be related to the objectives and competencies described in the curriculum for both didactic and applied components. They must be employed frequently enough to provide students and faculty with timely indications of the students' academic standing and progress and to serve as a reliable indicator of the effectiveness of instruction and course design.

Documentation Required for PathA Unique Standards

	<i>Narrative</i>	<i>Documentation</i>	<i>Site Visitor Role</i>
Standard 20A1	<u><i>No Narrative Required</i></u>	<p>Submit a completed Faculty Fact Sheet for the program director.</p> <p><i>The Faculty Fact Sheet is located in the appendix of this Guide.</i></p>	
Standard 20A2	<u><i>No Narrative Required</i></u>	<p>Submit a position description which describes the responsibilities of the program director.</p>	<p>Verify that the program director is responsible for the required aspects of the program.</p>
Standard 20A3	<u><i>No Narrative Required</i></u>	<p>Submit curriculum vitae for the Program Director</p> <p>Indicate the date that NAACLS approved the program director.</p> <p>Indicate how knowledge of education, administration and current accreditation/certification procedures was obtained.</p>	<p>Verify that the Program Director meets qualifications.</p> <p>Verify experience and training in administration, educational methodologies, and current accreditation and certification procedures.</p>
Standard 20A4	<u><i>No Narrative Required</i></u>	<p>Document the faculty appointment for the program director at each affiliated academic institution.</p>	<p>Verify documentation (e.g., notice of appointments, academic catalogs, faculty listings) of faculty appointments for the program director at each affiliated academic institution.</p>

Standard 20B1	<u>No Narrative Required</u>	Submit the name(s) comprising the advisory committee. Indicate the relationship of the advisory committee member(s) to the program.	
Standard 20B2	<u>Describe the responsibilities of the advisory committee.</u>	Submit a copy of the advisory committee meeting minutes.	Verify the responsibilities of the advisory committee.

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	<i>Narrative</i>	<i>Documentation</i>	<i>Site Visitor Role</i>
Standard 20C1	<u>No Narrative Required</u>	Submit a completed Faculty Fact Sheet for the medical director/advisor.	
Standard 20C2	<u>No Narrative Required</u>	Submit a position description which describes the responsibilities of the medical director/advisor.	Verify that the medical director/advisor is responsible for the required aspects of the program.
Standard 20C3	<u>No Narrative Required</u>	Submit curriculum vitae for the medical director/advisor Document the faculty appointment for the medical director/advisor	Verify that the medical director/advisor meets qualifications. Verify documentation (e.g., notice of appointments, academic catalogs, faculty listings) of faculty appointments for the medical director/advisor.

Standard 20D1	<u>No Narrative Required</u>	Submit the name(s) of individuals comprising the advisory committee. Indicate the relationship of the advisory committee member(s) to the program.	Verify the involvement of members in committee activities
Standard 20D2	Describe the responsibilities of the advisory committee.	Submit a copy of the advisory committee meeting minutes.	Verify the responsibilities of the advisory committee.
Standard 21	<u>No Narrative Required</u>	List the major clinical/didactic faculty for each laboratory discipline.	
Standard 21A	Describe the responsibilities of the program faculty.	<u>No Documentation Required</u>	Verify that faculty are responsible for the required aspects of the program.

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Standard 21B	Describe how faculty are evaluated relative to appropriate qualifications.	<p>Submit completed Faculty Fact Sheets for the major didactic faculty for each laboratory discipline. List details of major clinical faculty on Clinical Faculty Fact Sheets.</p> <p><i>The Faculty Fact Sheet is located in the appendix of this Guide.</i></p>	<p>Verify that faculty have adequate knowledge and proficiency in their content areas.</p> <p>Verify that major clinical/didactic faculty have the ability to teach effectively at the appropriate level.</p> <p>Review faculty evaluations.</p>
Standard 21C	Describe how the program ensures ongoing professional development of its' clinical and didactic faculty.	Submit sample documentation of ongoing professional development of the clinical and didactic faculty to fulfill instructional abilities.	Verify that the program assures and documents the ongoing professional development of clinical and didactic faculty.

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<i>IN CASES OF CONSORTIA OR JOINT VENTURES, SUBMIT INFORMATION FOR STANDARDS 21D1 AND 21D2.</i>			
Standard 21D	<u><i>No Narrative Required</i></u>	Submit a completed Faculty Fact Sheet for the consortium education coordinator.	
Standard 21D1	<u><i>No Narrative Required</i></u>	Submit a position description which describes the responsibilities of the consortium education coordinator.	Verify that the consortium education coordinator is responsible for the required aspects of the program
Standard 21D2	<u><i>No Narrative Required</i></u>	Submit a curriculum vita for the consortium education coordinator. Indicate how knowledge of educational methods and current accreditation/certification procedures was obtained.	Verify that the consortium education coordinator meets the qualifications listed in Standard 20AA2.

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	<i>Narrative</i>	<i>Documentation</i>	<i>Site Visitor Role</i>
<p>Standard 22A</p> <p><i>See appendix for Guidelines to Standard 22.</i></p>	<p><u><i>No Narrative Required</i></u></p>	<p>Submit a structured curriculum plan (or sequence of courses).</p> <p>Submit criteria and sample documentation for completion of the program.</p> <p>Submit the program goals and competencies.</p> <p>Submit course syllabi with course goals and behavioral objectives for ONE SAMPLE UNIT OF INSTRUCTION in the Professional Sequence (see Standard 22B). The sample unit should have both lecture and laboratory/clinical components.</p>	<p>Verify that students progress through the program as indicated in the Self-Study Report.</p> <p>Verify program length, degree granted.</p> <p>Verify that the criteria for the program exist and are distributed to applicants and students.</p> <p>Verify that the program has clearly written goals and competencies.</p> <p>Review course objectives for each subject area.</p>

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	<i>Narrative</i>	<i>Documentation</i>	<i>Site Visitor Role</i>
Standard 22A (continued)		Submit objectives in the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains for ONE SAMPLE UNIT OF INSTRUCTION in the Professional Sequence.	Verify that the program has appropriate objectives in the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains. Verify that the course objectives show progression to the level consistent with entry into the profession.
Standard 22B	Describe the coursework required for completion of the program and indicate whether the course work is addressed as part of the professional program or prior to admission to the program. Identify where the items described in Standard 22B1-9 are included in the curriculum.	Submit brief summaries or course descriptions for each unit of instruction or course in the program. Matrices are provided in the appendix to assist you in identifying where units of instruction are located in the program's curriculum. <i>*Use of the matrix is optional.</i>	Verify that the curriculum includes the required areas described in Standard 22B1-9. Verify that course work includes all instructional areas.

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	<i>Narrative</i>	<i>Documentation</i>	<i>Site Visitor Role</i>
Standard 22B (continued)	Identify all Required Cognate courses substantially or fully taught by PathA program faculty.	List all courses from the Required Cognate list that are taught by PathA program faculty (i.e., courses designed for PathA students or courses housed within the administrative unit for the PathA program with PathA program faculty providing 40% or more of the instruction.	Verify that all courses taught by PathA program faculty are identified and are evaluated by the same guidelines as Professional Sequence courses.
Standard 22C	<p>Briefly describe how the required material and activities listed in Standard 22B are used in the program to develop entry-level competencies.</p> <p>If applicable, describe how student experiences at different clinical sites are ensured as comparable.</p>	<p>Submit a brief summary of the types of laboratory tests performed in each clinical area.</p>	<p>Verify that instruction provides sequenced learning experiences</p> <p>Verify that the required materials and activities found in Standard 22B are used in the program to develop entry-level competencies</p> <p>Review the laboratory tests performed in each clinical area.</p> <p>If applicable, verify that student experiences at different clinical sites are ensured as comparable.</p>

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	<i>Narrative</i>	<i>Documentation</i>	<i>Site Visitor Role</i>
Standard 22D	<u>No Narrative Required</u>	<p>Submit the criteria for passing, failing and progression in the program.</p> <p>Indicate when the criteria for passing, failing and progression in the program are given to students.</p> <p>Submit evaluation systems for ONE SAMPLE UNIT OF INSTRUCTION. Evaluation systems must correlate with objectives and competencies submitted for Standard 22A.</p> <p>Indicate the frequency of student evaluation in lectures and student and/or clinical laboratories.</p>	<p>Verify that the criteria for passing, failing and progression in the program are established and given to students at the time of entry into the program.</p> <p>Review the evaluation systems for each subject.</p> <p>Review the evaluation systems in the affective domain.</p> <p>Verify that the evaluation systems are employed frequently enough to provide faculty and students with timely indications of a student's academic standing and progress, and to serve as a reliable indicator of the effectiveness of instruction and course design.</p>