

# Program Review

# Executive Summary

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## Physician Assistant Studies

Majors Reviewed:

- *Physician Assistant Studies, M.S.*

July 2025



**Pennsylvania**  
**College of Technology**

A Penn State Affiliate

Pennsylvania College of Technology's Master of Science (M.S.) in Physician Assistant Studies has a long-standing history of providing quality education since 1996. Over the years, the program has adapted to the changes to entry-level education into physician assistant practice, as directed by their accrediting body. Initially, the program provided a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree, then transitioned to a combined B.S./M.S. degree, and most recently, a stand-alone M.S. degree where all students must have completed a B.S. degree prior to entering the program.

The program is accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA) and adheres to their accreditation standards for physician assistant education to assure their curriculum remains relevant and meets industry needs. The next planned accreditation site visit is May 2027.

According to the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) 2024 Statistical Profile of Board-Certified Physician Assistants, Pennsylvania ranks in the top five states most populated with physician assistants. Growth across the United States is also occurring with 93 physician assistants per 100,000 population, up from 53 physician assistants per 100,000 population in 2023. In addition, ARC-PA estimates that the number of educational programs across the nation will also grow from 306 to 348 by 2027, thus increasing the number of individuals who may potentially join the workforce. Pennsylvania ranks first in the nation for their number of physician assistant studies programs.

The program has several strengths including a newly renovated space and several simulation labs that resemble real patient care settings and equipment. Moreover, the program's curriculum is driven by full-time faculty and highly engaged advisory committee members with diverse professional experiences and a passion for teaching and precepting students. Lastly, the program has initiated a faculty-tutoring program specific for physician assistant studies students to promote academic success.

In addition to its strengths, the program also faces challenges directly related to the saturation of physician assistant studies programs in Pennsylvania and neighboring states. The difficulty in securing sufficient, quality clinical rotations and preceptors for students, a requirement of ARC-PA, is increasing.

Recommendations to promote program growth and excellence include:

- foster a tutoring program specific for physician assistant studies students;
- implement course-assessment and program-assessment days throughout the semester to collect and analyze student data in real time and develop early interventions for struggling students;
- further develop relationships with colleges that have B.S. programs but do not have a physician assistant studies program to increase program interest and boost enrollment;
- cultivate collegial relationships with new and existing clinical partners and secure high quality clinical rotations; and
- improve the financial sustainability of the program through ongoing cost analysis, workload efficiency, and revenue enhancement opportunities.