

Towson University Physician Assistant Program

Program Goal Four & Benchmarks

Goal 4 — The program will recruit, matriculate, and graduate from a diverse and resilient student body.

Mission Alignment: *Diversity, resilience, and serving underserved communities.*

ARC-PA 6th Standards: A1.11; B3.01–B3.06

BENCHMARKS

DIVERSITY & DEMOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

- ≥ 30% of matriculants will be from one or more of the following:
 - a) Towson alumni
 - b) Graduate of a public Maryland college or University
 - c) Veteran
 - d) First-generation college student
- ≥ 20% of matriculants will have advanced language proficiency in addition to English as reported in CASPA including American Sign Language

Towson Alumni, USM Alumni, Veteran, or First-Generation College Student

Cohort	Towson Alumni, USM Alumni, Veteran, or First-Generation College Student	% Towson Alumni, USM Alumni, Veteran, or First-Generation College Student
Class of 2025	15	65.2%
Class of 2026	12	70.6%
Class of 2027	18	75%
Classes of 2025, 2026, & 2027 Overall	45	70.3%

The program has met the diversity and demographic representation benchmarks of matriculating greater than or equal to thirty percent of matriculants to be from one or more of the following groups: Towson alumni, graduate of a public Maryland college or university, military veteran, or first-generation college student. The program has implemented admission changes for the Classes of 2028 and 2029, with the intention of reducing attrition while maintaining the diversity and demographic benchmarks listed above.

Bilingual

Cohort	Bilingual	% Bilingual
Class of 2025	3	13%
Class of 2026	7	41.2%
Class of 2027	6	25%
Classes of 2025, 2026, & 2027 Overall	16	25%

The program has met the diversity and demographic representation benchmarks of matriculating greater than or equal to twenty percent of the class who will have advanced language proficiency in addition to English as reported in CASPA which also includes American Sign Language, in the last 2/3 (67%) years, with the last two years running. Additionally, the program has exceeded the benchmark by 5% when averaging the last three years. The program has implemented admission changes for the Classes of 2028 and 2029, with the intention of reducing attrition while maintaining the diversity and demographic benchmarks related to students with bilingualism.

STUDENT SUCCESS

- Annual attrition rate $\leq$ 8% (excluding withdrawals for documented personal or medical reasons)
- $\geq$ 80% on-time progression from matriculation through graduation for each cohort

Cohort	Attrition Rate*	≤8% Met	On-Time Progression	≥80% Met
Class of 2023	9.1%	No	≥80%	Yes
Class of 2024	8.6%	Yes	≥80%	Yes
Class of 2025	13%	Yes	≥80%	Yes
*due to academic or professionalism concerns				

Analysis of the Class of 2023–2025 cohorts demonstrates that on-time progression met or exceeded the ≥80% benchmark for all cohorts. However, attrition exceeded the ≤8% threshold in all cohorts (after excluding documented personal and medical withdrawals), resulting in this goal not being met. The program implemented the following admissions changes for Class of 2028 and 2029 to reduce attrition due to academic performance:

Class of 2028

- A written assessment was added to the interview process to provide an additional measure of applicants' critical thinking and written communication skills. Applicants were asked to read a prompt, summarize its key points, identify challenges associated with implementation, and discuss strategies for addressing those challenges. Responses were evaluated for comprehension, reflection on challenges, strategies for addressing challenges, organization and clarity, and grammar, spelling, and mechanics.
- The Mini Multiple Interview process assessed critical thinking, communication, and professionalism, providing additional measures of applicant characteristics relevant to success in the program.
- The matriculating Class of 2028 had a mean overall science GPA of 3.70, compared with 3.53 for the Class of 2027, 3.53 for the Class of 2026, 3.58 for the Class of 2025, and 3.52 for the Class of 2024.

Class of 2029

The admissions changes implemented for the Class of 2028 were continued for the Class of 2029. Additionally, the program conducted further analyses of admissions variables and student outcomes and used these findings to make additional revisions to our admissions criteria and scoring process in the following ways:

- Overall science GPA became the sole GPA measure used in admissions evaluation. Overall science GPA was selected because it was a stable measure of academic preparation, was moderately correlated with didactic GPA in the PA program, and allowed applicants with weaker early academic performance to demonstrate subsequent academic improvement. Undergraduate science GPA demonstrated a slightly stronger correlation with didactic GPA, although the effect size remained moderate. However, it was not retained as a separate admissions measure because it reflects only undergraduate performance and may be influenced by differences in access to academic advising, preparation, and life stability, as well as applicants' selection of science coursework of varying rigor. Prerequisite GPA was eliminated because it explained only an additional 2.6% of the variance in didactic GPA after accounting for overall science GPA, and this contribution was not statistically significant. Highest degree GPA was also eliminated because it did not explain additional variance in didactic GPA after accounting for undergraduate science GPA, indicating overlapping predictive information, and represents a fixed measure once the degree is conferred that does not reflect subsequent academic improvement.
- The program raised the minimum GPA from 3.0 to 3.2 and eliminated the undergraduate science GPA in favor of overall science GPA. Applicants with an overall science GPA below 3.20 were found to be 2.6 times more likely to experience academic probation, supporting use of this threshold as an academic risk-reduction measure.
- Science-course withdrawals were incorporated into applicant scoring. Analysis of the Class of 2027 demonstrated a strong association between two or more withdrawals from science courses and academic probation. Applicants with two or fewer science-course withdrawals therefore receive additional points in the admissions scoring process.
- Patient care experience measures were de-emphasized as a selection factor. Quality of patient care experience was not correlated with didactic GPA, EOR performance, or PACKRAT performance, and was thus eliminated as a selection factor. The number of patient care experience hours demonstrated weak negative correlation with didactic GPA and EOR average and no correlation with PACKRAT average. The minimum patient care experience requirement was therefore reduced to 500 hours, consistent with requirements of other Maryland PA programs, and applicants no longer receive additional admissions points for accumulating hours beyond the minimum requirement.
- Letter of recommendation requirements, scoring, and screening criteria were strengthened to provide a broader assessment of applicants and identify potential concerns before matriculation. At least one recommendation is required from an

individual other than a clinician to provide a more well-rounded assessment of the applicant. Applicants whose recommendations all rate them as “I highly recommend this applicant” receive additional points in the admissions scoring process. If any recommendation rates the applicant as “I recommend this applicant,” the recommendation is manually reviewed for potential negative comments. Applicants are excluded from further consideration if a recommendation contains a negative comment, rates the applicant as “recommend with reservations” or lower, or provides a “below average” rating for any assessed quality.

These cumulative changes were designed to place greater emphasis on admissions variables associated with higher academic performance and probation risk reduction, while revising or eliminating the weight assigned to factors that did not demonstrate meaningful relationships with student program academic outcomes. The program will continue to evaluate academic performance, probation, progression, and attrition in the Classes of 2028 and 2029 to determine the effectiveness of these interventions.

The program also developed a Director for Student Success with a twenty percent full-time effort dedicated to student success to reduce attrition and improve student academic success, as well as coordinating with university student support services. The position started July 1, 2026, and the program will evaluate the success of this intervention in future analyses.

WORKFORCE IMPACT

- ≥ 30% of all SCPEs will be assigned in HPSA, MUA, or safety-net settings, consistent with the program’s mission to serve Maryland’s health-professional shortage regions.

Cohort Year	# of Active SCPEs	# assigned in HPSA, MUA, or safety-net settings	Percentage Assigned in HPSA, MUA, or safety-net settings
2026	42	18	42%

The program has exceeded the workforce impact benchmark for this goal by providing students with at least equal to or greater than thirty percent of all SCPEs in HPSA, MUA, or safety-net settings, consistent with the program’s mission to serve Maryland’s health-professional shortage regions. The program adopted this goal in December 2025 and is when the data started to be collected and reported.