

ACCREDITATION COMMISSION FOR MIDWIFERY EDUCATION*

-ACME- OVERVIEW

What is the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education?

The Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) is the official accrediting body of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM). The ACNM is the only national organization of certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) in the United States. To maintain autonomy, ACME is administratively and financially independent from the ACNM.

What is the structure of the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education?

ACME consists of four (4) units:

- **Board of Commissioners** is responsible for the administration of ACME's activities, formulation of policy, and the development of the criteria used by the BOR in determining accreditation status.
- **Site Visitor Panel** arranges, conducts, and evaluates accreditation visits to midwifery education programs or institutions.
- **Board of Review (BOR)** is responsible for review of an applicant's Preaccreditation Report or Self-Evaluation Report and the Site Visit Report (SVR), and for determination of accreditation status.
- **Advisory Committee**, composed of members representing nursing, medicine, Education, public health and the public, as well as the immediate past chair of ACME, advises in the development of policy and evaluation of ACME.

What are the goals of the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education?

The goals of ACME are to:

1. Assist midwifery education programs in assessing the achievement of their stated purposes and outcomes in keeping with ACME preaccreditation or accreditation criteria.
2. Foster the continuous development and improvement in the quality of midwifery education programs throughout the United States, its Territories and the District of Columbia.
3. Assure the education program, the administration and faculty, the students and the public that the highest possible standards of education and professional competence are maintained by serving as an interested outside observer.
4. Bring together CNMs and CMs in service and in education in an activity directed toward improving educational preparation for midwifery practice.

5. Promote an understanding and ongoing evaluation of the accreditation process among institution administrators, faculty, students, and general membership of the ACNM.

6. Provide an external peer review process for programs that offer midwifery education.

How does the accreditation process work?

- If an accredited institution of higher education wishes to start a midwifery education program or an already-existing program wishes to apply for continuing accreditation, the CEO of the institution contacts the Chair of ACME to initiate the process.

- A number of documents are used to guide the accreditation process. The most important are:

1. The ACME *Policies and Procedures Manual* specifies procedures to be followed by the institution and ACME, lists the possible outcomes of the Board of Review deliberations, and describes the appeal process that is available.

2. The *Criteria for Programmatic Preaccreditation of Midwifery Education Programs with Instructions for Elaboration and Documentation* lists the Criteria that a **new** program must address in a Preaccreditation Report (PAR) and that must be met in order to receive preaccreditation status from the Board of Review. After graduation of its first class of students, a Preaccredited program is eligible to apply for full accreditation.

3. The *Criteria for Programmatic Accreditation of Midwifery Education Programs with Instructions for Elaboration and Documentation* lists the criteria that an **established** program must address in a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and that must be met to receive accreditation status from the Board of Review.

4. The program must describe how its philosophy is congruent with the *Philosophy of the American College of Nurse-Midwives*.

5. The ACNM *Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice* describes all of the hallmarks and competencies of midwifery practice that must be addressed in the curriculum of the program seeking accreditation.

- After the program prepares its PAR or SER, dates for a site visit are arranged with the Coordinator of the Site Visitors Panel. The Coordinator recruits two Site Visitors, one of whom is designated as the Senior Site Visitor.

- During the site visit, usually lasting 2 ½ days, the Site Visitors conduct interviews

with administrators, faculty and students, review documents, and visit facilities and resources. The purpose of the site visit is to clarify, verify, or amplify information that the program has presented in its PAR or SER and to summarize that information in a report that the Site Visitors prepare for the Board of Review. The Site Visitors do not make decisions about whether accreditation is to be granted.

- The Board of Review, which meets twice per year, carefully reviews all of the information submitted by the program or institution and the Site Visitors, and makes a decision about preaccreditation or accreditation. The maximum length of accreditation granted is for a period of ten years. The BOR may grant accreditation without recommendations, with recommendations which are not mandatory, grant accreditation pending submission of satisfactory progress reports which are mandatory, or deny accreditation.
- ACME also monitors programs between accreditation intervals and requires the submission of annual reports. Substantive changes in programs must be reported to ACME.

The Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education is recognized by the United States Department of Education as a programmatic accrediting agency for certificate, post-baccalaureate, graduate degree and pre-certification programs in nurse-midwifery/midwifery.
(U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 1990 K Street, NW Washington, DC 20006; phone # 202-502-7750.)

For further information about the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education, contact the ACME Administrative Assistant, 8403 Colesville Road, Suite 1550, Silver Spring, MD 20910-6374, USA. Phone 240-485-1802; Fax 240-485-1818; Email jburke@acnm.org

* (formerly Division of Accreditation)