

## Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) OVERVIEW

### Mission of ACME

The mission of the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) is to advance excellence and quality in midwifery education.

### Recognition

The Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (under 'Health Care') as a programmatic accrediting agency for nurse-midwifery education programs since 1982. In 1994, ACME approved criteria to accredit direct-entry midwifery education programs; the first program was preaccredited in April 1996. ACME currently accredits 39 programs offering nurse-midwifery and midwifery programs. ACME is administratively and financially autonomous from the American College of Nurse-Midwives.

### Operational structure of ACME

ACME consists of four units:

- **Board of Commissioners (BOC)** 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 (SVP)** arranges, conducts, and evaluates accreditation visits to midwifery education programs.
- **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 (AC)**, 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.

### Goals of the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education

- Assist midwifery education programs in assessing the achievement of their stated purposes and outcomes/objectives in keeping with ACME pre/accreditation criteria.
- Foster the continuous development and improvement in the quality of midwifery education programs.
- Assure the institution, the education program, the administration and faculty, the students and the public that the highest possible standards of education and professional competence are maintained.

- Bring together midwives in practice and in education in an activity directed toward improving educational preparation for midwifery practice.
- Promote an understanding and ongoing evaluation of the accreditation process among institution administrators, faculty, students, general membership of the ACNM and the public.
- Provide an external peer review process for programs that offer midwifery education.
- Through periodic review of the criteria with its stakeholders, ACME invites debate and discussion of accreditation issues.

#### ACME Accreditation process

- 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 the BOC at [acme@acnm.org](mailto:acme@acnm.org) 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 program and ACME, lists the possible outcomes of the BOR 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 BOR. 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 BOR.
4. The program must describe how its philosophy is congruent with the [Philosophy of the American College of Nurse-Midwives \(ACNM\)](#).

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 visitor 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 or institution has presented in its PAR or SER and to summarize that information in a report that the site visitors prepare for the ACME Board of Review. The site visitors do not make decisions about whether accreditation is to be granted.
  - The ACME Board of Review, which meets twice per year (typically in February and July), carefully reviews all of the information submitted by a program and the site visitors, and makes a decision about preaccreditation or accreditation status. The maximum length of preaccreditation granted to a program is for five years and the maximum length of continued accreditation is for 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 annually and between accreditation intervals and requires the submission of Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR). Substantive changes in programs must be reported to ACME.
  - There are annual and other fees associated with ACME accreditation. **See Appendix H** in the [\*\*\*ACME Policies and Procedures Manual\*\*\*](#).

The Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) 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.

Additionally the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) who advises the Secretary of Education on matters related to accreditation recommended that ACME receive continued recognition for an additional five years. ACME is scheduled for renewal of recognition in 2016.

*For further information about the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education, contact the ACME Executive Director, Heather Maurer at [hmaurer@acnm.org](mailto:hmaurer@acnm.org) or the Administrative Assistant, Jaime Sampson at [jsampson@acnm.org](mailto:jsampson@acnm.org). ACME is located at 8403 Colesville Road, Suite 1550, Silver Spring, MD 20910-6374 USA. Phone 240-485-1802; Fax 240-485-1818; for further information about the U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 1990 K Street, NW Washington, DC 20006; 202-502-7750.*

\* (formerly Division of Accreditation)(DOA)