

**GUIDE TO THE PROCESS FOR ACCME INITIAL ACCREDITATION**

**AN OVERVIEW AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

**Overview and Background Information**

**Conducting Your Self‐Study for Initial Accreditation**

The self‐study process provides an opportunity for you organization to reflect on its program of CME. This process can help your organization assess its commitment to and role in providing continuing medical education and determine its future direction.

Your organization will provide narrative descriptions and evidence of performance-in-practice for the Core Criteria, applicable Standards of Integrity and Independence, and applicable Accreditation Policies.

The process of conducting a self‐study is unique to your organization. Depending on the size and scope of your CME program, you may involve many or just a few individuals in the process.

# Data Sources Used in the Initial Accreditation Process

Your organization will demonstrate that your practice of CME is in compliance with the ACCME’s accreditation requirements through three primary sources of data: the self‐study report, evidence of performance‐in‐practice, and the accreditation interview.

# Expectations about Materials

Information and materials submitted to the ACCME must not contain any untrue statements, must not omit any necessary material facts, must not be misleading, must fairly present the organization, and are the property of the organization.

Information and materials submitted for initial accreditation (self‐study report, evidence of performance‐in‐practice, other materials) must not include individually identifiable health information, in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

# Missing or Incomplete Information

Initial applicants that meet the deadlines and submission requirements of the initial accreditation review process will receive an accreditation decision from the ACCME. Please note, if the ACCME is unable to render a decision due to missing or incomplete information, the ACCME reserves the right to request additional information.

# Decision‐Making

Your organization’s compliance findings and the outcome of the accreditation review are determined by the ACCME based on the data and information collected in the accreditation process. Accreditation decisions are determined through a review by two ACCME committees: first, the Accreditation Review Committee (ARC), and second, the Decision Committee of the Board of Directors.This multi‐tiered system of review provides checks and balances to ensure fair and accurate decisions. This is further enhanced by the ACCME’s use of a criterion referenced decision-making system.

The ACCME’s initial accreditation decision will be based on your organization’s demonstration of compliance with the Core Criteria, applicable Standards of Integrity and Independence, and applicable Accreditation Policies. Compliance with these criteria, standards and policies will lead to an accreditation outcome of Provisional Accreditation with a two-year accreditation term. However, if any of these requirements are found to be in noncompliance, the accreditation outcome will be Nonaccreditation. At the end of the two-year term of Provisional Accreditation, your organization would be eligible for reaccreditation. If successful in reaccreditation, your organization would be eligible for a status of either Accreditation (with a four-year term) or Accreditation with Commendation (with a six-year term).

# Submitting Materials to the ACCME

All information and materials will be submitted in the ACCME’s Program and Activity Reporting System (PARS). Access PARS at [parsa.accme.org](https://parsa.accme.org/). When you see the login screen, enter your email address and password. To login to PARS for the first time, please click “Can’t log in or forgot your password?”

You will use PARS to complete the Confirmation of Intent to Apply for Accreditation form, the Self-Study Report, and the Performance-in-Practice Structured Abstracts for the two CME activities you select to present for review. You will also use PARS to schedule your accreditation interview.

You may review and make necessary changes to your organization’s contact information in PARS. It is very important that your organization’s contact information is up to date in PARS. All users associated with your organization in PARS have the ability to access, modify and delete information entered in this process.

You may be asked to upload documents that demonstrate your compliance with ACCME requirements. Please note, any uploaded files may not exceed 25 megabytes.

# Self‐Study Report

You will provide narrative descriptions, documents, and examples to present the practice(s) your organization utilizes using the self-study report to demonstrate that your CME program is in compliance with ACCME requirements.

# Evidence of Performance-in-Practice

You will present evidence of performance-in-practice to demonstrate that your CME activities are in compliance with ACCME requirements. This process will require the following actions:

1. You will select at least two CME activities, completed within the last 24 months, for performance‐in‐practice review;
2. You will enter data in PARS for the activities you have selected for performance-in-practice review;
3. You will submit evidence of performance‐in‐practice for the selected activities in PARS.

# Entering Your CME Activity Data in PARS

Clicking on the “Program and Activity Data” link located on your PARS dashboard, you will enter known information about the CME activities that your organization has selected for performance-in-practice review.

# Selecting Activities for Performance‐in‐Practice Review

You will select at least two educational activities, completed within the last 24 months, for performance-in-practice review. These activities may be conducted in joint providership with an accredited ACCME provider or may be offered by the initial applicant without CME credit. In all cases, the evidence of performance-in-practice presented from these activities will be an important data source upon which your initial accreditation findings and decision will be based. The evidence presented must demonstrate compliance with the Core Criteria, applicable Standards of Integrity and Independence, and applicable Accreditation Policies.

# Preparing Evidence of Performance‐in‐Practice

You will submit evidence of performance-in-practice for the activities you select using the Performance-in-Practice Structured Abstracts in PARS. You will complete one abstract for each activity. In each abstract, you will provide the information requested with narrative explanations and statements, in tables, and uploaded documents and evidence to verify that the activity meets the ACCME’s requirements.

# Accreditation Interview

Your organization will have the opportunity to further describe the practices you present in the self‐study report and in evidence of performance‐in‐practice, and provide clarification as needed, in conversation with ACCME volunteer surveyors.

ACCME volunteer surveyors are your colleagues from the accredited CME community who are trained by the ACCME. A team of surveyors will be assigned by the ACCME to review your self‐study materials, meet with representatives of your CME program, and engage in a dialogue about your organization’s policies and practices. During the interview, the surveyors will seek clarification about any questions they may have regarding the self‐study materials you submitted to the ACCME. ACCME surveyors will: 1) conduct their interactions in a professional manner; 2) be familiar with your materials and the ACCME’s Core Criteria, Standards of Integrity and Independence and all applicable Policies; and 3) communicate clearly and effectively without offering consultative advice or feedback regarding compliance or the expected outcome of the accreditation review.

The ACCME utilizes video conferencing as its standard accreditation interview format. Interviews can be up to 2 hours in length. The selection of interview dates and times will be completed in PARS. To ensure the validity of the process and based on circumstances and available resources, the ACCME reserves the right to make all final decisions regarding the interview and/or composition of the survey team. The ACCME will provide information about the process of scheduling the accreditation interview and will confirm the interview date and time and assigned surveyors in advance via email.