

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE ACAHM COMPREHENSIVE STANDARDS AND CRITERIA**

The Comprehensive Standards and Criteria of the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine (ACAHM or Commission) are the written benchmarks, conditions, and thresholds adopted by the Commission to: (1) assess whether the quality of an institution/program merits pre-accreditation/accreditation status, and (2) maintain a culture of continuous improvement of academic quality at the institutions/programs.

There are ten (10) standards that serve as broad classifications used to categorize related accreditation criteria. Many criteria contain sub-components relating to the institution or each ACAHM-accreditable program.

All revisions to the comprehensive standards and criteria and their chronology are recorded in the [Revision History](#).

ACAHM makes available a combined [reference copy](#) of the Comprehensive Standards and Criteria for Accreditation (“Comprehensive Standards”) for the reading convenience of the general public. The individual Introduction, Standards and Revision History documents posted at the ACAHM website represent the official publication of the Comprehensive Standards. While the Commission makes suitable effort to assure that the reference copy reflects the contents of the official publication, the reference copy is not warranted as such.

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### **ACAHM-ACCREDITABLE PROGRAMS** (see [Glossary](#))

Only programs for which ACAHM has established accreditation standards and criteria are accreditable. These Comprehensive Standards and Criteria apply to the following programs for which ACAHM currently awards accredited or pre-accredited status:

- **Master’s-level degree and diploma programs**
- **Graduate certificate programs**
- **Professional entry-level doctoral degree programs**
- **Advanced practice doctoral degree programs**

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### **DISTANCE EDUCATION** (see [Glossary](#) and [Distance Education Policy](#))

All distance education must comply with ACAHM’s Comprehensive Standards and Criteria for Accreditation.

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**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS** (see [Glossary](#))

Eligibility Requirements are select accreditation criteria further classified by the Commission as ACAHM's basic threshold requirements for institutions, master's-level programs, and doctoral programs to achieve and maintain ACAHM pre-accreditation and accreditation status. An institution/program seeking pre-accreditation must demonstrate that it complies with these select accreditation criteria further classified by the Commission as *Eligibility Requirements*. While all accreditation standards and criteria are assessed during the eligibility phase, compliance with the following criteria designated as *Eligibility Requirements* is a requirement for achieving pre-accreditation status:

<i>Standard</i>	<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Title</i>
1	1.01	Integrity
1	1.02	Mission and Statement of Purpose
1	1.03	Program Goals
1	1.04	Program Learning Outcomes
2	2.01	Legal Organization and Authorization
2	2.02	Accreditation Status of Parent Institution
2	2.03	Degree-Granting Authority
2	2.05	Compliance with Federal Law
2	2.06	Compliance with State Law
2	2.07	Compliance with Local and Municipal Laws, Ordinances and Codes
3	3.01	Governance Structure
3	3.05	Administrative & Academic Leadership
5	5.01	Recruitment and Policy Publication
5	5.02	Admissions
5	5.05	Student Services
6	6.01	Systematic Evaluation
6	6.02	Assessment of Student Learning
7	7.01	Program Level
7	7.02	Minimum Program Length, Credits, and Hours
8	8.01	Core Faculty
9	9.02	General Sufficiency and Stability of Resources
9	9.04	Financial Planning and Control
9	9.08	Campus and Program Facilities
9	9.09	Learning Resource System (Library)
10	10.02	Catalog

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## INSTITUTIONAL vs. PROGRAMMATIC CRITERIA/COMPONENTS

ACAHM is recognized by the United States Department of Education as both an institutional accreditor and as a programmatic accreditor. Components of the accreditation criteria are differentiated into two types, institutional and programmatic. Criteria may include one or both types of components.

- **Institutional Components:** These components are defined as those relevant only to entities that are institutionally accredited by ACAHM. These institutional components are not relevant or pertinent to the schools that rely on ACAHM for programmatic accreditation only.
- **Programmatic Components:** These components are defined as those that are relevant to ACAHM programs, regardless of the institutional accreditation. Programmatic components may be further differentiated as applicable to all programs (i.e., master's, professional doctoral, advanced practice doctoral) or applicable to only one program.

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## PUBLICATION AND FORMATTING

The ACAHM Comprehensive Standards and Criteria consist of twelve (12) documents:

- Introduction to the Comprehensive Standards and Criteria
- Ten (10) Standards documents
- Comprehensive Standards and Criteria Revision History

A unified document containing all twelve (12) documents is available for user convenience but does not constitute the official published Comprehensive Standards and Criteria.

Within individual Standards and Criteria, the following section and sub-section format is employed:

- A. \_\_\_\_
  - 1. \_\_\_\_
    - a) \_\_\_\_

The letters I, O and Q are intentionally omitted from the format, due to their close visual similarity to the numbers 1 and 0.

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## PUBLICATIONS, RECORDS, AND MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTATION

When a criterion for accreditation requires published material, the institution/program must retain a copy of said material in English, regardless of the language intended for distribution.

For the purposes of accreditation procedures, the institution/program must be able to produce copies of all published material in English, regardless of the language intended for distribution.

Published materials cited in the accreditation standards and criteria include, but are not limited to, promotional advertisements, website, catalog, clinic manual, student handbook, enrollment agreements, syllabi, academic records, and required regulatory disclosures.

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## RELATED POLICIES/RESOURCES

Programs and institutions seeking or holding accreditation status with the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine (ACAHM or Commission) are subject to the Commission's *Standards, Criteria, Policies and Procedures* and all associated *Applications, Checklists, Glossaries, Guides, Handbooks, Manuals* and *Position Papers* published by the Commission on its website. Specific policies/resources may be hyperlinked within the published Standards documents.

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## SITE VISIT MANUAL

Programs and institutions demonstrate their compliance with the Comprehensive Standards and Criteria through the self-study process, which includes preparation of a self-study report, peer review of the report, and a site visit by peer evaluators. Consult the [ACAHM Site Visit Manual](#) for examples of the kinds of questions that programs and institutions should seek to answer through the self-study process, and the types of exhibits and resources that help to demonstrate compliance with the Comprehensive Standards and Criteria.

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## TRANSITIONS TO NEW/REVISED STANDARDS/CRITERIA

When ACAHM implements new or revised accreditation standards/criteria, institutions/programs are encouraged to move toward compliance with the most current accreditation standards. However, for decision-making purposes, ACAHM will hold institutions/programs accountable to meeting the standards under which the most recent accreditation application was submitted. Institutions/programs may request accountability to meet more current standards subject to Commission approval.