

Preface

The Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM) approved accreditation Standards for a First Professional Doctoral (FPD) degree in Acupuncture and/or Oriental Medicine on February 14, 2013 and began accepting substantive change applications from ACAOM accredited institutions to add the new program June 1, 2013. During the intervening four-year period ACAOM accepted ten applications for review to begin professional doctorate (PD) programs. Nine of the institutions that submitted applications received approval to begin enrolling students and are required to submit self-study reports for consideration of pre-accreditation, while one is currently under deferment. To date the Commission has not granted either pre-accreditation or accreditation to any professional doctorate programs under these standards.

Based upon our evaluative processes and ongoing communication with the Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (CCAOM) and the schools that have submitted applications, a number of standards/criteria have been identified for revision. Consistent with ACAOM's *Standards Review Policy* we are seeking public comment on proposed changes to Standard 5 and Standard 7 of the Professional Doctorate Standards.

Proposed revisions to Professional Doctorate

STANDARD 5: ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES STANDARD 7: PROGRAM OF STUDY

March 15, 2017

KEY

~~red strikethrough~~: indicates suggested deletion from current standards

yellow highlight: indicates suggested new language

Note: The title "First Professional Doctorate" is now being referred to as "Professional Doctorate." This change, and relevant abbreviation (PD), is reflected throughout these criteria and not otherwise highlighted.

STANDARD 5: ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES

Criterion 5-2: Standard Admissions

Institutional Criteria

[No applicable criteria in this category]

Programmatic Criteria

- A. Prospective students must meet the programmatic admissions requirements in effect at the time of their official matriculation.
- B. The program must have admissions policies, procedures, and practices that are consistent with students achieving the statement of purpose and goals of the program.
- C. The program's admissions policies, procedures, and practices must be periodically assessed to determine their effectiveness.
- D. English language competency must be demonstrated by all students seeking admission to the program. Specifically:
 1. For programs taught in English, competency may be demonstrated by scoring at least 550 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and an iBT score of at least 80.
 2. For programs taught in languages other than English, competency may be demonstrated by scoring at least 550 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and an iBT score of at least 80.
- E. The program must ensure that the student is proficient in the language(s) required for interdisciplinary collaboration
- F. The admissions criteria for the PD program must include the satisfactory completion of at least three (3) years of undergraduate-level education (defined as 90 semester credits or 135 quarter credits) from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of

Education, ~~or an equivalent international entity~~. Credits earned at a foreign educational institution must be validated by a recognized educational credentials evaluation service.

Guideline: Outside credential evaluation service providers utilized to evaluate foreign educational credentials should be affiliated with organizations/associations supporting international education, such as, but not limited to: AACRAO (American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers), AICE (Association of International Credential Evaluators), NACES (National Association of Credential Evaluation Services), and NAFSA (NAFSA: Association of International Educators).

- G. Prerequisite or co-requisite undergraduate-level education required for admission to the PD program must include chemistry, biology, and psychology. Co-requisite credits must not be counted towards degree completion credits, ~~or listed on degree transcripts~~.

Guideline: If these courses are completed as co-requisites while enrolled in the program, there should be clear policies in place that specify co-requisite completion schedules.

- H. Institutions/programs that confer a master's degree as part of the PD must ensure that students dual enroll *ab initio* and clearly outline if/when it is possible for a student to be awarded a master's degree without completing the full PD program.

Criterion 5-3: Transfer Credits/Transfer Students

Institutional Criteria

- A. The institution must publish its policies on award of credit by transfer, and said policy must comply with all applicable state authorizing and licensing agencies' regulations.
- B. Credits accepted for transfer by the institution must have been earned at an institution of higher education accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education, or its international equivalent.
- C. Credits accepted for transfer by the institution must be based on an official transcript received by the institution.
- D. Prior to being accepted for transfer by the institution, credits earned at a foreign educational institution must be validated by a recognized educational credentials evaluation service.

Programmatic Criteria

- A. Credits accepted for transfer to meet program graduation requirements must be demonstrated to be equivalent to published program degree requirements in content, rigor, and credit hour requirements.
Guideline: Credits earned more than five (5) years prior to admission should be accepted for transfer by the institution only where the student has retained the competencies of the course(s).
- B. Credits earned more than five (5) years prior to admission may only be accepted for transfer by an institution after validating that the student has retained the content knowledge and competencies of the respective course(s) for which transfer credits are being assessed.
- C. Subject to relevant state regulations and licensing agency rules, applicants may receive transfer credit for up to 50% of PD program total credits pending evaluation of courses for comparability in content, rigor, and credit hour requirements. Of that 50%, no more than 25% of the PD program clinical training requirements may be accepted as transfer credit.

~~The FPD program must ensure that transfer (or "advanced standing") students take at least two academic years in residence before receiving the FPD degree.~~

Criterion 5.8: Doctorate Degree Completion Students

The PD degree completion track is designed to be completed by a licensed acupuncturist who graduated from an ACAOM accredited/pre-accredited program. Students who enter this track complete the remaining doctoral program requirements not included in their master's level training.

Institutional Criteria

[No applicable criteria in this category]

Programmatic Criteria

- A. Prospective students must meet all of the programmatic standard admissions requirements outlined in Criterion 5.2: Standard Admissions.
- B. The admissions criteria for the PD completion track must also include:
 - a. the satisfactory completion of a master's degree or master's level program in acupuncture or Oriental medicine from an ACAOM accredited/pre-accredited program or institution.
 - b. current acupuncture license and/or certification in good standing issued by a U.S. state licensing/certifying board
 - c. demonstration of an active clinical practice as defined by the institution
- C. The program must complete a comprehensive transcript analysis that demonstrates that all applicable master's level AOM coursework completed is equivalent to published PD program degree requirements in terms of content, rigor, and credit hour requirements.
 - a. Credits earned more than five (5) years prior to admission may only be accepted for transfer / advanced standing by an institution after validating that the student has retained the content knowledge and competencies of the respective course(s) for which transfer credits are being assessed.
 - b. Acceptance to a doctoral degree completion track that includes advanced study or specialty concentrations in herbal medicine is furthered conditioned upon satisfactory completion of ACAOM's masters' core curriculum requirements for herbal training typically evidenced by official transcripts issued by an ACAOM accredited/pre-accredited program or institution.

STANDARD 7: PROGRAM OF STUDY

Criterion 7-1: Program Level, Length, Credits, and Hours

Institutional Criteria

[No applicable criteria in this category]

Programmatic Criteria

- A. The program must be sufficiently rigorous in breadth and depth, and appropriate to graduate professional education and training for practitioners in the field of acupuncture and/or Oriental medicine.
- B. For programs taught in multiple languages, institutional commitment, the level of instruction, supervision, ~~and~~ oversight, and opportunities for graduates, must be comparable for each language track.
- C. For programs taught at multiple locations, institutional commitment, the level of instruction, supervision, ~~and~~ oversight, and opportunities for graduates, must be comparable at each location.
- D. All professional doctoral programs in acupuncture or Oriental medicine must:
 1. Be at least four (4) academic years in length.
Definition: Four academic years is equivalent to at least 36 calendar months, or 120 instructional weeks.
 2. Demonstrate the adoption and implementation of a curriculum that reflects the attainment of the program learning outcomes and the achievement of all required PD professional competencies outlined in Criterion 7.2.
 3. Be appropriate to an institution of higher education offering a professional doctoral degree in acupuncture or Oriental medicine.
- E. Professional doctoral programs in **acupuncture** must:
 1. ~~Include~~ be a minimum of 121 semester credits of instruction, or its equivalent, and include a minimum of 790 hours of clinical training.
 2. Meet or exceed all existing ACAOM standards and criteria required for master's level acupuncture programs, in addition to meeting the PD standards, criteria and professional competencies defined in this document.
- F. Professional doctoral programs in **Oriental medicine** must:
 1. ~~Include~~ be a minimum of 162 semester credits of instruction, or its equivalent, and include a minimum of 1000 hours of clinical training.
 2. Meet or exceed all existing ACAOM standards and criteria required for master's level Oriental medicine programs, in addition to meeting the PD standards, criteria and professional competencies defined in this document.
- G. Professional **doctorate completion tracks** in acupuncture or Oriental medicine must:
 1. be a minimum of 16 semester credits of instruction (accounting for a minimum of 300 clock hours), or its equivalent, and include a minimum of 130 hours of clinical training.
 2. Meet or exceed all existing ACAOM standards and criteria for accreditation required for master's level acupuncture or Oriental medicine programs, in addition to meeting the PD standards, criteria and professional competencies defined in this document.

Criterion 7-2: Professional Competencies – see Appendix A

Institutional Criteria

[No applicable criteria in this category]

Programmatic Criteria

- A. The PD program learning outcomes must address, and lead to the development of all Master's level competencies plus the set of doctoral professional competencies to be attained through learning experiences included in the curriculum.

(Note: all Master's level competencies are required for the corresponding PD AOM program. As Master's Standards/Criteria are revised, the Master's competencies in these Standards/Criteria will be removed and incorporated by reference.)

- B. Professional doctorate completion tracks must address each of the domains and related professional competencies identified as advanced (doctoral level), including:
- a. Patient Care Domain #8: Advanced Diagnostic Studies
 - b. Systems-Based Medicine Domain #2: Patient Care Systems
 - c. Systems-Based Medicine Domain #3: Collaborative Care
 - d. Professional Development Domain #2: Formulating and Implementing Plans for Individual Professional Development
 - e. Professional Development Domain #3: Incorporating Scholarship, Research and Evidence Based Medicine

Criterion 7-3: Clinical Training

Institutional Criteria

[No applicable criteria in this category]

Programmatic Criteria

- A. The majority of the PD clinical training experience must be a supervised internship in a clinical setting, although the program may also offer externship/clerkship or observation experiences. **Definitions of "clinical setting," "internship," and "externship" are deleted from the standards and now located in ACAOM's Glossary.**
- B. The PD internship must be conducted in a teaching clinic directly operated by the program itself, or in an affiliated clinical facility. If conducted in an affiliated clinical facility, there must be a formal agreement between the two institutions, and the program must exercise academic oversight substantially equivalent to the oversight exercised for its directly operated teaching clinics. Specifically:
1. All clinical instructors must meet program requirements for faculty qualifications and experience.
 2. Regular, systematic evaluation of each type of clinical experience must take place.
 3. Clinical training supervision procedures at affiliated facilities must be substantially equivalent to those within directly operated teaching clinics.
- C. The PD clinical training must provide sufficient patient contacts to fulfill the professional competencies expected of program graduates.
- Guideline: Generally, at least 50 patient contacts should be required for each 100 hours of internship.*

Guideline: Generally, no more than two PD interns should receive credit for a single patient treatment, absent an educationally justifiable reason.

- D. Clinical training must place PD students in internship settings with an adequate number and variety of supervisors, and must provide a wide range of educational experiences.
- E. The PD clinical training must provide sufficient observation hours to fulfill the competencies expected of program graduates.

Guideline: If observation hours are conducted outside of a clinical setting, there should be an educationally justifiable reason for awarding credit for these hours.

- F. A significant portion of the PD program's clinical observation experiences must be with experienced practitioners.

Guideline: "Experienced" practitioners should generally have at least five (5) years of clinical experience.

- G. The PD program must incorporate two or more stages or levels of clinical training, which must be associated with clearly defined outcomes that describe the achievement of competency.
- H. As part of its clinical training, the PD program must provide opportunities for interns to engage in collaborative interactions with other medical providers in appropriate clinical settings.