



Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
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Revisions to Professional Doctorate Standards

Effective August 12, 2017

STANDARD 5: ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES

Criterion 5.2: Standard Admissions

Institutional Criteria

No applicable criteria in this category

Programmatic Criteria

- A. The program must have admissions policies, procedures, and practices that include explicit language competency requirements, and are consistent with students achieving the statement of purpose and goals of the program.
- B. The program's admissions policies, procedures, and practices must be periodically assessed to determine their effectiveness.
- C. Prospective students must meet the programmatic admissions requirements in effect at the time of their official matriculation.
 - 1. 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 or pre-accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. In considering the acceptance of education and training obtained in foreign countries, 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 that support international education, promote best practices in international education credential evaluation services, have published standards for membership, hold affiliations to national and international higher education associations and are frequently linked to and used by federal agencies, state agencies, educational institutions, accreditors and employers, such as, but not limited to: AICE (Association of International Credential Evaluators) and NACES (National Association of Credential Evaluation Services).

- D. 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.

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.

- E. 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.
- F. The program must ensure that the student is proficient in the language(s) required for interdisciplinary collaboration.
- G. 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 a post-secondary institution accredited or pre-accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.
- C. Credits accepted for transfer by the institution must be based on an official transcript received by the institution.
- D. In considering the acceptance of education and training obtained in foreign countries, credits earned at a foreign educational institution must be validated by a recognized educational credentials evaluation service.
- E. Transfer students must meet the admissions requirements in effect at the time of their official matriculation.

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.
- B. Credits accepted for transfer into the program must have been earned at a post-secondary institution accredited or pre-accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.
- C. Credits accepted for transfer into the program must be based on an official transcript received by the institution.
- D. In considering the acceptance of education and training obtained in foreign countries, credits earned at a foreign educational institution must be validated by a recognized educational credentials evaluation service.
- E. Transfer students must meet the program admissions requirements in effect at the time of their official matriculation.
- F. The program must demonstrate and document an acceptable process for assuring equivalent competence in the acceptance of transfer credit. 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.
- G. 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.

Criterion 5.8: Doctorate Degree Completion Students

The PD degree completion track is designed to be completed by an individual 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 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.
- 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.
 - 1. 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.
 - 2. 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

The program must:

- A. be appropriate to an institution of higher education offering a professional doctoral degree in acupuncture or Oriental medicine.
- B. 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.
- C. have an adequate clinical training component.
- D. ensure that the sequencing, duration, nature and content of all didactic, practical, and clinical training courses are appropriately integrated and consistent with mission, goals, objectives and student learning outcomes.
- E. show evidence that it has developed appropriate course prerequisites and that students enrolled in a course have completed all prerequisites.

- F. 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.
- G. be at least four (4) academic years in length (equivalent to at least 36 calendar months, or 120 instructional weeks).
- H. demonstrate that institutional commitment, the level of instruction, supervision, oversight, and opportunities for graduates, are comparable for each language track of programs taught in multiple languages.
- I. demonstrate that institutional commitment, the level of instruction, supervision, oversight, and opportunities for graduates, are comparable at each location for programs taught at multiple locations.

Professional doctoral programs in **acupuncture** must:

1. 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.

Professional doctoral programs in **Oriental medicine** must:

1. 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.

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 demonstrated clinical experience that leads to the development of professional competencies in the systems-based medicine domain (outlined in criterion 7.2: Professional Competencies)
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:
1. Patient Care Domain #8: Advanced Diagnostic Studies
 2. Systems-Based Medicine Domain #2: Patient Care Systems
 3. Systems-Based Medicine Domain #3: Collaborative Care
 4. Professional Development Domain #2: Formulating and Implementing Plans for Individual Professional Development
 5. 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.
- 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 program must assure that each student fulfills at least 150 hours observing acupuncturists and senior student interns performing AOM therapies in a clinical setting. A majority of the clinical observation experience must be with experienced practitioners that have all necessary state authority to perform the faculty duties.

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

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

- D. The PD clinical training must provide sufficient patient contacts to fulfill the professional competencies expected of program graduates.

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

- E. 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.
- F. 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.
- G. 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.