



## **COMMISSIONERS' MANUAL**

Revisions Effective 1 July 2017

Accreditation Commission  
for Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine

---

8941 Aztec Drive, Suite B  
Eden Prairie, MN 55347  
[www.acaom.org](http://www.acaom.org)

## Table of Contents

<b>1. THE COMMISSION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<i>A. Commission Composition</i> .....	<i>3</i>
<i>B. General Commissioner Characteristics</i> .....	<i>3</i>
<i>C. Commissioner Qualifications</i> .....	<i>4</i>
Desired Specific Knowledge and Skills .....	<i>4</i>
Diversity Balance Considerations .....	<i>4</i>
General Responsibilities.....	<i>4</i>
<b>2. COMMISSION RESPONSIBILITIES EXPLAINED</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<i>A. Monitor Accreditation Functions</i> .....	<i>4</i>
<i>B. Establish Policies and Procedures</i> .....	<i>5</i>
<i>C. Monitoring Administrative Functioning</i> .....	<i>5</i>
<i>D. Establishing Standards</i> .....	<i>6</i>
<i>E. Monitoring Fiscal Affairs</i> .....	<i>6</i>
<i>F. Accrediting Programs</i> .....	<i>7</i>
<i>G. Review Committees and Process</i> .....	<i>7</i>
<b>3. SERVING ON COMMISSION COMMITTEES</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<i>a. Executive Committee</i> .....	<i>10</i>
<i>b. Nominations Committee</i> .....	<i>10</i>
<i>c. Audit &amp; Finance Committee</i> .....	<i>10</i>
<i>d. Standards and Criteria Committee</i> .....	<i>10</i>
<i>e. Accreditation Process Evaluation Committee</i> .....	<i>11</i>
<b>4. ATTENDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>5. COMMISSIONER CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<i>Commissioner Code of Conduct</i> .....	<i>12</i>

# 1. THE COMMISSION

## A. Commission Composition

The Commission membership is comprised of a diverse range of individuals including those who serve in a) academic leadership roles, b) college administrative roles, c) as faculty of acupuncture and Oriental medicine programs, d) as practitioners of acupuncture and Oriental medicine, and d) as qualified public members as defined in [ACAOM Bylaws](#).

An administrator member is someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary program or institutional administration.

An academic member is someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary teaching and/or research.

An educator member is someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary education in an academic capacity (e.g., professor, instructor, academic dean).

A practitioner member is a person whose principal source of income is as a practitioner of acupuncture or Oriental medicine. Practitioner members should be actively involved in the development of the profession.

A public member is a person who is not a) an employee, member of the governing board, owner or shareholder of, or consultant to, an institution or program that either has achieved ACAOM Accreditation or Candidacy status, or has applied for Accreditation or pre-accreditation; b) a member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated, or associated with ACAOM; c) a spouse, parent, child, sibling of an individual or individuals described in a) or b) of this definition; or d) a practitioner as defined above.

Any individual may be elected as an “at large” member of the Commission.

## B. General Commissioner Characteristics

1. Qualified by academic training, professional experience and knowledge of the accrediting process.
2. Sensitive to the uniqueness of individual programs.
3. Impartial, objective, and without conflict of interest.
4. Strong academic and professional backgrounds and experience appropriate to the review of acupuncture and Oriental medicine programs.
5. Responsible, ethical, and objective with a known history of fulfilling commitments on time.
6. Willing, capable of, and committed to attending two, three-day Commission meetings (one in the Summer and one in the Winter) per year, Commission Retreats as may be determined by the Commission, and conducting approximately one site visit per year.
7. Willing and able to devote the time to perform detailed evaluations of program reports between Commission meetings.

## C. Commissioner Qualifications

### Desired Specific Knowledge and Skills

- a) Good communication and organizational skills
- b) Budget and finance experience
- c) Knowledge and experience in higher education and program assessment
- d) Governance experience
- e) Writing and editing skills
- f) Clinical and/or teaching experience

### Diversity Balance Considerations

- a) Ethnicity
- b) Gender
- c) Geographic distribution
- d) Professional and/or academic experience
- e) Educational background
- f) Variety of schools of thought within the profession

### General Responsibilities

- a) Monitor accreditation functions.
- b) Establish policies and procedures.
- c) Monitor administrative functioning.
- d) Establish standards.
- e) Monitor fiscal affairs.
- f) Accredite programs.
- g) Participate in ACAOM Committees.
- h) Attend ACAOM meetings and fulfill all Commissioner roles and responsibilities.

## 2. COMMISSION RESPONSIBILITIES EXPLAINED

### A. Monitor Accreditation Functions

The Commission serves as ACAOM's Board of Directors. All Commissioners have a fiduciary responsibility to monitor the affairs of ACAOM and to use the care that an ordinarily prudent person would exercise in a like position and under similar circumstances. It is the responsibility of Commissioners to ensure that ACAOM's mission as an accrediting agency is being achieved and that ACAOM is performing its accreditation functions in an efficient and effective manner. This includes monitoring the effectiveness of ACAOM *Standards and Criteria for Accreditation*, policies, procedures, their application, and how they might be improved.

ACAOM staff is responsible for developing proposed standards and criteria for accreditation consistent with [34 CFR §602](#), policies, procedures, and ensuring that each Commissioner receives the necessary information to effectively monitor ACAOM functions. For this purpose, agendas are prepared by staff for each Commission meeting, in consultation with the ACAOM Executive

Committee, composed of the ACAOM Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Executive Director. In addition, Commissioners may, on occasion, receive special communications, which provide information relevant to their roles and responsibilities. The Commission may also conduct conference calls to deliberate on relevant matters. Although Commissioners will be provided such information and documentation as may be necessary to conduct ACAOM business, it is the responsibility of each Commissioner to carefully review such documentation prior to Commission deliberations, and to contribute actively to the achievement of ACAOM's mission. Commissioners who have specific administrative issues or needs other than those directly germane to issues that have been directly delegated to them should contact the ACAOM Chair, who will discuss the matter with the Executive Director.

## **B. Establish Policies and Procedures**

The Commission publishes ACAOM standards and criteria for accreditation, and policies and procedures that govern the accreditation process on the Commission website. All programs and institutions in the accreditation process are provided access to ACAOM *Standards and Criteria for Accreditation*, policies, and procedures, and are expected to fully comply with them. Similarly, the Commission itself is legally required to adhere to its published policies and procedures in conducting program/institution Pre-accreditation (Candidacy) and Accreditation reviews.

Periodically, Commissioners may be required to approve new policies and procedures, or consider amending existing policies and procedures. Under ACAOM protocols, proposals for adopting new or amended policies and procedures are prepared by ACAOM staff for consideration by a relevant committee(s) prior to Commission consideration and adoption at its scheduled meetings. "New" policies, standards, and criteria for accreditation typically require two readings by the full Commission prior to final adoption. The Commission may also consider or adopt proposed policies or procedures virtually (i.e., by mail/FAX/e-mail ballot or by conference call).

The Commission is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of ACAOM's policies and procedures. If individual Commissioners have suggestions for improving ACAOM's policies or procedures, such suggestions should be shared with the Executive Director, or Chair, or addressed during Commission policy deliberations.

## **C. Monitoring Administrative Functioning**

The Commission is responsible for establishing ACAOM policies, while ACAOM staff is responsible for implementing the policies and procedures adopted by the Commission. ACAOM staff conduct all the administrative affairs of the Commission, including but not limited to, implementing the accreditation process; conducting day-to-day financial management; and engaging in communications with programs and institutions, state and federal regulatory authorities, and the general public.

Since the fulfillment of ACAOM's mission depends in substantial part on the effectiveness of ACAOM administrative operations, the Commission's Executive Committee monitors administrative effectiveness through evaluation of the ACAOM Executive Director. Direct and primary oversight of office administrative functioning is the responsibility of the Executive Director, who conducts regular conference calls with the Commission's Chair and Executive Committee to keep the Committee apprised of ACAOM administrative and other issues. The Executive Committee meeting minutes and decisions made between meetings are included in the Commission agenda for each Commission meeting. The Commission is also responsible for approving policies and procedures governing staff, including those contained in the *ACAOM Employee Manual*.

#### **D. Establishing Standards**

A critical Commission function is adopting *Eligibility Requirements, and Standards and Criteria for Accreditation* (i.e., [Accreditation Manual](#)) with which all programs/institutions in the accreditation process must comply. *ACAOM Eligibility Requirements, and Standards and Criteria for Accreditation*, are available on the Commission web site. ACAOM's Standards and Criteria Committee, composed of Commissioners appointed by the Chair, is responsible for recommending amendments to ACAOM standards and criteria for the Commission's consideration and adoption. As with the establishment of Commission policies and procedures, standards and criteria proposals are typically developed by ACAOM staff for consideration by the Standards and Criteria Committee prior to Commission consideration and adoption at its scheduled meetings. Significant amendments to ACAOM standards and criteria, or the drafting of new standards and criteria, are sometimes prepared by a Standards Task Force composed of the communities of interest prior to Standards Committee, and after Commission review and consideration. "New" standards and criteria proposals typically require two readings by the full Commission, and opportunity for public comment, prior to adoption. In addition, the Commission, acting as a committee of the whole, may amend or develops new standards and criteria. This process may occur during regularly scheduled Commission meetings or special Commission Retreats.

As an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, ACAOM is required to implement a systematic program of review that demonstrates that its standards are adequate to evaluate the quality of the education or training provided by the institutions/programs it accredits. The Commission has adopted a specific policy governing its review of the standards. Pursuant to ACAOM's [Standards Review Policy](#), ACAOM systematically reviews its existing standards every 5-years. The Standards and Criteria Committee and the Commission are responsible for reviewing ACAOM's standards and criteria consistent with this policy.

#### **E. Monitoring Fiscal Affairs**

The Commission is responsible for monitoring ACAOM's financial affairs to ensure that ACAOM remains financially stable and has, and will have, the necessary fiscal resources to meet the Commission's short- and long-term objectives.

The Executive Director, in consultation with the Commission Treasurer and our external accounting and separate auditing firm, prepares financial reports and budgets for review by the ACAOM Audit & Finance Committee. Materials include:

- Year-End Financial Report for the preceding year
- Proposed budget for the next fiscal year with any changes to employee compensation and benefits
- Year-To-Date Financial Report for the current year
- CPA-prepared audited financial statements or financial reviews

The Audit & Finance Committee submits its recommendations to the full Commission for consideration. Commissioners are expected to fully review ACAOM financial reports and budgets to ensure that ACAOM has, and will have, the necessary fiscal resources to support adequately its mission, goals, and objectives. The Commission is responsible for annually approving financial statements.

## **F. Accrediting Programs**

The Commission's role in reviewing institutions and programs for Accreditation and Pre-accreditation (Candidacy) status is at the heart of ACAOM's mission. Commissioners should be fully familiar with ACAOM's [Accreditation Procedures](#), and related policies found on the [Commission's website](#). Commissioners play a critical role in this process, as further described below.

## **G. Review Committees and Process**

The Commission utilizes Review Committees to recommend actions to the full Commission on comprehensive institutional reviews for pre-accreditation or accreditation, monitoring actions, sanctions and substantive change requests.

Each institution will have a minimum of two Commissioner reviewers (Review Committee). You are required to review the reports for your assigned institutions and programs relative to compliance with Commission policies, standards, and criteria for accreditation.

Programs and institutions seeking Pre-Accreditation (Candidacy), Initial Accreditation, or Continuing Accreditation, undergo comprehensive reviews and must:

- Submit a Self-Study Report
- Host a site visit
- Submit a Formal Institutional Response to the site visit report

A program's Self-Study Report, along with the Site Visit Report and the program's Formal Institutional Response to that report constitutes *the Accreditation Record* for purposes of rendering a Pre-accreditation, Initial Accreditation or Continuing Accreditation decision. Review Committees receive the [Accreditation Record](#) prior to full Commission consideration and are expected to complete a "review table" documenting the Committee's suggested revisions/findings. This same documentation is provided as part of the Commission meeting agenda materials for action at a Commission meeting. Review Committee Members are

expected to assume a primary role in facilitating the Commission program review process for their assigned programs and institutions during Commission meetings.

When reviewing institutions or programs for consideration of pre-accreditation (candidacy), the Commission's role is to assess whether programs and institutions have met all eligibility requirements and sufficiently meet the standards and criteria for initial award of ACAOM status.

Programs that have been granted Pre-accreditation may be required to submit biannual monitoring reports documenting progress in strengthening compliance with ACAOM standards and criteria.

Accredited or pre-accredited programs with identified deficiencies relative to compliance with one or more ACAOM standards and/or criteria are subject to a monitoring action (i.e., interim site visit, interim report, monitoring/progress report or supplemental information report – See ACAOM [Commission Actions Policy](#)) documenting progress in strengthening compliance with the standards and criteria.

Each pre-accredited and accredited program must also submit an annual report. ACAOM staff review annual reports and any identified concerns are forwarded to the appropriate review committee for consideration.

When reviewing biannual progress, first annual, monitoring, or interim reports, the Commission's role is to assess whether programs and institutions have corrected previous Commission findings of non-compliance and strengthened Areas Requiring Further Development. Review Committees may also be required to review programs'/institutions' Substantive Change Requests to assess whether the proposed substantive change(s) will or will not adversely impact the quality of the ACAOM pre-accredited or accredited programs and compliance with *Commission Standards and Criteria for Accreditation*.

## **H. Site Visits**

Although Commissioners and staff are not expected to conduct site visits, on rare occasions a Commissioner or staff member may be invited to participate on a site visit team. Site visits may include pre-accreditation, accreditation and/or continuing accreditation visits, interim site visits, fact finding visits, or focused site visits for certain categories of substantive changes.

ACAOM's Site Visitor Manual found on the [Commission's website](#) sets forth the roles and responsibilities of site visitors, standards of conduct, as well as information and instructions for conducting the visit.

## **I. Commission Decision-Making**

Certain categories of Commission decisions may be delegated to a Commission Review Committee or handled by the full Commission, either virtually (by email ballot) or during

ACAOM's bi-annual meetings. The following presents the types of Commission program decisions and the entity responsible:

#### **Pre-accreditation, Accreditation and Continuing Accreditation Decisions**

- Full Commission at ACAOM's bi-annual meetings

#### **Interim, Monitoring and Supplement Information Reports/Biannual Progress Reports**

- Typically, the assigned Review Committee reviews and takes actions on such reports. In instances where reports raise significant issues relative to compliance with Commission Standards and Criteria for Accreditation, the Review Committee in consultation with the Executive Director may require additional monitoring actions up to and including requiring the program to host an interim site visit. The resulting site visit report would then be reviewed by the committee and forwarded for full Commission consideration.

#### **Annual Reports**

Annual Reports are reviewed by ACAOM staff. Reports that fail to meet ACAOM's standards and criteria thresholds, or raise issues of concern, are timely forwarded to Review Committee members for the respective program/institution and may be placed before the full Commission for its review and action.

#### **Substantive Change Reports/Site Visits**

Typically, the assigned Review Committee makes decisions on behalf of the Commission to approve applications for substantive changes. Certain types of substantive changes, particularly those that require a site visit, may require full Commission approval.

#### **Formal Complaints**

Complaints against pre-accredited or accredited programs and institutions that fall within [ACAOM's Complaint Review Policy](#) may either be handled by staff, a Review Committee, or by the full Commission depending on the nature of the complaint.

#### **Additional Comments**

Commissioners with a conflict of interest with a program reviewed by the Commission do not receive the record for the program in question and cannot participate in the Commission deliberations or vote on that program.

Commissioners without a conflict of interest for the program being reviewed are expected to:

- Read the entire record contained in the Commission meeting agenda materials for each program prior to Commission meeting deliberation on the program;
- Provide complete and timely documentation and comments on school reviews to staff reviewers, where applicable;
- Fully participate in Commission hearings on program reviews; and,
- Fully participate in program deliberations, whether at the Review Committee level or during the Executive Session of Commission decision meetings.

### **3. SERVING ON COMMISSION COMMITTEES**

As a Commissioner, you may be assigned to serve on one or more Commission Committees or Task Forces. Such Committees deliberate either in person or by conference calls, mailings, e-mail and FAX ballot. Each committee is chaired by a Commissioner appointed by the ACAOM Chair. Committee Chairs are required to coordinate the committee review of matters within the committee's charter or charge, including the coordination with staff of committee agendas and conference calls.

All Commission Committees and Task Forces, except the ACAOM Executive Committee and Program Review Committees, are appointed by the Commission Chair. Program Review Committees are appointed by ACAOM Executive Director. See **Appendix A** for the charters of all active Commission committees.

#### **A. Executive Committee**

This Committee, required under ACAOM Bylaws, is composed of the officers of the Commission (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer). The Executive Director also serves on the Committee as an ex officio member. The Executive Committee has the authority to act on urgent items between Commission meetings, the urgency of the items to be determined by the Commission Chair. The Committee also conducts regular conference calls to discuss other issues and matters relevant to the administration of ACAOM affairs. The Committee is required to report its actions to the Commission for consideration and ratification. The Executive Committee typically conducts conference calls on a quarterly and/or as needed basis.

#### **B. Nominations Committee**

This is another Bylaws Committee composed of up to three Commissioners appointed by the Chair. The Committee's role is to solicit and screen nominees for election as Commissioners. The Committee prepares a slate of nominees for each anticipated vacancy on the Commission. The report is then placed on the Commission meeting agenda for consideration and action. The Nominations Committee typically conducts conference calls on a quarterly basis.

#### **C. Audit & Finance Committee**

The Audit & Finance Committee is a standing ACAOM Committee that reviews staff and CPA prepared financial reports, reviews and statements, budget proposals, and considers ACAOM's investment strategies prior to consideration and action by the Commission. The Committee typically conducts conference calls on a quarterly basis and is chaired by the Treasurer.

#### **D. Standards and Criteria Committee**

The Committee, which is composed of Commissioners, considers and recommends for Commission action proposed changes to Commission Standards and Criteria. The Standards and Criteria Committee typically conducts conference calls on a quarterly basis.

#### **E. Accreditation Process Evaluation Committee**

This Committee, which is composed of Commissioners, assesses the effectiveness of ACAOM accreditation processes, policies, procedures and protocols to consider and recommend for Commission action on proposed changes to those processes, procedures and protocols. The Committee typically conducts conference calls on a bi-annual basis.

#### **F. Other Committees and Task Forces**

In addition to standing committees and committees mandated in the ACAOM Bylaws, the Commission may establish various Ad Hoc Committees and Task Forces to study and provide recommendations to the Commission on issues set forth in the charter, or charges established for such committees or Task Forces. Examples include:

Ad hoc committees:

- Distance Learning Committee
- Information Technology Committee
- Planning and Development Committee

Task Forces:

- Doctoral Task Force
- Re-conceptualized Masters Standards Task Force.

All Commissioners who are assigned to serve on a Commission Committee or Task Force are expected to read all relevant documentation and participate fully in the committee/task force deliberation process.

### **4. ATTENDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Commissioners are expected to attend all Commission meetings and fulfill all assigned Commission responsibilities in a timely and competent manner. Failure to attend meetings and/or to adequately fulfill Commissioners' responsibilities undermines ACAOM's effectiveness and places an undue burden on Commission resources. Competent and timely review of school reports and meeting attendance, as well as thorough preparation for Commission meetings are particularly critical to ACAOM operations.

Commissioners who do not believe that they can adequately fulfill their roles and responsibilities should contact the Executive Director or Commission Chair to discuss whether it might be better for the Commissioner to resign from his or her position. Commissioners who have demonstrated difficulty in performing critical Commissioner roles and responsibilities will be contacted by the Commission Chair.

## 5. COMMISSIONER CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

### **Commissioner Code of Conduct**

Commissioners must strictly comply with the Commission's [Code of Conduct and Professional Ethics Guide](#) (Code) and [Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement](#). All Commissioners must demonstrate their commitment to comply with the Code by signing an acknowledgement statement at each Commission meeting that they understand the principles and standards in the Code and agree to comply with them. Additionally, Commissioners are under a continuing obligation to timely disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest (See [ACAOM Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form](#)).

### **Program Review Hearings**

Commissioners are expected to be sensitive and tactful during school review hearings. Unduly hostile questioning of program representatives must be avoided. Commissioners should also attempt to avoid questions which place program representatives in an embarrassing position regardless of how the questions are answered. For example, questions along the following lines should be avoided (e.g., Have you ceased the practice of providing misleading advertising to prospective students?). In this regard, Commissioners should acknowledge that certain issues may be particularly sensitive for programs to address, such as difficult personnel or financial matters, and particularly on matters where a Commissioner suspects that the program has not acted with honesty and integrity (e.g., providing untruthful or misleading information to the Commission or students). If an individual Commissioner, from his or her review of the program record of review, anticipates asking questions which could be deemed sensitive or embarrassing for the program, the Commissioner should contact staff or the Commission Chair before the hearing on ways in which the necessary information can be sought from the program in a dignified and appropriate manner.

# **APPENDIX A**

## NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE CHARTER

### 1. Purpose

Consistent with Article VI, Section 3-5 of the [ACAOM Bylaws](#), the purpose of the Nominations Committee is to "...solicit and screen nominees [for possible service as Commissioners] and to present a slate of [qualified] nominees to the Commission for action..."

### 2. Structure and Membership

Number. The Nominations Committee consists of up to three Commissioners appointed annually by the Commission Chair (Article VI, Section 4 of ACAOM Bylaws). The Committee composition should optimally include a balance of institutional, practitioner and public members of the Commission.

Chair. The Chair of the Nominations Committee shall be appointed by the Commission Chair.

### 6. Authority, Responsibilities and Procedures

#### **General**

The Nominations Committee shall oversee the ACAOM nominations process for electing Commissioners. The Committee considers and screens nominees, taking into consideration the credentials of each candidate relative to the criteria for the specific Commission vacancy and the educational and professional backgrounds and expertise of candidates that would enable the Commission to better fulfill its mission. Based on its review of candidates that meet the criteria for service on the Commission, the Committee develops and presents a recommended slate of qualified nominees to the Commission for consideration and action.

### 7. Criteria for Developing Slates for Commission Consideration

Each candidate considered by the Nominations Committee must meet the following Criteria set forth in Article VI, Section 3-5 of the ACAOM Bylaws for the relevant Commission vacancy:

There shall be eleven (11) Commissioners, and they shall be elected by the Commissioners, acting within the nomination and election process established by the Commission. Commissioners shall be elected based on the following categories as defined below:

- 2 shall be administrator members,
- 2 shall be academic members,
- 2 shall be educator members, who shall be elected from programs that are either accredited by it or in candidacy with the Commission
- 2 shall be practitioners of acupuncture or Oriental medicine,
- 2 shall be public members,
- 1 shall be an "at-large" member.

There shall also be an Executive Director who shall act as an ex officio non-voting member of the Commission.

## 8. Commissioner Category Definitions:

An *administrator* member is someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary program or institutional administration

An *academic member* is someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary teaching and/or research.

An *educator* member is someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary education in an academic capacity (e.g., professor, instructor, academic dean)

A *practitioner member* is a person whose principal source of income is as a practitioner of acupuncture or Oriental medicine. Practitioner members should be actively involved in the development of the profession.

A *public member* is a person who is not a) an employee, member of the governing board, owner, or shareholder of, or consultant to, an institution or program that either has achieved ACAOM Accreditation or Candidacy status, or has applied for Accreditation or Candidacy; b) a member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated, or associated with ACAOM; or, c) a spouse, parent, child, sibling of an individual or individuals described in a) or b) of this definition; or d) a practitioner as defined below.

Any individual may be elected as an “*at large*” member of the Commission.

The composition of the Commission must be constructed such that it includes a diverse range of individuals among whom serve in a) academic leadership roles; b) college administrative roles; and, c) as faculty of acupuncture & Oriental medicine programs.

If, during the term of a Commissioner, the category status of that Commissioner changes relative to the Commission’s definitions of administrator, academic, educator, practitioner, public, at-large members or, in the case of an educator member, employment status changes, or his/her institution of employment is no longer accredited or in candidacy with this Commission, then that Commissioner may complete that current term. If there is an open category and that Commissioner is qualified, the Executive Committee may appoint the Commissioner(s) to the new category(ies) for the remainder of the term(s).

In addition to meeting the forgoing criteria for the seat in question, the Nominations Committee must also take the following factors into consideration when developing a slate of nominees for Commission review and action:

- Prior experience as a site visitor;
- Diversity on the Commission (e.g., gender, ethnicity); geographical location among Commissioners; academic training and professional experience; balance of AOM backgrounds among Commissioners;

- For Institutional Members, a proper balance between faculty/educators, academic administrators, and Presidents/CEO's;
- Knowledge of the accreditation process;
- Sensitivity to the uniqueness and diversity of AOM programs;
- Impartiality, objective reasoning, and integrity; and,
- Capacity to devote the necessary time to serve as an effective Commissioner.

## 9. Nomination Procedures and Timelines:

- A. *Approximately seven months prior to new appointments to the Commission:*** ACAOM's Executive Director and Chair identifies the vacancies expected to occur on the Commission for any reasons, including the expiration of non-renewable terms, resignation(s), unwillingness to serve an additional term, or removal. Staff contacts each Commissioner whose term is due to expire at the next scheduled Commission meeting, but who is eligible for an additional term, to inquire whether he or she is willing to stand for election to another term. Commissioners affected must notify the Commission office in writing of their intent within one month.
- B. *Approximately six months prior to new appointments to the Commission:*** Commission staff, under the leadership of the Executive Director, solicits nominations from the communities of interest through a Commission Vacancy Announcement and Call for Nominations published in appropriate venues (e.g., ACAOM newsletter, web site, and email lists) to include the names, contact information, CV's, credentials, and other required information of qualified potential candidates for service on the Commission. An instruction letter listing the required documentation from candidates shall accompany the announcements.
- C. *Approximately four months prior to new appointments to the Commission:*** ACAOM staff receives and compiles nominations with the required credentials until the nomination deadline. Staff contacts each nominee to confirm their willingness to serve on the Commission. Staff reviews the qualifications of the potential candidates to determine their eligibility to serve on the Commission (including whether the individual appropriately meets the Bylaws definition for the vacant seat) and to ensure that an appropriate balance of the Commission's constituency would be maintained. The names and nominations documentation for all eligible candidates, including contact information, CV's or biographical sketches, statement of interest in serving on ACAOM, and licenses (if appropriate) are forwarded to the Commission Nominations Committee. Staff does not remove from consideration by the Nominations Committee any potential candidates based on the perceived suitability of one candidate over another.
- D. *Approximately three months prior to new appointments to the Commission:*** Based on the Nominations Committee review of the credentials of each nominee, the Committee selects the most qualified candidates for further consideration. A member or members of the Nominations Committee and/or the Executive Director will conduct a telephone and/or personal interview with the individual to describe the work of the Commission and determine the candidate's commitment, interest, and availability to serve on the Commission. The interviewer informs each candidate that she or he is one of many from which the Commission will make its selection.

- E. Approximately two months prior to new appointments to the Commission:** The Nominations Committee provides a slate of up to three candidates per vacant seat. The ACAOM Chair and Executive Director are apprised of the outcomes, and the slate of nominees is forwarded to the ACAOM Executive Director.
7. **Commission Agenda Item Preparation on ACAOM Election:** ACAOM Staff prepares, in consultation with the Nominations Committee, an agenda item for the Commission meeting reflecting the nominations slate(s) adopted by the Nominations Committee, which shall include CVs and/or summary of the candidates' other credentials.
8. **Commission Meeting/Election:** The Commission elects a qualified candidate for each vacant seat on the Commission. If, for any reason, the Commission rejects all the candidates on any nominations slate, the Nominations Committee and the Commission will repeat steps 1-8 until qualified Commissioners are elected to fill the vacancies. An elected candidate's status as a Commissioner becomes effective at the time of the adjournment of the meeting in which the election takes place.
9. **Election Notifications:** ACAOM staff corresponds with each candidate concerning the outcome of the election. New Commissioners are introduced to the Commission's communities of interest through its newsletter, web site, and other venues.

## AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE CHARTER

### Purpose

The purpose of the Audit and Finance Committee is to assist in the Commission's oversight of:

- the integrity of the ACAOM's financial statements;
- the Commission's financial strategy and objectives consistent with its strategic plans;
- the independent auditor's qualifications, independence and performance;
- the performance of the Commission's internal financial management functions;
- the Commission's budgeting process;
- the Commission's financial policies; and
- the Commission's investment and risk management practices.

### 1. Structure and Membership

Number. The Audit and Finance Committee shall consist of the Commission Treasurer and two additional members of the Commission appointed by the Commission Chair. The Chair of the Commission and its Executive Director shall serve on the Committee as ex officio members.

Chair. The Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee shall be the Treasurer of the Commission.

### 2. Authority and Responsibilities

#### A. General

The Audit and Finance Committee shall discharge its responsibilities and shall assess the information provided by ACAOM's management and the independent auditor, in accordance with its professional judgment. Management is responsible for the preparation, presentation, and integrity of the Commission's internal financial statements, budget proposals, and for the appropriateness of the accounting principles and practices that are used by ACAOM. The independent auditors are responsible for auditing the Commission's financial statements. The authority and responsibilities set forth in this Charter do not reflect or create any duty or obligation of Commissioner members on the Audit and Finance Committee to plan or conduct any audit, to determine or certify that the Commission's financial statements are complete, accurate, fairly presented, or in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles or applicable law, or to guarantee the independent auditor's report.

#### B. Oversight of Independent Auditors

- 1) **Selection**. The Audit and Finance Committee shall be directly responsible for appointing, evaluating, retaining and, when necessary, terminating the engagement of the independent auditor. The Audit and Finance Committee may, at its discretion, seek Commission ratification of the independent auditor it appoints.
- 2) **Compensation**. The Audit and Finance Committee shall be directly responsible for approving the compensation of the independent auditor. The Audit and Finance Committee is empowered, without further action by the Commission, to cause ACAOM to pay the

compensation of the independent auditor established by the Audit and Finance Committee consistent with the auditor engagement letter.

- 3) **Preapproval of Services.** The Audit and Finance Committee shall pre-approve all audit services to be provided to the Commission, whether provided by the principal auditor or other firms, and all other services (review, attest and non-audit) to be provided to the Commission by the independent auditor.
- 4) **Oversight.** The independent auditor shall report directly to the Audit and Finance Committee, and the Audit and Finance Committee shall be directly responsible for oversight of the work of the independent auditor. In its oversight role, the Audit and Finance Committee may, from time to time, as appropriate:
  - Receive and consider the reports made by the independent auditor regarding:
    - key accounting policies and practices;
    - alternative treatments within generally accepted accounting principles for policies and practices related to material items that have been discussed with ACAOM's management, including ramifications of the use of such alternative disclosures and treatments, and the treatment preferred by the independent auditor; and
    - other material written communications between the independent auditor and Commission management.
  - Review with the independent auditor:
    - any audit problems or difficulties the independent auditor encountered in the audit work and management's response, including any restrictions on the scope of the independent auditor's activities, or on access to, or availability of, requested information and any significant disagreements with management;
    - major issues as to the adequacy of the Commission's internal financial controls and any special audit steps adopted in light of material control deficiencies;
    - any accounting adjustments that were noted or proposed by the auditor but were passed (as material or otherwise); and
    - any communications between the Commission and the audit firm's offices respecting auditing or accounting issues presented by the engagement.

### **C. Financial Statements, Internal Financial Reports and Budget Proposals**

1. **Review and Discussion.** The Audit and Finance Committee shall review and discuss with the Commission's management and independent auditor, ACAOM-audited or reviewed financial statements or internal financial reports prepared by ACAOM management. The Committee will review and provide input on budget proposals prepared by ACAOM management.
2. **Recommendation to Board Regarding Financial Statements and Budgets.** The Audit and Finance Committee shall consider whether it will recommend to the adopting ACAOM's CPA-prepared financial statements and internal financial statements and budget proposals prepared by ACAOM management.
3. **Audit Committee Report.** The Audit and Finance Committee shall prepare a bi-annual committee report for inclusion on the Commission's summer and winter meeting agendas.

#### **D. Controls and Procedures**

1. **Oversight.** The Audit and Finance Committee shall coordinate the Commission's oversight of ACAOM's internal control over financial reporting and budgetary processes. The Committee shall receive and review the reports of budget to actual financial reports prepared by ACAOM management monthly.
2. **Risk Management.** The Audit and Finance Committee shall discuss the Commission's policies and practices with respect to risk assessment and management, including guidelines and policies to govern the process by which the Commission's exposure to risk is handled, such as ACAOM business liability and D&O insurance policies, HR Policies and Procedures, among others.
3. **Procedures for Complaints.** The Audit and Finance Committee shall establish procedures for:
  - (i) the receipt, retention and treatment of complaints received by the Commission regarding accounting, internal accounting controls or auditing matters; and
  - (ii) the confidential, anonymous submission by employees of the Commission of concerns regarding questionable accounting or auditing matters.
4. **Evaluation of Financial Strategy and Objectives.** The Audit and Finance Committee shall review and discuss with management the Commission's financial strategy and objectives.
5. **Additional Powers.** The Audit and Finance Committee shall have such other duties as may be delegated from time to time by the Commission.

#### **E. Procedures and Administration**

- a. **Meetings.** The Audit and Finance Committee shall meet by conference call as often as it deems necessary to perform its responsibilities. The Audit and Finance Committee may also act by unanimous written consent in lieu of a meeting. The Audit and Finance Committee shall periodically meet with the independent auditor. The Audit and Finance Committee shall keep such records of its meetings as it shall deem appropriate.
- b. **Reports to Board.** The Audit and Finance Committee shall provide reports to the Commission at its bi-annual meetings and at such other times as may be determined by the Committee or the Commission. The Audit and Finance Committee should review with the full Commission any issues that arise with respect to the quality or integrity of the Commission's financial statements, budgetary processes, the performance and independence of the Commission's independent auditors or the performance of internal financial management processes.
- c. **Charter.** The Audit and Finance Committee shall review and reassess the adequacy of this Charter on an annual basis and recommend any proposed changes to the Commission for approval.

## **STANDARDS AND CRITERIA COMMITTEE CHARTER**

### **1. Purpose.**

The purpose of the Standards and Criteria Committee is to:

- develop and review proposals for new or amended ACAOM *Eligibility Requirements*, and standards and criteria for reviewing institutions/programs in the accreditation process;
- coordinate the Commission's *Procedures for the Review and Revision of Eligibility Requirements, and Standards and Criteria for Accreditation*;
- coordinate or oversee the review of public comment on proposals for new or amended *Eligibility Requirements, Standards and Criteria for Accreditation*;
- provide recommendations to the Commission on proposals for new or amended *Eligibility Requirements, and Standards and Criteria for Accreditation*.

### **2. Structure and Membership**

Number. The Standards and Criteria Committee shall consist of up to seven Commissioners appointed by the Commission Chair. The Committee composition shall include a balance of institutional, practitioner and public members of the Commission.

Chair. The Chair of the Standards and Criteria Committee shall be appointed by the Commission Chair.

### **3. Authority, Responsibilities and Procedures**

#### **A. General**

The Standards and Criteria Committee shall develop and/or review proposals for new or amended standards consistent with its professional judgment and provide formal recommendations to the Commission on such proposals. ACAOM Staff and/or Standards Task Forces established by the Commission and composed of representatives of the communities of interest typically develop standards proposals for the Committee's consideration, but the Committee itself may also directly develop such proposals.

#### **B. Standards Review Process**

The Commission engages in a systematic program of review every five years that demonstrates that its existing standards are adequate to evaluate the quality of education and training provided by the institutions and programs it accredits and are relevant to the professional needs of students. The Standards and Criteria Committee is responsible for conducting, coordinating or overseeing the standards review process and providing recommendations, as appropriate, to the Commission for consideration and action. The Committee is also responsible for coordinating and/or overseeing the development of new eligibility requirements, standards and criteria.

If the Commission determines, at any point during its systematic program of review, that changes to the standards are needed, action will be initiated within 12 months to make the changes and revisions will be completed within a reasonable period. All Commission communities of interest, including but not limited to, stakeholders of institutions/programs in the accreditation process, relevant state and accrediting agencies, acupuncture and Oriental medicine organizations,

practitioners, and members of the public are notified of the proposed changes and encouraged to submit comments. The ACAOM Standards and Criteria Committee will ensure that the public comments received on standards proposals are considered before changes are finalized and presented to the Commission for consideration.

### **Procedures for Revising Standards**

- a) The Commission considers proposals for changes to its *Standards and Criteria for Accreditation* when they are presented to the Commission through:
  - internal suggestions by Commissioners or staff.
  - suggestions by ACAOM communities of interest.
  - third party testimony, either written or verbal, from students, graduates, faculty, college administrators, clinical instructors, practitioners, professional organizations, regulatory agencies, or members of the public, among others.
  - new regulations or provisions for recognition promulgated by the U.S. Secretary of Education.
- b) The Commission, through its Standards and Criteria Committee, conducts a comprehensive review of Commission Standards every five years.
- c) The Commission implements the following procedures for adopting or amending ACAOM Eligibility Requirements and Standards. Note that the Commission may adopt non-substantive changes in *ACAOM Eligibility Requirements* and *Standards and Criteria for Accreditation* for the purposes of clarification, adopt standards that are mandated by the US Secretary of Education, or adopt changes in *ACAOM Policies and Procedures* without implementing these procedures.
- d) Suggestions for change by the communities of interest, Commissioners, ACAOM Staff, or by an ACAOM-established Standards Task Force are reviewed by the Standards and Criteria Committee and, if appropriate, incorporated into a draft proposal for change.
- e) Draft proposals recommended by the Committee are presented to the Commission for its decision on whether to solicit public comment.
- f) The Commission provides opportunities for public comment on all standards proposals, which may include the solicitation of written comments, on-line standards, surveys, and public hearings.
- g) The Standards and Criteria Committee ensures that all public comment are reviewed and considered before formulating recommendations to the Commission on whether to amend or adopt standards proposals.
- h) Eligibility requirements, standards, and criteria that are adopted by the Commission are published on the ACAOM web site and included in any revisions of the *ACAOM Accreditation Manual*.

