



Policy Title: ACAOM Notification of Change Policy

Approved By: ACAOM Executive Committee

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Responsible Official: ACAOM Executive Director

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**Policy Summary:** This guidance outlines the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine’s (ACAOM or Commission) notification requirements related to institutional changes.

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### A. Background

The Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine functions as both an Institutional Accreditation agency and, for specific institutions that have been granted either regional or national accreditation by another agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, a Programmatic Accreditation agency. In keeping with federal law and Commission policy, institutions/programs accredited by the ACAOM are required to notify and, in some cases receive prior approval from, the Commission for institutional changes.

Institutions are strongly encouraged to timely contact the Commission to discuss potential changes being considered, to seek clarification on notification and fee requirements, and to obtain the appropriate substantive change instructions/application. The Commission may, at its discretion, review other institutional changes not listed here that impact the institutions/programs.

## B. Definitions:

**Additional Location** - is governed and financially supported by a main campus and offers 50% or more of an ACAOM-accredited program. An additional location offers student administrative, academic, and support services as necessary to deliver quality Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine programs (AOM). An additional location may be reviewed on an alternate accreditation cycle, depending on the distance or services offered apart from the main campus and, as determined by the Commission.

**Auxiliary Facility** – is an instructional site geographically apart from the main campus, but operated under the direction of the main campus, and offers less than 50% of one or more ACAOM-accredited or candidate programs. A majority of support services are provided at the main campus.

**Branch Campus** - is a location of an institution, whether by acquisition or internal development, that is geographically separated from a main campus. A branch campus is independent of the main campus if the location:

1. is permanent in nature;
2. offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential;
3. has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and
4. has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

**Distance Education Degree Program** - An educational process in which the majority of a degree program's instruction occurs when a student and instructor are not in the same place and includes technology that is used to support regular and substantive interactions between the instructor and the students. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may employ the following technologies: (1) the internet; (2) one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communication devices; (3) audio conferencing. Distance education may employ video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs and CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the previous three technologies. No "hands-on" portion of any laboratory or clinic-based courses within a degree program may be taught online or using technologically mediated instruction.

**For-Profit Institutions** – refers to educational institutions operated by private, profit-seeking businesses.

**Hybrid/Blended Courses** - are courses in which some ( $\leq 50\%$ ) traditional face-to-face time has been replaced by online learning or other technologically mediated learning activities. As with Distance Education Degree Programs defined above, no "hands-on" portion of any laboratory or clinic-based hybrid instruction may be taught online or using technologically mediated instruction.

**Main Campus** - the primary location of an institution accredited by ACAOM.

**Non-Profit Institutions** – an educational institution whose purposes are other than making a profit. In economic terms, a non-profit institution uses its surplus revenues to further achieve its purpose or mission, rather than distributing its surplus to the organization's shareholders (or equivalents) as profit or dividends.

**Proprietary Institutions** – an educational institution operated by private, profit-seeking businesses.

**Public Disclosure** – publication and dissemination of relevant information to help ensure that members of the public are provided full and accurate information.

**Significant program change** – as used herein, means the objectives of a program reflect changes and revisions that are no longer indicative of a program's previously approved outcomes, scope, or content.

**Significant changes in clock hours, credit hours, or program length** – as used herein means: 1) A change from clock to credit hours, or vice versa, and/or 2) A 20% or greater increase or decrease in the number of clock or credit hours required for the successful completion of an ACAOM-accredited program

**Significant changes to an accredited Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (AOM) program** as used herein means changes to an ACAOM-accredited program that affect program outcomes, program length (time), course titles, or an essential assessment component.

**Significant change to the present facilities** – as used herein means changes to a presently approved facility that impact the instructional or administrative oversight of the ACAOM-accredited programs offered.

**Significant changes to the mission or objectives of an ACAOM-accredited institution** – as used herein means a change to the mission or objectives of an institution that depart from previously approved outcomes, scope, or content.

**Substantive change** - a change that may significantly affect an institution's quality, scope, or control. Substantive changes require prior approval by the Commission to assure that the proposed change will not adversely impact the institution, the Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (AOM) program, or compliance with ACAOM standards or policies.

## **C. Notification requirements for institutions seeking or holding ACAOM INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION**

Institutions with ACAOM Institutional Accreditation status are required to inform the Commission and, in some cases, seek prior approval of change according to the following three categories of changes:

1. Changes that are defined as Substantive Change under Federal Law and/or by ACAOM Policy that require approval of the Commission prior to implementation of the change
2. Changes that require prior notification and review by the Commission
3. Changes that require notification to the Commission after a precipitating event or implementation of the change

### **1.0 Changes requiring Commission approval prior to implementation of the change**

#### **General Terms:**

- a. Substantive changes may not be initiated by the institution until prior approval is received from the Commission. The approval specifies the effective date and is not retroactive.
- b. The Commission will only accept substantive change requests for a new program from those institutions (and their branch campuses where applicable) that are in full compliance with all and *Standards and Criteria for Accreditation*.
- c. The Commission, at its discretion, reserves the right to elevate the level of review, to permit notification in less than the applicable notice period indicated below, to deny or defer implementation of a substantive change request, or to require an institution/program to suspend implementation of a substantive or other institutional change pending Commission action (e.g., insufficient information received, insufficient institution evaluation, receipt of adverse information).
- d. Institutions in pre-accreditation (candidacy) status have not yet demonstrated full compliance with Commission *Standards and Criteria for Accreditation* and are therefore ineligible to add new programs, or Distance Education under 1.15, until full initial accreditation is achieved.
- e. Substantive change forms are available from the Commission's executive office or on the ACAOM's website.

1.1 A change in location of a main campus, additional location, or branch campus.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 90 days prior to implementation

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation verification visit is required within 6 months.

1.2 The establishment of an additional location offering 50% or more of a program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 90 days prior to implementation

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation verification visit is required within 6 months.

**Commission Comments:**

- 1) Additional locations reviewed on an alternate accreditation cycle from the main campus are responsible for submitting appropriate annual reports and fees as geographically independent locations.
- 2) Additional locations that are approved by the Commission to offer existing accredited programs are extended the accreditation status of those programs at the main campus. (The addition of new programs at a new location requires separate substantive change approval.)

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Specific required language will be included in the action letter for this substantive change. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

1.3 The establishment of a branch campus.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** Six (6) months prior to implementation

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation verification visit is required within 6 months.

**Commission Comments:**

A branch campus is considered a separate institution that must attain programmatic accreditation independent of the main campus for any AOM programs offered. A location seeking to become a branch campus must first be an ACAOM-approved additional location by completing the appropriate substantive change process.

In general, institutions seeking to establish a branch campus must submit a substantive change application and a business plan that describes the educational program(s) to be offered; a budget projecting revenues, expenditures, and expected cash flow; and a description of the operation, management, and physical resources required to operate the new site.

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Specific required language will be included in the action letter for this substantive change. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

1.4 The acquisition of any other AOM institution or any AOM program or location of another institution that offers 50% or more of an AOM program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 6 months prior to implementation

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation visit is required within 6 months.

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Specific required language will be included in the action letter for this substantive change. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

- 1.5 The addition of a Master of Acupuncture degree program by an institution that offers an accredited Master of Oriental Medicine degree program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 60 days prior to implementation

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Specific required language will be included in the action letter for this substantive change. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

- 1.6 The offering of an Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (AOM) accredited program in another language. The identical degree program must first be ACAOM-accredited in English. Note: At this time, the Commission will review institutions wishing to offer their accredited English program(s) in either Chinese or Korean.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 6 months prior to implementation – Additional Language Program Applications are due by April 1st or October 1st annually. Applications will be considered at the subsequent Commission meeting.

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation focused visit is required within 6 months.

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Specific required language will be included in the action letter for this substantive change. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

- 1.7 The addition of a Master of Oriental Medicine degree program by an institution that offers an accredited Master of Acupuncture degree program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** Higher Degree Program Applications are accepted by April 1st or October 1st annually; once accepted as complete, applications will be considered at the subsequent Commission meeting.

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation focused visit is required within 6 months.

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

- 1.8 The addition of an AOM program at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution's current scope of accreditation (e.g., addition of a post-graduate Doctor of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine or Professional Doctoral Degree (PD)) or the addition of a second doctoral program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** Higher Degree Program Applications are accepted on April 1st or October 1st annually; once accepted as complete, applications will be considered at the subsequent Commission meeting.

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation visit is required within 6 months of beginning student enrollment with subsequent action based on Commission review.

**Note:** The Commission will only approve a substantive change allowing institutions to begin enrolling students in Professional Doctoral Degree programs when all ACAOM-accredited programs are in full compliance with ACAOM's *Eligibility Requirements*, and *Standards and Criteria for Accreditation*. Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Specific required language will be included in the action letter for this substantive change. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

1.9 Significant changes in clock hours, credit hours, or program length.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 90 days prior to implementation

1.10 Any significant change to the objectives of an ACAOM-accredited program since it was last evaluated.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 90 days prior to implementation

1.11 Intentionally left blank.

1.12 Any change in the institutional mission, legal status, form of control, or ownership of an institution.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 90 days

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation focused visit is required within 6 months of the date of effective date of change.

1.13 The addition of a permanent location at a site at which the ACAOM-accredited institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 90 days

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation verification visit is required within 6 months.

1.14 Entering into a contract under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in Title IV, HEA programs offers more than 25 percent of one or more of the ACAOM-accredited institution's educational programs.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 90 days

1.15 The addition of a first AOM-related distance education course.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee with documentation demonstrating institutional accreditor approval of distance education methodologies.

**Notice:** 6 months with a required site visit for a first distance education course. Three (3) months and prior ACAOM approval is required for subsequent distance education courses.

**Note:** Only didactic courses/content, limited to no more than 49% of an ACAOM-accredited educational program as measured by credits/hours, may be offered via distance education at this time. All distance education courses must be offered in English at this time.

1.16 The addition of an AOM-related certificate program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 90 days

**Required Documentation:** A business plan for the intended certificate program including an analysis of the expected impact on the accredited program(s) and associated resources, whether or not a credential will be awarded, and whether or not it is the intention to award Title IV federal financial aid for the certificate program.

## 2.0 Changes requiring prior Commission notification and review

### General Terms

ACAOM-accredited institutions are required to notify the Commission and provide appropriate supporting documentation within 30 days of implementing the changes below that do not normally require Commission prior approval or a site visit. These changes require a Letter of Notification to ACAOM and/or a Staff Review, as outlined below. At ACAOM's discretion, these changes may require further documentation, a focused site visit, or prior approval by the Commission.

2.1 The establishment of an auxiliary facility offering less than 50% of a program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** 30 days prior to planned implementation

**Required Documentation:** A summary of the facility and faculty involved and how the space will be utilized. A copy of the affiliation agreement or lease (if any).

2.2 Any significant change to present facilities.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review. If changes are deemed substantive, additional information or a focused site visit may be required.

**Notice:** 30 days prior to planned implementation

**Required Documentation:** Rationale for the change to facilities and its impact to accredited ACAOM programs.

2.3 Any significant change to an accredited AOM program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review. If changes are deemed substantive, additional information or a focused site visit may be required.

**Notice:** 30 days prior to planned implementation.

**Required Documentation:** Rationale for the change to the ACAOM-accredited program and its impact.

2.4 Any change in the name of an ACAOM-accredited institution or any change in the name of an ACAOM-accredited program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Letter of Notification to ACAOM

**Notice:** 60 days prior to change in name

**Required Documentation:** Rationale for the change in name of the institution or rationale for the change in name of the accredited program(s).

2.5 Intentionally left blank.

2.6 Filings of petitions for bankruptcy or reorganization.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** 30 days prior to filing a petition for bankruptcy or reorganization.

**Required Documentation:** 1) Copy of the petition for bankruptcy or reorganization and 2) a teach-out plan if applicable.

2.7 Voluntary withdrawal of accreditation from ACAOM or another accrediting agency.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** 30 days prior to voluntarily withdrawing accreditation

**Required Documentation:** 1) Letter explaining the reasons for withdrawing accreditation and 2) a teach-out plan if applicable.

**Site Visit:** A focused site visit may be required.

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this change. Specific required language will be provided by ACAOM. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

2.8 A decision to cease operations, close, or propose a teach-out of students.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** 30 days prior to the decision.

**Required Documentation:** Proposed Teach-Out Plan

**Site Visit:** A focused visit may be required.

**Notes:** (1) Public disclosure is required for this change. Specific required language will be provided by ACAOM. Please see section on Public Disclosure.  
(2) Institutions should also refer to 3.11 *Policy Statement on Closure of an Institution or Program, Teach-Out Plans and Agreements*

2.9 The addition of an AOM-related continuing education program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** 30 days prior to planned implementation

**Required Documentation:** A business plan for the intended continuing education program including an analysis of the expected impact on the accredited program(s) and associated resources for the continuing education program.

## 3.0 Changes requiring post-implementation notification

### General Terms

ACAOM-accredited institutions must notify the agency of any material event or circumstance that will or could affect the institution's operations, policies, staff, curricula, reputation, approval status, financial status, or authority to operate as a legal entity. Such notification must be made in writing within the specified timeframe of the event's occurrence.

These notifications are in addition to disclosures required in applications for pre-accreditation (candidacy), initial accreditation, continuing accreditation, annual reports, or any substantive change report or non-substantive change notification. ACAOM will review the notification and either accept the notification or at ACAOM's discretion, require further documentation, a higher-level review, or other Commission action.

3.1 Actions taken by external agencies.

Actions taken by external agencies that may affect the accredited institution require that a Letter of Notification be submitted to ACAOM within 30 days of the institution's receipt of official notification and/or agency letter. Actions that must be reported include:

- Any action against the institution to deny, limit, suspend, or terminate student loan guarantees or participation in external programs by a guaranty agency or the U.S. Department of Education **or** any determination in accordance with requirements of the U.S. Department of Education that the institution is not meeting its requirements.
- Any limitation, sanction (e.g., warning or probationary status), suspension, or withdrawal of an institution's license or right to operate or program approvals **or** any determination in accordance with requirements of a state or other applicable regulatory agency (including state authorization) that the school is not meeting applicable requirements or is in violation of any law.

- Investigations by state or federal authorities, beyond those required in the normal course, related to an institution's licensure, approval to operate, program approval(s), or participation in federal programs.
- Any grant of accreditation by another accrediting agency or any issued warning, show cause order, imposition of probationary status, or denial or withdrawal of accreditation by another accrediting agency.
- Any action to deny, limit, suspend, or withdraw/revoke an institution or program approval or recognition with any agency that grants certification or licensure to its graduates.
- Any criminal or civil action filed by a state (including state-supported legal assistance agencies) or federal authorities against the institution, its officers, or employees.
- The results of any lawsuit or investigation brought against the institution, its officers, or employees that determine an institution or program is not meeting applicable requirements or is in violation of law or regulation.

**Required Documentation:** 1) Copy of the official notification and/or agency letter disclosing the rationale for its action, and 2) the institution's response to the official notification including of all relevant documents and any remediation plan proposed to address the agency's action.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff review the notification to determine if the specific action being taken will place the institution in non-compliance with the Commission's accreditation standards or policies, and provide a recommendation to the Review Committee as to whether the Commission should:

- 1) Issue a finding of non-compliance,
- 2) Require a supplemental information report,
- 3) Deny pre-accreditation (candidacy) or initial accreditation
- 4) Defer action
- 5) Continue accreditation
- 6) Require monitoring action
- 7) Issue a formal notice of concern
- 8) Impose probation
- 9) Permit a good cause extension
- 10) Terminate accreditation

**Site Visit:** A focused site visit may be required.

### 3.2 A qualified or adverse financial statement.

Any qualified or adverse statement, or statement related to an institution's status as a "going concern," included in an audited financial statement or financial review report.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** Within 30 days of receiving audited financial statement or financial review report.

**Required Documentation:** 1) Opinion letter, 2) audited financial statement or financial review, 3) and a letter from the institution explaining the financial status of the institution.

### 3.3 A change in administrative leadership.

- (a) Change in the president/chief executive officer of the organization that owns or controls the institution, or
- (b) Changes to the board of directors other than in the normal course of term completion, or
- (c) Change in the administrative leadership of the AOM program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** Within 30 days of the change.

**Required Documentation relevant to change(s) above:**

- 1) Name, contact information, and bio of new president/chief executive officer
- 2) Summary of changes to board of directors
- 3) Resumes of new administrative leadership for AOM program

3.4 Any matter that may be deemed to significantly impact the character or quality of the institution or AOM program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** Within 30 days of the decision.

**Required Documentation:** Summary of the change and explanation of the impact to the institution or AOM program.

**Site Visit:** A focused visit may be required.

3.5 A 20% or more increase or decrease in the size of the faculty or student population.

**Instructions:** If the number of faculty or student population increases or decreases by 20% or more as compared to the institution's ACAOM annual report for the previous year, the institution must submit an analysis of the impact of the enrollment increase or decrease on the capacity of the institution and its AOM programs to continue meeting ACAOM accreditation standards.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review.

**Notice:** Within 30 days of the increase or decrease.

**Required Documentation:** Rationale and impact of increase or decrease in faculty size or student population.

3.6 The destruction of an institution or a significant part of its facilities.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** Subject to emergency response, as soon as possible after the event.

**Required Documentation:** Description of impact to the institution or AOM program, planned response, and public notification.

**Site Visit:** A focused visit may be required.

**Table 1: Institutional Accreditation Change Notification and Review Procedures**

\* The Commission may at its discretion establish follow-up requirements or other conditions for any substantive change actions.

Type of Change	Notice to ACAOM	Level of Review	Follow-up Required*
<b>Category 1: Prior Approval Required — Substantive Change</b>			
1.1 Change of location (main campus, branch campus or additional location)	90 days prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation
1.2 Additional location offering 50% or more of a program	90 days prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation. Public disclosure required.
1.3 Addition of branch campus	90 days prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation. Public disclosure required.
1.4 Acquisition of another AOM program or institution	90 days prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation. Public disclosure required.
1.5 Addition of M.Ac. program	60 days prior	Review Committee	Public disclosure required.
1.6 Addition of AOM program in language other than English	6 months prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation. Public disclosure required.
1.7 Addition of M.Om. program	6 months prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation. Public disclosure required.
1.8 Addition of new degree or credential level	1 year prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation. Public disclosure required.
1.9 Change in clock hours, credit hours or program length	90 days prior	Review Committee	
1.10 Significant departure in program objectives	90 days prior	Review Committee	
1.11 <i>Intentionally left blank</i>			
1.12 Change in mission, legal status, control, or ownership	90 days prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation
1.13 Additional permanent location to teach out another institution's students	90 days prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation. Public disclosure required.
1.14 Contract with an unaccredited organization offering 25% or more of a program	90 days prior	Review Committee	
1.15 Addition of a first AOM-related distance education course	6 months prior	Review Committee	
1.16 Addition of an AOM-related certificate program	90 days prior	Review Committee	

**Table 1: Institutional Change Notification and Review Procedures – Summary Table (Continued)**

Type of Change	Notice to ACAOM	Level of Review	Follow-up Required
<b>Category 2: Prior Notice and Review Required</b>			
2.1 Additional location offering less than 50% of a program	30 days prior	Staff Review	
2.2 Significant change to facilities	30 days prior	Staff Review	Additional information or a focused visit may be required
2.3 Significant change to accredited AOM program	30 days prior	Staff Review	Additional information or a focused visit may be required
2.4 Name change of institution or program	30 days prior	Notification	
2.5 <i>Intentionally left blank</i>			
2.6 Bankruptcy or reorganization	30 days prior	Staff Review	Focused visit may be required
2.7 Voluntary withdrawal of accreditation	30 days prior	Staff Review	Focused visit may be required. Public disclosure required.
2.8 Ceasing operations, closing the institution, or proposing a teach-out of students	30 days prior	Staff Review	Focused visit may be required. Teach out plan required. Public disclosure required.
2.9 Addition of an AOM-related continuing education (or certificate) program	30 days prior	Staff Review	Additional information or a focused visit may be required
<b>Category 3. Post Implementation Notification Required</b>			
3.1 External agency actions	Within 30 days	Staff Review	Additional information or a focused visit may be required
3.2 Qualified or adverse statement in audited financial statement	Within 30 days	Staff Review	Additional information or a focused visit may be required
3.3 Administrative leadership changes	Within 30 days	Staff Review	
3.4 Matter that may significantly impact character or quality of institution or AOM program	Within 30 days	Staff Review	Focused visit may be required
3.5 20% or more increase or decrease in size of faculty or student population	Within 30 days	Staff Review	Focused visit may be required
3.6 Destruction of an institution or a significant part of its facilities	Subject to emergency response, as soon as possible after the event.	Staff Review	Focused visit may be required

## D. Notification requirements for institutions seeking or holding ACAOM PROGRAMMATIC ACCREDITATION

### General Terms:

Institutions with ACAOM Programmatic Accreditation status are required to inform the Commission and, in some cases, seek prior approval of institutional change according to the following three categories of institutional changes:

1. Changes that are defined as Substantive Change under Federal Law and/or by ACAOM Policy that require approval of the Commission prior to implementation of the change
2. Changes that require prior notification and review by the Commission
3. Changes that require notification to the Commission after a precipitating event or implementation of the change

### 1.0 Changes requiring Commission approval prior to implementation of the change

#### General Terms:

- a. Substantive changes may not be initiated by the institution until prior approval is received from the Commission. The approval specifies the effective date and is not retroactive.
  - b. The Commission will only accept substantive change requests for a new program from those institutions (and their branch campuses where applicable) that are in full compliance with all *ACAOM Eligibility Requirements and Standards and Criteria for Accreditation*.
  - c. The Commission, at its discretion, reserves the right to elevate the level of review, to permit notification in less than the applicable notice period indicated below, or to require an institution/program to suspend implementation of a substantive or other institutional change pending Commission action (e.g., insufficient information received, insufficient institution evaluation, receipt of adverse information).
  - d. Institutions in pre-accreditation (candidacy) status have not yet demonstrated full compliance with Commission *Standards and Criteria for Accreditation* and are therefore ineligible to add new programs until full initial accreditation is achieved.
  - e. Substantive change forms are available from the Commission's executive office or on the ACAOM's website.
- 1.1 A change in location of a main campus, additional location, or branch campus.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 90 days prior to implementation

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation verification visit is required within 6 months.

- 1.2 The establishment of an additional location offering 50% or more of a program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 90 days prior to implementation

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation verification visit is required within 6 months.

**Commission Comments:**

- 3) Additional locations reviewed on an alternate accreditation cycle from the main campus are responsible for submitting appropriate annual reports and fees as geographically independent locations.
- 4) Additional locations that are approved by the Commission to offer existing accredited programs are extended the accreditation status of those programs at the main campus. (The addition of new programs at a new location requires separate substantive change approval.)

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Specific required language will be included in the action letter for this substantive change. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

1.3 The establishment of a branch campus.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** Six (6) months prior to implementation

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation verification visit is required within 6 months.

**Commission Comments:**

A branch campus is considered a separate institution that must attain programmatic accreditation independent of the main campus for any AOM programs offered. A location seeking to become a branch campus must first be an ACAOM-approved additional location by completing the appropriate substantive change process.

In general, institutions seeking to establish a branch campus must submit a substantive change application and a business plan that describes the educational program(s) to be offered; a budget projecting revenues, expenditures, and expected cash flow; and a description of the operation, management, and physical resources required to operate the new site.

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Specific required language will be included in the action letter for this substantive change. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

1.4 The acquisition of any other AOM institution or any AOM program or location of another institution that offers 50% or more of an AOM program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 6 months prior to implementation

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation visit is required within 6 months.

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Specific required language will be included in the action letter for this substantive change. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

1.5 The addition of a Master of Acupuncture degree program by an institution that offers an accredited Master of Oriental Medicine degree program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 60 days prior to implementation

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Specific required language will be included in the action letter for this substantive change. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

- 1.6 The offering of an Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (AOM) accredited program in another language. The identical degree program must first be ACAOM-accredited in English. Note: At this time the Commission will review institutions wishing to offer their accredited English program(s) in either Chinese or Korean.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 6 months prior to implementation – Additional Language Program Applications are due by April 1st or October 1st annually. Applications will be considered at the subsequent Commission meeting.

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation focused visit is required within 6 months.

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Specific required language will be included in the action letter for this substantive change. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

- 1.7 The addition of a Master of Oriental Medicine degree program by an institution that offers an accredited Master of Acupuncture degree program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** Higher Degree Program Applications are accepted by April 1st or October 1st annually; once accepted as complete, applications will be considered at the subsequent Commission meeting.

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation focused visit is required within 6 months.

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

- 1.8 The addition of an AOM program at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution's current scope of accreditation (e.g., addition of a post-graduate Doctor of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine or Professional Doctoral Degree (PD)) or the addition of a second doctoral program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** Higher Degree Program Applications are accepted on April 1st or October 1st annually; once accepted as complete, applications will be considered at the subsequent Commission meeting.

**Site Visit:** Post-implementation visit is required within 6 months of beginning student enrollment with subsequent action based on Commission review.

**Note:** The Commission will only approve a substantive change allowing institutions to begin enrolling students in Professional Doctoral Degree programs when all ACAOM-accredited programs are in full compliance with ACAOM's *Eligibility Requirements*, and *Standards and Criteria for Accreditation*. Public disclosure is required for this substantive change. Specific required language will be included in the action letter for this substantive change. Please see Section E on Public Disclosure.

- 1.9 Significant changes in clock hours, credit hours, or program length.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 90 days prior to implementation

1.10 Any significant change to the objectives of an ACAOM-accredited program since it was last evaluated.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 90 days prior to implementation

1.11 Intentionally left blank.

1.12 Intentionally left blank.

1.13 Intentionally left blank.

1.14 Intentionally left blank.

1.15 The addition of a first AOM-related distance education course.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 6 months

**Note:** Only didactic courses/content, limited to no more than 49% of an ACAOM-accredited educational program as measured by credits/hours, may be offered via distance education at this time. The first course to be offered via distance education must be offered in English. Three (3) months notification and prior ACAOM approval is required for all subsequent distance education courses.

1.16 The addition of an AOM-related certificate program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Review Committee

**Notice:** 90 days

**Required Documentation:** A business plan for the intended certificate program including an analysis of the expected impact on the accredited program(s) and associated resources, whether or not a credential will be awarded, and whether or not it is the intention to award Title IV federal financial aid for the certificate program.

## 2.0 Changes requiring prior Commission notification and review

### General Terms

ACAOM-accredited institutions are required to notify the Commission and provide appropriate supporting documentation within 30 days of implementing of the changes below that do not normally require Commission prior approval or a site visit. These changes require a Letter of Notification to ACAOM and/or a Staff Review, as outlined below. At ACAOM's discretion, these changes may require further documentation, a focused site visit, or prior approval by the Commission

2.1 The establishment of an auxiliary facility offering less than 50% of a program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** 30 days prior to planned implementation

**Required Documentation:** A summary of the facility and faculty involved and how the space will be utilized. A copy of the affiliation agreement or lease (if any).

2.2 Any significant change to present facilities.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review. If changes are deemed substantive, additional information or a focused site visit may be required.

**Notice:** 30 days prior to planned implementation

**Required Documentation:** Rationale for the change to facilities and its impact to accredited ACAOM programs.

2.3 Any significant change to an accredited AOM program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review. If changes are deemed substantive, additional information or a focused site visit may be required.

**Notice:** 30 days prior to planned implementation.

**Required Documentation:** Rationale for the change to the ACAOM-accredited program and its impact.

2.4 Any change in the name of an ACAOM-accredited institution or any change in the name of an ACAOM-accredited program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Letter of Notification to ACAOM

**Notice:** 60 days prior to change in name

**Required Documentation:** Rationale for the change in name of the institution or rationale for the change in name of the accredited program(s).

2.5 Any minor change in the program purpose, goals and/or objectives since it was last evaluated.

**Initial Level of Review:** Letter of Notification to ACAOM

**Notice:** 30 days prior to the change.

**Required Documentation:** Analysis reflecting a comparison of the approved mission or objectives and proposed mission or objectives.

2.6 Filings of petitions for bankruptcy or reorganization.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** 30 days prior to filing a petition for bankruptcy or reorganization.

**Required Documentation:** 1) Copy of the petition for bankruptcy or reorganization and 2) a teach-out plan if applicable.

2.7 Voluntary withdrawal of accreditation from ACAOM or another accrediting agency.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** 30 days prior to voluntarily withdrawing accreditation.

**Required Documentation:** 1) Letter explaining the reasons for withdrawing accreditation and 2) a teach-out plan if applicable.

**Site Visit:** A focused site visit may be required.

**Note:** Public disclosure is required for this change. Specific required language will be provided by ACAOM. Please see section on Public Disclosure.

2.8 A decision to cease operations, close, or propose a teach-out of students.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** 30 days prior to the decision.

**Required Documentation:** Proposed Teach-Out Plan

**Site Visit:** A focused visit may be required.

**Notes:** (1) Public disclosure is required for this change. Specific required language will be provided by ACAOM. Please see section on Public Disclosure.  
(2) Institutions should also refer to 3.11 *Policy Statement on Closure of an Institution or Program, Teach-Out Plans and Agreements*

2.9 The addition of an AOM-related continuing education program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** 30 days prior to planned implementation

**Required Documentation:** A business plan for the intended continuing education program including an analysis of the expected impact on the accredited program(s) and associated resources for the continuing education program.

## 3.0 Changes requiring post-implementation notification

### General Terms

ACAOM-accredited institutions must notify the agency of any material event or circumstance that will or could affect the institution's operations, policies, staff, curricula, reputation, approval status, financial status, or authority to operate as a legal entity. Such notification must be made in writing within the specified timeframe of the event's occurrence.

These notifications are in addition to disclosures required in applications for pre-accreditation (candidacy), initial accreditation, continuing accreditation, annual reports, or any substantive change report or non-substantive change notification. ACAOM will review the notification and either accept the notification or at ACAOM's discretion, require further documentation, a higher level review, or other Commission action.

3.1 Actions taken by external agencies.

Actions taken by external agencies that may affect the accredited institution require that a Letter of Notification be submitted to ACAOM within 30 days of the institution's receipt of official notification and/or agency letter. Actions that must be reported include:

- Any action against the institution to deny, limit, suspend, or terminate student loan guarantees or participation in external programs by a guaranty agency or the U.S. Department of Education or any determination in accordance with requirements of the U.S. Department of Education that the institution is not meeting its requirements.

- Any limitation, sanction (e.g., warning or probationary status), suspension, or withdrawal of an institution's license or right to operate or program approvals or any determination in accordance with requirements of a state or other applicable regulatory agency (including state authorization) that the school is not meeting applicable requirements or is in violation of any law.
- Investigations by state or federal authorities, beyond those required in the normal course, related to an institution's licensure, approval to operate, program approval(s), or participation in federal programs.
- Any grant of accreditation by another accrediting agency or any issued warning, show cause order, imposition of probationary status, or denial or withdrawal of accreditation by another accrediting agency.
- Any action to deny, limit, suspend, or withdraw/revoke an institution or program approval or recognition with any agency that grants certification or licensure to its graduates.
- Any criminal or civil action filed by a state (including state-supported legal assistance agencies) or federal authorities against the institution, its officers, or employees.
- The results of any lawsuit or investigation brought against the institution, its officers, or employees that determine an institution or program is not meeting applicable requirements or is in violation of law or regulation.

**Required Documentation:** 1) Copy of the official notification and/or agency letter disclosing the rationale for its action, and 2) the institution's response to the official notification including of all relevant documents and any remediation plan proposed to address the agency's action.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff review the notification to determine if the specific action being taken will place the institution in non-compliance with the Commission's accreditation standards or policies, and provide a recommendation to the Review Committee as to whether the Commission should:

- 1) Issue a finding of non-compliance
- 2) Require a supplemental information report
- 3) Deny pre-accreditation (candidacy) or initial accreditation
- 4) Defer action
- 5) Continue accreditation
- 6) Require monitoring action
- 7) Issue a formal notice of concern
- 8) Impose probation
- 9) Permit a good cause extension
- 10) Terminate accreditation

**Site Visit:** A focused site visit may be required.

### 3.2 A qualified or adverse financial statement.

Any qualified or adverse statement or statement related to an institution's status as a "going concern" included in an audited financial statement.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** Within 30 days of receiving audited financial statements.

**Required Documentation:** 1) Opinion letter, 2) audited financial statements, 3) and a letter from the institution explaining the financial status of the institution.

3.3 A change in administrative leadership.

- (a) Change in the president/chief executive officer of the organization that owns or controls the institution, or
- (b) Changes to the board of directors other than in the normal course of term completion, or
- (c) Change in the administrative leadership of the AOM program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** Within 30 days of the change.

**Required Documentation relevant to change(s) above:**

- 1) Name, contact information and bio of new president/chief executive officer
- 2) Summary of changes to board of directors
- 3) Resumes of new administrative leadership for AOM program

3.4 Any matter that may be deemed to significantly impact the character or quality of the institution or AOM program.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** Within 30 days of the decision.

**Required Documentation:** Explanation of the impact to the institution or AOM program.

**Site Visit:** A focused visit may be required.

3.5 A 20% or more increase or decrease in the size of the faculty or student population.

**Instructions:** If the number of faculty or student population increases or decreases by 20% or more as compared to the institution's ACAOM annual report for the previous year, the institution must submit an analysis of the impact of the enrollment increase or decrease on the capacity of the institution and its AOM programs to continue meeting ACAOM accreditation standards.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review.

**Notice:** Within 30 days of the increase or decrease.

**Required Documentation:** Rationale and impact of increase or decrease in faculty size or student population.

3.6 The destruction of an institution or a significant part of its facilities.

**Initial Level of Review:** Staff Review

**Notice:** Subject to emergency response, as soon as possible after the event,

**Required Documentation:** Description of impact to the institution or AOM program, planned response, and public notification.

**Site Visit:** A focused visit may be required.

**Table 2: Programmatic Accreditation Change Notification and Review Procedures**

\* The Commission may at its discretion establish follow-up requirements or other conditions for any substantive change actions.

Type of Change	Notice to ACAOM	Level of Review	Follow-up Required *
<b>Category 1: Prior Approval Required — Substantive Change</b>			
1.1 Change of location (main campus, branch campus or additional location)	90 days prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation
1.2 Additional location offering 50% or more of a program	90 days prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation. Public disclosure required.
1.3 Addition of branch campus	90 days prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation. Public disclosure required.
1.4 Acquisition of another AOM program or institution	90 days prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation. Public disclosure required.
1.5 Addition of a M.Ac program	60 days prior	Review Committee	Public disclosure required.
1.6 Addition of AOM program in language other than English	6 months prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation. Public disclosure required.
1.7 Addition of a M. Om program	6 months prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation. Public disclosure required.
1.8 Addition of new AOM-related degree or credential level	1 year prior	Review Committee	Site visit within 6 months after implementation. Public disclosure required.
1.9 Change in clock hours, credit hours or program length	90 days prior	Review Committee	
1.10 Significant departure in program objectives	90 days prior	Review Committee	
1.15 Addition of a first AOM-related distance education course	6 months prior	Review Committee	
1.16 Addition of an AOM-related certificate program	90 days prior	Review Committee	
<b>Category 2: Prior Review</b>			
2.1 Additional location offering less than 50% of a program	30 days prior	Staff Review	
2.2 Significant change to facilities	30 days prior	Staff Review	Additional information or a focused visit may be required
2.3 Significant change to accredited AOM program	30 days prior	Staff Review	Additional information or a focused visit may be required
2.4 Name change of institution or program	30 days prior	Notification	
2.5 Any minor change in the program purpose, goals and/or objectives since it was last evaluated	30 days prior	Notification	
2.6 Bankruptcy or reorganization	30 days prior	Staff Review	Focused visit may be required
2.7 Voluntarily withdrawal of accreditation	30 days prior	Staff Review	Focused visit may be required. Public disclosure required.
2.8 Ceasing operations, closing the institution, or proposing a teach-out of students	30 days prior	Staff Review	Focused visit may be required. Teach out plan required. Public disclosure required.

**Table 2: Programmatic Change Notification and Review Procedures – Summary Table Continued**

Type of Change	Notice to ACAOM	Level of Review	Follow-up Required *
2.9 Addition of an AOM-related continuing education program	30 days prior	Notification	Additional information or a focused visit may be required
<b>Category 3: Post Implementation Notification</b>			
3.1 External agency actions	Within 30 days of notification	Staff Review w/recommendation to Commission for further action	Additional information or a focused visit may be required
3.2 Qualified or adverse statement in audited financial statement	Within 30 days	Staff Review	Additional information or a focused visit may be required
3.3 Administrative leadership changes	Within 30 days	Staff Review	
3.4 Matter that may significantly impact character or quality of institution or AOM program	Within 30 days	Staff Review	Focused visit may be required
3.5 20% or more increase or decrease in size of faculty or student population	Within 30 days	Staff Review	Focused visit may be required
3.6 Destruction of a school or a significant part of its facilities	Subject to emergency response, as soon as possible post- event	Staff Review	Focused visit may be required

## E. Public Disclosure of Institutional Changes

Certain institutional changes require public disclosure to ensure that members of the public are provided full and accurate information concerning the institution/program. Institutions that have submitted institutional change applications/notifications will receive an action letter that approves, requests additional information, defers, or denies the change in accordance with Commission policies. The action letter will include required public disclosure language applicable to the change and identifies any other specific findings or actions of the Commission. The following types of changes require public disclosure:

1. **Substantive changes 1.2 – 1.8**  
Required public disclosure language is provided in the Commission's action letter approving the change.
2. **Institutional changes 2.7 and 2.8**  
Required public disclosure language is provided in the Commission's action letter approving the change.
3. **Institutional change 3.6**  
Public disclosure language is prepared by the institution consistent with the event at issue, the impact on students and staff, and the institution's response.

ACAOM may, at its discretion, require public disclosure for other institutional changes not identified here. In such cases, ACAOM will provide the specific public disclosure language and requirements.

### Revision History

Date Revised	Summary of Revisions	Approved By
161115	Refreshed and Reformatted.	ACAOM Executive Director
161212	Modified Programmatic Accreditation section, Category 1	ACAOM Executive Director
161220	Modifications requested by ACAOM Executive Director	ACAOM Executive Director
170308	Revisions to 1.0 and 3.1; addition of 3.6; revisions to Public Disclosure	ACAOM Executive Director
170518	Typographical corrections; revisions to 1.16, 2.9 and tables	ACAOM Executive Director
170615	Modifications to 1.11, 1.12 and 2.5 [Institutional]	ACAOM Executive Director