Policy Title: ACAOM Degree Structure and Naming Convention Policy

Approved By: ACAOM Commission

Document History: Implementation Date: 16 February 2019

Last Updated: 26 July 2019

Related Policies: ACAOM’s Notification of Change Policy; ACAOM’s Glossary;

References: ACAOM News Announcement: ACAOM enacts Degree Structure and Naming Convention; Standard 7, ACAOM Comprehensive Standards and Criteria; Federal Student Aid Handbook;

Responsible Official: ACAOM Executive Director

Policy Summary: This policy outlines ACAOM’s degree structure and naming convention.

The Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM or Commission) enacted a Degree Structure and Naming Convention at its February 2019 Commission meeting (see ACAOM News Announcement).

Effective no later than 31 December 2022, all ACAOM accredited/pre-accredited degree programs must convert to the following degree structure and naming convention (refer to Accreditation Standard 7: Program of Study for details regarding program length, professional competencies, and clinical training requirements):

**Entry-level programs:**

**Qualification for professional licensure and national certification in acupuncture**

- Master of Acupuncture (MAc)
  - unchanged from prior master’s degree program in acupuncture
- Doctor of Acupuncture (DaC)
  - unchanged from prior professional doctorate program in acupuncture

**Qualification for professional licensure where Chinese herbal medicine is required and national certification in Chinese herbology**

- Master of Chinese Herbal Medicine (MCHM)
  - applicants must be graduates of, or concurrently enrolled in, an accredited/pre-accredited entry-level program leading to qualification for professional licensure and national certification in acupuncture [as listed above].
  - The MCHM degree may only be conferred upon holders of entry-level degrees but may be awarded concurrently with an entry-level degree program leading to qualification for professional licensure and national certification in acupuncture [as listed above].
Advanced practice doctoral program:
- Doctor of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (DAOM)
  - while the “advanced practice” reference to this degree was implemented in February 2019 in ACAOM accreditation standards, policies, and related documents, the degree name and program requirements/structure remain unchanged

Guidance

GENERAL

Institutions offering ACAOM-accredited/pre-accredited programs in Oriental medicine (OM) must separate the single entry-level Oriental medicine (i.e., MOM or PD-OM) program into two entry-level degree programs, (i.e., MAc or DAc program and a MCHM). Institutions must determine what current curricular components from the OM program address the relevant Program of Study requirements, outlined in ACAOM’s Accreditation Standard 7, for the acupuncture program and for the herbal medicine program. Program design must also address the relevant admissions requirements outlined in Standard 5 and program purpose, goals and learning outcomes outlined in Standard 1.

To maintain the comprehensive nature of content and training within Oriental medicine programs, institutions may require the entry-level acupuncture (MAc or DAc) program and the Master of Chinese Herbal Medicine (MCHM) be exclusively offered as dual degree programs (refer to ACAOM’s Glossary definition). Institutions may require that dual degrees be conferred simultaneously, upon completion of degree requirements for both programs. Some states may require delivery of dual degrees and simultaneous degree conferral.

In dual degree programs, credit from a single course may count toward both degrees. Programs may also be entirely separate with no curricular overlap.

The MCHM can stand alone as a degree for graduates of an entry-level acupuncture program. The MCHM degree may only be conferred upon holders of entry-level degrees but may be awarded concurrently with an entry-level degree program leading to qualification for professional licensure and national certification in acupuncture.

Dual Degree Program (see ACAOM’s Glossary)

A dual degree program is a formalized academic program in which a student completes the curricula of two or more degree programs. Dual degree programs are characterized by the following:

- Separate application is made to each degree program. Upon acceptance to each program, application is made to participate in the dual degree program.
- Students are concurrently enrolled in each degree program.
- Students receive a parchment for completion of each degree program.
- Institutions may require that dual degrees be conferred simultaneously, upon completion of degree requirements for both programs.
CURRICULUM & FACULTY IMPACT

Changes required by the Degree Structure and Naming Convention are considered primarily content reorganization and naming changes to existing ACAOM accredited/pre-accredited degree programs. The Convention does not require changes to the content or faculty of currently accredited/pre-accredited programs. If an institution chooses to implement program curricular changes in conjunction with these naming changes, consult ACAOM’s Notification of Change Policy and ACAOM’s Glossary to determine reporting and approval requirements.

IMPLEMENTATION

Institutional accreditor and/or state higher education authority approval

As requirements of other institutional accreditors and individual state higher education authorities are not consistent, ACAOM cannot provide explicit guidance. Schools holding institutional accreditation from a national or regional accreditor should consult the relevant agency’s substantive change policies and procedures to determine reporting and review requirements. Note that changes required by ACAOM based on the Degree Structure and Naming Convention do not necessitate initiating programs at a new degree level or programs that represent a significant departure from the institution’s existing offerings.

ACAOM suggests that applications to institutional accreditors and/or state licensing/professional oversight authorities that require herbal training for professional licensure:

1. emphasize the dual degree nature of the programs, as defined in ACAOM’s Glossary and this policy.
2. describe the curricular content reorganization as required by ACAOM’s Accreditation Standard 7: Program of Study.

In the unlikely event that the institution experiences difficulty achieving approval of a related change application, please contact ACAOM staff at info@acaom.org for further guidance.

Impact on currently enrolled students

It is the Commission’s expectation that all ACAOM accredited/pre-accredited degree programs convert to the new degree structure and naming convention no later than 31 December 2022. These changes apply to all students enrolling after the institution’s implementation date. The impact of these changes on any students enrolled prior to the implementation date is the institution’s prerogative.

FINANCIAL AID AND STUDENT VISAS

Federal financial aid annual loan limits, as defined by the Federal Student Aid Handbook, do not differ between master’s and doctorate levels. As of 2019, the annual loan limit for graduate or professional students is $20,500 in Direct Unsubsidized Loans per academic year.

Institutions eligible to administer Title IV financial aid and/or Veteran’s Education and Training Benefits should consult with their Director of Financial Aid to determine reporting requirements to maintain eligibility.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP)-certified institutions that enroll nonimmigrant students should consult with their principal designated school official (PDSO) to determine reporting requirements related to:
• any issues that relate to school bona fides or compliance with regulations.
• keeping the school information in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System up to date, and
• submission of school certification and recertification packages.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE PROCESS and ASSOCIATED FEES

These changes are considered primarily content reorganization and naming changes to existing ACAOM accredited/pre-accredited degree programs. Provided there are not significant changes to the curricula of currently accredited/pre-accredited programs, these changes do not constitute additions of new programs. For newly accredited institutions/programs, or institutions/programs which did not previously offer an herbal curriculum at the master’s level, the addition of a Master’s degree program in Chinese herbal medicine does constitute a new program offering as per: Section 1.06 of the ACAOM Notification of Change Policy. Applicable fees are indicated in the ACAOM Schedule of Fees and Dues.

ACAOM-accredited programs and institutions pay two types of annual dues: program dues and headcount dues.

Annual Dues

With the change in degree structure, program dues assessed in 2020 and beyond will fall into three main categories:

• Master’s level programs
• Professional doctorate programs
• Advance practice doctorate programs

Dues of $6,950 will be assessed for the primary program. The primary category shall be based upon the initial program that was accredited; in nearly all cases, this will have been a master’s level program.

• If an institution offers multiple programs at the master’s level, only one dues payment shall apply with respect to those programs. Master’s level programs include the Master of Acupuncture; the Master of Chinese Herbal Medicine; the current Master’s programs in Oriental medicine; and the current certificate programs in Chinese herbology.

Dues of $3,500 will be assessed for any secondary programs that may apply. If an institution offers both the professional doctorate (DAc) and advance practice doctorate (DAOM), in addition to master’s level programs, then dues will be assessed for both programs.

• If an institution offers only the professional doctorate (DAc) and a Master of Chinese Herbal Medicine, and no other master’s level programs, then the Master of Chinese Herbal Medicine will not be treated as an independent secondary program for purposes of calculating dues.

Headcount dues

Headcount dues will be based on total unduplicated headcount of enrolled students in ACAOM-accredited programs as of the date specified by the dues invoice.

• A student enrolled simultaneously in the Master of Acupuncture and Master of Chinese Herbal Medicine; the Doctor of Acupuncture and Master of Chinese Herbal Medicine; or the Doctor of Acupuncture and the current Master’s program in Oriental medicine shall not be counted twice in the total headcount.
## Revision History

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<td>16 Feb 2019</td>
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