

GUIDE TO THE PROCESS FOR NCMS REACCREDITATION: AN OVERVIEW AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Overview and Background Information

Conducting Your Self-Study for Reaccreditation

The self-study process provides an opportunity for the accredited provider to reflect on its program of CME. This process can help the organization assess its commitment to and role in providing continuing medical education and determine its future direction. The NCMS has specific requirements for the *Self-Study Report* content outline, but the process of conducting a *self-study* is unique to your organization. Depending on the size and scope of your CME program, you may involve many or just a few individuals in the process.

Data Sources Used in the Reaccreditation Process

The NCMS's reaccreditation process is an opportunity for each accredited provider to demonstrate that its practice of CME is in compliance with the NCMS's accreditation requirements through three primary sources of data about the provider's CME program:

Self-Study Report

Organizations are asked to provide descriptions, attachments, and examples to give the reader an understanding of CME practice(s) related to NCMS Criteria and Policies. Descriptions are narrative explanations. Attachments are specific documents. Examples are demonstrations of the implementation of the practices described that may include narrative and/or attachments.

Performance-in-Practice Review

Organizations are asked to verify that their CME activities are in compliance with NCMS Criteria and Policies through the documentation review process. The NCMS will select up to 15 activities from the current accreditation term for which the organization will be expected to present evidence of performance-in-practice to the NCMS for documentation review.

Accreditation Interview

Organizations are presented with the opportunity to further describe the practices presented in the Self-Study Report and activity files, and provide clarification as needed, in conversation with a team of volunteer surveyors who are colleagues from the CME community, trained by the NCMS.

Expectations about Materials

Materials submitted to the NCMS, in any format, must not contain any untrue statements, must not omit any necessary material facts, must not be misleading, must fairly present the organization, and are the property of the organization.

Materials submitted for accreditation (Self-Study Report, activity files, other materials) must not include individually identifiable health information, in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Missing or Incomplete Information

Providers that meet all of the deadlines and submission requirements of the reaccreditation review process will receive an accreditation decision from the NCMS. Please note, if the NCMS is unable to render a decision due to missing or incomplete information, the NCMS reserves the right to request additional information, the expenses for which will be borne by the provider.

Accreditation Interview

The accreditation interview offers the provider the opportunity to discuss its CME program with qualified surveyors. NCMS surveyors will be assigned to review the self-study materials you submit to the NCMS. They will meet with representatives of your CME program to engage in a dialogue about your organization's policies and practices that ensure compliance with the Accreditation Criteria, including the Standards for Commercial Support and Accreditation Policies.

At the interview, the surveyors will seek clarification about any questions they may have regarding the self-study materials you submitted to the NCMS. You can expect NCMS surveyors to: 1) conduct their interactions with providers in a professional manner, 2) be familiar with your materials and the NCMS's Accreditation Criteria and Policies, and 3) communicate clearly and effectively with providers without offering consultative advice or feedback regarding compliance or the expected outcome of the accreditation review.

The NCMS utilizes the conference call as its standard accreditation interview format; however, other interview formats are available, including a face-to-face meeting at the NCMS offices, an on-site meeting at your organization's offices or the site of an activity, or via televideo. Interviews typically average 90 minutes in length.

To ensure the validity of the process and based on circumstances and available resources, the NCMS reserves the right to make all final decisions regarding the interview format, date, time, and/or composition of the survey team.

The NCMS will provide information about the process of scheduling the accreditation interview. The NCMS will confirm your assigned surveyor(s) and the interview date and time in advance via email. Your organization will be asked to confirm receipt of this communication.

Decision-Making Process

Your organization's compliance findings and the outcome of the accreditation review are determined by the NCMS based on the data and information collected in the accreditation process. The NCMS will also consider data from monitoring issues, if such data are applicable to the provider. The data and information are analyzed and synthesized by the Surveyors. The Surveyors make recommendations on findings and status which are forwarded for action by the NCMS's Medical Education Committee (MEC), which makes all final accreditation decisions.

This two-tiered system of review provides the checks and balances necessary to ensure fair and accurate decisions. The fairness and accuracy of NCMS decisions are also enhanced by the NCMS's use of a criterion-referenced decision-making system. Accreditation decision letters are sent to providers via email following the NCMS MEC meeting.

Requirements for Organizing and Formatting Your Self-Study Report

The Self-Study Report must be formatted as indicated to facilitate the review of your CME program:

The cover of each of the four Self-Study Report binders should clearly identify your organization by name and NCMS provider number. Use the full name of your organization as it is known to the NCMS (no acronyms or abbreviations).

1. Each page in the binder, including the attachments, must be consecutively numbered. The name (or abbreviation) of your organization must appear with the page number on each page.
2. The Self-Study Report must be organized using divider tabs as specified by the NCMS.
3. Narrative, attachments, and examples must be provided as indicated in the NCMS Self-Study Report Outline.
4. The Self-Study Report must be typed with at least 1" margins (top, bottom and sides), using 11 point type or larger; double-sided printing is acceptable.
5. Pertinent excerpts must be photocopied on standard paper for inclusion in the binder. Do not use plastic sleeves for single pages or for multi-page documents (i.e. brochures, handouts, etc.).
6. The Self-Study Report must be submitted in a three-ring binder. The rings may not be more than 1½ inches in diameter, and the materials may not be more than 1 ½ inches in thickness.
7. Four hard copies of the Self-Study Report must be submitted to the NCMS. Keep a separate duplicate copy for your reference at any time during the accreditation process, but especially at the time of the accreditation interview.
8. One electronic copy of the Self-Study Report in its entirety must be submitted to the NCMS (in addition to the four binders), as a single PDF file on a USB flash drive, bookmarked according to the seven sections of the NCMS Self-Study Report Outline.

Regarding Self-Study Report Divider Tabs

The Self-Study Report must be organized using divider tabs to separate the content of the report in the seven sections of the NCMS Self-Study Report Outline. For the purpose of printing tabs, the titles of the sections have been abbreviated as follows:

- I) Prologue**
- II) Purpose And Mission (C1)**
- III) Educational Activities (C2-7 and Policies)**
- IV) CME Program and Educational Activities (C8-9)**
- V) Content of Educational Activities (C10 and Content Validation)**
- VI) Evaluation and Improvement (C11-13)**
- VII) Engagement with the Environment (C16-22)**

Please pay careful attention to the requirements for organizing and formatting the Self-Study Report.

These requirements facilitate the review of your CME program. If they are not fulfilled, then: 1) The reaccreditation process will be suspended, and the provider's review will be deferred to the next cohort with new deadlines and milestones established; 2) A fee that is equal to twice the standard extension fee will be required; and, 3) All self-study materials will be discarded by the NCMS, and another complete set will be required by the NCMS by the new deadline.

The NCMS's Review of Performance-in-Practice

The NCMS's performance-in-practice review allows providers to demonstrate compliance with the NCMS's expectations and offers providers an opportunity to reflect on their CME practices.

Materials that demonstrate compliance with the NCMS's expectations may result from work done for individual activities or as part of the overall CME program. In this process, you will present materials that you developed and utilized for the activity to help your organization demonstrate compliance. Blank forms, blank checklists, and policy documents alone do not verify performance-in-practice.

The NCMS's review of a provider's performance-in-practice entails the following process:

- 1) The provider's submission of CME activity data
- 2) The NCMS's selection of activities for performance-in-practice review
- 3) The provider's submission of evidence of performance-in-practice for activities selected

Submitting your CME Activity Data

Using the ACCME's Program and Activity Reporting System, or "PARS," (pars.ACCME.org), you will submit known information about the CME activities that your organization has provided, or will provide, under the umbrella of your NCMS accreditation statement, from the beginning of your current accreditation term to the expiration. The only exception to this is for providers whose term began prior to January 1, 2008. No activities prior to January 1, 2008 need to be entered into PARS. For more information about PARS, visit <http://www.ACCME.org/cme-providers/maintaining-your-accreditation/about-pars>

Selecting Activities for Performance-in-Practice Review

Based on the CME activity data you provide to the NCMS, the NCMS will select up to 15 activities for review. The NCMS notifies providers via email of the activities selected for review. Your organization will be asked to confirm receipt of this communication. Providers are accountable for demonstrating performance-in-practice for all activities selected. It is important that you carefully review the list of activities selected by the NCMS. If you note an error, such as an incorrect activity date or format, or if an activity was cancelled or otherwise did not occur, contact NCMS Accreditation Services immediately to make any necessary corrections or adjustments to the sample of activities selected for performance-in-practice review.

Requirements for Assembling and Submitting Performance-in-Practice Materials

Submitting Evidence for Performance-in-Practice Review

The NCMS utilizes the review of a provider's performance-in-practice, as seen in materials from CME activities, to verify that the provider meets the NCMS's expectations. In addition, the NCMS collects additional evidence for the American Medical Association (AMA).

The requirements for assembling and submitting performance-in-practice materials to the NCMS for the accreditation process and for the AMA are outlined in this section.

Note: Providers must choose one of the two following options for submitting evidence of performance-in-practice to the NCMS. The option that is chosen must be used for all activities selected for performance-in-practice review.

Option 1: Submit Evidence Using the NCMS Performance-in-Practice Structured Abstract

The NCMS Performance-in-Practice Structured Abstract may be requested from NCMS Staff. Using the Structured Abstract, you will complete text-limited fields, tables, and attach evidence that verifies the activity meets the NCMS's requirements.

Option 2: Submit Labeled Evidence of Performance-in-Practice

The NCMS Performance-in-Practice Labels may be requested from the NCMS staff. The label template is pre-formatted to print onto *Avery Standard File Folder Labels #5266*. Affix the labels to evidence that verifies the activity meets the NCMS's requirements. If the evidence applicable to a label is several pages in length, you may apply the corresponding label to the first page or on a coversheet. Use labels, arrows, highlighting, or other methods to make explicit where the evidence is located.

For Options 1 and 2, providers may submit evidence in either hard copy or electronic format.

Instructions for submitting in hard copy:

1. Submit labeled evidence for each activity selected in an 8 ½" by 11" file folder; do NOT submit evidence in binders.
2. Affix a label on the front cover of each file folder that specifies:
 - Full name of your organization (no acronyms or abbreviations)
 - Activity title, as submitted in PARS.
 - Activity date, as submitted in PARS.

Instructions for submitting in electronic format:

Note: *submission in electronic format requires Adobe Acrobat version 8.0 or more recent.*

1. Save the evidence for your activity as a separate PDF file in the following format:
Brief activity title_Date of activity(YYYYMMDD)
2. Create a cover page for your activity file with the following information displayed. This cover page must be the first page of the activity file.
 - Full name of organization (no acronym)
 - Activity title, date, and type, as submitted in PARS
3. Save each individual activity file as a single PDF, bookmarked for each label, or each of the attachments.
4. Save all of the PDF files to a single CD-ROM or USB flash drive. Submit two CD-ROMs or flash drives, each with a complete set of PDF activity files.

Documentation Requirements for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™

The **American Medical Association's** collection of evidence from a representative sample of your activities demonstrates how well and how consistently your organization is meeting some of the *AMA's PRA Category 1 Credit™* requirements. As a service to both the provider and the credit system, the NCMS is collecting this evidence and transmitting it for the AMA's review and follow-up with providers. This information will not be considered as part of your NCMS accreditation decision and will not elicit feedback from the NCMS.

Download the Labels

Click here for [AMA PRA Labels](#). * This label template is pre-formatted to print onto *Avery Standard File Folder Labels #5266*. You may use either white or colored labels.

* <http://www.NCMS.org/news-publications/publications/materials-support-pre-application-and-accreditation-processes/ama-pra>

Label the Documents

Assemble one **separate file folder** that indicates the full name of your organization (no acronyms or abbreviations) on the cover of the file folder and includes, for each of the activities that the NCMS selected for performance-in-practice review, evidence of your organization's use of the:

- *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* Designation Statement by submitting a copy of the page of the brochure or handout which indicates the AMA's PRA statement
- AMA New Skills and Procedures Levels (if applicable)

Submit a Separate File Folder of AMA Documentation to the NCMS at the same time that you submit the NCMS performance-in-practice review materials.

Submitting Materials to the NCMS

The following materials must be shipped, using a method that has a reliable electronic, web-enabled delivery tracking system, for the NCMS's receipt by the published due date:

- Four copies of the Self-Study Report in binders formatted and organized as specified
- One electronic copy of the Self-Study Report as a single PDF file on a CD-ROM or flash drive
- Two separate flash drives or CD-ROMs with your evidence of performance-in-practice for selected activities if submitting electronically.
- One set of your evidence of performance-in-practice for selected activities, if submitting in hard copy format,
- One copy of the CME product(s) for any enduring materials, Internet, or journal-based CME activities selected for performance-in-practice review

Do not ship original documents. Activity files will not be returned. Retain a duplicate set of materials including the Self-Study Report and evidence of performance-in-practice for your own reference at any time during the accreditation process, but especially at the time of the accreditation interview. If the need arises, the NCMS may ask for additional copies of a file or set of files.

SHIP TO:

North Carolina Medical Society
Attn: CME Staff
222 N. Person Street
Raleigh, NC 27601