

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

Overview and Background Information

STEPS IN THE PROCESS:

Step One: Take time to review the accreditation criteria for CME. North Carolina Medical Society adheres to all the ACCME accreditation criteria, standards for integrity and independence of accredited CE, and ACCME Policies. These can be found at: <https://www.accme.org/accreditation-rules>.

It is the expectation that initial applicants for CME provider status prior to July 2022 will be in compliance with the following accreditation criteria:

- Mission (formerly criteria 1)
- Program Analysis (formerly criteria 12)
- Educational Needs (formerly criteria 2)
- Designed to Change (formerly criteria 3)
- Analyzes Change (formerly criteria 11)

After July 1, 2022, initial applicants must be in compliance with all ACCME core accreditation criteria applicable Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited CE and applicable accreditation policies.

Step Two: Once you have reviewed the criteria and have decided to proceed, fill out the *Request for a Pre-Application* form located on the NCMS website at: <https://www.ncmedsoc.org/continuing-medical-education> and submit to Russet Rogers, CME Staff Consultant at rrogers@ncmedsoc.org. Once your request has been reviewed, you will be sent a pre-application. The pre-application should be completed and returned along with an application fee of \$1,000. Once the pre-application and fee are received, we will review your application to determine if your organization is eligible to be an approved provider and you have mechanisms in place to comply with the appropriate criteria and standards as outlined under step one.

Step Three: We will review your application and notify you if you can proceed to the next step in the process.

Step Four: Conduct two activities within a 24 month period either in joint providership with an approved NCMS CME provider or the activities may be offered by the initial applicant without CME credit.

Step Five: Notify NCMS that you are ready to complete a self-study and performance-in-practice of the two activities to apply for provisional status as an Approved Provider.

Step Six: Submit the self-study and PIP materials along with an accreditation application fee of \$3,000 plus \$500 per surveyor (two surveyors).

Step Seven: NCMS will conduct an accreditation interview with your organization.

Step Eight: Based upon the self-study, the performance-in-practice material and the interview, NCMS will make a decision to approve your organization for Provisional Status for a two-year period or will make a decision of non-accreditation. Being in non-compliance with any one of the criteria or standards will result in a decision of non-accreditation.

If approved for Provisional Status, you may directly provide CME activities but may not jointly provide activities where your organization is the accredited provider. During this time period, an NCMS surveyor will need to attend one of your activities (expenses billed to your organization). Eighteen months into Provisional Status, you will start the process of submitting a reaccreditation self-study and performance-in-practice materials for a selection of your activities. These will be submitted along with the reaccreditation fee (\$3,000 plus \$500 per surveyor) for a reaccreditation decision moving your organization from Provisional to Accredited status.

Please note that once you are approved for Provisional Status, there is an annual accreditation fee that all organizations pay which is \$3,500 per year at the current time.

FEES:

Initial Application Fee:	\$1000.00
Initial Self-Study Fee:	\$3000.00 plus \$1000.00 for two surveyors
Annual Accreditation Fee:	\$3500.00
Self-Study Fee for Reaccreditation:	\$3000.00 plus \$1000.00 for two surveyors

CONDUCTING YOUR SELF-STUDY FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION:

The self-study process provides an opportunity for the initial applicant 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.

Prior to July 1, 2022 an initial applicant expected to provide narrative and evidence for:

- Mission (formerly criteria 1)
- Program Analysis (formerly criteria 12)
- Educational Needs (formerly criteria 2)
- Designed to Change (formerly criteria 3)
- Analyzes Change (formerly criteria 11)
- All five Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited CE

- All NCMS/ACCME policies

Your organization may choose to submit narrative and evidence for:

- Program Improvements (formerly criterion 13)
- Appropriate Formats (formerly criterion 5)
- Competencies (formerly criterion 6)
- Any of the criteria for accreditation with commendation

After July 1, 2022 you will submit narrative and evidence for all core criteria, standards and policies.

The NCMS will give a compliance finding and feedback for evidence submitted for these criteria, but these findings will not affect your organization's accreditation status.

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 INITIAL ACCREDITATION PROCESS:

The NCMS's accreditation process is an opportunity for an initial applicant to demonstrate that its practice of CME is in compliance with the NCMS's accreditation requirements through three primary sources of data about the initial applicant'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, Standards, 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 initial applicant will present evidence to the NCMS for documentation review from at least two recently completed educational activities.

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:

Initial applicants that meet all of the deadlines and submission requirements of the accreditation 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 initial applicant

Accreditation Interview

The accreditation interview offers the initial applicant 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 Integrity and Independence in Accredited CE 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 in a professional manner, 2) be familiar with your materials and the NCMS's Accreditation Criteria and Policies, and 3) communicate clearly and effectively without offering consultative advice or feedback regarding compliance or the expected outcome of the accreditation review.

The NCMS utilizes video conferencing 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. 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.

Please note, your organization must have a CME activity reviewed. An Activity Review entails the observation of one of your organization's CME activities by an NCMS volunteer surveyor. This requirement must be fulfilled as a part of your organization's initial accreditation review or as part of your organization's subsequent reaccreditation review process.

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 data and information are analyzed and synthesized by the Medical Education Committee (MEC), which makes the final accreditation decisions for the NCMS. As such, this process differs from that used by the ACCME. The NCMS does have an appeal process through which, at the request of a provider applicant, the decision can be reviewed by the NCMS Board of Directors Executive Committee.

The NCMS's review and initial accreditation decision will be based on your organization's demonstration and compliance with all accreditation criteria, standards and policies. Compliance with these criteria, standards and applicable policies will lead to an accreditation outcome of Provisional Accreditation with a two-year accreditation term. However, if any of these criteria are found to be in noncompliance, the accreditation outcome will be Nonaccreditation.

At the end of the two-year term of Provisional Accreditation, your organization would be eligible for reaccreditation. If successful in reaccreditation, your organization would be eligible for a status of either Accreditation (with a four-year term) or Accreditation with Commendation (with a six-year term).

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 the *NCME Outline for the Self-Study Report* that will be provided to you.
3. Narrative, attachments, and examples must be provided as indicated in the *NCME Outline for the Self-Study Report*.
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 and should be easily legible. 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 *NCME Outline for the Self-Study Report*.

The NCMS's Review of Performance-in-Practice

The NCMS's performance-in-practice review allows initial applicants to demonstrate compliance with the NCMS's expectations and offers initial applicants 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 an initial applicant's performance-in-practice entails the following process:

- 1) The initial applicant's selection of at least two recently completed CME activities for performance-in-practice review
- 2) The initial applicant's joint partner's entry of data into the NCMS's Program and Activity Reporting System, or "PARS," for activities selected for performance-in-practice review
- 3) The initial applicant's submission of evidence of performance-in-practice for the activities selected

Selecting Activities for Performance-in-Practice Review

The initial applicant will select two educational activities, completed within the last 24 months, for performance-in-practice review. These activities may have been conducted in joint providership with an accredited NCMS provider or may be activities offered by the initial applicant without CME credit. It is important to note, in all cases, the evidence of performance-in-practice presented from these activities will be an important data source upon which the initial applicant's accreditation findings and decision will be based.

The initial applicant is expected to provide evidence from the selected activities that demonstrate compliance with the core accreditation criteria, standards and policies.

Submitting your CME Activity Data:

Using the ACCME's Program and Activity Reporting System (pars.ACCME.org), your joint partner will submit known information about the CME activities that your organization selected for performance-in-practice review. For more information about PARS, visit <http://www.ACCME.org/cme-providers/maintaining-your-accreditation/about-pars>

Requirements for Assembling and Submitting Performance-in-Practice Materials

Submitting Evidence for Performance-in-Practice Review

The NCMS utilizes the review of an initial applicant's performance-in-practice, as seen in materials from CME activities, to verify that the initial applicant meets the NCMS's expectations.

NCMS staff will provide you with a Structured Abstract template. Using the Structured Abstract, you will complete text-limited fields, tables, and attach evidence that verifies the activity meets the NCMS’s requirements.

Initial applicants may submit evidence in either hard copy or electronic format.

Instructions for submitting in hard copy:

1. Submit 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	Activity type, as submitted in PARS
Activity title, as submitted in PARS	Directly or jointly provided
Activity date and location, as submitted in PARS	Commercial support was/was not accepted

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. The file you create should appear as a single document when opened. Do not use the Acrobat option to make a PDF “portfolio” style file. Use the following format for the file name: Brief activity title_Date of activity(YYYYMMDD)
2. Create a cover page for your activity file with the following information displayed. This coverpage must be the first page of the activity file.

• Full name of your organization	• Activity type, as submitted in PARS
• Activity title, as submitted in PARS	• Directly or jointly provided
• Activity date and location, as submitted in PARS	• Commercial support was/was not accepted

3. The structured abstract will require attachments. Create a bookmark for each attachment, and use the number of the attachment as your bookmark, e.g., “Attachment 1.”
4. Save all of the PDF files to a single CD-ROM or USB flash drive. Submit two CD-ROMs or flashdrives, each with a complete set of PDF activity files.

Submitting Materials to the NCMS

The following materials must be shipped, using a method that has a reliable electronic, web-enabled delivery tracking system:

- 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 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

hardcopy format

- One copy of the CME product(s) for any enduring materials, Internet, or journal-based CMEactivities 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 anytime 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: Russet Rogers, EdD
222 N Person Street
Raleigh, NC 27601
Phone: 919-833-3836 NCMS
Phone: 910-309-5679 Dr. Rogers