



Ohio State Medical Association

The power of many. The voice of one.

Accreditation of CME Providers Overview

The OSMA is pleased and proud to offer the service of voluntary accreditation to providers of continuing medical education who wish to be recognized for meeting our high level of quality. Such educational opportunities provide physicians with the ongoing knowledge and skills they need to provide their patients with optimum care. The OSMA is dedicated to maintaining its high level of service to providers and physicians in Ohio. Our hope is that this overview will provide information that will enable providers to make an informed decision about whether or not to pursue accreditation.

Accreditation

Accreditation is official recognition by an accrediting body that a provider's overall program of physician CME meets established criteria for educational planning and quality. Accrediting bodies and accredited providers throughout the country are a part of what is known as the System of Accreditation. At the national level, the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) has responsibility for recognizing state medical associations as local accrediting bodies and serves as the accrediting body for providers whose programs of CME serve physician learners, more than 30% of whom are from beyond the home or bordering states of the accredited provider. State medical societies, such as the OSMA, as recognized by the ACCME, accredit CME providers whose intended audience is from within the state or bordering states of the accredited provider. The ACCME and the OSMA utilize the same criteria and processes for awarding accreditation.

Purposes of Accreditation

Accreditation is the official recognition by the OSMA that a provider's overall program of physician CME meets established criteria for educational planning and quality. The major purpose of OSMA accreditation is to ensure quality and integrity in CME by establishing criteria for the accreditation of CME providers in Ohio including determining whether accredited providers meet and maintain accreditation criteria, promoting organizational self-assessment and improvement, and recognizing excellence.

Responsibilities of the OSMA

The primary responsibilities of the OSMA are to set and administer standards and criteria for providers of quality CME for physicians, certify that OSMA accredited providers are capable of meeting the requirements of the Essential Areas, Elements and Policies of the OSMA, relate CME to medical care and the continuum of medical education, evaluate the effectiveness of its policies, assist providers in continually improving their programs and, thereby, assure physicians, the public and the CME community that CME programs meet the OSMA's criteria for accreditation compliance.

OSMA Resources for Providers of CME

The OSMA will provide the following resources to assist you in seeking and maintaining CME accreditation:

Accreditation Application

Instructions for completing the *Application for Accreditation, Overview, and Procedures for the On-Site Survey*.

Resources

Essential Areas, Elements, Policies and Criteria for Decision Making, and CME Symposium.

Overview of the Accreditation Process

The reaccreditation process involves four phases: data collection, data review and analysis, decision and feedback to the provider.

Data Collection

The process uses multiple data sources. The OSMA will use the following data sources to make a determination about reaccreditation of the CME Program:

- \$ **Application for Accreditation** (first time applicants will also complete a Pre-Application)
- \$ **On-Site Survey** (a visit to your organization to review, clarify and document your practice, as well as to provide consultative comments that will help to strengthen your overall CME program);
 - The on-site survey involves the following:
 - \$ Organizational Review (Your organization and personnel in it)
 - \$ Documentation Review (Documents in your activity files)
 - \$ Activity Review (Observation of a portion of an educational activity); and
- \$ **Monitoring Data** (gathered annually and/or by special request)
 - \$ Annual Report (provides statistical information about the scope of your CME program)
 - \$ Progress Report (provides feedback to the OSMA which addresses any concerns or deficiencies identified in the provider's CME program at the time of the on-site survey)

Data Review and Analysis

The OSMA collects reviews and analyzes data for three Essential Areas:

- \$ Purpose and Mission (Describe why the organization is providing CME);
- \$ Educational Planning and Evaluation (Explain how the organization provides CME activities and how well the organization is accomplishing its purpose and providing CME activities); and
- \$ Administration (Defines what organizational resources are provided and the protocol used by the CME unit).

Within each Essential Area are required *Elements* for which measurement *Criteria* have been established. The *Elements* are descriptors of performance in the Essential Area. The *Criteria* describe the levels of performance and accomplishment for each Element. (See the insert for a complete description of the Essential Areas, Elements, Policies and Criteria for Compliance.)

The OSMA surveyors will review records, policies, procedures, a sampling of your files, and may choose to directly observe a CME activity in progress. The survey team will be made up of three CME professionals trained in the accreditation procedures and policies of the OSMA. The surveyors will summarize their findings in a report which will be submitted to the OSMA Focused Task Force on Accreditation for final decision.

Decision

At its next scheduled meeting, the OSMA Focused Task Force on Accreditation will review the report and the accreditation recommendation made by the survey team. The Focused Task Force on Accreditation will then vote on the final decision for the type and length of accreditation. The type and length of accreditation terms are as follows:

- \$ Initial Accreditation (maximum length of two years)
- \$ Accreditation (four or six years)
- \$ Probation (one or two years)
- \$ Non-accreditation

The decision by the Focused Task Force on Accreditation is based on the findings of the site survey team as determined by compliance with the measurement criteria established for the Essential Areas, their Elements, and Policies.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR PROVIDERS SEEKING INITIAL ACCREDITATION

The process for seeking accreditation is basically the same whether you are seeking accreditation for the first time, or are seeking re-accreditation. Providers of CME who are interested in seeking accreditation for the first time will be provided with general information about accreditation and a *Pre-Application*. The *Pre-Application* is the first step in seeking accreditation and provides the OSMA with basic information about why you are seeking OSMA accreditation, program goals, objectives, and the target audience you plan to serve.

As part of the accreditation process, the OSMA will gather information from the provider by reviewing individual activity documentation for a single educational event. The review is not to judge the quality of the educational activity, but rather to ensure that documentation is present to support compliance with the Essential Areas, Elements and Policies of the OSMA and that the documentation concurs with how the provider has described its day-to-day CME practices.

Therefore, it will be necessary for new applicants to plan and present at least one educational activity that is in compliance with the Essential Areas, Elements and Policies of the OSMA prior to seeking accreditation. This can be accomplished in one of two ways: 1) plan the educational activity without CME credit; or 2) plan the educational activity in cooperation with one of the accredited providers in Ohio who will designate CME credit for the activity. (A complete list of accredited providers in Ohio can be found on the OSMA web page at www.osma.org.)

TIME LINE FOR PROVIDERS SEEKING INITIAL ACCREDITATION

Time to Complete the Process for Initial Accreditation*	Function
Initial	<i>Pre-Application</i> requested by applicant provider.
0-6 Months	<i>Pre-Application</i> completed by applicant provider and returned to the OSMA.
6 Months	<i>Pre-Application</i> reviewed by staff to ensure that the information is complete and that the provider=s program of education meets the definition of continuing medical education. <i>Application for Accreditation</i> mailed to applicant provider.
6-12 Months	Provider develops and/or modifies its program of CME to meet the criteria for accreditation and completes the <i>Application for Accreditation</i> . The Application will need to be returned to the OSMA 8 to 10 weeks prior to the anticipated date for the on-site survey.
12-15 Months	Application is reviewed by the Screening Committee of the Focused Task Force on Accreditation. If the Screening Committee votes in favor of proceeding with the on-site survey, staff contacts the applicant to make arrangements. If the Screening Committee feels that the applicant is not ready to proceed with the on-site survey, a letter will be returned to the provider identifying areas that need to be addressed prior to scheduling the on-site survey.
15-18 Months	Site visit occurs and makes its accreditation recommendation to the Focused Task Force on Accreditation.
18-21 Months	The Focused Task Force on Accreditation reviews the data collected by the site surveyors and makes a final decision for accreditation.
21-24 Months	Accredited provider notified in writing of accreditation decision.

*This time line is dependent upon the applicant provider completing at least one CME activity prior to the accreditation process (see above). The process may take longer if the applicant has not completed at least one activity. Likewise, the process may take less time depending on the applicant organization and the Focused Task Force on Accreditation. The above time line is the maximum time that it should take to complete the process for initial accreditation.

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