

U.S. Department of Education Staff Report

to the

Senior Department Official on Recognition Compliance Issues

Recommendation Page

1. **Agency:** Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (1982 / 2015)
(The dates provided are the date of initial listing as a recognized agency and the date of the agency's last grant of recognition.)
2. **Action Item:** Petition for Continued Recognition
3. **Current Scope of Recognition:** The accreditation and pre-accreditation of basic certificate, basic graduate nurse-midwifery, direct entry midwifery, and pre-certification nurse-midwifery education programs, including those programs that offer distance education.
4. **Requested Scope of Recognition:** Same as above.
5. **Date of Advisory Committee Meeting:** 02/07/2018
6. **Staff Recommendation:** Continue the agency's current recognition and require the agency to come into compliance within 12 months, and submit a compliance report 30 days after the 12 month period that demonstrates the agency's compliance with the issues identified below.
7. **Issues or Problems:** It does not appear that the agency meets the following sections of the Secretary's Criteria for Recognition. These issues are summarized below and discussed in detail under the Summary of Findings section.

-- The staff has determined that, in order for the agency to meet this criterion, the agency must provide documentation and implementation of a standard defining terms of good cause and systematic procedures for monitoring a program's progress towards compliance. [§602.20(b)]

Executive Summary

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGENCY

ACME serves as an autonomous body within the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) with respect to the development, review, evaluation, and administration of all policies and procedures related to the accreditation of programs offering midwifery education. The ACNM is the professional association for certified nurse midwives in the United States and its territories. ACME conducts ACNM's accrediting activities and currently accredits 39 programs located in 25 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Accreditation by ACME provides eligibility for participation in various funding programs offered by the the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, including its Advanced Education Nursing Traineeship Program and its National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program.

Recognition History

The agency, through its predecessor, ACNM's Division of Accreditation (DOA), was first recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education in 1982 and has received periodic renewal of recognition since that time. The agency was last reviewed for continued recognition at the Spring 2012 Advisory Committee meeting. At that time the agency's recognition was continued, and it was requested to come into compliance with certain issues within 12 months and to submit a compliance report related to those issues. The NACIQI reviewed and accepted the compliance report at its June 2014 meeting and recognition was continued for a period of three years.

As part of its evaluation of the agency's current petition for continued recognition, Department staff reviewed the agency's narrative and supporting documentation. In addition, Department staff attended an agency decision-making meeting conducted via conference call, with corresponding documentation made available, on March 29, 2017.

The Department has not received written complaints regarding ACME during this review period. Also, there were no third-party comments regarding the agency's petition for continued recognition.

PART II: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

602.20 Enforcement of standards

As noted in the narrative, the agency has had to take immediate adverse action against a program however no program to date has received or requested an extension.

However, the agency has a published policy that it may extend the period for achieving compliance for reasonable cause. Ex 22 ACME Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM) notes that a program that has not come into compliance within the designated time period may 1) withdraw accreditation or 2) grant an extension if reasonable cause is provided (p.54). The agency grants extensions on a one-time basis and for no more than six months to protect the integrity of the program and for the protection of services and academic quality for currently enrolled students.

As discussed in the staff determination, the agency must provide documentation of plans or the standard that addresses the continuous monitoring to ensure that a program is making sufficient progress towards compliance.

Analyst Remarks to Response:

In response to the draft Staff Report, the agency does not currently have or implement standards for defining actions for good cause or for monitoring programs found in noncompliance . Although the agency has cited that the BOR sets a reasonable timetable and the required reports as evidence of compliance there is no standard or documentation in the policy manual that discusses the reasonable examples of "good cause" or the specific monitoring actions the agency will implement to ensure a program is making progress towards compliance. The staff has determined that the agency must provide documentation and implementation of a standard defining terms of good cause and systematic procedures for monitoring a program's progress towards compliance.

PART III: THIRD PARTY COMMENTS

The Department did not receive any written third - party comments regarding this agency.