

# **Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics**

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## **POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL**

**Accreditation Council  
for Education in  
Nutrition and Dietetics**

the accrediting agency for the  
**eat right.** Academy of Nutrition  
and Dietetics

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Updated: November 2010, July 2011, October 2013, June 2014, May 2015, July 2016, June 2017, August 2017, April 2018, May 2018, November 2018, December 2018, May 2019

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# Preface

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND®) serves the public by establishing and enforcing standards for the educational preparation of nutrition and dietetics practitioners and by recognizing nutrition and dietetics education programs that meet these standards. ACEND operates independently of the governing bodies of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Members make autonomous decisions about the accreditation status of individual nutrition and dietetics education programs and policies and procedures to be followed for accreditation. Program reviewers play key roles in carrying out the accreditation functions of ACEND. The purpose of this Policy & Procedure Manual is to outline an effective and efficient accreditation process, including fair and uniform application of the accreditation standards. The current standards may be found on the ACEND Web page at <http://www.eatrightpro.org/acend>.

This manual was developed for use by program directors, administrators, the ACEND board, program reviewers and staff.

# Introduction

## Role and Value of Accreditation

Accreditation is a voluntary process that recognizes the quality of an institution or program and assists in its improvement. As such, it provides value to educational institutions and programs while protecting students and the public interest. Specialized accreditation complements institutional accreditation by giving reasonable assurance of the quality and content of the education necessary for a particular profession or field. Specialized accreditation brings together practitioners, regulators, educators and students to improve professional preparation and practice, ultimately benefiting the profession and the public that it serves.

Accreditation of nutrition and dietetics education programs rests on the belief that nutrition and dietetics is a unique profession of such complexity and benefit to the health of the population that it requires a defined educational process based on national standards. Currently, ACEND's scope of accreditation and pre-accreditation is for Didactic and Coordinated Programs in Dietetics at both the undergraduate and graduate level, post-baccalaureate Dietetic Internships, and Dietetic Technician Programs at the associate degree level, and for its accreditation of such programs offered via distance education. These programs prepare individuals for entry to the profession of nutrition and dietetics.

Benefits of accreditation for nutrition and dietetics education include the following:

- Nutrition and Dietetics education programs are evaluated on their ability to meet self-defined program goals and national standards developed by and for the profession.
- Peer review by nutrition and dietetics professionals encourages continuous-quality improvement.
- Program participation demonstrates a commitment to self-assessment, to improving curricula and to adopting new methodologies to improve educational effectiveness.
- Program participation affirms a commitment to accountability to students and facilitates articulation and transfer of credit.
- Programs provide the education and skills necessary for graduates to function as nutrition and dietetics professionals.

## **ACEND Mission**

ACEND ensures the quality of nutrition and dietetics education to advance the practice of the profession.

## **ACEND Vision**

ACEND is valued for advancing excellence in nutrition and dietetics education.

## **ACEND Values**

ACEND volunteers and staff exhibit the following values in their accreditation activities and interpersonal interaction:

**Objectivity**—ACEND board members, program reviewers and staff evaluate all matters related to program evaluation in a fair and unbiased manner.

**Integrity**—ACEND board members, program reviewers and staff demonstrate honest and ethical behavior in all interactions, actions and decisions.

**Accountability**—ACEND board members, program reviewers and staff accept responsibility for assuring that ACEND-accredited programs provide education and experiences that meet all accreditation standards.

**Respect**—ACEND board members, program reviewers and staff treat all people with consideration, courtesy, and dignity.

## **ACEND Strategic Goals**

To achieve its mission and vision, the ACEND board has established strategic goals.

- ACEND assures the quality of nutrition and dietetics education through a peer review process.
- ACEND effectively communicates the accreditation process and expectations.
- ACEND fosters innovation in nutrition and dietetics education.

## **External Recognition**

ACEND has chosen to be recognized as an accrediting body by the United States Department of Education (USDE), which recognizes the quality and effectiveness of ACEND as the accrediting body for nutrition and dietetics education programs. ACEND voluntarily submits a self-study petition for recognition, showing that ACEND meets the criteria for recognition. Recognition provides an opportunity for interaction with other accrediting bodies, review of ACEND accrediting procedures and affirmation that ACEND is a reliable authority on the quality of nutrition and dietetics education. USDE recognition allows non-university based post-baccalaureate dietetic internship programs to participate in Title IV programs. ACEND is also a member of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) and abides by its *Member Code of Good Practice* <http://www.aspa-usa.org/principles>.

## **ACEND Accreditation Standards**

The ACEND board approved the 2017 ACEND Accreditation Standards, effective for all programs submitting applications for candidate and full accreditation as of June 1, 2017. The 2017 ACEND Accreditation Standards can be found on the ACEND Web page at <http://www.eatrightpro.org/acend>.

# Section 1: ACEND Structure

ACEND consists of a board and a pool of program reviewers. The ACEND board functions as the decision-making body and grants final accreditation awards.

## 1.1 Composition of ACEND

- A. ACEND is governed by a board of directors. The core composition of any ACEND decision making body must include at least one of each: academic, educator, practitioner, administrator and public member.
  1. Chair
  2. Vice Chair – serves as ACEND ex-officio member on the Council on Future Practice
  3. Past Chair
  4. A minimum of seven program representatives (Dietetic Technician, Didactic, Coordinated, Dietetic Internship and At-Large Representative), where each program representative has experience in the type of program they represent.
  5. At least one program administrator, one nutrition and dietetics student, at least three representatives of the public, and two practitioner members: a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) and a Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered (NDTR).
- B. Membership on Academy Committees
  1. ACEND Board Members

May not serve simultaneously on other groups within the Academy that may represent a conflict of interest with ACEND activities or violate U.S Department of Education regulations (i.e., member of the Academy Board of Directors (BOD), Nominating Committee, Nutrition and Dietetics Educators and Preceptors (NDEP) Council, Academy BOD Executive Committee, Political Action Committee, Legislative and Public Policy Committee, Council on Future Practice, Consumer Protection and Licensure Committee, Finance and Audit Committee, House of Delegates (HOD) Leadership Team, Board member of the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR)). During the vetting process, an individual's committee membership will be reviewed to ensure the candidates does not serve on any other ad hoc or new Academy board committee that may represent a conflict with ACEND.
  2. Program Reviewers, New and Reappointed

May not serve simultaneously on other groups within the Academy that may represent a conflict of interest with ACEND activities or violate U.S Department of Education regulations (i.e., member of the Academy BOD, Academy BOD Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, and HOD Leadership Team, member of the CDR Board or any other elected position on the Academy national ballot). During the vetting process, an individual's committee membership will be reviewed to ensure the candidate does not serve on any other ad hoc or new Academy board committee that may represent a conflict with ACEND. Program Reviewer may serve on local or State Academy affiliated boards where a conflict of interest is not identified.
- C. Criteria for ACEND Board Members
  1. Chair and Vice Chair
    - (a) General qualifications

- i. Hold Master's or higher degree.
- ii. Actively involved in education or practice (i.e. volunteer, consultant or employee).
- iii. Show evidence of professional leadership.
- iv. Served on the ACEND board within the last four years

(b) Requirements

- i. Time available for ACEND work, including travel and willingness on the part of the employer to permit time for performance of duties. This office requires a minimum of 25-30 days for attending scheduled meetings, participating in teleconferences, reviewing program documents, committee work and other assignments.
- ii. Ability to work closely with/through ACEND staff in order to promote/strengthen continuity from year to year and to facilitate communication.
- iii. Commitment to team decision making and setting of ACEND objectives
- iv. Ability to be impartial in the decision making process.

(c) Election of Vice Chair

To assist in leadership transition, the ACEND Board will elect a vice chair. The vice chair assumes position of chair after a one-year term as vice chair. The vice chair of the Board is elected in accordance with the following procedure.

- i. The Nominating Committee will develop a slate of interested candidates for vice chair from the ACEND Board who will be ending their term and past ACEND Board whose term has ended within the last four (4) years. At the winter board meeting, interested candidates will have their names placed on a ballot, which is presented to all board members and board member-elects.
- ii. The ACEND Board will vote for one candidate, and the one receiving the most votes becomes the vice chair with term to begin June 1.
- iii. The Nominating Committee chair notifies the newly elected vice chair of the results prior to announcing the results to the other Board members.

2. Representatives of the public

- (a) Public members are appointed by the ACEND board based on the following criteria from the July 1, 2010 USDE regulations:

**602.3 Definitions:** *“Representative of the public means a person who is not (1) an employee, member of the governing board, owner, or shareholder of, or consultant to, an institution or program that either is accredited by the agency or has applied for accreditation; or (2) a member of any trade association or membership organization related to, affiliated with, or associated with the accrediting agency; or (3) a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of an individual identified in (1) or (2) of this definition.”*

**602.14 Organization and Membership:** *“At least one member of the agency’s decision-making body is a representative of the public, with no less than one-seventh of the body consisting of representatives of the public.”*

- (b) Public members must not be current higher education faculty or administration associated with nutrition and dietetics education, but may be from other disciplines.



- (c) The public member may be retired as long as he/she has not been retired for more than five years at the time of the first appointment.
  - (d) During the vetting process, public member candidates are required to submit a statement attesting they meet public member requirements.
  - (e) Public members serve three-year terms. The term may be extended by election of the ACEND board for an additional 3 years.
  - (f) Public members must be willing and able to devote time required to review ACEND materials and attend scheduled meetings. This appointment requires a time commitment of approximately 12 days for attending scheduled meetings and participating in teleconferences, committee work and review of program materials.
  - (g) Public member responsibilities may include participation on committees and may include assistance with ACEND activities, such as reviewer training, workshops and forums on accreditation.
  - (h) Election of Public Members
    - i. In the year prior to the end of the public member's term, the Nominating Committee will advertise the open position through multiple channels, such as the ACEND website, and solicit applications from individuals interested in becoming an ACEND public member. The Nominating Committee reviews applications and interviews applicants. A public member completing a first term may apply to be included on the ballot to be elected for a second term. At the winter board meeting, the Nominating Committee presents a ballot to all board members and board member-elects, which includes the nominations for public member and the accompanying biographical information about each candidate.
    - ii. The ACEND Board will vote for one candidate during the annual Board election. The one receiving the most votes becomes a public member with a term beginning June 1.
    - iii. The Nominating Committee chair notifies the newly elected public member of the results of the election prior to announcing the results to the other Board members.
3. Program administrator
- (a) Program administrator is someone currently or recently engaged in an administrative position in higher education, health care or other type of organization sponsoring an accredited nutrition and dietetics education program.
  - (b) Program administrator member is appointed by the ACEND board.
  - (c) Program administrator member may also represent another position on the ACEND board.
  - (d) Program administrator member must be willing and able to devote time required to review ACEND materials and attend scheduled meetings. This appointment requires a time commitment of approximately 12 days for attending scheduled meetings and participating in teleconferences, committee work and review of program materials
  - (e) Program administrator member responsibilities may include participation on committees and assistance with ACEND activities, such as reviewer training, workshops, and forums on accreditation.
4. Nutrition and Dietetics student
- (a) Nutrition and Dietetics student is a student enrolled in an ACEND-accredited program during the first year of the appointed term.

- (b) Nutrition and Dietetics student member must be a member of the Academy.
  - (c) Nutrition and Dietetics student-elect is elected by the ACEND board.
  - (d) Nutrition and Dietetics student member serves a two-year term. The first year as Nutrition and Dietetics student-elect and at the close of the program year becomes the nutrition and dietetics student member.
  - (e) Nutrition and Dietetics student member must be willing and able to devote time required to review ACEND materials and attend scheduled meetings. This appointment requires a time commitment of approximately 12 days for attending scheduled meetings and participating in teleconferences, committee work and review of program materials.
  - (f) Nutrition and Dietetics student member responsibilities may include participation on committees and assistance with ACEND activities, such as reviewer training, workshops and forums on accreditation.
5. Program representative
- (a) General qualifications
    - i. Registered by the CDR and Active or Retired members of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.
    - ii. Hold a master's or higher degree.
    - iii. Current or recent professional leadership in program assessment as evidenced by a minimum of 3 years as a site reviewer with lead reviewer experience in the past five years; OR, at least 2 terms (5 years as a site reviewer), OR, programmatic review experience for other professional organizations, if not a current or recent ACEND reviewer.
    - iv. Actively involved in education or practice as evidenced by one or more of the following requirements:
      - 1. Currently employed in nutrition and dietetics education or practice
      - 2. Employed in nutrition and education or practice within the past 4 years
      - 3. Evidence of recent equivalent involvement in education or practice in nutrition and dietetics or related field.
    - v. Experience such as program director, faculty or coordinator in the program type they represent. Representative-at-large can have experience in any program type.
    - vi. Show evidence of commitment to quality nutrition and dietetics education programs as evidenced by:
      - 1. Reviewer in good standing with  $\leq 1$  formal complaint
      - 2. Timely with reviewer commitments
      - 3. If a program director, program is not on probation.
  - (b) Requirements:
    - i. Time available to review and evaluate ACEND materials and to complete other ACEND board responsibilities as assigned. This office requires a minimum of 12 days for travel and attending scheduled meetings; and at least 80 hours for reviewing documents and other program representative responsibilities.
    - ii. Ability to work closely with/through ACEND staff in order to promote/strengthen continuity from year to year and to facilitate communication.

- iii. Ability to be impartial in the decision making process.
- iv. Program representatives are elected by the ACEND board.
- v. Program representatives serve for four years. The first year as representative-elect and at the close of the program year become program representatives for three years as voting members of the ACEND board.
- vi. Terms of program representatives are staggered.
- vii. Program representative responsibilities may include participation on committees and assistance with ACEND activities, such as reviewer training, workshops, and forums on accreditation.

6. RD/RDN and NDTR Practitioner Representatives

The RD/RDN and NDTR Practitioner Representatives are elected by the Academy members.

(a) General qualifications

- i. Must be credentialed by CDR as a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (1 position) or Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered (1 position)
- ii. Member of the Academy in the Active classification
- iii. Three or more years' experience
- iv. Demonstrated leadership in nutrition and dietetics practice, worked with Registered Dietitians and/or Nutrition and Dietetics Technicians, Registered
- v. An understanding of quality assurance and accreditation is preferred

(b) Requirements

- i. The Practitioner Representatives shall serve for a four (4) year term. The first year as a non-voting representative-elect. The ACEND Practitioner Representative positions require a time commitment of approximately 12 days for attending scheduled meetings and participating in teleconferences, committee work and review of program materials. Depending on committee appointments and ACEND's program of work, this time commitment may be greater. Employer support in advance is encouraged.
- ii. The position requires the completion of Program Reviewer Training and attendance of one (1) Program Accreditation Site Visit during initial year in term.

D. Program Review Teams

- 1. Program reviewers are assigned to review teams to evaluate nutrition and dietetics education programs.
- 2. At least one member of the review team must have expertise in each type of program under review. Each team includes a program representative.
- 3. Review teams assigned to review programs for which ACEND functions as a programmatic accreditor (i.e. programs located in a college or university, must include an educator (someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary education in an academic capacity) and practitioner (someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in the practice of dietetics).
- 4. Review teams assigned to review a freestanding dietetic internship program eligible for Title IV funding must include an academic member (someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary teaching and/or research) and an administrative member, (someone currently or recently engaged in an administrative

position in higher education, health care or other type of organization sponsoring an accredited nutrition and dietetics education program).

5. A review team member may be retired as long as he/she has not been retired for more than five years at the time of the first appointment.

E. Criteria for Program Reviewers

1. General Qualifications

- (a) Registered by CDR and Active members of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.
- (b) Master's or higher degree preferred.
- (c) Willing to provide professional leadership.
- (d) Employed in education or practice for more than three years.
- (e) Have a commitment to quality nutrition and dietetics education programs.
- (f) Represent major areas of nutrition and dietetics practice.
- (g) Represent different geographical areas of the United States.

2. Time Commitment

- (a) Program reviewers must attend a training workshop following appointment and each re-appointment.
- (b) Program reviewers must be willing and able to devote the time required to prepare a thorough evaluation of accreditation materials and to complete other responsibilities as assigned (i.e., program review, meetings, telephone calls, correspondence, etc.).
- (c) Program reviewers must be willing and able to devote time required to do a least two site visits annually (20 days annually, including preparation time, travel, etc.) and evaluations of self-study applications for candidacy for accreditation, five-year reports, or major change reports as needed.

F. Vacancies

If any of the following offices become vacant because of health, resignation, disqualification, removal, or other cause, the unexpired term is filled in the following manner:

1. Chair: The vice chair of the Council succeeds to the office of chair and then serves until the end of the next program year after said vacancy occurs.
2. Vice chair, public members, program administrator members, practitioner representatives, nutrition and dietetics student members and program representative-elect: The ACEND board appoints a successor to fill any unexpired term.
3. Program representatives: Program representative-elect succeeds to the office of program representative and then serves until the end of the next program year after said vacancy occurs.

## **1.2 Functions and Responsibilities of ACEND**

A. ACEND Board

1. The ACEND board establishes, evaluates, and administers standards, policies, and procedures for accreditation, including eligibility for, granting of, periodic renewal of and withdrawal of accreditation.

- (a) Seek input and review data on the accreditation standards and procedures for accreditation annually from programs under review.
  - i. Accreditation Standards are reviewed in response to significant events that impact nutrition and dietetics education or practice, such as results of a role delineation study/practice audit, Academy strategic planning process, trends in higher education, health care and delivery of food and nutrition services, standards of practice for nutrition and dietetics practitioners, and others as applicable. This review occurs at least every five years.
  - ii. Review assists in determining that accreditation standards, policies, and procedures provide a consistent basis for determining the educational quality of the different programs being evaluated.
  - iii. Input is sought from program directors, faculty/staff, administrators, practitioners, employers and other appropriate stakeholders throughout the review process.
- (b) Update, as necessary, standards, policies and procedures related to the accreditation process, including written guidelines and guidance for accreditation documents and ACEND meetings.
  - i. Proposed revisions to the accreditation standards are published and disseminated for comment to program directors, practitioners, employers, administrators and other stakeholders prior to adoption.
  - ii. The comment period is a minimum of 60 days.

2. General functions

- (a) Schedule site visits and process documents related to accreditation in cooperation with ACEND Accreditation staff.
- (b) Monitor accredited programs through the review process, which includes self-study reports, Program Assessment Reports, progress reports, interim reports, annual reports and other information.
  - i. Upon written notification, review accreditation status of a program when an adverse action is taken against the sponsoring institution by an institutional accrediting or licensing agency and determine appropriate action.
  - ii. Upon written notification, review accreditation status of a program when an adverse action is taken against another program by a programmatic accrediting agency for reasons associated with the sponsoring institution and determine appropriate action.
- (c) Monitor default rates and compliance with HEA Title IV responsibilities of dietetic internships that are certified by the United States Department of Education (USDE) for participation in HEA Title IV programs.
  - i. Annually, review default rates provided by USDE for dietetic internship programs.
    - 1. The following programs currently use ACEND's accreditation for students to apply for federal loans.

OPE-ID	Programs Providing Access to HEA Title IV Student Loans
02137200	Massachusetts General Hospital Dietetic Internship Program

- 2. Each May (the end of ACEND's fiscal year), review default rates provided by USDE for dietetic internship programs.

3. Get the OPE-ID of the program.
  4. Go to: <http://www2.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/defaultmanagement/cdr.html>.
  5. Click the GO button to "Search the Cohort Default Rate Database."
  6. Enter the OPE ID on the "Official Cohort Default Rate Search" page, and click SEARCH.
  7. Put a paper or electronic copy of the default rate page in the program's folder.
- ii. Request an interim report from programs with default rates above the Federal threshold (currently three years at 25% or one year over 40%) including the default reduction plan submitted to USDE.
  - iii. Review a program's ability to continue to meet the current Accreditation Standards and take appropriate action if a program's default rate reaches 25% for three consecutive years or 40% in one year.
  - iv. Review accreditation status of a dietetic internship program in relation to compliance with HEA Title IV responsibilities, including financial or compliance audits and other information provided by USDE.
  - v. Take appropriate action if USDE reports indicate noncompliance with the current Accreditation Standards.
  - vi. When programs submit self-study or other reports, ACEND reviewers and staff must assess whether the program demonstrates compliance with HEA Title IV responsibilities, including financial or compliance audits and other information provided by USDE as monitored through Standard 2.
- (d) Set qualifications for ACEND board members and program reviewers.
  - (e) Maintain accreditation files with cooperation of ACEND staff.
  - (f) Review issues related to accreditation and take action as necessary.
  - (g) Investigate written complaints concerning accredited programs.
  - (h) Establish, review, and modify fees as necessary and provide for responsible fiscal planning and control for the administration of the accreditation process.
  - (i) Direct the activities of the program review teams for the evaluation of nutrition and dietetics education.
    - i. Formulate program review policies that assure efficient, consistent program evaluation for implementation by reviewers.
    - ii. Maintain an efficient mechanism for transmitting review team findings, in cooperation with the ACEND program representatives.
  - (j) Reach autonomous decisions regarding accreditation for nutrition and dietetics education programs.
    - i. Accredite programs that prepare nutrition and dietetics practitioners based on the Accreditation Standards in effect at the time and recommendations from the triads.
    - ii. Provide opportunity for third-party comment regarding programs under consideration for accreditation.
    - iii. Review and approve decision letters.
    - iv. Publish accreditation decisions.

- v. Communicate accreditation decisions to USDE, states and other appropriate organizations.
- (k) Appoint and train program reviewers.
    - i. Solicit applications for new program reviewers from nutrition and dietetics educators and practitioners as needed.
    - ii. Follow established program reviewer selection and reappointment procedures.
    - iii. Assist with program reviewer training sessions.
    - iv. Monitor performance of trained program reviewers.
  - (l) Establish policies and procedures for appeals of accreditation decisions.
  - (m) Appoint committees and consultants to assist the ACEND board in meeting its program of work, goals, and objectives.
  - (n) Act and advocate in all appropriate ways before the public, the profession, and education entities to encourage and achieve the highest standards in nutrition and dietetics education.
    - i. In cooperation with CDR and the Academy HOD, foster excellence in nutrition and dietetics education through initial input in development and revision of educational requirements for entry to the profession.
    - ii. Report to the Academy membership through newsletters, mailings, and forums.
  - (o) Collaborate with other accreditation agencies, as appropriate, to improve the efficiency of the accreditation process.
3. Responsibilities of individual ACEND board members
- (a) Participate in the ACEND triad review process
  - (b) Attend scheduled meetings of the ACEND board.
  - (c) Review accreditation recommendations from triads in preparation for participating in making decisions on the accreditation status of programs.
  - (d) Perform other duties as assigned by the chair, such as serving on standing or ad hoc committees, attending meetings related to accreditation, etc.
  - (e) Take appropriate action to avoid conflict of interest in carrying out ACEND responsibilities.
- B. Chair of ACEND
- 1. Functions
    - (a) Implement and coordinate action plans for ACEND.
    - (b) Maintain communication within ACEND and with the Academy BOD and HOD.
  - 2. Responsibilities
    - (a) Assume responsibility cooperatively with ACEND staff in determining action to be taken on selected matters relating to the accreditation process. These actions are based on decisions made by members of the ACEND board and review teams and in accordance with guidance set for accrediting bodies by the United States Department of Education (USDE).
    - (b) Schedule and preside at all meetings of the ACEND board.

- (c) Serve as ex-officio member of ACEND committees.
- (d) Appoint ACEND committees, as necessary, with the advice of the ACEND board in order to carry out ACEND action plans.
- (e) Request legal counsel, as necessary, for advice related to accreditation, appeals, etc.
- (f) Orient new ACEND members, including program reviewers, before they assume responsibilities on ACEND, in cooperation with the Nominating Committee, program representatives, and staff.
- (g) Is chair of the ACEND Executive Committee

C. Vice Chair of ACEND

1. Functions

- (a) Perform functions of the chair if the chair is unable to perform the functions of the office of chair.
- (b) Develop a program of work for ACEND in cooperation with staff for the vice chair's term as chair.
- (c) Serves as ACEND ex-officio member on the Council on Future Practice

2. Responsibilities

- (a) Assist the chair and represent ACEND upon the chair's request.
- (b) Review general correspondence and major changes from programs, as directed by the ACEND chair and in accordance with accreditation policies and procedures.
- (c) Become chair of ACEND at completion of term as vice chair.
- (d) Participate in the preparation of the ACEND budget, in cooperation with staff.
- (e) Appoint ACEND board members to standing committees for vice chair's term as chair.
- (f) Represent ACEND at meetings of USDE and other organizations relevant to accreditation.
- (g) Participate in planning the Academy annual meeting program for ACEND.
- (h) Represent programs that came through the Executive Committee meeting during ACEND board meetings.
- (i) Set ACEND board meeting dates for following year.
- (j) Serve role of Parliamentarian
- (k) Is a member of the ACEND Executive Committee

D. Past ACEND Chair

1. Functions

- (a) serve as ACEND ex-officio member on the Academy HOD and NDEP Council
- (b) Provide counsel to ACEND as needed.

2. Responsibilities

- (a) Represent ACEND at HOD and NDEP meetings.
- (b) Maintain communication between ACEND and HOD and NDEP



- (c) Provide written and/or oral report of HOD and NDEP meetings at ACEND board meetings.
  - (d) Serve on ACEND ad hoc or standing committees as appointed.
  - (e) Participate in site visits, focused site visits, and paper reviews as needed.
- E. Program Representatives
- 1. Functions
    - (a) Serve as members of ACEND board.
    - (b) Serve as communication liaison between teams and ACEND staff. Communicate with nutrition and dietetics education program directors as directed by chair of ACEND.
    - (c) Serve as communication liaison between program reviewers and ACEND regarding issues related to the accreditation process.
  - 2. Responsibilities
    - (a) Attend ACEND board meetings and participate in ACEND activities, as appropriate.
    - (b) Review all written documents/applications submitted by programs in order to have a working knowledge of program information.
    - (c) Review correspondence and major changes from programs, as directed by the ACEND chair and accreditation policies and procedures.
    - (d) Cooperate with chair of ACEND and staff when program directors request clarification of reviewers' comments.
    - (e) Communicate with program reviewers to assure accurate and thorough program review process. Communicate with ACEND for guidance with consistency in program review.
    - (f) Present recommendations made by triads to the ACEND board.
    - (g) Review requests by programs for extensions of deadlines for submitting additional material/interim report if extension requested is greater than two weeks.
    - (h) Serve as member of ACEND committees as appointed.
    - (i) Communicate program reviewers' concerns related to the accreditation process to ACEND board.
    - (j) Provide direction, based on policies and procedures established by the ACEND board, to program reviewers on concerns related to the accreditation process.
    - (k) Understand that direct communication with the United States Department of Education (USDE) or other organizations on behalf of the program reviewers or ACEND board are initiated only by the Executive Director in consultation with the chair of ACEND.
- F. Program Representatives-elect
- 1. Function: Perform functions of the program representative if the program representative is unable to perform functions of the office.
  - 2. Responsibilities
    - (a) Assist the program representative and/or represent the program representative at ACEND board meetings at the program representative's request.

- (b) Review major changes from programs, as directed by the ACEND chair and in accordance with accreditation policies and procedures.
  - (c) Assist the program representative, as requested, in communicating with reviewers to assure an accurate and thorough program review process.
  - (d) Serve on individual program review teams.
  - (e) Become program representative on June 1<sup>st</sup> following the term as program representative-elect.
  - (f) Eligible to vote in elections of new board members and the appointment and reappointment of program reviewers.
- G. Representatives of the Public
- 1. Function: Serve as a member of the ACEND board.
  - 2. Responsibilities
    - (a) Review ACEND materials.
    - (b) Attend and participate in scheduled ACEND board meetings.
    - (c) Participate on committees.
    - (d) Assist with ACEND activities such as reviewer training, workshops, and forums on accreditation.
- H. Program Administrator
- 1. Function: Serve as a member of the ACEND board.
  - 2. Responsibilities
    - (a) Review ACEND materials.
    - (b) Attend and participate in scheduled ACEND board meetings.
    - (c) Participate on committees.
    - (d) Assist with ACEND activities such as reviewer training, workshops, and forums on accreditation.
- I. Practitioner Representative
- 1. Function: Serve as a member of the ACEND board.
  - 2. Responsibilities
    - (a) Review ACEND materials.
    - (b) Attend and participate in scheduled ACEND board meetings.
    - (c) Participate on committees.
    - (d) Assist with ACEND activities such as reviewer training, workshops, and forums on accreditation.
    - (e) Eligible to vote in elections of new board members and the appointment and reappointment of program reviewers.
- J. Nutrition and dietetics Student
- 3. Function: Serve as a member of the ACEND board.
  - 4. Responsibilities
    - (a) Review ACEND materials.

- (b) Attend and participate in scheduled ACEND board meetings.
- (c) Participate on committees.
- (d) Assist with ACEND activities such as reviewer training, workshops, and forums on accreditation.
- (e) Serves as ex-officio member of the Academy Student Advisory Committee during year as student representative-elect.
- (f) Eligible to vote in elections of new board members and the appointment and reappointment of program reviewers during year as student representative-elect.

K. ACEND Staff

1. Functions

- (a) Serve as liaison with the Academy, CDR, USDE, and other appropriate groups.
- (b) Provide administrative assistance to the ACEND board, its review teams and committees.

2. Responsibilities

- (a) Draft reports, correspondence, or other materials related to the activities of ACEND.
- (b) Maintain official files on all accredited programs.
- (c) Schedule site visits.
- (d) Provide assistance/information to programs when needed.
- (e) Maintain recognition by USDE by submitting as needed: self-study reports, progress reports, any ACEND annual report, directory of programs updated annually, summary of major accrediting activities over the past year if requested, changes to policies, procedures or standards that might affect its scope of recognition or compliance with the criteria for recognition, and notification of expansion of scope, etc.
- (f) Attend meetings of USDE and other groups related to accreditation.
- (g) Orient new members before they assume responsibilities on the ACEND board, in cooperation with the ACEND chair.
- (h) Maintain program reviewer records.
- (i) Develop procedures for implementing policies established by the ACEND board.
- (j) Implement administrative notification as needed.
- (k) Obtain legal counsel as necessary for advice related to accreditation, appeals, etc., in cooperation with the ACEND chair.
- (l) Coordinate meetings and conference calls.
- (m) Draft decision letters for approval by the ACEND board.
- (n) Serve as initial contact for programs with questions or concerns about accreditation process.
- (o) Communicate, as needed, with the ACEND board and program reviewers regarding program questions or concerns about accreditation.
- (p) Coordinate review of accreditation materials including the assignment of reviewers to avoid conflict of interest.

- (q) Sign decision letters and other correspondence as directed by the ACEND chair (Proxy authorization given to the Executive Director, Accreditation).
- (r) Review and acknowledge program director and other substantive program changes in accordance with ACEND policies and procedures.

### **1.3 Committees**

#### **A. Establishment of Ad Hoc ACEND Committees**

1. The ACEND board may carry out its functions through committees, panels, or task forces.
2. Committees include at least one member of the ACEND board and other persons selected by the ACEND chair with the advice of board members.
3. The need for each committee will be assessed annually.
  - (a) Committees shall continue to exist until the duties assigned to them are accomplished or
  - (b) A committee is dissolved by the chair of ACEND.
4. Ad-Hoc Panel for Appeals
  - (a) Responsibilities:
    - i. Function as a decision-making body that is independent from the ACEND Board for the purpose of reviewing decisions to withdraw accreditation, or deny candidacy or full accreditation of a program.
    - ii. An Ad Hoc Panel is assembled if a program has made a formal request for an appeal of an adverse accreditation decision.
  - (b) Membership: The core composition of any ACEND decision making body must include at least an academic (someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary teaching and/or research), an educator (someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary education in an academic capacity), a practitioner (someone currently or recently directly engaged in significant manner in the practice of dietetics), an administrator (someone currently or recently engaged in an administrative position in higher education, health care or other type of organization sponsoring an accredited nutrition and dietetics education program) and a public member.
    - i. The immediate Past Chair of the ACEND Board who is in good standing
    - ii. The Past Chair who precedes the immediate Past Chair and is in good standing
    - iii. A past Program Representative, who is an academic, from the same program type as the program making the appeal and has administrative experience as defined in (b).
    - iv. A past Program Representative who is a practitioner.
    - v. A past Public Member.
    - vi. ACEND Executive Director (non-voting)
    - vii. Conflict of Interest: In the event that any of the above members have a conflict of interest (see Section 1.6.G), the ACEND chair will create a list of ACEND chairs or program representatives (as applicable) from the last 6 years with similar qualifications.

1. The appellant is allowed two weeks to reject up to half of the individuals from the list.
  2. The ACEND chair appoints the Appeals Panel from those names not rejected.
  3. The appellant is informed of the individuals appointed within two weeks of the appellant's response to the list of names.
- viii. The appellant communicates with the Appeals Panel only in writing through ACEND staff.
- (c) Members of the Appeal Panel will receive training, as appropriate, prior to the Appeals Panel hearing. Training may be conducted via webinar and will include panel member responsibilities, ACEND policies and procedures, ACEND accreditation standards and the program evaluation and appeals processes.
- (d) Authority:
- i. Makes the decision to affirm, amend, or reverse the original accreditation decision or send the original decision back to the ACEND Board for further consideration.
  - ii. If the original decision is sent back to the ACEND Board for further consideration, the following will occur:
    1. Appeals Panel identifies specific issues that the ACEND Board must address.
    2. ACEND Board must act in accordance within the Appeals Panel's instructions.
  - iii. The program may have legal counsel present and/or participate in any presentation the program is permitted to make.
- (d) Meetings:
- i. Meetings are called on an as needed basis
  - ii. Meetings may be in person or by telephone conference call or comparable communication means
  - iii. Meetings shall not occur without active participation from all committee members
  - iv. ACEND Executive Director will be responsible for overseeing the preparation materials for the meeting and overseeing the recording of the committee meeting minutes.
- B. Standing Committees of ACEND
1. Executive Committee
    - (a) Responsibilities:
      - i. Acts on the Board's behalf between Board meetings in the following matters:
        7. Matters that cannot wait for consideration of the full Board
        8. Reviews general correspondence and major changes from programs, in accordance with accreditation policies and procedures.
        9. Drafts Board meeting agenda in conjunction with staff
        10. Evaluates the Executive Director
        11. Periodically assesses the quality of committee work

12. Issues referred to it by the full Board for study

13. Issues generated by the Committee itself

(b) Membership:

- i. ACEND Chair (Executive Committee Chair)
- ii. ACEND Vice Chair
- iii. ACEND Past Chair
- iv. ACEND Executive Director
- v. Other individuals may be invited to attend an Executive Committee meeting if the topic under discussion requires her/his expertise

(c) Authority:

- i. Review and ratify Executive Committee actions at its next in person meeting or conference call.
- ii. An Executive Committee member's term is concurrent with term on the Board.
- iii. Has no authority to exercise program accreditation decisions on behalf of the Board.

(d) Meetings:

- i. Meetings may be in person or by distance communication
- ii. The ACEND chair in collaboration with the ACEND Executive Director sets the agenda for the Executive Committee meeting
- iii. A quorum is two-thirds of the voting membership; a quorum would be 2 voting members
- iv. The ACEND vice chair will chair the meeting in the absence of the ACEND chair

2. Accreditation Standards Committee

(a) Responsibilities:

- i. Ongoing monitoring of accreditation standards
- ii. Periodic review and revision of accreditations standards
- iii. Assess and implement, as appropriate, current trends and new developments in nutrition and dietetics education and practice
- iv. Assure policies, guidelines, guidance and documents used in the accreditation process are in compliance with USDE accreditation regulations

(b) Membership (Appointed by the Executive Committee):

- i. Committee chair
- ii. DPD Program Representative
- iii. DT Program Representative
- iv. DI or CP Program Representative
- v. Public Member
- vi. ACEND Staff
- vii. Temporary members for expanded Accreditation Standards Committees are appointed to complete specific, short-term tasks and may serve until the tasks are complete.

- (c) Authority:
  - i. Make recommendations to the ACEND Board
  - ii. Chair reports committee activities to the ACEND Board at each Board meeting
  - iii. All members of the Accreditation Standards Committee are voting members with the exception of ACEND Staff.
  - iv. Accreditation Standards Committee members serve on the Committee for the duration of their term on the Board, at the discretion of the Chair.

- (d) Meetings:
  - i. May be in person or by distance communication
  - ii. ACEND Staff is responsible for preparing materials for the meeting; and taking meeting minutes
  - iii. A quorum is two-thirds of the voting membership (3 voting members when committee membership has not been expanded)

### 3. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee recruits qualified individuals to serve as program reviewers and develops the ballot for the annual Board election to fill vacant Board positions. Positions elected by the ACEND Board include ACEND Vice Chair, Program Representatives including At-Large Representative, Nutrition and Dietetics Student and Public Members.

- (a) Responsibilities:
  - i. Recruit qualified candidates for election to the ACEND Board based on anticipated vacancies
  - ii. Review applications, interview and screen applicants for ACEND Board positions.
  - iii. Develop the ballot and complete candidate biographical information for the annual Board election. At least two individuals, whenever possible, will be slated by the Committee for each office.
  - iv. Recruit qualified individuals to serve as Program Reviewers
  - v. Review applications, interview and screen applicants for Program Reviewers
  - vi. Review current Program Reviewers for reappointment
  - vii. Develop a list of Program Reviewers for appointment/reappointment by the ACEND Board
  - viii. Monitor the performance of Program Reviewers

- (b) Membership (appointed by the Executive Committee):
  - i. Committee Chair
  - ii. Program Representative
  - iii. Student member
  - iv. Others as needed
  - v. ACEND Staff (non-voting)

- (c) Authority:

- i. Recommend slate of qualified candidates to the ACEND Board for position of Vice Chair, Program Representatives, including At-Large Representative, Public Members and Nutrition and Dietetics Student
  - ii. Recommend qualified individuals to appoint/reappoint as Program Reviewers
  - iii. Chair reports committee activities to the ACEND Board at each Board meeting
  - iv. All members of the Nominating Committee with the exception of ACEND Staff are voting members
  - v. Nominating Committee members serve on the Committee for the duration of their term on the Board, at the discretion of the Chair.
- (d) Meetings:
- i. May be in person or by electronic communication
  - ii. A quorum is a majority of the voting membership
  - iii. ACEND Staff is responsible for preparing materials for the meeting; and taking meeting minutes
4. Policy and Procedures Committee
- (a) Responsibilities:
- i. Ongoing development and monitoring of ACEND policies and procedures
  - ii. Compliance with USDE requirements and regulations
  - iii. Consistency and due process for all programs
  - iv. Annual review and revision of ACEND policies and procedures using data collected from monitoring activities
- (b) Membership (appointed by the Executive Committee):
- i. Committee Chair
  - ii. Program Administrator
  - iii. Program Representative
  - iv. Others as needed
  - v. ACEND Staff (non-voting)
  - vi. Temporary members of the Policy and Procedure Committee are appointed to complete specific, short-term tasks and may serve until the tasks are complete
- (c) Authority:
- i. Make recommendations to the Board on additions, deletions, and revisions to ACEND policies and procedures.
  - ii. Chair reports committee activities to the ACEND Board at each Board meeting
  - iii. All members of the *Policy and Procedure Committee* are voting members with the exception of ACEND Staff
  - iv. *Policy and Procedure Committee* members serve on the Committee for the duration of their term on the Board, at the discretion of the Chair.
  - v. Temporary members for expanded *Policy and Procedure Committees* are appointed by the Executive Committee to complete specific, short-term tasks and may serve until the tasks are complete
- (d) Meetings:



- i. Meetings may be in person or by electronic communication
- ii. A quorum is two-thirds of the voting membership
- iii. ACEND Staff is responsible for preparing materials for the meeting; and taking meeting minutes

5. Technology Committee

(a) Responsibilities:

- i. Monitor ACEND technology use and needs
- ii. Assess options and recommend changes in technology used
- iii. Keep abreast of new technology to enhance ACEND technology applications

(b) Membership (appointed by the Executive Committee):

- i. Committee chair
- ii. Program Representative
- iii. Public Member
- iv. ACEND Staff (non-voting)
- v. Other board members or external members as needed
- vi. Temporary members of the Technology Committee are appointed to complete specific, short-term tasks and may serve until the tasks are complete.

(c) Authority:

- i. Make recommendations to the ACEND Board
- ii. Chair reports committee activities to the ACEND Board at each Board meeting
- iii. All members of the Technology Committee are voting members with the exception of ACEND Staff.

(d) Meetings:

- i. May be in person or by distance communication
- ii. ACEND Staff is responsible for preparing materials for the meeting and taking meeting minutes
- iii. A quorum is two-thirds of the voting membership

C. ACEND Board Member Participation on Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Committees

1. As a result of the on-going review by the US Department of Education, ACEND must assure that policies and systems are in place to demonstrate that the Academy "...plays no role in making or ratifying either the accrediting or policy decisions of the agency" § 602.14(d)(2)<sup>1</sup>. In addition, ACEND recognizes that in order to be accepted as a credible authority on education issues, it must have the ability to present evidence-based commentaries and judgments that reflect the ACEND board as a whole, and are not biased by the agendas of other individuals or entities. ACEND's name should not be used to formally endorse ideas or initiatives without the permission of the ACEND board or Chairs.

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<sup>1</sup> Note, per federal regulation § 602.14(d) (2) "The related, associated, or affiliated trade association or membership organization plays no role in making or ratifying either the accrediting or policy decisions of the agency." This regulation applies to members of the Academy's Board of Directors, House of Delegates and committees of the Academy's Board of Directors and House of Delegates.

2. ACEND Representation on Committees of the Academy or Its Units
  - (a) Individuals representing the ACEND board of directors may only participate on committees of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy) or its units (e.g. CDR, the Foundation, etc.) provided that such service does not jeopardize ACEND's recognition by the U.S. Department of Education, the reputation of ACEND as a credible authority on education issues, or the work of the ACEND board of directors or staff. An ACEND representative must not participate in any decision making to control the supply-and-demand of practitioners in the marketplace, or influence licensure laws by mandating changes to the accreditation system. A representative of the ACEND board may only serve on a committee of the Academy as a non-voting member. Permission to serve on a committee of the Academy may only be granted by a discussion and vote of the ACEND board of directors.
  - (b) While a representative of ACEND may perform tasks on a committee, the purpose of an ACEND representative is to serve as a liaison between the ACEND board and the committee, providing information to the committee on the current position of the ACEND board, and conversely, providing current information from the committee to the ACEND board.
  - (c) The presence of an ACEND representative may not be used to endorse committee decisions or recommendations on behalf of ACEND. All requests for ACEND endorsement must be brought forward for a vote of the entire ACEND board of directors. An ACEND representative who is allowed to participate on a committee of the Academy must also abstain on the ACEND board from voting on issues and recommendations brought forward on behalf of the committee.
  - (d) The ACEND Board of Directors may deny or withdraw permission for an individual to serve on a committee on behalf of ACEND for any of the following reasons:
    - i. ACEND participation on a committee has actual or the appearance of conflict of interest or undue influence on a decision of the ACEND board;
    - ii. ACEND participation on a committee is used to endorse the committee activities, recommendations or agendas, when no endorsement has been made by the ACEND board;
    - iii. The ACEND representative to a committee does not routinely update the ACEND board after committee meetings or major decision of the committee;
    - iv. The ACEND representative to a committee provides inaccurate information about ACEND's position on issues;
    - v. The ACEND representative to a committee is unable to fulfill responsibilities to the ACEND board as a result of work the committee.

#### **1.4 Meetings of the ACEND Board**

- A. The ACEND board holds at least two in-person meetings and additional teleconference (audio conference or videoconference) meetings, as needed, each year.
- B. Scheduling
  1. Special meetings of the ACEND board may be called by the chair as needed, pending availability of funds.
  2. Meetings are scheduled by the ACEND chair and staff. Notices of meetings are sent to ACEND board members by staff.

- (a) Members are notified of the in-person meeting date and time in sufficient time (6-8 weeks) to make convenient, economical travel arrangements.
  - (b) Agendas for in-person meetings, including review team recommendations for accreditation are sent to ACEND board members for arrival two weeks before the in-person meetings. Agendas for teleconference meetings are sent for arrival one week before the meeting.
    - i. If the review team determines that the progress report documents compliance with ACEND Accreditation Standards, the program will be placed on the consent agenda of the next regularly scheduled ACEND board meeting.
    - ii. If the review team determines the program has not corrected all the deficiencies as indicated by a partially meets or does not meet ranking, the program will be placed on the board meeting agenda as a discussion item.
- C. Transacting business
- 1. A quorum to transact business for a regular or special meeting is at least a majority (more than 50%) of the ACEND board. Audio conference meetings require a roll call to establish a quorum. During an audio conference, any individual who joins the meeting after the roll call or leaves the meeting prior to adjournment must announce their status.
  - 2. Parliamentary authority: the rules contained in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* govern ACEND board meetings in all cases that they are applicable and when they are not superseded by ACEND policies and procedures.
  - 3. Roll call votes must be taken during an audio conference. During a videoconference each board member's vote must be tracked, such as by using a polling feature.
  - 4. Program representatives present the review team's recommendation for the accreditation decision at the ACEND board meeting. A motion is made to accept the review team's recommendation. If the motion fails, a detailed rationale statement shall be documented in the meeting minutes.

## **1.5 Program Reviewers**

- A. Procedures for Selection of Program Reviewers
- 1. Nominations are solicited as needed from the community of nutrition and dietetics educators and practitioners.
  - 2. An application that includes a current resume or vita, a statement from applicant identifying why he/she wants to be a program reviewer and the names of two persons qualified to substantiate her/his qualifications must be submitted (to be received before the winter ACEND board meeting).
  - 3. The names of the applicants are provided to Board members prior to the beginning of the nominating committee process for review and comment. ACEND board members may submit comments to the Nominating Committee substantiating selection of, or reasons for not selecting, any of the proposed program reviewers.
  - 4. The Nominating Committee reviews all applications, interviews all qualified applicants and contacts their references.
  - 5. The Nominating Committee recommends to the ACEND board an adequate number of qualified individuals to be trained and appointed to conduct program reviews projected for the upcoming years. Qualified applicants are invited to attend a training workshop held annually in the summer before they are appointed.

6. ACEND board members may submit comments to the Nominating Committee substantiating selection of, or reasons for not selecting, any of the proposed program reviewers during the ACEND board meeting at which the individuals are appointed.
- B. Reappointment of Program Reviewers
1. Program reviewers are subject to review and reappointment every three years. This review takes place at the winter ACEND board meeting. At least eight weeks before the meeting, a list of persons whose appointments are ending is made available to the members of the Nominating Committee by ACEND staff. The Committee recommends those to be reappointed and provides a list of names in the ACEND board agenda for approval.
  2. A program reviewer ordinarily serves a three-year term. If workload requires, program reviewers may be reappointed for additional terms.
  3. Criteria for not reappointing a program reviewer include:
    - (a) Performance evaluations that are not consistent with the expectations of a program reviewer or two or more documented complaints. (See Section 1.5.D)
    - (b) Inability to do two site visits annually. The Nominating Committee receives documentation of reasons for not participating in site visits.
  4. Reappointment may be denied based on criteria for discipline and/or disqualification.
  5. Letters for reappointment are sent to program reviewers by the Nominating Committee.
  6. Reappointments are contingent upon attending a training workshop within 12 months of the reappointment date. Extensions may be granted, for good reason, by the chair, Nominating Committee.
- C. Assessment of Performance of Program Reviewers
1. In addition to performing a self-evaluation following each onsite visit, program reviewers are assessed by the other members of the team and by individuals of the institution/program that was visited, using a format provided by ACEND. Annually, the information provided is compiled with comments included verbatim and sent to the program reviewers.
  2. Staff will review the compiled assessments for responses that raise concerns about the performance of the on-site reviewers individually, as well as collectively. If such issues arise, staff will contact the involved individual(s) to investigate and remediate, if necessary. Staff also have the authority to cease using program reviewers.
  3. ACEND Public Member(s) will annually review all assessments to identify trends in performance that can be addressed through training or policy change. An annual report of this review will be provided to the ACEND Board for review and action as indicated.
- D. Complaints about program reviewers
- (a) Complaints may include conduct during a site visit, poor preparation for the site visit, poor quality of the report, or non-compliance with procedures or other issues that conflict with ACEND's mission, goals and values.
  - (b) Complaints must be submitted in writing. The complaint must be signed by the complainant. Anonymous complaints will not be considered.
  - (c) Complaints are brought to the Nominating Committee chair. All complaints about program reviewers are investigated immediately. The reviewer is asked to respond in writing to the complaint. The complaint and the reviewer's response will be

included on the agenda of the next scheduled ACEND board meeting. The ACEND board determines the action to be taken, which may include remediation or termination of appointment.

(d) Records of complaints and reviewer terminations are maintained for ten years.

E. Termination of appointment

1. A reviewer's appointment may be terminated for any of the following reasons.
  - (a) Two or more documented complaints.
  - (b) If a program reviewer or ACEND board member acts as a consultant to a program or accepts employment from a program that he/she has visited/reviewed within the past three years.
  - (c) Board decision based on documented complaint.

F. Procedures for Scheduling Program Reviewers as Site Visitors

1. A program reviewer may be scheduled as a lead when he/she has been the accompanying reviewer on at least three site visits.
2. Program reviewers are contacted and scheduled for site visits by ACEND staff approximately four to six months in advance.
3. Program reviewers must decline a site visit that, in their best judgment, places them in a real or apparent conflict of interest.
4. Only individuals appointed as a program reviewer, members of the ACEND board and ACEND staff may be scheduled to conduct a site-visit review.
5. Observers may be included on the site-visit team with the permission of the program.

G. Review Teams

1. Function: Review programs based on policies and procedures developed by ACEND board.
  - (a) Follow accreditation guidelines in reviewing applications and other documents, particularly to comply with criteria for being recognized as an accrediting body by the United States Department of Education (USDE).
  - (b) Make appropriate recommendations to the ACEND board regarding program accreditation status.
2. Responsibilities of individual program reviewers for all assigned reviews.
  - (a) Serve as one of two persons to review self- studies, program assessment reports, annual reports, correspondence, and other requested materials from programs applying for accreditation.
  - (b) Provide summary report, and evaluation of whether all required evidence to demonstrate compliance with the standards has been provided by the program in proper format to the lead reviewer for each program by the established deadline.
  - (c) Serve periodically as lead reviewer for programs.
  - (e) Provide input to ACEND program representatives developing and updating policies and procedures.
  - (f) Maintain working files for all programs reviewed.
  - (g) Remain anonymous to program director, administrators, and faculty of programs when reviewing program assessment reports.

- (h) Be prepared to thoroughly discuss program summary with lead reviewer and/or ACEND program representative.
  - (i) Submit a current curriculum vita and update the Reviewer Portal to provide current conflicts of interest and twelve month contact information by September 1 in order to remain an active program reviewer.
3. Responsibilities of lead reviewers
- (a) Maintain the responsibilities of an individual program reviewer.
  - (b) Aid review team in adhering to established deadlines.
  - (c) Act as a mentor for the accompanying and trainee reviewers.
  - (d) Work with ACEND staff to finalize the site visit schedule with the program director, communicates and reviews plans with accompanying reviewer(s) and ACEND program representative.
  - (e) Communicate with program reviewers and ACEND program representative via telephone or Basecamp to assure accurate and thorough program review process.
  - (f) Assist program reviewers in preparing summary reports according to guidance as necessary.
  - (g) Confer with program reviewers regarding unclear issues and/or disagreeing viewpoints.
  - (h) Check accuracy of all statements and recommendations.
  - (i) Tie all comments to specific standards; writes comments in a style that can be communicated to the program director.
  - (j) Contact ACEND program representative and/or staff if questions arise.
  - (k) Summarize all reviewers' comments into one final summary report, which reflects consensus of all members of review team.
  - (l) Provide copy of final site visit report to all reviewers, ACEND program representative, and staff.
  - (m) Prepare to thoroughly discuss site visit report with the ACEND program representative.
4. Responsibilities of program reviewers conducting a site visit
- (a) Maintain responsibilities of an individual program reviewer and lead reviewer (See Sections 1.5.G. 2. and 1.5.G 3.).
  - (b) Review the self-study report submitted by the program before each site visit to develop an in-depth understanding of the program and to determine information to be collected during the site visit.
  - (c) Follow established policies and procedures for conducting site visits in a professional and ethical manner.
  - (d) Represent ACEND to programs in the accreditation process.
  - (e) Substantiate that the program is in compliance with the Accreditation Standards in effect at the time.
  - (g) Document that the program has established goals for attaining educational excellence and is capable of meeting these goals.
  - (h) During a site visit

- i. Verify information presented in the self-study report.
  - ii. Prepare a draft site visit report, which is used as the basis for the final site visit report and by the triad to form a recommendation regarding accreditation status of the program.
- (i) Any required documents not included in the self-study report or revised during the site visit and provided to the review team must be submitted directly to ACEND by the program director. Reviewers should include information regarding additional materials and/or revisions in the site visit report.
  - (j) After a site visit, submits the draft site visit report to the ACEND program representative and staff. Staff reviews and finalizes the site visit report and, upon approval of the review team, provides the final report to the program.

## **1.6 Ethics, Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest**

- A. ACEND board members and program reviewers abide by the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Nutrition and Dietetics and the Standards of Professional Practice.
- B. All actions of ACEND board members, program reviewers, and staff are consistent with the ACEND guidelines concerning confidentiality of program decisions and visits.
- C. As a nationally recognized accrediting body, ACEND has the responsibility to maintain confidentiality of privileged information. Acceptance of an invitation to be an ACEND board member or program reviewer constitutes an agreement to safeguard this confidentiality. Program files are available only to these members, staff working in accreditation, and program reviewers (program(s) they are reviewing). The disclosure to unauthorized persons of information obtained in connection with the review of any application is prohibited (see Section 1.9 Records, regarding authorized persons).
- D. In its accrediting activities, ACEND board members or reviewers will not access Protected Health Information (PHI) as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
- E. When the ACEND board has cause to believe that any program is acting in an unethical manner or is deliberately misrepresenting itself to students or public, it will investigate the matter and take appropriate action.
- F. The potential for conflict of interest exists when one's ability to make decisions to protect the public is compromised by any relationship with an institution or nutrition and dietetics education program that might interfere with objectivity in the accreditation process. Conflict of interest must be avoided by ACEND board members, program reviewers and staff in all situations in which accreditation recommendations or decisions are being made.
- G. Program reviewers are not assigned to participate in a site visit or review a program for which they have a conflict as described below. ACEND board members, or former board members assigned to an appeals panel, are absent from deliberations and decisions for a program and it is so noted in the meeting minutes if they:
  - 1. Currently serve or have served as an employee, paid consultant or appointee of the sponsoring institution or program
  - 2. Currently serve as an employee, paid consultant or appointee of any organization or program for which it has partnered.
  - 3. Are a graduate of the sponsoring institution or program
  - 4. Have a family member (defined as spouse, partner, child, parent or sibling) who is employed or affiliated with the sponsoring institution or program

5. Have a personal relationship with the program director or faculty/staff in the sponsoring institution or program
  6. Are affiliated with a program in the same state or reside in the same state (this restriction does not apply to public members)
  7. Are employed by a program of the same type within the competitive proximity of the program (i.e., within 100 miles) or are employed by an organization in direct competition with the sponsoring organization
  8. Have been identified as a conflict of interest by the program
- H. ACEND volunteers must adhere to the following provisions in regard to providing consultative services, education or training for the purpose of assisting others in maintaining or obtaining ACEND accreditation when those consultative services, education or training are not sponsored by ACEND or not part of the individual's responsibilities as a ACEND volunteer:
1. ACEND program reviewers must notify ACEND staff and update their declaration of conflicts of interest whenever they provide consultative services, education or training for the purpose of assisting others in maintaining or obtaining ACEND accreditation, apart from their normal responsibilities as ACEND volunteers. Program reviewers must provide a written statement to any party receiving consultative services, education or training that they are not acting on behalf of ACEND. Informal, impromptu conversations or request for advice are exempt if neither reimbursement nor remuneration is provided and it is explicitly stated that the volunteer is not acting on behalf of ACEND.
  2. ACEND board members and staff may not provide consultative services, education or training apart from their normal duties.
  3. Program reviewers must obtain prior written approval before using ACEND documents and materials as part of non-ACEND-sponsored consultative services, education or training for the purpose of assisting others in maintaining or obtaining ACEND accreditation.
  4. Summary of the conditions under which ACEND volunteers and staff may provide outside consultative services, education or training for the purpose of assisting others in maintaining or obtaining ACEND accreditation.

Board Members	ACEND board members are prohibited from providing consultative services, education or training to dietetic-education programs for the purpose of assisting them in maintaining or obtaining ACEND accreditation outside their roles as ACEND board members whether they are free of charge, reimbursed or remunerated.
Program Reviewer	Program Reviewers may provide consultative services, education or training if they notify the ACEND staff and Executive Committee and provide a written statement to parties receiving their services that they are not acting on behalf of ACEND. A program reviewer cannot serve as a consultant to a program for three years following the review and site visit.
ACEND Staff	ACEND staff are prohibited from providing consultative services, education or training to nutrition and dietetics-education programs for the purpose of assisting them in maintaining or obtaining ACEND accreditation outside their roles as ACEND staff whether they are free of charge, reimbursed or remunerated.



5. Denial or dismissal of ACEND volunteers.

The following circumstances may result in the ACEND board denying an individual's request for participation or reinstatement as an ACEND volunteer, or result in the ACEND chair asking a current volunteer to relinquish a position or face dismissal:

- Violation of any of the following
  - ACEND Code of Board Member Ethics
  - Code of Ethics for the Profession of Nutrition and Dietetics
  - Standards of Practice and Professional Performance
  - ACEND conflict of interest policy
  - Intentional disregard for ACEND policies and procedures.
- Repeated inability of the volunteer to perform duties
- Publicly disparaging the integrity of ACEND
- The ACEND board reserves the right to deny participation of, not reinstate or dismiss a volunteer for cause.
- A denial of participation or reinstatement as an ACEND volunteer, or a chair's request to relinquish positions may be appealed to the ACEND board of directors. The decision of the ACEND board is final. The ACEND board may vote to request that the chair relinquish leadership of the ACEND board or face dismissal for the reasons listed above. That decision may be appealed to a special committee composed of three former ACEND chairs, none of whom may be currently sitting on the ACEND board. Individuals will be notified in writing.

6. Appeal of denials or dismissals of ACEND volunteers.

To file an appeal of a decision to deny an individual's participation or reinstatement as a ACEND volunteer, or a chair's request to relinquish an individual's position as an existing volunteer, the individual must notify the ACEND Executive Director of Accreditation in writing, by certified mail, return receipt requested, that she/he appeals the decision or request:

- The written appeal must include pertinent facts in support of the appellant's position.
- The written appeal must be postmarked within 10 calendar days of the date of receipt of the notice of the decision or request, as documented by the record of express mail second-day delivery.
- If such a request is not submitted and postmarked within this 10-day period, all rights to appeal are considered to be waived and the decision is final.
- Appeals made by the ACEND chair will be considered by a special committee composed of three former ACEND chairs, none of whom may be currently sitting on the ACEND board. Appeals from all other volunteers will be considered by the ACEND board of directors.
- At the appeal hearing, the appellant will have an opportunity to present oral testimony via conference call.
- An appellant who is being dismissed from current services as an ACEND volunteer will be exempt from all ACEND responsibilities and travel until after the appeal decision is made.

- The appellant will be notified of the final decision by e-mail.
  - All decisions are final.
- I. If an ACEND board member is currently affiliated as an employee, paid consultant, or appointee of the sponsoring institution of the program under review, he/she will be expected to ensure he/she does not review any of the program materials included in the agenda packet. During face-to-face meetings the board member will leave the room during discussions involving a program with whom he/she has a conflict of interest. During board conference call meetings the board member will leave the conference line and be contacted when to return to the call after the decision. Decisions regarding programs with which there are board members' conflicts will be disclosed only in an official decision letter, using the same process all program decisions are communicated.
  - J. Three years must elapse from the time a program reviewer reviews or visits a program or an ACEND board member reviews a program, before he/she may serve as a consultant to that program.
  - K. Although ACEND staff does not participate directly in decisions regarding accreditation, they provide consistency across program reviews and ensure that policies and procedures are followed. Thus, staff must adhere to the same conflict of interest guidelines for program reviewers and board members in Section 1.6.G. with the exception of state residency.

## **1.7 Training of New Program Reviewers and ACEND Board Members**

- A. An orientation is scheduled annually for new program reviewers and ACEND board members.
- B. The orientation generally includes:
  1. Discussion of the role and value of accreditation.
  2. Review of accreditation and site visit process.
  3. Review of USDE requirements.
  4. Review of current ACEND Accreditation Standards.
  5. Responsibilities of program reviewers and board members.
  6. Review of higher education trends and impact on accreditation procedures (e.g., distance education).
  7. Attendance on an accreditation site visit within one year of their appointment.

## **1.8 Funding and Budget**

- A. The ACEND board participates with the staff in determining its financial needs and managing its expenditures.
- B. The ACEND board may change fees to maintain fiscal responsibility.
- C. Annually, ACEND and the Academy agree to a Memorandum of Understanding. The MOU is subject to U.S. Department of Education review and describes services provided by the Academy, fees paid by ACEND to the Academy, autonomy of ACEND accreditation processes and the Academy financial supplement based on the budgeting process.
- D. Budgetary procedures and timetables established by the Academy are followed.
- E. ACEND staff in consultation with the vice chair is responsible for the budget for all accreditation activities.

- F. Members of the ACEND board, program reviewers and committees do not receive any stated salaries or other compensation for services. Members are reimbursed for approved expenses in accordance with reimbursement policies of the Academy.
- G. ACEND board members receive a tablet computer at the beginning of their term to facilitate in the accreditation process.

## 1.9 Financial Reserves

### A. Policy

- 1. ACEND will seek to maintain financial reserves equal to a minimum of 50% of budgeted annual operating expenses to ensure the stability of the mission, vision, values and ongoing operations of ACEND.

### B. Purpose

- 1. To ensure the organization has adequate funds available in the event of an unanticipated catastrophic event or business situation that may reduce the reserves and weaken financial viability.
- 2. To fund special projects that benefit the organization and the profession.

### C. Procedures

- 1. When revenues exceed expenditures, the surplus is added to the reserves.
- 2. All revenue and expenses related to a project must be identified within the fiscal year in which it will occur. Multi-year projects must submit a budget during each fiscal year that it is being managed. Even though multi-year projects may be approved, it does not guarantee that funding will be available for the duration of the project, depending on the strategic plans, objectives and financial stability of ACEND.
- 3. Once ACEND achieves reserves of 50%, if the level of financial reserves exceeds the planning guidelines of this policy, a budget with expenses exceeding revenues may be presented to the ACEND Board for approval, provided that the expenses requested and ACEND's anticipated financial performance over the next three years are not expected to reduce reserves below 50% of the budgeted operating expenses. Caution should be taken when spending reserves to ensure they are used for activities that align with the ACEND strategic plan. Reserve spending recommendation levels are as follows:

Reserve Levels	Spending Recommendations
50%-60%	Not to exceed 20% of excess over 50%
60%-75%	Not to exceed 40% of excess over 50%
>75%	Not to exceed 75% of excess over 50%

- 4. Once ACEND has established reserves of 50% of the budgeted annual operating expenses, in the event that investment reserves are projected to slip below the required level (50%), during a fiscal year, the Executive Director will be required to perform the following:
  - o Notify the ACEND Board as soon as it is expected that the investment reserve will fall below the required levels.
  - o Recommend a solution to the situation.
- 5. A deficit budget, and/or a reduction in the investment reserves, must be approved by the ACEND Board and may be done for the following reasons:

- To avoid the disruption of ongoing operations, ensure the continuation of essential services and meet unexpected contingencies.
- For capital additions, including replacing of existing capital assets, as determined by and approved by the ACEND Board.
- To finance the development of new or expanded projects.

## **1.10 Records**

### **A. ACEND Official Program Files**

#### **1. Content**

- (a) Final decision letters are kept indefinitely.
- (b) Correspondence between programs and ACEND are kept indefinitely.
- (c) Site visit reports, interim reports and program assessment reports through two review periods, and the most recent self-study report are kept in the program's file.
- (d) Correspondence regarding student complaints and action taken are kept indefinitely.
- (e) Files of programs that have closed or have had accreditation withdrawn are kept in an inactive file.

#### **2. Access**

- (a) All program files are confidential.
- (b) Materials generated by programs are the property of the program and cannot be copied or used in any way by persons not involved in the accreditation process of the program without written permission from the program director or institution administration.
- (c) Access to files is restricted to the Executive Director and the Accreditation staff unless written permission is provided by the program director.

### **B. Working Files**

#### **1. Content**

- (a) Working files include reviewer summary comment sheets, self-study analysis forms and/or notes for a site visit, and draft reports. Working files maintained by ACEND board members, program reviewers and staff are destroyed immediately following the ACEND meeting at which the final accreditation decision is made.
- (b) Other materials are kept as designated for official program files. Files of ACEND board members and program reviewers (i.e., self-study, program assessment report, final site visit reports and correspondence, including memos and emails) are destroyed immediately after the final decision for a program has been communicated.
- (c) Program files of ACEND board members or reviewers (i.e., self-study or program assessment report, final site visit reports, correspondence) are transferred to other ACEND board members or program reviewers as necessary.

- 2. Access to working files. Working files are considered unofficial files and are maintained in a confidential manner.

### **C. Communication with Program Reviewers**

1. Program reviewer selection/appointment correspondence is kept until the reviewer is no longer active.
  2. Program reviewers submit a current curriculum vita or resume and data form documenting their expertise for evaluating nutrition and dietetics education programs to the ACEND staff as requested.
  3. Documentation of program reviewer performance is kept until the reviewer is no longer active.
- D. Records of Telephone Conversations
1. The conversation is confirmed with appropriate written correspondence.
  2. No decisions of the ACEND board are given by telephone or informal email message. Programs will receive official written notification of a decision in the ACEND decision letter sent via email.
- E. Records of Student Complaints
1. Programs are required to inform students of the mailing address and telephone number for ACEND.
  2. Student complaints received by or made available to ACEND are reviewed by and action taken by the ACEND board according to the Complaint Procedure.
  3. If a complaint does not relate to the ACEND Accreditation Standards in effect at the time, the ACEND chair may refer it to Federal, State, and/or other agencies as appropriate.
  4. Student complaints relating to the ACEND Accreditation Standards in effect at the time and action taken are included in the review of the program for re-accreditation.

### **1.11 Amendments to the Policies and Procedures for Accreditation**

- A. Amendments to the policies and procedures for accreditation may be proposed by any voting member of the ACEND board.
- B. The policies and procedures may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the ACEND board by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the voting members. These changes may be made in person, by written proxy or via conference call meeting. Editorial changes that do not change the intent may be made at any time.
- C. The policies and procedures are reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

## **Section 2: Accreditation Application and Review Process**

Policies and procedures have been established for application and review of all levels of accreditation: candidate, full accreditation. Accreditation applications must address the ACEND Accreditation Standards in effect at the time the application is submitted. The current ACEND Accreditation Standards can be found on the ACEND Web page at [www.eatright.org/acend](http://www.eatright.org/acend).

### **2.1 Application for Candidacy for Accreditation**

Newly developed programs that have not been previously accredited, have had accreditation withdrawn or have voluntarily withdrawn from ACEND-accreditation may apply to ACEND for Precandidate status. Precandidate status is awarded after review and acceptance of an eligibility application. Candidate status is awarded after review of the self-study report and an on-site visit indicate that the program is progressing toward compliance with the Accreditation Standards and demonstrates institutional readiness to implement the proposed program. After Candidacy for Accreditation is granted, the program may enroll students. Students on premises and enrolled after Candidacy is granted are considered graduates of an accredited program upon successful completion of the program.

#### **A. Eligibility Application for Precandidate status**

All programs applying to ACEND for precandidate status must meet certain basic requirements. ACEND considers only applications from programs that meet specific program eligibility criteria and are housed in organizations that meet sponsoring institution eligibility requirements.

1. The fact that an institution has another ACEND accredited program that is on probation or facing withdrawal of accreditation does not prevent the submission of an eligibility application for a new program for candidacy. ACEND will review the eligibility application to determine whether the institution will be allowed to proceed with the candidacy for accreditation process.
2. ACEND will not accept an eligibility application from a program in an institution that is subject to the following:
  - A pending or final action brought by a State agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw or terminate the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in the State;
  - A pending or final action brought by a recognized accrediting agency to deny, suspend, revoke, withdraw or terminate the institution's accreditation or preaccreditation; or
  - Probation or an equivalent status imposed by a recognized agency.

#### **B. Procedure for Submitting the Eligibility Application**

1. The sponsoring institution must submit a digital copy of the eligibility application and fee at least 12 months in advance of the planned enrollment of the first class of students. (See Appendix 6.4 for sample timelines) The eligibility application will not be processed until the fee is received. If a fee is not received within 30 working days the eligibility application will be returned to sender.
2. The eligibility application must be documented on the eligibility application template and contain the following:
  - (a) Cover page with original signatures of all institution and program officials.

- (b) Documentation of fulfillment of the eligibility standards, per program type.
    - i. The program must provide a complete, narrative description showing how it meets the eligibility standards stated for the program type.
    - ii. The report should include evidence of compliance necessary to document these standards and support the narrative.
    - iii. Supporting data and/or forms relevant to a particular eligibility standard must be inserted in an appendix and referenced by page number in the narrative of the report.
3. Format for the document must be as follows:
    - (a) The application must be submitted as one PDF file. The recommended length is no more than 25 pages, including the appendix.
    - (b) All pages, including those in the appendix, must be numbered.
    - (c) Proof of transmittal is the responsibility of the sender. The eligibility application should be emailed to ACEND at [acendreports@eatright.org](mailto:acendreports@eatright.org).
  4. ACEND staff reviews the eligibility application to verify that the program meets the eligibility standards for the program type.
    - (a) If insufficient information is provided, ACEND staff notifies the program and the program has an opportunity to present additional material within two weeks of notification. Failure to provide the additional materials within this timeframe results in the application being terminated. Fees will not be refunded.
    - (b) When the eligibility standards are confirmed, ACEND staff notifies the program director of the deadline for submitting the self-study report for candidacy.
    - (c) The due date for submitting the self-study report is approximately two to three months from the eligibility application acceptance date.
    - (d) Within three weeks of receiving notification that the eligibility application has been accepted, the program must submit potential dates to schedule the site visit and identify any conflict of interest with ACEND reviewers.
    - (e) The site visit will be scheduled to occur no later than three months after the date the self-study report is submitted.
- C. Self-Study Report for Candidacy for Accreditation
1. Programs seeking candidacy for accreditation must submit one electronic copy of the self-study report and supporting documentation to ACEND by the due date. Instructions for submitting the self-study report and the due date will be specified in correspondence sent after review of the eligibility application. Proof of transmittal is the responsibility of the sender
  2. Requests for extensions of deadlines for candidacy self-studies must be made in writing and are approved as follows:
    - (a) Requests for two weeks or less may be approved by ACEND staff in consultation with the review team and program representative to assure the document can be reviewed in a shortened time period.
    - (b) Requests for extensions of greater than two weeks ordinarily are not granted. If the program wishes to seek candidacy at a later date, a new eligibility application must be submitted. Fees are not refunded.

3. Program directors should contact ACEND staff for current information about self-study review and site-visit fees.
    - (a) Programs seeking candidate status receive an invoice and payment instructions for the self-study review/site visit fees when the site visit is scheduled.
    - (b) The fee is due when the self-study report is due.
    - (c) All fees must be received before the self-study report is reviewed.
  4. ACEND staff reviews the self-study report to determine if all required information is included.
    - (a) If insufficient information is provided, ACEND staff notifies the program and it has an opportunity to present additional material within two weeks of notification.
    - (b) Failure to provide the additional materials within this timeframe results in canceling the site visit and terminating the application. The site visit fee is refunded minus travel costs incurred by the reviewers.
- D. On-Site Visit for Candidacy for Accreditation (See Section 3 for more information on the site visit process)

The site visit offers the developing program the opportunity to clarify information in the self-study report and provide additional information, if necessary. It provides the opportunity for the program reviewers to verify what is in the self-study report.

1. An ACEND staff member participates in every site visit for candidacy status.
  2. The program review team ordinarily arrives on Sunday and conducts a two-day site visit (Monday–Tuesday) as scheduled.
    - (a) During the site visit, reviewers consult with faculty, administration, potential preceptors, if appropriate, and other interested parties.
    - (b) At the conclusion of the visit, the review team presents an objective, oral report to the program director and other administrators and allows representatives of the program the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the findings.
  3. The lead reviewer submits a draft site visit report to the ACEND program representative and staff no later than two weeks after the site visit.
  4. ACEND staff reviews and finalizes the site visit report and sends it to the review team and the ACEND program representative for review and approval within 15 working days.
  5. Upon approval by the review team, ACEND staff distributes the site visit report to the program director, program review team and all administrators who sign the application page of the self-study report, including the chief executive officer, within seven weeks of the site visit.
  6. Upon receiving the official written report, the program director may reply in writing to any issues, concerns or inaccuracies in the report.
    - (a) The program’s response must be emailed to ACEND staff within 30 business days of receipt of the site visit report.
    - (b) Failure to respond to the site visit report within 30 business days of receipt may result in the loss of the right to submit a response before the board decision.
- E. ACEND Board Decision on Candidacy for Accreditation
1. ACEND staff sends the site visit report and any program response to the program reviewers and ACEND program representative within five working days of receipt of the program’s response.



- (a) The program reviewer submits comments on the self-study report, site visit report and program response to the lead reviewer within three weeks of receipt of materials.
  - (b) The lead reviewer submits a consensus report summarizing comments of all review team members to the ACEND program representative and staff within two weeks of receipt of comments.
  - (c) The site visit report, any program response to it and review team's summary report with analysis of the self-study report and on-site findings is provided to the ACEND Board triad.
  - (d) The triad reviews the information and determines an accreditation decision recommendation for the ACEND Board. The primary reader submits the final summary report with the accreditation decision recommendation to ACEND staff.
2. The site visit report, the program's response and summary report are included on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled ACEND board meeting. The proposed program's self-study report and other documents from the permanent file are available for the ACEND Board's review, as needed.
  3. The ACEND board reaches a decision on the candidacy status of the proposed program based on the proposed program's ability to demonstrate that it has the operational resources and operates as described in the self-study report.
  4. ACEND staff sends a decision letter to the program director within two weeks of the ACEND board meeting.
    - (a) Decision letters regarding granting or denial of candidacy status are emailed to the program director and all administrators on file.
  5. When Candidacy for Accreditation is granted, the program may advertise and admit students for the next instructional period.
  6. If the ACEND board denies candidacy status to a proposed program, the program may request reconsideration of the decision by the ACEND board. (See Section 2.7)
  7. Final decisions on candidacy are published according to ACEND's procedures for publishing final accreditation decisions.
  8. Candidacy for Accreditation status is limited to the completion of two classes, but no longer than four years after candidacy is awarded.
    - (a) At that time, if the program wishes to continue to have ACEND accreditation, the program must submit a self-study application and schedule an on-site visit for full accreditation.
    - (b) Candidate status does not guarantee full accreditation by ACEND.

## **2.2 Application for Full Accreditation**

- A. Program Notification and Scheduling of Site Visit for Full Accreditation
  1. Approximately one year in advance, ACEND staff invites the program director of an accredited program to schedule a site visit for full accreditation and to submit a self-study report documenting compliance with the accreditation standards in effect at that time.
    - (a) The program is requested to submit the Invitation to Evaluate form with appropriate signatures documenting the intent to apply for full accreditation.
    - (b) Upon receipt, the program is notified of the procedure for applying for accreditation and the deadline for submitting the site visit dates form.

2. The program must submit the proposed site visit dates and identify any conflict of interest with program reviewers by the deadline specified in the letter from ACEND staff (approximately six to seven months in advance of scheduling a site visit).
    - (a) When the site visit date is determined and review team confirmed, ACEND staff notifies the program director.
  3. After the site visit is scheduled, the program is informed of the deadline for submitting the self-study report for full accreditation (approximately 12 weeks in advance of the site visit dates).
- B. Self-Study Report for Full Accreditation
1. Programs seeking full or continued accreditation must submit one electronic copy of the self-study report and supporting documentation to ACEND by the due date. Instructions for submitting the self-study report and the due date will be specified in correspondence sent after the site visit has been scheduled. Proof of transmittal is the responsibility of the sender
  2. Requests for an extension of the deadline for submitting the self-study report must be made in writing and are approved as follows:
    - (a) Requests for two weeks or less may be approved by ACEND staff in consultation with the review team and program representative to assure the document can be reviewed in a shortened time period.
    - (b) Requests for extensions of greater than two weeks ordinarily are not granted. If the program reschedules the site visit, a rescheduling fee must be submitted.
  3. Program directors should contact ACEND staff for current information about self-study review and site-visit fees.
    - (a) Programs seeking full accreditation receive an invoice and payment instructions for the self-study review/site visit fee when the site visit is scheduled.
    - (b) The site visit fee is due when the self-study report is due.
    - (c) All fees must be received before the self-study report is reviewed.
    - (d) Failure to submit the self-study report by the due date will result in a late fee.
  4. ACEND staff reviews the self-study report to determine if all required information is included.
    - (a) An incomplete self-study report that fails to address all the accreditation standards currently in effect is returned to the program.
      - i. The site visit is canceled and fees are not returned. If the site visit is rescheduled, a rescheduling fee is assessed.
      - ii. The program is placed on administrative notification. (See Section 2.11)
- C. On-Site Visit for Full Accreditation (See Section 3 for more information on the site visit process)
1. The program review team ordinarily arrives on Saturday and conducts a three-day site visit (Sunday through Tuesday) as scheduled.
    - (a) In consultation with the lead program reviewer and ACEND staff, the program director schedules tours and meetings with various program stakeholders, such as administrators, faculty, preceptors, students and graduates, allowing sufficient time for observations and interviews. To ensure schedule consistency in all program

reviews, ACEND staff and the lead reviewer will work collaboratively on the final site visit schedule.

- (b) During the site visit, reviewers evaluate facilities and consult with faculty, administration, students, graduates, preceptors, if appropriate, and other interested parties.
  - (c) At the conclusion of the visit, the review team presents an objective oral report to the program director and other stakeholders and allows program representatives the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the findings.
  - (d) During the site visit, any documents not included in the self-study report or revised during the site visit and provided to the review team must be submitted in the program response to the site visit report in order to be considered as part of the program's documentation. The review team has the right to limit the amount of revised information they will review during the site visit.
- 2. The lead reviewer submits a draft site visit report to the ACEND program representative and staff no later than two weeks after the site visit.
  - 3. ACEND staff reviews and finalizes the site visit report based on the draft site visit report and sends it to the review team and the ACEND program representative for review and approval within 15 working days.
  - 4. Upon approval by the review team, ACEND staff distributes the site visit report to the program director, program review team and all administrators who signed the application page of the self-study, including the chief executive officer, within seven weeks of the site visit.
  - 5. Upon receiving the official written report, the program director may reply in writing to any issues, concerns or inaccuracies in the report.
    - (a) The program's response must be submitted to ACEND staff within 30 business days of receipt of the site visit report.
    - (b) Failure to respond to the site visit report within 30 business days of receipt may result in the loss of the program's right to do so.
    - (c) No additional materials or documentation will be accepted after the program submits its response to the site visit report.

#### D. ACEND Board Decision on Full Accreditation

- 1. ACEND staff sends the site visit report and any program response to the site visit report to the program reviewers and the ACEND program representative within five working days of receipt of the program's response.
  - (a) The program reviewer(s) submits comments on the self-study report, site visit report and program response to the lead reviewer within three weeks of receipt of materials.
  - (b) The lead reviewer submits a consensus report summarizing comments of all reviewers to the ACEND program representative and staff within two weeks of receipt of comments.
  - (c) The site visit report, any program response to it and review team's summary report with analysis of the self-study report and on-site findings is provided to the ACEND Board triad.

- (d) The triad reviews the information and determines an accreditation decision recommendation for the ACEND Board. The primary reader submits the final summary report with the accreditation decision recommendation to ACEND staff.
- 2. The site visit report, the program's response and summary report are on the agenda of the ACEND board meeting. The program's self-study report and other documents from the permanent file are available for the ACEND board's review, as needed.
- 3. The ACEND board reaches a decision on the accreditation status of the program based on the program's ability to demonstrate that it is in compliance with the standards.
  - (a) A decision to grant full accreditation will not be made if the program is in an institution that is subject to: a pending or final action brought by a State agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw or terminate the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in the State; a pending or final action brought by a recognized accrediting agency to deny, suspend, revoke, withdraw or terminate the institution's accreditation or preaccreditation status; or probation or equivalent status imposed by a recognized agency.
  - (b) The board may grant a shortened term to extend accreditation until the next regularly scheduled ACEND board meeting pending receipt of information regarding the status of the institution's legal authority or accreditation status.
    - i. If the sponsoring institution's legal authority or accreditation status is reinstated, the ACEND board will reach a decision on the accreditation status of the program.
    - ii. If final action is brought by a State agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw or terminate the sponsoring institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in the State or a final action is brought by a recognized accrediting agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw or terminate the sponsoring institution's accreditation or preaccreditation, the program will not be granted full accreditation because of failure to comply with Eligibility Requirement #1.
  - (c) If probation or an equivalent status is imposed upon the sponsoring institution by a recognized agency, the ACEND board may grant full accreditation provided the institutional action and/or reasons for the action are not affecting the quality of the nutrition and dietetics education program.
    - i. In this case, a thorough and reasonable rationale for the ACEND action to grant full accreditation, consistent with the ACEND Accreditation Standards, will be provided to the Secretary of Education within 30 days of the final action.
    - ii. The program will be requested to provide a progress report on the accreditation status of the sponsoring institution until the institution's full accreditation status is reinstated.
    - iii. If institutional probation or equivalent status leads to an action by the licensing agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw or terminate the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in the State or an action by the accrediting agency to deny, suspend, revoke, withdraw or terminate the institution's accreditation or preaccreditation status, the ACEND board will review the accreditation status of the program and take appropriate action.
- 4. ACEND staff sends a decision letter to the program director within two weeks of the ACEND board meeting.
  - (a) Decision letters regarding probationary accreditation or withdrawal of accreditation are sent electronically and via express delivery for tracking purposes.

- (b) Copies of the decision letter are sent electronically to all program administrators on file.
- 5. If the ACEND board places a program on probation or withdraws accreditation, the program may request reconsideration of the decision by the ACEND board. (See Section 2.7)
- 6. Final decisions are published according to ACEND's procedures for publishing final accreditation decisions.

## **2.3 ACEND Board Decisions**

The ACEND board makes the accreditation status decisions described below. The accreditation review process applies to the ACEND accredited program in its entirety. Non-compliance or partial compliance with the standards at one site or track will have an impact on the accreditation status of the entire program. Accreditation decisions are based on review of one or more of the following:

- A program's eligibility application
- A program's self-study report
- A site visit report
- A program's response to a site visit report
- A program's five-year program assessment report and additional materials
- A program's interim report and additional materials
- A program's progress report
- A written complaint about a program and materials relating thereto
- A program's response to a written complaint and materials relating thereto
- ACEND staff-initiated administrative notification
- A program's response to ACEND staff-initiated administrative notification

### **A. Candidate Status**

1. Candidate Status is awarded after a review of the eligibility application and self-study report and an on-site visit indicate that the program is progressing toward compliance with the ACEND Accreditation Standards. Demonstration of institutional readiness to implement the proposed program is required.
2. ACEND will not grant candidacy for accreditation to a program in an institution that is subject to the following:
  - (a) A pending or final action brought by a State agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw or terminate the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in the State;
  - (b) A pending or final action brought by a recognized accrediting agency to deny, suspend, revoke, withdraw or terminate the institution's accreditation or preaccreditation; or
  - (c) Determined to be not in good standing with its regional accreditor, as interpreted by USDE as being significantly out of compliance with one or more of the agency's standards and requiring written notice of this status to the public, or other recognition agency.
3. Deferral of an Accreditation Decision
  - (a) The ACEND board may defer a decision to award candidate status when insufficient evidence is provided to demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standards. When a candidacy decision is deferred, the proposed program will be asked to provide additional information within a specified timeframe. Failure to submit the

requested information, or demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standards may result in denial of candidate status.

4. After candidate status is granted, the program may enroll students. Students on premises and enrolled after candidate status is granted are considered graduates of an accredited program upon successful completion of the program.
5. Candidacy for accreditation status is limited to the completion of two classes but no longer than four years after candidacy is awarded. At that time, if the program wants to continue to maintain ACEND-accreditation, the program must submit a self-study report and schedule an on-site visit for full accreditation. Candidate status does not guarantee full accreditation by ACEND.
6. If candidate status is denied the proposed program will need to restart the process and submit a new eligibility application and host an accreditation site visit if it wishes to seek ACEND accreditation.

B. Full Accreditation

1. Full accreditation is awarded to a program, which held candidate for accreditation status or which has been accredited on a continuous basis, based on a review of a self-study report and an on-site visit indicating the program is in compliance with the ACEND Accreditation Standards in effect at the time of review.
2. Students on premises and enrolled in the program before and during the time that the program holds full accreditation are considered graduates of an accredited program upon successful completion of the program.
3. A term of accreditation is seven years for programs that are in compliance with all standards at the time the ACEND board makes the accreditation decision. The ACEND board reserves the right to change the dates of a program's comprehensive review cycle with a minimum 18 month prior notification to the program.

C. Reduced Accreditation Terms

1. A program that has any standards identified as not met at the time it is reviewed by the ACEND board will be placed on a reduced accreditation term until compliance with all the accreditation standards is demonstrated. The reduced term begins when the ACEND board makes the decision and the time period to correct deficiencies cannot exceed the following:
  - (a) 12 months [program less than 1 year in length]
  - (b) 18 months [program at least 1 year in length but less than 2 years in length]
  - (c) 24 months [program at least 2 years in length]
2. The program director will be notified in writing in the ACEND decision letter of the date that a progress report is due to address the issues of noncompliance and the length of time of the reduced term.
3. Progress reports must be submitted via email to ACEND by the scheduled due date.
4. The progress report is sent to the original review team for review and analysis. The review team determines if the program has provided adequate evidence to demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standards. If no original team members are available, new reviewers will be assigned.
5. The progress report and summary report are provided to a triad that reviews the reports and determines an accreditation recommendation to be presented to the ACEND Board.

D. Probationary Accreditation

1. A program holding candidacy or full accreditation status is placed on probationary accreditation by the ACEND board when the program fails to comply with the ACEND Accreditation Standards or published policies in effect at the time of review.
  2. The program is notified in a decision letter that deficiencies must be corrected within a time period specified by the ACEND board or adverse action may be taken (i.e., accreditation is withdrawn).
    - (a) For programs less than one year in length, the time period to correct deficiencies cannot exceed 12 months.
    - (b) For programs of at least one year, but less than two years in length, the time period to correct deficiencies cannot exceed 18 months.
    - (c) For programs at least two years in length, the time period to correct deficiencies cannot exceed two years.
  3. The time period for correcting deficiencies and achieving compliance begins when the program is first notified by the ACEND board of the deficiency.
- E. Withdrawal of Accreditation
1. Accreditation is withdrawn by the ACEND board when a program fails to comply with the Accreditation Standards or policies in effect at the time within the time period specified by the ACEND board in a decision letter.
  2. Students on premises and enrolled in the program at the time the ACEND board withdraws accreditation are considered graduates of an accredited program on successful completion of the program within a time period determined by the ACEND board.
  3. After the date that accreditation is withdrawn by the ACEND board, new students enrolled in the program are not considered to be enrolled in and will not be considered graduates of an ACEND-accredited program.
  4. The program must wait one year from the date withdrawal of accreditation was final (appeals process had expired) before submitting a new eligibility application for candidacy for accreditation.
- F. Extensions for Good Cause
1. If a program has made a good-faith effort to come into compliance with accreditation standards, and the ACEND board is presented with substantial or sufficient reason, then the ACEND board, at its discretion, may grant the program an extension for it to come into compliance with standards beyond the timeframes specified by ACEND and the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). Such good cause might include:
    - (a) USDE timeframe for compliance expiring before the program can be scheduled for review by the ACEND board;
    - (b) Reasonable dates for providing outcomes data occurring after the expiration of USDE compliance timeframes; or
    - (c) ACEND compliance timeframes (i.e., for candidate accreditation) expiring before USDE compliance timeframes.
  2. In general, an extension may be provided for up to a maximum of two years.
  3. When an extension for good cause increases a program's accreditation beyond the expiration of its accreditation term, the length of the extension will be subtracted from the program's next term of accreditation.

4. At the discretion of the board, programs with four-year Candidate accreditation status may be extended up to a five-year term. No further extensions will be provided beyond five years as specified by USDE regulations for Candidacy accreditation.

## **2.4 Communication and Publication of ACEND Board Decisions**

### **A. ACEND Board Decision Letters**

1. Decision letter comments are drafted by ACEND staff based on accreditation decisions made by the ACEND board.
2. Decision letter comments are reviewed and approved by the ACEND board at the time the decision is made. All letters regarding withdrawal, probationary status or complaints acted on by the ACEND board are reviewed and approved by a program representative, public member, one additional board member and the chair. The signature of the ACEND chair, or vice chair if the chair has a conflict of interest, is on all the decision letters.
3. Decision letters are sent to program directors approximately two weeks after the ACEND board meeting.
  - (a) All decision letters, including probationary status, withdrawal of accreditation, denial of candidacy for accreditation and complaints are sent to program directors electronically. Letters regarding probation or withdrawal are also sent via express delivery for tracking purposes.
  - (b) Copies of decision letters are sent electronically to all program administrators on file.
  - (c) Notification of delivery is saved electronically.
  - (d) Program reviewers receive electronic copies of decision letters pertaining to their reviews.
4. Rationale statements for each decision are included in the ACEND board meeting minutes and must be consistent with information in the decision letter sent to the program.

### **B. Publication of ACEND Decisions**

1. An accreditation decision becomes effective the date the ACEND board makes the accreditation decision. Decisions cannot be made retroactive.
2. ACEND provides written notice to the USDE, appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, appropriate accrediting agencies and the public of decisions to award candidacy for accreditation, full accreditation or continue full accreditation no later than 30 days after the decision is made. Decisions are communicated to these entities via email notification providing a link to the Accreditation Decisions on the ACEND web site within 24 hours of final notice to the program.
3. ACEND provides written notice to the USDE, appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, appropriate accrediting agencies and the public at the same time the program is notified of a final decision to deny candidacy or full accreditation, withdraw accreditation, or place a program on probation. Decisions to deny candidacy, deny full accreditation, withdraw accreditation, or place a program on probation are considered final after the 30 day reconsideration and appeals deadlines expire.
4. A brief summary of the reason(s) for taking adverse action (i.e., withdrawing accreditation from a program) and comments about the action from the program or evidence that the program has been offered the opportunity to supply official comments are provided to the USDE, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency,



appropriate accrediting agencies and the public upon request within 60 working days of the final decision.

- (a) A summary is drafted by ACEND staff based on comments from the review team and the decision made by the ACEND Board.
  - (b) The summary is reviewed and approved by the responsible Program Representative, Public Member, one additional ACEND Board member and the ACEND Chair.
  - (c) The summary and a request for comments regarding the decision is included in the decision letter sent to the program director and copied to all program administrators who are listed in ACEND's database.
  - (d) For free-standing dietetic internships eligible for Title IV funding, a link to the final decision letter to place a program on probation, or withdraw accreditation, along with any official comments from the program, is provided to the USDE through the USDE Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs: Collection System within 60 days of making a final decision. For programs not eligible for Title IV funding, a link to the summary statement describing a final decision to withdraw accreditation and any official comments from the program will be provided via the Database within this same timeframe.
5. A list of programs with accreditation status is published on the ACEND Web site.
    - (a) Each program's web site listing includes the accreditation status, accreditation term end date, program address, program director contact information, degree granted, and estimated annual tuition.
  6. The program director must inform students and the public of the program's current accreditation status.
  7. Programs placed on probation or from which accreditation is withdrawn must inform prospective students, the public and enrolled students of the change in the program's status.
  8. One of the following statements is required to publicize program accreditation granted by ACEND:

**[Name of Institution]'s Nutrition and Dietetics Education Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, (312) 899-0040 ext. 5400. <http://www.eatrightpro.org/ACEND>.**

**[Name of Institution]'s Nutrition and Dietetics Education Program has been granted candidate status by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, (312) 899-0040 ext. 5400. <http://www.eatrightpro.org/ACEND>.**

Or:

**The accreditation of [Name of Institution]'s nutrition and dietetics education program has been placed on probationary status by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, (312) 899-0040 ext. 5400. <http://www.eatrightpro.org/ACEND>. For an explanation of probationary status, consult the director of the nutrition and dietetics program.**

9. If programs report an inaccurate or misleading accreditation status in any printed materials, ACEND staff notifies the program of the inaccuracy, requests correction within 30 days.

10. Names of programs granted candidate and full accreditation and programs voluntarily withdrawing from or letting accreditation lapse are provided to the USDE, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, the appropriate accrediting agencies and the public within 30 working days of the final decision.
  
11. If the ACEND board has reason to believe that an accredited program is failing to comply with HEA, Title IV, program responsibilities or is engaged in fraud or abuse, the information is provided to USDE.

## **2.5 Decisions between ACEND Board Meetings**

- A. Decisions of the ACEND board that require a response between meetings are reviewed and action determined by the ACEND chair.
- B. Requested or other materials received after the deadline date for an ACEND board meeting may be added to the agenda by the ACEND staff in consultation with the chair.
- C. Interpretation of decision letters or clarification of standards may be done by the ACEND chair. At her/his discretion, however, the chair may defer the questions to ACEND staff, the responsible program representative or the entire ACEND board.
- D. ACEND staff confers with the ACEND chair as needed regarding disposition of miscellaneous correspondence.
  1. Copies of correspondence are sent to the ACEND chair, the ACEND program representative and/or other appropriate persons as designated by the chair.
  2. Correspondence that the ACEND chair determines is in need of a decision by the ACEND board is placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled meeting. ACEND staff will acknowledge receipt of the correspondence and inform the program director that the request will be discussed by the ACEND board at its next meeting.

## **2.6 Third-Party Comment**

- A. A list of programs scheduled for candidate or full accreditation is published on the ACEND Web page, and a notice is published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*.
  1. Third-party comments regarding any of the listed programs related to the ACEND Accreditation Standards in effect at the time of the review are accepted in writing up to 30 days prior to the site visit dates for each program. The deadline date for submitting comments for each program is included in the public notice.
  2. ACEND staff duplicates and forwards third-party comments to the appropriate program director and program review team within two weeks of receipt.
  3. Program directors may respond to any comments or questions arising from third-party comments during the site visit. A written response also may be submitted with the response to the site visit report.
- B. A list of programs submitting five-year Program Assessment Reports for full accreditation are published on the ACEND Web page and a notice is published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*.
  1. Third-party comments are accepted in writing up to two months after the reports are submitted.
  2. Staff duplicates third-party comments received and sends them to the program for response along with comments from the review team, if any. The program has seven weeks from receipt to respond.

3. Staff forwards third-party comments and program response, if any, to the program review team.

## **2.7 Requests for Reconsideration of ACEND Board Decisions**

- A. If the ACEND board withdraws or denies candidate, or full accreditation from a program, or places a program on probation, the program may request reconsideration of the decision by the ACEND board.
  1. The program must submit the request electronically within 30 calendar days of the date of receipt of the notice of that decision, as documented by the record of the read receipt of electronic decision letter.
  2. If such a request is not submitted and postmarked within this 30-day period, all rights to reconsideration are considered to be waived and the decision is final. The program is notified of the final decision and the decision is published according to ACEND's procedures for publishing final accreditation decisions.
- B. If ACEND staff receives, from the affected program, a written request for reconsideration of a decision qualifying for reconsideration within 30 days following the date of the program's receipt of the notice, there is no change in the accreditation status of the program until the reconsideration process is completed.
- C. The written request for reconsideration must include a concise statement of the reasons for contesting the ACEND board's decision. On reconsideration, the ACEND board does not consider any new information or data provided subsequent to the determination of the original decision.
- D. Upon receiving a written request for reconsideration, ACEND staff provides the program the opportunity to appear before the ACEND board at its next regularly scheduled meeting to clarify information available to the ACEND board at the time of the original decision. The program, at its own expense, may participate in the meeting either in-person or by teleconference and may bring administrators and legal counsel. Legal counsel is limited to providing advice to the program.
- E. On reconsideration, the ACEND board may decide to: a) sustain the original decision or b) rescind the original decision and refer the matter to a review team for additional evaluation and/or focused on-site visit. If an on-site visit is conducted, the program is responsible for the cost of the visit.
- F. After reconsideration of the original decision, the ACEND board notifies the program electronically by email of the action taken within 30 days of the meeting at which the request is considered. Other administrative officers currently on file with ACEND receive a copy of the letter via email. The notification includes a statement of specific findings.
- G. Following reconsideration, if the original decision to place a program on probation is sustained by the ACEND board, the decision is considered final and published according to ACEND's procedures for publishing final accreditation decisions.
- H. Following reconsideration, if the original decision to withdraw or deny candidate, or full accreditation, ("appealable decision"), is sustained by the ACEND board, the program may file an appeal.

## **2.8 Appeals of Adverse Accreditation Decisions**

An adverse accreditation decision is defined by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) as denial, withdrawal, suspension, revocation, or termination of accreditation or preaccreditation, or any comparable accrediting action of an agency against an institution or program. The USDE does not define probation as an adverse accrediting decision; therefore, it is not subject to ACEND's appeals process.

- A. To file an appeal of an adverse accreditation action, the program must notify ACEND's Executive Director in writing, electronically, read receipt requested, that the program appeals the decision.
  1. The written appeal must be submitted electronically within 30 calendar days of the date of receipt of the notice of the reconsideration decision, as documented by the record of read receipt.
  2. If such a request is not submitted electronically within this 30-day period, all rights to appeal are considered to be waived and the decision is final.
  3. The program is notified of the final decision and the decision is published according to ACEND's procedures for publishing final accreditation decisions.
- B. The written appeal must include pertinent facts in support of the appellant's position and must be signed by the program director and an administrator from the sponsoring institution. The appeals fee must be submitted with the written appeal. The appeals fee is based on the partial cost of convening the Accreditation Appeals Panel. ACEND's fee schedule is available on request and on the ACEND Web site.
- C. If a written appeal and appeal fee are timely submitted, there is no change in the accreditation status of the program until the appeal process is completed.
- D. The ACEND chair assembles a five-member Appeals Panel and designates one member of the Appeals Panel as chair (Refer to Section 1.3 Committees, section A 4).
- E. The Appeals Panel functions as an independent body for the purpose of reviewing materials and hearing verbal presentations from the program and the ACEND board relative to the decision under appeal.
- F. The appeal hearing takes place in Chicago, Illinois or at a location designated by the ACEND board, no later than 45 days following confirmation of appointment of the Appeals Panel.
  1. ACEND staff in consultation with the program and the Appeals Panel chair determines a date and time for the hearing.
  2. ACEND staff makes all arrangements for the hearing after discussion with the Appeals Panel chair.
- G. The appellant may bring program faculty, administrators and legal counsel to the appeal hearing at its own expense.
  1. A member of the ACEND board and its legal counsel may attend and participate in the appeal hearing at its own expense.
  2. Because the nature of the hearing is investigative rather than adversarial, participation of legal counsel is limited to providing advice to the appellant or ACEND or making a presentation on behalf of the program.
  3. At least one ACEND staff member is present at the hearing to act as a technical advisor to the Appeals Panel.
- H. The purpose of the appeal hearing is to determine whether established policies and procedures were followed in making the decision and/or that the decision was not supported by substantial evidence. The Appeals Panel may:
  1. affirm, amend, or reverse the original accreditation decision or
  2. Send the original decision back to the ACEND Board for further consideration
    - Appeals Panel will identify specific issues that ACEND Board must address
    - ACEND Board must act in accordance within the Appeals Panel's instructions

3. The Appeals Panel considers the documents reviewed by ACEND, the record of the ACEND board's action, materials submitted in support of the appellant's position at the time the appeal was requested, and any oral and written presentations to the Appeals Panel.
4. The Appeals Panel does not consider any changes in the program or descriptions of the program that were made after the ACEND board's original decision except in regard to program finances. New financial information may only be considered once, and the outcome of the financial review cannot be used as the basis for an additional appeal. New financial information may be reviewed if all of the conditions listed below are met.
  - (a) The financial information was unavailable to the institution or program until after the decision subject to appeal was made.
  - (b) The financial information is significant and bears materially on the financial deficiencies identified by the agency. The criteria of significance and materiality are determined by the agency.
  - (c) The only remaining deficiency cited by the agency in support of a final adverse action decision is the institution's or program's failure to meet an agency standard pertaining to finances.
- I. The appellant bears the burden of persuasion that (a) there is not substantial, credible and relevant evidence to support the action taken by the ACEND board, and/or (b) there has not been substantial compliance with the policies and procedures governing the process resulting in the action taken by the ACEND board.
- J. At the appeal hearing, the appellant and ACEND board members have an opportunity to present oral testimony.
  1. The Appeals Panel determines specific time limitations before the hearing in an effort to confine the hearing to a reasonable period.
  2. A list of individuals, including legal counsel who will be present at the hearing must be submitted to the Appeals Panel at least two weeks before the hearing.
    - (a) No individual who is not specifically identified by the deadline may participate in the hearing, with the exception of substitutes for participants who become ill or otherwise incapacitated.
    - (b) The hearing is the final opportunity for the participants to present their positions.
- K. The Appeals Panel deliberates in executive session following adjournment of the appeal hearing.
  1. The Appeals Panel chair coordinates development of the Appeals Panel's written summary of findings, its recommendation to affirm, amend, reverse or remand the original accreditation decision and the rationale for the recommendation.
  2. The Appeals Panel provides a written summary of its findings and rationale in a recommendation to the ACEND board for final action.
- L. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final and there will be no further appeal of these issues.
  1. ACEND board notifies the appellant by express mail second day delivery of the Appeals Panel final decision within 30 days of the ACEND board meeting at which the Appeals Panel's recommendation is considered.
  2. Other administrative officers currently on file with ACEND receive a copy of the letter by electronic mail.

3. The decision is published according to ACEND's procedures for publishing final accreditation decisions.

## **2.9 Complaints about Programs**

- A. Any individual, for example, student, faculty, nutrition and dietetics practitioner and/or member of the public may submit a complaint against any accredited program to ACEND. However, the ACEND board does not intervene on behalf of individuals or act as a court of appeal for individuals in matters of admissions, appointment, promotion or dismissal of faculty or students. It acts only upon a signed allegation that the program may not be in compliance with the accreditation standards or policies. The complaint must be signed by the complainant. Anonymous complaints are not considered.
- B. ACEND staff forwards all written complaints to the ACEND chair within three weeks of receipt of the complaint. If the complainant requests to remain anonymous to the program, the complainant must also provide a written copy of the complaint where identifying information is blocked out.
- C. If the ACEND chair determines that the complaint does not relate to the accreditation standards or policies, the complainant is notified in writing within two weeks of the chair's review that no further action will be taken.
- D. If the ACEND chair determines that the complaint may relate to the accreditation standards or policies, the complaint is acknowledged in writing within two weeks of the chair's review and the complainant is provided a copy of the process for handling the complaint.
- E. At the same time as the complainant is notified, the complaint is forwarded to the program electronically with a read receipt request. The administrative officers of the institution or organization sponsoring the program, currently on file with ACEND, receive copies of the correspondence via email.
- F. The ACEND chair requests the program to conduct a preliminary investigation and submit a report addressing the relevant accreditation standards or policies submitted electronically no more than 30 calendar days from receipt of the notification, as documented by the record of read receipt.
- G. The ACEND chair may also request further information or materials relating to the complaint from the complainant, the institution or other sources.
- H. The ACEND chair appoints a review committee to consider the complaint, along with all relevant information. The review committee recommends appropriate action to the ACEND board at its next scheduled meeting.
- I. In determining the appropriate action, the ACEND board considers the complaint, materials relating to the complaint, the review committee's recommendation, if any, and additional evidence provided by the program, if any.
- J. The ACEND board or the ACEND chair may determine that legal counsel is needed to address the complaint. Staff works with the ACEND board and legal counsel to identify a plan to address the complaint.
- K. If the complaint is determined to be unsubstantiated or not related to the accreditation standards or policies, no action is taken.
- L. If the complaint is substantiated and indicates that the program may not be in compliance with the accreditation standards or policies, appropriate action is taken, which may include, but is not limited to, scheduling an on-site visit of the program at the program's expense. If the complaint is substantiated and the ACEND board determines that the program is not in

compliance with the accreditation standards or policies, the ACEND board may place the program on probation or withdraw accreditation.

- M. The program director and administration of the sponsoring institution are notified of the ACEND board's decision and action in writing within two weeks of the decision. The complainant is notified of the final decision and action when the reconsideration and appeals process expires.
- N. The program has the right to request the ACEND board to reconsider a decision to withdraw accreditation. (See the ACEND Policy & Procedure Manual, Section 2.7)

## **2.10 Complaints about ACEND**

- A. Any individual, for example, student, faculty, nutrition and dietetics practitioner and/or member of the public, may submit a complaint about the standards, policies, procedures or conduct of ACEND. The complaint must be signed by the complainant. Anonymous complaints are not considered.
- B. ACEND staff forwards all written complaints to the ACEND chair and a public member within three weeks of receipt of the complaint.
- C. If the ACEND chair and the public member determine that the complaint does not relate to the standards, policies, procedures or conduct of ACEND, the complainant is notified within two weeks of their review that no further action will be taken.
- D. If the ACEND chair and the public member determine that the complaint does relate to the standards, policies, procedures or conduct of ACEND the complaint is acknowledged in writing within two weeks of their review and the complainant is provided a copy of the process for handling the complaint.
- E. The ACEND chair appoints a review committee that considers the complaint, along with all relevant information, and recommends appropriate action to the ACEND board.
- F. The ACEND board or the ACEND chair may determine that legal counsel is needed to address the complaint. Staff works with the ACEND board and legal counsel to identify a plan to address the complaint.
- G. The ACEND board considers the review committee's recommendation at its next scheduled meeting. If the complaint is determined to be unsubstantiated or not related to the standards, policies, procedures or conduct of ACEND representative, no action is taken. If the complaint is substantiated, appropriate action is taken.
- H. The complainant is notified of the ACEND board's decision and action in writing within two weeks of the decision.

## **2.11 Staff-Initiated Administrative Notification**

- A. Program is placed on administrative notification by ACEND staff when the program does not comply with one or more of the following requirements for maintaining accreditation.
  - 1. Submission of eligibility application, self-study, program assessment report and/or annual reports by the scheduled due dates.
  - 2. Scheduling of site visit dates within a reasonable time frame from the date of the last accreditation decision.
  - 3. Implementation of substantive program changes and inactive status (leave of absence from taking students) before approval; and changes of program director, acting or permanent, when the change occurs.
  - 4. Payment of maintenance, self-study application, site visit fees or other fees. All fees, including administrative fees, must be paid by the due date.

5. Failure to submit any other requested materials by the due date.
- B. When programs fail to comply with one or more of the above criteria, the program is notified by the ACEND staff that it has been placed on administrative notification.
1. If the program submits documentation to rectify the situation, ACEND staff will remove it from administrative notification.
    - (a) The program will be notified by ACEND staff that it has been removed from administrative notification.
    - (b) A list of programs placed on and removed from administrative notification will be included in the consent agenda of the next regularly scheduled ACEND board meeting.
  2. If the program does not submit documentation before the next regularly scheduled ACEND board meeting, the program will remain on administrative notification.
    - (a) The program will be placed on the meeting agenda for review by the ACEND board.
    - (b) At that time, the ACEND board will make a decision about the program's status. The ACEND board may remove administrative notification or place the program on probation for failure to comply with ACEND policies and procedures.
- C. Administrative notification is not subject to reconsideration or appeal.
1. ACEND staff is not required to provide the opportunity for reconsideration before action by the ACEND board.
  2. During the time period a program is on administrative notification, the program is recognized and listed as an accredited program.



## **Section 3: Site Visit for Accreditation**

Site visits are an essential component of the evaluation process for accreditation decisions and may occur at any time during the accreditation period. For continuing accreditation, a self-study report and site visit are scheduled at least every seven years.

### **3.1 Purpose of the Site Visit**

- A. The site visit is conducted to verify and clarify information in the self-study report and provide additional information, if necessary.
- B. Program reviewers represent the ACEND board in the accreditation process through peer review and document their findings as to whether or not the program is demonstrating compliance with the accreditation standards.
  1. Before the site visit, program reviewers analyze the self-study report and note questions to be asked of the program stakeholders and documentation to be reviewed on-site.
  2. The program review team verifies information through multiple evaluation techniques, considering and weighing all information relevant to the Standards in effect at the time, and drawing on professional judgment to reach conclusions.

### **3.2 Scheduling Site Visit Dates**

- A. Site visits must be scheduled with sufficient time (generally 18 months) to accommodate a review of the program's documentation, conduct an on-site team evaluation, prepare reports, and render an accreditation decision. Note: for scheduling candidacy site visits see Section 2.
  1. The program director and their supervisor should be notified in writing at least eighteen months prior to the expiration of the program's current accreditation term (i.e., approximately twelve months before the expected date of the on-site evaluation), so that a decision on the program's status and new term of accreditation can be rendered by the board before the expiration of the current accreditation term.
  2. Upon notification, the program director must confirm that the program wishes to participate in an ACEND accreditation review and must work with ACEND staff to identify specific dates for potential site visits that occur when:
    - the program is in session,
    - and a majority of enrolled students or interns are actively engaged in the program.Typically, the site visit should be scheduled to start on a Sunday and end on the following Tuesday.
  3. Failure to submit dates and schedule a site visit within the time period specified in the notification may result in placing a program that holds candidate or full accreditation on administrative notification. (See Section 2.11)
- B. A request from a program to change dates for scheduled monitoring such as reporting deadlines and site visits must be in writing and must describe extenuating circumstances.
  1. Requests for a change in site visit dates from a program that does not appear to be meeting ACEND accreditation standards and benchmarks will ordinarily not be granted.
  2. Requests for a change in site visit dates involving a substantive program change will ordinarily not be granted.

3. Requests for a change in scheduled monitoring (e.g. reporting deadlines, site visit dates, etc.) that do not cause the review process to go beyond the expiration of the program's term of accreditation may be acceptable if ACEND's Executive Committee agrees.
4. Requests for a change in scheduled monitoring (e.g. reporting deadlines, site visit dates, etc.) that cause the review process to exceed the expiration of the program's term of accreditation are forwarded to the ACEND board for a decision.
5. If a review process is anticipated to end after the program's term of accreditation expires, the ACEND board must vote to grant an extension. The extension should not change the program's 7-year comprehensive review cycle. The length of extensions plus the full term of accreditation cannot exceed the next scheduled comprehensive 7-year review.
6. Program requests for changes after the site visit is scheduled are not typically granted. If the program requests that the site visit be canceled or rescheduled, an administrative fee of \$1,000 is charged to the program in addition to any costs incurred by the program review team.

### **3.3 Scheduling the Program Review/Site Visit Team**

- A. A team of at least two reviewers from ACEND's appointed pool of volunteer reviewers is assigned to each program to conduct a site visit.
  1. Program directors are given the opportunity to identify reviewers who present a conflict of interest or otherwise should not review the program.
  2. When choosing program reviewers for a particular program or programs, ACEND staff considers several factors.
    - (a) ACEND's Composition of program review teams policy is followed (Section 1.1.D)
    - (b) At least one of the program reviewers is experienced in the same type of program being visited.
    - (b) Each team includes reviewers with varying practice experience and expertise. Program reviewers with complementary backgrounds are selected and at least one reviewer is a practitioner.
    - (c) ACEND's conflict of interest guidelines are followed (Section 1.6.G).
    - (d) Reviewers are asked to refuse an assignment if they perceive a conflict of interest.
    - (e) A program reviewer cannot serve as a consultant to a program for three years following the review and site visit.
  3. On occasion, an observer will be scheduled to attend a site visit. Observers could include: a new ACEND Board Student Member, Public Member or Practitioner Member as part of orientation to ACEND; USDE representative, as part of ACEND's USDE review; or other individuals. The observer will read the site visit report and other documentation and observe the onsite proceedings but will not take an active role in assessing the program or providing input to the review team about the program's compliance with the accreditation standards. The program will not be charged for the travel expenses for the observer. The ACEND budget will cover the cost of observer travel.
  4. Periodically an ACEND staff member may be assigned to accompany the program review team on a site visit for full or continued accreditation. Staff attendance on these site visits provides first-hand knowledge used to enhance site visitor training, improve communications with ACEND-accredited programs and improve the site visit process. During the site visit, ACEND staff can provide guidance to the reviewers and programs regarding interpretation of ACEND standards and policies. The ACEND budget funds

travel expenses for staff to attend full or continued accreditation site visit expenses to US based programs. The ACEND budget will determine the number of full or continued site visits with staff assignments each year.

- B. After the site visit is scheduled, if one member of a two-member review team is unable to participate in the site visit another program reviewer is scheduled in her/his place.
  - 1. If a replacement is not available or if the reviewer notifies ACEND staff of her/his inability to participate in the site visit four weeks or less before the scheduled dates, the site visit is rescheduled at no additional cost to the program.
  - 2. Every attempt will be made to reschedule the site visit as soon as possible.
- C. Site visit fees are based on administrative costs associated with the review process and the average costs for a team of two program reviewers evaluating each program Sunday through Tuesday. ACEND reviewers travel on Saturday to ensure their on-time arrival to begin the site visit on Sunday.
  - 1. For institutions with more than one program, site visits may be scheduled concurrently to minimize disruption.
  - 2. The ACEND board periodically reviews fees and modifies them to reflect current costs. A current fee schedule is available from ACEND staff and on the ACEND webpage.

### **3.4 Focused Site Visit**

- A. A focused site visit may be scheduled at any time between accreditation visits to review specific issues or concerns identified in a report, a major change request or an investigation of a complaint against a program.
  - 1. The length of the site visit and number of site visitors are determined by the scope and purpose of the visit.
  - 2. An ACEND staff member participates in every focused site visit.
  - 3. Cost of the site visit is borne by the program.
  - 4. Failure to submit dates and schedule a focused site visit within the time period specified in the notification may result in ACEND staff placing the program on administrative notification or Board action such as placing the program on a reduced accreditation term or probation.
- B. The program submits additional materials addressing issues of concern seven weeks prior to site visit, unless otherwise specified.
- C. The site visit report focuses on the specific standards under review and is processed according to the schedule for a full accreditation review. (See Section 2.2.C.2-5)

### **3.4 Joint Site Visit with another Educational Accrediting Agency**

- A. Programs are encouraged to plan an ACEND review and site visit to occur at the same time as a review by another institutional or programmatic accrediting body.
  - 1. The program submits a request in writing to ACEND staff no later than ten months before the requested site visit date.
  - 2. The administrative officer overseeing the program must sign the request and include the desired date, accreditation status of the institution or other program under review and the name and address of the second accrediting agency.
- B. ACEND staff contacts the other accrediting agency to discuss plans for a joint visit and works with the ACEND lead program reviewer to facilitate the schedule for the site visit.

## Section 4: Maintenance of Accreditation

The maintenance phase includes submission of interim reports as requested in the ACEND board decision letters, ongoing monitoring of outcomes assessment and goal achievement, preparation of the five-year Program Assessment Report (PAR), submission of annual reports, payment of annual accreditation maintenance fees and the self-study report and site visit for full accreditation within seven years of the last comprehensive review.

### 4.1 Interim Report

- A. Program directors are notified in writing in the ACEND decision letter of the date that an interim report (IR) is due.
  1. IRs must be received by ACEND staff by the due date.
  2. ACEND staff reviews the interim report within four weeks of receipt.
- B. If the IR documents are in compliance with ACEND Accreditation Standards, ACEND staff, in consultation with the ACEND Chair, prepares a letter to the program director and emails the letter within one week. A list of programs whose IRs have been accepted is included in the agenda packet of the next ACEND board meeting.
- C. If additional information is needed, ACEND staff prepares a letter communicating the additional evidence needed and emails the letter to the program director within two weeks.
  1. The program response to the comments must be submitted within four weeks of receipt of the letter, as noted from the electronic notification of receipt. Responses submitted more than four weeks after the letter was received may not be considered by the ACEND board at the time of the decision. Failure to respond to the comments within four weeks of receipt may result in the loss of the right to submit a response before the board decision.
    - (a) ACEND staff reviews the program response and if the program did not adequately provide the requested information, the interim report and program response are sent to a team to review.
    - (b) The review team submits a consensus report summarizing comments to ACEND staff and the ACEND program representative within two weeks or receipt of comments.
    - (c) The IR, program response and review team summary report is sent to a triad. The triad makes an accreditation recommendation which is documented on the final summary report.
    - (d) The IR, program response and final summary report is placed on the agenda of the ACEND board meeting.
    - (e) ACEND staff sends a decision letter to the program director within two weeks of the ACEND board meeting.

### 4.2 Program Assessment Report<sup>2</sup>

- A. Preparing the PAR
  1. The PAR is due five years after the last comprehensive self-study review and site visit for full accreditation. A finding of full compliance in the review of the PAR reaffirms continuation of the accreditation status of the program until the next review is scheduled.

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<sup>2</sup> In February 2014 the ACEND board voted to eliminate the Program Assessment Report (PAR). The PAR will be phased out by 2019.

2. The PAR must document the program's ongoing and comprehensive assessment process during the previous five years and plans for continuation over the next five years, as stipulated in the accreditation standards.
3. The PAR documents the program goals, outcome measures for the program goals, expectations for graduates and student learning outcomes. The PAR describes how achievement of program goals and expectations for graduates have been evaluated and must provide evidence of the following:
  - (a) The program has coordinated assessment by all participants to meet timelines for data gathering.
  - (b) The program has collected regular and ongoing constructive feedback about the program from all stakeholders involved in the program and communities of interest outside of the program.
  - (c) The program has evaluated results of the assessment process and has presented evidence of how the results were used to improve the program. Data are required to document program evaluation, goal achievement and student/graduate outcomes.
4. The report should include the following sections:
  - (a) Introduction describing the:
    - i. Setting: A brief history detailing characteristics of the program.
    - ii. Resources: A brief narrative description about the administrative and financial support for the program, faculty/preceptors, facilities, and so forth and the effect of any changes in resources on the program.
  - (b) Program Budget
  - (c) Outcomes Assessment and Goal Achievement
    - i. Discussion of achievement of the program goals and program effectiveness based on assessment of outcomes measures established for each goal. Narrative description and evidence of the following as appropriate for each goal:  
 Assessment methods and data obtained from students, administrators, program faculty, preceptors and other internal stakeholders.  
  
 Assessment methods and data collected from communities of interest outside the program (e.g., employers, internship directors)  
  
 Student learning outcomes (e.g., exams, quizzes, lab reports, case studies, student presentations, and student projects)
    - ii. Graduate outcomes (e.g., program completion rates, performance of graduates in workplace, internships, and/or graduate school, results on the registration examination)
    - ii. Program strengths/weaknesses identified as a result of evaluating data described above.
    - iv. Description of changes that were or will be implemented based on results of this evaluation.
  - (d) Program Management Plans  
 Short- and long-term plans for management of the program to assist in achieving program goals over the next five years.
  - (e) Student Learning Outcomes Assessment and Curriculum Review

B. Submitting the PAR for ACEND Review and Decisions

1. ACEND staff notifies program directors one year in advance of the due date of the PAR.
2. Requests for extensions of deadlines for PAR must be made in writing and approved in the following way:
  - (a) Requests for two weeks or less may be approved by ACEND staff, after contacting the ACEND program representative and lead reviewer to assure the document can be reviewed in a shortened time period.
  - (b) Requests for extensions of greater than two weeks must include extenuating circumstances and be submitted in writing in time for review by the ACEND chair prior to the due date.
  - (c) Failure to submit a PAR by the due date without an approved extension will result in a late fee charged to the program. Proof of transmittal is the responsibility of the sender.
3. The PAR template should be used to concisely document the process and results of evaluation.
4. When the PAR is received, ACEND staff assigns a review team consisting of two program reviewers and one program representative to evaluate the report. .
  - (a) ACEND staff reviews all PARs to determine if the required format was used. PARs that fail to follow the format are returned.
  - (b) ACEND staff provides PARs to review teams and ACEND program representatives within two weeks of receipt of the PARs.
  - (c) Reviewers submit their comments on the PAR to the lead reviewer within five weeks of receipt of the PAR.
  - (d) The Lead reviewer submits a consensus report summarizing comments of all reviewers to ACEND staff and the ACEND program representative within two weeks of receipt of reviewers' comments.
  - (e) ACEND staff prepares a letter in consultation with the ACEND program representative communicating reviewers' comments and emails it to the program director within three weeks of receipt of consensus report.
  - (f) Any response to the reviewers' comments must be submitted within six weeks of receipt of the letter by the program director, as documented by return receipt. Responses submitted more than six weeks after the letter was received may not be considered by the ACEND board at the time of the decision. Failure to respond to the reviewers' comments within seven weeks of receipt may result in the loss of the program's right to do so.
  - (g) ACEND staff sends any program response to the reviewers' comments to the review team and the ACEND program representative within five working days of receipt of the program's response to the reviewers' comments.
  - (h) Reviewers submit their comments on the PAR and program response to the lead reviewer within three weeks of receipt of materials.
  - (i) The lead reviewer submits a consensus report summarizing comments of all reviewers to ACEND staff and the ACEND program representative within two weeks of receipt of comments.
  - (j) The PAR, program response, if any, and review team summary report are provided to a triad for an accreditation decision recommendation.

5. The final summary reports of reviewer comments and triad recommendations regarding the PAR are on the agenda of the ACEND board meeting.
6. ACEND staff sends a decision letter to the program director within two weeks of the ACEND board meeting.

### **4.3 Substantive Program Changes**

ACEND encourages responsible educational changes appropriate to program goals. For ACEND to meet its obligation of assuring that programs meet quality standards, it must have current information about accredited programs.

- A. Programs are required to notify ACEND of any substantive changes in the program. All substantive changes, with the exception of changes in program director appointment, must be submitted by the program director. Changes become effective at the time of approval by ACEND, and may not be dated retroactively. Programs will be placed on administrative notification if they implement a substantive program change prior to approval by ACEND (see Section 2.11 Staff-Administered Administrative Notification). The program director should contact ACEND staff if there are any questions regarding substantive changes. The ACEND board may request information at any time from an accredited program. Substantive program changes (other than program director changes or changes in administrative structure) are not accepted from, or approved for, programs with candidacy for accreditation until after the program achieves full accreditation status.
  - (a) Fully accredited programs may submit substantive program changes with a self-study report. The program change must be submitted as a separate section within the report or an appendix to the report and clearly describe how the changes will affect the program's compliance with the accreditation standards.
  - (b) Programs are required to pay a substantive change fee, in accordance with the Accreditation Fee Schedule, with the submission of a substantive program change. If multiple substantive changes are submitted in one request document, only one change fee is assessed.
1. Change of Program Director
  - (a) A change of program director, acting or permanent, must be reported in writing by the immediate superior of the program director at the time of the change.
  - (b) Correspondence must be submitted to ACEND staff and must include: confirmation of the new program director's appointment and faculty appointment, if applicable; effective date; documentation of the individual's credentials qualifying her or him for the position; time allocation for program management responsibilities; and contact information.
  - (c) Only one program director change fee will be assessed in the case of more than one program director change submission within a six month timeframe or when an interim program director is appointed and the original program director returns within a one year timeframe. If the program submits another program director change outside of these timeframes an additional change fee will be assessed.
2. Other Substantive Program Changes
  - (a) Substantive program changes must be reported to ACEND in sufficient time for review and approval prior to implementation. One copy of all necessary documentation regarding the proposed change must be submitted to ACEND staff at least eight weeks before the expected implementation date.
  - (b) Substantive program changes include, but are not limited to:

- i. Increase or decrease in program length, including changes from clock hours to credit hours or an increase or decrease in the number of clock (supervised practice hours) or credit hours required for program completion
- ii. Increase or decrease in number of students (see section 6.6 for requirements for submitting an enrollment increase request)
- iii. Change in program mission
- iv. Change in degree requirements or addition of another degree level for programs culminating in an academic degree; or change to direct assessment or competency based education
- v. Change in administrative structure of the program within the sponsoring institution
- vi. A free-standing program (Dietetic Internship) that is eligible to seek Title IV, HEA programs through its ACEND accreditation and is planning to enter into a contract with another institution or organization that is not certified to participate in Title IV, HEA programs to offer more than 25 percent or more of the educational program.
- vii. Addition of remote or student/intern identified supervised practice location. A program change is required if a program plans to add  $\geq 10\%$  of the required number of supervised practice hours at a remote site (defined as  $\geq 100$  miles from sponsoring organization) or when a student/intern is required to find their own supervised practice sites for  $\geq 10\%$  of supervised practice hours, regardless of whether the sites are local or remote. In both these situations it is expected that student/interns are practicing under the supervision of a preceptor in the location they are completing supervised practice.
- viii. Addition of international rotations in supervised practice
- ix. Change or addition of concentration area in supervised practice
- x. Place or remove a program from an admission hold (inactive status)
- xi. ACEND allows programs to offer their curricula via distance education or on a satellite or branch campus. The addition of either of these options constitutes a substantive program change as described below. ACEND does not accredit correspondence education programs, which are defined as primarily initiated by the student and typically self-paced with minimal interaction with the instructor. Both distance education and satellite or branch campuses require the following:
  - a) A single program director is responsible for the entire program regardless of the number of satellite sites or students. Faculty, staff and students at any distance location must be integrated fully into the academic, professional and social life of the program. Evidence of this integration includes faculty and students having committee assignments, students being engaged in professional organizations, faculty and staff having comparable research, scholarly activities and faculty development opportunities regardless of location or distance.
  - b) All students, regardless of site, are required to have comparable access to faculty, advising, academic affairs, teaching and learning technology, student services, professional organizations and library resources.
  - c) As a component of its routine assessment and monitoring, programs must compare and contrast the program's outcomes (not limited to CDR exam pass rates, internship placement rates, graduate employment, etc.) from



distance programs and/or satellite locations to the outcomes from all other locations. Programs must explain and address situations where outcomes are not comparable.

- d) The program is responsible for all additional accreditation fees related to establishing, maintaining and monitoring distance tracks.
- e) Distance Education

Distance education is defined as the delivery of 30% or more of didactic courses in the professional curriculum where students are physically separated from instructors and learning synchronously or asynchronously through live or recorded media. Regular and substantial interaction between the student and the instructor must occur. Programs where students are studying with preceptors in supervised practice rotations are not considered to be distance tracks, per se.

Programs must use one or more of the following technologies in the distance program to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor:

- 1) The internet;
- 2) One-way and two-way transmission through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite or wireless communication devices;
- 3) Audioconferencing; or
- 4) Video cassettes, DVDs and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in (1) through (3).

All programs offering distance education must have processes in place to establish that the student who registers in a distance education program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit awarded. The US Department of Education requires institutions to verify the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using methods such as:

- 1) A secure login and pass code;
- 2) Proctored examinations; and/or
- 3) New or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity.

The institution must use processes that protect student privacy and notify students of any projected additional costs due to the verification of student identity at the time the student enrolls or registers.

- f) Satellite or Branch Campus

A satellite location or branch campus is a site that meets all of the following conditions.

- 1) A portion or all of the program is offered at a site other than the primary program campus location and students at that site are studying the same curriculum.
- 2) Both faculty and students are located at the satellite location.

- 3) The primary accredited program has administrative responsibility, including financial, physical and human resources.
- 4) The core curriculum offered allows students to meet the same degree completion requirements as that of the primary campus.
- 5) The degree is granted by the higher education institution that offers the degree in the primary accredited program.

One-year advance notice is required (minimum of 12 months before the arrival of students) for the addition of a satellite location or branch campus to allow sufficient time to conduct the review process and focused site visit to ensure readiness and continued compliance with the standards at all distance sites. Failure to notify ACEND of opening a branch campus or satellite location within the one year notice requirement constitutes grounds for review and potential adverse accreditation action.

The accreditation review process applies to the ACEND accredited program in its entirety. Non-compliance or partial compliance with the standards at one site will have an impact on the accreditation status of the entire program.

- (c) Substantive changes are reviewed by the ACEND chair who determines disposition of material for review in consultation with staff.
- (d) The ACEND board may require an interim report, self-study report and/or a focused site visit or a comprehensive site visit as a result of the change.

#### B. Program Closure

1. When a program voluntarily withdraws from or loses accreditation, it either must remain open until all enrolled students have completed the program and been verified or it must reach agreement with another ACEND-accredited program to teach the remainder of the program.
2. The program must make provisions to assure that all currently enrolled students are provided all the instruction promised by the program and submit this plan to the ACEND board for approval. The plan must include the following
  - (a) Date the program will close
  - (b) Information on why the program is closing
  - (c) General description of resources (faculty/preceptors, advising, physical facilities, etc.) that are available to enrolled student/interns
  - (d) List of students/interns currently enrolled in the program
  - (e) List of courses/rotations (dietetics and non-dietetics) that each enrolled student/intern must complete for graduation/program completion and date of expected completion
  - (f) Whether enrolled students will incur additional charges due to the teach-out plan and if so, how students will be notified as soon as practicable of these charges.
  - (g) How prospective and enrolled students/interns will be informed as soon as practicable of the program's closing and any implications (including, but not limited to, those pertaining to students' prospects for employment, eligibility to sit for exams or qualify for internships) of the closure. The program must make reasonable best efforts to ensure its students/interns and prospective students/interns receive and acknowledge receipt of this information.

- (h) How program stakeholders, including faculty, preceptors, academic advisors, (including advisors of transfer students/interns), affiliated community colleges (including those with articulation agreements) and advisory board, as applicable, will be informed as soon as practicable of the program's closure and its implications for stakeholders.
3. A program sponsored by a regionally accredited institution must meet the requirements for teach-out agreements in effect for the sponsoring institution.
  4. A Dietetic Internship program that is not housed in a regionally accredited institution must do the following:
    - (a) Submit a teach-out (closing) plan for approval by ACEND if any of the following events occurs:
      - i. The U.S. Secretary of Education notifies ACEND that it has initiated an emergency action against the Dietetic Internship, in accordance with section 487(c)(1)(G) of the HEA, or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate the Dietetic Internship participating in any title IV, HEA program, in accordance with section 487(c)(1)(F) of the HEA, and that a teach-out plan is required.
      - ii. ACEND acts to withdraw, terminate, or suspend the accreditation or preaccreditation of the Dietetic Internship.
      - iii. The Dietetic Internship notifies ACEND that it intends to cease operations entirely or close a location or pathway that provides one hundred percent of the program.
      - iv. A State licensing or authorizing agency notifies ACEND that a Dietetic Internship's license or legal authorization to provide an educational program has been or will be revoked.
    - (b) ACEND will evaluate the teach-out plan to ensure that it provides for the equitable treatment of students under ACEND's criteria, specifies additional charges, if any, and provides for notification to the students of any additional charges.
    - (c) If ACEND approves a teach-out plan for a program that is accredited by another recognized accrediting agency, it will notify that accrediting agency of its approval.
    - (d) ACEND may require a program it accredits or preaccredits to enter into a teach-out agreement as part of its teach-out plan.
    - (e) If the program is unable to provide all the instruction promised, it must reach agreement with another ACEND-accredited dietetic internship to teach the remainder of the program.
      - i. The agreement must be consistent with the ACEND Accreditation Standards in effect at the time.
      - ii. The agreement must ensure that students are provided all the rotations promised by the internship prior to its closure, without additional charge.
      - iii. The agreement must be with an ACEND-accredited dietetic internship that is geographically proximate and has a compatible structure and schedule to the closed program.
    - (f) If the program closes without a teach-out plan or agreement, the ACEND must work with the U.S. Department of Education and the appropriate State agency, to the extent feasible, to assist students in finding reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional charge.

5. The program is required to maintain its regular review cycle during the phase out. When a program's application for re-accreditation is due prior to the program's voluntary closing, the program may submit a Program Assessment Report in lieu of a self-study report and site visit provided that the program closes within four years of notifying the ACEND board.
  6. After the program submits its plan for closure, it must comply with requirements for maintaining accreditation, i.e., payment of fees and submission of annual reports, until such time as it closes.
  7. A program operating under a closure plan must provide an update at least annually, or more frequently at the discretion of the ACEND Board, regarding the status of the program's closure, including description of adequacy of resources and update on remaining students'/interns' progression through the program.
  8. If an institution the agency accredits or preaccredits closes without a teach-out plan or agreement, the agency must work with the Department and the appropriate State agency, to the extent feasible, to assist students in finding reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional charges.
- C. Reorganization of an Existing ACEND Accredited Program
1. Reorganization of an existing ACEND accredited program or programs into another program type of the same degree level. This includes: the reorganization of a Didactic Program in Dietetics or a Dietetic Internship into a Coordinated Program in Dietetics or two or more existing programs reorganizing into one program. A program planning to reorganize into a program at a higher degree level will need to apply for accreditation as a new program.
    - (a) Programs must be in good standing with ACEND. Requests for a reorganization will not be considered for programs on a shortened accreditation term or probation due to partial or non-compliance with the ACEND accreditation standards.
    - (b) If the change requires approval of an institutional accreditor, evidence that the change has been approved must be provided.
    - (c) A plan for reorganization and an Eligibility Application must be submitted to ACEND for review and approval in advance of implementation and acceptance of new students.
    - (d) Payment of any required fees must be submitted with the plan for reorganization and eligibility application. Current fees can be found in the ACEND fee schedule.
    - (e) Upon approval of the plan and Eligibility Application, the new program will be required to submit a self-study report for accreditation and schedule a comprehensive site visit after two classes have graduated, typically within four years.
  2. Two or more existing accredited programs may reorganize into a consortium.
    - (a) Consortium is defined as two or more independent institutions or organizations or two or more existing accredited programs combining to sponsor a nutrition and dietetics education program. The consortium members will retain their identity and be listed individually as sites.
    - (b) Programs must be accredited in good standing with ACEND. Requests for a reorganization will not be considered for programs on a shortened accreditation term or probation due to partial or non-compliance with the ACEND accreditation standards.

- (c) If the change requires approval of an institutional accreditor, evidence that the change has been approved must be provided.
  - (d) A plan for reorganization must be submitted to the ACEND board for review and approval in advance of implementation and acceptance of new students.
  - (e) Payment of any required fees must be submitted with the plan for reorganization and eligibility application. Current fees can be found in the ACEND fee schedule.
  - (f) Upon approval of the plan, the consortium will be required to submit a self-study report and schedule a comprehensive site visit for reaccreditation after two classes have graduated, typically within four years of implementing the consortium.
- D. Change in the legal status, form of control or ownership of the organization sponsoring the program
- (a) A plan for reorganization and an Eligibility Application must be submitted to ACEND for review and approval in advance of approval of the transfer and acceptance of new students. All administrator signatures that may be required from the two institutions involved in the transfer must be included in the submitted documentation.
  - (b) If the change requires approval of an institutional accreditor or other entity, evidence that the change has been approved must be provided.
  - (c) Payment of a fee must be submitted with the transfer plan and Eligibility Application. Current fees can be found in the ACEND fee schedule.
  - (d) A change in ownership of a free standing dietetic internship using ACEND accreditation to obtain title IV funds requires that a site visit occur no later than six months after the change of ownership.
  - (e) At its discretion, the ACEND board may require a focused site visit to any other program that submits a request for change in legal status, form of control or ownership.

#### **4.4 Annual Reports**

- A. To maintain accreditation status, annual reports must be submitted by all nutrition and dietetics education programs by the designated date. The annual report provides data about administration of and student enrollment in and completion of the nutrition and dietetics education program.
- B. Programs are provided online access to the online annual report.
- C. ACEND staff reviews the annual report and compiles and summarizes the data for the ACEND board.

#### **4.5 Annual Maintenance Fees**

- A. Programs are required to pay annual maintenance fees by March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Fees are established to support the cost of the accreditation process.
- B. Online access to the invoice is sent to each program director approximately 90 days before the due date. If fees are not paid by the due date, a 10% administrative fee is assessed.
- C. Any change in fees is published and posted on the ACEND Web site. Questions about fees should be directed to ACEND staff.

#### **4.6 Admission Hold (Inactive Status)**

- A. Programs must submit a substantive program change request when they decide not to enroll students/interns for a period of time in order to maintain the program's accreditation status. Ordinarily, candidates for accreditation are not granted an admission hold.

- B. Programs requesting an admission hold must submit in writing the reason for not enrolling students/interns, the number of students/interns currently enrolled in the program and documentation of resources available to currently enrolled students/interns during the period when no new students/interns are admitted.
  - 1. The ACEND Chair may act on requests regarding an admission hold for one academic/program year or less. Decisions regarding a request for an admission hold for greater than one academic/program year must be made by the ACEND Board.
  - 2. Programs are not granted an admission hold for more than two academic/program years.
  - 3. Programs must submit a substantive program change request prior to accepting any new students/interns after an admission hold.
  - 4. Programs that do not accept students/interns for a period of two academic/program years must submit the substantive program change request to resume accepting students/interns at least six months prior to the time they wish to resume accepting students/interns. The ACEND Board may require a focused site visit before granting approval to resume acceptance of students/interns (See Section 3.3)
  - 5. During an admission hold, programs must continue to submit documents (e.g., annual reports, progress reports) and pay fees that are due during that time, unless otherwise directed by the ACEND Board.
  - 6. C. Programs on an admission hold must post a notice that they are not enrolling/accepting students/interns in the program on their website home page.

#### **4.7 Reinstatement of Accreditation**

- A. Programs that have been discontinued or whose accreditation has been withdrawn may reapply for accreditation.
- B. The program must wait one year from the date withdrawal of accreditation was final (appeals process had expired) before submitting a new eligibility application for candidacy for accreditation. (See Section 2.1)

#### **4.8 Emergencies and Disasters**

- A. ACEND has established procedures to be followed in situations where a local, regional or national emergency or disaster delays or in other ways compromises communications between a program and students, or disrupts classes or supervised practice experiences. A disaster or emergency could be any natural or manmade incident that impacts the program's ability to operate as planned.
  - 1. A program director or administrator must contact ACEND staff when a local, regional, or national emergency occurs that has the potential for impacting a program's ability to provide students with the planned educational experience.
  - 2. ACEND staff may initiate contact to a program director or administrator if they become aware of a disaster or emergency situation that may impact a program's ability to provide the planned education experiences for students.
  - 3. When a disaster with the potential for short-or long-term impact on the program's operations or ability to remain in compliance with the Accreditation Standards occurs, the program director or administrator must submit a request for modified operations to maintain compliance with the Accreditation Standards.
    - (a) Requests for modified operations must include the following information:
      - i. The date the program was impacted by the emergency or disaster.
      - ii. Contact information for the program director and administrator.

- iii. The nature of the impact on the program and students or interns.
  - iv. Efforts the program has made or plans to make to assist students or interns with placement in other ACEND accredited programs to allow them to continue their education. Transfer requirements and costs to students are up to the discretion of the program to which a student may transfer.
  - v. The tentative plan and timeline for resumption of classes, supervised practice experiences and other services by the educational program.
  - vi. List and status of students/interns currently enrolled in the program.
  - vii. List of courses/rotations (dietetics and non-dietetics) that each enrolled student/intern is scheduled to complete during the current academic year.
  - viii. Whether enrolled students/interns will incur additional charges due to the modified operations request and if so, how students/interns will be notified of these charges.
  - ix. Length of time modified operations are needed (requests may be granted for a period of time up to six months)
  - x. How prospective and enrolled students/interns will be informed of the program's plans during this time.
- (b) Upon receipt of the request, the ACEND staff will provide the request to the ACEND Executive Committee for their review and approval. The ACEND Executive Committee will evaluate the request to ensure that it provides for the equitable treatment of students/interns under ACEND's Standards.
- (c) Action to grant or deny emergency/disaster modified operations will occur within ten business days of receipt of written request from the program director or administrator.
- i. The ACEND Executive Committee may seek guidance from the ACEND Board, if necessary.
  - ii. If the request is denied, ACEND will inform the program what information may be needed to grant the request.
  - iii. During the period of modified operations, submission by the program of any requested information (e.g. Progress Report, Annual Report, Interim Report, or Self-Study Report) or other action by the program may be delayed without negative consequences. ACEND will provide a new due date for report submission based on the program's circumstances.
  - iv. If a site visit is scheduled during this time, it will be rescheduled with the timeframe for rescheduling determined by ACEND. The site visit rescheduling fee will be waived.
  - v. The ACEND board may require a focused site visit before a program resumes normal operations.
4. If modified operations are granted by ACEND, the program director must provide monthly written updates of progress toward attempts to place students or interns in other accredited programs, resumption of classes, supervised practice experiences and other services by the program.
5. If it becomes apparent that the program will not be able to resume classes, supervised practice experiences and other services by the end of six months, the program director must request in writing that the program be placed on Inactive Status. (Refer to Inactive Status policy 4.6 in the ACEND Policy & Procedure Manual.)

6. If ACEND staff are unable to make contact with a program representative within three weeks of an emergency or disaster, the program's status will be changed to Accreditation—Inactive Status and notification placed on ACEND's website. Prospective students and others inquiring about the program will be informed that the program is not currently accepting new students or interns. Subsequent actions will be guided by ACEND's policy 4.6 on Inactive Status.



# **Section 5: Review and Recognition of Non-U.S.-Based Programs**

In response to the globalization of higher education and the interest of nutrition and dietetics education programs in other countries in quality assurance and program evaluation as modeled in the United States, the ACEND board adopted policies and procedures for review and recognition of non-U.S.-based programs (i.e., programs outside of the United States and its territories). Using the same procedures as used for accreditation of U.S. programs, ACEND determines if the non-U.S.-based program is comparable in content and experience to a U.S.-based program; thus, the non-U.S.-based program is awarded accreditation status.

## **5.1 Procedure to Apply for Accreditation for Non-U.S. Programs**

- A. ACEND accepts an application for recognition of candidacy for accreditation from a program located outside the U.S. and its territories if it first meets ACEND's International Dietitian Education Standards or Foreign Dietitian Education Standards.
- B. A program may submit documentation that it meets ACEND's eligibility requirements after at least one class has graduated. The application must be submitted in English and include the signatures of all institution and program officials. The application should include a complete narrative description showing how the program meets the requirements stated for the standards under which it is applying and evidence of compliance to document these requirements and support the narrative.
- C. Following successful completion of the eligibility requirements review, the program is notified and a submission date for the self-study report addressing the Accreditation Standards is determined (approximately five-six months later). At this time, ACEND staff discusses with the program director the potential site visit dates, based on the self-study submission and necessary review time (approximately 12 weeks).
- D. The self-study application must be in English and should contain the following:
  1. A Self-Study Application for Candidacy for Accreditation of a Non-U.S.-Based Program cover page, with signatures of all institution and program officials. One form must be submitted with original signatures to ACEND staff; copies of the form may be included in the other self-study documents.
  2. A Table of Contents, with all sections, including the appendix, referenced by page number in the order of their appearance in the self-study.
  3. An Introduction to the Program, providing historical background, a brief description of the organization and of the nutrition and dietetics program and of stakeholders involved in the self-analysis process.
  4. The body of the self-study application consists of documentation of compliance with the Accreditation Standards.
  5. The program is expected to provide a complete, narrative description showing how it meets the requirements stated for each standard. The document should include examples of evidence inherent in or necessary to document these requirements and support the narrative.
  6. Each standard includes "Evidence of Compliance," illustrating the type of documentation that may be appropriate for the self-study report, for distance education programs, for new programs, and for programs preparing for a site visit.
  7. Statistical or numerical data may be presented in tabular or graphic form to support the narrative. Lists and outlines are a concise means of presenting supporting materials.

8. Supporting data and/or documentation developed by the program relevant to a particular standard may be inserted in an appendix and referenced by page number in the narrative of the report.
- E. The format for the self-study application should be as follows:
1. The document must be typed in English.
  2. All pages, including those in the appendix, must be numbered. Materials may be duplicated back-to-back. The document must be submitted in PDF format and all pages, including those in the appendix, must be numbered. Materials may be duplicated back-to-back.
    - (a) Screen prints of referenced webpages or working links to the webpages should be included.
  3. Program directors should contact ACEND staff for current information about self-study Proof of transmittal is the responsibility of the sender. One electronic copy of the self-study report must be submitted to ACEND by the postmark deadline specified in correspondence received after review of the eligibility application. All materials should be sent to the attention of ACEND staff using the instructions provided in the correspondence from ACEND.

## **5.2 Site Visit Process and Review for Candidacy of Accreditation for Non US-Based Programs**

- A. After review of the eligibility application, if the review team determines that all Eligibility Requirements have been adequately addressed and the program is prepared for the self-study and site visit, ACEND staff schedules the site visit at the convenience of the review team in consultation with the program.
1. In general, the length of the site visit is seven days as follows: two days allotted for travel, two days allotted for time zone adjustment or additional travel and three days for the on-site program review.
  2. ACEND staff reserves the right to adjust this schedule as needed due to extra travel or multiple program review within the same sponsoring institution.
  3. Approval to travel for an international site visit will be decided by the ACEND board and staff based on *Factors for Authorizing an International Site Visit* in section 5.4. Site visitors will also have to sign an *Acknowledgement of International Travel Risks* before being permitted to participate on the visit.
  4. Safety considerations and warnings published by the US Department of State and its consular information sheets on its web site and may result in the cancellation of a site visit. In that case, expenses incurred are the responsibility of the program and sponsoring institution. In the case of safety events preventing travel to a site, the site visit may, at the discretion of the ACEND board, be conducted in an off-site location, such as another country or another campus of the sponsoring institution.
  5. In general, the review team conducts the site visit according to the procedures described in the Section 3 Site Visit for Accreditation.
- B. Composition of Review and Site Visit Team
- Composition of the review and site visit team to non-U.S.-based programs is as follows:

1. The review/site visit team should consist of at least four individuals: one experienced lead reviewer from the current pool of ACEND program reviewers; two accompanying reviewers (one may or may not be an ACEND program reviewer) and one ACEND staff member to facilitate communication between the program, the program reviewers and the ACEND board and to maintain continuity of the process.
2. Program reviewers are identified who are willing and able to conduct a non-U.S.-based site visit based on language and cultural skills.
3. Other Academy members, who may not be ACEND program reviewers, but have significant experience in business, industry or education outside of the U.S., may be asked to participate in a site visit as needed.

### **5.3 Follow-Up to the Site Visit and ACEND Board Decision**

- A. The program is e-mailed a copy of the site visit report within seven weeks of the site visit.
  1. The program has 30 working days from receipt of the site visit report to submit a response to ACEND.
  2. The assigned program reviewers review the self-study report, site visit report and program response (if any) and document the program's compliance with the Accreditation Standards on the summary report. for action at the next scheduled ACEND board meeting.
  3. The self-study report, site visit report, program response and review team summary report are provided to a triad for an accreditation recommendation.
- B. The ACEND board reviews the triad's recommendation and supporting documentation and makes a decision regarding the program's status.
  1. If the program is found to be equivalent to a U.S.-based program, then candidacy for accreditation status is granted for a period no longer than four years.
  2. After four years, if the program wants to continue to have ACEND-accreditation, the program must submit another eligibility application and self-study and schedule an on-site visit for full accreditation. Candidate status does not assure full accreditation will be granted by ACEND.
  3. If the program is not found to be substantially equivalent to a U.S.-based program, candidacy status is not granted and the program is provided a rationale for this decision.
  4. No decision made by the ACEND board during the candidacy review of a program is eligible for reconsideration or appeal.
- C. ACEND staff sends a decision letter to the program director and all administrators within two weeks of the ACEND board meeting.
- D. Publication of Candidacy for Accreditation Status
  1. All candidacy for accreditation decisions are published on the ACEND Web site.
  2. A list of non-U.S.-based programs granted candidacy for accreditation status is published on the ACEND Web site. Program information for the Web listings is confirmed each year by programs via the online annual report process.
  3. The program director must inform students and the public of the program's status. The following statements are required to publicize candidacy for accreditation granted by ACEND:

[Name of Institution]'s Nutrition and Dietetics Education Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, USA, (312) 899-0040 ext. 5400. <http://www.eatright.org/ACEND>.

[Name of Institution]'s Nutrition and Dietetics Education Program has been granted candidate status by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, USA, (312) 899-0040 ext. 5400. <http://www.eatright.org/ACEND>.

Or:

The accreditation of [Name of Institution]'s nutrition and dietetics education program has been placed on probationary status by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, USA, (312) 899-0040 ext. 5400. <http://www.eatright.org/ACEND>. For an explanation of probationary status, consult the director of the nutrition and dietetics program.

4. If programs report an inaccurate or misleading status in any printed materials, ACEND staff notifies the program of the inaccuracy, requests correction within 30 days and publishes a correction on the ACEND Web site.

## **5.4 Factors for Authorizing an International Site Visit**

- A. The full ACEND Board must act to authorize an international site visit or not. The Board's decision whether or not to authorize the visit will be based on information contained in a staff recommendation that includes the following:
  1. An assessment of security risks, including factors such as military action, terrorism and street crime. This assessment should be documented and based on reliable information, including State Department information posted on its web site and information obtained from program/school faculty at the location of proposed travel.
  2. An assessment of provisions made to address the safety of the team during the visit.
  3. An assessment of the availability of reliable transportation and suitable accommodations for the team.
  4. An assessment of health risks, including documentation of any vaccinations that are required or recommended.
  5. Information on visa or other bureaucratic requirements for entry into the country, including information on the amount of advance time needed for such paperwork.
  6. Information, if available, on interest/willingness of specific staff or ACEND volunteers who have explicitly indicated interest in such travel.
  7. Prior payment of all fees and travel related expenses by the program. For direct flights of more than eight hours upgraded travel costs may be considered.
  8. A yes/no staff opinion on whether ACEND should undertake the visit, based on the information above.

- B. The Board will pay particular attention to information that relates to the likelihood of changes over time. The Board should have reasonable assurance that it will be possible to continue with subsequent visits when it approves each visit. This will help to prevent, programs from investing resources in an accreditation process that will not be possible to continue in the future.
- C. The Board's decision to authorize a visit should be based on its confidence that appropriate staff and volunteers can be identified, final visit authorization is contingent on the willingness of appropriate staff and volunteers to travel. No staff member or volunteer will be required to travel on the visit. The ACEND Executive Director, in consultation with the ACEND Chairs, may cancel the visit at any time due to lack of available personnel or emerging events in the country that would change the conditions that existed at the time of the Board's original decision to conduct the visit. ACEND staff should communicate this policy both to the program and to any staff and volunteers who are asked to participate.
- D. The Board can authorize the use of technology to conduct virtual site visit for those programs housed in locations where travel the U.S. State Department has issued a travel warning. The Board may also ask the program to consider holding the site visit at a different location (additional campus or neighboring country) for the safety of all ACEND staff and program reviewers.

# Section 6: Appendix

## 6.1 History of Nutrition and Dietetics Education

Early American Dietetic Association (ADA) leaders laid a strong foundation for nutrition and dietetics education. Throughout its history, ADA, now known as the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has continued to provide leadership for a dynamic, progressive system educating entry-level practitioners.

1923–The ADA Education Section first discussed plans for courses for student dietitians.

1924–The minimum specifications for a course for student dietitians were introduced by Ruth Wheeler, PhD.

1927–The “Outline for Standard Course for Student Dietitians in Hospitals” was approved by the Association. It required that students have a baccalaureate degree with a major in foods and nutrition and receive at least six months training, under the supervision of a dietitian, in a hospital.

1928–A list of hospitals with the approved course was published.

1929–The need for evaluating course quality became evident as the number of programs increased. It was decided that each hospital on the approved list was to be visited by a committee of three ADA members. The members were chosen for their ability in the educational field, their understanding of the hospital situation and their geographic location. These site visits were conducted every two years.

1932–An administrative course for dietitians was developed, and recommended academic requirements for dietitians were outlined.

1947–Plan I, academic standards for entering internships, was published.

1955–Plan II, which included four subject areas and a range of semester credit hours, was published.

1958–Plan III, which included required areas of learning and designated core subjects, emphases and concentrations, was published.

1962–The first Coordinated Undergraduate Program was developed. As an accredited program, it integrated experiential and academic components in an undergraduate curriculum.

1971–Plan IV, with competency-based minimum academic requirements, was introduced.

1973–Individualized, post-baccalaureate Dietetic Traineeships began and were approved.

1974–In response to a need for support personnel at the associate degree level, Essentials were published for approving Dietetic Technician Programs.

1974–In an effort to maintain appropriate standards for program review, ADA began program accreditation and was recognized by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, now USDE, as the accrediting agency for Dietetic Internships and Coordinated Undergraduate Programs. At the same time, the Commission on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), to be succeeded by the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation (CORPA), also recognized ADA as an accrediting agency for Coordinated Undergraduate Programs, and later for Dietetic Internships.

1986–The ADA Council on Education (COE) implemented a new structure with three subdivisions: Division of Education Programs, Division of Education Standards and Division of Education Accreditation/Approval.

1987–The Knowledge Requirements for Dietitians were implemented, as Plan V, under the Standards of Education. The Standards of Education were the minimum criteria to be met by all dietetics education programs. Approval of Preprofessional Practice Programs (AP4s), as an alternative to Dietetic Internships, began.

1988–All individual experiential pathways for registration eligibility were discontinued by CDR.

1991–The number system (plans I to V) for ADA’s approved academic requirements was discontinued. The Standards of Education were updated to reflect results of the 1989 Role Delineation Study.

Programs approved as meeting the Knowledge Requirements for Entry-Level Dietitians were designated as Didactic Programs in Dietetics (DPD). Programs were expected to continually update their curriculums based on current practice in dietetics.

- 1993–The ADA Board of Directors, the House of Delegates, COE and CDR approved the recommendation from the ADA/CDR Dietetics Education Task Force to accredit all dietetics education programs with a supervised practice component.
- 1994–A plan to accredit Dietetic Technician and Preprofessional Practice Programs, as well as Coordinated Programs and Dietetic Internships, was implemented. Preprofessional Practice Programs were designated as Dietetic Internships when accreditation was conferred.
- 1994–The Standards of Education were revised to reflect environmental changes affecting dietetics practice, to add new requirements for continued USDE recognition and to clarify and streamline the criteria and documentation required for accreditation and approval.
- 1994–The ADA Bylaws were amended to create the administratively autonomous Commission on Accreditation/Approval for Dietetics Education (CAADE) to replace the COE Division of Education Accreditation/Approval.
- 1994–ADA/CDR Future Search Conference was held to determine the direction of dietetics education and credentialing to meet the challenges of future practice. The Educational Competencies Steering Committee was formed to address the first priority recommendation for education from the Future Search Conference. The charge was to “identify core competencies for all dietetics practitioners and develop a new matrix for more opportunities for concentration based on additional knowledge and skills.”
- 1995–Surveys of dietetics educators and practitioners and CDR Practice Audit of practitioners and employers were conducted.
- 1996–On the basis of national survey data, foundation knowledge, skills and competencies for entry-level dietitians and dietetic technicians were developed. These recommendations for preparing entry-level practitioners were approved by the Council on Professional Issues (CPI) and forwarded to CAADE for implementation.
- 1997–The Standards of Education were revised to incorporate recommendations for competency-based education and for emphasis areas for entry-level dietitian supervised practice programs.
- 1999–In response to changes in higher education, CAADE implemented the same accreditation process, including a validation component (e.g., an on-site visit by a team of peers), for DPDs as that used for other dietetics education programs.
- 1999–The ADA Bylaws were amended to reflect changes in the Commission’s name and functions. CAADE became the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE).
- 2001–CADE board approved new 2002 Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards, developed by the Accreditation Standards Committee based on national data, effective March 1, 2003.
- 2005–CADE Accreditation Standards Committee expanded and charged to begin review and revision of the 2002 ERAS—an activity conducted at least every five years in response to significant events impacting dietetics education and practice.
- 2006–CADE implemented Candidacy for Accreditation which requires any new program seeking accreditation to host a site visit prior to the ACEND board decision. Candidacy status lasts four years.
- 2006–CADE established policies to recognize “Substantial Equivalency” status of international programs. Substantial Equivalency recognized that a program, as reviewed, is comparable in content and experience to a US based ACEND accredited programs. Graduates of Substantially Equivalent programs were eligible to take CDR’s credentialing exam for dietitians.
- 2008–CADE board approved new Eligibility Requirements and Accreditation Standards revised by the Accreditation Standards Committee based on national data, effective March 1, 2009.

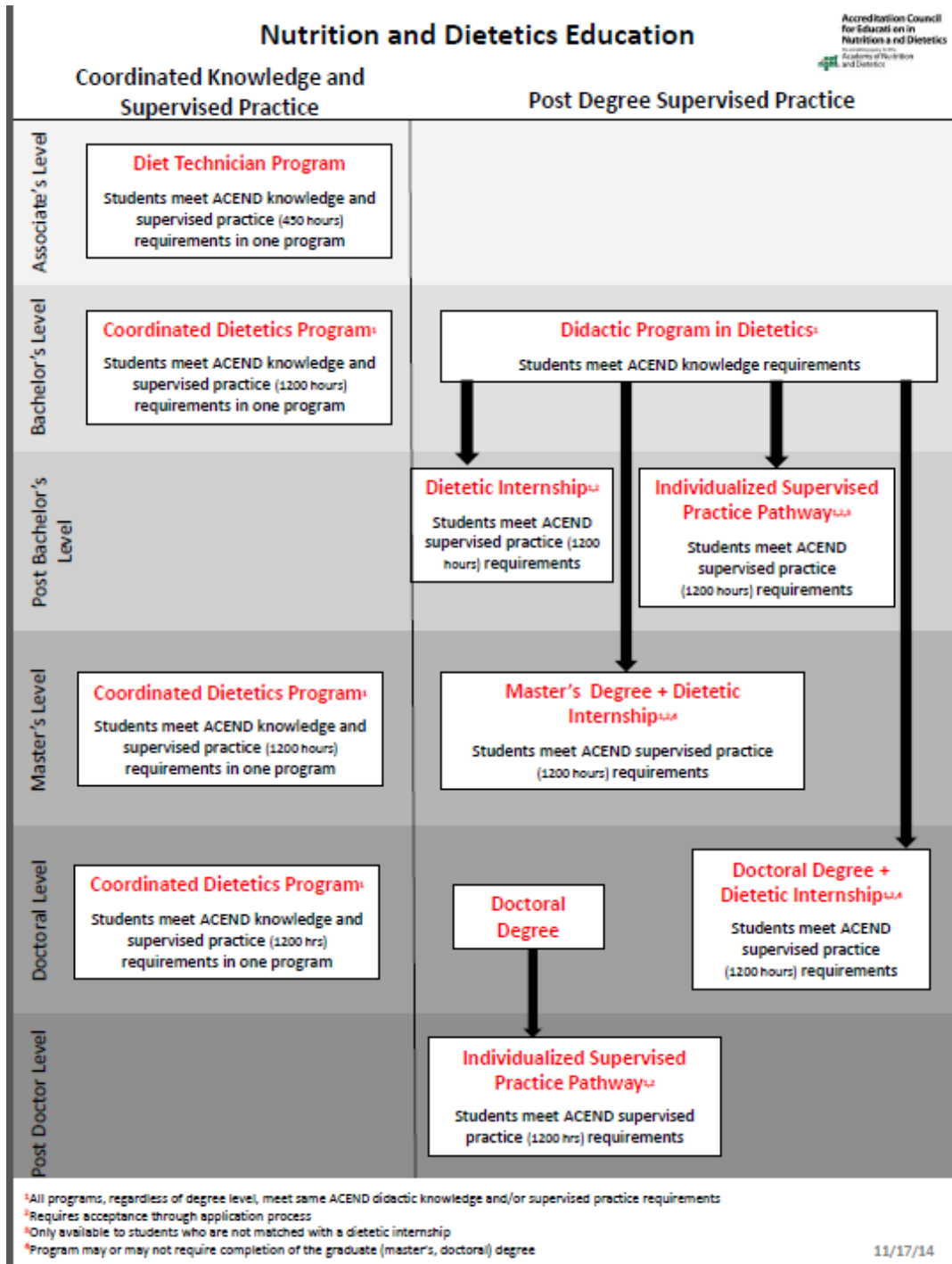
- 2009- The CADE board established a moratorium on new DPDs applying for candidacy for accreditation
- 2011- CADE established Individualized Supervised Practice Pathways (ISPPs), a supervised practice pathway in an existing accredited program.
- 2012–The American Dietetic Association and the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education changed their names on January 1, 2012 to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND).
- 2012–The ACEND board of directors approved the 2012 revision of the accreditation standards for all program types, to be effective June 1, 2012.
- 2012-ACEND developed new standards for international programs, International Dietitian Education (IDE) standards prepare foreign graduates to practice in the US and Foreign Dietitian Education (FDE) standards for graduates who plan to practice in their home country.
- 2012-ACEND began exploring the level of education needed for future nutrition and dietetics practice
- 2013-The Commission on Dietetic Registration changed entry-level registration eligibility education requirements for dietitians from a baccalaureate degree to a minimum of a graduate degree.
- 2014-The ACEND board changed the accreditation term length from 10-years to seven-years and eliminated the Program Assessment Report (PAR), the mid-cycle review of an accredited program.
- 2015- ACEND Board releases the document: Rationale for Future Education Preparation of Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioners
- 2017–The ACEND board of directors approved the 2017 revision of the accreditation standards for all program types, to be effective June 1, 2017.
- 2017-ACEND Board released the Future Education Model (FEM) Standards for Associate, Bachelor's and Graduate Degree Demonstration Programs and began accepting applications for FEM demonstration programs
- 2018-ACEND Board began accrediting Future Education Model Demonstration Programs



## 6.2 Overview of Nutrition and Dietetics Education Today

The **Schematic for Nutrition and Dietetics Education** (Fig. 1) encompasses two components required to educate a nutrition and dietetics practitioner:

1. Didactic education, which provides the *foundation knowledge* necessary to function in society and on which practitioner competencies can be built
2. Supervised practice, which provides the *practitioner competencies* essential to perform the specialized functions of an RD, RDN or a NDTR



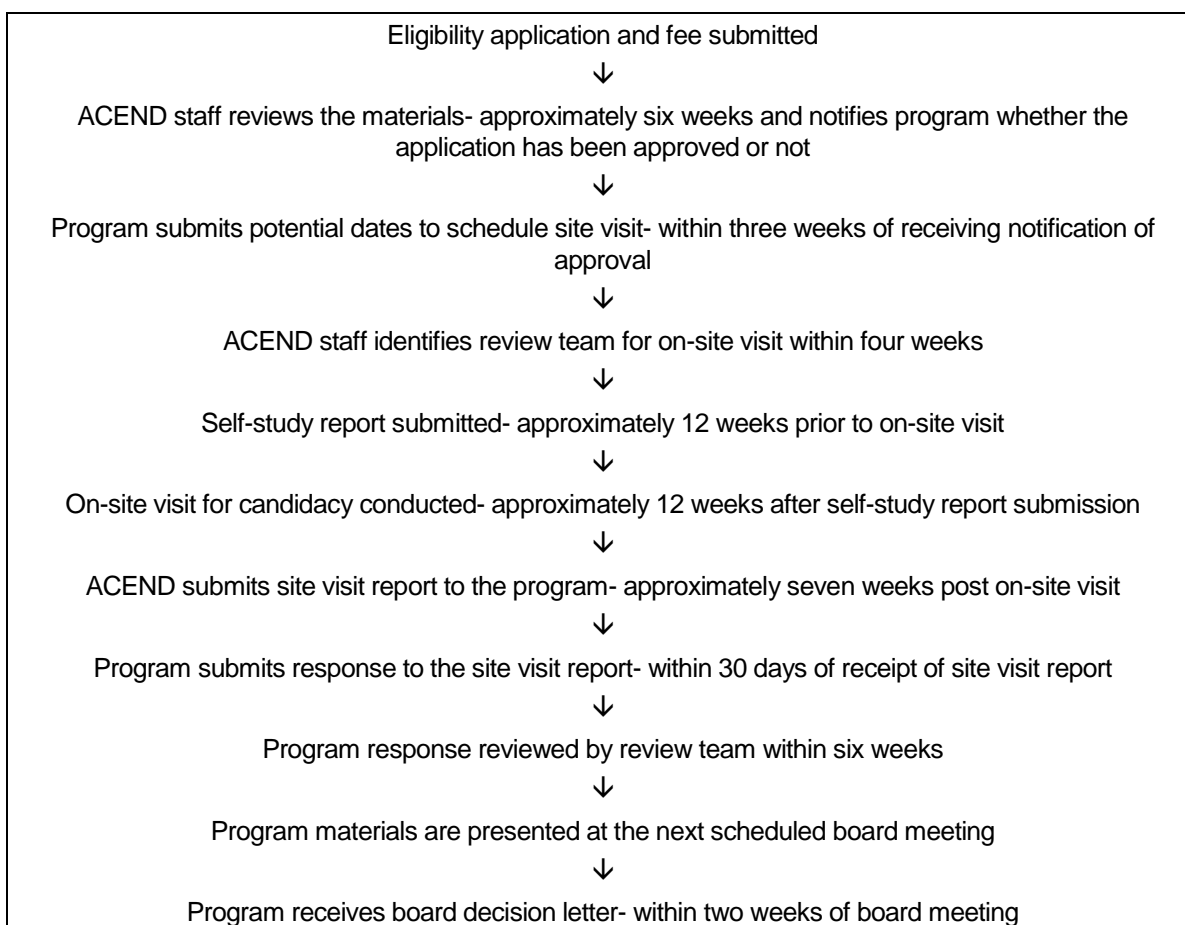
### 6.3 Articulation between Nutrition and Dietetics Education Programs

Nutrition and dietetics education programs are encouraged to develop curriculum models that allow for transition from the nutrition and dietetics technician to the dietitian nutritionist level with a minimum loss of academic credit. Articulation, which may be initiated by either the two-year or four-year institution, is enhanced by focusing on planning quality programs and by emphasizing accountability and evaluation.

Coordination between nutrition and dietetics education programs will improve the flexibility of the educational preparation of nutrition and dietetics practitioners and will provide opportunities for nontraditional students, who represent a larger percentage of potential students. In addition, articulation is a viable strategy to attract students from underrepresented groups who often begin their education at a community college.

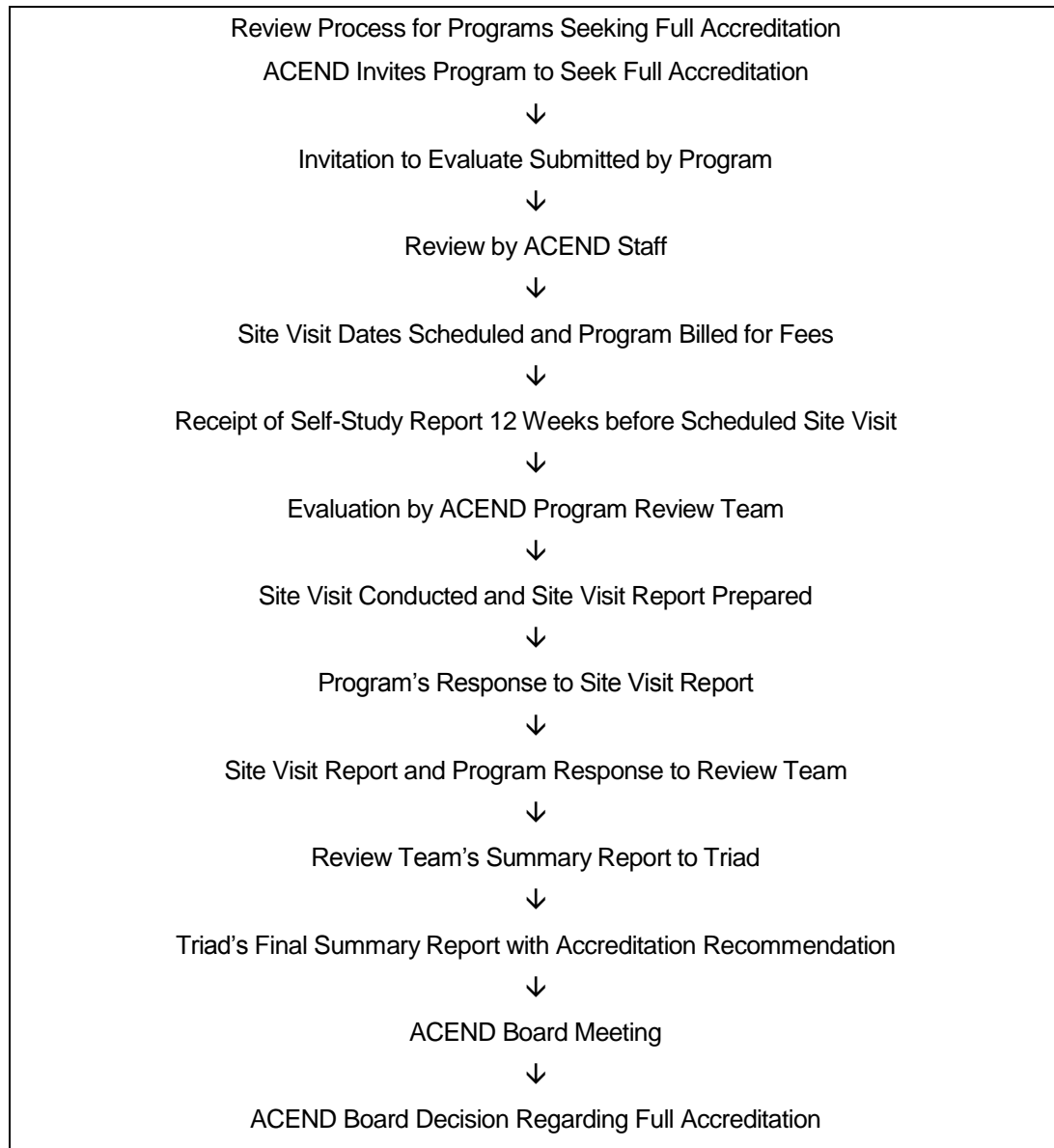
### 6.4 Sample Timelines for Candidacy for Accreditation

The timeline for the candidacy process is approximately 12 months from the time the Eligibility Application is accepted. The table below is intended as a guide only; actual timelines may vary depending upon when materials are received and scheduling of subsequent steps in the process.



## 6.5 Timeline for Full Accreditation

A program applying for full accreditation is required to submit the self-study report approximately three months before the site visit. The entire process is approximately 14 months.



## 6.6 Enrollment Monitoring for ACEND Accredited Programs

### Enrollment Monitoring for ACEND-accredited Programs

Each ACEND accredited program (DT, CP, DPD, DI, FDE, IDE, DPD with an ISPP) must establish an enrollment maximum, taking into account normal attrition rates, enrollment history, projected enrollment increases, and adequacy of resources to support student/intern success. DPDs should also take into consideration the availability of supervised practice placement for students or graduates. After the enrollment maximum is established, the actual number of students/interns in the class must stay within this number as the class proceeds through the program. Programs are only required to establish an enrollment maximum for the professional level courses in the program. For example, an undergraduate DPD would include junior and senior year students and post-graduate students completing DPD requirements.

A **Supervised Practice Program** (DT, CP, DI, FDE, IDE and ISPP option in a DPD) wishing to increase its maximum enrollment by 3 students/interns or 10%, whichever is greater, in one year will be required to submit an enrollment increase report. The report would consist of current enrollment, proposed enrollment and resources to support an increase in enrollment. If a program is requesting to increase enrollment beyond three interns or 10% (whichever is greater) or requesting to increase enrollment by 20% or greater over two years, the program must submit a Substantive Program Change request.

A **Didactic Program in Dietetics** (DPD) wishing to increase its maximum enrollment by any amount is required to submit a Substantive Program Change request. In the Substantive Program Change request, the DPD must explain how it will assure that all additional graduates who receive a verification statement will obtain positions in supervised practice programs.

Monitoring of annual report data will be done to ensure compliance to the enrollment monitoring policy. As with all Substantive Program Changes, ACEND requires prior approval in advance of the planned increase to demonstrate that the program has sufficient resources to accommodate students. Although ACEND has established thresholds for submitting a request for a change in enrollment, the ACEND board maintains the right to investigate any patterns of increases it considers problematic and not in the best interest of students.

Requirements for Submitting an Enrollment Increase Request		
Current Maximum Enrollment	Enrollment Increase Report for enrollment increases of...	Substantive Program Change request if it plans to...
Supervised Practice Programs		
1 or more students/interns	Up to 3 students/interns or 10% (whichever is greater) within 1 year	More than 3 students/interns or 10% within one year or 4 or more students/interns or 20% (whichever is greater) cumulative within 2 years
Didactic Programs in Dietetics		
1 or more students	Not applicable	any increases in enrollment
For example, a DI with a maximum enrollment of 20 must submit a Substantive Program Change request if they anticipate adding 4 additional interns within 2 years. When establishing the initial enrollment maximum programs need to take into consideration any enrollment increases they may have within the first two years and plan accordingly.		

## 6.7 Program Pass Rate Policy

Program pass rates on the Commission on Dietetic Registrations (CDR) registration exam for RDN or NDTR will be monitored each year using reports received in February from CDR. ACEND policies indicate the level and action to be taken as shown below:

	RDN Programs	NDTR Programs	Accreditation Action
Level	One-Year Pass Rate	One-Year Pass Rate	
1	80% or above	70% or above	Meets ACEND requirements
2	70-79%	60 – 69%	Does not meet ACEND standards, place on reduced term with designated time period to come into compliance
3	69% or below	59% or below	Does not meet ACEND standards, place on probation with designated time period to come into compliance

**Level One:** RDN Programs with a one-year pass rate over a three-year period of 80% or above and NDTR programs with one-year pass rate 70% or above meet ACEND standards. The board, at its discretion, may provide a certificate of excellence to programs with a 100% pass rate over a three-year period.

**Level Two:** RDN Programs with a one-year pass rate over a three-year period of 70-79% and NDTR programs with one-year pass rate 60-69% are placed on a reduced term with designated time period to come into compliance. Programs must submit a pass rate improvement plan, using a template provided by ACEND, when they first fall into the level two category; programs will be monitored annually within this time period to determine whether the pass rate has improved. Programs that do not improve pass rates within the designated time period will be placed on the agenda of the next ACEND Board meeting where the board may take further action, such as, place the program on probation. When determining the accreditation action, the Board will also consider whether the program is meeting its benchmark for the percent of program graduates who take the CDR exam within 12 months of completion (DI, CP, DT programs) or the percent of graduates (DPD) who are expected to apply to a supervised practice program within 12 months of graduation and the percent admitted to a supervised practice program within 12 months of graduation.

**Level Three:** RDN Programs with a one-year pass rate over a three-year period of 69% or below and NDTR programs with one-year pass rate 59% or below are placed on probation with a designated time period to come into compliance based on USDE's timeframes. Programs must submit a pass rate improvement plan, using a template provided by ACEND, when they first fall into the level three category; programs will be monitored annually per the time period to determine whether the pass rate has improved. Programs that do not improve pass rates within the designated timeframe the will be placed on the agenda of the next ACEND board meeting where the board may take further action, which may include withdrawal of accreditation. When determining the accreditation action, the Board will also consider whether the programs are meeting their benchmarks for the percent of program graduates who take the CDR exam within 12 months of completion (DI, CP, DT programs) or the percent of graduates (DPD) who are expected to apply to a supervised practice program within 12 months of graduation and the percent admitted to a supervised practice program within 12 months of graduation.

## USDE Window for Resolving Non-Compliance

U.S. Department of Education regulations 602.20(a) (1-2) specify maximum timeframes for resolving issues of non-compliance based on the length of a program. Accrediting agencies have the right to specify shorter timeframes at their discretion.

Program Length	Time for Resolution
Less than 1 year in length	12 months
1- to 2-years	18 months
2-years or more	24 months

## 6.8 Resource List

To assist programs applying for accreditation, ACEND offers the following products and services:

1. **ACEND website** at <http://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/>, includes

- Fact sheets on accreditation process and standards
- Listings on accredited programs with selected information
- ACEND UPdate webpage
- ACEND Policy & Procedure Manual
- ACEND 2017 Accreditation Standards (Effective June 1, 2017, revised July 1, 2018)
- ACEND Future Education Model Standards

2. **Accreditation Workshops and other training visit the ACEND web site at:**

<http://www.eatrightpro.org/resources/acend/training-and-volunteer-opportunities>

To contact ACEND staff:

312/899-0040, ext. 5400

Fax: 312/899-4817

E-mail: [acend@eatright.org](mailto:acend@eatright.org)

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