



July 2022

Dear Colleague:

The Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME) will be conducting a comprehensive review of its accreditation standards, starting in the fall of 2022. To begin this review process, we are seeking feedback on the current standards from our stakeholder community and the general public. This letter is an invitation to comment on CNME's accreditation standards.

The Council is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) as a programmatic accreditor for four-year, primarily residential doctoral programs in naturopathic medicine in the U.S. and Canada. The USDE requires recognized accrediting agencies to periodically review their accreditation standards in collaboration with stakeholders, and the CNME believes that one of its most important responsibilities is to ensure that the standards are periodically revised to reflect changes in the field of naturopathic medicine and evolving education and accreditation practices.

Our stakeholder community includes: naturopathic medical schools and programs; state, provincial and national professional naturopathic medical associations in the U.S. and Canada; naturopathic physicians; regulatory authorities such as naturopathic licensing boards and boards of higher education; the North American Board of Naturopathic Examiners, the Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges, and other organizations involved with education and evaluation in naturopathic medicine; and institutional accrediting agencies that accredit CNME-recognized ND/NMD programs.

Attached as an addendum is a set of general and specific questions that that CNME board of directors would like commenters to consider. Wherever possible, comments should pertain specifically to one or more of CNME's eleven Accreditation Standards. CNME's current standards are published in Part Four of the *CNME Handbook of Accreditation for Naturopathic Medicine Programs*, 2022 edition—a copy of which can be downloaded from the CNME website, www.cnme.org.

Please submit your comments to CNME by September 19, 2022, in any of the following ways:

- By the electronic comment form accessible via the following link:
- By email to: standardsreview@cnme.org
- By mail to: CNME, PO Box 178, Great Barrington, MA 01230.

Where possible, please organize your submission with headings identifying by name or number the particular standard(s) to which the comments apply. We also welcome any comments you might have with respect to the Council's policies and procedures.

COUNCIL ON NATUROPATHIC MEDICAL EDUCATION



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Please note that any draft revisions to Council's accreditation standards approved by the CNME Board of Directors will be circulated for follow-up comment before final adoption. The CNME expects to complete the comprehensive standards review process by the end of 2024.

Thank you for your participation in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Joni Olehausen, ND
President, CNME Board of Directors

ADDENDUM QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDER

General Questions

1. Are there any elements or criteria in any the standards that be removed? If so, what are they and why is this necessary?
2. Are there any important elements that have been left out of any of the standards? If so, what are they and why is this necessary?
3. Do some of the current standards contain elements or criteria that should be shifted to different standards? If so, please outline the specific changes you suggest and why they would be helpful.
4. Are there redundancies or duplications in the current standards that should be eliminated? If so, please outline what they are.
5. Are there any unclear wordings, ambiguities, contradictions or inconsistencies in specific sections that should be addressed? If so, please outline.
6. Do we need to add any new standards? If so, what are they and why are they needed?
7. Do you have any general observations about the current accreditation standards? What do you like or dislike about the current CNME standards?

Specific Questions

1. Have you observed any widespread weaknesses in regard to skills and/or knowledge among recent ND graduates that the CNME should address in the ND curriculum standard (i.e., Standard VI, "Program of Study")? If so, please list.
2. Given the various scopes of ND practice currently found in the U.S. and Canadian jurisdictions that license/regulate NDs—and how these scopes may evolve—what aspects of academic or clinical of ND education, if any, need further development?

3. Given trends in healthcare insurance coverage for ND services, are there any aspects of the academic or clinical ND educational standards that need further development? If so, please list.
4. The CNME educational standards reference the goal of graduating “primary care/general practice physicians/doctors”: Is this still appropriate as a fundamental goal of ND education and training? If not, what, if anything, should be specified as the fundamental goal?
5. The CNME has recently revised its accreditation standards to allow for the use of telemedicine and simulations to fulfill a portion of the clinical training requirements, including a limit of 25% for telemedicine contacts and 20% for simulations: What further revisions, if any, might be needed to clarify and/or strengthen these aspects of clinical training?
6. Given that there are some ND programs where ND students share classes with students enrolled in a different healthcare program—or who are getting an ND degree jointly with another degree—are any revisions/additions needed in the CNME standards to address these situations? If so, please outline your suggestions.
7. Assessment continues to be a challenging area for some ND programs: Are any revisions needed in Standard VII, “Assessment of Student Learning and Program Evaluation”? If so, please outline your suggestions.
8. The CNME is considering implementing a hybrid format for conducting comprehensive evaluation visits for reaccreditation of ND programs—i.e., handling some of the meetings via videoconferencing prior to the onsite campus portion of the visit so that the onsite portion is less rushed and/or of shorter duration. Would utilizing a hybrid evaluation visit format be potentially helpful to schools? If so, which parts of a visit could be handled virtually instead on campus?