

VIA EMAIL

To: Midwifery Students in ACME Accredited Programs

From: Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education, (ACME), Board of Commissioners

Date: November 21, 2014

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On November 17 & 18, 2014, the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) Board of Commissioners (BOC) met and discussed the "Student Report" which was submitted to the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) and brought to our attention through our ACNM liaison to ACME, Dr. Jane Dyer, CNM. Thank you for bringing your concerns regarding distance education and primary care content to our attention. We will attempt to address your concerns about distance education and primary care in this letter and wish to continue an open conversation between midwifery students and ACME.

Please find a general overview of ACME, as well as links to our key documents on our website page at <http://www.midwife.org/acnm/files/ccLibraryFiles/Filename/000000004550/ACME-OVERVIEW-OCTOBER2014.pdf>.

ACME is composed of a Board of Commissioners (BOC), Board of Review (BOR), Site Visitor Panel (SVP), and Advisory Board. ACME has a full time executive director and a part-time administrative assistant to support the operations of the organization.

The mission of the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) is to advance excellence and quality in midwifery education. The purpose of ACME is to plan, implement, evaluate and monitor the pre/accreditation of programs that offer midwifery education. The U.S. Department of Education grants the following scope of recognition to ACME: "the accreditation and pre-accreditation of basic certificate, basic graduate nurse-midwifery, direct entry midwifery, and pre-certification nurse-midwifery education programs including those programs that offer distance education."

The overall accreditation process, as defined and used by ACME, consists of a preaccreditation review and other periodic accreditation reviews of midwifery education programs to assure that programs possess the organizational characteristics, the professional orientation, a curriculum that contains the ACNM Core Competencies, and the resources necessary to provide an educational experience of high quality for its students to become competent, safe, beginning level midwives.

Using ACME accreditation criteria, your midwifery program conducts a self-evaluation study that analyzes all aspects of the education program including the organization and administration, the faculty and faculty organization, policies related to students, the curriculum and student learning, the resources, and details an assessment plan and desired outcomes. The education program hosts a site visit from ACME and is reviewed by the ACME Board of Review (BOR) to determine pre/accreditation status. The education program uses the results of this process to maintain or improve program performance.

ACME has created and set forth specific criteria that must be met by all midwifery programs. ACME is responsible for ensuring that all programs meet these requirements. You may find the accreditation criteria document detailing the requirements at <http://www.midwife.org/ACNM/files/ccLibraryFiles/Filename/000000004249/AccreditationCriteriaJune2013.pdf>.

The criteria are applicable to all programs including distance education programs. Detailed in Criterion II: Faculty and Faculty Organization are the specific requirements for faculty. If students have specific concerns about a distance learning course or faculty, ACME suggests that students take their initial concerns directly to the midwifery program director and/or faculty member. In addition, a student may write to ACME at any time with a comment, and/or grievance through the 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Comment process. Grievance procedure can be found in the [ACME Policies and Procedures Manual](#), Accreditation Overview II., H. Opportunities for Public Comment.

Any person, including but not limited to, the student, faculty or staff member of a program, accredited by ACME, who is aggrieved by any activity that is contrary to the policies or requirements of ACME, and purportedly taken under the authority of such program, may initiate a grievance in accord with our procedures detailed in the ACME Policies and Procedures Manual, Section X, Grievances Procedures Against an Accredited Midwifery Program.

ACME criteria specify that the midwifery curriculum must contain appropriate and adequate didactic content and clinical experiences to facilitate the attainment of the required [ACNM Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice](#) (2012), which outline the knowledge, skills, and abilities that can be expected of new midwives (CNMs/CMs), including those in primary care of women. The ACNM Core Competencies are based on a Task Analysis, a study completed approximately every five years, as well as other key documents, to ensure that the basic education of CNMs/CMs is consistent with the practice of midwives in the United States and Internationally.

A detailed history of the development and revision of the Core Competencies can be reviewed in an article by Phillippi and Avery in the [Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health](#), 2014, Volume 59(1). While midwifery education program curricula are required to contain the Core Competencies in primary care, they are free to decide how this content will be delivered. It is not required that education programs have a separate course in primary care of women, although many do. If students feel that the primary care Core Competencies are not included in the program of study, ACME recommends once again that students approach the program director and/or faculty about their concern and then if a resolution is not reached that they follow the ACME Grievance procedure as outlined above.

The ACME Executive Director, Heather L. Maurer, MA, ([hmaurer@acnm.org](mailto:hmaurer@acnm.org), 240.485.1803) is available to clarify or discuss these or any other student concerns. We wish you a continued productive journey in your midwifery education and thank you for your inquiry.