

Council of Ayurveda Credentialing

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Introduction:

Accreditation in the context of higher education is defined as the granting of public recognition to a program of study and/or an institution that meets or exceeds an established set of standards. Since Ayurvedic Medicine studies are considered as Higher education, it is important to understand overview of higher education accreditation.

Higher education accreditation is an external, peer-review process whereby recognition is granted to educational institutions—or to specialized and professional programs offered by educational institutions— signifying attainment of a certain specified level of quality and integrity in its operations. Accreditation is also a process that requires ongoing self-appraisal and continuing improvement on the part of institutions and programs. This recognition process, which is entered into voluntarily, provides assurance to the general public, the educational community, governmental agencies, and other organizations and individuals regarding the quality and integrity of institutions and programs. In the United States and Canada this recognition is granted primarily by private, independent entities, and can serve as a basis for professional licensure and access to external funding (in the United States, this can include access to a certain federally funded programs). These accrediting agencies establish standards and other criteria for accreditation, conduct onsite visits to verify compliance with standards, and decide whether to recognize the institutions or the specialized and professional programs that have applied. Once recognized, the institutions and programs are monitored and periodically re-evaluated by their accreditors; they also engage in a periodic, comprehensive self-appraisal process (referred to as the “self-study process”) at time intervals specified by the agency.

The two basic types of accreditation are “institutional” and “programmatic.” Institutional accreditation pertains to an entire educational institution, while programmatic accreditation pertains to specialized or professional programs, departments or Programs that are part of the higher education institution.

Institutional accreditors often require that an institution’s principal specialized programs also be recognized by the appropriate programmatic accreditors. Programmatic accrediting agencies are also often referred to as “specialized accreditors” or, if they accredit programs in one of the professions, as “professional accreditors.”

The CAC is a programmatic accrediting agency for the profession of Ayurvedic medicine. As such, it serves to ensure the high quality of Ayurvedic education in the United States and Canada through the voluntary accreditation of Certificate, Associate, Bachelor, Master and Doctorate-level Ayurvedic programs.

Typically, to become accredited, an institution or program must first achieve pre-accreditation status—which is referred to by the Council and a number of other accreditors as “candidacy status.” CAC candidacy is a formative period for a program during which the Council carefully monitors the program’s ongoing development towards maturity. Accreditation and candidacy status both indicate that a program is recognized by—and affiliated with—the Council; the Council provides no recognition or affiliation options other than candidacy and accreditation. The details of the specific steps and requirements for achieving candidacy and subsequent accreditation will be presented in CAC’s Accreditation Handbook.

Steps of Accreditation Process:

Institutions seeking to demonstrate eligibility for accreditation for their Ayurvedic educational program shall complete and submit the:

- I. **Initial Application for Candidacy & Accreditation**
- II. **Eligibility Application to CAC**

After submission of the first two (2) documents, CAC will contact the institution, offer phone consultations or workshops and provide guidance regarding completion of the Eligibility Application with submitting necessary documents (together called as Eligibility Packet).

Guidelines for the Preparation of the Eligibility Packet:

The Eligibility Packet should be submitted as follows:

1. The maximum number of pages is 60 pages double-spaced or 40 pages 1.5-spaced (for the sake of readability, reports should not be single-spaced). Note that this page limit applies to the body of the report and does not include appendices.
2. Report pages should be numbered.
3. Any easily readable typeface (e.g., Times Roman, Arial) may be used, provided that the type is a minimum of 11-point in size.
4. Margins should be a minimum of one inch on every side: left, right, top and bottom.
5. Block quotations should be indented, and may be single-spaced.
6. The report should be divided into sections pertaining to each of the eligibility requirements, and tabs or some other system should be used to indicate the location of sections and appendices.
7. Whenever the report references information contained in a document placed in an appendix, the report should specify the relevant page numbers of the document.
8. The report must be bound or placed in a loose-leaf binder (for ease of last-minute revisions, a loose-leaf binder is recommended). No more than two separate volumes may be submitted (e.g., a report binder and an appendices binder); however, catalogues, handbooks, manuals, etc., may be provided as separate documents and do not need to be part of the bound report (it's helpful if they are placed in a binder insert or pocket).
9. The application's narrative section must be in English even if a program is offered in a language other than English, or is housed in an institution in a location where English is not the official language. If any required documents contained in appendices are not in English, such as a charter or similar document that authorizes the legal operation of the institution, they must be accompanied by either an English translation of the document or an accurate summary of the document in English. Questions regarding appended documents that may require an English translation or summary should be directed to the CAC executive director.
10. Appendices shall include the relevant documentation for each standard as outlined in the CAC Eligibility Requirements Checklist.

Listed below are the 17 Eligibility Standards and the Required Information for the Narrative Section of the Eligibility Packet

1. The program is located at a legally organized educational institution that has authorization from the appropriate state or provincial agency to grant the Ayurvedic degree or designation. Note that a program in Canada is not eligible for initial accreditation by CAC unless it first obtains provincial approval for participation in government-funded student-aid programs.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ A letter, certificate or other document from a state or provincial regulatory body showing that the institution is a legally incorporated.
- ♣ A letter, certificate or other document from a state or provincial regulatory body showing that the institution is legally permitted to grant an Ayurvedic degree or designation.

2. The program is located at an institution with an advisory board that meets yearly to provide feedback to the administration about the program(s). At least two-thirds of the individuals who serve on the board must have no contractual, employment or personal financial interest in the institution or program.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ A list of the current members of the governing board, including officer title (if any), employment relationship with the institution (if any), and brief biographical information on each member.

3. The program is located at an institution that has an appropriately qualified chief executive officer (e.g., president) whose full-time or major responsibility is to the institution.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ Résumé/CV of the institution's chief executive officer.

4. The program has an appropriately qualified chief academic/administrative officer (e.g., dean)—or an appropriate academic leadership team—whose major responsibility is to the program. There are mechanisms in place to allow all appropriate constituencies within the program—including faculty, administrative staff and students—to communicate their needs and provide input to the program's leadership team.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ Résumé/CV of the program's chief administrative officer/dean (if applicable).

5. The program has a clear, concise and realistic mission statement that identifies what it intends to accomplish, and encompasses the educational preparation of Ayurvedic practitioners. The mission is accompanied by a set of programmatic goals and objectives—consistent with the mission—that address instruction and that guide the program in establishing specific measurable educational outcomes for students in the program.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ A copy of the program's mission and programmatic goals and objectives.

6. The program has an appropriately qualified and stable administrative staff sufficient in size to meet the needs of the program and achieve the program's mission.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ An organizational chart for institution showing how the program's administration fits within larger institution.
- ♣ An organizational chart for the program showing the reporting structure of the program's administrative staff.
- ♣ A list of the program's administrators, including their full-time-equivalent (FTE) status, teaching role (if any), and brief biographical information on each member.

7. Faculty members for didactic and clinical courses have appropriate education and experience for their teaching positions/responsibilities in the program.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ A grid or list of the program's faculty members, including their teaching assignments per month.
- ♣ Brief biographical information on each of faculty member.

8. The program meets the didactic clock hours and clinical hours outlined in the subject areas specified in the CAC Accreditation Standards.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ An outline of the program of study listing each course, including clock hour and credit amounts.
- ♣ An outline of academic requirements for students in the clinical portion of the program.
- ♣ Information on the program's clinical training sites.

9. The program has learning resources—including a library and supplies to achieve its mission and objectives.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ A summary of the library and information resources available to students in the program, including those resources directly related to the study of Ayurvedic medicine.

10. The program has in place—or is in the process of developing—processes for (i) evaluating each student's academic and clinical performance and achievement in relation to the program's mission and educational requirements.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ A copy of the program's documentation for evaluating academic and clinical performance.

11. Assessing overall program outcomes and effectiveness in relation to the program's mission and programmatic objectives.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ A copy of the program's academic assessment plan or a detailed description of its assessment process.

12. The program publishes and adheres to a student admission policy that clearly specifies the educational prerequisites, personal characteristics and minimum qualifications of applicants that the program considers necessary for academic and professional success.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ A copy of the program's catalog/calendar or other document that outlines admissions requirements.
- ♣ A copy of any additional materials provided to potential students containing admissions information.

13. The program has a current catalog or academic calendar and other official publications available to students and the public—in print or electronic form—that accurately set forth:

- a. Current mission and programmatic objectives
- b. Admissions requirements and procedures
- c. Transfer credit and advanced standing policies, including the criteria for accepting transfer credit
- d. Tuition, fees and refund policies
- e. Opportunities and requirements for financial aid (if applicable)
- f. Academic performance requirements
- g. Policies and procedures related to satisfactory academic progress
- h. Rules for student conduct
- i. Student disciplinary procedures
- j. Student grievance procedures
- k. Grading and attendance policies
- l. Program completion requirements
- m. Members of the administration, including their positions
- n. Professional education and qualifications of full- and part-time faculty
- o. Members of the governing board
- p. Non-discrimination policy
- q. Academic calendar
- r. Program sequence or outline
- s. Description of each major component of the academic program, including the curriculum and course descriptions for each course
- t. Description of the learning and other physical resources
- u. Sources of information on the legal requirements for licensure and entry into the profession.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ A copy of the program's catalog/calendar.
- ♣ A copy of the program's student handbook.

14. The institution in which the program is located must be financially sound, and provide resources to the program sufficient to carry out the program's mission and educational objectives in the current, short and long term. Adequate resources must be available to meet debt-service requirements of short- and long- term indebtedness without adversely impacting the quality of the program.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ A copy of the institution's budget for the current fiscal year.
- ♣ A copy of the program's budget for the current fiscal year.

15. The institution in which the program is located must provide financial statements showing a balance sheet statement, a statement of revenue and expenditures, and a report on the change in fund balance and/or financial position.

Attachments Required:

- ♣ A copy of the institution's most recent financial statements

16. The program discloses to the Council all information required by the Council to carry out its evaluation and accrediting functions.

- ♣ No documentation required

17. The program understands and agrees that the Council may, at its discretion and in accordance with its policies, make known to any agency or members of the public who may request such information the nature of any action, positive or adverse, regarding its status with the Council.

- ♣ No documentation required

III. Once Program submits the eligibility packet as required, CAC reviews all documentation and determines eligibility within 90 days of the decision. 3 decisions can occur:

- A. If the Program is accepted, they have up to 3 years to complete the self-study and get accredited
- B. If the Program is deferred they will be asked to provide additional information before the Council makes a decision on their candidacy
- C. If they are denied, the Program can re-apply in 120 days

IV. SSR (Self Study Report): If the Program demonstrates readiness, they may continue to seek candidacy status and full accreditation by submitting SSR (Self Study Report). Programs must demonstrate readiness based on 9 criteria called the STANDARDS OF ACCREDITATION and an approximate ~200 page report of how they are addressing the standards and how they will improve in the future.

Standards of Accreditation: Nine (9) Standards

- ✓ Standard One: Mission & Objectives
- ✓ Standard Two: Organization, Governance & Administration
- ✓ Standard Three: Financial Resources
- ✓ Standard Four: Program Faculty
- ✓ Standard Five: Student Services
- ✓ Standard Six: Program of Study
- ✓ Standard Seven: Evaluation & Assessment
- ✓ Standard Eight: Library & Learning Resources
- ✓ Standard Nine: Physical Resources

V. Evaluation Site Visit: Facilities and documents are validated.
Once a Program receives Candidacy Status, the site visit can be scheduled

- Must be scheduled at least 6 months to 1 year in advance of the visit
- The Program is responsible for the costs of the visit
- The visit can last 1 to 4 days (Depending on the Program's size)
- A team of up to 5 professionals (Depending on the Program's size) will review the campus, documents, curriculum, students and faculty
- Team will be comprised of at least one of the following (not all): Educator, Practitioner, Administrator, CAC Committee Member and/or a Non-CAC Committee Member
- Within 9 weeks, the program receives commentary on the program and is allowed to make corrections

Final decision is made on 9 weeks after the response. A draft is sent to the program and factual errors may be corrected within 15 days. A public comment period is open for 21 days. Within 10 business days after the hearing the Council mails written notification to the program.

CAC ACCREDITATION PROCESS AT A GLANCE:

1. Applications:
 - Initial Application
 - Eligibility Application
2. Candidacy Status: Demonstrates the commitment and readiness of the program to undergo the extensive accreditation process
3. Institution Works on SSR (Self Study Report)
4. Evaluation Site Visit: Facilities and documents are validated
5. Decision of granting accreditation will be made after 90 days from the visit