ACCREDITATION COMMISSION FOR MIDWIFERY EDUCATION

Orientation Training Module
for
BOARD OF REVIEW MEMBERS

I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Board of Review (BOR)!   Your work on the BOR is important to the continuation of high quality midwifery education and is a service to the profession. In recognition of that service, you can receive CEUs (see Section V.) accepted by AMCB toward maintenance of your certification.

A. Purpose of accreditation and the BOR

1. Higher education accreditation in the United States
    Although ACME is a specialized programmatic accrediting agency, it is important to understand how the work we do fits into the overall picture of higher education accreditation in this country. Unlike in some countries where the government controls the quality of higher education, in the U.S. this is a peer review process. In recent years there has been some suggestion that government should take over this process in this country as well, but so far this has been resisted by the higher education community.

    The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) is a non-profit association of 3000 degree-granting colleges and universities that is a national advocate in the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Dept. of Education for self-regulation of academic quality through accreditation. CHEA has its own process for recognizing institutional and programmatic accrediting agencies.   ACME has not applied for such recognition because of the cost. However, CHEA has a number of resources that are available to accrediting organizations, whether they are CHEA-recognized or not. Please go to www.chea.org, click on "Research and Publications," and read the article titled, "An Overview of U.S. Accreditation (2011)." This will give you a good understanding of the big picture in accreditation and how ACME fits into that. While you are on their website, you might want to browse through their other publications to see if there are others of interest to you.

2. The Board of Review
    Accreditation of programs that provide midwifery education is an effective peer review process for assuring the public that standards of excellence in midwifery education are implemented, maintained and advanced. The BOR is the body responsible for the evaluation of nurse-midwifery/midwifery education programs to determine whether pre/accreditation criteria have been met, for the purpose of granting pre/accreditation status. In addition, the BOR participates in the annual ongoing monitoring of pre/accredited programs to assure continued quality assessment, and takes action as appropriate. The BOR is committed to the consistent application and enforcement of ACME criteria.

B. Confidentiality and conflict of interest

BOR members must maintain the confidentiality of the review process at all times, and avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest. All information gained through the process of accreditation is confidential. Acceptance of the appointment to serve on the BOR constitutes an agreement to assure confidentiality of observations, conferences and reports. At no time may persons or agencies be identified in subsequent reports or research. The files of the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education and the BOR may be used only at the discretion of the BOC of the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education. See the ACME *Policies and Procedures Manual* for details.

II. Important documents for the work of the BOR

A. Essential documents (Consult the ACME web pages for latest editions)

- *ACME Policies and Procedures Manual*

- *Criteria for Programmatic Preaccreditation of Midwifery Education Programs with Instructions for Elaboration and Documentation*

- *Criteria for Programmatic Accreditation of Midwifery Education Programs with Instructions for Elaboration and Documentation*

- ACNM *Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice*

B. Other useful documents for reference

- *The Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviors Prerequisite to Midwifery Clinical Coursework*

- *Philosophy of the American College of Nurse-Midwives*

- ACNM *Standards for the Practice of Midwifery*

- ACNM *Position Statement on Midwifery Education*

- ACNM *Code of Ethics*

- ACNM *The Practice Doctorate in Midwifery*

BOR members should become familiar with these documents, especially the essential documents. They may be downloaded from the ACNM and ACME web pages. If you want a hard copy of any documents, please consult the ACME Administrative Assistant.

III. Meetings

A. The BOR meets twice yearly, in February and July. Each meeting is usually two days, not including travel time. Planning for meetings will be done by the BOR at the close

of the previous meeting. BOR members should anticipate approximately one to six programs being reviewed per meeting, excluding progress reports and other materials. Business will be conducted by electronic correspondence and telephone conference calls as much as possible according to established procedures.

A quorum will consist of a simple majority. The Chair of the BOC is not considered a voting member of the BOR

B. Review process

1. Preparation for meetings

   a. Prior to each in-person or conference call meeting, the Chair of the BOR appoints two people, a first and a second reader, to each program undergoing review to assess the program in depth and facilitate presentation at the meeting. The BOR Chair will also appoint reviewers for other agenda items, such as programmatic change reviews. These BOR members are appointed as far as possible in advance of the meeting, and this process rotates among members.

   b. After the site visit is completed and the Site Visitors Report (SVR) and any additional materials sent in by the program within seven days are received, for each program under review, all members of the BOR are sent electronic copies of:

      o The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) or Pre-Accreditation Report (PAR);
      o The SVR;
      o Any additional documentation submitted with the SVR, accompanied by a list of such documentation that designates the relevant criterion for each document;
      o Any additional documentation submitted by the program within 7 days after the site visit, accompanied by a list generated by the program that designates the relevant criterion for each document;
      o A copy of the accreditation letter from the previous review that delineates any Mandatory Progress Reports required at that time.
      o If BOR members want hard copies of any documents, they should consult the ACME Administrative Assistant.

   c. All materials submitted by a program are considered to be the property of ACME, therefore reviewers may make notes on any documents that would be helpful to them in the review process.

   d. Using the BOR Review Worksheet, the first and second readers assigned to a particular program review will evaluate all materials, doing a detailed assessment of each criterion, and will make a decision about whether the criterion has been met or not met. Evidence that was used to support this decision should be listed on the Worksheet. A bulleted format may be used for the listing of evidence for each criterion. (See sample Worksheet, Appendix A) In case a criterion is judged as not met, any additional evidence that will be necessary to document that the criterion is met should also be listed on the Worksheet.

e. The first and second readers will do this review independently and in adherence to the BOR review timeline (See Appendix B.)

f. After the first and second readers complete their independent reviews, they should confer to see whether they agree on the criteria that have been met or not met. For each criterion not met, they should determine what additional evidence is needed to verify that the criterion is met.

g. At this point, the first and second readers should merge their Worksheets to create one cohesive report. If they disagree on whether a particular criterion is met, each should give their rationale on the joint Worksheet. The second reader is responsible for compiling the joint Worksheet. At any time, they may consult the BOR Chair with questions that arise.

h. After the first and second readers have completed their work (ideally at least four weeks before the scheduled BOR meeting), they should consult the BOR Chair about any criteria not met and the additional evidence that is needed in order to enable the BOR to make a decision.

i. The BOR Chair will review the BOR Review Worksheet, the SER, SVR and any other relevant information, will make a judgment about the type and amount of missing or unclear information, and will draft a letter to be emailed to either the program director, appropriate institutional representative or the senior site visitor for clarification, with the details of what additional information is needed. Each request for additional information will be referenced to the relevant criterion. The letter will be reviewed by the first and second readers before it is sent to see if they concur with what is being requested.

j. At the time that the letter requesting additional information is sent to the Program Director, it will also be sent to all BOR members and the site visitors for that program, to promote the site visitors' continuing quality improvement. After seeing the questions in the letter, if a Site Visitor has additional information, it should be immediately submitted in writing to the BOR Chair.

k. If BOR Chair contacts the senior site visitor to clarify any information, the Chair should submit a written summary of the discussion to the first and second readers within two days. This summary should be listed on the comprehensive listing of additional materials that is maintained by the Administrative Assistant.

l. Contacts to program directors or appropriate institutional representatives to elicit additional information are to be made at least two weeks prior to the BOR meeting date, and two copies of all information must be submitted to the BOR Chair via the ACME Administrative Assistant at the National Office by the program directors or institutional representatives no later than one week before the first day of the BOR meeting. All information received should be sent to all BOR members by the ACME Administrative Assistant as soon as it is received. A listing of any additional information received should be added to the cumulative list of all additional materials that have been submitted.

m. The combined BOR Review Worksheet developed by the first and second readers will be sent electronically to all BOR members when the additional information is received from the program and has been incorporated into the review. The cumulative list of additional materials that have been submitted throughout the review process will be sent along with the combined Worksheet.

n. The BOR members not assigned as first or second readers should read all the relevant documents and decide whether there is sufficient evidence to determine if criteria have been met. They should use the BOR Review Worksheet in this process, but do not need to make all the detailed notes that the first and second readers must do. Each member of the BOR is to then formulate an opinion regarding ACME action. All questions and recommendations the member may have should be listed on the Worksheet in preparation for the meeting of the BOR.

o. The first reader should prepare an electronic draft of a letter, in the standard format, for all parts except the BOR decision. The draft should be addressed to the appropriate individuals to be notified. This draft is to be brought to the meeting in order to facilitate the process of writing the final letter.

p. The second reader is responsible for bringing the combined BOR Review Worksheet developed by the first and second readers to the BOR meeting to be used to facilitate the discussion.

q. An agenda will be sent to all members before each meeting. The agenda will begin with a review of the confidentiality statement, then approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, a report from the ACME Chair, the list of programs to be reviewed beginning with programs seeking preaccreditation and then accreditation and the first and second readers for each, and the programs that have submitted Mandatory Progress Reports to the Board. Other agenda items such as programmatic change reports will be added to the agenda as appropriate. The meeting usually concludes with evaluation and selection of the dates for the next meeting.

2. Conduct of meetings (in-person or teleconference)

a. At the meeting, the first reader will present the program review, using the combined Worksheet, naming each criterion and citing evidence to document that the criterion has been met. Any member may, and should, introduce criteria- based questions in regard to the program under review. All members of the BOR should participate in this discussion.

b. As each criterion is addressed, the BOR will confirm or modify the evidence that has been listed and the comments on the combined Worksheet from the first and second readers. Additional comments such as non-binding recommendations may be added as agreed upon. A final draft of the Worksheet will be approved at the end of the discussion. The second reader is responsible for compiling the final approved Worksheet and ensuring that the content is congruent with BOR decisions.

c. In any case where the first and second reviewers have not been able to determine with the evidence that has been presented that a criterion has been met, after a

thorough discussion, all BOR members will be asked whether they agree with this decision. Criteria not met will need to be addressed in a Mandatory Progress Report by the program.

d. The second reader usually takes notes of decisions and/or questions on those criteria about which there is BOR concern as well as adding comments for discussion. The notes taken by the second reader are the basis for summative discussion and action of the BOR. Detailed notes also are taken during this process by the BOR Chair in support of the second reader.

e. At the end of the review, the first reader makes a recommendation regarding the accreditation action to be taken. Action will be taken on consensus of BOR members after a full discussion. If a consensus cannot be reached, action will be taken on the basis of a simple majority vote of members present.

f. For each program considered, the review concludes with creating a final draft of the letter to the program and the institution with which the program is affiliated describing the pre/accreditation actions.   The final approved Worksheet will be appended to the letter to provide detailed feedback to the program.

C. Electronic Meetings

1. Regular meetings
Regular semi-annual meetings of the BOR may be conducted electronically at the discretion of the BOR Chair. All procedures outlined above apply to electronic as well as in-person meetings.

2. Ad hoc meetings
BOR members are expected to participate in ad hoc conference calls as the need arises. The need for conference calls is determined by the BOR Chair. An agenda will be sent to BOR members prior to the conference call. In the case of a full program review, all of the process outlined above will be followed for the review.
For other business such as programmatic change reviews, the Chair of the BOR will designate the person to present the review and to draft the letter to the program.
The decision of the BOR will be reported to the program director and appropriate institutional representative(s) within five working days. The program director will be informed of this timeline before the meeting is held.

D. Outcomes of the review process
Please review the possible actions that the BOR can take in the ACME *Policies and Procedures Manual*, IV.E. The actions listed are the only ones the BOR is authorized to take.

IV. Distance education

A. Review of programs using distance technology

Programs are required to meet all accreditation criteria regardless of the methodology used to deliver the curriculum. While it is the program's responsibility to document that *all* criteria are met, when reviewing distance education programs, BOR reviewers should pay particular attention to the following criteria:

II.B.3. Have preparation for teaching commensurate with the teaching assignment, e.g. didactic classroom, mixed medium and distance delivery and/or clinical teaching.

III. D. Upon entering the program, students have access to and are informed of support services designed to meet their needs in order to promote their retention and progression through the program.

III. E.2. Students are apprised of their progress on an ongoing basis.

III. F. Student rights and responsibilities consistent with institution policy are available in written form, and students are notified where the policies may be found. This includes:
- *F.1.   Opportunities for student involvement in development and implementation of midwifery program policies.*
- *F.2.   Opportunities to participate or have input into the representation on councils or committees of the institution or academic unit.*
- *F.4.   Access to resources and opportunities is equivalent regardless of student location and teaching modalities.*

IV.E. 4. The program ensures that graduates will have achieved competence.
- *E. 4.a. The program provides students with the necessary clinical experiences to achieve the objectives/ outcomes of the program.*

IV.E.5. The program implements established policies and procedures to verify student identity for academic work, including that conducted by electronic or distance technologies.

IV.F. Regular communication occurs among and between faculty and students during implementation of the curriculum.

VI.A.4. The assessment process includes periodic evaluation of clinical education. Clinical evaluation will include:
- *A.4.a. Initial and periodic evaluation of the ability and effectiveness of clinical sites to meet student learning needs.*

B. Statement on Distance Education
ACME has endorsed the Statement on Distance Education Policies developed by the Alliance for Nursing Accreditation, March 2002. Please refer to Appendix A in the ACME *Policies and Procedures Manual* to review these policies.

C. CHEA Findings on Specialized Accreditation and Distance Education
The Council on Higher Education Accreditation, in its monograph, *Specialized Accreditation and Assuring Quality in Distance Learning* (Feb., 2003), summarized its findings of a review of specialized accrediting agencies:
 "Whatever the particular format an accrediting organization chooses for these policies and procedures, the thrust is to require programs engaged in distance learning to have a well-defined rationale for distance learning that is consistent with the mission, goals, and objectives of the program and of the institution offering the program; adequate

instructional and technological support for the faculty and students engaged in distance learning; adequate resources for distance learning; an adequate review program for the distance learning component; and student outcomes that are comparable to those in the campus-based program."

V.   Meeting logistics, reimbursement policies, and CEU procedure

A. Meeting logistics
The BOR has 2 regularly scheduled program reviews periods, in February and July of each year. Generally speaking, 3 or fewer program reviews are conducted by teleconference; 4 or more scheduled reviews are conducted at a face-to-face meeting, usually at the ACME office in Silver Spring, MD. Meetings are generally up to 2 days in length.

The time and date are determined 3-4 months before the scheduled review, accommodating as many member schedules as possible. Meetings are usually held the last half of February and July. Meetings are generally scheduled to accommodate members arriving on the morning of a meeting, and departing after the meeting's afternoon conclusion on the second day.
If it is to be an in-person meeting, the ACME Administrative Assistant sends hotel booking information and expense forms to be submitted with original receipts. Members will be reimbursed for single rooms or may choose to share. BOR members are responsible for making their own travel arrangements. Members may submit an expense form with receipts for any travel booked and paid for before the meeting, and submit another for expenses incurred at the meeting and in the return home.

B. Reimbursement policies

1. Travel expenses: Defined as transportation (plane, bus, car, taxi, etc.).
    Air travel is reimbursed at coach class, advance purchase rate including luggage fees (excluding overweight fees). Tickets that cost more than $500 must be approved in advance by the Chair. Mileage is reimbursed at the current Federal rate not to exceed advance airfare. Parking is reimbursed. Members are encouraged to use the least expensive fare possible and should be prepared to pay for expenses associated with late purchase or avoidable last minute changes in travel plans.

2. Per Diem: $40 per day is allowed to help offset the cost of food. In circumstances where a meal is provided for the group, the per diem will be reduced, whether the individual consumes the meal or not, according to the following schedule:
    minus $ 7.00 if breakfast is provided
    minus $ 13.00 if lunch is provided
    minus $ 20.00 if dinner is provided

3.   Hotel costs: Each person will be reimbursed for her/his room at the ACME   rate.
    An additional hotel stay will be reimbursed if this results in savings on airfare that exceeds the room and per diem cost.

4. The ACME Chair approves and signs expense reports for ACME members.

C. CEU Procedure

AMCB recognizes (April 2011) the work done by midwives on ACNM and ACME committees. Participation in ACME may qualify you for a maximum of 10 contact hours (1.0 CEU) of continuing education in a 5 year CMP cycle. At the request of the BOR member, a letter of verification from the BOR chair with dates of service and hours of participation will be sent to AMCB. Such verification for the BOR Chair will be signed by the ACME Chair. The number of qualifying hours will be at the discretion of the BOR or ACME Chair.

Appendix A Sample BOR Review Worksheet format

Board of Review Worksheet for Programmatic Review
Criteria for Programmatic Accreditation
December 2009 (Revised June 2010, November 2010, January 2013)

Program _____

Preaccreditation _____ Initial Accreditation_____ Re-Accreditation_____ Programmatic Change review _____

Date of Review (BOR meeting_____

ACME Program Accreditation Criterion I: Organization and Administration

Criterion I: Organization and Administration	Instructions for Elaboration in the SER	Criterion Met		Evidence to Support Criterion Met OR Additional Evidence that is Required	Additional Comments or Recommendations
		Yes	**No**		
A. This SER is an in-depth self-study written by a member/s of the midwifery program faculty with opportunity for input by students, faculty and administrators.	A. Describe who wrote and reviewed the SER.	X		• SVR of interviews with PD, faculty and administrators, and students	Very well-written report.
B. The midwifery program provides	B. List the constituencies		X	• SER does not adequately describe relevant constituencies	Ask PD to submit documentation that third party

opportunity to its relevant constituents for third party comment in relation to the accreditation criteria at least two months prior to the scheduled site visit.	the program plans to notify regarding opportunity for third party comments on the accreditation criteria. Third party comments should be sent directly to ACME.			• SVs were not able to document in Exhibits that third party comments were solicited	comment had been solicited.
C. The midwifery program resides within or is affiliated with an institution that is currently accredited by ACME or by another agency recognized by the United States Department of Education, or it meets ACME's policy requirements for institutions based outside the United States (see Appendix B).	C. "Resides within" can be documented through evidence found in academic unit publications; "affiliated with" must be documented with a copy of the affiliation agreement. Describe the relationship of the program to the accredited institution. Name the institutional accrediting body. If the midwifery program resides	X		• Riverside University accreditation by XXXX regional accrediting agency found on p. 3 of the Riverside University Catalog • SVs viewed accreditation letter from XXX regional accrediting agency • CCNE accreditation listed on p. 4 of Riverside School of Nursing Bulletin • SVs viewed accreditation letter from CCNE	

	within or is affiliated with an institution based outside the United States, describe the relationship between the program and the international institution.				
C.1. There is evidence of commitment to the midwifery program from key administrators in the institution and academic unit.	1. Describe the support of these key administrators with concrete examples for both the institution and the academic unit (if different).	X		• Strong letters of support from the dean of the school of nursing and the provost • SV interviews verified support • Dean verified that the program would continue even without grant support	Strong administrative support is an asset to the program

Appendix B. Review timeline

<u>**BOR Review Timeline***</u>
<u>**For First and Second Readers**</u>

Regarding Preaccreditation, Accreditation, Reaccreditation,
and Programmatic Change Reviews

Note: ACME Policies mandate that all site visits be scheduled to conclude at least 10 weeks before the February and July meetings, Dec. 1 for February reviews and May 1 for July reviews. If site visits are completed sooner, the following timetable should be moved up accordingly.

FOR REVIEWS REQUIRING A PAR/SER:
- *No later than 10 weeks before BOR Meeting:*
  Receive packet of documents for assigned review:
    - ✓ The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) or Pre-Accreditation Report (PAR);
    - ✓ The SVR;
    - ✓ Any additional documentation submitted with the SVR, accompanied by a list of such documentation that designates the relevant criterion for each document;
    - ✓ Any additional documentation submitted by the program within 7 days after the site visit, accompanied by a list generated by the program that designates the relevant criterion for each document;
    - ✓ A copy of the accreditation letter from the previous review that delineates any Mandatory Progress Reports required at that time.
    - ✓ Additional materials such as school catalogues may be sent to the first and second readers.
- First and Second Readers independently review documents and complete the BOR Review Worksheet.
- *No later than 6 weeks before BOR Meeting:*
  First and Second Readers meet by phone to discuss submission and identify criteria that are not met and any other questions about the submission. They merge their Worksheets to create one combined Worksheet (Second Reader responsible for this.)
- First Reader identifies on the combined Worksheet any criteria with questions/concerns and additional information that the First and Second Readers think is required, and sends it to BOR Chair.
- *No later than 5 weeks before BOR Meeting:*
  First Reader and BOR Chair meet by phone or email to discuss criteria in question and determine what additional material is needed and whether this information should be obtained from the Site Visitors or the Program Director.
- BOR Chair drafts letter to Program Director and emails to First and Second Readers to see if they concur with what is being asked.
- *No later than 4 weeks before BOR meeting:*
  BOR Chair sends letter to program requesting additional information and/or calls or writes Senior Site Visitor to request additional information. The deadline for the program to

submit additional information is 2 weeks before the BOR meeting. Any information received in a phone call should be summarized in writing by the BOR Chair and sent to First and Second Readers.

- At the same time the letter is sent to the program for additional information, the ACME Administrative Assistant also sends it to all BOR members and the Site Visitors.
- *Two weeks before BOR Meeting:*
  Readers review additional material and discuss by phone or email whether that material is sufficient to verify the criterion/criteria in question. The information and decision are summarized on the combined Worksheet.
- First Reader discusses decision with BOR Chair and drafts letter to the program that reflects their recommendation.
- *At least one week before the BOR Meeting*:
  Combined Worksheet and draft letter are sent to the ACME Administrative Assistant to be included in program materials displayed at meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE A SER/PAR

- *Not later than 10 weeks before BOR Meeting:*
  The BOR Chair reviews request, identifies issue(s) and relevant policy, and assigns reader(s). All necessary information is sent to the assigned reader(s).
- *Not later than 8 weeks before the BOR Meeting:*
  If there is a Second Reader, the two Readers meet by phone or email to discuss the issue(s) and whether additional documentation is needed.
- *No later than 6 weeks before the BOR Meeting:*
  First Reader and BOR Chair meet by phone or email to discuss the Reader's evaluation of the issue, whether additional information is needed and whether information is to be requested before BOR meeting.
- *At least 4 weeks before the BOR Meeting:*
  If information is needed before the meeting, BOR Chair writes letter to program with that request with a deadline of 2 weeks before the meeting, and sends a copy of the letter to the Reader(s).
- *Two weeks before the meeting*:
  Reader(s) review additional information before meeting. If there are two Readers, meet by phone or email to discuss evaluation.
  First Reader and BOR Chair meet by phone or email to discuss completeness of additional information and what is to be presented at the meeting.
  One week before the meeting:
- First Reader prepares electronic file of information necessary to present the agenda item at the BOR meeting and writes a draft of letter to the program. These files are sent to the ACME Administrative Assistant to be included in program materials displayed at meeting.

*Adapted from Checklist developed by T. Booth