

PRE-ACCREDITATION PROCESS

What is Pre-Accreditation and the Pre-Accreditation Process?

- Pre-accreditation is a non-accredited affiliation with ACCPAP indicating that a physiotherapy education program is preparing for accreditation.
- The Process offers developing physiotherapy education programs the opportunity to establish a formal, publicly recognized relationship with ACCPAP, and to become familiar with the ACCPAP accreditation standards and processes.

Why Should a Program Participate in the Pre-Accreditation Process?

Participation in the Pre-Accreditation Process:

- Provides an opportunity for developing programs to work with ACCPAP and ensure that the accreditation standards are fully understood and are used as benchmarks for the planning, development, and implementation of the new program.
- Gives stakeholders some assurance that a new program is being developed with some formal approval/recognition.
- Facilitates the development of a physiotherapist education program with resources (e.g., leadership, faculty, clinical education sites, and budget) in accordance with the national accreditation standards and evaluation process.

What are the Minimum Criteria Required for a Program to Apply for Accreditation?

- The professional entry-level degree is granted by a university.
- By 2012 the professional entry-level program is at the master's level.
- The education program is within a university that offers other health professional programs.

Key Principles of the Pre-Accreditation Process

- Participation in the pre-accreditation process is highly recommended for a developing program wishing to enter the accreditation process.
- Initiation of the pre-accreditation process does not assure attainment of accreditation status from ACCPAP
- Failure to participate in the pre-accreditation process may result in a protracted accreditation process and/or may impact on the ability of the program to achieve accreditation status.
- The pre-accreditation process is streamlined and is not intended to burden a program with duplication of the work and material required for government and/or university approval processes.

Operational principles

- The Pre-Accreditation Process is initiated through a letter of intent from the developing program in the early stages of planning.
- When the education program submits its letter of intent to participate in the process along with the Preliminary Report, ACCPAP will invoice the program for the annual fee related to administration of the process.
- Expenses related to the Pre-Accreditation Process, i.e., preparation of the Preliminary Report or the on-site visit by an advisor, are the responsibility of the education program.

- A program in the pre-accreditation phase must use the following language to describe the program's status in the accreditation process:

“The (Name of program/institution) is seeking accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Canadian Physiotherapy Academic Programs (ACCPAP). The program has submitted a letter of intent to participate in the pre-accreditation process. The pre-accreditation process denotes an affiliation with ACCPAP and indicates that the education program is considering accreditation standards in its planning stages. Submission of the letter of intent and participation in the pre-accreditation process does not assure that the program will be granted accreditation status when the final program is implemented.”

- At the end of the pre-accreditation process, if a program does not submit a letter of intent to ACCPAP to participate in a full accreditation review, ACCPAP will withdraw its affiliation with the program.

Schedule for Pre-Accreditation Process Activities

Pre-Accreditation Activity	Timeline for Completion	Lead Responsibility
Submit letter of intent and fee to participate in Pre-Accreditation Process	As soon as planning process is started	University administration
-Provide program/university with ACCPAP Accreditation Manual including standards -Forward list of potential advisors to program ¹	Following receipt of letter of intent	ACCPAP
Submit Preliminary Report to ACCPAP	Once program approval received from government / university and ideally prior to admission of the first cohort of students	University administration or program
Review Preliminary Report and provide feedback to program	Within three months of receiving report	ACCPAP
Contact advisor and confirm plans for Preliminary Review Visit	Within two months of receiving feedback from ACCPAP	Program
Conduct Preliminary Review Visit	Within two months of being contacted by program	Advisor
Submit report to ACCPAP	Within two weeks of the review	Advisor
Review report, revise as necessary, and forward to program	Within two weeks after receipt of report	ACCPAP
Respond to recommendations from Preliminary Review Visit	Prior to submitting letter of intent to participate in accreditation review	Program
Submit letter of intent to ACCPAP to participate in full accreditation review	18 months prior to graduation of first class of students	Program

¹ Potential Advisors could include previously appointed Peer Review Team members and Council members. Advisors who would have a direct relationship with the program and who would act in the capacity of a consultant about the ACCPAP accreditation process and standards, would not be involved in decision-making about the program's accreditation status.

Details of the Pre-Accreditation Process Activities

Purpose of Preliminary Review

The primary purpose of the Preliminary Review is to provide feedback to the program about its progress toward achieving compliance with the evaluative criteria. This will be accomplished by focussing on:

- The overall curriculum plan, including the conceptual foundation for the curriculum and the related educational principles and values;
- Student learning outcomes and course outlines for the entire program; with detailed information for the first year of the program; and
- Evidence that the program will use to demonstrate compliance with the evaluative criteria

While it is not expected that the education program would demonstrate evidence for all of the accreditation evaluative criteria, it is expected that plans should be in place to accomplish this before the first cohort of student graduates.

Processes for the Preliminary Review

- i) The program will submit a Preliminary Report in a narrative format (a hard copy and an electronic version) that addresses each of the evaluative criteria separately. In addition, the Report should include the following documentation:
 - Government/university approval documents
 - Evidence that the university is an institution with degree granting authority.
 - Evidence that the program has employed a program administrator/director who meets the accreditation criteria related to qualifications.
 - Evidence of faculty appointments.
- ii) An ACCPAP reviewer or reviewers will be appointed, in consultation with the program, to conduct an on-site review of the program; the review should be scheduled over a one to two day period. These reviewers would not be appointed as a Peer Review Team member to participate in the first full accreditation review of the program.
- iii) After the on-site review, the reviewer(s) will provide feedback to ACCPAP and the program in a written report that will outline the strengths, issues, weaknesses, and deficiencies that are apparent at the stage of the program's development. The reviewer(s) will also include possible suggestions for the enhancement and development of program resources as they relate to the evaluative criteria. The reviewer may also provide a verbal report to the program.

Decision-Making

The Report of the Preliminary Review will be considered by the ACCPAP Council. While no judgment of the likelihood of accreditation will be made, one of the following decisions will be taken:

- a) Satisfactory progress towards compliance; or
- b) Areas require further development; or
- c) Due to insufficient information, the Council is unable to determine if satisfactory progress has been made toward compliance and further follow-up will be required.

Letter of Intent to Participate in Pre-Accreditation Process

This is to acknowledge that the _____
(Name of University)

is in the process of developing a new physiotherapy entry-level education program and intends to initiate the ACCPAP Pre-Accreditation Process.

It is understood that ACCPAP Pre-Accreditation is a non-accredited affiliation with ACCPAP indicating that the physiotherapy education program is preparing for accreditation. Initiation of the pre-accreditation process does not assure attainment of accreditation status from ACCPAP.

Signed:

Dean of Faculty

(Name)

(Signature)

(Date)