



# Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education International Services Program

## Application for Certification: Summary of the Steps and Associated Documentation

The following guidance is intended to provide an easy-to-follow summary of the key steps in the process of application for Certification. Applicants, however, should also refer to the Certification Policies and Procedures, especially paragraphs 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3.

The following steps will take place in accordance with application/submission deadlines, where applicable, and the timeline mutually agreed between the school and ACPE. A timeline appropriate to an application can be requested by sending an email to [international@acpe-accredit.org](mailto:international@acpe-accredit.org).

- 1) School of pharmacy or university submits a Letter of Intent (LOI). The LOI is a formal, although non-binding (without obligation), indication from the school of pharmacy and/or university of their intention to apply for ACPE certification of a degree program(s) in pharmacy. It is not the official application; this comes later by submission of an Invitation to Evaluate and the school's self-study report, and payment of the appropriate fee. A LOI, however, formally starts the process of applying for certification.

The letter should be on the letterhead of the school or university and signed by duly authorized officers of the school and university, such as the Dean and Chancellor, President, Rector, etc. An electronic version (PDF) emailed to ACPE is acceptable.

The LOI should include the following:

- A statement indicating the school/university's intent to apply for Certification of their degree program(s) in pharmacy; the name(s) of the degree(s) should be specified in full
- A statement indicating that appropriate officials from the school/university have read and understood the process, requirements, and fees associated with an application for Certification
- The school/university's best estimate of the likely/requested dates<sup>1</sup> (month and year) for:
  - the required Pre-Application Consultation with ACPE
  - initiation and completion of the school's self-study
  - submission of an Invitation to Evaluate
  - the on-site evaluation

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the timelines (Gantt charts) that are developed by ACPE for this purpose; they are available on request from [international@acpe-accredit.org](mailto:international@acpe-accredit.org)

With the LOI, a number of supporting documents (listed below) need to be submitted to ACPE, primarily to confirm that the school, university, and degree program meet the Eligibility Criteria that are specified in ACPE's Certification Policies and Procedures (Section 6):

- i. History of University and School of Pharmacy: 2 – 3 pages providing a brief summary of:
  - *History and overview of the university* (date of establishment, public/private, mission statement, number of faculties/colleges, number of undergraduate and graduate students, organizational chart showing the school/college of pharmacy, and brief description of the organizational structure)
  - *History of the school of pharmacy* (date of establishment, mission statement, year of first students enrolled, year of first graduates of the professional degree program(s) for which Certification is being applied, number/nature and diversity of students currently enrolled, organizational structure and governance, departmental structure, degree(s) offered, curricular structure and philosophy of the degree program(s), brief description of the campus facilities, summary of academic and support staff, research focus of the school/college, community and national engagement(s), strategic plan (in English, if available), and any other noteworthy or unique aspects of your program)
- ii. School of Pharmacy Overview ([use ACPE template provided on website](#))
- iii. School of Pharmacy Administrative Information ([use ACPE template provided on website](#))
- iv. Documentation providing evidence that the school of pharmacy and/or university are authorized (by the appropriate national/state/provincial authority) to award the degree(s) for which Certification is being applied
- v. A description (1 - 3 pages) of all accreditations that apply to the school of pharmacy and university (voluntary or mandatory). As applicable, documentary evidence of current accreditation status or evidence of application for accreditation must be provided. If there is no accreditation system applicable to the school of pharmacy and university, the document should describe any external (to the university) system of quality assurance. Any notable conditions of or required actions by the accreditation/quality assurance body should be noted, and the action being taken by the school and/or university to address such issues should be included in the document.
  - The school of pharmacy is required to consult with ACPE prior to the submission of the LOI as there may be additional requirements for the school and/or country.

Use the following checklist to guide you when submitting the LOI and additional documents requested:

<b>Letter of Intent: Checklist</b>	
Item #	Item Name/Description
<b>1)</b>	<b>Letter of Intent (LOI) - (1 page, English only)</b>
a.	The LOI is on the official letterhead of the school or university
b.	The LOI is signed by duly authorized officers of the school and university (such as Dean and Chancellor, President, Rector, etc.)
c.	The LOI includes a statement indicating the school/university's intent to apply for Certification of their degree program(s) in pharmacy and the name(s) of the degree(s) should be specified in full
d.	The LOI states that appropriate officials from the school/university have read and understood the process, requirements, and fees associated with an application for Certification
e.	The LOI provides the school/university's best estimate of the likely/requested dates (month and year) for:
	i. the required Pre-Application Consultation with ACPE
	ii. initiation and completion of the school's self-study
	iii. submission of an Invitation to Evaluate
	iv. the on-site evaluation

<b>2)</b>	<b>History of University and School of Pharmacy (2-3 pages, English only)</b>
a.	History and Overview of the University (1-2 pages)
i	Year of establishment
ii	Public/private
iii	Mission statement of university
iv	Faculties and colleges
v	Number of undergraduate and graduate students
vi	Organizational chart of the university, showing the school of pharmacy
vii	Brief description of the organizational structure of the university
b.	History of the School of Pharmacy (1-2 pages)
i	Year of establishment
ii	Mission statement of school of pharmacy
iii	Year of first students enrolled
iv	Year of first graduates of the professional degree program(s) for which Certification is being applied
v	Organizational structure and governance of the school of pharmacy
vi	Departmental structure of the school of pharmacy
vii	Degree(s) offered by the school of pharmacy
viii	Curricular structure and philosophy of the professional degree program(s)
ix	Brief description of campus facilities at the school of pharmacy
x	Number of students enrolled in the professional degree program(s)
xi	Nature/diversity of the students enrolled
xii	Brief summary of academic and support staff
xiii	Research focus of school of pharmacy; community and national engagement
xiv	Strategic Plan (If available, provide the Strategic Plan in English. Otherwise, a ± two-page executive summary in English should be provided in addition to the original document in the national language.)
xv	Any other innovative, noteworthy or unique aspects of your program, school, and university that may provide additional interesting information and provide context for the evaluation
<b>3)</b>	<b>School of Pharmacy Overview</b> (use ACPE template)
<b>4)</b>	<b>School of Pharmacy Administrative Information</b> (use ACPE template)
<b>5)</b>	<b>Documentation providing evidence that the school of pharmacy and/or university are authorized (by the appropriate national/state/provincial authority) to award the degree(s) for which Certification is being applied</b>
<b>6)</b>	<b>A description (1 - 3 pages) of all accreditations that apply to the school of pharmacy and university (voluntary or mandatory). As applicable, documentary evidence of current accreditation status or evidence of application for accreditation must be provided. If there is no accreditation system applicable to the school of pharmacy and university, the document should describe any external (to the university) system of quality assurance. Any notable conditions of or required actions by the accreditation/quality assurance body should be noted, and the action being taken by the school and/or university to address such issues should be included in the document.</b>
a.	Confirm with ACPE whether country-specific requirements are met. For schools located in Saudi Arabia, e-mail Silvi Kastrati, <a href="mailto:skastrati@acpe-accredit.org">skastrati@acpe-accredit.org</a> , for further information.

2) ACPE staff review materials submitted by the school to ensure all Eligibility Criteria are met.

- i. If it appears that the Eligibility Criteria are met, ACPE advises the school that the school, university, and program appear to meet all Eligibility Criteria, and that the application for Certification can move forward.

- ii. If documentation is unclear or missing, ACPE will request additional evidence and/or documentation to be submitted.

Note: The members of the on-site evaluation team will review documentation on-site to confirm that the Eligibility Criteria are met. If it is determined that the school, university, or program do not meet the Eligibility Criteria, ACPE will take the appropriate action.

- 3) ACPE and school set a date and format/venue for the required Pre-Application Consultation (refer to Certification Policies and Procedures paragraph 10.2).
- 4) ACPE provides Pre-Application Consultation (this is ideally provided prior to the start of the self-study, or very early in the process).
- 5) ACPE and school mutually agree on the date for the formal submission of the application (Invitation to Evaluate, Self-Study Report (SSR), and Application Fee) and the proposed dates for the on-site evaluation visit if authorized by the Board.
- 6) School initiates its self-study. A template for the Self Study Report (SSR) (self-assessment instrument) and the list of documentation and data that must be submitted with the SSR are available at <https://www.acpe-accredit.org/international-services-program/#tab-ApplicationforCertification>.
- 7) ACPE and the school initiate discussions and planning for the logistical arrangements for the proposed on-site evaluation visit (identification of members of the on-site evaluation team, travel plans, visa requirements, etc.) and confirm the detailed timeline for the remaining steps in the application process.
- 8) School completes its self-study and submits its SSR, Invitation to Evaluate, and Application Fee. A template for the Invitation to Evaluate is provided at <https://www.acpe-accredit.org/international-services-program/#tab-ApplicationforCertification>.
- 9) A member of the ACPE staff (or consultant appointed for the purpose) completes Stage 1 of the preliminary review of the application, SSR and supporting documentation and data to check for completeness of required documentation and data and adequacy of responses to the focused questions in the SSR.
  - i. If there is **missing documentation or data, or other deficiencies**, ACPE provides the school with details of issues to be addressed and requests the school to revise and re-submit its self-study report.
  - ii. If the **documentation and data are complete and the responses to the focused questions are adequate**, the SSR is forwarded to a Preliminary Review Team.
- 10) A Preliminary Review Team (PRT), comprised of a member of the ACPE International Commission and two members of the ACPE staff or consultants appointed for the purpose, completes Stage 2 of the preliminary review of the application, SSR and supporting documentation and data using the Certification Threshold Rubric (available, for information, at <https://www.acpe-accredit.org/international-services-program/#tab-ApplicationforCertification>) to assess the school and program's readiness for an on-site evaluation visit.
  - i. If the PRT believes that the school and program **are not ready** for an on-site evaluation visit, i.e., the program does not have a reasonable chance of achieving Certification, ACPE provides the school with details of the issues to be addressed and requests the school to revise and re-submit the SSR.
  - ii. If the PRT believes that the school and program **are ready** for an on-site evaluation visit, i.e., the program has a reasonable chance of achieving Certification, the PRT submits a report with its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the International Commission (IC).

- 11) The IC reviews the PRT's report and recommendations.
  - i. If the IC believes that the school and program **are not ready** for an on-site evaluation visit, i.e., the program does not have a reasonable chance of achieving Certification, ACPE provides the school with details of the issues to be addressed and requests the school to revise and re-submit the SSR.
  - ii. If the IC believes that the school and program **are ready** for an on-site evaluation visit, i.e., the program has a reasonable chance of achieving Certification, the IC submits a report with its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the ACPE Board. The IC may modify the PRT's report, including adding/modifying requests to the school for additional information to be provided prior to the on-site evaluation visit, if authorized by the Board.
- 12) The ACPE Board reviews the report and recommendation of the IC and makes a decision whether or not to authorize an on-site evaluation visit.
  - i. If an on-site evaluation visit is **not authorized**, ACPE provides the school with details of the issues to be addressed and requests the school to revise and re-submit the SSR.
  - ii. If an on-site evaluation visit is **authorized**, ACPE advises the school and finalizes dates and arrangements for the on-site evaluation visit.
- 13) If authorized, the on-site evaluation visit is undertaken. *(The following steps only apply if the on-site visit is authorized and completed.)*
- 14) ACPE sends a draft Evaluation Team Report (ETR) to the school to check the accuracy of (factual) statements made in the ETR. ACPE invites the school to prepare and submit (optional) supplementary information for consideration by the IC and Board.
- 15) School reviews draft ETR for accuracy and submits feedback to ACPE.
- 16) ACPE finalizes ETR, and sends it to the school, university, IC and Board.
- 17) School submits (optional) a response to the ETR and supplementary information, if applicable.
- 18) At the next possible in-person meeting (May or November) the IC reviews the ETR and any supplementary information submitted by the school by due date. The Dean and other representatives of the school/university are invited to "meet" with the IC (via tele/video conference) during the meeting to discuss the application and any updated/supplementary information.
  - i. If the IC **does not recommend Certification or Provisional Certification** at the time, the school is invited to revise and re-submit its application. The application will not be forwarded to the ACPE Board.
  - ii. If the IC **recommends Certification or Provisional Certification**, it submits its recommendation regarding Certification to the ACPE Board.
- 19) The Board reviews the recommendation of the IC and takes a certification action:
  - i. If the Board grants Certification, ACPE notifies the school and university and provides details of the Board's actions and recommendations, including any monitoring requirements. A program receiving initial Certification is granted a two-year certification term.
  - ii. If the Board does not grant Certification it may take one of the following actions:
    - The Board may grant Provisional Certification, notify the school and university and provide details of the Board's actions and recommendations, including any monitoring requirements. A program granted Provisional Certification is granted a maximum two-year term, during

which it may be granted Certification. After the two year term, if issues are not resolved to the satisfaction of the Board, Provisional Certification may be withdrawn.

- The Board may invite the school to revise and resubmit its application
- The Board may deny Certification. (Denial of Certification is an appealable action. See paragraph 15 of Policies and Procedures.)
- The Board may take such action as it deems appropriate