



ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR PHARMACY EDUCATION

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Executive Director, ACPE

August 7, 2020

Dear Pharmacy Deans,

As the uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 national health crisis continue, we know you and your faculties are challenged in planning for the coming academic year. ACPE continues to get inquiries about the many issues schools are facing due to the pandemic. We also noted the information and questions shared by some schools during the networking sessions at the recent AACP Virtual Meeting. ACPE is providing this additional guidance with the hope that it is helpful during this time of ever changing realities.

We have stated that the guidance that ACPE has provided in previous communications *will remain applicable through the remainder of 2020*. Many schools have inquired whether this flexibility will continue through the spring 2021 semester. As many of you know, ACPE is recognized by the US Department of Education (USDE). As such, ACPE's accreditation requirements and process must follow all USDE rules and regulations. At this time, the USDE has only allowed flexibilities such as virtual site visits and distance education (without the usual approvals) until December 31, 2020. We are hopeful that this deadline will be extended but until that occurs, we cannot comment on flexibilities beyond the fall 2020 semester. We will notify you as soon as we get further guidance from USDE. For your convenience, I have compiled all of the previous guidance letters to deans that outline the various flexibilities offered and some suggestions in one document so that you have them all in one place (see attached).

Given the pandemic, the ACPE staff are conducting all site visits virtually during the fall 2020 semester. The schedule also includes the visits that had to be postponed during spring 2020. ACPE has developed a guide and polices for virtual site visits that can be found on our website at: https://www.acpe-accredit.org/pdf/ACPE_Guide_to_Virtual_Site_Visits_Final.pdf. The ACPE Board of Directors has approved a 30% reduction in the fall 2020 site visit fee keeping in mind that all virtual site visits must be followed up by an on-site abbreviated verification visit as required by the USDE. The reduced fee includes the cost of the verification visit. More information about the verification visit can be found in the aforementioned guide. For those of you who are also ACPE accredited continuing education (CPE) providers, ACPE made the decision to keep CPE fees the same and not impose the standard increase and we are not assessing penalty fees at this time.

AACP recently forwarded to us a document that outlined recommendations for experiential education activities that was authored by several experiential education administrators at multiple schools of pharmacy. The ACPE Board of Directors thanks this group of faculty for their work and for sharing it with ACPE. Attached to this email is the document and the ACPE Board of Directors response to each recommendation for your information and use.

THE ACPE Board of Directors and staff met with our sponsoring organizations, AACP, APhA and NABP during the recent Board meeting. Several items were discussed that may be of interest to the schools.

- PCOA: NABP provided data that indicated that of the over 4,000 students who took the PCOA exam via ProctorU in spring 2020, their mean scaled score overall was slightly higher than the cohort who took the exam on campus. The students who took the exam using ProctorU only took about 10 minutes more to complete the exam. There was discussion about the exam and several participants questioned the value to the students, administration and faculty of requiring pharmacy programs to administer the PCOA. After the joint meeting, the ACPE Board of Directors spent time discussing the ACPE requirement that all schools administer the PCOA exam. Since there is a great deal of controversy and sensitivity

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surrounding this requirement and we have several years of experience with the exam, ACPE plans to gather more data to make a final decision about the required use of this exam. I will be reaching out to a neutral third party to develop a short survey which will be sent to the Deans of all accredited programs asking your views about the PCOA exam. The responses will be blinded to ACPE hoping that Deans will be honest and forthright. I know that there is survey fatigue but please respond when you receive the survey sometime during the fall semester. The data will be helpful to the ACPE Board as they continue discussion and deliberations on this topic.

- NABP shared a recommendation from the NABP Advisory Committee on Examinations that the primary degree for licensure for US PharmD graduates be from entry-level ACPE-accredited PharmD programs and not Post-BS PharmD programs. ACPE pointed out that current Board Policy requires that all admissions to non-traditional (post-BS) PharmD programs must have graduated from a 5 year BS pharmacy program accredited by ACPE or the Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP) and must hold a license to practice pharmacy in the US or Canada or if awarded a pharmacy degree from a Non-US or Canadian program, must hold a valid license to practice pharmacy in a US jurisdiction. As a reminder to schools with nontraditional PharmD programs, only US licensed pharmacists that meet the aforementioned criteria should be admitted to the program. ACPE staff will be updating the Rubric utilized by site team visitors and the “blue book” questions as well as required uploads during the self-study to better evaluate this data at relevant schools. Students from the nontraditional program will also be requested to be included and interviewed during the student session of the site team visit.
- There was discussion about the timeline for revision of Standards 2016. AACP pointed out that the CAPE Educational Outcomes will need to be updated prior to work on a new set of Standards. APhA also suggested that ACPE review recent policies from the APhA House of Delegates as some are relevant to the standards revision process. The Board will have more discussion on this at their next Board meeting so that the Academy is fully aware of the timeline.

This is our guidance as of now. It could change at any time given the fluidity of the situation. We will continue to update you periodically as the situation warrants. We know that all our schools and colleges of pharmacy are facing very difficult times with much out of your direct control. The ACPE staff are always available to discuss and work through possible options you might be considering as you balance the realities you are facing within the boundaries set by the accreditation standards. We want to be helpful and support your efforts in these turbulent times. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to any member of the ACPE staff.

Thank you!

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet P. Engle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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