



316 Osuna Road NE, Suite 501, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

FIRST TIME APPLICANTS APPLYING FOR CME ACCREDITATION

Getting Started – What You Need to Know

For first-time, or “initial” applicants, the accreditation process takes up to twelve months. During the application process, at least one medical education session or one jointly sponsored CME activity should be implemented and observed by a NMMS staff person and/or by a NMMS CME Committee member accompanied by a review of the activity documentation.

Purpose of Accreditation

Accreditation is a mark of quality continuing medical education (CME) activities that are planned, implemented and evaluated by accredited providers in accordance with Accreditation Criteria, ACCME Policies and Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education. Accreditation assures the medical community and the public that such activities provide physicians with information that can assist them in maintaining or improving their practice of medicine. These activities are free of commercial bias and based on valid content.

The ACCME and NMMS

The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) is the organization that sets educational standards and policies for CME activities. The ACCME accredits organizations that serve a national target audience of physicians and recognizes state medical societies as accrediting partners within the states that choose to operate as accreditors.

The New Mexico Medical Society (NMMS) is recognized by the ACCME as an accreditor of CME providers in New Mexico whose target audience is composed of no more than 30% of physician learners from outside New Mexico and its contiguous states. NMMS’s system of accreditation is equivalent to that of ACCME’s national system of accreditation; therefore, there are many references to ACCME policies, especially in the *Standards of Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education*, which are trademarked by the ACCME. Additional information about the ACCME, headquartered in Chicago, IL, can be found at www.accme.org.

NMMS’s Expectations

NMMS has several expectations of those who apply for NMMS accreditation:

- Eligible organizations that decide to apply for NMMS accreditation should be prepared to both describe and furnish evidence that demonstrates compliance with the Accreditation Requirements. For this reason, organizations considering applying for NMMS accreditation must plan, implement and evaluate at least one CME within the twelve month period prior to the initial accreditation interview. This activity can be a medical session education session or a jointly sponsored CME activity.
- NMMS expects its accredited providers to monitor their overall CME program on a regular basis for compliance with the Accreditation Requirements.
- NMMS-accredited providers are required to submit annual reporting data on ACCME’s online database. This information includes contact information, number and types of activities, number

of hours offered, number of physicians attending, and income and expense data for the CME program.

- Payment of certain fees is required to obtain and maintain NMMS accreditation. NMMS fees are:
 - \$500 Pre-application
 - \$1,000 Self Study, Initial or Reaccreditation
 - Annual Fee, Single organization
 - \$750 for 2023 (minimum)

Eligibility to Apply for NMMS Accreditation

The organization must:

- Be located in New Mexico;
- Be developing and/or presenting a program of CME for physicians on a regular and recurring basis;
- Serve a target audience of no more than 30% of physician learners from outside New Mexico and its contiguous states. Organizations with a national audience should apply for accreditation from the ACCME (www.accme.org);
- Demonstrate an overall organizational commitment to the CME program, including physician support, budget support, staffing, and record-keeping resources;
- Be an eligible company. Eligibility is defined in the *ACCME Accreditation Requirements* under the *Standards of Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education*, in the section on Eligibility. Eligibility criteria and examples are provided in this section.
- Present activities that have “valid” content. Specifically, the organization must be presenting activities that promote recommendations, treatment or manners of practicing medicine that are within the definition of CME. Providers are not eligible for accreditation if they present activities that promote treatments that are known to have risks or dangers that outweigh the benefits or are known to be ineffective in the treatment of patients;
- Demonstrate the capacity to comply with the *Accreditation Criteria*, *ACCME Policies* and the *Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education*.

When there is a question regarding eligibility, NMMS reserves the right to make decisions on the issue.

The Pre-application Process

The first step in becoming accredited is completion of the Pre-application for NMMS Accreditation, after you have developed and offered one activity according to accreditation standards. The purpose of the Pre-application is to provide you with an opportunity to explain your eligibility for NMMS accreditation as well as to demonstrate that your organization has mechanisms in place to fulfill NMMS’s Essential Areas and Elements and Accreditation Policies in the CME activities that you will produce.

Once your organization has submitted its pre-application and fee of \$500, the NMMS will review the materials to determine your organization’s eligibility and to verify that mechanisms are in place for your organization to meet NMMS requirements. The materials are not reviewed for compliance with NMMS expectations.

The NMMS determines compliance during the initial accreditation process based on three data sources: the self-study report, performance-in-practice review, and accreditation interview. Therefore, if the NMMS approves your pre-application, it is not a guarantee that your organization will receive Provisional Accreditation. The NMMS will notify your organization whether or not it is eligible to continue with the Provisional Accreditation process in writing, within four weeks of receipt of your pre-application.

Submitting the Pre-Application and Fee

When you have completed the pre-application, please prepare a single, bookmarked PDF format file of the pre-application form and all required attachments.

- Send the pre-application and attachments in bookmarked PDF format via email to info@nmms.org.
- Send your nonrefundable fee payment to **NMMS CME**, 316 Osuna NE #501, Albuquerque, NM 87107

A pre-application will not be reviewed until payment has been received. The NMMS reviews pre-applications regularly and will notify your organization once a decision has been made regarding your eligibility. The fee is not returned if the Pre-Application is incomplete or if the NMMS determines that your organization is not eligible for accreditation at this time.

The Initial Self Study Process

If your organization is deemed eligible to continue with the initial accreditation process, you will complete and submit a Self-Study Report and the Performance-in-Practice Structured Abstract for Initial Accreditation. Once the Self Study Report and Structured Abstract are received your organization will be invoiced for the \$1,000 accreditation fee and an on-site survey will be scheduled. Travel expenses of the survey team will be invoiced after the survey meeting.

The survey interview provides an opportunity for your organization to meet with one or two surveyors and a staff member of NMMS's CME office. The surveyors will discuss with you the objectives of your CME program, clarify any questions they may have about your Self Study, and discuss your organization's ongoing plans for improvement as they relate to your practice of CME. The surveyors will also review your performance in practice as demonstrated in your activity documentation for the two or more activities you developed and presented prior to the survey.

Following the survey interview, the survey team will make their recommendations to the NMMS Continuing Medical Education Accreditation Committee for a final accreditation decision. The decision will be Initial Provisional Accreditation for two years or non-accreditation.