UNITED COUNCIL FOR NEUROLOGIC SUBSPECIALTIES

Accreditation FAQs

Q: What is accreditation?

A: Accreditation is a voluntary process of evaluation and peer-review based on UCNS accreditation standards. Programs that attain accreditation status offer the core educational content established by the subspecialty, meet the required quality standards established by UCNS, and demonstrate the minimum program requirements established by the subspecialty to produce a competent fellow. Fellows who complete a UCNS-accredited program meet the training eligibility requirements to apply for certification in the subspecialty.

Q: What neurologic subspecialty fellowships training programs can apply for UCNS accreditation?

A: As of 2017, UCNS accredits training programs that offer fellowships in Autonomic Disorders, Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry, Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology, Geriatric Neurology, Headache Medicine, Neural Repair and Rehabilitation, Neurocritical Care, Neuroimaging, and Neuro-oncology

Q: Why should an institution seek UCNS accreditation for its subspecialty fellowship training programs?

A: UCNS accreditation is the measure of excellence for neurologic subspecialty training programs in any of the UCNS recognized subspecialty areas. Fellows can be assured that UCNS-accredited programs provide the educational content deemed necessary by the experts in the field and have peer-reviewed oversight by the Accreditation Council to assure compliance with the established UCNS program requirements.

Q: What are the training program requirements?

A: The subspecialty training *program requirements* are used by the Accreditation Council to review training programs. All training programs must meet the requirements set forth in the *program requirements* as they are the minimum standards established by the subspecialty for an educational training program. Program requirements are available in the "Accreditation" area of each subspecialty on the UCNS website.

Applying for Accreditation

Q: How do I apply for accreditation?

A: Programs applying for accreditation must first request access to the UCNS Accreditation Interface. Once your request is processed, you receive your program number and a program-specific password and a link to begin completing the online application. Additional information and instructions on using the Accreditation Interface and applying for accreditation can be found on your subspecialty's accreditation page on the UCNS website.

Q: What must I do to begin the accreditation process?

A: All programs seeking accreditation must submit the following:
1. Completed application using the Accreditation Interface
2. Application Fee

Q: When can I submit my application?

A: Applications may be submitted anytime for review during one of the two application periods. Deadlines are December 1 for spring review and June 1 for fall review.

Fees

Q: What fees are associated with accreditation?

A: Programs are required to remit an application processing fee (due whenever an application for initial or continued accreditation is submitted) and an annual accreditation fee. The current fee structure is as follows:
  Initial Application Fee: $2,000
  Reaccreditation Application Fee: $1,000 (every 3-5 years)
  Annual Fee: $1,500

Q: Will you send an invoice when annual accreditation fees are due?

A: Yes, accredited programs are invoiced when annual fees or continued accreditation processing fees are due. Programs seeking initial accreditation are not invoiced.

Continuing Accreditation

Q: How do I maintain my accreditation?

A: Accreditation is awarded for a specific duration (term or cycle) and programs must submit continued accreditation documentation to maintain accreditation when the term or cycle is completed. Your original notification letter will indicate the duration of your awarded accreditation term and estimated date of next review. UCNS staff will contact you in advance of the review requesting necessary documentation.

Q: How long is an accreditation term or cycle?

A: Accreditation terms are determined by the Accreditation Council depending upon the strength of the application. Provisional accreditation is generally two to three years. Full accreditation is generally three to five years. The Accreditation Council reserves the right to shorten an accreditation term if the program is out of compliance with its subspecialty program requirements.

Q: Will I be notified when I need to apply for continuing accreditation?

A: Yes. Prior to your continued accreditation review UCNS staff will e-mail you the necessary instructions to complete your reaccreditation application using the Accreditation Interface.

Program Changes

Q: What do I do if I am retiring as program director?

A: UCNS must be notified in advance of a change in program director. A letter from the Department Chair describing the change and his/her selection for a new program director must be submitted to the Accreditation Council accompanied by the new program director's CV. The template letter, template CV, and description of the program change request process may be found on the UCNS website.

Q: How can I change the number of fellows enrolled in my program?

A: UCNS must be notified in advance if you wish to increase the approved complement of fellows. The Accreditation Council determines the fellow complement based on the faculty to fellow ratio. Faculty considered for the ratio are primary faculty who are UCNS certified or eligible in the subspecialty of the training program. If a program has sufficient certified or eligible faculty, the program director may submit a program change request. A template letter and description of the process may be found on the UCNS website.

Q: **Do I need to contact UCNS if the duration of my program changes?**

A: Yes. Subspecialties have specific parameters regarding program duration. Your notification letter indicates the duration of training for which your program is approved. If you would like to request a different duration, please consult your subspecialty program requirements and submit a request to the Accreditation Council with supporting documentation describing the curriculum for your proposed program. Templates needed to submit the the request may be found on the UCNS website.

Accreditation Interface

Q: **What is the Accreditation Interface?**

A: The Accreditation Interface is the online application system developed by UCNS for program accreditation. All accreditation submissions will now be submitted through the Accreditation Interface, including the new UCNS Annual Report.

Q: **Why can't my program have multiple usernames and passwords?**

A: Access to the Accreditation Interface is given to the program, not to individual users. The username and password will be provided to the program director. The program director may share the login information with whomever he or she wishes. Passwords may be reset at any time by contacting UCNS staff.

Q: **How do I reset my password?**

A: Passwords are reset by UCNS staff. Contact a staff member to reset your password.

Q: **What is carried over from previous submissions?**

A: Most information submitted in a previous submission will carry into the next submission. The primary exceptions to this include: fellow information (because it changes annually) and some institutional and personnel information.

Q: **I've completed my submission – now what?**
A: Program submissions will first be reviewed by UCNS staff for completeness. If information is missing, the program will be contacted and asked to edit its submission through the interface. Once the submission is completed, it will be locked and sent to the Accreditation Council for review.

Q: **Is a paper application still available?**

A: No. All submissions must be submitted using the Accreditation Interface.

Accreditation Decisions

Q: **What does *provisional accreditation* mean?**

A: *Provisional accreditation* is granted for initial accreditation of a program, or for a previously accredited program that had its accreditation withdrawn and has subsequently applied for reaccreditation. *Provisional accreditation* implies that a program is in a developmental stage. It remains to be demonstrated that the proposal for which accreditation was granted will be implemented as planned. Accordingly, the Accreditation Council will monitor the developmental progress of a program accredited on a provisional basis.

Q: **What is a *progress report*?**

A: Programs may be awarded accreditation when additional clarification and follow up is needed. A *progress report* is a specific response to questions or concerns that have arisen in the process of Accreditation Council deliberations. The Council's accreditation recommendation may be reversed if the *progress report* is not received or does not address the question or concern. It is important to submit this information by the date identified in your notification letter.

Q: What does *deferral of accreditation* mean and how do I respond appropriately?

A: The Accreditation Council may defer a decision on the accreditation status of a program. The primary reason for *deferral of accreditation* is lack of sufficient information about specific issues which precludes an informed and reasonable decision. *Deferral of accreditation* is a non-action.

Please respond to each item listed in your notification letter to assure the Accreditation Council has all the necessary information to make a decision. Please submit your responses by the due date indicated in your notification letter to ensure that your program will be reviewed.

Q: What does *withhold accreditation* mean and how do I respond appropriately?

A: The Accreditation Council may *withhold accreditation* when it determines that the proposal for a new program does not substantially comply with the UCNS-approved program requirements for the subspecialty. The Accreditation Council will cite those areas in which the proposed program does not comply with the standards. The proposed withhold status is intended to allow the program the opportunity to respond to the deficiencies identified by the Accreditation Council without requiring a new application and application process fee. Please submit your responses by the due date indicated in your notification letter to ensure your program will be reviewed.

Q: Can a program's accreditation end?

A: Accreditation may be withdrawn from a program if the program is found to be in substantial noncompliance with the program requirements. Programs are given the opportunity to respond to any areas of noncompliance before accreditation is withdrawn. A program may also request voluntary withdrawal of its accreditation. Additional details regarding withdrawal of accreditation may be found in the [Accreditation Policies and Procedures](#).

Annual Reports

Q: What is an annual report?

A: An annual report is a program submission that programs complete each year. UCNS implemented an annual reporting system in place of regularly scheduled site visits. The annual report allows UCNS to ensure that it has the most current information or all accredited programs. The annual report also allows programs to update its information between continuing accreditation reviews, which will allow for a more streamlined full accreditation process.

The annual report is an abbreviated application. All the information requested on the annual report will be familiar to programs because the information is also collected during review cycles.

Q: When is the annual report due? Will I be notified?

A: Annual reports are due each March 1. Programs will receive notification in January when they may begin completing the annual report.

Q: Do I have to complete an annual report if I'm due for reaccreditation?

A: No. Because the information requested in the annual report is also requested during a reaccreditation review, you will not need to submit an annual report during a reaccreditation year.

Q: I was just reaccredited last fall; do I have to complete the annual report?

A: Yes, programs who recently completed a reaccreditation review still need to complete the next annual report. Only programs currently in a reaccreditation review will not be required to complete the annual review.

Q: Is there a fee due with the annual report?

A: No. The annual fee is not due with the annual report. It is invoiced in the spring and due in July.

Q: **What is the difference between the *Sponsoring Institution*, *Primary Institution*, and *Participating Institution*?**

A: UCNS defines the various educational institutions as follows:

Sponsoring Institution: The institution that assumes the ultimate responsibility for a program of GME. This entity is typically responsible for multiple GME programs and is overseen by a Designated Institutional Official. This terminology is the ACGME's and UCNS follows the ACGME model.

Primary Institution: The institution that is used most heavily for actual clinical training during the fellowship.

Participating Institution: An institution to which fellows rotate for a required experience.

Q: **Is a program required to have each of the type of institution?**

A: Each program must have a designated sponsoring institution, and a primary institution, which may or may not be the sponsoring institution. Educational programs may take place at only one location; however, UCNS allows programs to utilize multiple educational centers to ensure students receive all required educational experiences.

For more information visit:

www.ucns.org

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