

RESOLUTION ON FIRST-PROFESSIONAL DOCTORAL STANDARDS

**Adopted by
The Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine
9 February 2008**

BACKGROUND

The Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine (“ACAOM” or “Commission”) has received an increasing number of requests from the acupuncture and Oriental medicine profession over the past several years to develop first-professional doctoral standards. The Commission conducted an initial survey of its communities of interest in November 2002 to assess whether there was sufficient support among these communities to develop first-professional doctoral standards; the results (which are posted to the ACAOM web site) show that respondents were evenly divided on the issue.

Based on these survey results, the Commission then established a Doctoral Task Force (“Task Force”) in 2003 composed of representatives appointed by the key national Acupuncture & Oriental medicine organizations, including the Council of Colleges of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine, the American Association of Oriental Medicine, the Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine Alliance, the Federation of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine Regulatory Agencies, the National Federation of Traditional Chinese Medicine Organizations, and the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies to develop a list of proposed professional competencies that might be included in first professional doctoral accreditation standards. The Task Force conducted meetings in March 2004, November 2004 and June 2005 and presented to the Commission its final consensus report on the proposed competencies titled: *Recommended Core Competencies for the First Professional Doctorate in AOM* (“Task Force Report”). The Task Force Report was posted to the ACAOM web site in June 2005 and subjected to a series of public hearings in 2005-2006 seeking comment from the communities of interest, the transcripts for which are published on the ACAOM web site.

ACAOM established a Doctoral Committee to develop proposed first professional doctoral standards based on the Task Force Report and sought public comment on the Report. The Doctoral Committee was subsequently disbanded and the Doctoral Task Force reconvened to ensure that the communities of interest would have a direct role in developing the standards. The Task Force at its July 2007 meeting arrived at a consensus on proposed first-professional doctoral standards and competencies based on the Task Force Report and public comment on the Report, and recommended that the Commission release the proposed standards for public comment by the communities of interest.

The Commission posted the standards on its web site along with an on-line survey in September 2007, and conducted its first public hearing on the proposed standards in October 2007 —transcripts for which are published on the ACAOM web site. The Commission established a timeline for the further development of the standards and for seeking additional public comment from the communities of interest prior to considering the standards for adoption.

REGULATORY GUIDANCE

The U.S. Secretary of Education’s criteria for the recognition of accrediting agencies set forth in 34 CFR 602.13 provides that to be granted an expansion of scope for new programs or degree levels, an accrediting agency must demonstrate that “...its standards, policies, procedures and decisions to grant or deny accreditation are widely accepted by educators and educational institutions, licensing bodies, practitioners and employers in the professional... fields for which the educational institutions or programs within the agency’s jurisdiction prepare their students” (Emphasis Added).

FINDINGS

In the collective and unanimous judgment of the Commission, there is currently insufficient evidence of consensus within the acupuncture and Oriental medicine communities of interest, which includes state regulators and legislators, educators, and the practitioner community, to warrant implementing a first-professional doctorate as entry-level into the profession. Absent such consensus, the Commission lacks authority to make decisions on whether or when first-professional doctoral standards, policies and procedures are adopted for purposes of entry into the profession.

RESOLUTIONS

Be it resolved that the Commission urges the acupuncture and Oriental medicine communities of interest, as the primary conveners, to continue to seek consensus by whatever means deemed appropriate regarding the issue of a first-professional doctorate as entry-level into the profession.

Be it resolved that once consensus is reached within the profession, the Commission will renew its efforts to develop and subsequently pilot standards, policies and procedures for first-professional doctoral programs in AOM as entry-level into the profession.

