

GUIDELINE-03
**PRE-ACCREDITATION PROCESS FOR
PHYSIOTHERAPY EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

What is accreditation, pre-accreditation and the pre-accreditation process?

- Accreditation is a process of quality assurance through which recognition is granted by PEAC to confirm standards of education have been met.
- In Canada, graduates of PEAC-accredited programs are automatically eligible to write the national Physiotherapy Competency Exam, and, if successful, be licensed to practice physiotherapy in a Canadian jurisdiction.
- Pre-accreditation is a non-accredited affiliation with PEAC indicating that a physiotherapy education program is preparing for accreditation.
- The process offers developing physiotherapy education programs the opportunity to establish a formal, publicly recognized relationship with PEAC, and to become familiar with the PEAC accreditation standards and processes.
- Entering the pre-accreditation process is voluntary, not mandatory, for new programs.
- Pre-accreditation is a paid service where PEAC plays a mentoring role for a new program interested in mentorship as program development evolves.

Why should a program participate in the pre-accreditation process?

Participation in the pre-accreditation process:

- provides an opportunity for developing programs to work with PEAC and ensure that the accreditation standards are fully understood and are used as benchmarks for the planning, development, and implementation of the new program.
- gives stakeholders some assurance that a new program is being developed with some formal recognition.
- facilitates the development of a physiotherapy education program with resources (e.g., leadership, faculty, clinical education sites, and budget) in accordance with the national accreditation standards and evaluation process.
- provides the opportunity for individualized consultation with an experienced advisor prior to proceeding with the full accreditation process.

What are the minimum criteria required for a program to apply for pre-accreditation?

- The professional entry-level degree is granted by a university in Canada.
- The education program is within a university that offers other health professional programs.

Key principles of the pre-accreditation process

Philosophical principles

- The pre-accreditation process is consultative and supportive in nature. The preliminary report (written by the new program) and the pre-accreditation visit report (written by the advisor designated by PEAC) are reviewed only by PEAC staff and not forwarded to the PEAC Accreditation Committee or the Board of Directors at any time. Participation in the pre-accreditation process is highly recommended for a developing program wishing to enter the accreditation process. Initiation of the pre-accreditation process does not assure attainment of accreditation status from PEAC.
- Participating in the pre-accreditation process should facilitate the ability of the program to achieve accreditation status.

*****NOTE: In order for the first cohort of students to be considered graduates of an accredited program, the entire accreditation process, including the award of accreditation status to the program, must be complete prior to the cohort's graduation date. Thus, the pre-accreditation process must be planned with this timeline in mind.***

Operational principles

- It is the responsibility of the new program to contact PEAC to express interest in the pre-accreditation and accreditation processes. This should take place once government approval for the new program is assured, and the program meets the minimum criteria to apply (see p. 1 above).
- The pre-accreditation process is initiated through a letter of intent (see Appendix A) from the developing program in the early stages of planning.
- When the education program submits its letter of intent to participate in the pre-accreditation process, PEAC will invoice the program for the pre-accreditation fee (see GUIDE 10 Fee Schedule).
- Expenses related to the pre-accreditation process (preparation of the preliminary report and the onsite visit by an advisor) are the responsibility of the education program. Reimbursement of expenses can be via direct reimbursement to the advisor, or reimbursement to PEAC upon receipt of an invoice following the onsite visit).
- PEAC will act as a resource to the program throughout the preparation of the preliminary report and with respect to timelines and expectations in the pre-accreditation and accreditation processes.
- PEAC will act as a resource to the advisor throughout the pre-accreditation process as required.
- The pre-accreditation visit should take place three years prior to the first cohort's anticipated graduation date from the program. For some programs, this will be prior to the first cohort's admission to the program.
- A program in the pre-accreditation phase which chooses to publish its pre-accreditation status must use the following language to describe the program's status in the accreditation process:

“The (Name of program/institution) is seeking accreditation by Physiotherapy Education Accreditation Canada (PEAC). The program has submitted a letter of intent to participate in the pre-accreditation process, which denotes an affiliation with PEAC and indicates that the education program is considering accreditation standards in its planning stages. Submission of the letter of intent and participation in the pre-accreditation process does not assure that the program will be granted accreditation status when the final program is implemented and evaluated.”

- At the end of the pre-accreditation process, the program submits a letter of intent to PEAC to participate in a full accreditation review (see Appendix B). Should the program not submit a letter of intent, PEAC will withdraw its affiliation with the program.
- In January of the calendar year following submission of a letter of intent, PEAC will invoice the program for the full annual accreditation fee (see GUIDE-10 Fee Schedule)

Details: Pre-accreditation process activities

The primary purpose of the pre-accreditation review is to provide feedback to the program about its progress toward achieving compliance with the accreditation criteria. This will be accomplished by focussing on:

- the overall curriculum plan, including the conceptual foundation for the curriculum and the related educational principles and values
- student learning outcomes and course outlines for the entire program
- the links established between learning outcomes and competencies
- the curriculum content which teaches and assesses student competency in each area described in Standard 6 of the accreditation criteria
- the program’s evaluation plan, including goals and benchmarks related to the entire program (broader than curriculum evaluation alone).
- the governance structure, planned faculty complement, and planned clinical placement experiences which will demonstrate compliance with the accreditation criteria

While it is not expected that the education program would demonstrate evidence for all of the accreditation criteria at the time of the preliminary visit, it is expected that plans would be in place to accomplish this before the full accreditation visit, and before the first cohort of students begins its final year.

Processes

- i) Twelve weeks prior to the scheduled onsite visit, the program will electronically submit a preliminary report to PEAC in a narrative format that addresses each of the evaluative criteria separately. Tables and graphs are appropriate in some sections. In addition, the report should include the following documentation:

- government/university approval documents
- evidence that the university is an institution with degree granting authority
- evidence that the program has employed a program administrator/director who meets the accreditation criteria related to qualifications
- evidence of faculty appointments

The report will be similar to the future Self Study Report (SSR) to be submitted prior to the full accreditation review, but likely will be incomplete in places as the program continues to formulate its SSR.

- ii) An advisor will be appointed, in consultation with the program, to conduct an onsite review of the program; the review should be scheduled over a one to two day period.
- iii) The program's preliminary report will be forwarded to the advisor approximately 10-12 weeks prior to the scheduled onsite visit, following review by PEAC staff.
- iv) The program will develop a preliminary visit schedule for the advisor, similar to that for a full accreditation visit, but exclusive of those interviewees not available at the time of the visit (eg students, graduates, employers). Any clinical sites or preceptors already confirmed should be included in the schedule.
- v) After the onsite visit, the advisor will provide feedback to PEAC and the program in a written report that will outline the areas of strength and the areas of concern, including potential gaps in compliance with accreditation criteria that are apparent at this stage of the program's development. The advisor will also include possible suggestions for the enhancement and development of program resources as they relate to the evaluative criteria. The advisor may also provide a verbal report to the program.

Following receipt of the advisor's report of the pre-accreditation review by PEAC staff, it will be forwarded to the education program for reference and recommendations.

Schedule for Pre-Accreditation Process Activities

Pre-Accreditation Activity	Timeline for Completion	Lead Responsibility
Submit letter of intent to participate in the pre-accreditation process (Appendix A)	As soon as planning process is started. This should be once program approval is received from government / university and ideally at least four years prior to the anticipated graduation date of the first cohort of students.	University administration
Invoice program for pre-accreditation fee (GUIDE-10)	Upon receipt of letter of intent and annually in January	PEAC

Communicate via telephone and email to ensure the education program understands the pre-accreditation process, the accreditation standards, the requirements, and the timelines. Provide program/university with PEAC Program Accreditation Handbook, the Accreditation Standards, and other resources	Upon receipt of letter of intent	PEAC
Collaborate to determine dates of pre-accreditation visit ¹ to the program and due date of preliminary report	Upon confirmation of dates of graduation of first cohort of students ²	PEAC and program
Forward a list of potential advisors to program ³	Upon confirmation of dates of a pre-accreditation visit	PEAC
Provide PEAC with names of preferred potential advisor(s).	Within one month of receipt of the list of potential advisors	Program
Contact/confirm chosen advisor	Following receipt of names of preferred potential advisors	PEAC
Consult with advisor regarding his/her role and PEAC's role, and discuss/confirm plans for pre-accreditation visit.	Upon confirmation of advisor's interest/availability	PEAC
Provide feedback and suggestions regarding first drafts of the preliminary report to the program upon request, and act as a resource as necessary to the program during the development of the report.	Prior to submission of the preliminary report	PEAC
Submit preliminary report to PEAC	On established due date (three months prior to the pre-accreditation visit)	University administration or program
Prepare/confirm pre-accreditation visit schedule	Following submission of preliminary report	PEAC, program, advisor
Review the preliminary report to ensure format and content is appropriate and to confirm ease of navigation.	Upon receipt of the preliminary report	PEAC

¹ The pre-accreditation visit should take place **three years prior** to the first cohort's anticipated graduation date from the program. For some programs this will be prior to the first cohort's admission to the program. Note that the preliminary report will be due three months prior to the visit.

² In order for the first cohort of students to be considered graduates of an accredited program, the entire accreditation process, including the award of accreditation status to the program by PEAC, must be complete prior to the cohort's graduation date.

³ Potential advisors could include experienced Peer Review Team members and PEAC members. The advisor will have a direct relationship with the program and act in the capacity of a consultant about the PEAC accreditation process and standards. The advisor will not be involved in the future onsite accreditation review, nor in decision-making about the program's eventual accreditation status.

Forward preliminary report to the advisor for review and preparation for the visit.	Upon completion of the review of the report (usually within one week)	PEAC
Review preliminary report and prepare any questions for PEAC	Upon receipt of the preliminary report	Advisor
Discuss preliminary report with the advisor to highlight potential areas of focus, and to answer any advisor questions regarding format/content/navigation	Shortly after forwarding the report to the advisor	PEAC
Conduct pre-accreditation visit	On established visit date	Advisor
Submit a report of the pre-accreditation review to PEAC	Within four weeks of the visit	Advisor
Review report, revise as necessary, and forward to program	Within two weeks of receipt of report	PEAC
Submit letter of intent to PEAC to participate in full accreditation review (Appendix B)	Upon completion of the visit OR upon receipt of the pre-accreditation visit report	Program
Schedule full accreditation review	8-10 months prior to graduation of the first cohort of students, allowing for time for the award of accreditation status by PEAC. ⁴	PEAC and program
Invoice program for full annual accreditation fee (GUIDE-10)	January of calendar year following receipt of letter of intent from program	PEAC

Guideline Number: 03	
Date of last revision	Associated documents
<i>Mar 2005</i>	FORM-10 Letter of Intent – Accreditation
<i>June 2007</i>	
<i>Nov 2008</i>	FORM-11 Letter of Intent – Pre-Accreditation
<i>Dec 2010</i>	
<i>June 2011</i>	GUIDE-10 Fee Schedule
<i>May 2012</i>	
<i>June 2013</i>	Program Accreditation Handbook
<i>Nov 2014</i>	
<i>Sept 2016</i>	

⁴ In order for the first cohort of students to be considered graduates of an accredited program, the entire accreditation process, including the award of accreditation status to the program by PEAC, must be complete prior to the cohort's graduation date. PEAC holds meetings to assign accreditation status in April and September each year.

Appendix A Letter of Intent to Participate in the Pre-Accreditation Process

The *Program Name* at *University Name* intends to initiate the PEAC pre-accreditation process.

Expected date of graduation of first cohort of students:

Enter Date

In order to initiate the process, the *Program Name* at *University Name* acknowledges the following:

- Review and understanding of GUIDE-03 Pre-Accreditation Process
- Review and understanding of the format, content, and method of submission required for the preliminary report
- Acceptance of the timelines for submission of key documentation in the accreditation process including
 - preliminary report
 - preliminary visit schedule
 - selection of pre-accreditation advisor
 - receipt of advisor's pre-accreditation report and recommendations
 - submission of Letter of Intent to participate in an accreditation review
- Responsibilities of the program with respect to the pre-accreditation visit
 - arrangement of all interviews and interviewees as outlined in the pre-accreditation visit schedule
 - transportation of the advisor between the hotel and campus each day
 - provision of snacks and lunch for the advisor during the days onsite
 - reimbursement of all expenses (travel, hotel, meals) for the advisor's visit
- Availability of PEAC staff to provide assistance/guidance when required

The *Program Name* at *University Name* acknowledges that if it does not comply with the timelines and responsibilities referred to above, the pre-accreditation visit will not proceed and any costs associated with travel arrangements will be reimbursed to PEAC, if applicable.

Program Chair:

Enter Name

Enter Title

Signature

Enter Date

Dean / Director / Administrator of School:

Enter Name

Enter Title

Signature

Enter Date

Appendix B Letter of Intent to Participate in Accreditation Review

The *Program Name* at *University Name* intends to initiate the PEAC accreditation review process.

Date of expiry of current accreditation status (if applicable)

Enter Date

In order to initiate the process, the *Program Name* at *University Name* acknowledges the following:

- Review and understanding of the Program Accreditation Handbook
- Review and understanding of the format, content, and method of submission required for the Self Study Report and Self Study Inventory
- Acceptance of the timelines for submission of key documentation in the accreditation process including
 - Self Study Report and Self Study Inventory
 - onsite visit schedule
 - receipt of PRT onsite review report
 - submission of Program Response
- Responsibilities of the program with respect to the onsite visit
 - arrangement of all interviews and interviewees as outlined in the onsite visit schedule
 - transportation of the PRT between the hotel and campus each day
 - provision of snacks and lunch for the team during the days onsite
 - booking of meeting space for the PRT as described in the Program Accreditation Handbook
- Availability of PEAC staff to provide assistance/guidance when required

The *Program Name* at *University Name* acknowledges that if it does not comply with the timelines and responsibilities referred to above, the review will not proceed and any costs associated with travel arrangements by the accreditation team will be reimbursed to PEAC by the *Program Name* at *University Name*.

Program Chair:

Enter Name

Enter Title

Signature

Enter Date

Dean / Director / Administrator of School:

Enter Name

Enter Title

Signature

Enter Date