



Accreditation Process

FIRST TIME APPLICANTS APPLYING FOR ACCREDITATION

Getting Started – What You Need to Know:

For first-time, or “initial” applicants, the accreditation process takes nine to twelve months. If your organization is considering applying for MAG initial accreditation, there are several factors you should consider in determining whether MAG accreditation is right for you.

Purpose of MAG Accreditation:

MAG accreditation is a mark of quality continuing medical education (“CME”) activities that are planned, implemented and evaluated in accordance with the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education’s (ACCME’s) Essential Areas and Elements and Accreditation Policies ([Accreditation Requirements](#)). MAG 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.

Purpose of ACCME:

The ACCME is the organization that sets educational standards for CME activities, and monitors its accredited providers’ adherence to those standards. MAG abides by all ACCME policies. MAG accredits organizations, and does not accredit individual activities. Un-accredited organizations that would like to partner with a MAG accredited provider in the provision of quality CME can enter into [joint sponsorship](#) with an accredited organization.

It is important to note that MAG does not reward the continuing educational accomplishments of individual physicians. Rather, those accomplishments are rewarded by other organizations which, for example, require physicians to complete a certain amount and/or type of CME for membership or re-licensure. As such, CME providers are not MAG accredited for the purpose of granting credit. The requirements for granting credit are maintained by the other organizations themselves. Since different credentialing bodies have varying requirements, CME providers should be aware of the requirements of the particular credentialing body for which credit is being granted.

Expectations of MAG:

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

- Eligible organizations that decide to apply for MAG accreditation should be prepared to both describe and furnish evidence that demonstrates compliance with the Accreditation Requirements. For this reason, organizations considering applying for MAG accreditation must plan, implement and evaluate at least two CME activities prior to beginning the accreditation process.
- MAG expects its accredited providers to monitor their overall CME program for compliance with the Accreditation Requirements and to fulfill annual reporting requirements. For a description of the ongoing responsibilities of MAG accredited providers, see [Maintaining Accreditation - Ongoing Responsibilities of Accredited Providers](#)
- Payment of certain fees is required to obtain and maintain MAG accreditation. For a schedule of current MAG fees, see http://www.mag.org/pdfs/edu_fee_schedule_2010.pdf.
- MAG conducts its affairs in English, and requires that all information be submitted in English.

MAG's Policy Regarding Confidentiality of Information:

Through the accreditation process, MAG collects data related to a provider's compliance with Accreditation Requirements. MAG will maintain the following as confidential, except as required for MAG accreditation or recognition purposes, or as may be required by legal process, or as otherwise authorized by the CME provider to which it relates:

- Information acquired by MAG from a provider during the accreditation process for that CME provider except for accumulated data that does not specifically identify individual CME providers;
- Correspondence and memoranda within MAG relating to the accreditation process for a CME provider;
- Correspondence between MAG and a CME provider relating to the accreditation process for the CME provider/accreditation; and
- MAG proceedings relating to a CME provider.

In order to maintain confidential information as such, MAG and its volunteers are required not to make copies of, disclose, discuss, describe, distribute, or disseminate in any manner whatsoever, including oral, written, or electronic form, any confidential information that they receive or generate, or any part of it, except directly for MAG accreditation purposes. MAG and its volunteers are also required not to use such confidential information for personal or professional benefit, or for any other reason, except directly for MAG accreditation or recognition purposes.

A Note Regarding Vendors of Accreditation Compliance Advice and Products:

Be advised that MAG has no relationship with and does not endorse any vendor providing accreditation compliance advice or products to CME providers. MAG has neither approved nor disapproved the advice or products of any such vendors.

Determining Your Eligibility for MAG Accreditation:

Only certain organizations are eligible to receive MAG accreditation. The criteria listed below must be met before an organization will be considered for MAG accreditation.

The organization must:

- Be located in Georgia or Tennessee.
- Be developing and/or presenting a program of CME for physicians on a **regular and recurring** basis.
- Not be a [commercial interest](#).
- Not be developing and/or presenting a program of CME that is, in the judgment of the ACCME, devoted to advocacy on unscientific modalities of diagnosis or therapy.
- 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.

MAG accredits the following institutions, if they choose to seek accreditation:

- Hospitals
- Health systems
- State physician membership organizations
- Specialty societies
- Non-profit organizations
- For-profit organization

Other organizations whose programs of CME serve physician learners (30% or more of whom are from **beyond** the home or contiguous state(s) of the organization) should seek ACCME accreditation). Organizations whose programs of CME primarily serve physician learners (70% or more of whom are from the home or contiguous state(s) of the organization) are usually accredited by an ACCME recognized state medical society, MAG.

Note that a CME provider may not maintain both ACCME accreditation and accreditation by a state medical society at the same time. If a state medical society accredited provider alters its function and successfully achieves ACCME

accreditation, that provider must notify the respective state medical society. A similar process follows for ACCME accredited providers that become accredited by a state medical society.

When there is a question regarding eligibility, MAG reserves the right to make decisions on the issue, and has a formal process in place to do so.

The Pre-Application Process:

The first step in becoming accredited is completion of “The MAG Pre-Application Process” (“Pre-Application”). The purpose of the Pre-Application is to provide you with an opportunity to explain your eligibility for MAG accreditation, as well as to demonstrate that your organization has mechanisms in place to fulfill ACCME’s Essential Areas and Elements and Accreditation Policies ([Accreditation Requirements](#)) in the CME activities that you will produce.

Once your organization has completed and submitted to MAG the Pre-Application and \$250 Pre-Application fee, MAG will notify your organization whether it is eligible to continue with the initial accreditation process. This notification is in writing, and is usually sent within eight weeks of receipt of your Pre-Application. MAG staff review Pre-Applications regularly and will notify you once a decision has been made regarding your eligibility to continue with the initial accreditation process.

The Initial Self Study Process:

If your organization is deemed eligible to continue with the initial accreditation process, you will complete and submit an [Initial Self Study Report](#) for MAG accreditation, including payment of the \$3,300 Initial Application Fee. Once all required information and payment has been received, MAG will schedule your survey.

First-time applicants must fulfill two requirements with respect to their survey: they must have a survey at their administrative offices and have a CME activity reviewed. There is no prescribed order for the two requirements, but the first survey must take place prior to [Provisional Accreditation](#), and both requirements must be completed prior to [Accreditation](#).

The interview/survey provides an opportunity for your organization to meet with two MAG surveyors to discuss the objectives of your CME program and your approach to compliance with ACCME Requirements. The surveyors will clarify any questions they may have about your application, and will also expect to discuss your organization’s ongoing plans for improvement as they relate to your practice of CME. You can expect your surveyors to ask thoughtful questions and to listen carefully to what your organization has to say about its CME program.

Providers are responsible for reimbursing MAG for the travel expenses their surveyors incur as a result of their participation in the interview. Although MAG bills providers for the actual costs incurred, these expenses are above and beyond the \$3,300 Initial Application Fee.

Following the interview, the surveyors will document the results of their conversations with your organization and send the findings to MAG's Continuing Medical Education Committee. Once the findings are received, MAG's decision making process begins.

Relevant Downloads:

[Essential Areas & Elements, including the Standards for Commercial Support \(PDF\)](#)

[ACCME Accreditation Policies - All \(PDF\)](#)

[Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations \(PDF\)](#)

[Sample Initial Self Study Materials \(PDF\)](#)

[Self-Study Demographic Information form \(Word\)](#)

*****All links that refer back to the ACCME website are policies that MAG upholds and therefore, any accredited provider will need to abide by these policies in becoming accredited by MAG.