

**Guide to the Process for**

**ISMA Initial Accreditation**

Self-Study Report • Performance-in-Practice • Interview

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**Overview and Background Information**

**Conducting Your Self-Study for Initial Accreditation**

The self-study process provides an opportunity for an initial applicant to reflect on its program of CME. This process can help your organization assess its commitment to and role in providing continuing medical education and determine its future direction.

**As an initial applicant your organization is expected to demonstrate compliance with ALL**

**Core Accreditation Criteria (formerly C1 – 13), in order to achieve Provisional Accreditation.**

**Data Sources Used in the Initial Accreditation Process**

The Indiana State Medical Association’s accreditation process is an opportunityfor an organization to demonstrate that its practice of CME is in compliance with ACCME/ISMA accreditation requirements and policies through three primary sources of data about the organization’s CME program:

1. **Self-Study Report:** Organizations are asked to provide concise narrative descriptions, examples, and attachments to give ISMA an understanding of CME practices.
2. **Evidence of Performance-in-Practice Review:** Organizations are expected to prove that their CME activities are in compliance via a documentation review process.
3. **Accreditation Interview:** Organizations are presented with the opportunity to further describe the practices presented in the self-study report and in evidence of performance-in-practice, and provide clarification as needed, in conversation with a team of volunteer surveyors who are trained by the ISMA. It is an opportunity to ensure that any questions regarding the provider’s practices/procedures are answered so that complete information about the provider’s organization is considered in the accreditation decision.

**ISMA’s forms and documents used to facilitate the accreditation process are sent via email to the provider or organization applying for initial accreditation and are also available online.** To access the forms and documents, go to the ISMA website at [www.ismanet.org](http://www.ismanet.org). Click on Education – CME OneSource – Accreditation & Restudy – Accreditation Forms. **ISMA Recognition staff will go over these documents with you so that you understand what is required.**

**Expectations for Materials**

Information and materials submitted to the ISMA must not contain any untrue statements, must not omit any necessary material facts, must not be misleading, must fairly present the organization, and are the property of the organization.

Information and materials submitted for accreditation (self-study report, evidence of performance-in-practice, and other materials) must not include individually identifiable health information, in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

**Missing or Incomplete Information**

Providers that meet all deadlines and submission requirements of the accreditation review process will receive an accreditation decision from the ISMA. Please note, if ISMA is unable to render a decision due to missing or incomplete information, ISMA reserves the right to request additional information, the expenses for which will be borne by the initial applicant.

**Decision-Making**

Your organization’s compliance findings and the outcome of the accreditation review are determined by ISMA based on the data and information collected in the accreditation process. The data and information are analyzed and synthesized by ISMA surveyors and a report and recommendation on findings are forwarded for action to the ISMA Commission on Medical Education. All accreditation decisions are ratified by the ISMA Commission on Medical Education which has begun meeting three times each year (generally March, July and November). The Commission makes all final accreditation decisions.

**The ISMA’s initial accreditation decision will be based on your organization’s demonstration of compliance with all Core Accreditation Criteria and applicable ISMA/ACCME Accreditation Policies. Compliance with these criteria and policies will lead to an accreditation outcome of Provisional Accreditation with a two-year term**.

However, if any of these criteria are found to be in non-compliance, the accreditation outcome will be

Non-Accreditation. Initial applicants who receive Non-Accreditation may not be reviewed again by the ISMA until approximately six months to one year from the date of the ISMA meeting at which the decision was made.

**At the end of a two-year term of Provisional Accreditation, your organization would be eligible for reaccreditation. If successful in reaccreditation, your organization would be eligible for a status of either Standard Accreditation (with a four-year term) or Accreditation with Commendation (with a six-year term).**

This multi-tiered system of review provides the checks and balances necessary to ensure fair and accurate decisions. The fairness and accuracy of ISMA decisions are also enhanced by the ISMA’s use of a criterion-based decision-making system. Accreditation decision letters are sent to providers within 15 days following the ISMA Commission on Medical Education meeting.

**Self-Study Report – Data Source #1**

**Conducting Your Self-Study**

The Self-Study Report process provides an opportunity for an organization to reflect on its program of CME. This process can help the organization assess its commitment to and role in providing continuing medical education, analyze its current practices, identify areas for improvement, determine its future direction, and effectively present the results to ISMA in the Self-Study Report.

**The content of the Self-Study Report is specified by ISMA, but the process of conducting a self-studyis unique to each organization.** **Depending on the size and scope of the organization’s CME program, the process may involve many or just a few individuals.**

Regardless of the size or nature of the program, the Self-Study Report is intended to address:

* The extent to which the organization has met its CME Mission.
* An analysis of factors that supported or detracted from the CME mission being met.
* The extent to which, in the context of meeting the CME mission, the organization produces CME that:
  + Incorporates the educational needs that underlie the professional practice gaps of its own learners.
  + Is designed to change competence, performance, or patient outcomes.
  + Includes educational formats appropriate for the setting, objectives, and desired results.
  + Is in the context of desirable physician attributes.
  + Is independent from commercial interests, maintains a separation of education from promotion, ensures appropriate management of commercial support, and does not promote the proprietary interests of a commercial interest.
* How implemented improvements have or will help the organization better meet its mission.

**Completing Your Self-Study Report**

For **initial accreditation**,if your organization is approved to begin the application process by completing the Self-Study Report, ISMA will send the current version of the **Self-Study Report Form** via email within 6-8 weeks of the submission of the Pre-Application.

**Submitting Your Self-Study Report**

The following materials should be sent to ISMA electronically (*hard copies are no longer required*):

* ONE (1) electronic copy of your Self Study Report Form, including labeled attachments, with pages sequentially numbered. It should be saved and uploaded as a single Word document to ISMA’s OneDrive share-file system. If you have ability to bookmark the report sections, please do so.

The cover page of each Self-Study Report should clearly identify your organization by name. Use the full name of your organization as it is known to the ISMA (no acronyms or abbreviations).

Keep a duplicate copy for your reference at any time during the accreditation process, but especially at the time of the accreditation interview.

**PROVIDE EMAIL NOTIFICATION TO THE FOLLOWING**

**ISMA STAFF ONCE ALL DOCUMENTATION HAS BEEN SUBMITTED:**

**Cheryl Stearley**

**CME Accreditation & Recognition Administrator**

**Email:** [**cstearley@ismanet.org**](mailto:cstearley@ismanet.org)

**Phone: 317-454-7731**

**Evidence of Performance-in-Practice — Data Source #2**

**Selection of Activities**

Organizations are asked to verify that their CME activities are in compliance with the ISMA’s Accreditation Criteria and Policies through a performance-in-practice review process.

**As an initial applicant this process will require the following actions:**

1. You will select **no less than two (2) CME activities**, completed within the last 12-month period, for which your organization will present evidence to demonstrate that your CME activities are in compliance with ISMA Accreditation Criteria and Policies.

In this process, you will present information and materials that you developed and utilized to ensure that your CME activities are in compliance. Blank forms, blank checklists and policy documents alone do not verify performance-in-practice.

**Preparation and Submission of Evidence of Performance-in-Practice**

**The ISMA Performance-in-Practice Structured Abstract must accompany each activity file.**

ISMA CME staff will provide you with this document and/or it may alsobe downloaded from the ISMA CME OneSource website at:

<https://www.ismanet.org/ISMA/Education/CME_OneSource/ISMA/Education/CME_OneSource.aspx>

Following the Structured Abstract, you will provide the information requested in concise narrative explanations and statements, in tables, and attach supportive documents and evidence to verify that the activity meets the ISMA’s requirements.

**Submitting Your Evidence of Performance-in-Practice**

The following materials must be sent to ISMA electronically (*hard copies are no longer required*):

* ONE (1) electronic copy of your evidence of PIP for each of the 2 activities selected, saved and uploaded as PDF documents on ISMA’s OneDrive share-file system. Please name/identify the activity files individually.

**PROVIDE EMAIL NOTIFICATION TO THE FOLLOWING**

**ISMA STAFF ONCE ALL DOCUMENTATION HAS BEEN SUBMITTED:**

**Cheryl Stearley**

**CME Accreditation & Recognition Administrator**

**Email:** [**cstearley@ismanet.org**](mailto:cstearley@ismanet.org)

**Phone: 317-454-7731**

**Interview — Data Source #3**

Organizations are presented with the opportunity to further describe the practices presented in the self-study report and in evidence of performance-in-practice, and provide clarification as needed in conversation with a team of volunteer surveyors who are trained by the ISMA.

ISMA surveyors will be assigned to review the self-study materials you submit to the ISMA. They will meet virtually with representatives of your CME program to engage in a dialogue about your organization’s policies and practices that ensure compliance with the ISMA’s Accreditation Criteria and Policies, including the Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education.

During the interview, the surveyors will seek clarification about any questions they may have regarding the self-study materials you submitted to the ISMA. You can expect ISMA surveyors to:

1. Conduct their interactions with providers in a professional manner
2. Be familiar with your materials and the ISMA’s Accreditation Criteria and Policies, and
3. Communicate clearly and effectively with providers without offering consultative advice or feedback regarding compliance or the expected outcome of the accreditation review. The survey team may request that a provider submit additional materials based on this dialogue to verify a provider’s practice.

**Formats**

The ISMA utilizes the Zoom platform as its standard accreditation interview format. However, other interview formats are available, if necessary, including a face-to-face meeting at the ISMA office or an on-site meeting at your organization’s office. Interviews typically average 90 minutes in length.

To ensure the validity of the process and based on circumstances and available resources, the ISMA reserves the right to make all final decisions regarding the interview format, date, time, and/or composition of the survey team.

**Scheduling**

The ISMA will provide information about the process of scheduling the accreditation interview during initial discussions. The ISMA will confirm your assigned survey team and the interview date and time well in advance via email. Your organization will be asked to confirm receipt of this communication.

**Fees**

**Initial Accreditation** - The ISMA currently assesses an initial applicant survey fee of **$2,500** for receipt of a Self-Study Report and associated material to consider and provide for survey services. Thereafter, an Annual Service Fee covers annual accreditation services and training provided by ISMA on a continual basis.

**Onsite Interview** – If one is requested, providers are expected to cover the survey team’s travel/hotel expenses for this format.

**Overview of CME Accreditation Timeline & Checklist**

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| Before Accreditation Decision Date | Before Interview Date | After Interview Date |
| ☐ Participate in **Preparing for Accreditation** **Zoom** **Teleconference,** which will include review of Self Study Report Form, Performance-in-Practice Structured Abstract, and Guide to the Process for ISMA Initial Accreditation (6-9 months before accreditation decision)  ☐ Receive an email from ISMA to **schedule survey** (6-9 months before accreditation decision)  ☐ Receive an email from ISMA **confirming the survey** (at least 3-4 months before the interview date) | ☐ Submit **Self-Study Report**  (1-2 months before the interview date)  ☐ Submit **Performance-in-Practice Structured Abstract** and supportive documents for each activity selected for review (1-2 months before the interview date) | ☐ Submit **additional materials**  (if requested by ISMA)  Receive **Accreditation Decision Letter and Accreditation Certificate** by  email (within 15 days of ISMA’s Commission on Medical Education Meeting)  ☐ Invoiced for **accreditation interview** |
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