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COUNCIL ON PODIATRIC MEDICAL EDUCATION VIRTUAL SITE VISIT POLICY

On March 17, 2020 the United States Department of Education issued guidance allowing recognized agencies to proceed with virtual site visits on a temporary basis, on the condition that they are followed, within a reasonable time frame, by an in-person visit to campus.

The Council on Podiatric Medical Education (Council or CPME) will make a determination about the format for any upcoming school visits as information becomes available and CPME will contact the schools directly.

The information below supplements CPME 130, *Procedures for Accrediting Colleges of Podiatric Medicine* concerning the conduct of completely virtual or partially virtual site visits and will be updated as necessary.

Colleges Engaging in Virtual Site Visits

If CPME staff, in consultation with the Council chair, determine that a virtual site visit (either completely or partially virtual) must be conducted in lieu of an on-site visit due to natural disasters, pandemics, or other circumstances of that magnitude, then the dean is responsible to ensure that the evaluation team has adequate opportunity to engage in all of the meetings listed in CPME 130, *Procedures for Accrediting Colleges of Podiatric Medicine*. Partially virtual site visits, where one or more team members may conduct the visit virtually, may be utilized in instances where the full team is unable to travel to the school due to natural disasters or other catastrophic events. The virtual on-site evaluations will follow the same requirements, policy and procedures as the on-site evaluation with modifications to accommodate the online platforms. The dean should prepare, ahead of time, all technological necessities to ensure that the evaluation team meets with the individuals as cited above and for all documentation reviews. Additionally, the dean is to prepare contingency plans in case of unforeseeable technological difficulties including power loss or other acts of nature. CPME will provide the virtual platform and will share the access codes for the meetings.

If for any reason the evaluation team is not provided with the opportunity to hold these meetings, or if the individuals requested are not in attendance sufficient to adequately assess the college, the Council may determine that the report of the on-site evaluation is not sufficient to grant continuing accreditation of the college and may schedule another site visit at cost to the college. Inability to communicate with the individuals due to technological barriers will be viewed negatively by the evaluation team and ultimately by the Council.

If the on-site visit is conducted completely virtually, a follow-up in-person on-site visit will take place within 24 months following the virtual site visit and when it is safe to do so. If the on-site visit is



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conducted only partially virtually, no follow-up in-person site visit will be necessary as team members were present on campus to assess the school during the partially virtual site visit.

The follow-up in-person visit may be performed by staff or a trained site visitor and need not repeat the full review. A focused on-site visit to confirm the presence of facilities viewed during the virtual site visit and the opportunity to randomly select students to interview as part of the normal site visit process would fulfill the need of a full on-site visit following the virtual site visit.

Virtual site visits are limited to colleges that are otherwise in good standing or to colleges that are engaged in renewal of accreditation, as opposed to those colleges seeking an initial award of accreditation.

Policy adopted by CPME October 17, 2020