



Guidance to Improve the Quality of Interprofessional Education (IPE) for the Health Professions Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Health Professions Accreditors Collaborative (HPAC)?

The [Health Professions Accreditors Collaborative](#) was established in 2014 as a platform for discussion, proactive problem solving, and sharing among accreditors in the health care professions. HPAC represents member organizations that are committed to working together to advance education, practice, and quality across professions and disciplines. The Collaborative grew out of solution-oriented conversations among member agencies of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) and initially focused on enhancing accreditors' ability to ensure graduates of health profession education programs are prepared for interprofessional collaborative practice.

What is the National Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education?

The [National Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education](#) is a unique public-private partnership charged by its founding funders to provide the leadership, evidence, and resources needed to guide the nation on the use of IPE and collaborative practice as a way to enhance the experience of health care, improve population health, and reduce the overall cost of care. The founding and current funding members of the National Center are the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the John A. Hartford Foundation, and the University of Minnesota.

Why did HPAC and the National Center collaborate on the *Guidance on Developing Quality Interprofessional Education for the Health Professions*?

Endorsing HPAC members recognize that accreditation plays an important role promoting quality interprofessional education (IPE) that leads to effective health outcomes, including encouraging communication and collaboration across professions and the institutions that sponsor educational programs. The guidance document was developed in collaboration with the National Center to provide guidance so students in foundational and graduate education programs are prepared for interprofessional collaborative practice upon graduation.

Which health care accrediting organizations have endorsed the guidance?

To date, the Boards/Commissions of the following organizations have endorsed the guidance document:

- [Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools \(ABHES\)](#)
- [Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing \(ACEN\)](#)
- [Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education \(ACME\)](#)
- [Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics \(ACEND\)](#)
- [Accreditation Council on Optometric Education \(ACOE\)](#)
- [Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education \(ACOTE\)](#)
- [Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education \(ACPE\)](#)
- [Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant \(ARC-PA\)](#)
- [Commission on Accreditation of the American Psychological Association \(APA-CoA\)](#)
- [Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs \(CAAHEP\)](#)
- [Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education \(CAATE\)](#)
- [Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education \(CAHIIM\)](#)
- [Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education \(CAPTE\)](#)
- [Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care \(CoARC\)](#)
- [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education \(CCNE\)](#)
- [Commission on Dental Accreditation \(CODA\)](#)
- [Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation \(COCA\)](#)
- [Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs \(CACREP\)](#)
- [Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association \(CAA-ASHA\)](#)
- [Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs \(COA-NA\)](#)
- [Council on Chiropractic Education \(CCE\)](#)
- [Council on Podiatric Medical Education \(CPME\)](#)
- [Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\)](#)
- [Liaison Committee on Medical Education \(LCME\)](#)

Why is guidance on quality IPE needed?

As the United States health care system is being redesigned to be a patient-driven process that leverages teams, highlights workforce optimization, increases value, and enhances the use of technology, health professions accreditation will play a key role in producing professionals that will excel in this system. The urgent need for health professionals to work together and create models of care is unprecedented. During the

past decade, health care in the United States has become more complex and is rapidly evolving to be more team-based across professions, with the emphasis shifting from primarily acute care settings into greater attention to prevention, primary care, and the importance of the community, such as the social determinants of health. This expanded view of how to achieve health is driving new models for IPE and collaborative practice. In order to provide quality and cost-effective care, health professionals must be better prepared to lead and collaborate on interprofessional teams. To this end, the guidance document is intended to foster increased communication and collaboration between health professions educators in the various health professions and to provide guidance on achieving quality IPE.

What are the goals of the guidance document?

The goals of the guidance are to facilitate the preparation of health professional students for interprofessional collaborative practice through accreditor collaboration and to provide consensus guidance to enable institutions to develop, implement, and evaluate systematic IPE approaches and IPE plans. The document:

- Offers consensus terminology and definitions for IPE and related concepts;
- Encourages institutional leaders to develop a systematic approach to foster IPE in their own institutions and, where appropriate, collaborate with academic institutions, health systems, and community partners;
- Suggests a framework for leaders and faculty to develop a plan for quality IPE; and
- Provides opportunities for HPAC member accreditation boards/commissions to utilize the guidance to assess their IPE standards and to train site teams regarding the essential elements of quality IPE.

How was the guidance document developed?

The guidance was developed through a multi-year, multi-phase consensus process aimed at supporting the development and implementation of quality IPE. A writing team comprised of members of HPAC and the National Center led the development process, whereby consensus was achieved through a series of drafts, HPAC member consultation with their boards/commissions, stakeholder reactions/feedback, revisions, and approvals.

How does the guidance document support current IPE accreditation standards?

The guidance is not intended to replace or subsume individual HPAC members' accreditation standards for IPE, nor is it intended for accreditors to have identical IPE standards. While maintaining individual accreditors' autonomy, the guidance document seeks to encourage increased communication and collaboration and to provide guidance on expectations related to quality IPE.

Who will find this document useful?

Quality IPE requires interdependence across professions and an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of those involved in its planning, implementation, and evaluation. This guidance document was developed to inform three audiences simultaneously:

- Presidents, Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors, Provosts, and other leaders who have institutional responsibility for accreditation and IPE at their institutions of higher education;
- Deans, department chairs, directors, faculty, and other health program leaders who are responsible for planning and implementing IPE learning activities that will meet the objectives of their own programs and the expectations of relevant accrediting bodies; and
- HPAC member accreditation board/commission members and evaluators who will be developing and/or reviewing IPE standards and procedures.