FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
FUTURE OF CONJOIN ACCREDITATION SERVICES

GENERAL:

What did Conjoint Accreditation Services announce?

On January 22, 2016, Conjoint Accreditation Services announced that it will exit its responsibility for assessing and accrediting health science education programs in designated professions by February 1, 2018.

Why did Joule Inc. decide to exit from Conjoint Accreditation Services?

Joule Inc. is the Canadian Medical Association’s newest company and Conjoint Accreditation Services’ governing body. Joule’s mandate is focused on the personal and patient care needs of individual physicians. Following an extensive program review, it has become apparent that accreditation functions lie outside that mandate.

What is the role of the regulatory bodies and certification associations with regard to the future of accreditation?

The regulatory bodies, certification and professional associations must determine the next steps for program accreditation for their own profession. Conjoint Accreditation Services will wait for their guidance and engage with them as required.

How will Conjoint Accreditation Services exit this business line?

Conjoint Accreditation Services is embarking on a responsible exit from its activities and is committed to working with all stakeholders during this transition period. Conjoint Accreditation Services will continue to operate for up to 24 months. Accreditation services will continue to be offered within this period; however, new applications for accreditation will not be accepted.

What has been happening since the announcement?

Since the announcement to divest from providing accreditation services there have been numerous activities toward finding a solution that succeeds Conjoint Accreditation Services. All nine national certification/professional associations are actively exploring options and have formed a working group to this end. Conjoint Accreditation Services has been attending meetings to identify key risks and considerations during the transition phase and to ensure the professions (national certification/professional association and provincial regulatory bodies) have the information, tools and processes they need to move forward.

When can we expect to find out more?

The decision regarding the future solution or solutions for program accreditation is the responsibility of the professions. Conjoint Accreditation Services is expecting to receive an indication of the direction in which they may move as early as summer 2016. This FAQ
document will be updated as new information is available.

What is happening with governance of the accreditation process throughout the transition?

The Committee on Conjoint Accreditation (CCA) and the Committee on Program Accreditation (COPA) have confirmed their commitment to work with Conjoint Accreditation Services during this transition. Conjoint Accreditation Services staff have also been provided the support they need to continue their work throughout this period.

FOR SPONSORS and PROGRAMS:

What happens to the programs if an organization withdraws their sponsorship?

Conjoint Accreditation Services requires sponsorship from both a national certification and professional association and a national physician association to include any profession in our process. Conjoint Accreditation Services would therefore no longer be able to continue with accreditation activities for the relevant profession if either of these two sponsors withdrew their sponsorship.

Conjoint Accreditation Services does not require sponsorship from the provincial regulatory bodies or the education and scientific associations for inclusion of a profession. As such, any sponsorship withdrawals from these three groups would not impact the ability for Conjoint Accreditation Services to continue to provide accreditation services.

New

Is Conjoint Accreditation Services still accepting new applications for accreditation?

New applications for accreditation will not be received after January 22, 2016: the estimated duration to complete the accreditation process, from receiving a new application to completing the Program Assessment Report, is 18 months with the appeal deadline being 30 days following receipt of this report. Therefore, completion of the assessment and any appeal process cannot be guaranteed prior to the February 1, 2018 exit date.

Is Conjoint Accreditation Services still going to accept revised competency profiles for use in the accreditation process?

Yes. However, the program reporting and report review processes that accompany the implementation of a revised competency profile in the accreditation process may not be fully complete. Please consult with Conjoint Accreditation Services to discuss timelines.

Revised

Are visits scheduled for 2016 or 2017 still occurring?

Conjoint Accreditation Services will continue to operate for the next 24 months and will complete all accreditation activities scheduled for 2016 and 2017 unless we receive notice otherwise from the national professional/certification organizations or from programs.
Can a program still obtain a 6-yr status if the visit is in 2016 or 2017?

Yes, if your program demonstrates that it is in compliance with all five requirements, it will be accorded at 6-year status. The accreditation term, however, will expire on February 1, 2018.

What happens to the Conjoint Accreditation Services accreditation term (date of expiry) and accreditation status (2-year and 6-year) after February 1, 2018?

An accreditation status is indicative of the level of compliance with accreditation criteria; programs that demonstrate compliance with all five accreditation requirements are accorded a 6-year status and partial compliance accorded a two-year status. Given Joule’s decision to divest, the accreditation term for all programs will expire on February 1, 2018. However, it would be the prerogative of the body assuming the accreditation role to acknowledge the Conjoint Accreditation Services status (and associated term) in order to facilitate a seamless transition and maintain current accreditation cycles.

Conjoint Accreditation Services will wait for guidance from the regulatory bodies and national professional/certification organizations as to next steps. Programs are encouraged to engage with the relevant regulatory bodies and national professional/certification organizations to help guide their next steps. Should decisions be taken by national professional/certification organizations that impact the services provided by Conjoint Accreditation Services, we will notify the relevant programs.

Will the standards of accreditation change in any way during the transition period?

No, the standards will not change. The robustness of the assessment process will continue as it always has. The assessments will continue to be based on the requirements and criteria listed in the 2014 Requirements for accreditation handbook. Maintaining the integrity of the assessment process is important for transitioning a high quality accreditation solution to a new service provider. Conjoint Accreditation Services is very proud of the reputation and legacy built over the years - all in support of building a better health-care system for Canadians.

Can accreditation survey visit dates scheduled in 2016 or 2017 be moved?

In order to adequately serve those programs already scheduled during this transition period, Conjoint Accreditation Services is not able to accommodate changes or deferrals to our scheduled accreditation activities.

Our program’s visit was scheduled for the first half of 2018, with a phase I submission due Fall 2017. Do we still submit our phase I submission even if the visit won’t occur?

All scheduled activities in 2017 will be conducted by Conjoint Accreditation Services. These activities include the review of phase I submissions scheduled for the fall of 2017. It will be responsibility of the professions to determine timelines for activities in 2018, including phase II reviews resulting from the fall 2017 phase I assessments.
Do programs still need to submit follow-up reports to Conjoint Accreditation Services?

Unless otherwise notified, follow-up reports (as listed in program assessment reports) must be submitted in order to maintain accreditation.

Why should a program go through the process of accreditation and what should they consider before making a decision whether to withdraw or not?

For many programs, staying accredited means ensuring that graduates have access to certification exams and licensing.

Additionally, the Conjoint Accreditation Services process is an opportunity to receive feedback from peers about program strengths and areas for improvement. As such, it can be an important driver for program improvement.

Any program considering withdrawing from accreditation is encouraged to first engage with relevant provincial regulatory bodies and national professional/certification organizations to assess the impact of such a decision on the ability of program graduates to access certification exams and licensing.

Can a site survey be moved into the 2017 schedule if the program accreditation status expires after February 1, 2018?

At this point, confirming our workload in this shifting landscape for 2017 is not possible. We will continue to evaluate our resources on a continual basis and where possible, we will open discussions with programs who have expressed a desire to move their visit.

Will refunds be issued for program withdrawals?

Yes, annual fees will be refunded if programs voluntary withdraw from the accreditation process. Refunds will be pro-rated based on the date of withdrawal.

Has anything changed regarding the process for program assessments, third-party complaints or appeals?

No. Conjoint Accreditation Services’ Committee on Program Accreditation (COPA) who ratifies all program assessments and reviews third-party complaints and the Committee on Conjoint Accreditation (CCA) who reviews appeals are maintaining these functions during this transition period.

However, given the announcement that Conjoint Accreditation Services is divesting itself of the responsibility to accredit health educational programs on or before February 1, 2018 and to ensure appropriate time for complaints to be processed, all 3rd-party complaints must be submitted on or before October 1, 2017.
OTHER:

What is the approach Conjoint Accreditation Services is taking for groups or individuals who are offering their services for business continuation?

While Conjoint Accreditation Services is committed to working with the regulatory bodies, national professional/certification organizations and programs to ensure a smooth transition for everyone involved, these stakeholders are ultimately responsible for deciding the next steps. We therefore suggest that these groups or individuals contact regulatory bodies and national professional/certification organizations directly.