
Section C:

The Accreditation Process & Associated Fee

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The Accreditation Process

Overview

The accreditation process is a structured, step-by-step process by which institutions/programs demonstrate how they meet the MEAC Standards for Accreditation. It consists of a preliminary application and self-evaluation report prepared by the institution/program followed by a site visit and interviews conducted by MEAC, a report of the findings of the accreditation review process, and a decision by the MEAC Board of Directors.

The accreditation process is designed to create or support opportunities for the directors, students, faculty and staff of institutions/programs to evaluate their midwifery education program against these national standards as well as any goals set by the institution/program itself. In addition, the accreditation process also provides opportunities for institutions/programs to receive training from MEAC specialists and feedback from teachers, administrators and other peers in the field of midwifery education.

Detailed policies and procedures regarding all accreditation activities can be found in Section G of the MEAC Accreditation Handbook.

Getting Started

Before initiating the accreditation process, carefully review the MEAC Accreditation Handbook. Consider the specific benchmarks that must be met within each of the standards, the kinds of documentation that will be required, the policies and procedures you must have in place, the costs of accreditation, and the responsibilities of maintaining accreditation status. This may seem overwhelming at first, but if you have a relatively new institution/program, the accreditation process will really help you get organized. If you have been involved in midwifery education for a long time, it may help to know that others have found this process to be very helpful in strengthening weak areas of an existing institution/program.

MEAC provides training and technical assistance to institutions/programs about the accreditation process and may recommend consulting educators, administrators, accountants and/or other professionals for further development of the institution or program. MEAC may require an applicant to attend workshops on the accreditation process. MEAC staff is available throughout the process to answer questions and provide other assistance.

Once you've made the decision to seek accreditation, identify the people in your institution/program who will contribute to the preparation of your application and self-evaluation report. The Midwifery Program Director (or equivalent in your institution/program) generally leads the process but faculty, students, staff, board members and other stakeholders will also be involved depending on the size, structure and complexity of your midwifery education program. Get your team together to review the requirements and the timeline. Figure out who needs to do what to put all the pieces in place and get started!

Part I Preliminary Application

The Preliminary Application and Part I Fee initiates the accreditation process and launches the timeline that structures each of the following steps in the process. The application is intended to document the institution's/program's legal authority to provide an educational program, explain the ownership and governance structure, provide other necessary background information, and briefly describe the midwifery education program. The Preliminary Application form and checklist can be found in Section D of the MEAC Accreditation Handbook.

Part I Procedures and Timeline

1. Applicant submits Preliminary Application and Part I Fee
2. MEAC Accreditation Coordinator (AC) reviews the Preliminary Application:
 - Is the Preliminary Application complete?
 - Does the applicant meet the basic legal and financial requirements?
3. MEAC notifies applicant within 4 weeks of receipt of Preliminary Application:
 - Preliminary Application has been accepted and the Self-Evaluation Report is due within 26 weeks of notification of acceptance
 - If Preliminary Application is incomplete and/or doesn't meet basic legal and financial requirements:
 - Applicant must submit missing and/or new information within 4 weeks of notification
 - AC will review missing and/or new information
 - MEAC will notify applicant within 4 weeks of receipt of missing and/or new information that the Preliminary Application has either been accepted or rejected
4. If the Preliminary Application is rejected, an explanation will be provided and the applicant may reapply at any time.

Part II Self Evaluation Report (SER)

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) is a comprehensive, detailed report prepared by the institution/program addressing each of the standards and associated benchmarks. The institution/program is asked to demonstrate how the benchmarks are met by providing written descriptions; completing forms and tables; submitting documents, records and reports; and copies of policies and procedures, contracts, and marketing materials. The SER Workbook, found in Section E of the MEAC Accreditation Handbook, guides you through the process and serves as a reference so you can be sure your report is complete and correctly formatted.

An Accreditation Review Committee (ARC) will be appointed to evaluate your SER, conduct your subsequent site visit and interviews, and to prepare a report with recommendations to the MEAC Board of Directors. You will be provided the names of volunteers who may be appointed to serve as your ARC and you have the right to request alternate appointees. The ARC will determine whether your SER is complete and the information provided adequately addresses the benchmarks. You will be given an opportunity to provide new and/or different information if necessary.

After you submit your SER, MEAC will publish a notice in the MANA News and a community newspaper about your institution's or program's application for accreditation. We will also send an announcement to any applicable regulatory or accrediting bodies. The ARC will consider any third party comments regarding your institution's/program's qualifications for accreditation and will follow-up as needed.

Part II Procedures and Timeline

1. Applicant must submit Self Evaluation Report (SER) and Part II Fee within 26 weeks of MEAC notifying applicant that Preliminary Application was accepted. MEAC sends a list of proposed Accreditation Review Committee (ARC) members to applicant for approval.
2. Applicant approves ARC members within 4 weeks of MEAC providing list of proposed ARC members
3. Accreditation Coordinator completes thorough review of SER and drafts preliminary analysis of SER within 4 weeks of MEAC receipt of SER
 - Is the SER complete?
 - Does the applicant appear to meet the benchmarks and documentation requirements?
4. MEAC posts public notices of applicant's application for accreditation within 4 weeks of MEAC receipt of SER and notifies state agencies and other accreditors, soliciting third party comment.
5. ARC reviews/revises preliminary analysis of SER and MEAC notifies applicant within 6 weeks of receiving Accreditation Coordinator preliminary analysis:
 - SER is adequate; ARC Preliminary Analysis and site visit preparation materials are provided; and site visit will be scheduled within 26 weeks
 - SER is incomplete or inadequate
 - Applicant must submit missing and/or new information within 8 weeks
 - AC/ARC will review missing and/or new information
 - MEAC will notify applicant within 8 weeks of receiving missing and/or new information that SER is adequate/site visit can be scheduled or SER is rejected with explanation
 - SER is rejected with explanation
6. If the SER is rejected, the applicant may not re-apply until a period of 26 weeks has elapsed since MEAC's decision.

Part III Site Visit and Interviews

A two or three day visit to the institution/program and interviews of students, faculty, and staff will be conducted by members of your Accreditation Review Committee (ARC) to verify that the information provided in the SER is accurate and complete. The SER Workbook includes all of the specific information that the site visitors will be looking for in the site visit and interviews. The ARC will use standardized procedures and forms to gather information and you will receive copies of these forms well in advance of the site visit so that you know what to expect and what to prepare.

MEAC will work with you to establish a site visit date that works for you and the site visitors and will make travel arrangements for the site visitors. You will be contacted to help prepare and arrange a schedule for activities during the site visit.

Part III Procedures and Timeline

1. Site visit is scheduled to occur within 26 weeks of MEAC notifying applicant that the SER has been accepted
2. Accreditation Coordinator confirms site visit dates with applicant and site visitors, develops tentative site visit schedule and sends to applicant 8 weeks in advance of site visit
3. Applicant submits Part III Fee 6 weeks in advance of site visit
4. Accreditation Coordinator and ARC review any public comments received and any other concerns and/or questions raised by SER review; finalize site visit schedule (including tasks assigned to site visitors); and prepare information for applicant 2 weeks in advance of site visit
5. MEAC sends final site visit schedule, site visit preparation materials, and any specific questions/concerns the ARC will address during site visit in addition to basic site visit activities 2 weeks in advance of site visit
6. Site visit occurs over 2-3 days; phone interviews may occur before, during and/or after the site visit
7. ARC and Accreditation Coordinator verbally review Preliminary Report and site visit results with applicant at conclusion of site visit

Part IV ARC Final Report

The ARC evaluates whether your program or institution meets the standards through review of the SER, the site visit and interviews. They examine any third party comments, complaints or information from regulatory or accrediting agencies. Based on their findings, they will prepare and send you a draft of the ARC Final Report. You will have the opportunity to send clarifying comments and, if requested, to provide additional information or new evidence to demonstrate how benchmarks are met. After incorporating your response, the ARC will submit the ARC Final Report with their recommendations to the MEAC Board of Directors.

Part IV Procedures and Timeline

1. Accreditation Coordinator prepares written report combining ARC Preliminary Report, site visit and interview results and provides to ARC within 4 weeks of completing site visit.
2. ARC reviews ARC Preliminary Report, site visit and interview results and AS written report; adopts draft ARC Final Report within 4 weeks of receiving AC written report:
 - Is all documentation complete and adequate to determine whether or not benchmarks have been met?
 - Was ARC able to verify information during site visit and/or interviews?
3. MEAC sends draft ARC Final Report to applicant with request, if applicable, for additional information and/or new evidence that benchmark(s) have been met; applicant must respond within 8 weeks of receipt with clarifying comments, additional information and/or new evidence that benchmarks have been met.
4. Accreditation Coordinator and ARC review applicant's response and revise report accordingly; ARC adopts ARC Final Report with Recommendation to grant, defer or deny accreditation within 6 weeks.

Part V Decision by Board of Directors

The Board of Directors makes the decision to grant, defer or deny accreditation. If you are unable to provide information that satisfactorily demonstrates how your institution or program meets the standards by the established deadline, accreditation will be denied. If it is denied, your institution or program may re-apply when one year has elapsed from the date of the Board's final decision.

MEAC provides an appeal process if an institution or program believes it has been unjustly denied accreditation which is described in Section G of the MEAC Accreditation Handbook. MEAC will notify your institution/program once an accreditation decision has been made.

If the Board grants accreditation or pre-accreditation status, MEAC will provide you with a certificate, and notify applicable 3rd parties.

Part VI Maintaining Accreditation

Accredited institutions/programs must demonstrate continuing compliance with MEAC standards and fulfill certain other requirements, including the submission of annual reports and sustaining fees as well as any interim reports required by the Board.

If MEAC has reason to be concerned that an accredited institution/program is not in compliance with MEAC standards, MEAC may conduct special evaluations or site visits, require the institution/program to show cause why accreditation should not be withdrawn, and/or take adverse action which could include terminating accreditation.

Accredited institutions/programs must notify MEAC before making substantive changes and certain changes require prior approval by MEAC. More specific requirements, policies and procedures for maintaining accreditation can be found in Section G of the MEAC Accreditation Handbook.

Part VII Renewing Accreditation

MEAC will notify accredited institutions/programs that they must begin the process of renewing accreditation by submitting an Application to Renew Accreditation and Part I Fee at least 112 weeks in advance of the expiration date their current period of accreditation.

MEAC will notify applicant within 4 weeks of receipt of Application to Renew Accreditation and Part I Fee that the Self-Evaluation Report is due within 26 weeks. The process continues as described in Parts II through VI above.

More specific requirements, policies and procedures for renewing accreditation can be found in Section G of the MEAC Accreditation Handbook.

	Cumulative Timeline	Step Timeline	Applicant submits to MEAC:	MEAC Internal Procedures:	Applicant notified by MEAC:
PART I	0 weeks		Preliminary Application and Part I Fee		
	4 weeks	4 weeks		Accreditation Coordinator (AC) reviews preliminary application; verifies info and finds complete, basic requirements met	Preliminary application has been accepted, SER due in 26 weeks
PART II	30 weeks	26 weeks	Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and Part II Fee		List of proposed Accreditation Review Committee (ARC) members
	34 weeks	4 weeks	Applicant approves ARC members	AC drafts preliminary analysis of SER; staff posts public notices	
	40 weeks	6 weeks		ARC reviews/revises AC preliminary analysis of SER;	Preliminary analysis of SER and site visit prep info, site visit to be completed within 26 weeks
PART III	56 weeks	16 weeks		AC confirms site visit dates with applicant and site visitors	Confirmed site visit dates and tentative schedule
	58 weeks	2 weeks	Part III Fee	AC/applicant develops tentative site visit schedule	
	60 weeks	2 weeks		AC/ARC review any public comments received, finalize site visit schedule, prepares info for applicant	Final site visit schedule, prep reminders and any specific questions/concerns the ARC will address during site visit
	66 weeks	6 weeks	Site Visit and Interviews Completed		Verbal review of preliminary analysis and site visit results at close of site visit
PART IV	70 weeks	4 weeks		AC prepares draft ARC Final Report	
	74 weeks	4 weeks		ARC reviews/revises draft ARC Final Report	Draft ARC Final Report, response with any comments/added info due in 8 weeks
	82 weeks	8 weeks	Response to draft ARC final report with any comments/added info		
	88 weeks	6 weeks		AC/ARC reviews applicant response, makes revisions as indicated, adopts ARC Final Report with Recommendations	
PART V	110 weeks	22 weeks		Board reviews ARC Final Report with Recommendations and makes decision regarding accreditation	
	112 weeks	2 weeks			Applicant notified of Board decision

Fee Schedule

Fee schedule effective November 1, 2008. The fee schedule is reviewed annually and is subject to change. There are no refunds allowed, except as noted.

Fee for Initial Accreditation and Reaccreditation

Part I (due with Preliminary Application).....\$200

Part II (due with Self Evaluation Report).....\$1200-\$3000

Gross income derived from tuition and student fees in last complete fiscal year	Part II Fee
0-\$50,000	\$1200
\$50,000-\$100,000	\$2400
>\$100,000	\$3000

Part III (due 8 weeks in advance of Site Visit)..... \$2000

Total\$2900-\$4700

Annual Sustaining Fees

Sustaining fees are assessed every year, including the years in which re-accreditation fees are paid. Annual Sustaining Fees are calculated from a base fee with additional fees applied per matriculating student depending on the type of accreditation and services provided, such as degree granting and Title IV participation. A *matriculating student* is a person enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an institution/program for the purpose of obtaining a degree or certificate in midwifery. The number of students used in the formula is based on the number enrolled on December 31st of the previous year.

Sustaining Fee Schedule Adopted October 2008	Due Oct 15, 2009	Due Oct 15, 2010	Due Oct 15, 2011	Due Oct 15, 2012
Base Rate	\$3,500.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,500.00	\$5,000.00
*Programmatic Accreditation	\$50.00	\$55.00	\$60.00	\$65.00
*Institutional Accreditation	\$80.00	\$90.00	\$100.00	\$110.00
*Distance Education	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$15.00	\$18.00
*Degree-granting	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$65.00
*Title IV participant	\$30.00	\$35.00	\$40.00	\$45.00

Annual Sustaining Fees are due October 15 each year. The penalty for late payment is \$200 after the deadline plus \$100 for each 30 days late thereafter.

Fee Schedule Example for Assessing Annual Sustaining Fees due October 15, 2010:

- Institutional Accreditation Base Fee \$4000 plus \$90 per student
 - Add \$50 per student if institution is degree-granting, and/or
 - Add \$35 per student if institution participates in Title IV programs, and/or
 - Add \$12 per student if institution participates in distance/correspondence education

For example, an institution that is degree-granting but does not participate in Title IV programs and had ten matriculating students enrolled as of December 31 of the previous year would pay \$4700. The calculation looks like this:

$$\$4000 + 10(\$90) + 10(\$50) = \$5400$$

Substantive Change Fees

Change in Mission/Purpose/Objectives	\$300
Change in Ownership, Legal Status or Form of Control (plus Site Visit fees if required)	\$800
New Branch Campus (plus Site Visit fees).....	\$800
Change of Location.....	\$300
Addition of Auxiliary Classroom.....	\$300
Decision to Implement Title IV Programs.....	\$300
Changes in Curriculum:	
Addition or discontinuation of courses that results in:	
Significant departure in content.....	\$300
Significant departure in method of delivery (includes distance learning).....	\$300
Change in length of program.....	\$300
Addition of courses at a higher degree/credential level (includes change to degree granting status).....	\$300
Substantial increase or decrease in credit hours awarded	\$300
Change from credit to clock hours or vice versa.....	\$300
Change in capacity for clinical training	\$300

Other Miscellaneous Fees

Site Visit Fee.....	\$2000
Interim change from pre-accreditation to accreditation status	\$300
Penalty for late submission of Annual Report (plus \$100 for each 30 days late thereafter)	\$200
Penalty for late submission of Annual Sustaining Fees..... (plus \$100 for each 30 days late thereafter)	\$200
One month extension fee	\$200
(refund of \$150 is allowed if request for extension is denied)	
Appeal Fee (plus Ad Hoc Committee Expenses)	\$3500
Hearing Fee (plus Ad Hoc Committee Expenses)	\$2000