



**meac**  
midwifery education  
accreditation council

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## Section D2: The Reaccreditation Process

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## Overview of the Renewal of Accreditation Process

### Accreditation

Accreditation is a structured, step-by-step process consisting of a Preliminary Application, a comprehensive Self-Evaluation Report, an Additional Information Request, a Materials & Information Request, a Site Visit, a Draft ARC Report, the school's response to the findings, a Final Board Report, and an accreditation decision. The accreditation process has 5 steps or parts:

- Accreditation: Part I - Preparing for Accreditation
- Accreditation: Part II - The Self-Evaluation Report
- Accreditation: Part III - The Site Visit
- Accreditation: Part IV - The Draft ARC Report & IBR Review
- Accreditation: Part V - Final Board Report

The accreditation process is designed to create opportunities and support the directors, students, faculty, and staff of institutions/programs in evaluating their midwifery education programs against national standards and goals set by the institution/program. This process is the primary method for institutions/programs to demonstrate compliance with MEAC's Standards of Accreditation.

While the accreditation process provides several opportunities for due process and minor corrections, institutions/ programs must have done the work to comply with all applicable standards before beginning the accreditation process. For institutions/programs seeking renewal of accreditation, the accreditation process starts following Renewal of Accreditation Training and typically takes about 2 years to complete.

## The Renewal of Accreditation Process

### Renewal of Accreditation Training

Institutions/programs interested in renewing MEAC accreditation must complete a two-stage training series with MEAC following the approval of the institution's/program's Application for Renewal of Accreditation. The Training Stages include the following:

#### Accreditation: Part I

##### Stage 1: Self-study (review)

- Review the Accreditation Handbook Sections A-F and prepare questions for the Director of Accreditation

##### Stage 2: Accreditation review training with the Director of Accreditation (or via Google Classroom)

- Best Practices in Accreditation

#### Stage 3: Readiness Self-Assessment

- Application for Renewal of Accreditation

#### Accreditation: Part II

##### Stage 4: Prepare the school's Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

- Upload SER and evidence to Weave

## Self-Evaluation Report (Accreditation: Part II)

The Self-Evaluation Report is due within 22 weeks of the Notification of Part I Acceptance. The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) is a comprehensive, detailed report prepared by the institution/program. The SER will systematically address each of MEAC's Standards and all applicable benchmarks for each program included within the grant of accreditation. The SER is completed via the Weave online portal, where the institution/program will enter a written narrative and supporting documentary evidence to demonstrate compliance with each applicable benchmark. A SER template and Tips for Meeting Standards and Benchmarks are available.

## Additional Information Request (AIR)

Following submission of the SER, the Director of Accreditation (DA) will review the reaccreditation report and contact the institution/program to request additional information in areas that were weak. The DA has six weeks to review the SER and send the AIR. The institution/program has eight weeks to respond. This may add up to 14 weeks to the process.

## Self-Evaluation Report (Accreditation: Part II)

A team of peer reviewers (Site Visit Team or Accreditation Review Committee [ARC]) will be assigned to evaluate the institution's/program's SER. The Director of Accreditation will prepare a report that outlines any additional materials or information needed to complete the evaluation of the Benchmarks.

## Materials and Information Request (MIR)

Following the submission of the SER, the Director of Accreditation will review it for completeness. If there are benchmarks/demonstrations that have not been answered, if your response references evidence that didn't get submitted, or if there are responses that didn't fully answer the benchmark, you will be notified with the Materials and Information Request. The Materials and Information Request has three sections:

1. Materials Requested (where items are missing or incomplete)
2. Information Requested (where it is unclear how the institution/program meets the benchmark)
3. Opportunity to Respond to Noted Deficiencies and Possible Noncompliance (where there are no requests for additional information, as it is clear what the institution/program is doing). This section is specifically provided as an opportunity for the institution/program to come into compliance.

The institution/program will be able to respond to each section of the Materials and Information Request before the site visit.

## Site Visit (Accreditation: Part III)

The next step in the accreditation process is the Site Visit. The Director of Accreditation will meet with the institution/program before the site visit to discuss logistics, additional requirements, and other pertinent information. MEAC will provide a Site Visit Manual and a tentative schedule for preparation. The Site Visit is scheduled to take place from 90 days following the MIR response.

## The Site Visit

The Director of Accreditation and the assigned team of peer reviewers (ARC) will conduct a site visit to verify the information provided in the institution's/program's submissions. The site visit will be conducted virtually if the institution/program offers most of its coursework via distance education. If the institution/program is brick and mortar, the site visit will be in person. For distance education programs, the DA will schedule a time to conduct in-person clinical site visits.

## Draft ARC Report (Accreditation: Part IV)

MEAC's Director of Accreditation prepares the Draft ARC Report following the site visit. This report summarizes ARC findings and provides the institution/program with preliminary benchmark scoring for all applicable standards and benchmarks. A copy of the Draft ARC Report will be provided to the institution/program, and the institution/program will be able to respond to the preliminary benchmark scoring and findings. The institution/program's response to the Draft ARC Report is the final opportunity for due process before the Board's decision.

The Director of Accreditation will summarize the institution's/program's response and approve the ARC recommendations. The final scoring recommendations will be submitted to the Board of Directors for an accreditation decision.

## Independent Board Review

Two Board Members (IBR), with the assistance of the Director of Accreditation, will review the institution's/program's SER and the ARC scores. The IBR will provide their own assessment of the SER and score each Benchmark independently. IBR, with the assistance of the DA, will present their accreditation recommendation to the entire Board for an accreditation decision.

## Final Board Report (Accreditation: Part V)

Before making an accreditation decision, the MEAC Board of Directors will review all the materials from each step of the accreditation process, including the Final ARC Report and the Director of Accreditation's summary report. Two Board Members, with the assistance of the Director of Accreditation, will take the lead in the review and present their recommendations to the entire Board for an accreditation decision. Following discussion and a decision, the Board's overall accreditation decision will be put into a Board Report and sent to the program/institution. The Board Report will include official benchmark scores, requirements for further reporting, and any adverse action and details for appeal if warranted. If the decision consists of adverse action (denial, suspension, or withdrawal of accreditation), the institution/program will have further options for due process. For more information, see MEAC's Accreditation Handbook, Section G, Appeal and Due Process policy.

## Renewal of Accreditation Timeline

Total renewal of accreditation time = 20 months (1 year & 8 months)

	Step	Details	Timeline (How long you should expect the process to take)
	Institution/program Notified to Apply for Reaccreditation	Institution/program is notified 90 weeks (1.7 years) before the end of the current accreditation cycle that it is time to apply for reaccreditation.	
	Accreditation Training	Accreditation training review.	
<b>PART I</b>	Part I Application	The current institution/program has 4 weeks to complete and submit the Part I application and fee.	<b>4 Weeks</b>
	Part I Fee	Due before Part I is officially accepted.	<b>2 Weeks</b>
	Notification of Part I Acceptance or Denial	MEAC Staff will review the application within two weeks of receipt and notify the applicant of the outcome and next steps. If denied, notification will also include the reason for denial.  If accepted, the applicant will be granted access to the Weave online portal and given instructions for completion of the SER.	
<b>PART II</b>	Complete Self-Evaluation Report (SER)	<b>Programmatic</b> applicants will have 14 weeks from the date of notification of Part I acceptance and access to the Weave portal to complete and submit the SER and SER fees.	<b>14-16 Weeks</b>
		<b>Institutional</b> applicants will have a minimum of 16 weeks from the date of notification of Part I acceptance and access to the Weave portal to complete and submit the SER and SER fees. The two extra weeks granted to programmatic applicants are due to the more complex nature of an institutional review. Additional time will be given to complete the SER for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutions that grant degrees (2 additional weeks)</li> <li>• Institutions that offer distance education (2 additional weeks)</li> <li>• Institutions participating in Title IV (2 additional weeks)</li> </ul>	
	SER Fee	Due before the end of the 14 weeks.  MEAC will contact the applicant two weeks before the due date to remind the institution/program and request the current enrollment count so that MEAC can send an invoice for the SER fee.	<b>6 Weeks</b>
	MEAC Review of SER	DA will review the SER for completeness, compile a list of missing, incomplete, or unclear pieces, and notify the applicant via an Additional Information Request (AIR). The DA has 6 weeks to review.	

	Applicant Response to AIR	The applicant has 8 weeks to provide the requested AIR.	<b>8 Weeks</b>
	Accreditation Review Committee (ARC) Review of Institution/Program Submission	The ARC will review the whole institution/program submission and give preliminary scores for each benchmark.	<b>6 Weeks</b>
		DA has 2 weeks to review ARC scores and prepare a Material and Information Request.	<b>2 Weeks</b>
		The DA will send the school a Materials and Information Request. The school has 8 weeks to respond.	<b>8 Weeks</b>
<b>Part III</b>	Site Visit Scheduled	MEAC will coordinate with ARC and the school to schedule a site visit no more than 90 days (3 months) from the school receipt of MIR.	<b>12 Weeks</b>
	Submission of Site Visit Fee	The Member institution/program must also submit the site visit fee. MEAC will send an invoice for this.	
	Site Visit	DA and the ARC will conduct a site visit with the Member institution/program.	
<b>Part IV</b>	Draft ARC Report	DA will prepare the Draft ARC Report with updated preliminary benchmark scoring following the site visit.	<b>6 Weeks</b>
	Institution/Program Response to Draft ARC Report	The institution/program has 8 weeks to respond to the draft ARC report.	<b>8 Weeks</b>
	DA & ARC Review of Response to Draft ARC Report	DA & ARC will review the applicant response, finalize preliminary benchmark scores, and adopt the Final ARC Report. The Final Draft ARC Report will also include a recommendation to either grant or deny reaccreditation.	<b>6 Weeks</b>
	Independent Board Review of Institution/Program Materials	Two members of the Board of Directors will be assigned to thoroughly review the Member institution/program's materials, review the ARC's process, finalize a recommendation to the Board to grant, grant with compliance, grant with probation, or deny reaccreditation, and recommend any follow-up reporting.	<b>6 Weeks</b>
<b>Part V</b>	Board Accreditation Decision	The MEAC Board will review the institution/program's materials, the Final ARC Report with recommendations, and the IBR Report with recommendations, and make an accreditation decision.	<b>4 Weeks</b>
	Institution/Program Notified of Accreditation Decision	MEAC provides the school with a full written explanation of the decision.	
<b>MAXIMUM TOTAL TIME</b>			<b>81 Weeks</b>