



meac
midwifery education
accreditation council

Section H: Glossary

ACADEMIC ADVISING: A systematic process based on a student-advisor relationship intended to aid students in achieving educational, career, and personal goals through the use of the full range of institutional and community resources.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR: The time frame identified in a catalog or other document and provided to the student which contains the requirements that define a student's program and schedule with academic terms, school years, and student completion timelines. This is different from a schedule of classes, which is defined below.

ACADEMIC COUNSELING: An assistance program that helps students acquire more effective and efficient study skills.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Academic dishonesty or academic misconduct is any type of cheating that occurs in relation to a formal academic exercise.

ACADEMIC YEAR: A time period of at least 30 instructional weeks during which a full-time undergraduate student is expected to complete coursework. It is usually equivalent to at least 24 semester or trimester credit hours or 36 quarter credit hours at an institution using those credit hours; or at least 900 contact hours of instruction at an institution using clock hours.

ACCREDITATION: The status of public recognition that an accrediting agency grants to an educational institution or program that meets the agency's established standards and requirements.

ACCREDITATION CYCLE: The time period between initial accreditation and re-evaluation, often ranging from 5 to 10 years.

ACCREDITING AGENCY: An organization authorized to evaluate and accredit institutions or programs based on specific criteria.

ADEQUACY OF FACULTY: Assessment of whether the faculty is adequate in quantity (often measured in student/teacher ratios) and skill (often demonstrated by credentials) to support student achievement of program objectives and goals.

ADULT TEACHING AND LEARNING: The art and science of helping adults learn (in contrast to children). Teaching adults requires an understanding of the unique characteristics of adult learners that are different from the traditional pedagogical assumptions about child learners. Adult teaching theory is based on the concept that adult learners are autonomous, free, and growth-oriented.

ACNM: American College of Nurse-Midwives. The national professional organization for Certified Nurse-Midwives and Certified Midwives
www.acnm.org

ACTIVE PARTICIPANT: An apprentice or student midwife actively involved in a birth through coaching, charting, assisting, comforting, etc.

ADDITIONAL LOCATION: A teaching facility that is geographically apart from the main campus of the institution where 50% or more of the education program is offered. The addition of such a location must be pre-approved by MEAC as a substantive change. An additional location does not meet all four elements of the definition of a branch campus.

ADEQUACY OF FACULTY: Criteria commonly used to assess the adequacy of faculty include student to teacher ratios, diversity of faculty, number of faculty, advanced degrees, peer reviews, and in-service training.

ADULT TEACHING AND LEARNING: The method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT: A status granted to students who come into a program with relevant experience that has been verified, evaluated and found to be equivalent to coursework in the program. Also, the practice of placing a student in a course based on previous achievement levels, e.g., study at another institution, by challenge examination, or College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examination results. Amount or type of credit given is determined by the institution or program within the institution.

ADVERSE ACCREDITING ACTION OR ADVERSE ACTION: Means the denial, suspension, revocation, or termination of accreditation or pre-accreditation, or any comparable accrediting action an agency may take against an institution or program.

ALIGNMENT: Alignment in higher education refers to the process of ensuring that the various components of an institution—such as curricula, learning outcomes, assessments, resources, and institutional goals—are strategically coordinated to achieve the desired educational outcomes and meet stakeholder needs.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA): A federal law that requires employers and others to make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. Please go to ADA.gov for more information.

ANTEPARTUM: The period of time during a woman's pregnancy before the onset of labor.

APPRENTICESHIP: A form of training that requires studying and working with a midwife in their practice.

ASSET TO LIABILITY RATIO (CURRENT RATIO): A ratio of liquid assets to current debts falling due within a year's time. Current assets are divided by current liabilities to arrive at the ratio. See Handbook Section E for Assets to Liabilities Ratio Worksheet.

ASSESSMENT: The systematic process of measuring an institution's or program's performance against accreditation standards.

ASSOCIATE DEGREE: An undergraduate academic degree awarded by higher education programs or institutions upon completion of the required course of study. For traditional, full-time students in the United States an associate degree is often equivalent to the first two years of a four-year college or university degree. It is the lowest in the hierarchy of post-secondary academic degrees offered in the United States.

AUDIT: A statement issued by an independent Certified Public Accountant that expresses an opinion about whether the statements present fairly a company's accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

BACCALAUREATE DEGREE: An undergraduate academic degree awarded by a higher education program or institution upon completion of the required course of study. For traditional, full time students in the United States a baccalaureate degree requires a minimum of four years to complete. It is the second lowest in the hierarchy of post-secondary academic degrees offered in the United States.

BALANCE SHEET: In formal bookkeeping and accounting, a balance sheet is a statement of the book value of all of the assets and liabilities (including equity) of a business or other organization or person at a particular date, such as the end of a "fiscal year." It is known as a balance sheet because it reflects an accounting identity: the components of the balance sheet must (by definition) be equal, or in balance; in the most basic formulation, assets must equal liabilities and net worth, or equivalently, net worth must equal assets minus liabilities. A balance sheet is often described as a "snapshot" of the company's financial condition on a given date. Of the four basic financial statements, the balance sheet is the only statement which applies to a single point in time, instead of a period of time.

BENCHMARK: A point of reference from which measurements may be made (b) something that serves as a standard by which others may be measured or judged.

BEST PRACTICES: Methods or techniques that have been widely recognized as superior for achieving desired outcomes in education or accreditation.

BIRTH CENTER: A facility, institution or place - not normally used as a residence, which is not an ambulatory surgical center or a hospital, or in a hospital— in which births are planned to occur. See NARM's Candidate Information Bulletin – glossary. [NARM CIB](#)

BOARD CERTIFICATION: A credential awarded to midwives who pass a rigorous examination demonstrating proficiency and expertise in midwifery practice.

BRANCH CAMPUS: A location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. The U.S. Secretary of Education considers a location of an institution to be independent of the main campus if the location 1) is permanent in nature; (2) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; (3) has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and (4) has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

BUSINESS PLAN: A formal statement of a set of business goals, the reasons they are believed attainable, and the plan for reaching those goals. It may also contain background information about the organization or team attempting to reach those goals. Business plans may also target changes in perception and branding by the customer, client, taxpayer, or larger community. When the existing business is to assume a major change or when planning a new venture, a 3 to 5 year business plan is required, since investors will look for their annual return in that timeframe.

CAREER PLACEMENT SERVICES: Services that an institution provides to students that includes a wide variety of resources to assist with identifying career opportunities, finding up-to-date information on the latest job market trends, acquiring work experience, and developing job search skills for a successful transition from school to midwifery practice.

CERTIFICATION: A credential issued to individuals or programs verifying that specific requirements or standards have been met.

CERTIFICATE LEVEL PROGRAM: An educational program that is focused on preparing students as entry level midwives, providing the education and training of the skills necessary to meet NARM certification requirements, and preparing graduates for immediate employment in the field. It is not a degree granting program because it has not met state standards for degree granting programs, and/or does not include general education or other courses not related to midwifery.

CERTIFIED MIDWIFE (CM): A professional midwife certified by the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB) after completing accredited education and passing an exam.

CERTIFIED NURSE MIDWIFE (CNM): A registered nurse who has completed advanced midwifery education and obtained certification by the AMCB.

CITIZENS FOR MIDWIFERY (CFM): A national organization of midwifery supporters. See www.cfmidwifery.org for more information.

CLASSROOM FACILITY: An area in which students regularly gather for instruction from faculty or for other learning activities.

CLINICAL PLACEMENT SUPPORT: The school provides assistance to students related to finding a location and preceptor to fulfill the clinical requirement of the midwifery program.

CLINICAL PRECEPTORS: Professionals who provide clinical instruction to students.

CLINICAL PRECEPTORSHIPS: Supervised professional training designed to allow students to apply previously acquired skills and knowledge to practical situations, such as client care. Clinical experiences are school- or work-based placements in which students are taught academic and occupational skills from school or employee instructors who supervise and evaluate students' work. School-based clinical experiences typically expose students to situations and settings they might encounter once they enter their profession. Simulations and role-playing allow students to hone their professional skills in school under the direction of a classroom teacher. Work-based clinical experiences offer students real-life activities in a professional setting. These experiences, offered under the direction of a practicing midwife, are designed to help students learn the skills and attitudes necessary to become a competent practitioner. Both students and clinical instructors are typically supervised by school-based coordinators or intermediary organizations that monitor placements to ensure that appropriate instruction occurs. See www.narm.org for further information on preceptors.

CLINICAL LEARNING SITE (FACILITY): Any facility in which a student observes or participates in client care.

CLINICAL TRAINING: See clinical preceptorships

CLOCK HOUR: In higher education, a clock hour is a unit of measurement used to determine the time a student spends engaged in direct instructional activities, such as classroom lectures, lab sessions, or hands-on training. Clock hours are particularly common in vocational, technical, and some professional programs, as well as in institutions that offer shorter, career-focused education.

COHORT DEFAULT RATE: A cohort default rate is the percentage of a school's borrowers who enter repayment on certain Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program or William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program loans during a particular federal fiscal year (FY), October 1 to September 30, and default or meet other specified conditions prior to the end of the next fiscal year. See FSA for more information.

COMMERCIAL FACILITY: A building or area zoned as a business property.

COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION: An approach to teaching and learning more often used in learning concrete skills than abstract learning. It differs from other approaches in that the unit of learning is extremely fine grained. Rather than a course or a module, each individual learning outcome or skill (known as a competency), is one single unit. Learners work on one competency at a time, which is likely a small component of a larger learning goal. The student is evaluated on the individual competency, and only once they have mastered it do they move on to others. After that, higher or more complex competencies are learned to a degree of mastery and isolated from other topics. Another common component of Competency-based learning is the ability to skip learning modules entirely if the learner can demonstrate they already have mastery. That can be done either through prior learning assessment or formative testing.

COMPLIANCE: Adherence to the requirements and standards set by the accrediting agency.

CONTACT HOURS: The actual number of clock hours that a student is present in a classroom or clinical setting for instruction.

CONTINUITY OF CARE: Care provided throughout prenatal, intrapartum, and postpartum periods. See www.narm.org for more information on certification requirements.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: An ongoing effort to improve the quality and effectiveness of an institution or program.

COPYRIGHT: Copyright is a legal concept, enacted by most governments, giving the creator of an original work exclusive rights to it, usually for a limited time. Generally, it is "the right to copy", but also gives the copyright holder the right to be credited for the work, to determine who may adapt the work to other forms, who may perform the work, who may financially benefit from it, and other related rights. It is a form of intellectual property.

CORE COMPETENCIES: Specific knowledge and skills that the candidate must be able to apply to meet standards of performance required for entry level practice. The competencies have been pre-defined, are nationally recognized, and form the basics of training.

CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION: (1) Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor; (2) interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student; (3) correspondence courses are typically self-paced; (4) correspondence education is not distance education.

COUNSELING: Providing support and/or guidance to students in times of need as a result of personal or school-related crises. "Counseling" may include referring students to professional counselors when indicated.

CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL MIDWIFE: A midwife nationally certified by the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM). See www.narm.org for more information

CREDIT(S): A unit of academic progress, also known as "credit hours," generally indicated as quarter, trimester, or semester credit hours. One credit hour is equivalent to 50 minutes of instruction.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY: The quality of being aware and accepting of other cultures. A person who is culturally sensitive is aware that there could be differences between their culture and another person's, and that these differences could affect their relationship and the way they communicate with each other. A culturally sensitive person would understand other countries' traditions and ways of life, or attempt to learn and apply new understandings. Importantly, culturally sensitive people attempt to be free from prejudices and preconceptions about other cultures. This term is used along with cultural sensitivity in MEAC's standards rather than the term cultural competence.

CULTURAL VERSATILITY: A person's ability to temporarily modify his or her behaviors to help others believe that their concerns and expectations are being met. This term is used along with cultural sensitivity in MEAC's standards rather than the term cultural competence.

CURRENT: Prevalent, customary, and most recent.

CURRICULUM: A detailed outline of the courses, modules or other discrete units of instruction, including clinical training, and intended learning outcomes in a timeline format that indicates how students will proceed through the program to completion. Credit value and/or classroom hours should be included.

DEGREE-GRANTING INSTITUTION: A school recognized by a state authority and accrediting agency that grants AS, AA, BA, BS, MA, MS or PhD degrees to students according to generally accepted standards in higher education. A degree-granting institution may offer degrees in addition to a basic curriculum in midwifery.

DEGREE-LEVEL PROGRAM: An institution that intends to grant degrees must meet additional criteria established by MEAC for degree-granting institutions. If an institution or program wishes to add a degree level program, it must apply to MEAC prior to instituting that degree program as a substantive change. See MEAC Policies and Procedures Section III.

DIDACTIC: Instruction that involves lecture and textbook instruction rather than hands-on demonstration and laboratory study.

DIRECT-ENTRY MIDWIFE: A midwife who trained by entering directly into midwifery education, and not through a nursing program.

DISCRETE UNITS OF INSTRUCTION: Classes, modules, courses, or course sections that can be identified separately within a midwifery curriculum. Each unit or section has identified learning objectives, learning activities, learning resources, and evaluation tools or methods.

DISCRIMINATION: The prejudicial and/or distinguishing treatment of an individual based on their actual or perceived membership in a certain group or category.

DISSERTATION: The lengthy study of a subject, usually culminating in a written thesis, as part of a course of study.

DISTANCE EDUCATION/PROGRAM: Distance education is a formal educational process that uses technology to deliver instruction to students who are not in the same physical location as the instructor. It can include courses and programs that are offered online, off-campus, or electronically. Distance education can use a variety of technologies, including: The Internet, Satellite or wireless communication, Audio and video conferencing, instructional television, and telecourses. Distance education can be categorized as fully distance or hybrid/blended. A fully distance course has no more than 15% of instructional time in face-to-face sessions. A hybrid/blended course has more than 50% but less than 85% of instruction occurs when the student and instructor are not in the same place. Some schools use platforms like Zoom, Blackboard, Canvas, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, D2L, and Edgenuity for distance learning.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION: A concept that aims to acknowledge, embrace, and support people from all backgrounds, identities, and experiences, ensuring everyone has equal opportunity to participate and contribute, regardless of factors like race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, or religion; essentially, it means creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed and valued for their unique differences.

DOCTRINE OF FAIR USE: The intangible rights granted by statute to the author or originator of certain literary or artistic productions, whereby, for a limited period, the exclusive privilege is given to that person (or to any party to whom he or she transfers ownership) to make copies of the same for publication and sale.

[U.S. Copyright Office Fair Use Index](#)

[Fair Use Overview](#)

[Copyright Advisory Services](#)

DOCUMENTATION: The collection of evidence and records used to demonstrate compliance with accreditation standards.

DUE PROCESS: Procedures ensuring that institutions or programs have a fair opportunity to present evidence and respond to findings during the accreditation process.

EDUCATIONAL RECORDS: Those records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by the Institution or by a person acting for the Institution. Education records take many forms, including paper and electronic. Education records are subject to regulations under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Education records include:

- Grades
- Class lists
- Student course schedules
- Disciplinary records
- Student financial records
- Payroll records for employees who are employed as a direct result of their status as students (e.g. work study, assistantships, resident assistants)

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: A postsecondary course of study that generally leads to an academic or professional degree, vocational certificate, or other recognized credential. The U.S. Secretary of Education considers that a postsecondary institution is not providing an "educational program" if the institution itself does not provide the program's instruction (including a course of independent study) but merely gives credit for one or more of the following: instruction provided by other institutions or organizations, or other accomplishments such as "life experience."

ELECTRONIC SECURITY MEASURES: May include but not limited to password protection, encryption, secure online or proctored exams, etc.

ELIGIBILITY: The criteria an institution or program must meet before applying for accreditation.

ELIGIBILITY AND CERTIFICATION APPROVAL REPORT (ECAR): A report sent to a school from the U.S. Department of Education after a school has been approved to participate in Title IV Federal Family Education Loan Programs. It confirms the information used in the school's Application for Approval to Participate in the Federal Student Financial Aid Programs. When there are changes to the list of officials eligible to certify or sign for a federal Stafford or PLUS Loan, the ECAR must be updated as soon as possible to eliminate delays. See [ECAR](#) for more information on eligibility.

ENCRYPTION: A form of electronic security whereby data is converted into a form, called a ciphertext that cannot be easily understood by unauthorized people. Decryption is the process of converting encrypted data back into its original form, so it can be understood.

ENROLLED STUDENTS: Students enrolled at any time during an academic year, as well as continuing students, even those who are taking a temporary leave of absence. See also Matriculating Students.

ENROLLMENT: (a) The process of registering for classes. (b) The total number of students at an institution.

ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT: A contract between a student and an institution that provides certain terms and conditions. MEAC requires that certain topics be addressed in enrollment agreements.

EVALUATION: The process of reviewing an institution or program to determine if it meets accreditation standards.

EVALUATION METHODS (STUDENT): Processes or means of assessing student achievement, e.g. written examinations, oral examinations, performance examinations, research papers, presentations, projects, or other qualitative or quantitative measures.

EVIDENCE-BASED: Decisions or actions supported by verifiable data or information.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE: The integration of clinical expertise, patient values, and the best available research evidence into decision-making for patient care.

EXTERNAL AUDIT: See Glossary Term "Audit." An audit conducted by an independent certified professional accountant (CPA) who has no financial relationship with the business being audited.

EXTERNAL FINANCIAL REVIEW: The un-audited review of financial statements of a business or organization by an independent accountant for the purpose of determining the accuracy and plausibility of the information being reviewed. Such a review includes inquiries concerning financial, operating and contractual information, the application of analytical procedures and discussions with officials of the enterprise.

EXTERNAL PRECEPTORSHIP SITE: A site in which midwifery students receive clinical training that is not located within or operated by the accredited institution or program itself. Sites may include offices/clinics, birth centers, hospitals and home-birth settings.

FACULTY: Persons who instruct or guide students in developing their theoretical knowledge base and/or clinical skills within a school or program. MEAC considers both didactic and clinical instructors/preceptors as faculty.

FACULTY PERFORMANCE EVALUATION: The assessment of how didactic and clinical instructors/preceptors carry out their responsibilities.

FACULTY-STUDENT RATIO: The number of faculty members available relative to the number of students, indicating the level of individualized attention possible.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA): A Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records and assures certain student rights concerning their records. See [FERPA](#) for more information.

FELLOWSHIP: Advanced training opportunities for midwives who wish to specialize in a particular area of practice.

FINANCIAL AID ADVISEMENT: Guidance and support for students looking for financial aid to assist in paying the expenses of attending school.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY: Financial accountability results from holding an individual(s) accountable for effectively performing a financial activity, such as a key control procedure within a financial transaction process. A well-defined financial accountability structure serves as the foundation for establishing effective financial processes. Accountability is officially delegated from a governance group, such as a Board of Directors, or from one individual having delegated authority to another specific individual.

FINANCIAL RECORDS (STUDENT): Those records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by the Institution or by a person acting for the Institution.

FINANCIAL REPORTS OR STATEMENTS: Reports such as the balance sheet, income statement, and statement of cash flows, which summarize the financial status and operations of a business entity.

FINDINGS: Results or conclusions drawn from the accreditation review process, often detailing strengths and areas for improvement.

FOCUSED VISIT: A targeted site visit by an accrediting agency to address specific concerns or follow-up on prior findings.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT: The goal of formative assessment is to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. More specifically, formative assessments: help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work, help faculty recognize where students are struggling and address problems immediately. Formative assessments are generally low stakes, which means that they have low or no point value. Examples of formative assessments include asking students to: draw a concept map in class to represent their understanding of a topic, submit one or two sentences identifying the main point of a lecture, turn in a research proposal for early feedback.

FULL SCOPE MIDWIFERY PRACTICE: A midwifery practice encompassing all aspects of maternity care for preconception through postpartum care.

GAGAS AUDIT: Audits performed under Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, which are applicable to financial audits. These GAGAS standards have been adopted by the American Institute of Certified Professional Accountants. See [GAGAS](#) for more information.

GENERAL EDUCATION COMPONENTS OR COURSES: These are courses that are designed to provide students in degree-programs with a broad academic foundation and include an appropriate distribution of coursework from the humanities, applied sciences and social sciences. State postsecondary education rules typically establish minimum requirements.

GESTATIONAL AGE: The age of a pregnancy calculated from the first day of the last menstrual period.

GOVERNANCE: The set of processes, customs and policies affecting the way in which a school is directed, administered or controlled.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE: The type of legal entity which directs, controls, and administers the educational institution, and an overview or organizational chart of the role, functions, and membership of that organization. For educational institutions, governance types may include sole proprietorships, partnerships (general or limited liability partnerships), or corporations (non-profit, for-profit, government).

HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA): A Federal law which sets national standards to protect the privacy of personal health information. See [HIPAA Home | HHS.gov](http://HIPAAHome.HHS.gov) for more information

INACTIVE: See "leave of absence".

INDEPENDENT/INDEPENDENTLY: Not relying on instructors, preceptors, classmates, or others for assistance or support.

INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANT: Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in public practice having no financial or other interest in the client whose financial statements are being examined.

INDEPENDENT PROJECT (FOR MASTER'S OR DOCTORAL PROGRAMS): A degree project is a major independent project or thesis completed by a student in the student's main subject area, individually or in a small group. Such a project will often require a specified number of weeks of full-time work, equivalent to a certain number of credits. The project may be presented in the form of a paper and/or presentation.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING NEEDS: Taking into consideration the unique strengths and weaknesses, and the goals of individual students.

INSTITUTION: (1) A freestanding educational organization that provides one or more educational programs leading to a certificate or degree. (2) A clearly defined, appropriately authorized entity which has or seeks accreditation, and conducts activities within the scope of the accrediting authority of MEAC.

INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION: This type of accreditation refers to the review and approval of an entire institution, including all of its financial and management aspects. MEAC provides institutional accreditation for independent educational entities primarily providing midwifery training within the context of a proprietary or non-profit organization.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY: Intellectual property is a legal concept which refers to creations of the mind for which exclusive rights are recognized.

INTERIM REPORT: A periodic report submitted between full accreditation reviews to demonstrate continued compliance.

INTRAPARTUM: The period during labor and childbirth.

JOB DESCRIPTION: Action-oriented, clear and concise statement that identifies the primary duties performed and responsibilities carried out in a particular job. It is not meant to be an encyclopedia of every task performed. Job descriptions should be used for hiring, job evaluation and classification, and performance appraisal.

LAY MIDWIFE: A term that has been used to describe midwives who were not trained within a formal educational program.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES: Activities engaged in by the learner, through observation or participation, for the purpose of acquiring certain skills, concepts, or knowledge, whether guided by an instructor or not. A list of learning activities can usually be found in a course syllabus. Examples include lecture, discussion, films, skills demonstrations and practices, role-plays, small group activities, reading and writing assignments.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: A software platform or application used to deliver, manage, track, and assess educational or training programs. LMS platforms are widely utilized in educational institutions, corporate training, and professional development programs to streamline learning processes and make educational content accessible in a digital format.

LEARNING MATERIALS AND RESOURCES: Materials available to students to assist them in achieving learning objectives that are represented, accessible, or stored in a variety of media and formats. A list of learning materials and resources can usually be found in a course syllabus. Examples include books, journals, videos, computers, clinical supplies, teaching aids.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Specific measurable goals that state what the students are expected to do as a result of a learning activity or upon completion of a module, course, or other discrete unit of instruction. "Measurable" means that the student should be able to demonstrate that the objective has been met, so specific action verbs such as "labels the bones of the pelvis" or "demonstrates giving an injection" should be used. Words which are less suggestive of actions and tend to result in weaker, less measurable learning objectives/outcomes are: Know, Understand, Comprehend, Feel, Learn, Appreciate. Learning objectives are related to mission and program goals.

LEARNING STYLES: The different ways individuals prefer to process, understand, and retain information. These styles are based on the idea that people learn best when information is presented in a manner that aligns with their natural preferences and cognitive strengths.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE: A set period of time in which a student temporarily withdraws from the program for mitigating circumstances such as family, illness, etc, with a plan to re-enroll.

LEGAL FORM OF OWNERSHIP: The type of entity that controls/owns the institution, including but not limited to: sole proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company, non-profit corporation, for profit corporation, publicly held corporation.

LEGALLY AUTHORIZED: Having the necessary approval from the state where the school is located and in any other states where the school may have a presence. Each state handles this authorization process differently. A good resource for learning about each state's requirements can be found here: [State Requirements](#).

LENGTH OF PROGRAM: Parameters established by the institution/program that establish how long students have to complete the program, specifically the minimum amount of time required and the maximum amount of time allowed. The program determines its own length after taking into consideration learning activities that students must accomplish in order to master the skills, knowledge and behaviors outlined in the MEAC curriculum checklist as well as any clinical training hours required for certification by NARM and state legislation. The adequacy of the program length should be reaffirmed by the evaluation of the program assessment process. (see Standard I Benchmark B1).

LIBRARY/LEARNING RESOURCES: an organized collection of resources made accessible to a defined community for reference or borrowing. It provides physical or digital access to material, and may be a physical building or room, or a virtual space, or both.

LICENSED MIDWIFE: A midwife who is legally recognized and regulated by her state or jurisdiction.

LICENSURE: The process by which a midwife obtains legal authorization to practice in a particular jurisdiction.

MAJORITY: One number greater than half of the total number being measured.

MANAGEMENT LETTER: Comments and/or recommendations from a certified public accountant which accompany his/her audit, in order to improve the internal control structure or achieve other operational efficiencies in the organization.

MASTER'S DEGREE: A graduate academic degree awarded by a higher education program or institution upon completion of the required course of study. This degree is available to individuals who have either completed a baccalaureate degree or are working to complete the baccalaureate and masters requirements simultaneously in an articulated master's program.

MATRICULATING STUDENT: A person enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a program or institution for the purpose of obtaining a degree or certificate offered by that institution.

MAXIMUM TIME FRAME: The maximum amount of time a program will allow for student completion of the curriculum requirements before the student is no longer considered to be matriculating. The program determines its own maximum time frame. A maximum timeframe is generally one and one half times the normal allotted timeframe, for example, if a program is designed to be completed in 3 years then a maximum timeframe would be 4.5 years to complete. This would not include permitted leaves of absence for a student.

MEASURE OF PROGRAM LENGTH: In educational and training programs, the **measure of program length** refers to the standardized method used to determine the duration or required commitment to complete a program. It is a key metric for understanding the scope of a program and ensuring consistency across institutions, particularly for accreditation, financial aid eligibility, and student planning.

MIDWIFERY MODEL OF CARE: This refers to the model of care provided by midwives. There are numerous resources on this subject, but MEAC suggests that, as a minimum, schools address all elements of the Midwives Model of Care, which can be found at www.cfmidwifery.org

MIDWIVES MODEL OF CARE™: The Midwives Model of Care™ is based on the fact that pregnancy and birth are normal life processes, and includes:

- monitoring the physical, psychological and social well-being of the mother throughout the childbearing cycle;
- providing the mother with individualized education, counseling, and prenatal care, continuous hands-on assistance during labor and delivery, and postpartum support;
- minimizing technological interventions; and
- identifying and referring women who require obstetrical attention.

The application of this woman-centered model of care has been proven to reduce the incidence of birth injury, trauma, and cesarean section.

MINUTES: Minutes are the instant written record of a meeting. They typically describe the events of the meeting, starting with a list of attendees, a statement of the issues considered by the participants, and related responses or decisions for the issues. Generally, minutes begin with the name of the body holding the meeting (e.g. a committee), place, date, list of people present, and the time that the chair called the meeting to order. The primary function of minutes is to record the decisions made, therefore, all official decisions must be included. If the members of the committee or group then agree that the written minutes reflect what happened at the meeting, then they are approved, and the fact of their approval is recorded in the minutes of the current meeting.

MISSION STATEMENT: A broad statement of the purpose of your institution or program. It is also an opportunity to articulate what is unique or special about your institution or program. An example would be "to prepare professional midwives to be competent to practice in out-of-hospital settings." Another might be "to prepare midwives to serve Spanish-speaking families in the U.S. and Central America."

MODULE: A unit of education or instruction in which a single topic or a small section of a broad topic is studied for a given period of time.

MONTHLY CASH FLOW: A financial planning tool that shows the expected cash influx and outflow during the budget period, including receipts from loans needed to maintain a minimum cash balance and repayments of such loans.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL MIDWIVES (NACPM): A professional association whose members are CPMs that has adopted Philosophy and Principles of Practice and Standards of Practice. See <http://www.nacpm.org/> for more information.

NEONATAL: Relating to the first 28 days of a newborn's life.

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION: Orientation addressing the academic, social, emotional, and intellectual issues involved in beginning an educational path at an institution or program, which may last a few hours or a few days.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY: MEAC standards require accredited institutions or programs to develop and enforce a policy which precludes the discrimination of individuals for employment (faculty and administration) or enrollment on the basis of sex, gender identity, race, color, marital status, ethnic origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

NON-MATRICULATING STUDENT: A student enrolled in courses, but not admitted to or intending to, complete a program leading to a degree or certificate.

NORTH AMERICAN REGISTRY OF MIDWIVES (NARM): An organization that sets standards for and provides a mechanism for the certification of midwives, including graduates of MEAC accredited institutions/programs. See www.narm.org for more information.

OPERATIONS BUDGET: A formal statement of future plans, expected income by source and expected expenses by category for a discrete period of time, usually expressed in monetary terms. Budgeting is the process of developing formal plans for future financial activities, often serving as a basis for evaluating actual performance.

ORGANIZATIONAL BYLAWS: Rules or laws established by an organization to regulate itself, as allowed or provided for by some higher authority. The higher authority, generally a legislature or some other governmental body, establishes the degree of control that the by-laws may exercise.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART: A diagram that clearly illustrates the supervisory relationships among the school's owners, management and all other employees, including faculty and preceptors. The diagram should specify positions by job title rather than by the names of individuals.

OUT OF HOSPITAL BIRTH: A planned birth in a home, free-standing birth center, or other location independent of a hospital. See Candidate Information Bulletin [NARM CIB](#) for more information.

PEER REVIEW (IN ACCREDITATION): Evaluation of a person's work or performance by a group of people in the same occupation, profession, or industry.

PLAGIARISM: The "wrongful appropriation" of another author's language, thoughts, ideas, or expressions, and the representation of them as one's own original work. See: [Copyright Advisory Services](#).

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: A set of documents that describe an organization's policies for operation and the procedures necessary to fulfill the policies.

POST-PARTUM: The period after childbirth when a mother's body returns to a non-pregnant state.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: The non-compulsory educational level following the completion of a school providing a secondary education, such as a high school, or secondary school. Also referred to as higher education.

PRACTICE: See theory and practice.

PRACTITIONER: Educator and practitioner relating to those who serve on the accrediting bodies, appeals panels and site visits.

PRECEPTOR: A faculty member who serves as clinical instructor within a midwifery program.

PRE-ACCREDITATION: To apply for accreditation, institutions or programs must have graduated at least four students—the majority of whom is licensed or certified midwives or is working in midwifery or a related field. Institutions or programs who do not meet these criteria may apply for pre-accreditation, but must otherwise meet the same standards as those set for institutions or programs seeking accreditation.

PRENATAL: The period of time, conditions, or medical care occurring before birth, spanning from conception to the start of labor.

PRESENCE: A term related to the requirement for state authorization of distance education programs. The definition of this term varies from state-to-state. A good resource for learning about each state's definition of the term can be found here: [State Requirements](#).

PRIMARY MIDWIFE/CARE PROVIDER: Person who has full responsibility for provision of all aspects of midwifery care (prenatal, intrapartum, postpartum, and newborn) without the need for supervisory personnel. See Candidate Information Bulletin <http://www.narm.org/pdffiles/cib.pdf> for more information.

PRIMARY MIDWIFE UNDER SUPERVISION: An apprentice or student midwife who provides all aspects of care as if s/he were in practice, although a supervising midwife has primary responsibility and is present in the room during any care provided. See Candidate Information Bulletin [NARM CIB](#) for more information.

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT: A term used to describe learning gained outside a traditional academic environment; the evaluation and assessment of an individual's life learning for college credit, certification, or advanced standing toward further education or training.

PROCTOR: A person authorized by the school or program to oversee or administer a course that a student completes independently using a prepared curriculum and examinations. "Proctors" are different from faculty and do not necessarily meet the same qualifications as a faculty member.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Refers to ongoing learning opportunities designed to enhance the skills, knowledge, and effectiveness of faculty, staff, and administrators. It plays a critical role in maintaining high standards of teaching, research, and service while fostering a culture of continuous improvement within institutions.

PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT: A financial statement for companies or nonprofit organizations that indicates how net revenue (money received from the sale of products and services before expenses are taken out, also known as the "top line") is transformed into net income (the result after all revenues and expenses have been accounted for, also known as the "bottom line"). This report is also known as an income statement. It

summarizes income and expenses for the month, so you can tell whether you're operating at a profit or a loss. The report shows subtotals for each income or expense account in your chart of accounts. The last line shows your net income (or loss) for the month.

PROGRAM: A series of courses, which have been sequentially combined, that has a terminal objective and leads to a certificate of completion, diploma, or degree.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT: MEAC requires accredited programs and institutions to conduct ongoing assessment of the accredited midwifery program(s). The purpose of the program assessment is to identify areas for improvement in the program by evaluating whether the program goals are being met. This is a diagnostic tool and part of a program's continual quality improvement process. See Program Goals for more information and examples.

PROGRAM GOALS: Midwifery education program goals are the broad hoped-for outcomes for students at the completion of the education program. Program goals should be measurable in order to do a thorough program assessment. Depending on the goal, these measurements may or may not be directly tied to the learning objectives of particular courses (though taken as a whole, the learning objectives of the courses at your program/institution should add up to a package that helps you achieve your program goals). For example, all MEAC accredited institutions and programs should have as a program goal that graduates are prepared to be nationally certified by North American Registry of Midwives and/or to be state licensed. (see Standard I Benchmark C4).

Examples of program goals, not required in the MEAC standards, include:

- 1) Program Goal: To educate leaders in the midwifery community
 - a) Measure (not tied to learning objectives): Number (or percentage) of alumni who serve in leadership roles in midwifery organization, e.g. state midwifery boards, state NACPM chapters, board roles in AMO organizations, etc.
 - b) Measure (tied to learning objectives): Successful completion of courses focusing on leadership, including MDW 309-Midwifery Organizations in Context and LPD 403- Leadership and Personal Development
- 2) Program Goal: To increase the supply of midwives in California by training midwives who are licensed and practice in this state.
 - a) Measure (not tied to learning objectives): Percentage of alumnae licensed in California
 - b) Measure: (not tied to learning objectives): Percentage of alumnae practicing in California

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT (PPA): -A written agreement that must be signed by both a top official at an institution and the U.S. Secretary of Education that permits the institution to participate in one or more federal Title IV student aid programs (other than the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership [LEAP] Program). The signed agreement makes the institution's initial and continued eligibility to participate in Title IV programs conditional on compliance with all provisions of the applicable laws and program regulations. This agreement may have to be updated periodically due to changes at the institution. See [PPA Info](#) and [ESA](#) for more information.

PROGRAMMATIC ACCREDITATION: This type of accreditation refers to the review and approval of a midwifery program that legally functions as part of an institution with a scope larger than midwifery. In order for an entity to apply for program accreditation, it must be housed within an institution already accredited by a U.S.E.D. recognized accrediting agency.

QUALITY ASSURANCE: The systematic process of ensuring that an institution or program meets defined standards of quality.

QUALITY INDICATORS: Specific measures used to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of an institution or program.

QUALITATIVE MEASURES: Assessments or analyses that are not numerical in nature. Examples are in-depth interviews, personal references, or written essays.

QUANTITATIVE MEASURES: Assessments that can be reported numerically. Examples include a person's age, test scores, or GPA.

QUARTER SYSTEM: Academic term in which the year is divided into four quarters, each approximately ten to thirteen weeks long.

REACCREDITATION: The process by which an accredited institution or program undergoes re-evaluation to maintain its accredited status.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION: Changes made in physical facilities, learning activities, assessment methods, and other aspects of the school's services that support the success of students, faculty and staff with disabilities. See Americans with Disabilities Act link above.

RECERTIFICATION: The process by which midwives renew their certification to ensure continued competence in their field.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION: The practice of identifying, classifying, archiving, preserving, and destroying records. Birth certificates, medical x-rays, office documents, databases, application data, and e-mail are all examples of records.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS (STUDENT): Policies and procedures for advertising/ marketing to attract students to apply for enrollment in a program

REGULATORY AGENCIES: Public agencies or organizations mandated by state or federal statute responsible for the oversight and regulation of higher education, career education, and midwifery education.

REMEDATION: The act or process of correcting a fault or deficiency.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY: Used in the context of a job description, these describe the specific tasks and jobs that an individual must perform and/or participate in as part of their obligation to the institution/program.

RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN: A document prepared to foresee risks, estimate impacts, and define responses to issues. A risk is "an uncertain event or condition that, if it occurs, has a positive or negative effect on an organization's objectives." Risk is inherent in all organizations so they should assess risks continually and develop plans to address them. The risk management plan contains an analysis of likely risks with both high and low impact, as well as mitigation strategies to help the project avoid being derailed should common problems arise. Likely risks for midwifery schools include: legal, financial, loss of key personnel, natural disasters, etc.

RUBRIC: A framework or scoring guide used to evaluate performance against accreditation standards.

SAFETY PLAN: A predetermined procedure, generally written, to inform people of how to respond in an emergency or hazardous situation.

SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS: Policies and procedures established by an institution/program that determine whether or not students are making satisfactory progress toward their educational goals. Students who receive Title IV funds must be making satisfactory academic progress in order to remain eligible for financial assistance. Schools must check at least once each academic year and document for each payment period that each student receiving Title IV aid is progressing satisfactorily in their academic program. See [SAP](#) for more information.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES: A list of courses to be offered for a given semester or quarter providing the days, time, meeting place and usually the instructor of the course. Some class schedules also contain academic calendar information, including deadlines for registration transactions, and additional course fees, financial aid, and other pertinent information.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE: The procedures, actions, and processes permitted by law or professional standards for midwives.

SELF-EVALUATION REPORT (SER): The report an institution or program prepares which fully describes how it meets each of the MEAC standards and benchmarks, with all supporting documentation/evidence to support their report.

SELF-STUDY: A comprehensive internal review conducted by an institution or program to assess its adherence to accreditation standards.

SEMESTER SYSTEM: Academic term in which the year is divided into two semesters, generally about thirteen to fifteen weeks long.

SEPARATION OF DUTIES: Regarding financial practices, the division of tasks between at least two people in the collection of and banking of monies received to ensure ethical financial practices.

SHOW CAUSE: A non-adverse action taken by MEAC requiring an institution or program to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate why the institution/program's accreditation should not be withdrawn. See MEAC Policies and Procedures Section III.

SITE VISIT: An in-person evaluation conducted by representatives of the accrediting agency to verify compliance with standards.

SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES: Social support consists of strategies that foster and fortify social networks, school-connectedness, self-confidence, and academic motivation through intentional services, behaviors, structures, and expectations. Kuh and Love (2004) found that students who made cultural connections through social groups that reflect their culture of origin were more likely to persist in higher education. While such groups may form organically and informally, universities may also foster and create such opportunities to connect. Specific forms of social support provided by colleges, such as cohorts (Harris 2006) and learning communities (Tinto 2004) help students share academic experiences together, thus linking academic and social integration.

SOLVENCY: The ability of an institution to meet its long-term financial obligations. MEAC uses ratios to analyze an institution's solvency.

STANDARDS: The established criteria that institutions or programs must meet to achieve accreditation.

STATE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AUTHORITY: A regulatory agency mandated by state law to oversee and institute rules for higher education institutions and programs.

STATED TIMEFRAME: The amount of time it takes for most students to complete the midwifery program as determined by the institution or program; this is the amount of time described in program materials.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Strategic planning is an organization's process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy. In order to determine the direction of the organization, it is necessary to understand its current position and the possible avenues through which it can pursue a particular course of action. The key components of 'strategic planning' include an understanding of the firm's vision, mission, values and strategies.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: Terminology used by the U.S Department of Education to assess whether institutions of higher education are succeeding in helping their students to achieve their academic goals. MEAC requires accredited institutions and programs to demonstrate the following measures of student achievement: completion (of the program), retention, graduate placement, and certification exam pass rates. (See Standard I Benchmark C).

STUDENT ADMISSIONS CRITERIA: Decisive factors, requirements and conditions that a student must meet in order to enroll in a program.

STUDENT AND EXCHANGE AND VISITOR PROGRAM (SEVP): Acts as the bridge for varied government organizations which have an interest in information on foreign students. It uses web- based technology, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to track and monitor schools and programs, students, exchange visitors and their dependents throughout the duration of approved participation within the U.S. education system. See [Student and Exchange Visitor Program | ICE](#) for more information.

STUDENT EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT: The evaluation of a student's learning to determine progress and level of performance.

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID: Financial assistance for an eligible student; usually for tuition but possibly for other educational and living expenses, available in the form of grants, loans, and scholarships.

STUDENT LEDGERS: A current and accurate record of student payments, credits and debits. Title IV institutions must meet specific requirements for these ledgers.

STUDENT PROGRESS: Policies and procedures for measuring how students advance, develop, gain knowledge or move forward in their education.

STUDENT SERVICES: Programs offered by an institution to offer assistance and support to students, such as counseling, financial aid information, tutoring, housing, childcare, new student orientation, clinical placement assistance, accommodation for disabilities, learning resources.

STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM: A software platform designed to manage, store, and track information related to students and their academic records. SIS is commonly used in educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities to streamline administrative processes and improve communication between administrators, teachers, students, and parents.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE: Any significant change to the educational mission or programs of an institution that might adversely affect the capacity of the institution or program to meet MEAC's standards, including changes in curriculum, mission/objectives, ownership, legal status, location, additional locations, additions of branch campus. See MEAC Policies and Procedures Section III.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT: The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Summative assessments are often high stakes, which means that they have a high point value. Examples of summative assessments include: a midterm exam, a final project, a paper, a senior recital. Information from summative assessments can be used formatively when students or faculty use it to guide their efforts and activities in subsequent courses.

SUPERVISION/SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP: A relationship in which one party oversees the work of another, evaluates the quality of the work and provides guidance and direction. See Candidate Information Bulletin [NARM CIB](#) for more information.

SYLLABUS/SYLLABI: An outline or other brief statement describing the main topics of curriculum for a course and requirements of students enrolled in the course. Syllabi typically focus on the learner. Well-written syllabi communicate to students what is expected to succeed in a course and what competencies must be mastered. Syllabi assist faculty members with communicating with their learners and help learners understand what is expected of them. Follow this link for information on best practices in syllabi writing: [Best Practices in Syllabus Writing: Contents of a Learner-Centered Syllabus - PMC](#).

SYSTEM BACKUP: Refers to the copying and archiving of computer data so it may be used to restore the original after a data loss event. Backups have two distinct purposes. The primary purpose is to recover data after its loss, be it by data deletion or corruption. The secondary purpose of

backups is to recover data from an earlier time, according to a user-defined data retention policy, typically configured within a backup application for how long copies of data are required.

TEACHING AIDS: Any device, object, or machine used by a teacher to clarify or enliven a subject in an effort to achieve the specified learning objectives.

TEACH-OUT AGREEMENT: A written agreement between institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their program of study if an institution, or an institutional location that provides one hundred percent of at least one program offered, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their program of study.

TEACH-OUT PLAN: A written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides one hundred percent of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study, and may include, if required by the institution's accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between institutions.

TECHNOLOGY PLAN: A plan prepared by a school to explain how telecommunications and information technology will be used to achieve educational goals, curriculum reforms, or library service improvements.

TECHNOLOGY/TECHNICAL SUPPORT: In general, technical support services attempt to help the user solve specific problems with a product—rather than providing training, customization, or other support services.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT: A contract signed by employees to acknowledge that they understand and agree with the basic terms of their employment and scope of duties. It provides basic employment conditions that protect the company, and helps ensure that the employee cannot later deny awareness, responsibility, or accountability. The document should clarify the intentions of the employer and employee. To ensure that the terms can be enforced, the Terms of Employment (and other related documents) should be signed before employment begins. Although many employee rights and employer obligations are established by federal law, state law still controls a great deal of the employment relationship. Employers are urged to have the Terms of Employment and other related employment forms reviewed by the company's local attorneys, and to use those forms in a manner prescribed by local law.

TITLE IV: A section of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, a federal law in the United States that governs federal student aid programs. Title IV outlines the rules and funding mechanisms for federal financial assistance to students pursuing post-secondary education. These programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Education and aim to improve access to higher education.

TITLE IX: A federal civil rights law in the United States that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Enacted as part of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title IX is administered by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

THEORY AND PRACTICE: Two aspects of education. Theory is very often contrasted to "practice"; a Greek term for "doing", which is opposed to theory because pure theory involves no doing apart from itself. A classical example of the distinction between theoretical and practical uses the discipline of medicine: medical theory involves trying to understand the causes and nature of health and sickness, while the practical side of medicine is hands-on – trying to make people healthy. These two things are related but can be independent, because it is possible to research health and sickness without curing specific patients, and it is possible to cure a patient without knowing how the cure worked. In keeping with the latest evidence in adult learning, MEAC standards encourage schools to link theory and practice where possible.

THESIS: A dissertation embodying results of original research and especially substantiating a specific view; especially one written by a candidate for an academic degree.

THIRD-PARTY COMMENT: Input from stakeholders such as students, alumni, or employers regarding an institution or program being reviewed for accreditation.

THIRD-PARTY SERVICER: As defined in [34 CFR 668.2](#), a third-party servicer is "an individual [not including an employee of the institution] or a State, or a private, profit, or non-profit organization that enters into a contract with an eligible institution to administer, through either manual or automated processing, any aspect of the institution's participation in any title IV, HEA program."

TIMELY FASHION: Within the timeframes established by the agency or program.

TITLE IV FEDERAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS: Financial aid programs for postsecondary students, authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA). The programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Education. See [FSA](#) for more information about Title IV federal student aid programs.

TRANSCRIPT: The accurate and complete record of a student's academic coursework attempted at an institution, presented in either electronic or paper format.

TRANSFER OF CREDIT: The institution's mechanism for assessing and/or accepting transfer credits earned by a student transferring from another institution. See [CHEA](#) for more information.

TRANSPARENCY: Openness and accessibility of information related to the accreditation process and outcomes.

TRIMESTER SYSTEM: Academic term in which the year is divided into three terms, usually thirteen to seventeen weeks in duration.

TUTORING: Special mentoring by faculty or other qualified individuals for classroom and clinical work.

UNDER REVIEW: The status of an institution or program that is in the process of being evaluated for accreditation.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (U.S.D.E.): A federal agency directed by the U.S. Secretary of Education (an office appointed by the President) and mandated by Congress to oversee education in the United States and its territories, including the disbursement of federal student financial aid, the regulation of accrediting agencies, and many other federal programs that support, provide funding, or regulate educational institutions. See www.ed.gov for more information.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (U.S.D.E) RECOGNIZED AGENCY: An agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education as a reliable authority in evaluating the educational quality of programs offered by postsecondary institutions. An accrediting agency sets educational standards, evaluates institutions, and certifies that institutions have met its standards.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS: Universal precautions refers to the practice of avoiding contact with clients' and/or patients' bodily fluids, by means of the wearing of nonporous articles such as medical gloves, goggles, and face shields.

VALID AND RELIABLE ASSESSMENTS: In order for assessments to be sound, they must be free of bias and distortion. Reliability and validity are two concepts that are important for defining and measuring bias and distortion. Reliability refers to the extent to which assessments are consistent. Validity refers to the accuracy of an assessment – whether or not it measures what it is supposed to measure.

VALIDATION: The process of confirming that an educational program or credential meets established standards.

VERIFICATION: The confirmation of evidence provided by an institution or program during the accreditation process.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: A program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation.

WATER BIRTH: A method of childbirth where labor and/or delivery occurs in a water-filled tub or pool under midwifery care.

WITHDRAWAL: A permanent dropping of courses or the midwifery program by the student.

WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION: The removal of accreditation status due to non-compliance with established standards.