Section D.2: Overview of the Renewal of Accreditation Process

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Overview of the Renewal of Accreditation Process

Accreditation

Accreditation is a structured, step-by-step process consisting of a Renewal of Accreditation Application, a comprehensive Self-Evaluation Report, a Materials & Information Request, a Site Visit, a Draft Findings Report, the institution/program's response to the findings, and an accreditation decision.

The accreditation process is designed to create opportunities for and to 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 that are seeking renewal of accreditation, the accreditation process starts following Accreditation Review Training.

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:

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
- Best Practices in Accreditation

The Renewal of Accreditation Process

Self-Evaluation Report

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 thereunder 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. An SER template and Tips for Meeting Standards and Benchmarks are available.

I. Applying for Institutional or Programmatic Accreditation? Some standards apply to both programmatic and institutional accreditation, but some are specific to institutional or programmatic accreditation.

    A. Standards applying to only institutional accreditation: II.E1, II.E2, II.E3, II.F1, III.E1, III.E2, IV/D1, IV.D2, IV.D3, IV.D4, IV.E1, V.A1, V.A3, V.B1, V.B2, V.B3, V.B5, V.D1, V.D3, VI.B1, VII.A3, VII.A5, V11.D1, VII.D3, VIII.B1, VIII.C1, X.A1, X.B1, X.B2, X.B3, X.B4, X.B5, X.C1, X.C2

    B. Standards applying to only programmatic accreditation: V.A2, V.B4, VII.A4

II. **Self Evaluation Report** (SER)

    A. Provide a history of the institution/program:

        1. When the institution/program opened

        2. When the institution/program first enrolled students

        3. When the institution/program first became eligible to apply for accreditation

        4. Any significant events in the institution/program's history

        5. List and provide dates of all changes of control/ownership, name, location, addition of programs, separate facilities, and other substantive changes that have occurred in the last two years

    B. Explain ownership and organization

        1. Provide as an exhibit a chart of the ownership structure of the institution/program, including all entities and individuals in the chain of ownership and any additional information necessary to explain the ownership structure

        2. Provide as an exhibit an organizational chart of the institution/program's management structure

    C. Include information regarding requirements with which institution/program must comply that are significantly different or more stringent than MEAC standards

        1. Any state-specific student refund requirements

        2. Any state-specific requirements for faculty

        3. Any state or local government requirements for fire, safety, sanitation, and insurance

        4. Any state program requirements

        5. Any other additional requirements by federal, state, or local government agencies or other accrediting bodies that are significantly different or more stringent than MEAC standards

D. Respond to *each of the standards* outlined in MEAC's Section B: Standards of Accreditation

   1. Responses should be clear and concise but should speak to all parts of each standard. Explain processes and procedures.

      a) Think about writing out instructions to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich ([this is a silly video](#) describing what I mean)

   2. Explain how the institution/program meets each standard and its benchmark(s). Provide examples and exhibits. See the example in #3.

      a) Example: institution/program's Mission Statement

         (1) Include the Mission Statement

         (2) Provide pages from or links to where the Mission Statement may be found (student handbook, website, etc.)

   3. Example of how the institution/program might respond to Standard I | Mission, Program Assessment, and Student Achievement:

      a) Benchmark I.A | Mission

         Benchmark I.A1 (Programmatic and Institutional Accreditation) – The institution or program has a mission statement.

         (1) Institution Response: The mission of Made Up College of Midwifery is to prepare clinically, culturally, and philosophically competent midwives who provide exceptional care to women, newborns, and families (I pulled this basically word for word from the University of Utah instead of trying to write my own 😀).

         (2) Made Up College of Midwifery includes the College's mission statement in the student handbook (see Exhibit 1: Page X of Student Handbook) and on the institution/program's website (see Exhibit 2: (Insert link) Made Up College of Midwifery Website).

III. To earn renewal of accreditation, the institution/program must show compliance with or progress towards compliance with all standards (remember that some are either institutional or programmatic)

IV. Formatting the SER

   A. Institutions/programs will upload all responses and exhibits in Weave (might be a good idea to create outside of Weave in the SER template and then copy them into the Weave software)

      1. Responses – Format consistently, check for spelling, grammar, etc. Should reference exhibits in response.

      2. Exhibits – Name all Exhibits in a logical, standardized format (Example: Exhibit 1: Page X of Student Handbook)

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

Materials and Information Request

Following submission of the SER, your institution/program's assigned MEAC Director of Accreditation will review the SER 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 is it unclear how the institution/program meets the benchmark)
3. Opportunity to Respond to Noted Deficiencies and Possible Noncompliance (where there are not any 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 have the opportunity to respond to each section of the Materials and Information Request prior to the site visit.

Preparation for Site Visit

The next step in the accreditation process is the Site Visit. The Director of Accreditation will meet with the institution/program prior to the site visit to discuss logistics, additional requirements, and any other pertinent information. MEAC will provide a Site Visit Manual and a tentative schedule for purposes of preparation.

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. If the institution/program offers the majority of its coursework via distance education, the site visit will be conducted virtually. If the institution/program is brick and mortar, the site visit will be in person.

Draft ARC Report

The Draft ARC Report is prepared by MEAC's Director of Accreditation following the site visit. This report summarizes ARC findings, and it 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 have the opportunity 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 then be submitted to the Board of Directors for an accreditation decision.

Board Report

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 will 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 includes adverse action (denial, suspension, or withdrawal of accreditation), the institution/program will have further options for due process. See MEAC's Accreditation Handbook, Section G, Appeal and Due Process policy for more information.

Renewal of Accreditation Timeline

	Step	Details	Max Time for Each Step	Cumulative Timeline
	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.		
PART I 6 weeks	Part I Application	The current institution/program has 4 weeks to complete and submit the Part I application and fee.	4 Weeks	4 Weeks
	Part I Fee	Due before Part I is officially accepted.		
	Notification of Part I Acceptance or Denial	MEAC Staff will review the application within two weeks of receipt and will 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.	2 Weeks	6 Weeks
PART II 38-46 Weeks	Complete Self-Evaluation Report (SER)	**Programmatic** 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.	14-22 Weeks	20-28 Weeks
		Institutional 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 that are 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: • Institutions that grant degrees (2		

		additional weeks) • Institutions that offer distance education (2 additional weeks) • Institutions participating in Title IV (2 additional weeks)		
	SER Fee	Due before the end of the 14-week time period. 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.		
	MEAC Review of SER	MEAC staff will review the SER for completeness, compile a list of missing, incomplete, or unclear pieces, and notify the applicant via a Materials and Information Request (MIR).	8 Weeks	28-36 Weeks
	Applicant Response to MIR	The applicant has 6 weeks to provide the requested MIR.	6 Weeks	34-42 Weeks
	Submission of Site Visit Fee	The Member institution/program will also need to submit the site visit fee. MEAC will send an invoice for this.		
	Accreditation Review Committee (ARC) Review of institution/program Submission	The ARC will review the full institution/program submission, give preliminary scores for each benchmark, and compile a list of questions for the site visit. MEAC staff will coordinate with the ARC and Member institution/program to schedule a site visit, collect contact lists, etc. This will occur no more than four weeks following the ARC review of the institution/program submission.	10 Weeks	43-52 Weeks
Part III 4 Weeks	Site Visit	MEAC Staff and the ARC will conduct a site visit with the Member institution/program.	4 Weeks	48-56 Weeks
Part IV 18 Weeks	Draft ARC Report	MEAC Staff will prepare the Draft ARC Report with updated preliminary benchmark scoring following the site visit.	6 Weeks	54-62 Weeks
	Approval of Draft ARC Report and	The ARC will review and revise the Draft ARC Report, and MEAC Staff will send the	2 Weeks	56-64 Weeks

	Institution/program Notification	report to the Member institution/program.		
	Institution/program Response to Draft ARC Report	The institution/program has 4 weeks to respond to the draft ARC report.	4 Weeks	60-68 Weeks
	ARC Review of Response to Draft ARC Report/ Independent Board Review of institution/program Materials	The ARC will review the applicant response, finalize preliminary benchmark scores, and adopt the Final ARC Report. The Final ARC Report will also include a recommendation to either grant or deny reaccreditation. 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.	6 Weeks	66-74 Weeks
Part V 4-8 Weeks	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 will make an accreditation decision.	2-6 Weeks	68-80 Weeks
	Institution/program Notified of Accreditation Decisi0on		2 Weeks	70-82 Weeks
	Planning Cushion	To ensure comprehensive reviews can be completed with enough time for full consideration before the institution/program's grant of accreditation expires.	8 Weeks	78-90 Weeks