MAERB Fall Report 2020

Contents

MAERB's New Contact Information

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MAERB Office staff are working virtually. We still, however, are dedicated to serving the CAAHEP-accredited programs. As with any new method of working, there is some adjustment. Outlined below are the central points of contact for the MAERB office. Please feel free to contact your Program Manager if you have any further questions.

Telephone: There is a new telephone number for MAERB—312-392-0155. When you listen to the message, you will hear the extensions for the MAERB staff. Please call us when you have questions.

Submitting Self-Studies, Progress Reports, and other Accreditation Materials: Program Directors have the capacity to upload accreditation documentation, such as Self-Study Reports, Progress Reports, Requests for Reconsideration, and other large file submissions, on the MAERB website. The directions for doing so are on the Documents tab of the MAERB website (www.maerb.org) in the "Program Resources/Accreditation Resources" section. The instructions are titled, "Submitting Documents, MAERB website." Program Directors were sent their password in May 2020 or in a subsequent notification. This upload system is designed for a large collection of documents. If you can send the documents via email to your Program Director, you are encouraged to do so.

Payments for Accreditation Services or Annual Program Service Fees: If you want to pay by credit card (MasterCard, Discover, Visa, or American Express) you can contact Tasha Harris at 312-392-0155, ext. 406, or write tharris@maerb.org. If you are paying by check, make the check payable to the MAERB, and mail it to the MAERB, 20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1575, Chicago, IL 60606.

MAERB COVID-19 Statement—Sunset Date, February 15, 2021

As we are living in unprecedented times, we have needed to make unprecedented adaptations. Even in this chaotic period, the central goal of a CAAHEP-accredited medical assisting program remains the same: producing competent entry-level medical assistants and preserving patient and student safety. At the same time, the pathway to producing those competent entry-level medical assistants may vary. In the MAERB COVID-19 Statement, the programs can implement a broader-than-normal range of approaches to the practicum, including simulation. You will find the complete MAERB COVID-19 Statement at the MAERB website (www.maerb.org) on the Reference tab.

The Sunset Date for this specific allowance is currently set for February 15, 2021. MAERB members, however, will be evaluating the MAERB Status Report that all the programs submitted by September 1, 2020, and they will be gathering additional information at the end of October in order to determine the best course of action for the upcoming spring semester.

Change in ARF Outcome, Employer Surveys Sent

Effective immediately, MAERB is replacing the Employer Survey Participation outcome with an Employer Surveys Sent outcome on the Annual Report Form, and you will note the change in Policy 205, "Annual Report Form Processing," in the MAERB *Policies and Procedure Manual*.

As you know, the Employer Survey Participation outcome had a threshold of 30%. In other words, if you had 10 students in your graduate cohort of 2018 who received medical assisting positions or jobs in a related field, you needed to receive at least three Employer Surveys from employers to meet the threshold. The MAERB has replaced that outcome with the requirement that 100% of employers who hired graduates to work as medical assistants or in a related field must be sent an Employer Survey. For example, with the 10 students in your graduate cohort of 2018 who received medical assisting positions or jobs in a related field, you need to send Employer Surveys to 100% of the employers.

Over the years, MAERB had received consistent feedback that many large systems, who served as the major employers, were not returning the Employer Surveys. In addition, during this litigious age, small employers were also more hesitant about expressing feedback in writing. While the survey is designed to provide feedback to the program about its success, many employers have been concerned that it provided confidential information about specific individuals. Unfortunately, the Employer Survey Participation outcome became increasingly difficult to meet, due to these external pressures. In switching the outcome to Employer Surveys Sent, Program Directors can successfully achieve the outcome while continuing to receive important feedback from those employers who participate.

Employers are important communities of interest for CAAHEP-accredited medical assisting programs, and it is vital that Program Directors receive feedback from this community. This feedback can be achieved in several different ways. With the goal of developing a list of best practices to you, we have included a new question in the "General Information" section of the Annual Report Form that asks you to share how you are receiving feedback from your local employers.

MAERB Forum

Unfortunately, we are not able to meet in person this year, but the MAERB members still want to provide the community of CAAHEP-accredited medical assisting programs with information about the MAERB's ongoing activities. We will be holding a virtual MAERB Forum on Wednesday, September 9, 4:00 – 5:15 pm Central.

If you haven't done so already, you can register in advance for this webinar at the following link: MAERB Forum<https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_W__YgeqVQzasFLBo612Xtw>
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar at the time designated.

During the webinar, we will be providing updates and discussing the following:

 * COVID-19 adjustments
 * Responses to the *MAERB Status Report*
 * Policy changes and updates
 * Upcoming work on revising the CAAHEP Standards and Guidelines and the MAERB Core Curriculum

Please join us for the event, and, if you are not able to join, we will have a recorded version uploaded on the website after the event. Your instructional staff and administrators are welcome to join in viewing the Forum webinar.

Annual Report Form (ARF) Rollout—Technological Updates and Good News!

After the successful use of the new Annual Report Form in spring 2020, the MAERB is moving ahead with the new technology, and the fall programs will have the opportunity to use the online version, instead of the Excel form that they used last year. In the spring of 2020, the MAERB staff inputted online the data that had been submitted by programs via Excel in fall 2019 so that Program Directors will not need to do any extra work.

Instructions and training videos will be uploaded the MAERB website in mid-September after the Program Directors on the fall ARF schedule have received email notification that the 2020 ARF has gone "live."

Based upon policy, Program Directors will now need to submit the following information online with their ARF each year:
 * **Policy 205**: Program Directors will be required to submit their ARF Tracking Tool (labeled on the website as the 2019 and beyond ARF Tacking Tool) that has been updated to match the top row of data that will be included on the 2020 ARF (i.e., admission data for those admitted in 2019 and all other outcome data for those who graduated in calendar year 2019).
 * **Policy 230**: Program Directors will be required to submit the annual Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes for the calendar or academic year of 2019.
 * **Policy 225**: Program Directors will be required to submit their 2019 Annual Resource Assessment Grid. A template document is posted on the MAERB website.

Annual Report Form (ARF) 2020, Deadlines

Fall Submissions, 2020 ARF (2019 admission/graduate cohorts and updates to prior years)
   August 20, 2020: Program Directors received a notice informing them that in approximately 30 days they will be sent the 2020 ARF.
   September 18, 2020: Program Directors will be able to begin work on their 2020 ARF.
   October 23, 2020: Firm deadline for the online submission of the 2020 ARF

Spring Submissions, 2020 ARF (2019 admission/graduate cohorts and updates to prior years)

December 11, 2020: Program Directors will receive a notice informing them that in approximately 30 days they will be sent their 2020 ARF.
January 15, 2021: Program Directors will be able to begin work on their 2020 ARF.
February 19, 2021: Firm deadline for submission of the 2020 ARF

Training Webinar Online: 2019 and beyond ARF Tracking Tool

As was mentioned above, concurrent with submission of the 2020 ARF, Program Directors will be required to submit an updated Excel copy of the MAERB-designed Tracking Tool, which should substantiate the aggregated data that they have reported on the 2020 ARF. The MAERB has held several webinars for Program Directors to demonstrate effective ways to use the ARF Tracking Tool. There is currently a training video posted on the MAERB's website (www.maerb.org) on the Documents tab. The training video is under the section, "Annual Report Form," and it is titled, "ARF Outcome Tracking Tool."

Newish Requirement: Submission of Assessment Tools with Self-Study

Beginning with the fall 2020 semester, all programs with an initial or continuing accreditation site visit are required to submit their curricular assessment tools, demonstrating that they are teaching and assessing the MAERB Core Curriculum, together with the submission of their Self-Study, four months prior to the visit. Due to this new requirement, the site visits are scheduled for a day and a half rather than two full days.

These medical assisting programs with scheduled site visits will need to organize all the curriculum materials electronically according to the alphanumeric classification of the MAERB Core Curriculum. The new Self-Study template is included on the Documents tab.

At the end of the Self-Study Report template, the MAERB has provided a schema for exactly how to organize and label these curricular materials. The submission of blank assessment tools is not a new requirement; rather, only the timeframe for submission has changed. In the past, Program Directors had the tools first available during the site visit in the resource room. There are several benefits to requesting these assessment tools in advance:

1. Program Directors will be able to locate any omissions of the teaching and assessment of the MAERB Core Curriculum as they are completing the Self-Study.
2. The Site Surveyors will be able to review the quality of the assessment tools and provide feedback to the Program Director prior to the site visit.
3. Site Surveyors will have more time at the site visit to talk with people and learn about the program.

The MAERB looks forward to continuing to support CAAHEP-accredited medical assisting programs in their teaching and assessment of the MAERB Core Curriculum. To help you with this new process, you will find a training video, titled "Assessment Tools with Self Study," at the MAERB website (www.maerb.org) on the Educators tab, under "Training Videos and Handouts."

Policy Changes and Updates

At the MAERB Summer 2020 meeting, there were several policy changes that were put in place, and you will find the specific policy at the MAERB website (www.maerb.org) on the Documents Tab. Please go to the website to download the updated version of the MAERB *Policy Manual*. Below you will find a brief summary of the changes for your information.

Policy 110: Advertising of Accreditation Status
CAAHEP has changed the language for you to use for the public announcement of CAAHEP-accreditation. In the past, you needed to include the address and phone number; with the change, you only need to include the website. The address and phone number are optional.

In addition, programs placed on probation will need to submit documentation to MAERB that students and applicants have been informed of the probationary accreditation status.

Policy 115: Accreditation Fees
As of August 1, 2021, the Program Director Personnel Change fee will increase to $400 from $350, and that fee increase includes attendance at a Virtual Program Director Boot Camp, which will be offered either annually or semi-annually.

Policy 133: Apprenticeships with CAAHEP-Accredited Programs
Programs who add an apprenticeship component to a CAAHEP-accredited program need to have this addition approved by MAERB, demonstrating that the program is still meeting the CAAHEP *Standards and Guidelines.*

Policy 205: Annual Report Form Processing
Please see the article "Change in ARF Outcome" above. The outcome has changed to measure the percentage of Employer Surveys Sent, rather than requiring 30% Employer Participation.

Policy 240: Program Director Change/Appointment
Newly appointed Program Directors are required to attend a live virtual Program Director Boot Camp within a year of their appointment, and the fee for that Boot Camp is built into the increase in the Program Director Fee. This requirement, as well as the increase in the fee, will begin August 1, 2021.

Policy 305: Initial Accreditation
As stated earlier, the policy was amended to state that Program Directors of newly accredited programs are required to attend a live virtual Program Director Boot Camp during the first year of the program's accreditation.

Website Updates

Every summer or early fall, MAERB updates its website to ensure that Program Directors are receiving the most updated information. You will note that the following documents have been updated:
- *Initial Accreditation Packet*: Materials for programs applying for Initial Accreditation
- *Program Director Handbook*: Important information for all Program Directors.
- Submitting Documents, MAERB Website: This document outlines the process of submitting large collections of documents to MAERB.
- *Student Status Form*: This form is to be used by programs to document any changes in practicum or achievement of the competencies that the students have experienced due to COVID-19. This information does not need to be submitted to MAERB, but it is important for the program to document these changes.

- *Outcome Thresholds Chart*: This chart was updated to reflect the revisions in Policy 205 focused on the change to Employer Surveys Sent rather then Employer Survey Participation.
- *MAERB Policies and Procedures Manual*: The policy changes that were outlined in the "Policy Changes and Updates" were included in the updated Manual.

Please feel free to let us know if you have any questions about these documents or any others, as we want to provide you with accurate and up-to-date information.

Virtual Site Visits—Fall 2020

For the site visits taking place in fall 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MAERB is conducting virtual site visits so that it can honor the good and timely work that has been done by the CAAHEP-accredited medical assisting programs in preparing for the accreditation process. In designing virtual site visits as a temporary measure, MAERB is responding to the national/global health crises, with the intent of keeping our constituents and communities of interest safe and healthy.

A virtual site visit uses a web-based audio and visual connection so that the site surveyors can interact effectively with the Medical Assisting Program Director and instructional staff, the institutional administration and support staff, the students and the graduates, and the Advisory Committee.

At this time, MAERB is moving ahead with plans to conduct all scheduled site visits for spring 2021 face-to-face, and the Program Directors have been informed of that fact. It is anticipated that site surveyors will be able to travel to the program to effectively evaluate the medical assisting program's compliance with the CAAHEP-accredited programs.

However, because pandemics are unpredictable, the MAERB is also setting up contingency plans. If it is not safe or healthy for people to travel, the MAERB will conduct virtual site visits for spring 2021.

The virtual site visits are, as explained above, a temporary measure; at the same time, we will learn from this temporary measure, and we will share the information that we learn with the larger community.

Virtues of Accreditation

The MAERB is going to be showcasing the Virtues of Accreditation on a regular basis in its semi-annual MAERB Report. At the September 2019 MAERB Forum, during the brief discussion of the three-year CMA (AAMA) pilot program that allows graduates from unaccredited medical assisting programs to sit for the CMA (AAMA) exam, Forum participants requested that MAERB provide a brief outline of the virtues of accreditation so that Program Directors and other instructional staff of CAAHEP-accredited medical assisting programs can discuss the benefits of CAAHEP accreditation with their school administrators.

Below you will find a list of accreditation virtues that we first published in fall 2019 and have updated. We solicited responses from our community members. The MAERB continues to welcome your participation in this process, as we realize that you, too, have a list of the virtues of accreditation that you outline when you speak to students, administrators, and employers.

- **Accreditation assures professional competence**: Graduates from a CAAHEP-accredited program have covered the comprehensive MAERB Core Curriculum and achieved the psychomotor and affective competencies to ensure patient safety.

- **Accreditation offers standardization, uniformity, and consistency**: All CAAHEP-accredited programs cover the same MAERB Core Curriculum, so employers can be guaranteed that the students know a given body of entry-level knowledge.
- **Accreditation requires external verification, review, and validation**: In fulfilling the standards, CAAHEP-accredited programs submit their outcomes to MAERB for an annual review and go through a comprehensive site visit review with CAAHEP every ten years.
- **Accreditation protects resources:** The accreditation *Standards and Guidelines* specify that the students and faculty have access to specific resources in order to ensure that the program can comply with the national standards.
- **Accreditation enhances the institution's reputation**: Institutions participating in programmatic accreditation distinguish themselves from other institutions.
- **Accreditation is public**: CAAHEP-accredited programs are listed in a CAAHEP database for student and educator access, and CAAHEP-accredited programs post their status and outcomes.
- **Accreditation travels well**: Employers across the country recognize the value of accreditation.
- **Accreditation advances the profession**: The standardization, uniformity and consistency that accreditation ensures, as well as the review of the *Standards and Guidelines* and MAERB Core Curriculum, move the profession forward toward greater recognition in the allied health field.

You can help us by adding to this list, so please contact Sarah Marino (smarino@maerb.org) with your suggestions, and we will continue to develop tenets.