

### **What is meant by a Trigger Course?**

Almost every medical assisting program has a slightly different process of admission into the program. That being said, from MAERB's perspective, it boils down to two distinct types of admission: 1) You either admit students based on a Formal Admissions Process, or 2) you admit students based on those who enroll in and pass what MAERB calls a "Trigger Course." Today we are going to discuss the latter, but, in order to do so, you must first understand what a Formal Admissions Process is so that you can accurately determine which admissions process defines your program.

A program uses a Formal Admissions Process if it has a process of admissions that is unique among the other fields of study at the school. Typically, the program has some sort of unique application process by which it can accept certain potential students and reject others.

If you don't use this sort of process but, rather, have open admission, then your program should speak in terms of what MAERB calls a Trigger Course. The Trigger Course is that first course (or courses) within the sequence of your program that teaches and assesses some of the psychomotor and/or affective competencies within the MAERB Core Curriculum. Typically, this course would be taught in the first semester or quarter, but it's possible that it might be located in a subsequent semester/quarter. Programs that use a Trigger Course (to determine and define admission into the medical assisting program) only need to count those students who successfully pass the Trigger Course.

Let's say that your program determines admission based upon a Trigger Course that happens to have the prefix MA105. Let's imagine that you offer MA105 twice a year, every January and August.

In August of 2022, 18 persons enroll in the class, but several drop out at various points during the term and so only 13 students make it to December 2022 having successfully passed the class. Your admission cohort, then, for this group of students would then consist of 13 persons (not the 18 who enrolled in the Trigger Course).

Theoretically (on both your ARF Tracking Tool and on your ARF) you may either list the date of admission for these 13 students as either August 2022 or as December 2022. MAERB prefers that you use the month in which the Trigger Course began (i.e., August, in this case), but we allow for you to use the ending month, if you wish. The critical thing is that you use the same month on both your Trigger Course and on your ARF, so that the data matches. Once you have decided to use either the month in which the course began or the course ended, we want you to continue to use that start or end month when reporting on your ARF.