

MAERB Report

Fall 2014

Overview

This report contains the following information for the Program Directors and other interested faculty/staff of CAAHEP-accredited programs:

- MAERB's updated website
- Updated Program Director Handbook
- MAERB at AAMA Annual Conference: MAERB Forum
- MAERB Annual Report Form, Updated Policy
- New Faculty Workbook Template
- Results of Annual Report Form (ARF) Survey

MAERB has a new look: www.maerb.org

Any organization's website involves ongoing updates, and MAERB's website received a new look and some minor re-organization this summer. Go to www.maerb.org to see the new look. In addition, check out the new "Documents" page. In order to make it easier to find all the information that you need, all of MAERB's forms, workbooks, and resources are collected on one page, organized by specific focus. So, if you are working on your Annual Report Form, you will be able to go to that section and find all of the available resources. The MAERB office determined to make more of the resources for preparing for the visit accessible online, so Program Directors will find a number of documents to guide them in preparing for the site visit process in the section "Site Visits and Program Directors." There are a number of new or newly revised resources available, and those documents will be discussed in other sections of this MAERB Report.

Program Director Handbook: Updated and Improved!

In the summer of 2013, the MAERB members shared with the MAERB/CAAHEP community of medical assisting programs the first version of a *Program Director Handbook*. Based upon recent feedback from the Program Directors and the MAERB site Surveyors, the *Program Director Handbook* has been updated significantly, providing Program Directors with an overview of CAAHEP Programmatic Accreditation, the annual and ongoing responsibilities of Program Directors of CAAHEP-accredited programs, and

details about the comprehensive review process and the site visit. In other words, the *Handbook* is designed to be useful for Program Directors at any stage of the program within the accreditation process.

The goal is to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the CAAHEP accreditation processes administered by the MAERB office and overseen by the MAERB Members. Feedback is welcome, so contact your Case Manager if you have any questions about the *Program Director Handbook* or any ideas for improvement. We will be reviewing it next summer in order to ensure that it remains current and helpful.

AAMA Annual Conference: MAERB Forum and Accreditation Workshops

MAERB will be well-represented at the AAMA 58th Annual Conference in St. Louis on October 17-20, 2014, and we hope to see you there. On Friday, October 17, from 2:00-4:00, the MAERB members will conduct the annual MAERB Forum. The designated topics for the MAERB Forum include the following: the new Standards; changes to the Annual Report Form, and changes to the website.

In addition, MAERB will be conducting two Accreditation Workshops: the first on October 18 for continuing accreditation, and the second on October 20 for continuing and initial accreditation. The workshops are designed for visits conducted under the 2008 *Standards and Guidelines*, so programs who have visits scheduled to occur prior to January 2017 will find the material to be relevant.

Annual Report Form: Changes in Policy 1.16

Below you will find an outline of the major differences in the Annual Report Form (ARF) and the thresholds. Another useful resource for you is the “Outcome Threshold Chart” that can be found on the Documents page on the MAERB website. These changes have been put into place for the 2014 ARF, and Program Directors were informed of these changes in May 2014. As has been true in the past, medical assisting programs with multiple-admission (more than two per year) cohorts will be submitting the data for the 2013 academic year in the fall, beginning on September 19, 2014. Programs with one or two admission cohorts per year will begin to submit their 2013 academic data in late January/early February 2015.

1. Trigger Course

As has been true in the past, MA programs have the ability to establish a trigger date in order to determine when the program has officially started. You will note that the new policy changes the terminology to “trigger course,” in Policy 1.16.I.A and provides an extended definition. The “trigger course” is the first course in the Medical Assisting program curriculum in which any of the psychomotor and/or affective competencies are taught and measured, a definition that has been operative in the past.

There are some programs in which students take courses prior to starting the Medical Assisting program in which some psychomotor and/or affective competencies may be taught, but if the competencies are re-taught and re-assessed within the medical assisting curriculum, then the trigger course can be the one designated by the program rather than a course outside of the medical assisting curriculum.

Another shift is in the formal definition of the admission cohort: the formal admission cohort is the group of students who have successfully completed the trigger course.

This definition will be in place for the retention data gathered for the 2014 ARF, which collects information about the 2013 admission cohorts as well as updates from prior years. Programs can choose to update the previous years of data on the 2014 ARF, based upon the revised definition. It is optional to update previous years, so, if the threshold has been met in the past and/or there is no danger of an adverse recommendation, please do not worry about making changes.

There will be a point in the near future, either in conjunction with a site visit or independently, when you will be asked to define your trigger course for MAERB review.

2. **Credentialing Exam Thresholds**

The other major change is with the threshold for the credentialing exams in Policy 1.16.I.A. The threshold has been changed by setting the requirement for participation at 30% of all graduates and a passage rate at 60% of all participants. The latter threshold was derived by looking at the national passage rate of the four NCCA-accredited credentialing exams: CMA (AAMA); RMA (AMT); NCMA (NCCT); and CCMA (NHA).

It is important to note that this new credential exam data will be collected for the first time on the 2014 ARF, but it will not be monitored for any accreditation recommendation until the 2018 ARF. All programs will be starting fresh in this particular category with the 2014 ARF, and, as a result, there will be no exam history for the 2009-2012 graduates.

3. **Data Monitoring Date**

In Policy 1.16.II, the method of monitoring the data has been altered. In the past, MAERB has monitored the data from the most recent year, evaluating the data up to the point in which the ARF is submitted. For upcoming Annual Reports, programs are still required to gather and enter data that is collected up to the point of the submission, but the data from the most recent year's

admission cohort, the top row in the ARF, will not be evaluated at this point; rather, the data from the three years prior to the most recent year will be monitored.

For example, with the upcoming 2014 ARF, programs will be asked to submit data about the 2013 admission cohort(s). The MAERB members, however, will be looking only at the data updated in the 2012, 2011, and 2010 admission cohorts in considering the outcome trends. By not reviewing the most recent year, MAERB has effectively set the data monitoring date so that the majority of the data for the specific admissions' cohort will be complete.

4. Probationary Recommendation

The shift in monitoring the data will affect the policy for the recommendation of probation, as is detailed in Policy 1.16.III. If a program does not meet a single threshold for three consecutive years and/or does not meet multiple (two or more) thresholds for the two most recent consecutive reporting years prior to the year that is being reported (the top row), then the program is subject to a recommendation of probation. The definition for multiple thresholds has been fully defined as two or more for at least two consecutive years.

As an example, with this hypothetical program submitting the 2014 ARF data, this program would be subject to a recommendation for probation based upon the retention information from 2010-2012, the three consecutive years in which that threshold is not met.

NOTE: The Exam Threshold is not currently being monitored.

Year	Retention	Placement	Grad Part	Grad Sat	Emp Part	Emp Sat	Exam Part	Exam Pass Rate	# Grads
	>=60%	>=60%	>=30%	>=80%	>=30%	>=80%	>=30%	>=60%	
2013	59.97%	00.00%	00.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0
2012	49.74%	65.43%	27.00%	90.00%	28.40%	100.00%			15
2011	36.27%	78.07%	78.07%	95.00%	23.97%	82.31%			11
2010	39.29%	69.87%	22.17%	95.00%	59.17%	79.47%			12
2009	44.37%	88.31%	36.15%	100.00%	50.00%	84.50%			14

As another hypothetical example, the program whose dashboard is represented below would not be subject to a recommendation for probation because the Employer Participation threshold is only unmet for two previous years, excluding the top row, and the Graduate Survey Participation has been met once during the most recent two consecutive years. **NOTE: The Exam Threshold is not currently being monitored.**

Year	Retention	Placement	Grad Part	Grad Sat	Emp Part	Emp Sat	Exam Part	Exam Pass Rate	# Grads
	>=60%	>=60%	>=30%	>=80%	>=30%	>=80%	>= 30%	>=60%	
2013	70.97%	00.00%	00.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	50.15%	55.73%	0
2012	87.82%	65.43%	27.00%	90.00%	28.40%	100.00%			15
2011	62.70%	78.07%	78.07%	95.00%	23.97%	82.31%			11
2010	70.21%	69.87%	22.17%	95.00%	59.17%	79.47%			12
2009	82.37%	88.31%	36.15%	100.00%	50.00%	84.50%			14

5. **Audit and Data Policy**

In policy 1.16.IV, the MAERB has developed an audit policy so that it can conduct random audits of Annual Reports. It is specified that the program is required to keep the five most recent years of raw data. The MAERB office will be working with both the Program Directors and the Surveyors in order to assure that this information is reviewed accurately. The requirement for keeping five years of data was first placed into Policy 2.7, Program Retention of Student Records, and we are repeating it in policy 1.16.IV for further clarification.

Faculty Workbook

The Faculty Change Workbook has a new format, and you will find it on the MAERB website. There is one significant change in the Faculty Change Workbook. In the previous workbook, you were asked to fill out tabs to illustrate the faculty member’s expertise and/or experience in the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domain tabs. The new Faculty Change Workbook has removed those

tabs. It is still required, however, to supply documentation for the faculty member's instruction in education theory and techniques, as well as experience and/or education.

If you are in the process of completing an old version of the Faculty Change Workbook, please DO NOT discard your work. We will certainly accept the previous Faculty Change Workbook. We recognize that there will be a transition period. Other than a few formatting changes, there have been no other changes. You don't, however, need to fill out the three tabs for the cognitive objectives and the psychomotor and affective competencies.

Results of Annual Report Form (ARF) Survey

In the spring of 2014, the MAERB office surveyed the Program Directors of CAAHEP accredited medical assisting programs in order to learn more about how Program Directors use the outcomes in order to improve their programs as well as to evaluate the accreditation process of the Annual Report Form. As you can tell from all the policy changes that occurred, the results of that survey were taken very seriously by the MAERB members, and the results of this survey were instrumental in shaping the new policy. It was evident that the medical assisting Program Directors were very invested in outcome-based education assessment, judging from the thoughtfulness of the responses and the 472 (!!!) respondents. There were a number of comments about the usefulness of the ARF to help the Program Directors focus on central issues within the program and to present those issues to other communities of interest.

Many respondents commented on some confusing issues that they perceived. One point of confusion that was highlighted focused on the definition of the "trigger date." The MAERB addressed that explicitly by changing MAERB Policy 1.16 to define a clear trigger course and be more explicit about the definition of the admission cohort. In addition, a number of Program Directors indicated their concern about basing the threshold for exam passage rate on all the graduates rather than just the number of graduates who actually took a credentialing exam. The change in MAERB Policy 1.16 also addressed those concerns, as now a program will need to achieve a 30% or higher participation rate of its students/graduates taking one of the four credential exam that can be used to satisfy that outcome, and, based on the participants, need to have at least a 60% passage rate of the participants. In addition, a number of program directors expressed their concern with the timing and the "up-to-the-minute request" for the data. In other words, the schedule for the ARF submission does not always coincide with the graduation, graduate survey, and employer survey schedule. As MAERB will no longer be making accreditation recommendations based upon the data of the most recent year, programs will have the time in order to demonstrate that they have successfully met the threshold.

Along with evaluating the ARF outcomes and process, Program Directors provided some great input to help the MAERB accreditation office improve its procedures. The staff in the Accreditation Office are very appreciative of the positive feedback that they received

through the survey process and also welcome the insightful constructive criticism. The goal of the MAERB office is to answer your questions accurately and consistently, and the MAERB office will continue to work on providing that service.

There were far too many good comments to effectively summarize, and the MAERB members will be relying on this data over the next year in order to consider a variety of options to best support Program Directors in the important work that they do. Outlined below you will find the quantitative responses to the survey. We anticipate that there will be great deal more dialogue in the future. Your participation and input is greatly appreciated.

Evaluate the MAERB Annual Report Form based on its usefulness.

There is a five point scale being used, with “Very Useful” represented by “5” and “Not at all Useful” represented by “1.” The “Rating average” indicates the total rating.

Answer Options	Very Useful		Useful		Not at all Useful		N/A		Rating Average				
The ARF reported outcomes in helping you to evaluate your program	145	31%	105	23%	156	34%	39	8%	16	3%	1	0%	3.70
The ARF reported outcomes in helping you to make changes to your program	129	28%	108	23%	155	34%	48	10%	19	4%	2	0%	3.61
The action plans that you develop within the ARF, when you have unmet thresholds, to guide you in improving those thresholds	97	21%	104	22%	149	32%	56	12%	25	5%	32	7%	3.45
The ARF’s role in helping you to represent your program to MAERB	127	27%	116	25%	154	33%	44	10%	13	3%	4	1%	3.66

The ARF's role in helping you to represent your program to institutional administration	135	29%	98	21%	132	29%	58	13%	28	6%	4	1%	3.56
The ARF's role in providing data for the other reports, both internal and external, that you need to submit about the MA program	124	27%	96	21%	141	30%	57	12%	35	8%	6	1%	3.48
The ARF using the admission cohort, rather than the graduation year, in order to organize data about job placement, graduate surveys, and employer surveys	104	22%	86	19%	102	22%	70	15%	88	19%	7	2%	3.11

What methods have you used to encourage and/or require students to take one of the credentialing exams? Please check all that are applicable.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Required for graduation	21.5%	98
Exam fee is part of student fee	49.1%	224
Set up campus as exam site	21.9%	100
Exam review is part of a class/the program	83.1%	379
Preparatory/Practice Tests	83.6%	381
Required purchase of review books	60.7%	277
Program events and activities that stress the importance of certification	51.5%	235
Sponsorship of study groups	14.7%	67

If a credentialing exam is not a required part of your program, what factors impede students from taking an exam? Check all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Expense	69.5%	214
Distance to a test site	27.6%	85
No financial incentive (local employers do not differentiate)	49.4%	152
Lack of interest	22.7%	70
Timing issues	21.8%	67
Exam anxiety	55.5%	171

Based upon your knowledge of your students, please rank in order the certifying exam that they are most likely to take.

Answer Options	1st choice		2nd choice		3rd choice		4th choice		N/A	
CMA (AAMA)	354	77%	93	20%	8	2%	4	1%	3	1%
RMA (AMT)	66	14%	212	46%	49	11%	14	3%	121	26%
NCMA (NCCT)	26	6%	26	6%	162	35%	59	13%	189	41%
CCMA (NHA)	15	3%	26	6%	51	11%	183	40%	187	40%