



4101 W. Green Oaks Blvd.
Suite #305-599
Arlington, TX 76016
Main 817-330-0080
Fax 817-330-0089
www.coaemsp.org

Committee on Accreditation

of Educational Programs for the EMS Professions

Resources on Accreditation

*Deb Cason, NAEMSE Representative to CAAHEP
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It's not long now! January 1, 2013 is the date! Only 23 months before paramedic programs must submit their self study report in order to become accredited and allow graduates to take the National Paramedic Certification exam. (At publication of this issue, the NREMT believes they will allow graduates from programs who have completed their self study to take the National Paramedic certification exam. A formal policy announcement from the NREMT will be issued in the near future). But do not fear! Resources are available to assist you in this process! This article will focus on resources to get your started and to develop the Initial-Accreditation Self Study Report (ISSR). The ISSR is the first step in accreditation, and occurs before a site visit. The following is a partial list of resources:

Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs (CAAHEP) website, CAAHEP.org

1. About Accreditation—this section is useful to identify WHAT accreditation is and WHY its important
2. Accreditation Glossary—this is a generic accreditation glossary that applies to all programs in all CAAHEP disciplines. It includes the types of accreditation and what are standards and guidelines.
3. Find an Accredited Program—this section of the website allows anyone to first identify the profession and then the state and lists each accredited program for that state. Program personnel may be able to find a program or program(s) that can help answer some questions and assist in the self study process.
4. For Program Directors—the most important document in this section is the Request for Accreditation Services (RAS) which gets a program into the CAAHEP system and puts the program on a mailing list for information. Completing this RAS doesn't mean the program has actually "applied" for accreditation nor does it provide any accreditation status. A program actually "applies" for accreditation by submitting the self study document.
5. YAM—Your Accreditation Mentor—this is a small tab at the top of the home page and has a wealth of information on becoming accredited including the CAAHEP Standards & Guidelines, Domains of Learning, Beginning the

Accreditation Process, Writing the Self Study and hosting the Site Visit, etc. This is a valuable resource for any program director! Videos are also in this section that assist in accreditation.

Committee on Accreditation for EMS Professions (CoAEMSP) website, CoAEMSP.org

1. Standards Interpretation —The Standards are the requirements on which a program is evaluated and that you must follow in your program development. The guidelines (in italics) are clarifications or examples of those requirements. The Standards Interpretations is a great tool to assist with your understanding of the Standards. Reading this prior to beginning work on the ISSR will help you focus on what is required and what you should do and answer.

2. Self Study Report—ISSR document identifies all sections of the self study for you to download and complete. HOWEVER, if you would go to the bottom of the self study report section you will find “ISSR SAMPLE” that is a completed “dummy” self study report document (thank you Jeff McDonald—who would voluntarily complete a self study report when they don’t have to?). This will provide you with a great example of what the CoA is looking for in the answers to the self study questions. This is not for cutting and pasting into your own ISSR but it should give you some ideas!

3. Policy and Procedures—this section has some helpful information, especially if you have insomnia. Not really, but it does address some special situations. The most important part about the Policies and Procedures for you at this point is the last 4 pages: Accreditation Glossary. This is more specific to CoAEMSP and can be helpful if you find yourself unsure of a term. And if you don’t find the definition here, send it to the CoA and we’ll try to answer it and add it to the glossary.

4. Fees—of course every Dean, Chief and CEO wants to know how much it costs. The fees listed here help explain it to your boss.

5. Contact us—this has the email address and phone number of Dr. George Hatch, our executive director. (Contrary to rumor, his number is not 1-800-GEO-HATCH, but we’re working on it.) Dr. Hatch has been a program director and is very knowledgeable about both the accreditation process and education and can provide assistance. It may be that other staff can answer questions and their areas of expertise are listed in this section as well as their contact information.

6. CoAEMSP email list—this is a great way to receive ongoing information from CoAEMSP on current issues. Please sign up! We like to communicate.

7. Meetings and Events—this section is at the top of the home page and identifies accreditation workshop dates and locations. This is one of the best ways to give yourself and your program a boost on your self study.

8. News from CoA—is also at the top of the home page and has previous articles and newsletters. Additionally a “Terminal Competency Form” is on this section that you can use as is to have your medical director verify student competency at the end of your program. You will understand the requirement better after reading Standards and Guidelines and their interpretations. An Accreditation Fact Sheet is also a good overview and resource.

9. Becoming Accredited – has links to the RAS, the Standards and Guidelines, the ISSR, the accreditation workshop registration form, and the “Getting Started: An Action Plan” tool,

which is invaluable in outlining all the steps in the process and providing a checklist to keep you on track. Also, if your sponsorship category requires an articulation agreement, there is a great article on how to work with college(s) to develop one.

NAEMSE.org

On the left hand side of the home page there's a tab about requesting an accreditation mentor. Complete the form and submit and NAEMSE will get back with you on someone who has some accreditation expertise and can answer your questions, OR find a resource who can!

So as you can see, you are not alone and many organizations and individuals want to assist you and your program through the accreditation process! That is an important message to all of us that accreditation is important and does make a difference. So begin the accreditation process today by going down this list of resources and becoming familiar with what is to come!

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