

Inter-Societal Memorandum of Understanding on Medical Physics Education

August 7, 2012

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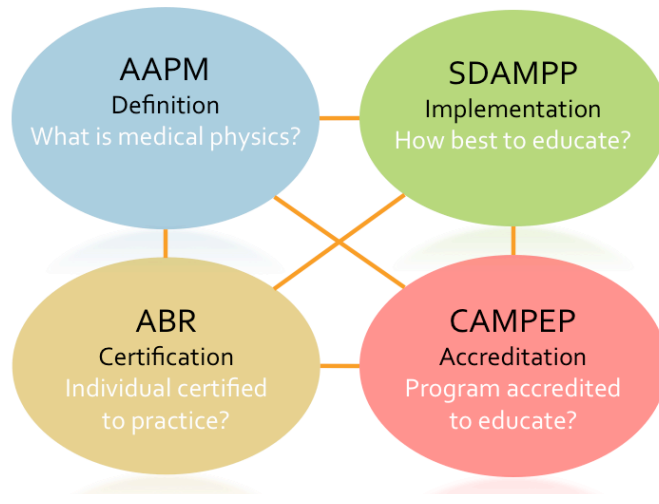
There are four key organizations that have a strong interest in medical physics education. They include the AAPM, the American Board of Radiology (ABR), the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Physics Educational Programs (CAMPEP), and the Society of Directors of Academic Medical Physics Programs (SDAMPP). Given the complexity of interests and areas of potential overlap, there has always been a felt need to clearly identify what is the role that each organization can (and should) play in medical physics education.

Initiated over a year ago, the leadership of these four organizations initiated a dialogue toward bringing about this clarity. The individuals who were actively engaged in this initiative included Anthony Seibert, Gary Ezzell, and John Hazel (representing the AAPM), Steve Thomas and Donald Frey (representing the ABR), Bill Hendee and George Starkschall (representing the CAMPEP), and Ehsan Samei, Jim Dobbins, and John Bayouth (representing the SDAMPP). Born out of this effort and worked out over many meetings and discussions, at the AAPM meeting in Charlotte, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was ratified by the respective leadership of the four organizations. The MOU is reproduced verbatim below.

This MOU is the first ever such statement of clarity and unity amongst these four organizations. Being able to reach a consensus across such broad range of activities and missions is quite an achievement, a reflection of the exceptional unity of our community and the maturity of our field. It is very much hoped that this MOU would provide enabling definition of how each organization can take a unique yet collaborative role in the advancement of our educational enterprise. Across the multiplicity of missions, constituencies, and activities, we all share the same goal, the best education of the next generation of medical physicists towards the advancement of human welfare.

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Relative roles of SDAMPP, AAPM, CAMPEP, and ABR for the Education of Medical Physicists in the United States



Objective

Medical physics education in the United States is an enterprise defined, implemented, and monitored by four primary organizations: AAPM, CAMPEP, ABR, and SDAMPP. Each organization provides an indispensable component necessary to enable and to advance medical physics education. However, given the multiplicity of input, there is possibility of redundancy, gaps, and overlapped areas of authority. This MOU is meant to serve as a guiding document to define the relative roles of the four organizations as an effort to clarify the landscape and to foster more synergistic engagement of the organizations towards the advancement of medical physics education in the United States. This document focuses on the education of medical physicists seeking ABR certification, which can lead the candidate to achieve the recognition of Qualified Medical Physicist (QMP) as defined by the American College of Radiology, and the explicit roles that the participating organizations play towards that end. The MOU is not meant to capture the broader scope of the activities pursued by the respective organizations. Furthermore, the “primary audience” in the sections below pertains only to the *primary* constituencies of the respective organizations. Those are not meant to be exclusive. Furthermore, the “primary audience” in the definitions below is not meant to capture all the constituents that each organization serves, rather only the primary ones.

AAPM

Scope:

1. Defining the didactic and clinical training pathways towards becoming a Qualified Medical Physicist (QMP), with input and feedback from SDAMPP, ABR, CAMPEP and other appropriate professional organizations.
2. Defining the educational content for graduate and residency programs (e.g., AAPM reports), as well as minimum educational requirements for those entering medical physics from other professions.
3. Promoting the establishment of medical physics programs based on need (joint with SDAMPP)
4. Providing continuing education opportunities to assist in maintenance of certification (MOC).
5. Recruitment of highly talented individuals into medical physics, with an emphasis on minorities and undergraduates (joint with SDAMPP)

Primary audience:

Entire community of medical physicists

SDAMPP

Scope:

1. Providing a forum for discussion and coordination within and between graduate and residency programs – communicating with students and residents
2. Defining and fostering best practices for medical physics education
3. Encouraging improved consistency in medical physics education
4. Collecting and monitoring statistics pertaining medical physics education
5. Assisting new medical physics programs in getting started (eg, leadership structure, financial models, curriculum implementation, best educational models, number of faculty, etc) (joint with AAPM and CAMPEP)
6. Disseminate structured mentorship requests from international medical physicists to program directors (joint with ABR and CAMPEP)

Primary audience:

Leaders of medical physics educational programs

CAMPEP

Scope:

1. Establishment of criteria and guidelines for accreditation of graduate and residency educational programs in medical physics.
2. Review and approval of applications for accreditation of educational programs in medical physics to insure that these programs are meeting accepted standards for the training of medical physicists.
3. Monitoring of accredited educational programs to ensure ongoing compliance with criteria and guidelines for program accreditation.
4. Consideration in accreditation criteria and guidelines of desirable attributes of medical physicists, including research experience, educational skills, clinical expertise, and professional and leadership behavior.

Primary audience:

Medical physics educational programs seeking accreditation

ABR

Scope:

1. Certifying that diplomates have acquired, demonstrated, and maintained a requisite standard of knowledge, skill, understanding, and performance essential to the safe and competent practice of medical physics

Primary audiences:

The public and individual medical physicists