ARF Tracking Tool Instructions and Suggestions

Common general mistakes in filling out the ARF Tracking Tool:

- **Adding rows in between cohorts (e.g., with wording such as "Spring 2022 cohort")**
  We frequently sort on students by last name to make sure that there are no duplicate entries. When you add rows with special wording in them, they end up getting deleted so that we can more clearly see the students. Instead, we ask that you use the Filter function with Excel to see a group of students from a given year or each cohort. If you do not know how to use your Filter function, please consult your MAERB program manager or someone with IT at your school for assistance.
- **Deleting columns from the Tracking Tool or revising the wording of the given column headers.** You may add as many columns as you want, but please don't delete any columns or change the prescribed wording in any of the column headers.
- **Adding extra wording to columns that are meant to be for MM/DD/YYYY formatting only.** When you add extra words to a column that is reserved for a date only, you make it much more difficult for the MAERB office to use the Sort and Filter features within Excel. If you want to add extra comments, add one or more columns to the Tracking Tool and place the comments there.
- **Leaving columns blank.** Unless a specific column is not applicable to the given student or graduate, it should be filled out. The only optional columns on the Tracking Tool are the columns for the student's middle name and for the student ID.
- **Uploading a Tracking Tool to the Files tab of the ARF that isn't fully updated** and, and such, doesn't match the data that is reported on the 2023 ARF. Please make sure that your Tracking Tool matches the top four rows of your ARF (i.e., 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 admissions, and also 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 graduates) before uploading it.
- **Removing data from the uploaded Tracking Tool because it relates to students who were admitted or who graduated in 2023.** Your Tracking Tool is meant to be a comprehensive document with only two tabs. Please don't remove any students or data from your Tracking Tool; the MAERB office will simply use the Filter feature of Excel to be able to view the data that it needs to see.

Common specific errors that are being made on the ARF Tracking Tool:

AdmissionCohort tab:
1. <u>Leaving columns H, I, or K blank</u>: If the student has dropped, you must fill out columns H and I. If the student has graduated, you must fill out column K.
2. <u>Having admission dates that don't match the ARF:</u> Because the wording in the header of column F can be misleading, some PDs are entering into column F the month in which the student finished the Trigger Course, and, thus, this data doesn't match what was reported on the ARF. The months and dates of admission on the Tracking Tool must match the program's ARF.
3. <u>Not keeping the status of the student current in column G:</u> If a student is labeled as a drop (D), but later re-enrolls or graduates, the status of that student must be changed to reflect the current status (i.e., either IP or G).
4. <u>Creating other abbreviations in column G</u>: Please use only D, IP, or G in this column. Please don't create new abbreviations. If you want to add special comments for a particular student, create a "Comments" column on the Tracking Tool.

GradCohort tab:

1. Failing to fill out all the columns on the tab: Some programs are entering the name of the graduate but not filling out the remainder of the columns.
2. Adding students who haven't graduated yet: It can be confusing to see the name of a student on this tab who hasn't yet graduated. If you wish to do so, please add a "Comments" column to the tab and clearly indicate their anticipated graduation date in that column.
3. Leaving columns H, I, P, Q, S, or T blank: Dates that surveys are sent and received (if applicable to the respective student) are required fields of the Tracking Tool. Likewise, if a person has gotten a job in the field, in addition to placing an X into column O, columns P and Q must be completed. If you do not know the workplace of a particular graduate, then unfortunately, you cannot count them as a positive placement.
4. Failing to mark the domain fields: If a graduate or employer survey has been returned, each of the 3 corresponding domain fields needs to be completed (with a Yes or a No). Please don't leave these fields blank.
5. Entering numbers (or other data) into the domain fields: Even though each returned survey is evaluated on the 1-to-5 Likert scale, we ask that you not enter a number into the columns for the 3 domains. Rather, just enter Yes if the average score for that field is 3.0 or above, and a No if the average is below 3.0. It will help you with the reporting process and make it easier for you to filter.
6. Not accounting for every graduate in the Job Placement columns of the Tracking Tool: Every graduate of the program should have an X (and only one X) placed into either column M, N, or O. Many programs are leaving these columns blank for some of the graduates.
7. Placing dates into column S for students who didn't get a job in the field: You should only complete column S (i.e., the date that the employer survey was sent) if the graduate got a job in the field. Otherwise, the column should be left blank.
8. Leaving the exam dates blank: If a student took any of the 5 qualifying certification exams, not only should you mark Pass or Fail, you need to include the date on which the test was taken. This information should be readily available from all of the certifying agencies.

We highly recommend that you leave the Excel Filters activated on your Tracking Tool at all times and that you use your Filters to help you to complete your ARF each year.