Online Maryland Accreditation Process

User Guide

Version 1 – January 20, 2015

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Introduction

Welcome to the Online Maryland Accreditation Portal (O-MAP), a part of the Maryland EXCELS Quality Rating and Improvement Online System (QRIOS). This system was designed to allow for ease of use by programs participating in both the Maryland Accreditation process, as well as the Maryland EXCELS QRIS. Specifically, the tool allows a program participating in both initiatives to share documents and files that have been uploaded as evidence in support of either Accreditation or EXCELS to be easily repurposed as evidence toward the other initiative when appropriate. At the same time, the Online Maryland Accreditation Portal, allows for programs to participate in either EXCELS or Accreditation independently, without obligation to be in both initiatives in order to still gain the full benefits of this online system.

The guiding design principal has been to make the process of participating in these valuable initiatives, both designed to recognize and promote high-quality care, as seamless and supportive as possible. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and its partner in both EXCELS and Maryland Accreditation, the Johns Hopkins University, Center for Technology in Education (JHU CTE), are committed to building systems and processes that recognize all of us – providers, validators, parents and guardians, policy makers, technical assistance providers, experts and researchers - ensuring Maryland children receive the high-quality care and education they deserve.

At the same time, we are constantly striving to improve our systems and tools, and we look to the feedback of users like you to help shape what the future looks like. This guide will always reflect the latest design and functionality, in what we hope you will find as easy to follow step by step directions depending on your role in the system. At the same time, you should check back often to the Maryland Accreditation Online Community for the latest news, information, and resources as additional features and functions are released. At the same time, you will find critical information about the Accreditation process, tips for improving quality care, and opportunities to provide feedback on what is and is not working for you in the Accreditation Process.

Thank you in advance for your commitment to Maryland's children and families, and for all that you do to make sure quality matters every day.

User Type: Providers
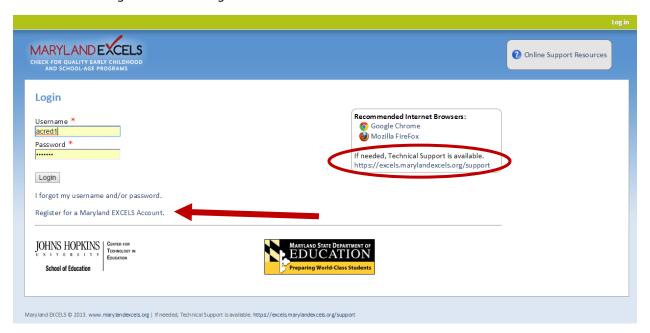
Step 1 – Registration/Login

The first part of participating in the Maryland Accreditation process is to create an account through the Maryland EXCELS Quality Rating and Improvement Online System. This will serve as your single account to participate in your choice of Accreditation and/or EXCELS.

If you have previously registered with Maryland EXCELS, you simply need to login using that account. Type your username and password, then select "login." You can click "I forgot my username and/or password," and you will be prompted to enter your email address to retrieve and reset your credentials. ***If you have logged in successfully, move to page 6 of this guide***.

If you still have difficulties and require technical support, you can click the web address noted in the red oval on Screenshot 1 below. **See page 31** for more information on technical support.

If you are completely new to both Accreditation and EXCELS, you should select "Register for a Maryland EXCELS Account," note by the red arrow on Screenshot 1 below, and then ***move to page 5 of this guide***.

Screenshot 1 – Registration and Login

NOTE: O-MAP is supported to operate on Internet Explorer version 9 and above, and is optimized for Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox. We recommend installing these browsers as they will auto-update with any fixes and added features. You can click the respective browser above to install on your machine.

Step 1a. – Registration

If you are completely new to both Accreditation and EXCELS, you will need to register for an account. Here's what is required for each field (see Screenshot 2 on the following page for the corresponding parts of the screen):

A. **License/Registration/LOC#** - **Required Field**
   1. If you are a licensed child care center, before/after care provider, or private preschool, you will enter your License number. NOTE – this must be a current and valid license number. It should be ***entered using only the digits to the right of the dash*** in your license number. Example – 12-3456 would enter: 3456.
   2. If you are a public-preschool or a Head Start provider operated by local education agency/school system, you will enter your 2 digital LEA number plus your 4 digit school code.
   NOTE: If your license number is already in use or invalid, you will be unable to register. Contact your local licensing specialist for assistance.

B. **Program Name – Required Field**
   1. Enter the name of your program as it appears on your State issued license.

C. **Doing Business As – Required Field**
   1. Enter the name of your program as it appears in your marketing. This may be the same as your licensed Program Name, or it may be different: for example, Johns Hopkins Bayview Learning Center may do business as Bright Starts @ Hopkins.

D. **Program Type – Required Field**
   1. Select the appropriate type that corresponds to your program.
   NOTE 1: this system allows all eligible program types for Maryland EXCELS to register, but Maryland Accreditation is limited to center, school-age, public and private pre-k and Head Start programs operated by any of these. Family providers cannot participate in Maryland Accreditation at this time.
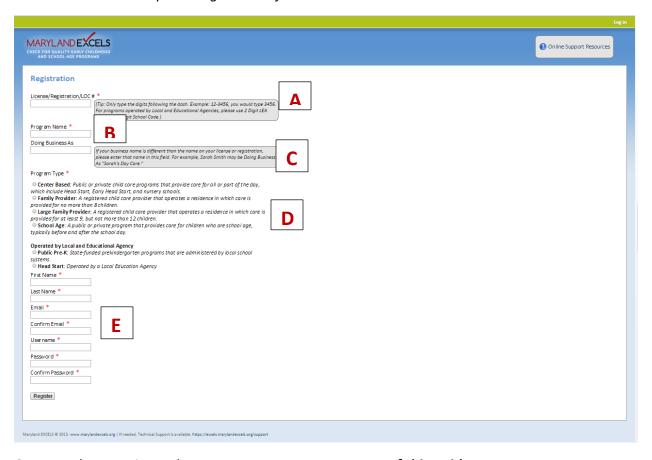   **NOTE 2**: Head Start programs that are operated by a Local Education Agency/school-system should select the Head Start option under "Operated by Local Educational Agency." All other Head Start Programs should select "Center Based" as program type.

E. **User Information – Required Fields**
   1. First name - This should be the first name of the individual registering the program. Typically, this is a Director or owner.
   2. Last Name – This should be the last name of the individual registering the program.
   3. Email – This should be the email address that is used by the individual registering the program. We will send important messages through this account, so please use one that you check regularly. *You do have the ability to change this information at any time, or add other users. Look to the **Account Management** section of this guide for more on this.
   4. Confirm Email – Re-enter the email address you just typed. If they do not match, you will be prompted to correct.

5. Username – Create a unique username for this account. We recommend that each user associated with a program has an individual account – again, you may have multiple users associated to a given program.
6. Password – This should be a password that is unique to this user. We do not require it, but a strong password uses a combination of upper and lower-case, letters, and numbers.
7. Confirm Password – Re-enter the password you just created.
8. Select "Register" to complete

Screenshot 2 – Required registration fields

Once you have registered your program, ***move to page 7 of this guide***.

Step 2 – Participation in MSDE Accreditation

Home Tab -

Once you have registered an account, you will be prompted to make a selection to participate in MSDE Accreditation if you are an eligible program type (see Step 1a above for more information about eligible program types), and you can apply to participate in Maryland EXCELS. You can always return to this screen at any time by selecting the **HOME tab**, circled in red on Screenshot 3.

The buttons to "**Apply for Maryland EXCELS"** and **"Participate in MSDE Accreditation"** will remain here until you have selected each for your program. These are shown in the red rectangle on Screenshot 3.
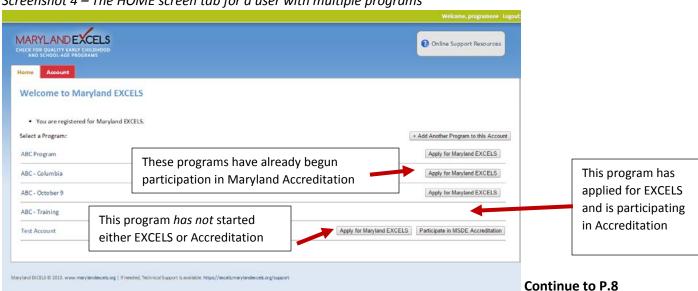
If you are the owner/operator of multiple programs, you may add another program at any time that will then display here on your HOME tab. This feature is activated by clicking **"Add Another Program to this Account"** as indicated by the red arrow on screenshot 3.   You will see a list of your programs under "Select a Program." Screenshot 4 shows how the HOME screen looks for a user with multiple programs associated to their account.

NOTE: See how different programs have different options for Applying for Maryland EXCELS or "Participating in MSDE Accreditation" based on where each program is in the process of joining either initiative.

Screenshot 3 – The HOME screen tab

Screenshot 4 – The HOME screen tab for a user with multiple programs

Continue to P.8

Step 2a. – Participate in Maryland Accreditation
Once you select "Participate in MSDE Accreditation," you will be prompted to complete several fields on the Program Participation Form. The following defines required information for each field, and then Screenshots 5 and 6 show the corresponding section of the form for each definition. You only need to complete this information the first time you "Apply for EXCELS" or "Participate in MSDE Accreditation" for each program you operate. Then, if/when you choose to start the other initiative – EXCELS or Accreditation – this information will carry-over from the first time you completed it. You will be able to make changes if needed. Likewise, information, such as address, will pre-populate based on your license or school number. A future enhancement will connect the electronic attendance system with your enrollment and staffing.

A. **Name of Organization – Required Field**
If your program is part of a larger corporate entity, please name that entity here (i.e. Knowledge Universe for KinderCare). If you are independent, please enter **"Self."**

B. **Supervisor – Required Field**
Name of the highest-ranked official for the registered program. This could be a Director, Owner, President, District Admin, etc.

C. **Support Person – Required Field**
Name of any associated lead with the program. For example, if you selected a corporate supervisor above, name the Program Director here; or an Assistant Director; etc. If not applicable, please enter **"None."**

D. **Established Since – Required Field**
Enter year of first licensing issuance or program start (for public-operated entities).

E. **Lead Contact – Required Field**
Select name from drop-down of the designated lead contact to receive all communications surrounding your Maryland Accreditation participation. You may select to add a new entry.

F. **Program Address/Contact – Required Fields**
Please enter your program's street address, city, zipcode, county, and program phone number, fax and web address if applicable.

G. **Enrollment/Staffing – Required Fields**
Please enter your current enrollment numbers, associated number of staff and classrooms, per age-group. Enter zero where applicable as all fields require a value. This information is editable, and need not be updated when changes occur until times of validation visit and/or re-accreditation requests.

H. **Photo**
This is not required, but uploading an exterior photo of your program can help validators identify it during visits, and will also help facilitate a future function designed to promote programs participating in Accreditation and EXCELS.

I. **Business Hours – Required Fields**
You must select a start and end time for your program.

J. **Program Offering Questions – Required Fields**
  I. *Please answer the listed questions as either Yes or No:*
  II. *Does your program offer before care?*

III.   *Does your program offer after care?*
IV.   *Are you a Head Start program?*
V.   *Are you an Early Head Start program?*
VI.   *Are you a Montessori program?*
VII.   *Are you a Judy Center program?*
VIII.   *Have you attended a MSDE Accreditation Orientation?* – if you select **yes**, you will be prompted to enter the date of orientation. You can only select past dates. You will be able to complete this field later in the process if you select **no**, but you cannot begin the actual accreditation until you have completed an Orientation.

K. **List of Individuals Involved with Accreditation Process**
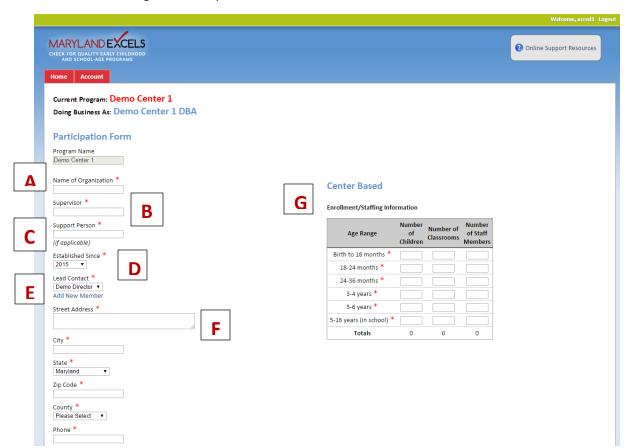You have the option to add the names and positions of additional staff involved with your Accreditation process.

L. **Readiness Checklist**
The readiness checklist is your final prompt to ensure your program is ready to begin the Accreditation process.
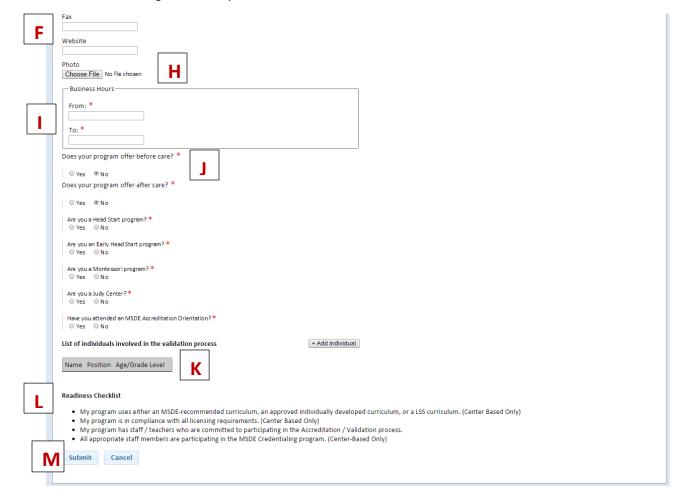
M. **Submit Button**
Once all required fields have been entered, click this button to submit the form.

Screenshot 5 – Program Participation Form
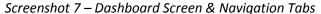
Screenshot 6 – Program Participation Form continued

F

Fax

Website

Photo
Choose File | No file chosen

H

I

Business Hours

From: *

To: *

Does your program offer before care? *

J

○ Yes   ● No

Does your program offer after care? *

○ Yes   ● No

Are you a Head Start program? *
○ Yes   ○ No

Are you an Early Head Start program? *
○ Yes   ○ No

Are you a Montessori program? *
○ Yes   ○ No

Are you a Judy Center? *
○ Yes   ○ No

Have you attended an MSDE Accreditation Orientation? *
○ Yes   ○ No

List of individuals involved in the validation process   [+ Add Individual]

Name	Position	Age/Grade Level

K

L

Readiness Checklist

- My program uses either an MSDE-recommended curriculum, an approved individually developed curriculum, or a LSS curriculum. (Center Based Only)
- My program is in compliance with all licensing requirements. (Center Based Only)
- My program has staff / teachers who are committed to participating in the Accreditation / Validation process.
- All appropriate staff members are participating in the MSDE Credentialing program. (Center-Based Only)

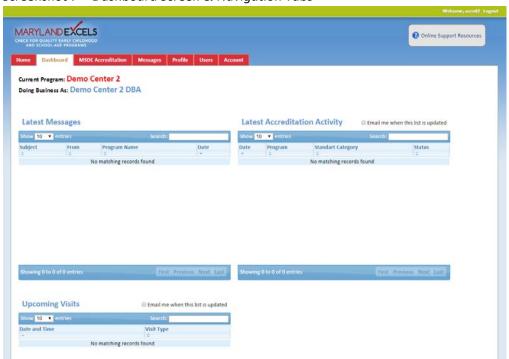**M**   [Submit]   [Cancel]

Go to page 11 when complete.

Step 3 – Entering the Online Maryland Accreditation Portal

Once you have completed the Participation Form for Maryland Accreditation, you will several new tabs along the top of your page:

❖ **Home** – Select this to always see a list of programs associated with your account. **See p. 7** for more information.

❖ **Dashboard** – Once your select a program from your Home tab, this will be your landing page. The dashboard provides you the latest information related to your program. This will be discussed further in this section.

❖ **MSDE Accreditation** – This tab is where you will go to begin and complete Maryland Accreditation. This will be discussed further in **Step 4 (p. 13)**

❖ **Messages** – Go here to send and receive messages through the online system. These can be set to forward to your preferred email address, as discussed in **Step 5** of this guide on page 26.

❖ **Profile** – Go here to change/update information submitted on your Program Participation Form (**see p. 7** for more specifics about this form.)

❖ **Users** – Use this tab to change, add, or delete users with access to your program's account. This will be discussed under **Step 6, Account Management**, on **page 27**.

❖ **Account** – Use this tab to change your own system credentials, including username and password. This will be discussed under **Step 6, Account Management**, on **page 27**.

❖ **NOTE:** If the program is in both Maryland EXCELS and Accreditation, an additional tab will appear for Maryland EXCELS. These two tabs are specific to each initiative. All other tabs contain information applicable to both.

Screenshot 7 shows the tabs along your screen for a user with no current dashboard information. The Dashboard will be discussed next.
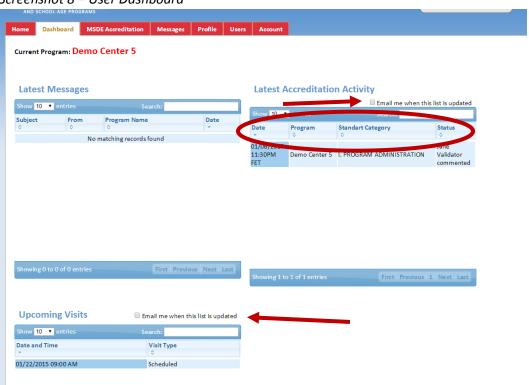
Screenshot 7 – Dashboard Screen & Navigation Tabs

Step 3a – Dashboard

The **Dashboard** contains all of the latest updates and information pertaining to your program's participation in Maryland Accreditation and EXCELS. Specific to Maryland Accreditation, you will see the **Latest Messages** sent or received. In Screenshot 8, there are none, but you can click on any message displayed to open, read, and respond. Under the **Latest Accreditation Activity**, you will see any new comments, ratings, or uploaded files associated with the **Accreditation Binder** (discussed in **Step 4**). Each entry is clickable, taking you right to the section of the binder where the activity occurred. You can sort your list by clicking any of the top fields – as shown in Screenshot 8 via the red oval – by:

- ➢ **Date** – most recent to oldest, or vice versa
- ➢ **Program** – Your dashboard is synched to your account, so any program for which your account is associated, will feed activity to your dashboard. If you are associated with multiple programs, you can sort this alphabetically, in A-Z or Z-A order.
- ➢ **Standard Category** – Sort by the Standard Areas within Accreditation, in ascending or descending numbered order.
- ➢ **Status** – Sort by status – rated, commented, uploaded, in A-Z or Z-A by name of user who performed the action.

Finally, under **Upcoming Visits,** you will see any visits you have requested for Program Improvement or Validation, also sortable by date or status – scheduled, requested, declined.

You can subscribe to all section of the dashboard to receive email alerts when new activity occurs, by clicking the boxes indicated by the red arrows in Screenshot 8. Now go to **Step 4.**
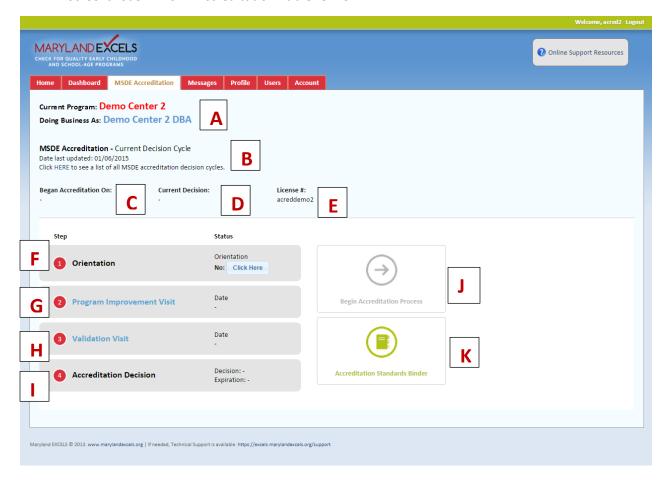
Screenshot 8 – User Dashboard

Step 4 – Completing Maryland Accreditation

You are now ready to begin working on completing the Maryland Accreditation Process. The Process is comprised of 4 parts: **Orientation, Program Improvement Visit, Validation Visit, and Accreditation Decision.**
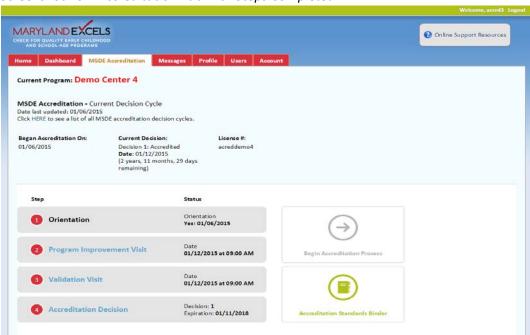
Each part is described in detail throughout this section, along with the other aspects of this tab. To begin, an overview of this tab and all functions is presented in Screenshot 9.

A. **Name of the program** - This reflects the program presented both as its official name and your commercial name. If you operate multiple programs, make sure this reflects the program on which you are planning to work.

B. **MSDE Accreditation** – Current Decision Cycle – As you achieve Maryland Accreditation and renew your accreditation, you will accrue multiple cycles. A cycle begins each time a Decision 1 or Decision 3 is achieved. Once you have achieved an Accreditation, you will be able to click "**Here**" to see past decisions and your associated data. The tab will always default to open the "**Current Decision Cycle**."

C. **Began Accreditation On** – Once you begin your Accreditation Process, you will have two years from that date to achieve a Decision.

D. **Current Decision** – Once a Decision is rendered, it will be recorded here. Decision 1 will enable a reaccreditation application. Decision 2 will allow you to make corrections to your current cycle, and attempt to be re-validated to obtain a Decision 1. Decision 3 will end your cycle, and you will have to begin the accreditation process again.

E. **License #** - This should reflect your current license number associated with your program. You should ensure that if you have recently changed your license number that this reflects your current and active number.

F. **Orientation** – You must attend an offered Orientation and recorded a valid date before you can begin Accreditation. This field will be populated with a date if you recorded having attended an Orientation during the Participation Form. Otherwise, you will be able to enter a date here.

G. **Program Improvement Visit** – You will use this section to request a Program Improvement Visit, and to indicate your availability.

H. **Validation Visit** – You will use this section to request a Validation Visit, and to indicate your availability.

I. **Accreditation Decision** – This section will reflect the Decision by the Committee, along with the expiration date for the decision.

J. **Begin Accreditation Process** – When you are ready to begin the Accreditation Process, and to start entering your self-rating data, you must select this button. This will then start the two-year timeline to complete your Accreditation process.

K. **Accreditation Standards Binder** – This is your gateway to review all the accreditation standards at any point. You can only enter data for the self-rating once you have pushed the Begin Accreditation Process button. You will then have the opportunity to complete an initial self-appraisal, and then a secondary self-appraisal following your Program Improvement Visit, up to 72 hours prior to your scheduled Validation Visit, and then you can add comments and files up to 48 hours following the Validation report that will be entered in the system. You will go to the Standards Binder continuously throughout the Accreditation Process.

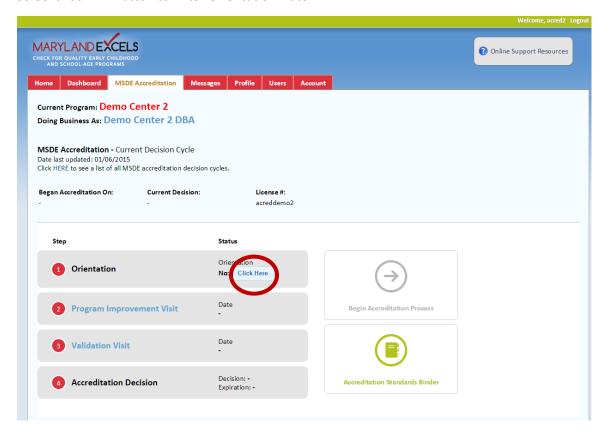*Screenshot 9 – MSDE Accreditation Tab Overview*

Screenshot 10 – Accreditation Tab with Steps Completed

Step 4a – Orientation

The first part of the Orientation Process begins with completing an Orientation session. To get more information about where to find offered Orientation Sessions, or to enter a date of an attended session, select the **"Click Here"** button, as shown in the red circle in Screenshot 11. You will then be promoted to indicate you have attended an Orientation, and the date you attended. Remember, you can only enter past dates.

Screenshot 11 – Button to Enter Orientation Date

Screenshot 12 – Pop-Up Screen for Entering Accreditation Orientation Attendance

Step 4b – Program Improvement Visit

Once you have completed an Orientation session, you can **begin the Accreditation Process** by selecting the button shown in Screenshot 13 in red rectangle. This will then capture the date you have begun Accreditation, as shown by the red arrow. At this point, you can click **Accreditation Standards Binder**, shown by the second red arrow, at any point to review the Accreditation Standards, and to enter your initial self-appraisal rating, comments, or upload files.
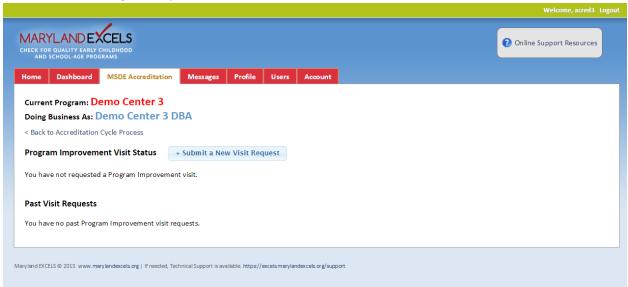
Next, when you are ready to schedule your required Program Improvement Visit, you can click the link in the red oval to schedule your visit. This is described further on the next page.

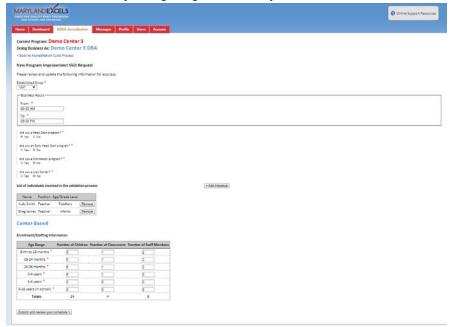*Step 4b – Program Improvement Visit: Scheduling a Visit*

Once you click the **Program Improvement Visit** button, you will be prompted to **"Submit a New Visit Request"** or you can review whether you have already scheduled visits, or if past visits have occurred. When you have submitted a current request that has yet to occur, you will be unable to submit a new request until that pending visit occurs or is cancelled.

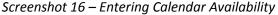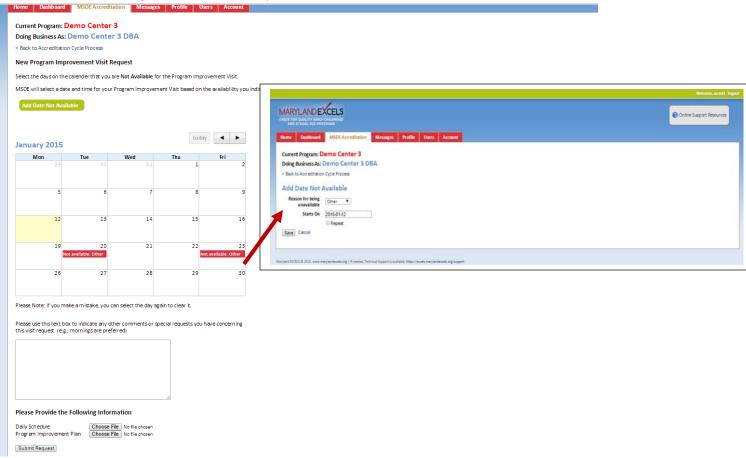*Screenshot 14 – Program Improvement Visit Status screen*

If you are making a new visit request, you will have two stages to complete your request. Stage 1 involves confirming your program information previously entered when beginning Maryland Accreditation. This is shown in Screenshot 15.

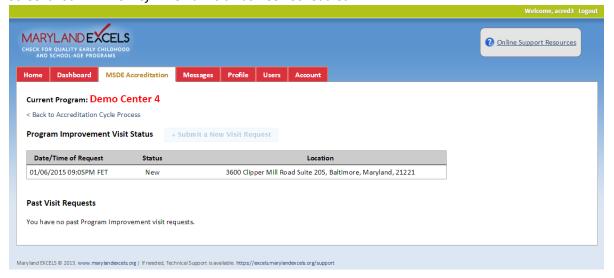*Screenshot 15 – Confirming Program Details for PIV*

The second stage of scheduling a visit involves entering your availability through the calendar feature. You will enter dates for which your program is **NOT AVAILABLE**. Otherwise, it will be assumed that your Program Improvement Visit can be scheduled at any data that is not notes as unavailable. You have the option to provide notes to the scheduling team, as well as adding files for schedules or Program Improvement Plan.
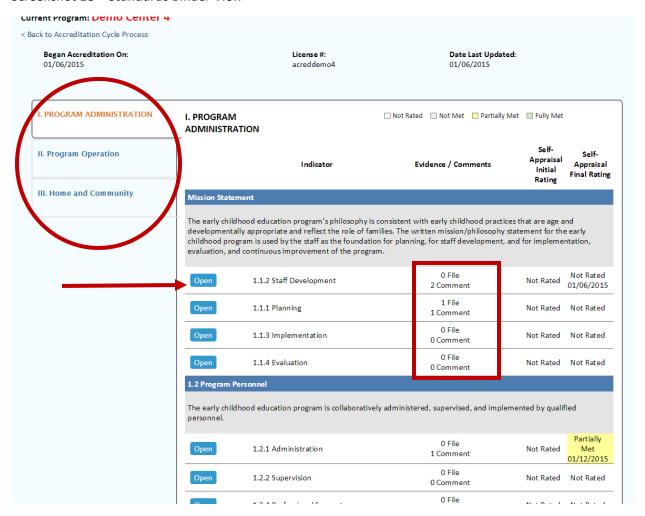
Screenshot 16 – Entering Calendar Availability

Screenshot 17 – View of When a Visit Has Been Scheduled

Step 4b – Completing Self-Appraisal through Standards Binder

The Standards Binder is your workspace and feedback medium throughout the Accreditation Process. Prior to the Program Improvement Visit, you may enter files, ratings, and comments as part of your **"Self-Appraisal Initial Rating."** Screenshot 18 shows the Binder view. You can click each of the three standards area by selecting the tabs circled in red, each specific indicator, by clicking **Open**, as shown by the red arrow, and note which indicators have comments or files, as shown in the red rectangle. Following the Program Improvement Visit, you can modify ratings, add comments or files, which will show as your "**Self-Appraisal Final Rating."**
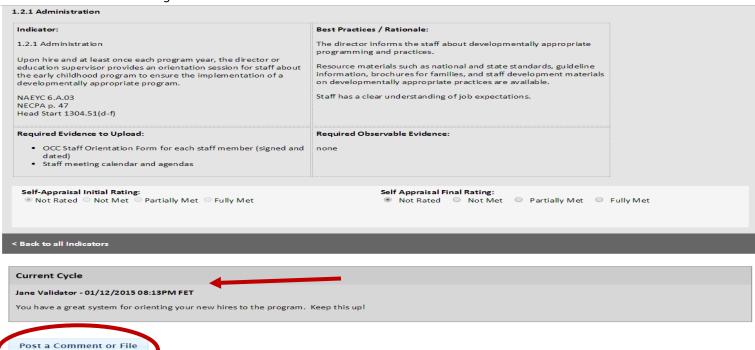
Screenshot 18 – Standards Binder View

To learn how to post a comment or file, continue to the next page.

By clicking "**Open"** next to any of the indicators, you will enter the **Indicator Page**. Here you are able to read a description of the Indicator, note the required evidence to fulfill that indicator, and gain insight into the Best Practice/Rationale context for why this is part of Maryland Accreditation.   For each Indicator, you will check one of the rating elements – **Not Rated is the default; Not Met; Partially Met; or Fully Met**. You can enter comments or files by clicking "Post a Comment or File" in the red oval on Screenshot 19. Here, you will also see past comments you have made, or comments by any of the raters – this screenshot shows a Validator's comments made during the Program Improvement Visit.

Screenshot 19 – Indicator Page view

To post a comment of file, after you click the button shown in in Screenshot 19 above, you will have a pop-up window that guides you through adding files or making comments. Make sure to select "**Save."**
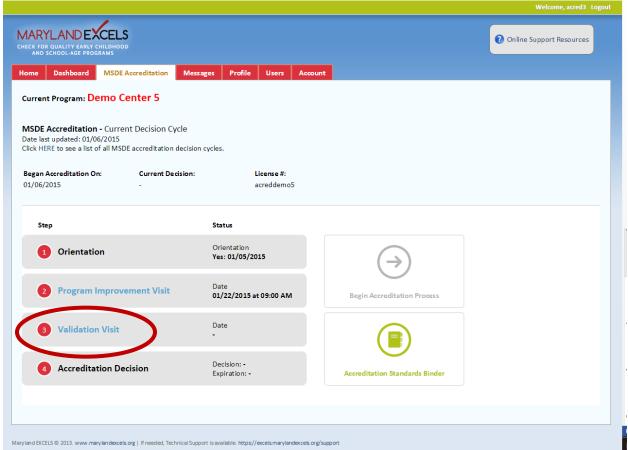

NOTE: A key feature of using a single-system to administer both Maryland Accreditation and EXCELS is that you can share files you have uploaded between both initiatives. Every file you upload into the system will be available for you to select when adding an attachment. Select "**Choose from Previous Uploads"** to access your inventory of files. In this way, we hope it will save you time and effort to demonstrate your achievement of high-quality.

Step 4c – Program Validation Visit

After the Program Improvement Visit, you can request a Validation Visit. Like above, you will enter dates for which you are unavailable, confirm your program information, and be able to see any previously scheduled or completed visits. You will have access to your Standards Binder to make your final self-appraisal ratings, add files, or make comments up to 72 hours before your scheduled visit. The assigned Program Validators will be able to see all of this information online in preparation for their visit to your program. They may request additional information once on site, but there is no need to prepare a paper-binder for their review. They can access all materials you have uploaded through the web.

To begin, click the "**Validation Visit"** shown in the red oval on Screenshot 20. To understand the basics of scheduling, and uploading evidence, commenting, or conducting self-ratings**, see section 4b, pages 17-20**.

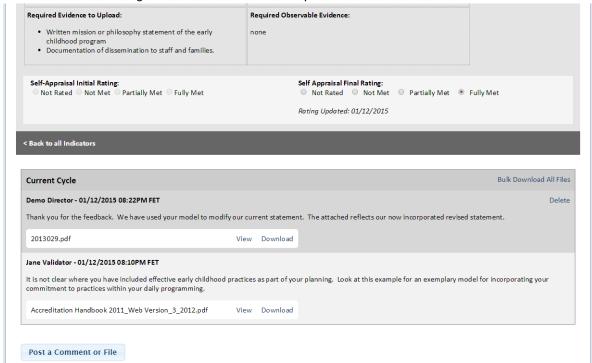*Screenshot 20 –* Select Validation Visit to Schedule

Before requesting your Validation Visit, you will want to ensure you have reviewed any and all comments or files uploaded during the Program Improvement Visit. You will want to strive to implement systems, policies, and practices that address any initially low-rated indicators to fully-met by your Validation Visit. 100% fully-met is not required to achieve a Decision 1, but those are your areas of needed improvement.
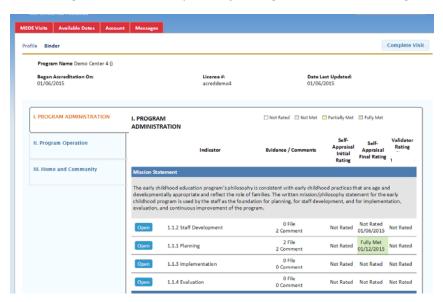
Step 4c – Validation Visit: Using the Standards Binder

Within 48 hours prior to your scheduled Validation visit, and up to 72 hours after the visit, your binder will be locked and you will be unable to make any ratings, comments, or file uploads. You will be able to read all the past information that is there, and you will begin to see comments and scores from the Validators. After 72 hours following your scheduled visit, you will be able to make comments and upload new files in response to findings from the Validation team. This information will be available to the Decision Committee as they weigh your Accreditation rating.

Screenshot 21 – Posting Comments and Files in Response to Validator

Screenshot 22 – Scoring Overview to Compare Self-Ratings and Validator Rating

NOTE: When completing your self-appraisal, please note that under Standard Area II - Program Operation, there are several sections of the rubric that only apply depending on the age of the children enrolled in your program. These sections contain the same numbering scheme for each age-group, and are noted parenthetically of applying to certain ages. You need only complete the sections that apply to your program based on the age-group you are established to serve.

Screenshot 22 – Example of Duplicated Sections Applicable to Either Infants and Toddlers or Pre-K

2.2 Care and Learning Opportunities for Infants and Toddlers (Birth to 36 Months)				
(I/T) The early childhood program has research-based care and learning opportunities that support each child's development and follows the Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age.				
Open	2.2.l (I/T) Routine Care	0 File 0 Comment	Not Rated	Not Rated
Open	2.2.2 (I/T) Social/Emotional Security	0 File 0 Comment	Not Rated	Not Rated
Open	2.2.3 (I/T) Sensory and Cognitive Development	0 File 0 Comment	Not Rated	Not Rated
Open	2.2.4 (I/T) Communication Skills	0 File 0 Comment	Not Rated	Not Rated
Open	2.2.5 (I/T) Gross Motor Development	0 File 0 Comment	Not Rated	Not Rated
Open	2.2.6 (I/T) Fine Motor Development	0 File 0 Comment	Not Rated	Not Rated
Open	2.2.7 (I/T) Fine Arts	0 File 0 Comment	Not Rated	Not Rated
Open	2.2.8 (I/T) Disposition Toward Learning	0 File 0 Comment	Not Rated	Not Rated
2.2 Curriculum (3 to 6 years)				
The early childhood program utilizes a curriculum that supports each child's development. The curriculum is aligned with the MMSR Framework and Standards for Prekindergarten and Kindergarten/ State curriculum and/or Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age.				
Open	2.2.1 Goals and Learning Outcomes	0 File 0 Comment	Not Rated	Not Rated

Step 4c – Validation Visit: Rating Score

Each Validation Visit is conducted by at least 2 separate Validators. They will score your program independently; entering their own ratings for each indicators into the Online Standards Binders. Following the Validation Visit, your Standards Binder will show both of your self-appraisal scores, and then a Validation Rating score. The Standards Binder uses a color-coding system to make it easier for you to pinpoint areas to concentrate on addressing.
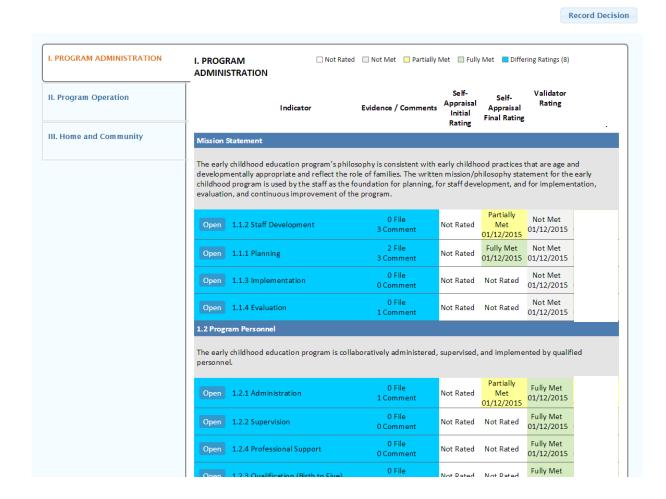
A light gray indicates an indicator was rated "**not met.**"

A yellow indicates an indicator was rated "**partially met.**"

A green indicates an indicator was rated "**fully met.**"

A blue highlight indicates there is a discrepancy in the score either between the self-appraisal and the Validator(s), or between the Validators themselves. The lowest differing score between Validators is what appears for your review, though you will be able to see anonymous comments by each individual Validator.

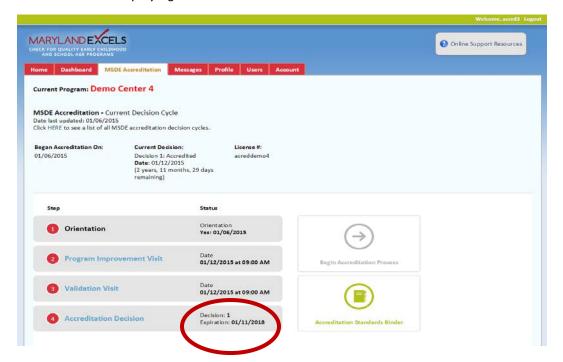*Screenshot 24 – Standards Binder Following Validation Visit*

Step 4d – Accreditation Decision

Once the Validation Visit is complete, MSDE is notified and will schedule a Decision Committee. This meeting reviews the various ratings, comments, and files uploaded for each indicator throughout the entire Accreditation process. The Committee will then generate a Decision related to your Accreditation bid:

➢ **Decision 1** – Your Accreditation application has been awarded. You will see the decision listed, along with your Expiration date – three years from the date of award.
➢ **Decision 2** – Your Accreditation application has been deferred. You will have specific feedback in your Standards Binder related to one or more indicators that needs to be addressed before your Accreditation can be awarded. You will have 1 year to supply evidence that the concerns raised during the Validation visit have been addressed.
➢ **Decision 3** – Your Accreditation application has been denied. You will need to "Begin Accreditation Process" again, and restart the entire process.

Any Decision status will be indicated under Step 4 of the Accreditation tab, as shown on Screenshot 24.

Screenshot 24 – Displaying Decision status

Step 5 – Messages

The Online Maryland Accreditation Portal is equipped with an internal messaging system. This feature is shared with both EXCELS and Accreditation, so you can quickly see messages you have sent or received related to either initiatives. Much like a regular email system, you can compose a message or respond to any message by clicking on it. You can see all **Sent** messages through the Sent tab shown in the red circle. You can also see any messages you have archived through the **Archived** tab. You can select any message in your inbox and archive by clicking "**Archived Selected.**"

Messages automatically forward to the email address you used to register. By clicking the link included in the email, it will bring you back to this messaging system for you to respond. When composing a new message, you can indicate whether you want the communication to go to all users on your account, to system Admins for technical comments, MSDE Admins for policy comments, to your assigned Validators, or to all users.

Screenshot 25 – Messaging System
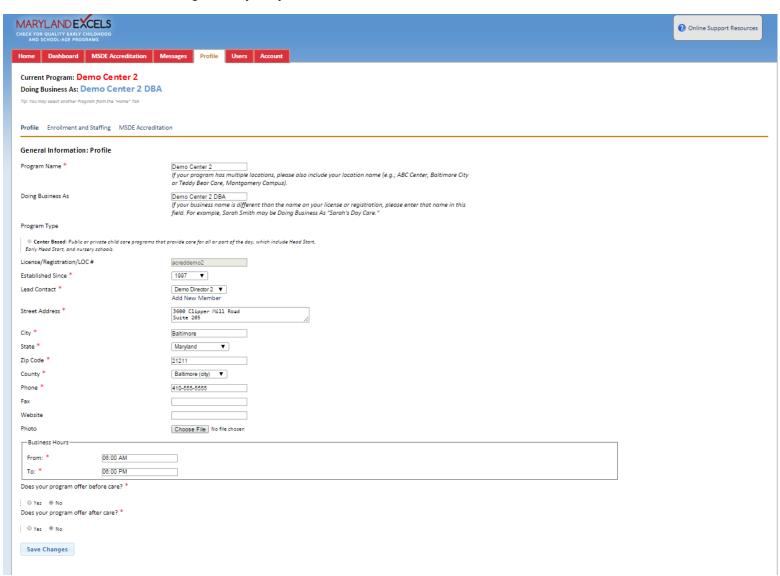
Step 6 – Account Management

Three tabs comprise the functions for Account Management:

Profile – The Profile tab allows you to make changes to the information supplied when you first elected to participate in either Maryland Accreditation or EXCELS (see pgs. 7 – 10 for more information)

Users – The Users tab allows you to add, delete, or modify additional users who will have access to your program within the system. This is where you will manage adding new staff who will help facilitate the process of obtaining Maryland Accreditation.

Account - The Account tab is where you make changes to your own personal account, such as modifying your associated email address or changing your password.

Screenshot 26 – Program Profile information

Step 5 a - Users Tab

On the **Users Tab**, you can add, edit, or delete users – people who have access to your program information through the online system.

When you first click on the tab, you will see a list of any associated users with your program. This list is sortable by clicking any of the "Headers" circled in red on Screenshot 27. By clicking the top of any column, you will sort all fields alphabetically by the column you selected. You can open up the information on any specific user by clicking their name from the list. You can use the "**Search**" feature to look for a specific user. Tip – type in only the first few letters of their last name when searching.

To add a user, click the "**Invite User"** button noted by the red arrow below.

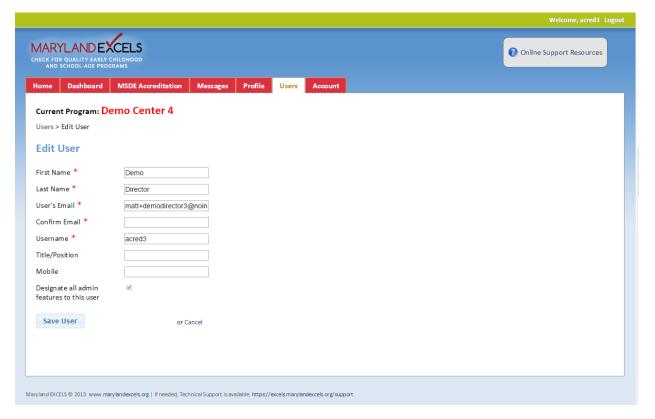*Screenshot 27 – User Management Tab*

Adding or editing users involves the same fields. You will be prompted to complete the registration information for the user. The "**Designate all admin features to this user**" checkbox allows this user to automatically receive all updated communication related to the account, and enables the user to have the rights to the following:

➢ Begin Accreditation Process
➢ Schedule Validation Visits
➢ Dispute a Decision

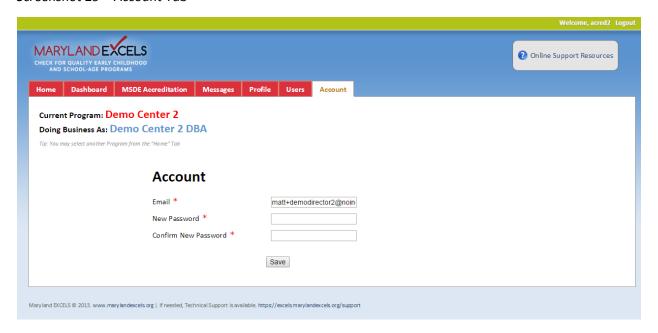> Otherwise, a user is allowed to upload evidence, make comments, and schedule Program Improvement Visits.

> *Screenshot 28 – Create/Edit User fields*

Step 5b – Account Tab

The **Account Tab** allows you to modify your own personal email associated with the account or create a new password. Complete the fields and select "**Save´** to make these changes.

Screenshot 29 – Account Tab

Step 6 – Technical Support

You can initiate Technical Support at any time by clicking in either one of two places as circled in red on Screenshot 30. Technical Support is avaialbe 24/7 by phone or email. Some issues may require additional investigation, and if so, your representative will inform you of the estimated response time. Phone support is not automated – you will talk with a human being every time you call. You can reach the Technical Support page via web: https://excels.marylandexcels.org/support/ or phone: **443-872-9250**.

Screenshot 30 & 31 – How to Contact Technical Support

Screenshot 31 – Technical Support Online Form