



**Adventist
Accrediting
Association**

Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges and Universities

ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

Part II

THE ACCREDITATION VISIT

2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Regular Accreditation Visit	II-3
Parameters of Visit	II-3
Initial Arrangements	II-3
Committee Selection	II-3
Financial Arrangements	II-4
Pre-Visit Expectations	II-4
Overall Schedule	II-5
Required Documentation	II-6
The Accreditation Report	II-7
Accreditation Recommendation	II-8
Right of Appeal	II-10
Accreditation Recommendation for an Institution Facing Initial Accreditation	II-11
Final Report and Accreditation Action	II-12
Summary Time Line	II-12
The Interim Accreditation Visit	II-12
Parameters of Visit	II-12
Initial Arrangements (and Committee Appointments)	II-13
Financial Arrangements	II-13
Pre-visit Expectations	II-13
The Visit	II-14
Follow-up	II-14
Summary Time Line	II-14
The Administrative Review Visit	II-15
Parameters of Visit	II-15
Initial Arrangements (and Committee Appointments)	II-15
Financial Arrangements	II-15
Pre-visit Expectations	II-16
The Visit	II-16
Follow-up	II-17
Summary Time Line	II-17
Focused Accreditation Visit	II-17
Parameters of Visit	II-17
Procedures	II-18
Financial Arrangements	II-18
Follow-up	II-19

THE REGULAR ACCREDITATION VISIT

Parameters of Visit

The regular accreditation visit can take place under the terms of a Form A *Self-Study* or the more focused Form B *Self-Study*. Part I of the *Accreditation Handbook* outlines the basis on which an institution will be accredited under each of these two forms. In both cases, however, the regular accreditation visit is a full accreditation team visit in which the institution will be involved in an extensive self-evaluation process prior to the visit. The conclusions of the self-evaluation will be given in the relevant *Self-Study* document provided by the institution to the team. This *Accreditation Handbook* will outline the responsibilities of all involved in the visit and identify the possible accreditation recommendations that can be made to AAA.

Initial Arrangements

Usually in April of the year preceding the year that a regular accreditation to a college/university is scheduled, the secretary of the Adventist Accrediting Association will inform the institutional president that a visit is due. Along with this letter, the president of the institution will be sent a copy of the *Accreditation Handbook*. Copies of the letter will be sent to the chair of the Board of Trustees of the relevant institution, the General Conference Education Department liaison to the division in which the institution is located, and to the Division Education Department Director. At the same time a letter will be sent to the chair of the relevant division BMTE or equivalent with a copy to the institutional president and the board chair, reminding them of the need to ensure that all BMTE/IBMTE endorsement processes are completed prior to the AAA visit.

Once the institution is informed of the plan for a AAA visit, the relevant General Conference education department liaison will take the initiative in contacting both the director of the education department of the division in which the college/university to be visited is located and the president of the institution. They will agree on the appropriate timing for the visit during the scheduled year.

As soon as an institution is advised that an accreditation visit is due, they are advised to start the *Self-Study* process required for a AAA visit (see Parts III and IV of the *Handbook*).

Committee Selection

The General Conference liaison usually serves as chair of an accreditation committee and the education director of the division involved serves as the committee's secretary. These two individuals, in consultation with the institutional president, will then select and recommend the rest of the team to the staff of the Adventist Accrediting Association for approval. In some agreed situations, the chair will be an administrator from a Seventh-day Adventist peer institution. In this case the General Conference and division

representatives appoint the chair and the chair is invited to be involved in selecting the rest of the team. When the GC liaison is not the chair, he/she will normally serve as committee secretary.

The individuals recommended for an accreditation team will be experienced in various areas of administration and education, matching the profile of the institution. It is advised that one team member come from another division to the institution being visited and that at least one team member not be a denominational employee. The chair of the evaluation committee or, at his/her request, the committee's secretary will contact the members of the committee and obtain the approval of the employing organization for their involvement in the visit. A typical team size is five to seven members.

Financial Arrangements

Normally the transportation costs of any team member employed by the Seventh-day Adventist church is the responsibility of the employing organization. The local division is usually be responsible for travel expenses of any individual not employed within the church system. The General Conference liaison may negotiate alternative funding arrangements for individuals traveling from other divisions where expenses are excessive.

The institution to be visited is expected to provide room and board in addition to local transportation to the members of the committee.

Pre-Visit Expectations

Approximately **three months before the visit**, the chair of the visiting committee will mail a letter to the committee members outlining the plans for the visit and enclosing (1) a copy of the report prepared by the last evaluation committee as well as any interim visit reports, and (2) a copy of the *Accreditation Handbook*. A letter will be sent also to the president and the board chair of the college or university to be visited, outlining the plans for the visit. All letters will be copied to the relevant division education director.

The chair of the committee will also continue to work with the appointed committee and the institution and, where possible, establish a tentative schedule prior to arrival of the committee on site.

One-month prior to the visit, the president of the institution will be responsible for providing to all members of the committee copies of the completed *Self-Study* document which will include specific responses to the recommendations made by the committee that conducted the last full evaluation visit as well as any recommendations made by an interim evaluation committee. Along with this document, the president should send a current *Bulletin/Catalog/Prospectus* and a copy of the institutional strategic plan. A copy of the most recent audited statement should also be sent to the committee chair.

The president or his/her designee will also be responsible for the assigning of a

committee room to the visiting team, including access to a computer and printer (and ideally the internet). This room should also contain the documents identified by AAA as required for a visit (see “Required Documentation” below), and these should be in the room when the team arrives on campus.

Prior to arrival on campus it will be the responsibility of the committee members (1) to read the documents sent to them in advance of the visit and (2) to inform the relevant individual identified by the chair (usually the division education director) the time and place of their arrival to the area so that arrangements for their transportation and housing can be made.

Overall Schedule

The schedule agreed between the visiting team and the local administration should include times for the following:

- An organizational meeting of the visiting committee to agree on procedures and individual assignments.
- An initial meeting between the administrative team of the institution and the visiting committee to discuss the institution’s formal responses to the recommendations of the previous visit as well as major developments, achievements, trends, and challenges in each of the following areas: academic, finance, student life, nurture/outreach activities, physical plant, industries, etc..
- Opportunity for individual interviews between selected members of the committee and members of the administrative team, to discuss specific issues relating to the institution and the *Self-Study*.
- A review of the physical master plan and projections of new buildings, followed by a selected guided tour of the facilities.
- Selected individual meetings between members of the committee and academic department chairpersons/deans, departmental faculty (without chairpersons), campus pastor and/or chaplain, heads of services (dormitories, library, computer center, laboratories, cafeteria, health clinic, industries, maintenance, etc.), and president/officers of the student association.
- Group interviews between selected members of the committee and student representatives from various levels and departments. In the case of graduate programs, these interviews may involve all the students in a specific school or degree program.
- Individual/group interviews between selected members of the committee and available members of the institutional board, including its chair.
- Preparation of a written report with input from all the members of the committee, formal agreement on the recommendation to be forwarded to the Adventist Accrediting Association, and approval of the draft of the report. See Appendix C for an outline of the evaluation report and Parts III and IV of the *Accreditation Handbook* for suggested issues to be considered by the team.
- Exit report. After the visiting committee has completed the preparation of the draft of their report, they shall use the following process in the presentation of the

- exit report. (1) Review the findings with the institution's Board chair, officers, administrative officers verbally and correct any factual errors that may be pointed out; (2) Present the report to the administration, faculty, staff, and student leaders in a public meeting; (3) The Chair of the visiting committee will not announce the confidential recommendation that will be made to the AAA Board pertaining to the accreditation term; (4) The Chair shall invite the chief administrator and Board chair to say a few words to receive the report; (5) No discussion of the report shall be encouraged during the process. Such discussions, if any, can be a part of the response of the administration to the chairman of the AAA committee.
- Final meeting of members of committee, to discuss issues raised during the exit report and to agree on the final draft and accreditation recommendation that will be signed by all committee members. In addition, the chair will elicit from the committee a self-evaluation of the visit procedures and outcome.
 - After the visit. A draft will be sent to the institution for correction of error of fact. The president will send corrections of error of fact to the site visit chair, with supporting documents if necessary. The site visit chair will update the document regarding any needed corrections of error of fact and send it to the team members for review and feedback.
 - After being voted by AAA Board, the final copy of the report is sent back by AAA secretary. The board chair will present it to the Board and the college/university president shall present it to the faculty to initiate broad-based engagement in fulfilling the recommendations of the report. For example, administration may choose to form faculty committees to study one or more parts of the report to suggest a strategy for fulfilling the recommendations within a set time frame. This strategic plan, including the time frame, should be approved by the Board, and followed by the administration. Administration is expected to provide updates in reports to the AAA.

Required Documentation

The following documents and materials must be available to members of the accreditation committee in a room designated for their work on campus at the time of their arrival on campus:

- The *Board Handbook or Manual*
- The latest edition of the college or university *Bulletin*
- The *Faculty/Staff Handbook*, including job descriptions for administrators, faculty, and staff
- The *Student Handbook*
- Minutes of the Board and the Administrative Committee for the last three years
- All audited annual financial statements since the last regular accreditation visit (or three years in the case of Form B institutions)
- The current institutional budget
- A year-to-date financial operating statement
- Report of the Financial Oversight Committees (Audit and Compensation Review).

- Annual report of the treasurer/chief financial officer that is provided to the board. This report must include the financial statement, all schedules—including loans receivable or loans guaranteed or cosigned for subsidiary organizations, assets pledged as collateral, and any off-balance-sheet obligations of the organization concerned.
- A copy of the class schedule and the academic calendar
- Campus map
- Institutional master plan(s), including spiritual master plan(s) if not integrated in a detailed manner into the full master plan
- Documents on affiliations and extensions
- Course syllabi, organized by schools and departments, with information on how the integration of faith and learning takes place in classes
- Listing of church affiliation of each administrator, faculty, staff member by department
- Church affiliation percentages for student body for traditional and non-traditional students
- Institutional publications such as sample articles, news releases and PR materials used with the university/college constituency
- List of faculty research/publication records. The team shall also be given access to faculty files/portfolios
- Administrative/faculty/staff pay scales as related to the approved denominational scales or approved by Board action
- A list of recommendations for endorsement of relevant faculty teaching in the seminary/department of religion, and a copy of any alternative International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (IBMTE) process approved for the institution
- Most recent AAA accreditation *Self-Study* and visiting committee report and any interim/annual reports completed since that visit
- Copies of any national/regional accreditation/validation material (annual reports, self-studies, government accreditation/validation notifications, any correspondence changing accreditation/validation status, etc.)

The Accreditation Report

The accreditation report written during the accreditation visit will follow the outline identified in Appendix C. While the chair and secretary of the committee will be responsible for ensuring the completion of the report, all team members will be involved in writing the report, particularly the writing of commendations and recommendations in their areas of expertise.

Appendix D provides advice to team members on writing recommendations and commendations.

Accreditation Recommendation

The accreditation recommendation is the overall recommendation on whether an institution should be accredited or reaccredited, and, if so, for what term and with what conditions, if any.

In considering the accreditation recommendation (to be reached by a majority vote), the visiting committee will have at its disposal the following options:

1. *A five-year institutional accreditation with no interim visit.* This is for an institution that has fulfilled or satisfactorily addressed all the previous recommendations, that has submitted an acceptable *Self-Study* in advance of the visit, that shows adequate strength in each major area identified in the *Self-Study*, and that anticipates no major changes which will impact its mission, Seventh-day Adventist focus or the financial and administrative stability of the institution. The recommendation may include the request for written reports on specific items at established times.
2. *A five-year term of institutional accreditation, with a report and administrative review visit at the end of that period, by a team appointed by the AAA, and the possibility of extension of the term to that of the regional or government term of accreditation/recognition.* Additional interim reports may be requested. **This term is only available for institutions accredited under the terms of Form B.** This is for an institution that has a strong track record of success in external accreditations, that has fulfilled or satisfactorily addressed all previous AAA recommendations, that has submitted an acceptable *Self-Study* in advance of the visit, that shows adequate strength in each major area of its operation, and that anticipates no major changes that will impact its mission, Seventh-day Adventist focus or the financial and administrative stability of the institution. At the time of the administrative review visit the team will expect to find that the institution has: (a) met the major recommendations of the previous visiting committee, (b) made significant progress toward meeting all other AAA recommendations, and (c) satisfactory progressed in addressing the relevant issues raised by the regional accrediting or governmental review process. Only if these criteria are met, may the visiting committee recommend, and the AAA grant, an extension of the accreditation term that will match the term granted by the regional or governmental agency. If these requirements have not been met, the visiting committee shall recommend, and the AAA may grant, a one-year extension of accreditation to the institution to allow it to prepare a *Self-Study* and be ready for a full accreditation visit at the end of the one-year extension.
3. *A five-year institutional accreditation with an interim visit.* This is for an institution that has satisfactorily fulfilled or addressed the previous recommendations, that has submitted an acceptable *Self-Study* in advance of the visit, that shows weaknesses in a few areas, and/or is experiencing or will experience in the near future important changes in its administration, status,

programs, or size which could impact the institutional mission and/or Seventh-day Adventist identity. These specific issues will be identified in major recommendations. At the time of the interim visit the team will expect that the institution has fulfilled or made substantial progress in fulfilling all of the major and other recommendations. The approximate time for the interim visit will be identified in the accreditation recommendation.

4. ***Three or four year institutional accreditation. Interim reports or visits may be included.*** This is for an institution that has not fulfilled several previous recommendations, that has not prepared an acceptable *Self-Study*, that shows weaknesses in several areas of its operation or leadership, and/or is experiencing or will experience significant changes in its leadership and/or programs which could impact on the institutional mission and Seventh-day Adventist identity. Only on rare occasions, where external situations result in institutional instability beyond the control of the institution, may a team give a recommendation of only a one or two year term of regular accreditation.
5. **Deferral.** Deferral is not a final decision. It is interlocutory in nature and designed to provide time for the institution to correct certain deficiencies. This action allows the Board to indicate to an institution the need for additional information or progress in one or more specified areas before a decision can be made. Deferrals are granted for a maximum period of one year.
6. ***Probationary status, with a specific time limit of two years or less.*** This is for an institution where the accreditation visit is unsatisfactory or the pre-work by the institution is unacceptable. One or more of the following will be evidenced:
 - The institution has not submitted an acceptable *Self-Study*
 - The institution has not submitted a *Self-Study* on time
 - The institution has not made significant progress in responding to the recommendations of the previous evaluation visit
 - The institution shows substantial weaknesses in major areas of its operation or leadership
 - The institution is not representative of Seventh-day Adventist educational philosophy, policy and/or practice.
 - The institution disregards IBE/AAA guidelines and/or actions

These weaknesses need to be carefully documented, with specific conditions, expected evidence of their fulfillment, and a time frame for the removal of the probationary status. In situations where one particular department/school shows significant weaknesses, the visiting team may recommend a focused visit to the institution within a two-year period to review that program. If the college or university has not resolved the identified problems by that time, then the whole college/university may be placed on probation.

7. **Issue an Order to Show Cause.** An Order to Show Cause is a decision by the AAA Board to suspend or terminate the accreditation of the institution within a

maximum period of one year from the date of the Order, unless the institution can show cause why such action should not be taken. Such an Order may be issued when an institution is found to be in substantial noncompliance with one or more Standards or Criteria for Review, or has not been found to have made sufficient progress to come into compliance with the Standards. An Order to Show Cause may also be issued as a summary sanction for unethical institutional behavior or constant disregard of IBE/AAA guidelines and/or actions. In response to the Order, the institution has the burden of proving why its candidacy or accreditation should not be suspended or terminated. The institution must demonstrate that it has responded satisfactorily to Board concerns, has come into compliance with all Standards, and will likely be able to sustain compliance.

The candidacy or accredited status of the institution continues during the Show Cause period, but during this period, any new site or degree program initiated by the institution is regarded as a substantive change and requires prior approval. In addition, the institution may be subject to special scrutiny by the AAA Board, which may include special conditions and the requirement to submit prescribed reports or receive special visits by representatives of the AAA. The Order to Show Cause is sent to the chief executive officer and the chair of the governing board.

8. ***Suspension of accreditation.*** This is for an institution that either refuses to fulfill the recommendations of previous evaluation visits, does not welcome an AAA visit, and/or openly deviates from the philosophy and objectives of Seventh-day Adventist education. These will need to be carefully documented, with specific conditions that will allow the institution to regain regular status with the Adventist Accrediting Association.

Right of Appeal

An appeal can be submitted to the International Board of Education on actions related to the approval of new programs or programs undergoing substantive changes. Appeals regarding accreditation are submitted to the Adventist Accrediting Association. The reasons for the appeal must be predicated on one of the following: the team or Board drew their conclusions based on inaccurate information, the team or Board failed to follow procedure, or the team/Board acted unprofessionally (for example, through conflict of interest, prejudice, etc.).

Right of Appeal—Division. Any action of the division board involving a specific institution or program may be appealed by the same in writing, through the respective division education committee, within 90 days of notification of such action. Such an appeal may be supported by a representation of no more than three persons before a meeting of the board. The board, in closed session, shall then render its decision.

Within 90 days of the Division Board of Education and/or Executive Committee issuing a decision, the involved institution may request reconsideration of the decision by the

division education committee provided the request is based on new information. Such review may be supported by representation of no more than three persons appearing before a meeting of the division education committee. The division education committee in executive session shall then render its final decision. If, after the final decision is rendered by the division Education Committee, the matter is not resolved, written appeal by the institution may be made to the International Board of Education/AAA, through the General Conference Department of Education which shall have discretion to determine whether to accept the appeal for review. The Department of Education may recommend an independent assessment of the proposal and make a recommendation to IBE/AAA based on its independent conclusions.

Right of Appeal—Site Visit Report. Applying institutions can appeal the overall conclusion of the on-site team by writing a response to the team report within 90 days of receipt of the final report. This will only be considered by the International Board of Education/AAA if the appeal is to the major recommendation on approval of the proposed new/changed program. Disagreement with other statements in the report may be documented, but these will not constitute an appeal. Any appeal should succinctly identify the reasons for disagreement with the findings of the site team, provide supporting evidence for the request for a differing conclusion, or where the team did not follow procedure, and must be submitted within 90 days of the completion of the original report, and at least 10 working days prior to the meeting of the IBE/AAA. Such an appeal may be supported by a representation of no more than three persons before a meeting of the board. The board, in closed session, shall then render its decision.

Right of Appeal—IBE/AAA. If the International Board of Education/Adventist Accrediting Association changes the recommendation of the on-site team to the detriment of the applying organization, that organization can appeal the Board action by submitting a written request for a reconsideration of the action within 90 days of receiving notification. This request must provide reasons, with supporting documentation attached, for why the Board action is considered unfair by the organization. This appeal will be considered at the next meeting of IBE/AAA. Such an appeal may be supported by a representation of no more than three persons before a meeting of the board. The board, in closed session, shall then render its decision. In extreme and far-reaching decisions, further appeal may be made to the General Conference Executive Committee.

Accreditation Recommendation for an Institution Facing Initial Accreditation

An institution facing its first accreditation after being awarded candidacy status can be given any of the accreditation terms identified in 1, 3-5 above, although its *Self-Study* will respond to recommendations made at the time candidacy was given, rather than to recommendations of any previous AAA visit.

If the visiting accreditation team considers that an institution in candidacy status does not reach the required standard for accreditation, it may recommend that the institution be dropped from candidacy and that no accreditation be awarded, or it may extend

candidacy for a maximum of two years. If an extended term of candidacy is awarded, the institution will need to have met both the initial recommendations from the team recommending candidacy and any additional recommendations/conditions made at the time of the first AAA visit before the end of the extension period. An extension to candidacy can only be given once.

Final Report and Accreditation Action

The committee chair and secretary will ensure that no longer than two months after completing the visit, the executive secretary of the Adventist Accrediting Association will receive the final draft report, including the recommendation regarding the term of accreditation, or another option. At that time copies of the report will also be sent to the president of the institution visited and the chair of the board. The date when AAA will consider the report and accreditation recommendation will also be identified to the institution. (Due to the international nature of AAA, the board meets twice annually.)

Once the final draft accreditation report is received by the institution from the visiting team, it can be used immediately for planning and action. It is expected that the president of the institution visited will distribute copies of the evaluation report among the members of the board and review its recommendations during the next board meeting. In addition, the president will propose to the board a process for addressing each recommendation and assign responsibilities for their fulfillment, with time frames, among his/her administrative team.

However, while the team report can be used as a working document, it will still be considered a draft until the report is voted by the AAA Board. The AAA Board reserves the right to make changes to the terms of accreditation recommended and to make alterations to the submitted report. The institution and its board chair will receive copies of actions taken by AAA Board as soon as practicable after the meeting.

Summary Time Line

Appendix B-1 provides a recommended summary timeline of responsibilities for a regular AAA visit.

THE INTERIM ACCREDITATION VISIT

Parameters of Visit

An interim evaluation of an Adventist university or college takes place when the AAA Board, upon the recommendation of an appointed visiting team, deems it necessary for AAA to visit the institution inbetween the times of regular accreditation visits. The decision for an interim visit is voted as part of the AAA action following a regular accreditation visit.

Initial Arrangements (and Committee Appointments)

As with regular accreditation visits, by April of the year preceding an interim visit, the Executive Secretary of AAA will inform the institutional president of the visit that will take place the next year and of the institutional responsibilities in preparation for that visit. The chairman of the institutional board, the education director for the relevant division, and the GC liaison for that division will also receive copies of the correspondence.

The committee appointed to conduct an interim visit will be smaller in size (3-4 members) than the one appointed to conduct a full accreditation visit. Its composition will be agreed upon by the GC liaison for and the education director of the world division in which the institution is located. These individuals usually serve as chairman and secretary of the committee. Other members of the committee will be selected in mutual consultation, taking into consideration the areas or functions of the institution that will be evaluated. The committee will be appointed by the staff of AAA.

Once the committee is approved, the division education director will contact the administration of the institution to be visited and in consultation with other team members, will establish the dates of the visit.

Financial Arrangements

Normally the relevant sending organizations will be responsible for the travel costs of the team members to the college/university campus. The administration of the institution visited will provide local transportation as well as room and board to the members of the committee during the visit.

The division education representative will be the link person for all practical arrangements for the trip.

Pre-visit Expectations

Not less than three months before the visit, the GC liaison will forward to the members of the committee a copy of the report of the last full evaluation visit and a copy of the AAA *Accreditation Handbook*. He/she will also confirm the plans for the visit in writing with the institutional president and board chair and will agree to a preliminary schedule.

The top administrator of the institution being visited, in turn, will provide the members of the visiting committee, one month in advance of the visit, a written report identifying progress made on the recommendations made by the last full AAA team with particular focus on the major recommendations.

The Visit

The interim visit will review progress on the recommendations made by prior AAA team(s) with focus on the major recommendations made at that time and the manner in which the college/university administration have addressed and responded to them. The committee members will meet with board representatives, administrators, faculty, staff, and students to ascertain the satisfactory fulfillment of these recommendations.

In preparing its report, the visiting committee will reinstate the recommendations only partially fulfilled and/or add others that require attention before the end of the accreditation period. In cases of institutional disregard for the recommendations made by the last full evaluation, the interim committee may recommend that the institution be placed on probation or that its denominational accreditation be suspended. In any of these cases, the committee will provide specific documentation and evidence in support of these recommendations. The report should follow the pattern of regular accreditation visit reports using commendations and recommendations. All members of the interim evaluation committee will sign the report.

Before leaving campus, the committee will present an exit report of the major findings of the visit to the chair of the board, the institutional president, and others as agreed with the president.

Follow-up

The chair of the committee will be responsible for sending a final copy of the report to the Executive Secretary of AAA with copies to the institutional president, the board chair, and the division education director no later than one month after completing the visit. The institution may consider the report as a working document as soon as the report is received and should discuss its findings at the next meeting of the institutional board. However, AAA reserves the right to make changes to the recommendations at the time a vote is taken by the AAA Board.

The AAA Board will consider the report at its next full meeting. This will include any recommendation that would change the status of the institution with AAA or the length of time to the next full accreditation visit. After action is taken by the AAA Board, the Executive Secretary of AAA will be responsible for informing the institution of the action.

Summary Time Line

Appendix B-2 provides a timeline of responsibilities relating to AAA interim or administrative visits.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW VISIT

Parameters of Visit

An administrative review visit takes place when an institution accredited by AAA under Form B guidelines has been given a maximum term of accreditation by AAA (five years) but has a regional/government accreditation term that runs for a longer period. An administrative review visit is intended to provide an opportunity for AAA to interface in a formal way with an institution after five years has passed since its previous full visit, but without expecting the institution to prepare a full report. If the team is satisfied with the progress made during that time, it may recommend to AAA an extension of the five-year term to that coinciding with the term given by the regional/government accreditation body.

Initial Arrangements (and Committee Appointments)

As with regular accreditation visits, the Executive Secretary of AAA will ensure that by April of the year preceding the visit the institutional president is informed of the visit that will take place the next year and reminded of the preparation that will need to be made. The chairman of the institutional board, the education director of the relevant division, and the General Conference liaison for that division will also receive copies of the correspondence.

The administrative review team will include the appropriate GC liaison, the division director of education, and an administrator of a peer institution (ideally an individual present at the last full visit). If the chair of the last visit was a peer institutional administrator, that individual (or a suitable replacement) should also be asked to chair the administrative review team and the General Conference liaison will be the secretary. In other cases the General Conference liaison will serve as the team chair and the education director of the division will be the secretary. The appointment of the team will be by the staff of AAA on the recommendation of the General Conference liaison and division education director.

Once the committee is approved, the division education director will contact the administration of the institution to be visited and, in consultation with other team members, will establish the dates of the visit.

Financial Arrangements

Normally the relevant sending organizations will be responsible for the travel costs of the team members to the college/university campus. The administration of the institution visited will provide local transportation as well as room and board to the members of the committee during the visit.

The division education representative will be the link person for all practical arrangements for the trip.

Pre-Visit Expectations

Not less than three months before the visit, the GC liaison will forward to the members of the committee a copy of the report of the last full evaluation visit and a copy of the Accreditation Handbook. He/she will also confirm the plans for the visit in writing with the institutional president and board chair. The correspondence will include an invitation to the board chair to meet with the team in person or to speak to them by telephone conference call.

In preparation for an administrative review, the institutional administration will prepare a short written report that:

1. Reviews the institution's progress in meeting the recommendations of the last full accreditation visit. (The team will expect that substantial progress has been made in meeting all major recommendations.)
2. Identifies key changes and developments in the institutional operation since the last full visit that have impacted on the institutional mission. This might include, for example, major changes in key personnel, shifts in institutional strategy, curriculum developments, the financial status of the institution, and the relationship between the institution and its external accrediting body (bodies).
3. Discusses future directions/plans that will impact the mission.
4. Raises other items of institutional concern that the administration wishes to discuss with the visiting team.

This report will be sent to all team members at least one month prior to the visit. After receiving the report, the GC liaison will be responsible for developing a schedule that will include selected meetings with administration, faculty, staff, and students as necessary.

The team will also want to see, at a minimum, the latest *Self-Study* report written by the institution for AAA, and the *Self-Study* most recently prepared for any government accreditation visit (or equivalent) along with the response from that accreditation team. These should be made available to the team on arrival on campus. The committee may also direct the institution to have other documentation ready for their examination at the time of the visit.

The Visit

In total, the administrative review visit will be one or two days in length and will largely focus on the content of the institutional report.

The team report will respond directly to the report from the institution and the follow-up discussions resulting from that report. It will be written in the same format as regular AAA reports, using commendations and recommendations, and will be signed by all members of the team. Based on their findings, the team will recommend either a continuation of accreditation until the end of the term given by the local accrediting body, up to a maximum extension of an additional five years or that AAA visit the institution in a year's time, with a full team. The next visit after an administrative visit will be a regular full visit.

The administrative review team will give an exit report to the administration at the conclusion of its visit. The board chair will also be invited.

Follow-up

The final report must be forwarded to the Executive Secretary of AAA within a month of the conclusion of the visit. The institutional president and board chair shall also receive a copy of the recommended report.

The AAA Board will take action on the recommendations of the report at its next scheduled meeting. The institution can consider the report as a working document until that time and its findings should be shared with its institutional board at its next meeting. However, AAA reserves the right to make changes to the recommendations when a vote is taken by the AAA Board.

The Executive Secretary of AAA will inform the president of the college/university visited of the final AAA Board action.

Summary Time Line

Appendix B-2 provides a timeline of responsibilities relating to AAA or administrative interim visits.

FOCUSED ACCREDITATION VISIT

Parameters of Visit

Once the AAA Board takes an action regarding the length of an accreditation term, this decision will be upheld. However, in exceptional circumstances, AAA may decide to visit an institution during an accreditation term to respond to an identified area of concern.

A request for a focused visit may be initiated by the institution's administration, board, or constituency, or by the AAA board itself responding to circumstances observed in the institution.

Exceptional circumstances may include the following:

1. A financial crisis that could have an adverse impact on the wider church
2. A crisis of mission—where the identity of the institution as a Seventh-day Adventist College or University is at risk. This could be the result of institutional policies that operate outside the expectations of a church institution.
3. A refusal of the institution to respond to the professional requests/expectations of the church—such as in providing information and reports that are integral to the accreditation process.
4. Exceptional personnel issues that leave the institution in a critically unstable situation.

Procedures

Where an institution recognizes it is facing a critical situation, the administration and board may choose to approach AAA to ask for a focused visit. Such a request should be channeled through the appropriate division department of education. Such a visit will be considered informal. The team membership will be agreed upon between the institution, the division education director, and AAA. The report with recommendations will be provided to all groups involved in making the original request.

A special visit may also take place by the request of the church organization directly responsible for the organization (normally union or division), the relevant division department of education, or as a result of substantial concern on the part of the General Conference Department of Education. In each of these cases, AAA would coordinate the visit with the administration of the relevant division through its department of education.

When a visit is initiated outside the institution, other than by AAA board itself, AAA will send a letter of enquiry to the chairman of the board and the chief administrator of an accredited institution, with a copy to the division education director, outlining the issue at hand and requesting a formal response within 30 days.

On the basis of the response received and in consultation with the division education director, the AAA staff will decide whether (a) the answer clears the issue, (b) additional information is required, or (c) a focused visit is warranted. If the staff agrees to recommend a focused visit, all members of the AAA Board will be contacted and a two-thirds vote of members casting a ballot will be required to proceed with the visit which should take place within 60 days of the action. If a visit takes place, the GC liaison for the respective division will normally serve as the chair of the team.

Financial Arrangements

Normally the relevant sending organizations will be responsible for the travel costs of the team members to the college/university campus. The administration of the institution

visited will provide local transportation as well as room and board to the members of the committee during the visit.

The division education representative will be the link person for all practical arrangements for the trip.

Follow-up

The written report of the focused visit, with recommendations, will be considered by the AAA Board and the relevant division administration for appropriate action.