



**Adventist
Accrediting
Association**

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

ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

**Secondary Level
Trans-European Division**

**St Albans
England
2017**

PART 1: PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Extracted from the Philosophy statement approved by consensus of the First International Conference of the Philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist Education (2001) and incorporated into the Working Policy of the General Conference.

Aim and Mission

Adventist education prepares students for a useful and joy-filled life, fostering friendship with God, whole-person development, Bible-based values, and selfless service in accordance with the Seventh-day Adventist mission to the world.

Philosophy

The Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education is Christ-centered. Adventists believe that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God's character and purposes can be understood as revealed in the Bible, in Jesus Christ and in nature. The distinctive characteristics of Adventist education—derived from the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White—point to the redemptive aim of true education: to restore human beings into the image of their Maker.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that God is infinitely loving, wise, and powerful. He relates to human beings on a personal level, presenting His character as the ultimate norm for human conduct and His grace as the means of restoration.

Adventists recognize, however, that human motives, thinking, and behavior have fallen short of God's ideal. Education in its broadest sense is a means of restoring human beings to their original relationship with God. Working together, homes, schools and churches cooperate with divine agencies in preparing learners for responsible citizenship in this world and in the world to come.

Adventist education imparts more than academic knowledge. It fosters a balanced development of the whole person—spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially. Its time dimensions span eternity. It seeks to develop a life of faith in God and respect for the dignity of all human beings; to build character akin to that of the Creator; to nurture thinkers rather than mere reflectors of others' thoughts; to promote loving service rather than selfish ambition; to ensure maximum development of each individual's potential; and to embrace all that is true, good, and beautiful.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST ACCREDITATION: PHILOSOPHY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for Quality Management and Accreditation

All schools have a responsibility to ensure they deliver quality education, and integral to this responsibility is the need for a strong internal quality management process. External accreditation does not replace this expectation; however, it provides an important objective measurement of an institution's success.

The Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (AAA) is the recognized accrediting body commissioned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to carry out the accrediting process for Adventist secondary and higher education institutions around the world. It operates out of the General Conference Department of Education in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA, and in cooperation with the its regional Commissions on Accreditation, in the following areas of the world:

- East-Central Africa, Nairobi, Kenya
- Inter-European: Bern, Switzerland
- Euro-Asia: Moscow, Russia
- Inter-America: Miami, Florida, U.S.A.
- North America: Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.
- Northern Asia-Pacific: Koyang-city, Kyounggi-do, Republic of Korea
- Southern Africa-Indian Ocean, Harare, Zimbabwe
- South America: Brasilia, Brazil
- South Pacific, Wahroonga, New SouthWales, Australia
- Southern Asia: Hosur, Tamil Nadu, India
- Southern Asia-Pacific: Manila, Philippines
- Trans-Europe: St. Albans, Herts., England
- West-Central Africa: Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

The major function of AAA is to visit and consider accreditation or re-accreditation of all Seventh-day Adventist secondary and higher education institutions, or accept recommendations for accreditation from the relevant division Commission on Accreditation.

Philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist Accreditation

The Adventist Accrediting Association holds to the principle that denominational accreditation is not dependent upon regional, state or national recognition requirements. International experience, however, has shown that many of the academic, professional and ethical criteria established by the Adventist Accrediting Association coincide with those required by other professional and governmental bodies.

The Adventist Accrediting Association supports the right of each institution to pursue its educational mission under the guidance of a governing board elected by its constituency; the right of the staff to teach, carry out and publish research, and the right of students to learn and to develop their God-given talents. However, the exercise of these rights must not interfere with the institution's obligation to provide quality education within the context of the beliefs, mission, educational philosophy, and practices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Accreditation Objectives and Responsibilities

In making its assessment of the institution visited, an accreditation team appointed by AAA will represent two significant groups:

1. The members of the institutional constituency (students, parents/guardians, alumni, church leaders and members, local and regional community), who want assurance regarding the quality of the programs and degrees offered as well as of the institutional congruence with the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

2. The Seventh-day Adventist Church at large, whose leaders and members desire assurance of the overall quality and mission effectiveness of an institution that is part of its national and global educational network.

This team will seek to achieve the following objectives:

1. To evaluate, on the basis of the *Self-study* document and an on-site visit, the overall status of a specific Seventh-day Adventist educational institution.
2. To assess the degree in which the institution fulfills the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education in forming the character and developing the talents of children, young men and women who are committed to the Seventh-day Adventist message and who support the mission of the Church.
3. To determine if the programs offered by the institution are comparable in content and quality to those offered by similar Seventh-day Adventist and non-Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions, both in the same country and in other countries of the world.
4. To provide guidance to the administration and the institutional board on ways in which the institution may strengthen its operation and better achieve its educational and spiritual objectives and its overall mission.

Continued Accreditation Responsibility

Once an institution has been accredited, the administration is responsible for ensuring accreditation does not lapse. Ongoing quality and mission focus is assured by AAA through accreditation visits (the different types of visits are identified under “Types of Accreditation Visits” below); at the time of each visit a recommendation regarding re-accreditation will be made by the visiting team. Accreditation will only be continued as long as an institution remains a quality Seventh-day Adventist institution.

Expectations of an Accreditation Visit

During an accreditation visit, members of the evaluation committee will be expected to demonstrate the best qualities of a Seventh-day Adventist educational professional:

1. Professionalism in preparing for the visit (by becoming acquainted with the *Self-study* document and the context in which the school operates), in fulfilling promptly his/her assignments as a member of the committee, in expressing his/her judgment, and in all personal contacts and statements during the visit.
2. Confidentiality in reporting any sensitive information that has been entrusted to him/her, both during and after the visit.
3. A constructive spirit that assesses objectively the strengths and weaknesses of an institution, a program, or an individual, and also seeks to enhance their respective potential through careful counsel.
4. Avoidance of any unethical behavior, such as using the accreditation visit as an opportunity to recruit staff or students for another institution.

The administration, faculty and staff of the institution facing accreditation will also be expected to show their professionalism in:

1. Cooperating with the accreditation process by producing documents as requested and in a timely manner.

2. Not pursuing personal agendas with the team members.
3. Accepting the response of the team to the institution in an open and constructive manner, using the recommendations as a means to strengthen the quality and mission of the institution.

Changes to Accreditation Status

While the accreditation status voted by AAA following an accreditation visit to a school is normally upheld for the full period granted to the institution, AAA can vote to change this status based on one of the following:

1. Substantial changes to the institutional operation that give AAA grounds for concern that the institution can either no longer offer programs of quality, or that the SDA focus and mission of the institution is at risk. In this case AAA will approve a focused visit to the institution. The report from this visit may recommend a change of accreditation status.
2. A substantial disregard of the conditions or expectations identified in the voted action from the previous AAA visit. This could include an institution not returning required reports after being reminded by AAA. It could also include a situation when a condition attached to the accreditation action has not been met in the time agreed, or after reasonable time has elapsed. In these cases AAA may vote to decrease the length of accreditation in order to have a full site visit at an earlier time, place an institution on probation, or in particularly serious situations, revoke accreditation completely.

Extension of Accreditation

Once an accreditation term has expired, an institution will be considered unaccredited unless a regular accreditation visit has taken place prior to the expiry date or an extension to the accreditation period has been voted by AAA. Reasons for extensions are normally the following:

1. Political or other conditions in the country of the institution that make it difficult for a team to visit.
2. Significant recent changes in top personnel in the institution, making it difficult for the AAA team to effectively evaluate the institution's operation.
3. The timeline of government accreditations. It is usually advantageous to the institution and AAA to coordinate visits to institutions so they do not conflict, but rather complement government accreditation visits.
4. The inability of AAA to provide a team to visit the institution in the year expected.

In each of these cases an extension to accreditation will normally not exceed one year.

Part II: THE VISIT

THE REGULAR ACCREDITATION VISIT

Initial Arrangements

During the year preceding a scheduled regular accreditation visit to a school, the division education director will inform the institutional head that a visit is due. Along with this letter, the head of the institution will be sent a copy of the *Accreditation Handbook*. A copy of the letter will be sent to the chair of the Board of Trustees of the relevant institution. The institutional head and division education director will then 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 Part III of the *Handbook*).

Committee Selection

The education director of the division involved serves as the committee's chair, unless the GC liaison for the division is present, in which case he/she serves as chair. The remainder of the team will be appointed by the division education director, in consultation with the institutional head.

The individuals recommended for an accreditation team will be experienced in various areas of administration and education, matching the profile of the institution. A typical team size is four to five 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, while the local division will usually be responsible for travel expenses of any individual not employed within the church system. 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 institutional head and the board chair of the school to be visited, outlining the plans for the visit. All letters will be copied to the relevant division/union education directors.

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 head of the institution will be responsible for providing to all the 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 and any recommendations made by an interim evaluation committee. Along with this document, the head 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 institutional head 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 may 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 the procedures and individual assignments.
- An initial meeting between the administrative team of the institution and the visiting committee to discuss the formal responses to the recommendations of the previous visit as well as major developments, achievements, trends, and challenges by 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, followed by a selected guided tour of the facilities.
- Selected individual meetings between members of the committee and academic department chairpersons, school pastor and/or chaplain, and heads of services (dormitories, library, computer center, laboratories, cafeteria, health clinic, industries, maintenance, etc.)
- Group interview of teaching staff.
- Group interviews between selected members of the committee and student representatives from various year groups and representing various constituencies.
- 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 A for an outline of the evaluation report and Part III of the *Accreditation Handbook* for suggested issues to be considered by the team.
- Presentation of an exit report, including copies of the draft report, to members of the administration and board of the institution. Other staff may be invited by agreement between the institutional head and the team chair. At the exit report the institution will be invited to ask for clarifications and correct misstatements of fact.
- 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.

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 to school:

- The *Board Handbook* or *Manual*
- The latest edition of the school *Prospectus*
- The *Staff Handbook*, including job descriptions for administrators and staff
- The *Student Handbook*
- Minutes of the School Board, and of the Administrative Committee, or equivalent, for the last three years
- All audited annual financial statements for the last three years
- The current institutional budget
- A year-to-date financial operating statement
- 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
- Listing of church affiliation of each administrator and staff member
- Church affiliation percentages for student body
- Institutional publications such as sample articles, news releases and PR materials used with the school constituency
- Administrative/staff pay scales as related to the approved denominational scales or approved by Board action
- 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/recognition material (annual reports, self-studies, government accreditation/recognition notifications, any correspondence changing accreditation/recognition status, etc.)

The Accreditation Report

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

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 revisit*. This is for an institution that has fulfilled or satisfactorily addressed all the previous recommendations, submits an acceptable *Self-study* in advance of the visit, shows adequate strength in each major area identified in the

Self-study, and anticipates no major changes that will impact its mission, SDA 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 institutional accreditation with an interim visit.* This is for an institution that has satisfactorily fulfilled or addressed the previous recommendations, submits an acceptable *Self-study* in advance of the visit, 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 that could impact the institutional mission and/or SDA 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 recommendations. The approximate time for the interim visit will be identified in the accreditation recommendation
3. *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, has not prepared an acceptable *Self-study*, 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 that could impact on the institutional mission and SDA identity. Only on rare occasions, where external situations result in institutional instability beyond the control of the institution, may a team give only a one or two year term of regular accreditation.
4. *Probationary status, with a specific time limit of two years or less.* This is for an institution where the accreditation visit is unsatisfactory. Several 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.

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 of the school shows significant weaknesses, the visiting team may recommend a focused visit to the institution within a two-year period to review that department. If the school has not resolved the identified problems by that time, then the whole school can be placed on probation.

5. *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.

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 head 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 institutional head 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 institutional head 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 AAA, on the recommendation of the division Commission on Education. 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 the AAA Board as soon as practicable after the meeting. The actions will be sent through the division Department of Education.

THE INTERIM ACCREDITATION VISIT

Parameters of Visit

An interim evaluation of an Adventist school takes place when the relevant division Commission on Education, upon the recommendation of an appointed visiting team, deems it necessary for AAA to visit the institution in between the times of regular accreditation visits. This decision will be voted as part of the action following a regular accreditation visit.

Initial Arrangements (and Committee Appointments)

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 education director of the world division in which the institution is located.

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 school. 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 division education director 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 head and board chair and will agree a draft 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 focus on the major recommendations made at the time of the last AAA visit and the manner in which the school administration have addressed and responded to them. The committee members will meet with board representatives, administrators, 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 decide to 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 evidences 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 the school, 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 division education director, with a copy to the institutional president and board chair, not 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. The division education director will inform AAA of any changes to accreditation recommended as a result of the visit. If any action is taken by the AAA Board, the Executive Secretary of AAA will be responsible for informing the institution of the action through the division department of education.

Part III: THE SELF-STUDY

INSTITUTION OF EXCELLENCE

In most cases, when AAA accredits a secondary institution, that school will be already required to meet rigorous government standards for its operation. Its ongoing quality will therefore be monitored and evidenced both externally and internally in a variety of ways.

With this in mind the Adventist Accrediting Association will focus its visit on the way the school operation and life fully identifies with institutional and Seventh-day Adventist mission. Within these parameters an institution of excellence will be defined as a school that has:

1. A clear sense of mission and identity, encapsulated in statements of mission, philosophy, objectives and ethics, and evidenced in the total life of the institution.
2. A strong and vibrant spiritual life program, encapsulated in a spiritual master plan, that widely involves and impacts on both the institution and communities beyond.
3. Governance structure and administrative leadership that provides strong mission-driven direction to the institution, ensures the institution's educational objectives can be met and nurtures a school environment characterized by good communication, inclusive decision-making and strong internal quality management processes.
4. A financial operation that has a strong financial base (including support from the church), is managed efficiently, and selects budget priorities to support institutional mission.
5. A curriculum that, evidenced by appropriate outcomes, meets the mission and objectives of the institution and church, particularly in giving students a vision for service in the church, providing an education of quality, and in the integration of faith and learning throughout all disciplines.
6. A staff personally supportive of the institutional mission, effective in their transmission of both their discipline and values in the classroom, and administrative processes to ensure that staff development and evaluation procedures include mission-focused elements.
7. Resource centers (library and computer services, in particular) that while providing quality resources also show ethical and mission concerns in the resourcing choices that are made.
8. Student services that provide strong support for the personal and spiritual needs of students, and model and nurture Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle in a constructive manner in all areas of student life.
9. A public relations program that provides an opportunity for dialogue with external constituencies that results in useful and accurate feedback to the institutions and that positions the school and its mission positively in the minds of the various constituent groups.

These indicators of excellence will be used as the criteria for evaluation by AAA, and the basis for the institutional *Self-study*.

(In cases where the local government is not regulating the quality of secondary education in any consistent manner, AAA may request more extensive information in preparation for its visit, and may respond more fully to the academic program and institutional operation than is indicated in this document.)

INSTITUTIONAL *SELF-STUDY* FUNCTIONS

The development of an institutional *Self-study* is a significant part of the accreditation process. In particular, it serves the following vital functions:

1. For an educational institution, it provides an opportunity for a formal review and evaluation of its mission, objectives, resources, and outcomes, and the relationships among them.
2. For the Adventist Accrediting Association evaluation team, it provides the detailed information that enables them to familiarize themselves with the institution and its direction, and draft relevant commendations and recommendations.
3. For the Adventist Accrediting Association and the institution, it reveals the strengths and weaknesses of an institution in relation to how well it meets the accreditation criteria. Thus, the *Self-study* indicates the areas where the institution must grow and improve, of its own volition, as a means of achieving or maintaining eligibility as an accredited institution.

SELF-STUDY PROCESSES

An institution is advised to start the *Self-study* process as soon as they have notification of a AAA visit. The *Self-study* should be developed with wide input throughout the school, and a steering committee should be appointed to prepare the document. The completed *Self-study* shall be approved by the administrative committee of the institution and will be sent to all team members from the office of the institutional head. The team members should receive the material at least one month prior to the time of the accreditation visit.

While the *Self-study* should provide essential information, its focus should be on analysis and evaluation of institutional processes. AAA expects to find an institution that is self-reflective and proactive in development of its spiritual mission and identity.

SELF-STUDY INSTRUMENT

There will be two sections to a Secondary *Self-study*.

***Self-study* Section A**

Section A of the *Self-study* will respond to the recommendations from the last accreditation visit and to any additional recommendations from any interim reports.

The institution will identify:

1. Those items that have been fully implemented and the means by which the implementation was accomplished.
2. Those items that have not been implemented and the reason for non-compliance.

In their response to Section A the team will consider what percentage of recommendations have been met, if there is **evidence** they have been met, and if the reasons for not meeting recommendations are acceptable.

Self-study Section B

Section B of the *Self-study* will provide documentation (evidence) in response to the nine criteria identified by AAA as indications of excellence in secondary institutions. While specific surveys are not requested, responses to Section B should show evidence of institutional use of surveys and feedback in institutional self-evaluation and planning. These surveys should be available for further study by the team.

In the table that follows, each area will be identified. This will be followed in the left hand column by a list of the documentation that an institution will be expected to include in its *Self-study*. (An institution may include other information it considers relevant evidence—this is a guide to the minimum expectation.)

In the right hand column are examples of what the accreditation team might consider in evaluating the evidence provided by the institution. These lists are given to assist the institution in knowing what types of issues will be considered relevant. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list, and team members will use this table only as a guide.

Area 1: History, Philosophy, Mission, and Objectives	
<i>The institution must have a clear sense of mission and identity, encapsulated in statements of mission, philosophy, objectives and ethics, and evidenced in the total life of the institution.</i>	
<i>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study.</i>	<i>The visiting team may consider the following:</i>
1.1 A copy of the institutional mission and objectives, indicating the bodies that approved the statements and the date.	<i>Precision and relevance of statement(s); relation to constituency expectation and the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; procedure followed in its development, approval and latest revision; evidences of its application in the real life of the institution.</i>
1.2 A copy of the statement of professional ethics, approved by the board and the administration, compliance with which is required of all employees of the institution.	<i>Scope and specificity of statement; procedure for approval; congruence with Adventist church expectation; compliance by administration, faculty and staff.</i>
1.3 A detailed description of the institutional involvement in and support of the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.	<i>The relationship between the school and its local church, conference and union; the active support of church standards, ideals and mission by the administration and staff; their personal commitment to biblical/Christian values and lifestyle.</i>
1.4 A description with examples and evaluation of how the institution is	<i>Formal and informal relationships with other SDA schools; collaborative projects; support of programs</i>

cooperating with other Seventh-day Adventist schools in helping the church achieve its mission.	<i>etc. in other schools; how institutional relationships and collaboration support church mission.</i>
1.5 An analysis of secondary educational trends in the country with a description of how the institution is making plans to meet upcoming challenges.	<i>The institution's understanding of the education issues in the country; the institution's role and place in the local educational environment; its success in maintaining both local credibility and denominational focus.</i>

Area 2: Spiritual Development, Service, and Witnessing

The institution will have a strong and vibrant spiritual life program, encapsulated in a Spiritual Master Plan, that widely involves and impacts on both the institution and communities beyond.

<i>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in the Self-study:</i>	<i>The visiting team may consider the following:</i>
2.1 A detailed description of the spiritual master plan of the institution, including a chart of responsibilities, a list of beliefs and values to be conveyed to the students, the process to evaluate the achievements of the plan, and the procedure for implementing changes in the plan.	<i>Procedure for spiritual planning/development, including staff involvement; scope and organization of plan(s); specific objectives for the intentional transmission of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, principles, values, and lifestyle through curricular and co-curricular activities; action plan with identified responsibilities; assessment instrument; effectiveness of process of updating and changing plan to meet current needs; frequency of reporting to board.</i>
2.2 A description and evaluation of the involvement of administration and staff in the spiritual development of the students, including in-reach, nurture, service, and witnessing activities.	<i>Quality of the overall program; devotional and worship meetings; work on behalf of non-Adventist and off-campus students; programs or requirements for student services; outreach programs; level of involvement by administration and staff in specific activities.</i>
2.3 A description and evaluation of student involvement in nurture, service, and witnessing programs such as devotional meetings, study groups, drug and alcohol prevention, evangelism, ministry outings, periods of spiritual emphasis, chapels, vespers, church services, Sabbath School, and personal witness.	<i>Selection of student spiritual leaders; involvement of students in planning for in-reach and mission activities; breadth of possibilities for student involvement in spiritual activities; strength of student missionary program; number of students actively involved in in-reach or outreach activities; student survey responses on strength of spiritual program opportunities.</i>
2.4 A job description and outline of the role carried by the chaplain and associates in the spiritual formation and life of the students.	<i>Job description; line of authority and responsibility; involvement in the development and implementation of spiritual master plan; relationships with administration, staff, students, and denominational structure; evaluation of services.</i>

2.5 An outline of the role carried by the pastor of the local church(es) in the spiritual formation and life of the students.	<i>Relationship between church and school; cooperative planning; organizational relationship with chaplain of institution; involvement in in-reach/outreach activities of institution.</i>
2.6 Reports on the institution's spiritual life presented to the Board of Trustees during the last three years prior to the accreditation visit.	<i>Review and assessment of a recent report on the institution's spiritual life and the outcomes presented to the Board.</i>

Area 3: Governance, Organization, and Administration	
<i>The institution will have a governance structure and administrative leadership that provides strong mission-driven direction to the institution, ensures the institution's educational objectives can be met and nurtures a school environment characterized by good communication, inclusive decision-making and strong internal quality management processes.</i>	
<i>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in the Self-study:</i>	<i>The visiting team may consider the following:</i>
3.1 The role and operating parameters of the Board of Trustees.	<i>Level of board representation of constituency; handbook outlining authority and responsibilities (the board governs and the administration administers); process of induction of new board members; quality of contacts with the institutional community; implementation of actions; attitude to and evident support of the institution by board members.</i>
3.2 A description of how strategic planning takes place at the school, with evidence that an existing plan is in place and is being used in planning decisions, particularly as this relates to institutional mission.	<i>Strategic plan: content, process for development and updating, evidence of the plan being an active document; effective of communication of plan to key constituent groups; links between mission and strategy.</i>
3.2 A description and evaluation of the procedures used by the administration and Board of Trustees to determine how successful the institution is in achieving its church-related mission, including the results of the most recent assessment.	<i>Process for, results and follow up of board self-evaluation; means and effectiveness of board evaluation of institutional mission; the success of the evaluation process.</i>
3.3 A report that identifies and evaluates the work of all committees that focus	<i>Scope of committee terms of reference; breadth of membership (administration, faculty, staff, students);</i>

<p>on school's spiritual life. This should include an identification of membership, terms of reference, and frequency of meetings, and a self-reflection on the effectiveness of these processes.</p>	<p><i>reporting processes; evaluation processes; impact of committees on spiritual life of institution; relationship between committees and total planning processes of institution.</i></p>
<p>3.4 A description and analysis of how administration is evaluated on issues relating to the mission of the institution and the church.</p>	<p><i>Evaluation processes for institutional head and administrators reporting directly to the institutional head; evidence of expectation of support of mission of institution and church; processes for encouraging administrative improvement/growth.</i></p>
<p>3.5 A description and analysis of the processes in place for quality assurance and outcomes assessment, with particular reference to how feedback on the success of the institution in fulfilling its mission as an SDA institution is collected, evaluated and used in planning. This should include reference to internal and external constituencies, including past students, and the results of recent surveys.</p>	<p><i>The choice of areas for institutional research; effectiveness and efficiency of processes to receive feedback; evaluation of feedback; relationship between evaluation and institutional planning; communication of information; relationship between research tools and institutional mission.</i></p>

<p>Area 4: Finances, Financial Structure, and Physical Plant</p>	
<p><i>The institution will have a financial operation that has a strong financial base (including support from the church), is managed efficiently, and the administration selects budget priorities to support institutional mission.</i></p>	
<p><i>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study:</i></p>	<p><i>The visiting team may consider the following:</i></p>
<p>4.1 A report on the commitment of the sponsoring church organizations to the institution's financial viability including annual church subsidies and appropriations from conferences, union, etc. expressed in local currency amounts and as a percentage of total income given to the institution since the last accreditation visit.</p>	<p><i>Adequacy of level of church support; stability of institutional finances; dependency on church for crisis financial support; impact of institutional finances on financial stability of supporting church organization(s).</i></p>

4.2	An account of total government funds received with a copy of institutional policies that govern the receipt of such funds.	<i>Level of dependence of institution on external government funding; relationship between external funding and institutional freedom.</i>
4.3	A description of the budgeting process, identifying how priorities are decided, and how this process reflects the institutional mission.	<i>Involvement of cost centers in budgeting; process for deciding budget priorities; evidence that institutional mission has been considered in setting budget priorities.</i>
4.4	An identification of the reason for and amount of any institutional debts, and the planned process to meet these obligations.	<i>Approval processes for debt; processes for resolving debts; pattern of debts; reliance on church organizations for resolution of debts; impact of support on wider health of church.</i>
4.5	A table identifying operating losses and gains for the last five years, and the working capital/liquidity ratios at the end of each of those years. If working capital and liquidity percentages are not at policy level, the report should identify what timed plans are in place to ensure that policy expectations are met.	<i>Pattern of institutional financial health; effectiveness of institutional processes to ensure ongoing financial stability, or restore financial stability.</i>
4.6	The institutional master plan (5- or 10-year), with supporting documents for the physical plant, staff housing, student residences, library, church building, etc. Schedules for building development should be included.	<i>Review of the institutional master plan in relation to the physical plant; financial backing for plans; realism of plans.</i>
4.7	A description of the maintenance responsibilities and procedures for campus buildings and facilities, gardens and landscape, including the budget assignment.	<i>Cleanliness; conditions of buildings; aesthetics of grounds; regularity of maintenance; adequacy of budget allocation.</i>

Area 5: Programs of Study

A curriculum that, evidenced by appropriate outcomes, meets the mission and objectives of the institution and church, particularly in giving students a vision for service in the church, providing an education of excellence, and in the integration of faith and learning throughout all disciplines.

<p><i>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study:</i></p>	<p><i>The visiting team may consider the following:</i></p>
<p>5.1 A description and evaluation of how the institutional procedures for curricular development focus on the church mission of the institution and the integration of faith and learning. Identify changes made in curriculum since the last AAA visit that reflect this focus.</p>	<p><i>Level of integration of mission-focus into institutional processes for curricular development; evidence of mission considerations in course development priorities.</i></p>
<p>5.2 A description and evaluation of (a) the way the beliefs, values, and lifestyle practices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are conveyed through the curriculum offered by the institution, and (b) the programs and procedures that encourage and ensure the staff to integrate their faith with their teaching and have a positive effect on student learning of Christian values.</p>	<p><i>Adequacy of procedures that encourage faculty to approach each course from a biblical-Christian perspective that conveys Christian values, and fosters the transmission of Adventist beliefs; evidence of this integration in course syllabi and student course evaluations.</i></p>
<p>5.3 A description of the success of the institution in meeting government expectations regarding quality and an analysis of plans to improve on areas identified by the institution as in need of development and/or improvement.</p>	<p><i>Results in external examinations; nature of student intake; facilities for dealing with special needs; benchmarking with similar institutions. Is the institution providing the quality of education that will encourage SDA parents to send their children to the school?</i></p>
<p>Area 6: Staff</p>	
<p><i>Staff will be personally supportive of the institutional mission, effective in their transmission of both their discipline and values in the classroom, and the administrative processes of the institution will ensure that staff development and evaluation procedures include mission-focused elements.</i></p>	
<p><i>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study.</i></p>	<p><i>The visiting team may consider the following:</i></p>
<p>6.1 Policies pertaining to the religious affiliation of the institution's staff and to their support of the values of</p>	<p><i>Integration of church mission expectations into institutional policies and procedures on identifying and hiring staff, employment contracts, promotion and re-</i></p>

<p>the Seventh-day Adventist Church including: hiring criteria, terms of employment contracts, grievance procedures, orientation to the institution's mission, and academic freedom and responsibility for teachers in the context of the institution's mission. The percentage of staff that are SDA should be identified.</p>	<p><i>appointment procedures, etc; staff induction processes; statement of academic freedom and responsibility and evidence of its application in the life of the institution.</i></p>
<p>6.2 A description and evaluation of the processes and plans for staff development and performance evaluation (on job performance and service) that assist in ensuring and encouraging staff support for the mission of the institution and the Seventh-day Adventist church.</p>	<p><i>Integration of institutional and church mission expectations into processes for evaluation of staff.</i></p>

<p>Area 7: Library and Technology Centers</p>	
<p><i>The institution will provide resource centers (library and computer services, in particular) that while providing quality resources also show ethical and mission concerns in the resourcing choices that are made.</i></p>	
<p><i>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study:</i></p>	<p><i>The visiting team may consider the following:</i></p>
<p>7.1 Policies and procedures used for accessioning new materials that support the Seventh-day Adventist ethos of the institution.</p>	<p><i>Intentional plans to support institutional ethos through accession policies and procedures; impact of policy on academic freedom and responsibility in library operation.</i></p>
<p>7.2 Policies and procedures for computer use and internet access that reflect the mission of the institution.</p>	<p><i>Appropriateness of policies and procedures; communication of policies; procedures in case of abuse of policies.</i></p>

<p>Area 8: School Policies and Records</p>

<i>The institution will have school policy and records procedures that are efficient, secure and reflect best practice in secondary schools.</i>	
<i>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study:</i>	<i>The visiting team may consider the following:</i>
8.1 Reference to policies and procedures regarding : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student recruitment, including financial aid • admission and registration • class schedules and length of academic terms • student records • academic conduct (including plagiarism) • assessment procedures and processes • advancement of students • residence requirements and graduation requirements • alumni records. 	<i>Clarity of policies, availability to students, expectations compared with other secondary institutions, communication of policies; consistency of application.</i>
8.2 A summary of grade distribution by department for the past two school years.	<i>Spread of grades; consistency in approach to grading.</i>
8.3 A description and assessment of the way in which the school policies and records and its staff promote and support the transmission of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and values and the spiritual development of students.	<i>Department attitude towards students; ethical policies; involvement of staff in church and institutional activities that support the mission of the institution.</i>
8.4 Plans for development and improvement within this area, stating how each plan will (a) improve the institution’s spiritual mission and (b) be implemented.	

Area 9: Student Services
<i>The institution’s student services will provide strong support for the personal and spiritual needs of students and model and nurture Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle in a constructive manner in all areas of student life.</i>

<p><i>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study:</i></p>	<p><i>The visiting team may consider the following:</i></p>
<p>9.1 An analysis of how student services' plans for student activities, clubs, etc. support the spiritual plans for the institution, encourage the holistic development of the students, and assist in the transmission of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and values.</p>	<p><i>Evidence of conscious consideration of institutional and church mission in planning; student feedback on success of planning; student input into planning processes.</i></p>
<p>9.2 An identification of the objectives for carrying out student counseling programs (i.e. therapeutic, academic, career, spiritual, substance abuse) and plans in place to support students with particular needs (students with disabilities, etc.) . An evaluation of the success of these programs should be included.</p>	<p><i>Philosophy and practices in student counseling and support; link between programs and institutional and church mission; integration of counseling programs with institutional plans; indicators of student satisfaction.</i></p>
<p>9.3 A plan/description of how the residence hall deans promote spiritual life within the dormitories, and a self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the present program.</p>	<p><i>Residence hall planning processes for student support (especially spiritual life); student feedback opportunities; self-evaluation effectiveness; integration of residence hall programs into total institutional plan for spiritual development of students.</i></p>
<p>9.4 A demographic analysis of students, which may include age ranges, gender, nationality, off-campus and residence hall status, denominational affiliation, etc. The report should identify how the school identifies the unique needs among these groups, and the plans in place to address these, particularly in relation to the spiritual mission of the institution. It should also identify the percentage of SDA students enrolled.</p>	<p><i>Balance of students; number of non-SDA students; institutional processes for identifying unique needs and responding to these; integration of off-campus and non-SDA students into campus life; links between student demographics and spiritual life planning.</i></p>
<p>9.5 A description of discipline procedures, with an analysis of the institution's effectiveness in developing discipline processes that are redemptive and focus on Christian ideals.</p>	<p><i>Regulations as identified in student handbook; discipline records; evidence of consistency; student perceptions of fairness.</i></p>

Area 10: Public Relations and External Constituencies

The institution’s public relations program will provide an opportunity for dialogue with external constituencies that results in useful and accurate feedback to the institution and that positions the school and its mission positively in the minds of the various constituent groups.

The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study:

The visiting team may consider the following:

10.1 A multi-year enrollment/recruiting plan which supports the institutional strategy and mission of the institution.

Link of strategy with total institutional plan and mission; main markets; potential new markets.

10.2 A multi-year public relations plan which includes a description of how branding, publications, advertising, publicity, and community relations foster an understanding of the spiritual values of the institution.

Link of strategy with total institutional plan and mission; branding decisions; link between decisions on priorities and spiritual values of institution; impact of actions on understanding of institution in the community.

10.3 A description of how the school maintains a positive and on-going relationship with its external constituencies, including planned processes for communication and encouragement of feedback.

Perception of the institution in the eyes of the local and church communities; effectiveness of processes to receive feedback from external constituencies, including alumni; communication processes; effectiveness of use of feedback.

Appendix A

Outline of Accreditation Report

Introduction

A short summary of the report, including the name of the institution visited, the dates of the visit, the members and affiliation of the visiting committee, the text of the final accreditation recommendation, and the signature page.

Background to Institution and Visit

This section will usually include:

1. A brief historical and geographical background to the institution.
2. Programs offered by the institution.
3. Enrollment statistics and trends.
4. Members of the evaluation committee and their position.
5. Circumstances of the visit.
6. Documents examined during the visit.

In the case of interim visits only items 4-6 above will need to be included, as the report will serve as a supplement to the regular (full) accreditation report.

Major Recommendations and Commendations

Major recommendations and commendations will be selected from the full list of recommendations and commendations identified by the team. They will be those that have most whole institutional significance, and in the case of recommendations, hold the greatest threat to the stability and/or Adventist ethos of the institution. These will be asterisked where they are found throughout the report and then repeated as a group towards the front of the report.

The number of total major recommendations should not exceed **ten**. The number of major commendations should be similar

Responses to the Recommendations from the Last Accreditation and/or Interim Report

The team will review each recommendation made by the last full evaluation committee, those made by any interim visit (if any), the institutional response, and evidences of their fulfillment. They will assess the reasons recommendations have not been implemented, or fully implemented.

The report will include a comment on the team's conclusions, usually written in the form of commendations and/or recommendations.

Responses to the *Self-study*

1. The team will review the documentation provided in response to the *Self-study* documentation and the degree to which these responses, supplemented by interviews, observation and other

institutional documentation, provide evidence of a quality, Seventh-day Adventist institution. (See Parts III and IV of the *Accreditation Handbook* for some of the issues the team may wish to pursue in considering the *Self-study*.)

2. Team members will consider areas of excellence and the areas where documentation or information is lacking, or where interviews and observation suggest a need for improvement. Commendations and recommendations should be written accordingly (see Appendix C for suggestions on writing these).
3. Each area will be responded to separately. It is recommended that the team focus on major issues and that the number of recommendations remain at a realistic level for institutional action.

Expression of appreciation to the institution visited

Accreditation Recommendation

The final accreditation recommendation to the Adventist Accrediting Association will be drafted by the evaluation committee toward the end of the visit on the basis of the observations made and taking into consideration the options available (these options are identified in this document and will be discussed with the team by the chair). The committee will arrive at its final recommendation by either majority vote or consensus agreement.

Appendix B

Writing Commendations and Recommendations

The majority of the institutional report will consist of commendations and recommendations. All team members will be involved in writing these in their areas of expertise and approving those written by others. Some of these commendations and recommendations will be identified by the team as **major**.

In drafting commendations and recommendations, members of the evaluation committee should keep the following items in mind:

1. Statements must be based on either the *Self-study* document, personal observation, or an interview with a board member, administrator, faculty, staff, or students, only after the team member has carefully cross-checked and verified each observation or statement.
2. Commendations or recommendations should be addressed to a specific group, department or unit in the institution—never to individuals by name.
3. Commendations should be given only for achievements or tasks performed in an above-average or superior manner, not for the normal fulfillment of a duty.
4. Recommendations should be concise and specific, with measurable ingredients (how will an observer know if a specific recommendation has been fulfilled?), and should not preempt the governance role of the institutional board or the administrative authority of the administrators.
5. Recommendations should focus on major issues and should be limited to a number reasonable for the institution to manage in the period before the next full evaluation visit.
6. In order to assist the secretary in drafting the report, each commendation or recommendation should be keyed to the appropriate area number and to the page number of any document referred to. They should also include the name of the committee member submitting the item.

Sample commendations and recommendations follow, with an explanation of how these can be used as a pattern for team members.

Commendations

Samples:

The visiting committee (or team) commends:

1. The administration for their high level of positive communication with the local church community (*Self-study*, p. 32; interviews).
2. The administration, staff and students for their active involvement in the development of a spiritual master-plan that is already making an appreciable difference to the spiritual programming and ethos of the school community (*Self-study*, pp. 17, 47; institutional strategic plan; interviews; student survey).

Notes:

1. Writers should say who the commendation is for—i.e. in the first commendation, the administration, and in the second, administration, faculty and staff. Individual names should not be given—only titles, or groups of individuals.
2. Commendations should state clearly what is being commended, with as much preciseness as possible. This can include not only **what** is being done, and also the **effect**—e.g. in the second sample commendation, the commendation is for “the active development of a spiritual master-plan” but the next part of the sentence helps explain why that is so important “that is already

making an appreciable difference to the spiritual programming and ethos of the school.”

3. A writer should give the source, or sources of information that led to the conclusion. Where there are specific references to documents and page number can be given, pages should be identified. If information came from an interview, the name(s) of the individuals should not be identified.

Recommendations

Samples:

The visiting committee (or team) recommends:

1. That the administration urgently reconsiders their plans to build a new classroom block until the debt on the library construction has been fully paid (interviews; audited financial statement, 2002-03; *Self-study*, p. 35).
2. That the Academic Committee continues its plans to develop a process for more structured evaluation of courses and teaching that will involve feedback from students as well as peers and administration (interviews, *Self-study*, p. 63).

Notes:

1. Writers should identify clearly who the recommendation is to—e.g. in the above examples, to the administration and the Academic Committee. The recommendations can be to an individual (mentioned only by title, e.g. Principal), a committee, or a group of individuals.
2. If a recommendation is already in the plans of an institution this should be credited in what is written—e.g. “That the Academic Committee **continues its plans . . .**”
3. All recommendations should be do-able and measurable. The institution needs to be able to report completion of the recommendation and the next accrediting team needs to confirm that it has been met.
4. The sources of recommendations should be referenced in as much detail as possible—e.g. audited financial statement, 2002-03.
5. As team members they should consider which of the recommendations they will want to suggest as **major** ones to their colleagues. In the samples given above, the first would be considered a major recommendation as it impacts the financial stability of the institution. **In general, major recommendations will be those that if not resolved could provide a severe threat to the continuance or Seventh-day Adventist identity of a schools.**

Suggestions and Other Comments

While the majority of the accreditation report will be written in the form of commendations and recommendations, there are occasions where the team may decide to add additional text. This will normally be for one of the three following reasons:

1. The team faces a particularly complex or sensitive situation and considers that the context of a recommendation needs to be carefully explained. This is best done as a preamble to a section of the report, or directly prior to a key recommendation.
2. The team considers that there is an important statement to make to an institution that will be best expressed as a “suggestion” rather than a recommendation or commendation. A suggestion should be given at the end of the commendations and recommendations under the relevant area, and may best be introduced by following the same pattern, i.e. The visiting team suggests:

3. The team has serious concerns regarding an aspect of an institution and concludes “conditions” should be attached to the accreditation recommendation. Conditions will normally refer to one or more specific issues that need immediate attention and a timeframe will be given by which these should be met. Conditions should be stated at the front of the report, along with the accreditation recommendation.

The chair of the committee will guide the team in the appropriateness of adding extra sections to the report.