Adventist Accrediting Association

ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

Appendices

2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDIX A
Outline of Accreditation Report

Introduction

A 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. Institutional profile:
    - A listing of degree programs
    - Enrollment statistics and trends
    - Faculty statistics
    - A listing of other institutional and/or program accreditations
    - A listing of institutional administrators at the time of the visit
3. Circumstances of the visit, including a listing of documents examined
4. Summary recommendation fulfillment

The Areas

This section will focus on an analysis of institutional fulfillment of the Criteria for Review (CFRs) in each Area, to include:

1. Observations and findings
2. Commendations
3. Recommendations, including identification of major recommendations
4. Suggestions

The document will conclude with a statement of appreciation.

Certain portions of this report are discussed in further detail in the following paragraphs.

Responses to the Recommendations from the Prior Site Visit Report

The team will review each recommendation recorded in the report from the prior site visit, the institutional response, and evidences of their fulfillment. They will assess the reasons recommendations have not been implemented or not yet fully implemented.

The report will include a comment on the team's conclusions in evaluating fulfillment of a recommendation. A partially fulfilled or unfulfilled recommendation will typically result in a transfer of the recommendation to the new site visit report, although the wording of the recommendation may be adjusted.

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.
2. Team members will consider areas of excellence as well as 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 B for suggestions on writing these).
3. Each Criterion for Review (CFR) will be evaluated 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.

Major Recommendations

Major recommendations will be selected from the full list of recommendations identified by the team. The focus will be on those recommendations that have the most whole institutional significance and 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. The number of total major recommendations should normally not exceed ten to twelve.

Accreditation Recommendation

The final accreditation recommendation to the Adventist Accrediting Association will be drafted by the evaluation committee toward the end of the visit based on 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. (See Appendix C for a visual representation of these options.) The committee will arrive at its final recommendation by either majority vote or consensus agreement.

APPENDIX B
Writing Commendations and Recommendations

Most 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. Commendations should be given for tasks performed in an above-average or superior manner. Recommendations represent institutional deficiencies in comparison with the Criteria for Review (CFRs).

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 or other institutional documents, personal observation, or an interview with a board member, administrator, faculty, staff, or students, and 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, specific and measurable (i.e., how will an observer know if a specific recommendation has been fulfilled?) and should focus on outcomes, rather than the process by which outcome is achieved.
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.

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

Commendations

The visiting committee (or team) commends:

1. The administration, for their high level of positive communication with the local church community, which has resulted in an elevated regard for the institution by members of the local churches (*Self-Study*, p. 32; interviews with Board representatives).
2. The administration, faculty, 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 campus (*Self-Study*, pp. 17, 47; institutional strategic plan; interviews with faculty and staff; student survey).

Notes:

- Writers should state to who the commendation is given. Individual names, however, should not be given—only titles, or groups of individuals.
- Commendations should state clearly what is being commended with as much precision as possible. This should include not only what is being done, and also the effect—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 campus."

- A writer should give the source(s) of information that led to the conclusion. Where there are specific references to paginated documents, page numbers should be identified. However, if information came from an interview, the name(s) of the individual(s) should not be identified. A minimum of two sources should be provided for each commendation and recommendation.

Recommendations

The visiting committee (or team) recommends:

1. That the administration place on hold its plans to build a new classroom block until the debt on the library construction has been fully paid (interviews with administrators; audited financial statement; *Self-Study*, p. 35).
2. That the Academic Committee enact its plans to develop a process for more structured evaluation of courses and teaching that will involve feedback from peers and supervisors, as well as from students (interviews with administrators and faculty; *Self-Study*, p. 63).

Notes:

- Writers should identify clearly to whom the recommendation is directed—in the above examples, to the administration and to the Academic Committee. The recommendations can be to an individual (mentioned only by title, e.g. President), a committee, or a group of individuals.
- If a recommendation is already in the plans of an institution, this should be identified in what is written—e.g., "That the Academic Committee enact its plans…"
- All recommendations should be doable 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.
- The sources of recommendations should be referenced in as much detail as possible—e.g. audited financial statement, 2018-19.
- Each team member should consider which of the recommendations will be suggested to their colleagues as major. In the samples given above, the first would likely be considered a major recommendation because it impacts the financial stability of the institution. In general, major recommendations will be those that significantly impact the college/university and are most essential to its continuous quality and to the embodiment of the Seventh-day Adventist ethos.

Suggestions and Other Comments

While most 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 textual commentary. This will normally be for one of the three following reasons:

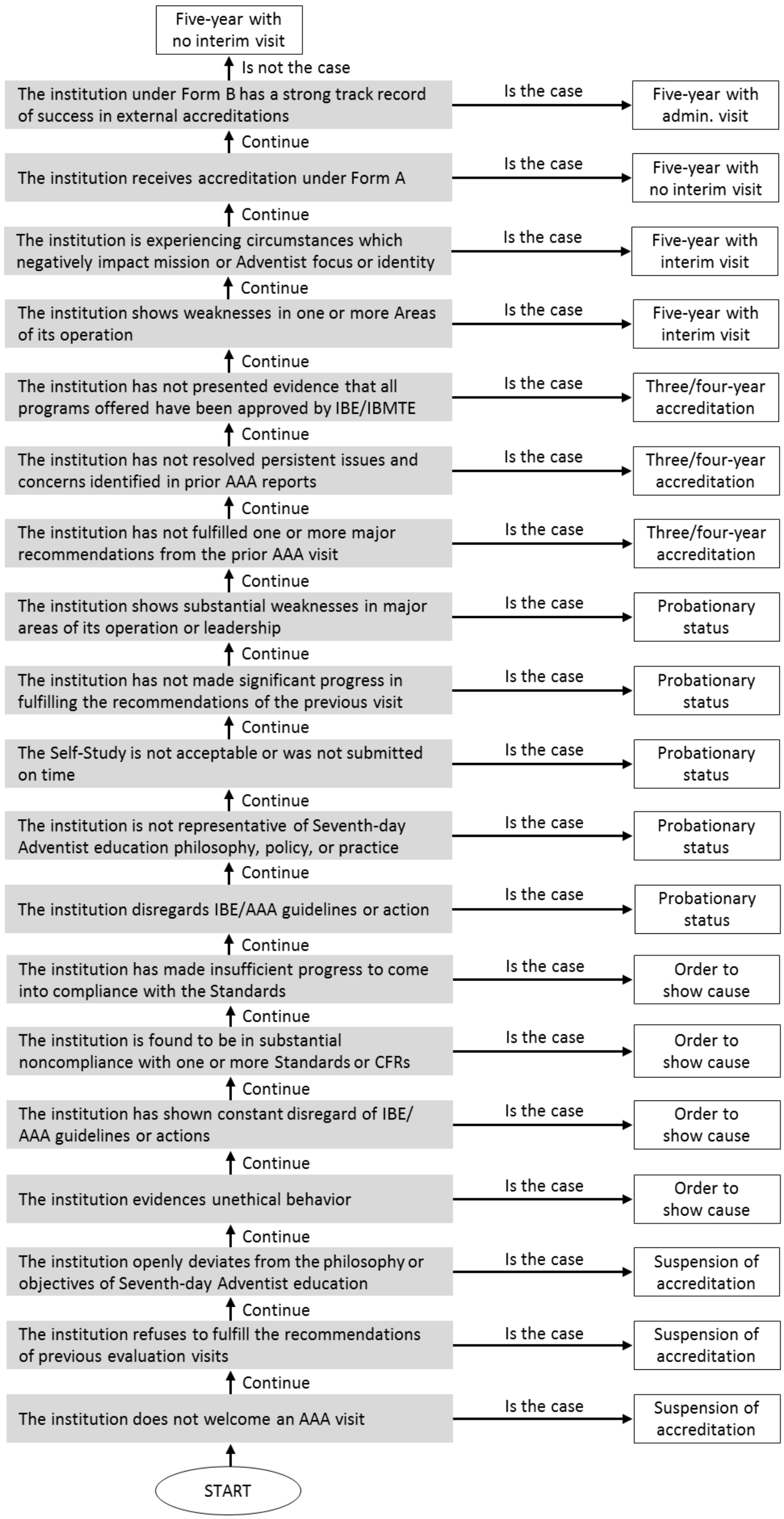
1. The team faces a particularly complex or sensitive situation and considers that the context of a recommendation needs to be carefully explained. This is best done in the section of Observations and Findings, or as a comment immediately prior to or following a key recommendation.

2. The team has serious concerns regarding an aspect of an institution and concludes that "conditions" should be attached to the overall accreditation recommendation. Conditions will normally refer to one or more specific issues that require immediate attention and a time frame will be given by which these should be met.

3. 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. These may relate, for example, to a suggested process that reflects best practice. 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:

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

APPENDIX C
Typical Decision Tree for Recommendation Options



APPENDIX D
Criteria for the Review of Urban Campuses

Purpose:	To provide guidance for AAA teams reviewing institutions of tertiary education situated in urban contexts or that have extension campuses located in urban settings. While existing CFRs are generally applicable to colleges and universities irrespective of setting, it seemed helpful to the AAA to contextualize or incorporate certain CFRs In order to provide special and, in some cases, more specific guidance for tertiary institutions in urban settings given the special circumstances of the urban context which can yield significant challenges in implementing the whole-person, redemptive philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist education.
Extended Application:	These Criteria for Review (CFRs) could potentially be adopted and/or adapted for the review of Adventist educational institutions in urban settings at other levels, such as primary and secondary schools.
Urban Setting Defined:	There are certainly various ways to define an urban campus, such as the following: • Located in an area of high human population density and built environments (National Geographic Society) • Located in densely developed territory, residential and commercial, of 50,000 or more people (U.S. Census Bureau) In the United States, the Carnegie Foundation has developed a system that classifies educational institutions as urban, suburban, or rural, updated every five years. For the purpose of this document, each Division in conjunction with the General Conference Department of Education liaison will determine which of its tertiary campuses will be classified as urban. As guidance, the following parameters may be utilized: A campus of higher education, located physically within a metropolitan setting of dense population and built development, where the majority of students are non-residential and spend limited time on campus except for attending classes.

Criteria for Review	Preferred Evidences
1. The institution fulfills the philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist education, particularly its redemptive purpose and its focus on whole-person development. Maps to: Form A, Area 1 Form B, Area 1	▪ Evidence of plans and initiatives to ensure a clear Adventist identity and ethos throughout the institution ▪ Evidence of intentionality in evangelistic purpose, immersing students in the values and objectives of Adventist education ▪ Evidence of policies and procedures that safeguard the Adventist ethos when admitting non-Adventist students

Criteria for Review	Preferred Evidences
2. The institution effectively nurtures students in their spiritual development. Maps to: Form A, Area 2 Form B, Area 2	▪ Evidence of the provision of chaplains, with at least half-time load in chaplaincy, whose key focus is the salvation and spiritual nurture of students. Ideally there should be a policy in place to hire a chaplain for every certain number of students at the site. If more than one, there should also be both male and female chaplains, with chaplains preferably assigned to specific programs. ▪ Evidence of the provision of a representative on-site worship facility ▪ Evidence that the institution offers engaging on-site weekly worship programs (e.g., Friday night, Sabbath morning, and Sabbath afternoon) ▪ Evidence of the involvement of students in planning and implementing spiritual programming ▪ Evidence of the implementation of a spiritual development curriculum, including the utilization of small groups ▪ Evidence of intentional evangelization, resulting in the baptism of students ▪ Evidence that the institution organizes mission trips and other missionary activities in which students and employees participate ▪ Evidence of organized volunteer service opportunities to people in need (e.g., refugees, homeless) ▪ Evidence that the institution intentionally fosters respect for others, exemplifying the love of Christ
3. The programs of study at the institution nurture the faith of students in intentional ways. Maps to: Form A, Area 5 Form B, Area 4	▪ Evidence of the incorporation of institutional values and a biblical worldview throughout each academic program ▪ Evidence of student training and experiences in witness, in which administrators, faculty, and staff are also involved ▪ Evidence of the incorporation of service-learning requirements in courses and programs of study, which present an array of service options to students ▪ Evidence of the engagement of students in the required religion courses

Criteria for Review	Preferred Evidences
4. The programs of study at the institution effectively prepare students for the workplace. Maps to: Form A, Area 5 Form B, Area 4	▪ Evidence that the core curriculum incorporates a course focused on the Christian in the workplace (i.e., living a Christ-centered life of witness in the work environment) ▪ Evidence that the educational program requires students to be involved in apprenticeships or internships, or other significant field experiences, or to hold a program-related full- or part-time job in which they are formally evaluated ▪ Evidence of an active literature evangelism program, or alternative program, made available to all students, with an emphasis on the development of interpersonal skills for sharing the gospel
5. The institution ensures that programs of study are adequately staffed, and that faculty and support staff are both qualified and committed. Maps to: Form A, Area 6 Form B, Area 5	▪ Evidence that no more than half of the credits in each academic program, including the set of upper-division courses, are taught by contract part-time faculty members ▪ Evidence that the institution has attained or has in place strategies that move progressively toward the goal that all full-time faculty are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in regular standing ▪ Evidence that a majority of part-time/contract faculty are members of the Adventist church, or that the institution has in place strategies to move progressively toward this goal ▪ Evidence that the contract for all employees stipulates an agreement with the philosophy of Adventist education and a commitment to respect the beliefs and practices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church ▪ Evidence that the contract for all teachers stipulates involvement in student-related activities outside of the classroom

Criteria for Review	Preferred Evidences
6. The institution ensures that student services contribute effectively to whole-person development and are aligned with the Adventist philosophy of education. Maps to: Form A, Area 9 Form B, Area 6	▪ Evidence that the food services provided are in harmony with the Adventist philosophy of healthful living, including what is sold through the vending machines ▪ Evidence that the institution oversees student housing, ideally in a dormitory setting for any students not living with their parents, legal guardians, or spouse, and below a certain age (e.g., 25 years old), or at minimum through establishing and implementing a set of formative criteria for student housing, with a consistently applied approval process ▪ Evidence of the provision of facilities for recreation and for cultural programs, as well as spaces for student interaction and for student-faculty interaction ▪ Evidence of the provision of social activities for students, with evidence that administrators, faculty, and staff participate with students in a number of these social activities ▪ Evidence of a mentoring program for new students
7. The institution provides co-curricular activities and experiences that align with Adventist identity and mission. Maps to: Form A, Area 9 Form B, Area 6	▪ Evidence of the provision of recreational programs that are congruent with Adventist identity and mission ▪ Evidence of the provision of cultural programs that are congruent with Adventist identity and mission ▪ Evidence of an effective health and wellness program, co-curricular or curricular, that transmits the health message of the Adventist church in an attractive manner
8. The institution provides initiatives and programs that foster the personal development of students. Maps to: Form A, Area 9 Form B, Area 6	▪ Evidence that the institution offers time management and emotional health seminars and workshops to students ▪ Evidence that the institution provides personal/career Christian counseling, with the employment of a part-time counselor, or a full-time counselor when enrollment at the site exceeds 500 students
9. The institution provides students with opportunities to interact with God's creation.	▪ Evidence of an aesthetic campus environment that incorporates aspects of natural beauty, both inside and outside of the classroom ▪ Evidence that students and teachers engage in beautification projects, both on- and off-campus, such as adopting a park or developing an urban community garden ▪ Evidence that students are provided with opportunities to interact with natural settings as part of the required curriculum

Appendix E
Criteria for Review of Research Degrees

The institution's supervision of its research students, and any teaching it undertakes at the master's and doctoral level, is informed by a high level of professional knowledge of current research and advanced scholarly activity in its subjects of study The awarding of degrees that recognize the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other forms of advanced scholarship, places a particular and substantial responsibility upon an awarding body. The institution's faculty/academic staff should accordingly command the respect and confidence of their academic peers across the higher education sector as being worthy to deliver research degree programs. Institutions wishing to offer research degrees should have in place a strong underpinning culture that actively encourages and supports creative, high quality research and scholarship amongst the organization's academic faculty and staff and its doctoral and other research students.

Adventist institutions of higher learning that offer research degrees are by their very nature an intellectual core for the Church in the region they serve as well as a center of whole person education. Integration of faith, learning, and praxis is a vital component that is rooted in their very reason to exist. An Adventist approach to a discipline must be consistent with the role of Scripture within Adventism while remaining genuinely open to new insights which might modify previous positions. Research provides an opportunity to integrate Adventist faith and learning at the highest level.

As a community of ethical and balanced analytical thinkers, faculty and students are uniquely positioned to supply a competent and able workforce for the church and society. From their uniquely privileged platform of intellectual leadership, they contribute discovery and dissemination of knowledge and, more importantly, respond to concrete problems and challenges that are part of the contemporary scene.

Within this context, the institution fosters and supports research efforts not limited to but deliberately inclusive of the fundamental and distinctive character of Adventist faith and a biblical worldview. Research topics might include development of the whole person (mental, physical, social and spiritual development in educational research), strong family bonds/ties (sociology), non-alcohol and tobacco use, vegetarian diet (public health and science research), Biblical standards as the basis of long-lasting truth and worldview (in areas like evolutionary studies, world history, marriage and family studies, etc.).

Area 1: History, Philosophy, Mission, and Objectives

Educational objectives are clearly recognized throughout the institution and are consistent with stated purposes. The institution has developed indicators for the achievement of its purposes and educational objectives, including for research degrees. The institution has a system of measuring student achievement in terms of milestones, retention, completion, and student learning (research skills, domain mastery, ability to create new knowledge, and advancing Adventist mission). The institution makes public data on student achievement at the institutional and degree level.

Area 2: Spiritual Development, Service, and Witnessing

The institution includes in the campus Spiritual Master Plan a component appropriate to the spiritual formation and needs of research students, including those who are part-time and off-campus.

Formative elements on spirituality (such as composition of a Personal Development Portfolio) are appropriate to the needs of research students.

Research degrees demonstrate evidence of their Adventist character through an intellectual quality in which the biblically-based Adventist worldview is basic to the entire academic endeavor. Transformational reflection on faith and sound theological thinking are an essential and evident part of scholarship. There is measurable evidence of rootedness in Adventist values and beliefs, ranging from theological reflection in doctoral theses/dissertations, projects or capstone reports to proposals to resolve problems and challenges or to enrich the church and society through well-thought and designed programs or projects.

The institution shows evidence that the masters/doctoral research program is a factor in making an institution an intellectual center which serves the church in its region and beyond by addressing issues of how Adventism relates to contemporary issues.

The research demonstrates reflection on how an Adventist worldview impacts on a particular discipline, yet at the same time show unequivocally that Adventism's demand that students not merely be reflectors of others' thoughts translates into research which is genuinely creative and original.

The institution encourages research in all disciplines, including theology, not as an end in itself but as an opportunity to reflect on the implications of Adventist faith and practice in contemporary society. The institution supports opportunities for service to others at the institution (e.g. mentoring undergraduates) and beyond (e.g. short-term work for ADRA which uses the skills being used in doctoral research).

The institution supports students whose research is in areas particularly challenging to classically formulated Adventism (e.g. through inter-disciplinary seminars which explore the relationship between faith and specific disciplines).

The institution's research degree board provide a measurable assessment of the Adventist component in their research degree offerings which may include, a 2-3 unit/credit biblical taught course/seminar relevant to the student's research area such as Bible/Religion and Science, History and Philosophy of Science, Comparative Science/Social Science ethics and the Bible, Biblical Financial ethics/Bible and Finance aimed at integration of faith and learning, a compulsory non-credit seminar on the above, regular research seminars, and/or a chapter/component of research degree that integrates faith with the topic/question/thesis.

The research degrees and faculty/staff who teach them are in compliance with the International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (IBMTE) for research degrees in Religion and Theology.

Area 3: Governance, Organization, and Administration

The institution's organizational structures and decision-making processes are clear, consistent with its purposes, and sufficient to support effective decision-making about research degrees and to place priority on sustaining effective academic programs.

Research supervisors and faculty exercise effective academic leadership and act consistently to ensure both academic quality and the appropriate maintenance of research degrees by including at least one person who is active in research on each major research decision-making body.

Planning and budgeting are coherent processes and are informed by appropriately defined and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data, such as consideration of evidence of educational effectiveness and student learning in research degrees. The institution monitors the effectiveness of the implementation of its plans and revises them as appropriate.

The institution employs quality assurance processes at each level of functioning to ensure accountability. These include new program approval processes, periodic program review, and ongoing data collection and evaluation. These processes involve assessments of effectiveness, tracking of results over time and using the results of these assessments to revise and improve structures, processes, content, and pedagogy.

The bodies and individuals who administer research degrees and their faculty/staff develop the research culture and rigor of academic research degrees and establish:

a. criteria for evaluating formative, summative, and integrative activities such as theses, dissertations, projects, or other capstone experiences;
b. learning outcomes and expectations for graduate-level rigor in Area 2 (spiritual development, service and witnessing);
c. a code of supervisory practice that includes spiritual support for students;
d. faculty development, financial support for upgrading, and mentoring in research skills and the development of an academic career that includes research;
e. expectations for research and/or advanced clinical practice for graduate faculty status and appraisal through annual performance reviews and promotion and tenure policies.

Area 4: Finances, Financial Structure, and Industries

Fiscal and physical resources are effectively aligned with the support of research that is sustainable, consistent with the strategic plan, and sufficient in scope, quality, currency, and kind to support research degrees and the scholarship of its members (such as allocations for sabbaticals, research support, attendance at professional meetings, journal subscriptions, visit and exchange, etc.). Funds are budgeted and available to allow timely completion of research projects and degrees as they are commenced.

Area 5: Programs of Study

All degrees awarded by the institution are clearly defined in terms of entry-level requirements and in terms of levels of student achievement necessary for graduation that represent more than simply an accumulation of credits. Research degrees are consistent with the mission, purpose, and character of the institutions; are in keeping with the expectations of their respective disciplines and professions; and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the several levels of postgraduate and professional degrees offered. Research degree programs are visibly structured to include active involvement with the literature in the field and ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate high-level professional practice and training experiences, including teaching assistantships for those going into academic careers.

The institution demonstrates that its graduates consistently achieve its stated levels of attainment, ensures that its expectations for student learning are embedded in the assessment criteria used to evaluate student work, and that these criteria distinguish between expectations for undergraduate and graduate levels.

The institution's academic programs actively involve students in learning, challenge them to achieve high expectations, and provide them with appropriate and ongoing feedback about their performance and how it can be improved.

The institution actively values and promotes scholarship and creative activity, as well as their dissemination at levels and of the kinds appropriate to the institution's mission, purposes, and character and the student's level of development.

Regardless of the mode of program delivery (part-time, off-campus, full-time residential), the institution regularly identifies the characteristics of its students and assesses their needs, experiences, and levels of development and satisfaction. This information is used to help shape a learning-centered experience and to actively promote student success in research degrees.

In order to improve program currency and effectiveness, all research degrees offered by the institution are subject to systematic review, including analyses of the achievement of the degree's intended learning objectives and actual outcomes. Where appropriate, evidence from external constituencies such as external examiners, placement, employers, and professional societies is included in such reviews.

Area 6: Faculty and Staff

Recruitment, workload, incentive, and evaluation practices of research supervisors, faculty, and staff are aligned with institutional purposes, educational objectives of research degrees, and research productivity. All of these are supported by formal evidence.

The institution demonstrates that it employs research supervisors and faculty with substantial and continuing commitment to the institution and its values sufficient in number and professional qualifications (including a record of recent scholarly activity) to achieve its educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, provide spiritual support for their students, and ensure the integrity and continuity of its research degrees wherever and however delivered.

Research supervisors are selected on the basis that they demonstrate substantial relevant knowledge, understanding, and experience of both current research and advanced scholarship in their discipline area and that such knowledge, understanding, and experience directly inform and enhance their supervision and teaching.

The institution demonstrates its research culture by meeting the minimum national benchmarks for research productivity such as:

- percentage of senior researchers (e.g., 20% full professor; 35% associate),
- proportion of full-time research supervisors who are active and recognized contributors to subject associations, learned societies, and relevant professional bodies (e.g., normally around a half as a minimum) and proportion of its academic staff who are research active (e.g., around a third as a minimum who have published within the past three years, acted as external examiners for research degrees, served as validation/review panel members, or contributed to collaborative research projects with other organizations),
- proportion of its academic faculty/staff who are engaged in research or other forms of advanced scholarship (e.g. around a third as a minimum) and who can demonstrate achievements that are recognized by the wider academic community to be of national and/or international standing as indicated by authoritative external peer reviews.

Area 7: Library and Resource Centers, and Technology

The library budget is proportionate to research income and sufficient to support the research culture of the institution and the needs of research students and research faculty.

For on-campus students and students enrolled at a distance, physical and information resources, services, and information technology facilities are sufficient in scope and kind to support and maintain the level and type of research and research training offered.

Area 8: Academic Policies and Records

The institution publishes minimal standards for entry to research degrees. A baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and specified grade average are generally required for entry to a research master's degree. Normally a master's degree by research or occasionally a bachelor's degree with first class honors or second class upper division are required for entry to a research MPhil/doctoral degree. Examinations and/or personal recommendations may also be required. The department recommends to the research committee acceptance or rejection of the applicant. Admission does not imply that the student will be awarded a degree.

The institution clearly defines and distinguishes between the different types of credits it offers and between degree and non-degree credit and accurately identifies the type and meaning of the credit awarded in its transcripts.

Degrees:

- MA/MS/MSc: A first graduate degree, representing the equivalent of at least one academic year of full-time post-baccalaureate study, or its equivalent in depth and quality. The distinctions between M.A. and M.S. are similar to those between B.A. and B.S. Some M.A. and M.S. degrees are merely continuations at a higher level of undergraduate work without basic change in character. Others emphasize some research that may lead to doctoral work.
- MBA, MSW, MDiv, etc.: Professional degrees requiring up to two years of full-time study. Extensive undergraduate preparation in the field may reduce the length of study to one year.
- MPhil, PhD, DPhil, ThD: The standard research-oriented degree which indicates that the recipient has done, and is prepared to do, original research in a major discipline. The PhD usually requires three years or more of postgraduate work or an equivalent period of part-time study and consists mainly of a supervised research project and completion of an externally-examined original research thesis or project.
- EdD, PsyD, MD, JD, DMin, DrPH etc.: Degrees with emphasis on professional knowledge. These degrees normally require three or more years of prescribed postgraduate work and are designed to prepare persons for a specific profession. Some undergraduate programs prepare for direct entry into employment (e.g., nursing) and other programs are offered at both undergraduate and graduate levels (e.g. engineering, business management, ministry). Others are primarily or solely graduate in nature (e.g., medicine, dentistry). In the U.S., all professional programs at the doctoral level presuppose a background preparation in liberal or general education.

The institution has in place policies and procedures to monitor satisfactory progress of students through research degrees in a timely manner.

The institution's student learning outcomes and expectations for student attainment are clearly stated at the degree and institutional level and are consistent with its mission and values. These outcomes and expectations are reflected in academic programs and policies, advisement, library and information resources, and the wider learning environment.

The institution collects and analyzes student data disaggregated by demographic categories and areas of study. It tracks achievement, satisfaction, and campus climate to support student success. The institution regularly identifies characteristics of its students and assesses their preparation, needs, and experiences. These data are used to benchmark against similar institutions and demonstrate equitable access to institutional resources necessary to successful completion of the degree.

The institution satisfies relevant national guidance relating to the award of research degrees in accordance with the research degree management frameworks issued by relevant research councils, funding bodies, and professional/statutory bodies.

Area 9: Student Services

Consistent with its purposes, the institution develops and implements non-academic programs that are integrated with its academic goals and programs and which support student professional and personal development, including those who are part-time or off-campus.

Student support services—including financial aid, registration, advising, career counseling, computer labs, and library and online information services—are designed to meet the needs of research degree students studying in all modes: distance or on-campus, full or part-time.

Area 10: Physical Plant and Facilities

Student housing is designed to meet the study and family needs of full-time, on-campus research degree students.

Research facilities and laboratories are sufficient in number and adequately equipped to support the research degrees, especially in the basic sciences.

Area 11: Public Relations and External Constituencies

Appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, and others defined by the institution, are involved in the assessment of the effectiveness of research degrees.

The institution truthfully represents its academic goals, programs, religious ethos, and services to students and to the larger public; demonstrates that its research degrees can be completed in a timely fashion; and treats students fairly and equitably through established policies and procedures addressing matters such as student conduct, grievances, refunds, and ethical conduct in research.

Area 12: Pastoral and Theological Education

The institution will provide evidence that the pastoral and theological education program that is by research will result in graduates who have the practical skills, the theoretical/theological understanding, and the commitment to the message and mission of the church that are necessary for employment as a pastor, teacher, and/or for graduate pastoral/theological education.

APPENDIX F
Best Practices for Distance Education[1]

Institution Context and Commitment

Electronically offered programs both support and extend the roles of institutions. Increasingly they are integral to academic organization with growing implications for educational infrastructure.

1. In its philosophy, content, purposes, and organization, the program is consistent with the institution's role and mission to deliver distinctive Adventist education.
   - Provide evidence that: (a) the program is consistent with the mission statement of the school or that the mission statement has been revised; (b) student access to academic resources, faith community, and health/lifestyle resources is adequate; (c) student spiritual guidance and formation is adequate, including opportunities for the development of a personal relationship with their Savior and fellowship with the Adventist church; (d) opportunities for outreach and service are in place and adequate.
2. It is recognized that institutions change over time. The institution is aware of accreditation requirements and complies with them. Each accrediting association has established definitions of what activities constitute a substantive change that will trigger prior review and approval processes. The appropriate accreditation commission should be notified and consulted if an electronically offered program represents a major change. The offering of distributed programs can affect the institution's educational goals, intended student population, curriculum, and modes or venue of instruction and can thus have an impact on both the institution and its accreditation status.
   - Does the program represent a change to the institution's stated mission and objectives?
   - Does the program take the institution beyond the Conference/Union/Division/ accrediting association boundaries?
3. The institution's budgets and policy statements reflect its commitment to the students for whom its electronically offered programs are designed**.**
   - How are electronically offered curricula included in the institution's overall budget structure? Do they reflect ongoing commitment?
4. What are the institution's policies concerning the establishment, organization, funding, and management of electronically offered curricula? The institution assures adequacy of technical and physical plant facilities, including appropriate staffing and technical assistance, to support its electronically offered programs.
   - Do technical and physical plant facilities accommodate the curricular commitments reviewed below, e.g., instructor and student interaction and appropriateness to the curriculum?
   - Whether facilities are provided directly by the institution or through contractual arrangements, what are the provisions for reliability, privacy, safety, and security?
   - Does the institution's budget plan provide for appropriate updating of the technologies employed?
   - Do the faculty at the host site have the appropriate certification and endorsements to support the programs being offered as well as those envisioned in the near term?

[1] Adapted from a North American Division document by this same title.

- Is the staffing structure at the remote location appropriately qualified (academically and technologically) to provide support to ensure student success?

5. The internal organizational structure which enables the development, coordination, support, and oversight of electronically offered curricula will include the capability to:

   - Facilitate the associated instructional and technical support relationships.
   - Provide (or draw upon) the required information technologies and related support services.
   - Develop and implement a marketing plan that considers the technologies available, the factors required to meet institution goals, and the target student population.
   - Provide training and support to participating instructors and students.
   - Assure compliance with copyright law.
   - Contract for products and outsourced services.
   - Assess and assign priorities to potential future projects.
   - Assure that electronically offered programs and courses meet Division standards, both to provide consistent quality and to provide a coherent framework for students who may enroll in both electronically offered and traditional on-campus courses.
   - Maintain appropriate academic oversight.
   - Maintain consistency with the institution's academic planning and oversight functions in order to assure congruence with the institution's mission and allocation of required resources.
   - Provide the structure required for distributed education students to participate as fully as possible in the institution community (including chaplaincy services, worships and spiritual emphasis programs, mission trips, and other extracurricular institution activities.)
   - Assure the integrity of student work and faculty instruction.

Evaluation of the above points may be accomplished by any, all, or combinations of the following procedures and inquiries:

- Is there a clear, well-understood process by which an electronically offered program evolves from conception to administrative authorization to implementation? How is the need for the program determined? How is it assigned a priority among the other potential programs? Has the development of the program incorporated appropriate internal consultation and integration with existing planning efforts?
- Track the history of a representative project from idea through implementation, noting the links among the participants including those responsible for curriculum, those responsible for deciding to offer the program electronically, those responsible for program/course design, those responsible for the technologies applied, those responsible for faculty and student support, those responsible for marketing, those responsible for legal issues, those responsible for budgeting, those responsible for administrative and student services, and those responsible for program evaluation. Does this review reveal a coherent set of relationships?
- In the institution's organizational documentation, is there a clear and integral relationship between those responsible for electronically offered programs and the mainstream academic structure?
- How is the organizational structure reflected in the institution's overall budget?
- How are the integrity, reliability, and security of outsourced services assured?
- Are training and technical support programs considered adequate by those for whom they are intended?
- What are the policies and procedures concerning compliance with copyright law?
- How does curriculum evaluation relate to this organizational and decision-making structure?

6. What are the institution's policies concerning credit transfer? On what basis are decisions made regarding transfer of academic credit?
   - Does the institution have policies to regulate credit transfer and to evaluate non-traditional programs?
   - How does the institution determine the basis of a Carnegie unit (USA)-equivalent (elsewhere)/grades?
   - How does the institution determine equivalency for on-line and face-to-face courses?
7. The institution strives to assure a consistent and coherent technical framework for students and faculty. When a change in technologies is necessary, it is introduced in a way that minimizes the impact on students and faculty.
   - When student or instructor proceeds from one course or program to another, is it necessary to learn another software program or set of technical procedures?
   - When new software or systems are adopted, what programs/processes are used to acquaint instructors and students with them?
8. The institution provides students with reasonable technical support for each educational technology hardware, software, and delivery system required.
   - Is support realistically available to students during hours when it is likely to be needed?
   - Is help available for all hardware, software, and delivery systems specified by the institution as required for the program?
   - Does support involve person-to-person contact for the student? By what means is this accomplished, e.g., email, phone, fax?
   - Is there a well-designed FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) service, online resources provided, and/or by phone menu or on-demand fax?
9. The selection of technologies is based on appropriateness for the students and the curriculum. It is recognized that availability, cost, and other issues are often involved, but program documentation should include specific consideration of the match between technology and curricula.
   - How were the technologies chosen for this institution's curricula?
   - Are the technologies judged to be appropriate (or inappropriate) to the curricula in which they are used?
   - Are the intended students likely to find their technology costs reasonable?
   - What provisions have been made to assure a robust and secure technical infrastructure, providing maximum reliability for students and faculty?
   - Given the rapid pace of change in modern information technology, what policies or procedures are in place to keep the infrastructure reasonably up-to-date?
10. The institution seeks to understand the legal and regulatory requirements of the jurisdictions, including denominational, in which it operates, e.g., requirements for service to those with disabilities, copyright law, province/state, national requirements for institutions offering international restrictions such as export of sensitive information or technologies, etc.
    - Do the institution's policies and documentation indicate an awareness of these requirements and demonstrate that it has made an appropriate response to them?

APPENDIX G
Adventist Accrediting Association Conflict of Interest Policy

In carrying out their accreditation responsibilities, members of the AAA Board, staff, and site visit teams seek to ensure that their decisions are based solely on the application of professional judgment to the information resulting from their evaluation procedures. Therefore, they seek to avoid conflict of interest and the appearance of conflict of interest. A conflict of interest is defined as any circumstance in which an individual's capacity to make an impartial and unbiased accreditation decision may be affected or perceived to be affected because of a prior, current, or anticipated institutional affiliation(s), or other significant relationship(s) with an accredited institution or an institution seeking recognition by the Board.

Because of the common objectives embraced by the various organizational units and institutions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, membership held concurrently on more than one denominational committee or board does not in itself constitute a conflict of interest, provided that all the other requirements of the policy are met. While serving as an officer, trustee, or director of multiple denominational entities is thus acknowledged and accepted, a member serving on the AAA Board is expected to act in the best interests of the Adventist Accrediting Association and its role in denominational structure.[2]

The following are examples of affiliations and other significant relationships pertaining to visiting team members, AAA Board members, and AAA Board staff that present a conflict or the appearance of a conflict. Such affiliations and significant relationships should be disclosed to the executive secretary for discussion and evaluation. Affiliations with institutions under review that would pose a conflict of interest may include, but are not limited to, any of the following categories during the past five years: employee, former employee, applicant for employment, board member, appointee, paid consultant, current student, graduate, or instructor. Any relationship involving a written agreement and/or compensation may create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest and should be included. Other significant relationships that should be reported for their potential in prejudicing decision making include, but are not limited to: having a close relative (such as but not limited to spouse, child, parent or sibling) affiliated with the institution under review, receiving an award from the institution, and/or having a close personal or professional relationship at the institution under review where that relationship might have a material effect on accreditation review.

AAA Board Members: AAA Board members shall make proposals, vote and otherwise conduct themselves in Board meetings and activities in a manner consistent with their best, impartial, and unfettered judgment, and in furtherance of the Board's purposes, without regard for the potential impact of the Board's decisions on their own professional or financial interests or those of their friends, relatives and colleagues. Board members are expected to commit themselves to full disclosure and restraint in any institutional consideration involving a conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest.

Visiting Team Members: In selecting visiting teams for a specific institutional review, individuals who have a known conflict of interest should be excluded. If unsure about a conflict of interest, individuals are expected to disclose possible conflicts to the Board staff via the Conflict of Interest Form for discussion and evaluation prior to appointment to a team. It is the policy of the Board that visiting team members not serve as paid consultants with an institution they have visited for one

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[2] See General Conference Working Policy E 85 Conflict of Interest and/or Commitment

year following the visit. Institutions, in reviewing proposed teams, are encouraged to bring to the attention of Board staff any possible conflicts of interest or situation that might be perceived as a conflict of interest.

Board Staff: Board staff are committed to full disclosure and restraint in any institutional consideration involving a conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest. Staff members shall recuse themselves from voting on decisions regarding institutions with which they have been employed, served as a director/trustee, or served as a paid consultant during the previous five years. Staff members may not participate in private consulting with any institution accredited by or a candidate for accreditation with the Board for at least one year after serving on the Board. Staff also may not receive honorary degrees or awards from any institution with candidate or accredited status with the Board for at least one year after serving on the Board. Disclosure of any conflict of interest, or situation that might reasonably be perceived as a conflict of interest, must be provided to the executive secretary.

In the case of a conflict involving the executive secretary, notice shall be given to the Board chair. In the case of a conflict involving the Board chair, or for any unclear conflicts or appearance of conflicts involving team members, board staff, or board members, the AAA Board Conflict of Interest subcommittee will be consulted. A record of institutions where there is a conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict will be kept in a separate file by the executive secretary of the Adventist Accrediting Association.

Consultants and other agency representatives: Consultants and others with a formal contractual relationship with the AAA, who, in the course of their work may become involved in Board policy, institutional evaluation, or the accreditation decision of specific institutions, will be required to complete the Conflict of Interest Form and the Form shall be kept on file.

Mitigating Potential or Actual Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts that are deemed to have the potential or are likely to be perceived as having the potential to have a direct and significant effect on a decision must be eliminated, mitigated, or managed. Such strategies for eliminating, mitigating, or managing conflicts can include:

Removal: The best way to handle conflicts of interests is to avoid them entirely. Individuals invited to participate are expected to decline to serve in the evaluation of an institution where they have, or where it might reasonably appear that they have, a conflict of interest. For the purposes of this policy, five years is established as the limit of prior association. Other means of removing a conflict include, but are not limited to, divestiture of significant financial interests; disqualification from participation in all or a portion of the meeting or site visit; and/or severance of relationships that create actual or potential conflicts.

Disclosure: If known in advance, all present and potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed by Board members, staff and potential team members.

- Board members and staff shall complete an annual Conflict of Interest Form. Such disclosures shall be submitted to the executive secretary of the AAA for review by the Board's Conflict of Interest committee. The committee shall resolve or determine the steps required to manage the potential conflict, with appropriate information provided to the Board.
- Potential members of a visiting team shall inform the staff or chair of the visiting team and the head of the institution being visited of any disclosures they may need to make.

If not known in advance, conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest shall be disclosed to the person in charge of the meeting or activity and to the full meeting. The voting members in such a meeting shall determine whether or not the matter disclosed constitutes an actual or perceived conflict of interest and the manner in which this is to be handled.

Recusal: Those with a conflict of interest are expected to recuse themselves from (i.e., abstain from) decisions where such a conflict exists. The imperative for recusal varies depending upon the circumstance, ranging from abstaining from discussion or voting, to removing oneself from the room or situation to avoid participation in all discussion or deliberation on the issue. All such actions should be recorded in any minutes or records kept. Following full disclosure of the present or potential conflict, the Board may decide that no conflict of interest exists and invite the person in question to participate.

Members of the Board will at a minimum abstain, and in some cases absent themselves from the room when there are deliberations or votes on decisions regarding institutions with which they are affiliated or with which they have participated as a member of the most recent visiting team.

Training: Training on the policy shall be provided to prospective AAA site team members and AAA Board members by means of the Conflict of Interest form.

Policy Application

Questions or concerns regarding the application of this Policy should be addressed to the executive secretary of the AAA or the General Conference Office of General Counsel.