ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

Procedures, Standards, and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Professional Forestry, Urban Forestry, Natural Resources and Ecosystem Management, and in Forest Technology

Revised 2016\(^1\)

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\(^1\) This Handbook will be in effect for all accreditation reviews occurring on or after January 1, 2017.
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PREFACE

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) is the national scientific and educational organization representing the forestry profession in the United States. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1900 by Gifford Pinchot, it is the largest professional society for foresters in the world. SAF members include natural resource practitioners in public and private settings, researchers, industry executives, administrators, educators, and students.

Professional accreditation of forestry programs has been a critically important function of the Society since accreditation was initiated in 1935. Over the years, accreditation processes and standards have been reviewed and revised periodically—approximately every ten years—to ensure that professional foresters continue to meet contemporary needs.

SAF first established guidelines for recognizing educational programs in forest technology in 1971. The forest technology program standards were revised in 1999, 2000, 2004, 2007, and 2008. In 2008, the SAF Council approved a change from recognition to accreditation of educational programs in forest technology, effective in 2009.

In 2007, on the recommendation of the Educational Policy Review Committee, the SAF Council approved a revision of the standards that addressed educational programs in urban forestry, in recognition of the need for professionals with an education in both the core forestry subjects and subjects specific to this growing field.

In December 2009, the SAF Council chartered a task force under the direction of the Educational Policy Review Committee to consider the merits of a SAF accreditation program for educational programs in terrestrial ecology. During the course of its work the task force provided multiple forums for input into their work. In December 2012, the SAF Council accepted the task force report and charged the Educational Policy Review Committee with implementing the new standard. In December 2013, the SAF Council accepted the Standards for Accreditation in Natural Resources and Ecosystem Management as incorporated into the Accreditation Handbook for implementation on January 1, 2014.

This Accreditation Handbook presents the latest standards for professional forestry, urban forestry, natural resources and ecosystem management, and for forest technology in a new, combined format, organized as follows:

- The Introduction explains the rationale for SAF accreditation, the basis for the standards, and the use of particular terms in the handbook.
- Section I describes the accreditation procedures for all four kinds of programs, with information on eligibility, prerequisites, application, timeline, site visits, actions, fees, and appeals.
- Section II presents the standards.
- Section III offers guidance on preparing the self-evaluation report that is used to determine compliance with the standards, plus templates that can be used for documentation.
Notices

SAF’s accreditation standards are periodically reevaluated and may be modified by SAF’s Educational Policy Review Committee, which receives comments from the SAF Committee on Accreditation, the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation, SAF task forces, forestry program heads, and the SAF Board of Directors. This document supersedes all previously published procedures, standards, and guidelines for SAF accreditation.

It is the responsibility of the institution seeking initial or continued candidacy or accreditation status to be thoroughly familiar with the procedures, standards, and guidelines.
INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Society of American Foresters is to advance sustainable management of forest resources through science, education, and technology; to enhance the competency of its members; to establish professional excellence; and to use our knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic to ensure the continued health, integrity, and use of forests to benefit society in perpetuity.

In furtherance of these objectives, SAF accredits educational programs in the United States and Canada that lead to four types of degrees: a professional degree (bachelor’s or higher) in forestry, urban forestry, or natural resources and ecosystem management; and an associate’s degree in forest technology.

The objectives of SAF accreditation are as follows:

- to improve the overall quality of forestry and natural resource education through periodic program self-evaluation and peer review by qualified educators and practicing foresters;
- to foster integrity and excellence through the development, use, and periodic revision of the standards for accreditation to assess the educational environment and effectiveness of forestry and natural resource programs; and
- to assure students, employers, the general public, and other organizations and agencies that SAF-accredited programs have educational objectives consistent with professional standards, have the resources to accomplish those objectives, and are expected to continue to offer a quality forestry and natural resource education.

The standards set forth in this handbook incorporate the experience gained through eight decades of application. They describe the essential elements of forestry and natural resource educational programs: program mission, goals, and objectives; program organization and administration; students; parent institution support; curriculum; and faculty. The standards emphasize qualitative considerations and provide latitude for an institution’s and program’s unique initiative, experimentation, and variation.

SAF recognizes the need for diversity and encourages a rich learning environment composed of students, faculty, and external constituents and representing different cultures, experiences, and viewpoints.

Although concerned with the quality of the institution maintaining the forestry and natural resource programs, SAF does not examine the total institution in detail. It relies on regional accrediting bodies and appropriate provincial, state, or federal legislation for this function and requires that the program be in a US institution accredited by its regional commission on accreditation; or be in a Canadian institution with an appropriate provincial legislation or charter and membership in Universities Canada (http://www.univcan.ca/), formerly the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AAUC).

Programs and institutions seeking accreditation must adhere to local, state, and federal law. If a conflict exists between the accreditation standards and local, state, or federal law, the legal standard takes precedence.
SAF accredits four kinds of programs in forestry and natural resources and has four corresponding sets of standards.

Standards for all forestry and natural resource program accreditation apply to programs leading to an associate’s, bachelor’s or master’s degree. Programs that seek SAF accreditation under these standards must meet these requirements that embrace the science, art, and practice of creating, managing, using, and conserving forests, both rural and urban, and associated resources for human benefit and in a sustainable manner to meet desired goals, needs, and values. Note that the broad fields covered by these standards consist of those biological, quantitative, managerial, and social sciences that are applied to forest management and conservation including such specialized fields as agro-forestry, urban forestry, industrial forestry, non-industrial forestry, and wilderness and recreation forestry and the ecosystems in which they are found.

SAF has two accreditation committees—one for professional degree programs in forestry, urban forestry, and natural resources, and one for forest technology programs—which conduct the accreditation process and make final decisions about their respective types of programs. Hereinafter, both the Committee on Accreditation (COA) and the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation (CFTSA) are referred to as “the Committee”; arrows (→) indicate the instances in which the two committees’ procedures differ.

**Definitions**

*Competencies,* as used herein, refer to student outcomes that indicate program graduates will have the necessary background to excel in the field. The term *curriculum* defines the sequence of courses leading to a degree that prepares an individual for entry into the profession. It is intended to include all courses and prerequisites that constitute the professional or technical degree.

The appropriate unit for accreditation is the degree program, defined as the curriculum put forth by the institution for accreditation and the institutional resources needed to support that specific degree program. SAF does not accredit universities, colleges, departments, or other academic units; rather, it accredits degree programs within these institutional structures. One or more programs may be accredited within a single academic unit. Similarly, an academic unit may contain both accredited and non-accredited degree programs.

*Candidacy* indicates that a program has achieved initial recognition and is progressing toward accreditation. The program must earn accreditation within five years or reapply.

In the standards, the verb *must* is used when a requirement substantially bears on compliance with a standard and evidence of achievement must be documented.
SECTION I. CANDIDACY AND ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

The decision to seek initial or continued SAF accreditation is that of the program, as supported by the chief administrative/academic officer of the institution. Institutions may seek candidacy and then accreditation for programs that lead to associate’s, bachelor’s, or master’s degrees. Regardless of the degree that is awarded, the program must conform to the accreditation standards presented in Section II. This section of the handbook describes the process of becoming a candidate for accreditation and achieving accreditation.

CANDIDACY

Candidacy indicates that a program has achieved initial recognition and is progressing toward accreditation. The program then has five years to organize its operations; establish sound policies, procedures, and management functions; ensure quality; and demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standards. Achieving candidate status does not ensure eventual accreditation.

Before applying for candidate status, a program must meet three prerequisites:

- It must be in a US institution accredited by its regional commission on accreditation; or be in a Canadian institution with an appropriate provincial legislation or charter and membership in Universities Canada (http://www.univcan.ca/), formerly the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.
- It must show the parent institution’s commitment to achieving and maintaining an accredited degree program.
- It must require study in a curriculum that has the potential to meet the standards (Section II).

In addition, forest technology degree programs must be offered as two-year residency associate degrees or their equivalent in contact hours and content. Pre-forestry programs do not qualify for candidacy.

Candidate Eligibility Review

Once a program meets those prerequisites, the program administrator submits the following materials to the Committee, in care of the SAF Director of Science and Education:

- A letter from the chief administrative or academic officer of the institution requesting that the program(s) be considered for candidate status and specifying under which standard each degree program seeks accreditation.
- A factual, concise (not more than 20 pages) report on candidate eligibility, demonstrating the extent to which the program meets or exceeds the candidacy prerequisites and the accreditation standards. Supporting documents, such as the catalog, curriculum, budget, relevant website references, faculty résumés, or forms required for a full accreditation review may be included as appendices. The report should be submitted in electronic form.
- A nonrefundable candidate eligibility review fee (see “Fees” below).
The letter indicating intent to apply for candidacy must be received by April 1 for consideration during that calendar year. The candidate eligibility report is due not later than July 31.

The Committee reviews the program’s eligibility report at its next regularly scheduled meeting, usually in the fall, immediately preceding the SAF national convention. The program head is asked to meet with the Committee, at the program’s expense. The Committee determines whether the prerequisite criteria have been met and whether the program has promise of meeting the accreditation standards within five years.

The SAF Chief Executive Officer notifies the institution’s chief administrative or academic officer of the Committee’s decision within sixty (60) days of the decision. An adverse decision may be appealed within 30 days of notification. The original decision may be affirmed or reversed. The appeals process for candidate status is the same as for accreditation (see “Appeals,” below).

A program that is denied candidate status may reapply when it can demonstrate substantial improvement in those aspects of its operation identified as weak by the Committee. A second candidate review fee is required.

**Candidate Status Requirements**

Programs granted candidate status must keep the Committee informed of progress through an annual report describing any significant changes or developments. The Committee may terminate a program’s candidacy status, if evidence of progress is lacking for two consecutive years or if the conditions on which the program was admitted to candidacy are significantly altered.

Candidacy lapses if a program fails to achieve accredited status within five years of the date of initial candidate status, unless the period is extended by Committee action. Program heads must wait at least one year after the lapse of their candidacy status to reapply, and should reapply only after deficiencies have been corrected. Reapplication procedures are the same as for initial application.

**Representations to the Public**

Institutions whose programs have been granted candidate status must use the following statement or equivalent wording when describing that status publicly in their catalogs and elsewhere:

> The educational program(s) in [majors, options] leading to the degree in [degree title(s)] is/are [a] candidate(s) for accreditation by the Society of American Foresters (SAF), under the [forestry/ urban forestry/ natural resources and ecosystem management/ forest technology] standard.

**ACCREDITATION**

Recognizing that no two institutions are alike, SAF’s policy is to evaluate each program independently, on its individual merits. The Committee assesses the total program and its environment for stimulating intellectual professional development and growth.
**Procedural Overview**

Both forest technology and professional degree programs are assessed for accreditation based on a self-evaluation report, analysis by a visiting team of reviewers, and the Committee’s professional judgment.

The program conducts a self-evaluation and undergoes an on-site review. The SAF Director of Science and Education can assist the program in undertaking its self-evaluation and scheduling the on-site visit.

It is the responsibility of the institution’s and program’s administrators to be thoroughly familiar with the accreditation standards and to consult with the SAF Director of Science and Education as needed to verify readiness to undergo the assessment.

The Committee considers the program’s self-evaluation, the visiting team’s report, and the program’s response to that report at its next regularly scheduled meeting and makes a decision on the request for accreditation.

A forestry, urban forestry, natural resources and ecosystem management, or forest technology program will be accredited by SAF if it meets the following requirements:

- It has achieved candidacy status.
- It has applied for accreditation and paid the required fees.
- It has conducted and submitted a comprehensive self-evaluation, prepared in accordance with SAF’s guidelines (Section III).
- An SAF-appointed external review team has conducted an on-site assessment.
- It has demonstrated to the Committee that the education it offers complies with the accreditation standards.

Adverse decisions may be appealed.

Accreditation must be renewed within five years (for a newly accredited program) or ten years (for continuing accreditation) or as determined by the Committee.

**Accreditation Timeline**

For a current candidate or accredited program, the SAF Director of Science and Education notifies the institution’s chief academic officer by January 31 of the year before its candidacy or accreditation status would expire. For example, a program whose candidacy or accreditation expires in December 2015 will be notified in January 2014, to allow a full year for the full accreditation review before its candidacy or accreditation would expire in 2015.

The letter advises the officer of the pending expiration, asks whether the officer wishes to have the program reviewed, and outlines the procedures to be followed. A copy is sent to the head of the program.

The letter also asks whether there are any circumstances that might warrant postponement of the review. Postponement may be considered in cases of significant organizational, personnel, or other
changes, or to enable coordination with other internal or external reviews. Whether a postponement is warranted is at the discretion of the SAF Director of Science and Education in consultation with the Committee chair. Postponement may not exceed one year without consideration by the full Committee.

The institution’s chief administrative or academic officer must write to the SAF Director of Science and Education by April 1 of the year prior to the year of expiration and formally request an accreditation review during the following academic year. SAF conducts an accreditation review only at the request of the chief administrative or academic officer. The application fee must accompany the letter. (See “Fees” below.)

On receipt of the letter and fee, the SAF Director of Science and Education sends guidelines to the head of the program (or others as designated by the chief administrative or academic officer) and offers advice and assistance in preparing for the self-evaluation report and site visit. The site visit is scheduled approximately six months in advance; the self-evaluation report and supporting documentation are due at least 30 days before the site visit. Both the self-evaluation and the site visit are described in greater detail below.

The Committee reviews the self-evaluation report, the visiting team report, and the program’s response to that report at its fall meeting. Within 60 days after the meeting, the chief academic officer is notified of the Committee’s decision. If the institution believes an adverse decision was inappropriate, it may appeal to the SAF Board of Directors within 30 days; it then has 90 days to substantiate the grounds for its appeal. (See “Appeals” below.)

Table 1. Timeline for initial or continued accreditation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year before accreditation or candidacy expires</td>
<td>SAF notifies chief administrative or academic officer of institution that current accredited or candidate status expires at end of next calendar year. Copy to forestry program head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before April 1</td>
<td>Chief administrative or academic officer of institution requests accreditation review. Review fee is paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer-fall</td>
<td>Program conducts self-evaluation not more than 12 months before site visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer-fall</td>
<td>Institution and SAF schedule site visit in upcoming academic year. Visiting team is selected and site visit dates confirmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic year before accreditation or candidacy expires</td>
<td>30 days before site visit Program submits self-evaluation report to SAF and visiting team members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 days after site visit</td>
<td>Visiting team submits report to institution’s chief academic officer for factual review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 days after receipt of visiting team report</td>
<td>Chief administrative or academic officer or designee submits comments on the factual accuracy of the report to visiting team chair. If no comments are received, Committee assumes report is accurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Program head and visiting team chair are invited to meet with Committee in fall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall–winter in year that accreditation or candidacy expires</td>
<td>45 days before Committee meeting The program head submits written comments regarding activities or plans occurring after the site visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee meeting</td>
<td>Committee reviews all documentation, meets with visiting team chair and program head, deliberates, and acts on</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 days after Committee action</td>
<td>SAF chief executive officer notifies chief academic officer of decision, with copy to program head.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 days after notification of adverse decision</td>
<td>Institution may appeal decision to SAF chief executive officer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>90 days after notification of appeal</td>
<td>Institution submits detailed documentation supporting its position and its request.</td>
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**Self-evaluation**

The aim of a program self-evaluation is to demonstrate compliance with SAF accreditation standards. The self-evaluation is also intended to provide the basis for program planning and improvement.

A self-evaluation is valuable only if it is candid, realistic, and comprehensive. A program’s ability to assess its strengths and opportunities for improvement collectively is vital to accreditation. Guidelines and templates for preparation of the self-evaluation report are presented in Section III.

The self-evaluation report is considered the property of the institution; SAF will not release its contents unless authorized, in writing, to do so.

**Site Visit**

SAF deploys visiting teams to the program campus to validate the self-evaluation and gather information on intangible items, such as morale, motivation, leadership, cooperation, and the learning environment. The visiting team analyzes the program’s strengths and opportunities for improvement, the effectiveness of its procedures, the quality of its performance, and the adequacy of its resources for sustaining its performance.

The visiting team evaluates the program for consistency with the accreditation standards. With a careful reading of the program’s self-evaluation and its own brief but intensive on-site review, the visiting team can confirm and validate the conclusions of the self-evaluation, identify any areas in questionable compliance with the standards, determine whether the institution has been responsive to recommendations in previous reviews, and reinforce the program’s commitment to the continuing pursuit of excellence.

Although the report and opinions of the visiting team are given great weight and respect in the accreditation process, it is the Committee that makes the final decision on accreditation. The Committee will base its judgment on the evidence in the self-evaluation report, the team’s observations, and additional facts that come to light after the site visit.

Visiting team members are encouraged to offer constructive comments for improvement of forestry programs along the guidelines suggested by the Standards. However, the program administrators may wish to engage the visiting team members in a more in-depth discussion of opportunities once the on-site review is completed (see “Visiting team consultation,” below).
Given mutual agreement, the visit may be timed to coincide with external program reviews or other similar activities. The visit should be scheduled to avoid major events, such as national, state, or provincial holidays; religious holidays; or significant national, local, or campus events, that would hamper the team’s work.

Selection of Visiting Team

SAF visiting team members are selected for their interest, experience, training, and overall knowledge of assessment processes in professional settings. Of primary importance is the ability to develop and articulate objective opinions and judgments free of self-interest or professional bias. The nomination of qualified persons by individuals and organizations is encouraged at all times.

The SAF Director of Science and Education, in consultation with the Committee chair as needed, appoints a visiting team following consultation with the program head, who may challenge for cause the appointment of specific team members.

A team consists of three to five persons, including any SAF staff member. All team members must be SAF members or hold SAF committee appointments as public representatives. No team member may be a graduate, past faculty member, or employee of the institution being reviewed. No team member may have even the appearance of a conflict of interest. All team members must reside outside the program’s home state.

The team chair must be a forestry or natural resources educator with academic administrative experience.

At least one team member must come from the nonacademic sector; typically, this practitioner represents an important employment sector for graduates.

The third participant is a member of the Committee.

When multiple programs are reviewed concurrently under > 2 standards, additional team members with appropriate disciplinary or practical expertise will be added.

An SAF staff member may accompany the team and serve in a support capacity for initial accreditations or for re-accreditations when the committee deems this presence useful, or when invited by the program.

For continued accreditation, if more than five years has elapsed since the parent institution’s last full regional accreditation review, or if the institution is on warning, the SAF Director of Science and Education, in consultation with the forestry program head and Committee chair, may appoint a generalist to the visiting team. The generalist will be one who is familiar with general university administration. No generalist is required if a concurrent institutional accreditation review is undertaken.

The program head may request a team with additional members and suggest areas of expertise to be represented. Appointment of additional members is at the discretion of the SAF Director of Science and Education; the institution bears the extra travel and other expenses. If additional team members are appointed by SAF for training purposes, SAF is responsible for the extra expenses.
After the team members have been determined, the program head and team chair, in consultation with the SAF Director of Science and Education, make final arrangements for the visit.

**Responsibilities of Program Head for Site Visit**

The program head has the following responsibilities for the site visit:

- Be thoroughly familiar with SAF’s accreditation standards and procedures.
- Inform the institution’s administrators, faculty, students, and staff of the accreditation process and progress.
- Accept, or challenge for cause, team members assigned by SAF.
- Provide electronic copies of the self-evaluation report and supporting documentation directly to the SAF Director of Science and Education at least 30 days in advance of the visit. Hard copies may be provided at the discretion of the program head for the convenience of the visiting team on site.
- Arrange for lodging and on-site transportation for the visiting team. The program head may use suitable institutional facilities or seek the assistance of the institution’s alumni or local SAF chapter members.
- Well in advance of the visit, prepare the team’s agenda, schedule appointments, and request that administrators, faculty, students, staff, and others reserve time to meet with the team members. To assess competencies, the team meets with a small, representative group of employers of graduates; alumni employers should be kept to a minimum. Alumni or advisory groups are welcome to meet with the team at other functions. Faculty interviews should prioritize program faculty. The meetings with students should be open and scheduled so as to permit the greatest representation from all years and all majors under review. Students who cannot attend should be invited to submit comments to the team.

When different degree programs are being reviewed under different accreditation standards separate meetings with respective program faculty and students should be scheduled.

When an undergraduate and a graduate degree program are under concurrent review, separate meetings with undergraduate and graduate students should be scheduled.

- Reserve a private meeting room for the visiting team, which may be located in the lodging venue, and provide access to a printer, photocopier, reference materials, and other support services. The meeting room should be available to the team during evening hours.
- Meet regularly with the visiting team on campus. However, the program head should not attend the team’s formal meetings with other administrators, faculty, graduates, students, or employers.
- Provide written comment on factual accuracy of the visiting team’s report and attend the Committee’s fall meeting to discuss the review.
- Pay the visiting team and any SAF member’s expenses, including travel, lodging, meals, and miscellaneous expenses related to the visit.
- If desired, schedule an off-the-record consultation with the team at the end of the visit; see below.
Visiting Team Consultation

After conducting their review, visiting team members have a unique perspective on the program’s strengths and weaknesses. The program head may request an off-the-record consultation with team members to discuss the institution’s strategic opportunities. Such a consultative visit occurs after all formal interviews are completed, but must be scheduled in advance. Consultative discussions are not included in the team’s report.

Sample Site Visit Schedules

→ Forest technology program: Site visits typically last two days; Table 2 presents a suggested schedule, which contains the elements that should be included in the site visit. The agenda can be modified to suit the institution.

Table 2. Sample schedule for forest technology program site visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day prior to start of visit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late afternoon/evening</td>
<td>Arrival. Team meeting to review program, concerns, members’ assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening - optional</td>
<td>Working dinner with program head to review agenda, logistics, discuss program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Day 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Working breakfast meeting with program head to review agenda, logistics, discuss program. (if not done the night before)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Meetings with chief administrative or academic officer, forestry faculty, and other faculty/technical support staff directly involved in program. Tour of facilities and equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>Lunch meeting with advisory committee, employers, alumni.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>Meetings with Library, Student Services, Business Operations, Institutional Research and Support staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late afternoon</td>
<td>Team meeting to discuss findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>Informal dinner with faculty, staff, others as appropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Day 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Breakfast meeting with program head to review issues/modify agenda, meetings for the day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Meet with students. Other meetings as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late morning</td>
<td>Team meeting to review/discuss findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon – early afternoon</td>
<td>Exit interviews - with administrators, faculty. These can be separate or combined as determined is appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departure</td>
<td>Team members depart following exit interviews; or if not feasible depart the next morning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professional degree program: Site visits typically last two to three full days. Table 3 presents a suggested schedule, which contains the elements that should be included in the site visit. The agenda can be modified to suit the institution.

Table 3. Sample schedule for professional degree program site visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrival Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon/evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner / evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning/Late Morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>afternoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: the number of faculty/student meetings will be guided by the number of degree programs under review and the number of standards under which review is conducted. E.g., if a school has a BS and a MF program, the team will need to meet with both undergraduate and graduate students, separately; or if a school has one degree program being reviewed under the forestry standard and one under the urban forestry standard, the team will need to meet with faculty members devoted to each program separately as well as with students in each program separately. This may add additional time to the visit and push back the timing of the exit interviews. Programs are encouraged to consult with the SAF Director of Science and Education as they are formulating their agendas.

**Site Visit Report**

Within two weeks of the visit, the visiting team chair circulates a draft of the team’s report to the team members and the SAF Director of Science and Education and requests comments. Within 45 days the final report is conveyed to the institution’s chief academic officer who is invited to
comment on its factual accuracy. The institution has 60 days to provide comments. The response to the visiting team report is provided to the Committee, which will consider it along with the self-evaluation report and the visiting team report in its deliberations. If no comments are received, the report is presumed accurate.

The report is considered the property of SAF, which does not publicly release its contents. However, SAF reserves the right to release the document in its entirety if the institution releases only portions.

**Accreditation Committees’ Review and Decision**

The Committee on Accreditation and the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation meet annually, usually just before the SAF national convention, to review and make decisions on all accreditation activities conducted or reviewed during the previous academic year.

The program head and the visiting team chair are asked to meet with the appropriate Committee at this time; the date and time of the interviews is provided in advance of the meeting to facilitate travel plans. The program head is invited to submit written comments regarding any updates since the site visit. Such comments must be submitted electronically to the SAF Director of Science and Education at least 45 days before the Committee meeting; any documentation submitted after this date may not give Committee members sufficient time for consideration.

At least 60 days before the meeting, the SAF Director of Science and Education sends the Committee members copies of the self-evaluation, supporting documentation, visiting team report, and any comments from the institution. They systematically review the material and consult with the visiting team chair and the program head before making their decision. It is the duty of the Committee to make an independent analysis of the facts and to determine whether a program’s initial or continued accreditation is warranted.

**Committee Actions**

The Committee will decide the specific degree programs to be approved, the duration of the accreditation or candidacy, and any conditions or requests for additional information. For the specific degree programs under review, the Committee may take any of the several actions described below.

**CANDIDACY**

Granted when all prerequisite criteria have been met and when a program has promise of meeting the accreditation standards within five years. Candidacy may be granted for up to five (5) years.

**INITIAL ACCREDITATION**

Granted on a first review when all standards are at least minimally met and the program's continued development and conformance to the accreditation standards is likely. Initial accreditation may be granted for up to five (5) years unless the accreditation is for a new program within an academic unit that has other SAF accredited programs, in which case a 10 year review may be scheduled.

A program receiving initial accreditation may be required to submit progress reports at the discretion of the Committee.
ACCRREDITATION
Granted when all standards are met or when one or more standards are met with recommendation, and continued overall program quality and conformance to standards are judged likely to be maintained. Accreditation may be granted up to ten (10) years.

A program receiving accreditation may be required to submit progress reports at the discretion of the Committee.

PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION
Granted when one or more standards are met with recommendation and the cited deficiencies are such that continued overall program quality or conformance to standards is uncertain. Provisional accreditation may be granted up to three (3) years.

A program receiving provisional accreditation is required to submit a progress report in two (2) years describing steps that have been taken to correct deficiencies.

This status shall not be granted more than twice without an intervening period of accreditation. Provisional status is not deemed to be an adverse action and is not subject to appeal.

DEFERRAL
The Committee may choose to defer a decision, if it determines that additional information is needed. The specific information, the format, and due date will be specified. The expiration of the current accreditation or candidacy will be extended appropriately. Deferral is not deemed to be an adverse action and is not subject to appeal.

PROBATION
This status results if a program has failed to respond satisfactorily to previous Committee requests or has deviated significantly from accreditation standards. Probation is not deemed to be an adverse action and is not subject to appeal.

SUSPENSION OF ACCREDITATION
This status results if a program fails to maintain good standing for administrative reasons, such as non-payment of fees. Suspension of accreditation is not subject to appeal.

SHOW-CAUSE
The Committee may request that the program show cause why candidacy or accreditation should not be terminated if, in the Committee’s opinion, it has not responded satisfactorily to conditions imposed on it as a result of significant noncompliance with the accreditation standards. Show-cause is not deemed to be an adverse action and is not subject to appeal.

CANDIDACY OR ACCREDITATION DENIAL
This status results when one or more prerequisite criteria or standards are not met. Denial of candidacy or accreditation is subject to appeal.

REVOCATION OF CANDIDACY OR ACCREDITATION
This status results if an accredited or candidate program fails to comply with accreditation standards. Revocation of accreditation is subject to appeal.
For provisional accreditation, deferral, probation, and a show-cause request, the Committee cites specific findings related to specific standards, sets the date by which the institution is requested to respond, and lists recommended actions to remedy the situation. For denial or revocation the Committee cites specific findings related to specific standards which demonstrate significant non-compliance.

**Notification of Decision**

Within 60 days of the Committee’s action, the SAF chief executive officer sends a formal letter to the institution’s chief academic or administrative officer. Notification includes a copy of the Committee’s Summary Findings and Action, which includes any required actions. The Committee’s findings are considered confidential and the property of SAF, which does not publicly release their contents. However, if the institution releases portions, SAF reserves the right to release the documents in their entirety.

Accreditation decisions are published on the SAF website and in the *Journal of Forestry* or other SAF publication. The notice indicates the accreditation action, the duration of the action, and the degree programs involved. Publication of an adverse decision, however, is delayed to give the institution opportunity to appeal the adverse decision.

Within 90 days following notification to the institution, SAF notifies appropriate agencies. The notice indicates the accreditation action, the duration of the action, and the degree programs involved. Notification of an adverse decision, however, is delayed to give the institution opportunity to appeal.

**Accreditation Period**

Once a degree program is accredited, it is subject to periodic review as determined by the Committee. The initial period of accreditation is typically five years: all programs may be required to undergo self-evaluation and on-site review within five years after first being granted accredited status.

Thereafter, continued accreditation requires self-evaluation and on-site review at least every 10 years. The process is the same as for initial accreditation: the institution’s chief administrative or academic officer submits a letter of application with the required fee, the program undergoes self-evaluation and a site visit, and the Committee makes its determination.

Both the initial period and the subsequent periods of accreditation may vary among institutions and among degree programs within an academic unit, if circumstances change or the program is altered.

Continued accreditation is contingent on on-going compliance with the accreditation standards. Notification of substantive program changes occurring between reporting periods is mandatory. (See “Substantive Change Reports” below.)

**Substantive Change Reports**

The program head is responsible for reporting substantive changes in a program to the Committee. A substantive change is one that may significantly affect the quality or direction of a program. Examples include major changes in the following:
• objectives;
• complement of faculty;
• curriculum;
• financial support;
• the administration of a program; or
• revision of student admissions or retention standards.

Note that the replacement of one faculty member within the same specialty may not be considered a substantive change, since faculties are dynamic. The accumulated replacement of faculty members, however, does result in a substantive change. Similarly a minor curriculum change may not be substantive, yet an accumulation of minor changes may become substantial, so care should be taken to evaluate a program each year relative to the last review and/or reported change.

The Committee reviews substantive change reports at its annual meeting or as necessary. It may request additional information, acknowledge the change with or without reservation, or request that a site visit or other action be scheduled. Failure to report a substantive change may result in probation or a show-cause recommendation.

FEES

Fee revenues help underwrite accreditation and educational review committee costs, periodic 3rd-party review of standards, procedures, and guidelines to ensure conformance with generally accepted standards for programmatic accreditation, marketing of accreditation to prospective employers and students, and other program expenses directly associated with the accreditation process. SAF allocates a percentage of membership dues revenue to accreditation activities and absorbs overhead normally associated with these expenses. All review fees and charges are due and payable when invoiced. Late payments may jeopardize a program's application, candidacy or accreditation status.

The SAF Board of Directors has set the fees as indicated in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Fees by type of program</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Technical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidate eligibility review</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>$1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site review (billed January 31 in year prior to year of candidacy or accreditation expiration)</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual (billed July 1 of each year)</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the above fees, the applicant program pays the expenses for visiting team members and any accompanying SAF staff member (except when the accompanying persons are present for training purposes) and miscellaneous expenses related to the conduct of the site visit. If individual team member expenses are to be subject to the per diem rate of the institution, this must be made clear and rates provided at least six months prior to the site visit. Unless the program head requests otherwise, SAF will arrange team travel, reimburse the team members, and subsequently invoice the institution undergoing the site visit.
All fees and charges are due and payable when invoiced. Late payments may jeopardize a program’s application, candidacy or accreditation status.

**VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL FROM ACCREDITATION STATUS**

On request from the chief administrative or academic officer, a program may withdraw voluntarily from accreditation or candidacy status at any time. Decisions to withdraw voluntarily are published by SAF.

**VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL FROM ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

On request from the chief administrative or academic officer, a program that has indicated intent to undergo an accreditation review may withdraw voluntarily from the process at any time prior to Committee decision.

If the withdrawal precedes final selection of the visiting team, half the application fee will be refunded. There will be no refunds once the program head is notified that the visiting team has been selected.

Decisions to withdraw voluntarily from the process are considered to be a voluntary withdrawal of accreditation or candidacy status and are published by SAF.

**APPEALS**

An institution may appeal an adverse decision by the Committee, defined as a denial of initial or continued candidacy or accreditation or revocation of candidacy or accreditation. Appeals are heard and decided by the Society’s governing body, the SAF Board of Directors, which for this purpose includes a public member representative.

Grounds for appeal are limited to allegations that the Committee has erred in one of the following three ways:

- failure to adhere to the accreditation standards;
- failure to follow the accreditation procedures; or
- failure to consider or accurately interpret all the evidence and documentation presented by the applicant during the review process.

The status of the program remains unchanged pending the outcome of the appeal. SAF does not give public notice of an adverse decision until the appeal is complete and the Board of Directors has taken final action.

The appeal must be made within 30 days of the date of the SAF chief executive officer’s formal letter giving notice of the adverse decision. It must be in writing, come from the chief academic officer of the institution, and be sent to the SAF chief executive officer, with a copy to the SAF chief operating officer. The letter must specify the grounds for the appeal and request a hearing.
The institution then has 90 days from the date of notification of the adverse action from SAF to submit a report supporting its position and its request, stating the issues clearly and providing supporting detail and information. This report becomes a part of the record.

The hearing is held before the Board of Directors at its next regularly scheduled meeting occurring 45 or more days after receipt of the detailed report; the institution is given at least 30 days’ notice of the time and place. The institution is responsible for its own travel and other expenses.

The hearing is conducted in accord with due process: the institution has the opportunity to present its case and to respond to questions, and the current Committee chair is available to answer questions. In addition to considering the written report and the testimony introduced by the institution, the Board of Directors considers the institution’s self-evaluation report, the visiting team’s report, and any other material on which the Committee based its findings and decision. It may also consider new material that was not previously made available to the Committee.

Within 45 days after the hearing, the Board of Directors presents its decision in writing, with the facts and reasons that form the basis for its action, to the chief academic officer of the institution, with a copy to the Committee chair in care of the SAF Director of Science and Education. It may uphold the Committee’s decision, or remand the decision to the Committee. The Board of Directors’ decision is final.

If the decision is remanded to the Committee, the Committee will reconsider the matter and issue a decision within 90 days of the Board of Directors’ decision. The committee will take into consideration the facts and reasoning provided in the Board of Directors’ decision, as well as any new information provided by the institution during the appeal process.

If the Committee’s decision to deny or revoke candidate or accredited status is upheld by the Board of Directors, the program must wait at least one year before reapplying and may reapply only after it can demonstrate that it has corrected the deficiencies noted in the Committee Summary Findings and Action report.

**COMPLAINTS AGAINST CANDIDATE AND ACCREDITED PROGRAMS**

Candidate and accredited programs must be consistent with SAF’s accreditation standards. Although SAF cannot intervene in the internal procedures of institutions or act as a regulatory body, it can respond to documented complaints. Any review of complaints is based on the *Procedure, Standards, and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Professional Forestry, Urban Forestry, Natural Resources and Ecosystem Management, and in Forest Technology*.

A complaint about a candidate or accredited program must be in writing, signed, and addressed to the appropriate Committee in care of the SAF Director of Science and Education. The letter must clearly identify the individual, group, or legal entity making the complaint.

The complainant must present substantial evidence that a program has made substantive changes that affect its quality or has engaged in practices that violate the accreditation standards, procedures, and guidelines. The evidence must include facts and, when possible, cite written materials and individuals for corroboration.
The complainant must also demonstrate, when reasonably possible, that a serious effort was made to resolve the issue with the institution or program and that all review procedures provided within the institution and the program have been exhausted.

The SAF Director of Science and Education, in consultation with the Committee chair, reviews the complaint to determine whether it is within the scope of SAF policies and jurisdiction. Within 30 days of receipt of the complaint, the complainant is informed of their decision; if it is within SAF’s scope, the complaint is forwarded to the institution and program for response.

The chief academic officer of the institution is asked to respond within 60 days and advise the Committee about any actions taken to resolve the issue. If the institution does not respond within 60 days, the Committee takes action, which may include a request to show cause why candidacy or accreditation should not be revoked.

Within 60 days of receipt of the institution’s response, the Committee reviews the complaint and the institution’s response and determines whether the matter should be closed or action taken. Action may include probation, suspension, show-cause, or revocation.

If action is taken, material relating to a complaint will be filed and reviewed at the time of the next regularly scheduled accreditation review. If the matter is closed, material will be destroyed.

The complainant is informed periodically about the investigation, including any action taken by the Committee.
SECTION II: STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is based on an assessment of the total educational program, the institution's environment for stimulating intellectual and professional growth, and support for the program. Accreditation ensures that the environment, facilities, faculty, and infrastructure for the educational program are sufficient and appropriate to meet the program's stated mission, goals, and objectives.

All degree programs seeking SAF accreditation must meet Standards I – IV; and meet Standards V & VI as defined for the standard under which accreditation is sought.

STANDARD I: PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

The degree program must have a clearly defined, published statement of its mission, goals, and objectives. The goals and objectives should support the mission statement.

Dynamic educational programs change over time. The program’s mission, goals, and objectives should be periodically reevaluated and revised as appropriate.

The statement of mission, goals, and objectives must reflect the following:

- the SAF standards for accreditation, as detailed below;
- the distinction of managing forested landscapes for diverse objectives as an interdisciplinary profession;
- the needs of the constituencies that the program seeks to serve and that those objectives are consistent with those of the parent institution;
- the role of the professional in meeting diverse, changing social, cultural, economic, and environmental needs and values; and
- the professionalism and ethical behavior necessary to manage and use natural resources for the benefit of society.

STANDARD II: PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Where both an associate’s degree program and a bachelor’s degree program are housed and administered in the same academic unit, every attempt must be taken to distinguish program mission, goals, and objectives.

Administrator

The program must be administered by a person carrying the equivalent title and authority of administrators of comparable units in the institution.

Student Recruitment, Admissions, and Transfers

The institution, academic unit, and/or program must have a clear, published procedure for evaluating and accepting students and for transferring credit to fulfill the general and professional education requirements in the curriculum. Transfer courses and advance placement courses must equal or exceed the content and standards of the accepting institution’s courses.
Teaching
The administration must give high priority to quality instruction through faculty appointments, evaluation, and recognition of performance.

Administrative Support
The program must have adequate staff resources with competencies needed to support the students, faculty, and administration.

Program Planning and Outcomes Assessment
The program must conduct periodic reviews and have policies, processes, and practices for short- and long-term planning. The interests of students and external constituents must be represented in its assessments of educational outcomes. These assessments must indicate the extent to which academic and professional goals have been met, the elements contributing to program success or shortcomings, and the process for enhancing program outcomes.

Because of rapid changes in the forest technician work force, Forest Technology programs will plan and assess their programs in consultation with an advisory body that will provide a feedback mechanism as to appropriate job skills for the graduate technician. Forest Technology programs must maintain cooperative relations with regional industries, organizations, and agencies.

Representations to the Public
Both SAF and institutions must be clear in specifying which degree programs are accredited when communicating with students, employers, and the public. Program administrators must work with their institution’s information officers to ensure that only accredited programs are so designated in catalogs and promotional materials. Similarly, SAF must ensure that all literature it publishes accurately identifies accredited degree programs and only accredited degree programs.

Institutions with SAF-accredited degree programs must use the following statement, or equivalent wording, to describe degree programs with accredited status publicly in their catalogs or elsewhere:

The educational program(s) in [curricula, majors, options] leading to the [degree title(s)] is/are accredited by the Society of American Foresters (SAF).

Provision of Reliable Information to the Public on Performance
The program or institution shall provide reliable information to the public on its performance, including student achievement. Public information may include graduation rates, job placement rates, pass rates of professional certification exams, average starting salaries of graduates, and other information as determined by the program and institution.

The information or links thereto must be posted on the program web pages and may be made publicly available elsewhere—published in catalogs, distributed to local, state or regional newspapers, or provided in specific trade journals or professional publications.
STANDARD III: STUDENTS

Student Life
An important indicator of institution and program commitment to its students is a well-planned effort, in line with the program’s goals and objectives, to provide a broad range of academic and extracurricular offerings, which encourage the development of technical and leadership skills and promote cultural awareness.

Recruitment and Retention
Following institutional policies and guidelines, the program must recruit, retain, and graduate motivated and academically qualified students who reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity.

Advising
The program must provide quality student advising. Advisers must be readily available to students enrolled in the program for counsel regarding the student’s academic, professional, and career opportunities.

STANDARD IV: PARENT INSTITUTION SUPPORT

Program Support
The parent institution must provide adequate funding and other institutional support to allow the program to attract and retain highly qualified faculty, staff, and administrators. It must provide opportunities for faculty development and continuing education.

It must also support the learning environment with computers, spatial information technologies, specialized laboratories, consumable supplies, equipment, and transportation for field instruction.

Supporting Programs
The parent institution must provide strong, well-staffed student support programs. Courses and support programs must be readily accessible for the program’s students. The institution must have adequate library facilities and holdings, electronic access to information, and related services.

Physical Facilities
The parent institution, in collaboration with the program unit, must provide a physical environment that is adequate in size, safe, healthful, and conducive to learning. Outdoor laboratory sites must be available. These sites may be owned by the institution, or by private entities, or under public control. Sites not owned by the institution should have instructional use agreements in place.

STANDARD V: CURRICULUM

FORESTRY

Professional forestry degree programs may take different approaches to curricula: a separate course in one program may be part of a more comprehensive course in another, and a required course in one program may be an elective in another. In all cases, however, forestry education must
begin with the fundamentals: written and oral communication; mathematics; the biological, social, and physical sciences; and the humanities. These general education subject areas are often delivered by arts and science units at the institution, sometimes by the academic unit housing the program. The SAF standards for accreditation differentiate between general education courses and those specific to professional forestry.

The professional forestry courses must provide in-depth coverage of ecology and biology; measurement of forest resources; management of forest resources; and forest resource policy, economics, and administration. The professional education areas of study must be delivered through a curriculum in which courses are sequentially integrated. The curriculum must be presented in a manner that fosters analytical and critical reasoning skills, including systematic problem solving and decision-making. Awareness of historical and current issues and policies affecting forest resource management and conservation must be established.

The curriculum must provide a variety of educational experiences, including lectures, discussion, simulations, computer applications, and individual and group projects in laboratories and field experiences. The purpose of these experiences is to ensure that graduates of the program can knowledgeably develop, apply, and execute management plans that adequately address matters of ownership goals, forest health and sustainability, and the legal and regulatory environment. Students must be able to apply scientific methodologies to attain an array of sustainable forest products, services, and conditions.

**General Education**

*Communications*

Oral and written communication skills must be developed throughout the curriculum. Students must have the following:

1. the ability to prepare and deliver effective oral presentations;
2. proficiency in English composition, technical and business writing, and writing for nonprofessional audiences; and
3. the ability to read with comprehension and to understand, communicate, and critically evaluate multiple viewpoints.

*Science and Mathematics*

The curriculum must include mathematics and the biological and physical sciences.

1. **Biological sciences.** Students must understand the following:
   a. the components, patterns, and processes of biological and ecological systems across spatial and temporal scales; and
   b. molecular biology, cells, organisms, populations, species, communities, and ecosystems.

2. **Physical sciences.** Students must have an understanding of physical and chemical properties, measurements, structure, and states of matter.
3. *Mathematics.* Students must know and be able to use the basic approaches and applications of mathematics and statistics for analysis and problem solving, as appropriate for the program’s stated outcomes.

**Social Sciences and Humanities**

The social sciences and humanities are critical components of a professional education. Students must demonstrate the following:

1. the ability to address moral and ethical questions and use critical reasoning skills;
2. an understanding of human behavior and social and economic structures, processes, and institutions of importance across a broad range of societies; and
3. an appreciation for the diverse dimensions of the human experience and culture.

**Professional Education**

The forestry program must have depth, breadth, and balance among the four major subject categories below, with adequate instruction in basic principles, typical laboratory and field applications, and current practices.

**A. Ecology and Biology**

Students must - demonstrate the following competencies:

1. an understanding of taxonomy and an ability to identify forest and other tree species, their distribution, and associated vegetation and wildlife;
2. knowledge of soil properties and processes, hydrology, water quality, and watershed functions;
3. an understanding of ecological concepts and principles, including the structure and function of ecosystems, plant and animal communities, competition, diversity, population dynamics, succession, disturbance, and nutrient cycling;
4. an ability to make ecosystem, forest, and stand assessments; and
5. knowledge of tree physiology and the effects of climate, fire, pollutants, moisture, nutrients, genetics, insects and diseases on tree and forest health and productivity.

**B. Measurement of Forest Resources**

Students must demonstrate the following competencies:

1. an ability to identify and measure land areas and conduct spatial analysis;
2. an ability to design and implement comprehensive inventories that meet specific objectives using appropriate sampling methods and units of measurement; and
3. an ability to analyze inventory data and project future forest, stand, and tree conditions.

**C. Management of Forest Resources**

Students must demonstrate the following competencies:
1. an ability to develop, apply, and understand the effects of silvicultural prescriptions appropriate to management objectives, including methods of establishing and influencing the composition, growth, and quality of forests;

2. an ability to analyze the economic, environmental, and social consequences of forest resource management strategies and decisions;

3. an ability to develop management plans with specific multiple objectives and constraints;

4. an understanding of the valuation procedures, market forces, processing systems, transportation and harvesting activities that translate human demands for timber-based and other consumable forest products into the availability of those products;

5. an understanding of the valuation procedures, market, and non-market forces that avail humans the opportunities to enjoy non-consumptive products and services of forests; and

6. an understanding of the administration, ownership, and organization of forest management enterprises.

**D. Forest Resource Policy, Economics, and Administration**

Students must demonstrate the following competencies:

1. an understanding of forest policy and the processes by which it is developed;

2. knowledge of how federal, state, and local laws and regulations govern the practice of forest resource management;

3. an understanding of professional ethics, including the SAF Code, and recognition of the responsibility to adhere to ethical standards in decision making on behalf of clients and the public; and

4. an understanding of the technical, financial, human resources, and legal aspects of public and private enterprises.

**Technological Literacy**

Students must be able to use contemporary electronic technologies in professional life.

**Distance Learning**

Any distance-learning component of a program must be consistent with the program's stated objectives. Examples of distance learning include off-campus classroom programs, external degree programs, branch campuses, correspondence courses, and electronically based instruction.

**URBAN FORESTRY**

Professional urban forestry degree programs may take different approaches to curricula: a separate course in one program may be part of a more comprehensive course in another, and a required course in one program may be an elective in another. In all cases, however, urban forestry education must begin with the fundamentals: written and oral communication; mathematics; the biological, social, and physical sciences; and the humanities. These general education subject areas are often delivered by arts and science units at the institution, sometimes by the academic unit.
housing the urban forestry program. The SAF standards for accreditation differentiate between
general education courses and those specific to professional urban forestry.

The professional education must provide in-depth coverage of ecology and biology; measurement of
urban forests and other forest resources in urban settings; management of urban forests and trees
in an urban environment; and urban forest resource policy, standards, economics, business,
administration, and law. The professional education areas of study must be delivered through a
curriculum in which courses are sequentially integrated. The curriculum must be presented in a
manner that fosters analytical and critical reasoning skills, including systematic problem solving and
decision-making. Awareness of historical and current issues and policies affecting urban forest
management and conservation must be established.

The curriculum must provide a variety of educational experiences including lectures, discussion,
simulations, computer applications, and individual and group projects in laboratories and field
experiences. The purpose of these experiences is to ensure that graduates of the program can
knowledgeably develop, apply, and execute management plans that adequately address matters of
ownership goals, urban forest health and sustainability, and the legal and regulatory environment.
Students must be able to apply scientific methodologies necessary to attain an array of sustainable
urban forest resources, services, and conditions.

General Education

Communications

Oral and written communication skills must be developed throughout the curriculum. Students must
have the following:

1. the ability to prepare and deliver effective oral presentations;
2. proficiency in English composition, technical and business writing, and writing for
   nonprofessional audiences; and
3. the ability to read with comprehension and to understand, communicate, and critically
   evaluate multiple viewpoints.

Science and Mathematics

The curriculum must include mathematics and the biological and physical sciences.

1. Biological sciences. Students must understand the following:
   a. the components, patterns, and processes of biological and ecological systems across
      spatial and temporal scales; and
   b. molecular biology, cells, organisms, populations, species, communities, and
      ecosystems.
2. Physical sciences. Students must have an understanding of physical and chemical properties,
   measurements, structure, and states of matter.
3. Mathematics. Students must know and be able to use the basic approaches and applications
   of mathematics and statistics for analysis and problem solving, as appropriate for the
   program’s stated outcomes.
Social Sciences and Humanities

The social sciences and humanities are critical components of a professional education. Students must have the following:

1. the ability to address moral and ethical questions and use critical reasoning skills;
2. an understanding of human behavior and social and economic structures, processes, and institutions of importance across a broad range of societies; and
3. an appreciation for the diverse dimensions of the human experience and culture.

Professional Education

The urban forestry program must have depth, breadth, and balance among the four major subject categories below, with adequate instruction in basic principles, typical laboratory and field applications, and current practices.

A. Ecology and Biology

Students must demonstrate the following competencies:

1. an understanding of taxonomy and an ability to identify a wide range of woody plant species, including native forest species and introduced urban forest species, and an understanding of their growth and health in urban and suburban environments;
2. an understanding of soil properties, biology, and processes, especially soil nutrients, soil compaction issues and mitigation, hydrology, water quality, and watershed function;
3. an understanding of ecological concepts and principles including the structure and function of ecosystems and especially the growth and performance of various tree species in urban/suburban settings, plant and animal communities common to urban forests, diversity, and disturbance;
4. a core competency in arboriculture including an understanding of tree establishment and maintenance in urban settings, and an understanding of basic tools and equipment and their use;
5. an understanding of tree physiology and anatomy and effects of climate, fire, pollutants, moisture, genetics, construction, insects, diseases and cultural problems on tree health and urban forest composition;
6. knowledge of urban wildlife and its interactions with urban forest components;
7. knowledge of and ability to practice arboriculture and urban forestry in multiple cultural, physical, and housing density settings; and
8. a thorough understanding of the compartmentalization of decay in trees, defect development, tree failure patterns, and tree structure evaluation.

B. Measurement of Urban Forests and other Forest Resources in Urban Settings

Students must demonstrate the following competencies:
1. an ability to identify and place trees in an appropriate location relative to each other and relative to structures in an urban/suburban environment and evaluate the health and benefits of urban forests;
2. an ability to measure, assess and recommend the appropriateness and value of existing trees and urban forests;
3. knowledge of and ability to assess tree risk, health, and value (appraisal);
4. knowledge of statistical sampling methods and ability to conduct and analyze inventory data to model future urban forest changes, assess green space, and monitor tree health;
5. knowledge of spatial analysis and ability to utilize GIS and remote sensing tools/skills in urban-rural interfaces; and
6. an ability to understand and apply appropriate appraisal methods to value urban trees taking into account species, site, landscape location, condition, and market value.

C. Management of Urban Forests and Trees in an Urban Environment:

Students must demonstrate the following competencies:

1. an ability to develop and apply prescriptions appropriate to management objectives, including methods of establishing and influencing the composition, growth, and quality of trees and urban forests and to understand the impact of those prescriptions;
2. an ability to analyze the economic, environmental, and social consequences of urban forest management strategies and decisions;
3. an ability to develop management plans with specific multiple objectives and constraints;
4. knowledge of urban and land use planning including the fundamentals of site planning and landscape design;
5. knowledge of basic accounting and business skills, including working with budget development and management; and
6. an understanding of wildlife habitat management in urban environments, including habitat enhancement and wildlife pest management.

D. Urban Forest Resource Policy, Economics, and Administration and Law:

Students must demonstrate the following competencies:

1. an understanding of processes and legal aspects of municipal policy formation;
2. an understanding of federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, and regulations relative to the practice of urban forestry;
3. an understanding of professional ethics and recognition of the responsibilities to adhere to ethical standards in urban forestry decision-making on behalf of clients and the public;
4. an ability to communicate as an urban forestry professional;
5. an understanding of industry best management practices and the applicable federal, state, and local guidelines and standards for safety and performance; and
6. an understanding of the administration, ownership, and organizational implications for urban forests under both private and public ownership, including appraisals.

Technological Literacy
Students must be able to use contemporary electronic technologies in professional life.

Distance Learning
Any distance-learning component of a program must be consistent with the program's stated objectives. Examples of distance learning include off-campus classroom programs, external degree programs, branch campuses, correspondence courses, and electronically based instruction.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT (NREM)

Professional NREM degree programs may take different approaches to curricula: a separate course in one program may be part of a more comprehensive course in another, and a required course in one program may be an elective in another. In all cases, however, NREM education must begin with the fundamentals: written and oral communication; mathematics; the biological, social, and physical sciences; and the humanities. These general education subject areas are often delivered by arts and science units at the institution, sometimes by the academic unit housing the NREM program. The SAF standards for accreditation differentiate between general education courses and those specific to professional natural resources and ecosystem management.

The professional education areas of study must provide in-depth coverage of ecology and biology; measurement and evaluation of ecosystem components, properties, and functioning; and management of ecosystems, including legal, regulatory, policy, and economic aspects. The professional education areas of study must be delivered through a curriculum in which courses are sequentially integrated. The curriculum must be presented in a manner that fosters analytical and critical reasoning skills, including systematic problem solving and decision making. Awareness of historical and current issues and policies affecting ecosystem management and conservation must be established.

The curriculum must provide a variety of educational experiences including lectures, discussion, simulations, computer applications, and individual and group projects in laboratories and field experiences. The purpose of these experiences is to ensure that graduates of the program can knowledgeably develop, apply, and execute management plans that adequately address matters of ownership goals, ecosystem health and sustainability, and the legal and regulatory environment. Students must be able to apply scientific methodologies necessary to attain an array of sustainable natural resources and ecosystem services and conditions.

General Education

Communications
Oral and written communication skills must be developed throughout the curriculum. Students must have the following:

1. the ability to prepare and deliver effective oral presentations;
2. proficiency in English composition, technical and business writing, and writing for nonprofessional audiences; and
3. the ability to read with comprehension and to understand, communicate, and critically evaluate multiple viewpoints.

**Science and Mathematics**

The curriculum must include mathematics and the biological and physical sciences.

1. *Biological sciences.* Students must understand the following:
   a. the components, patterns, and processes of biological and ecological systems across spatial and temporal scales; and
   b. molecular biology, cells, organisms, populations, species, communities, and ecosystems.

2. *Physical sciences.* Students must have an understanding of physical and chemical properties, measurements, structure, and states of matter.

3. *Mathematics.* Students must know and be able to use the basic approaches and applications of mathematics and statistics for analysis and problem solving, as appropriate for the program’s stated outcomes.

**Social Sciences and Humanities**

The social sciences and humanities are critical components of a professional education. Students must demonstrate the following:

1. the ability to address moral and ethical questions and use critical reasoning skills;
2. an understanding of human behavior and social and economic structures, processes, and institutions of importance across a broad range of societies; and
3. an appreciation for the diverse dimensions of the human experience and culture.

**Professional Education**

The natural resource program must have depth, breadth, and balance among the four major subject categories below, with adequate instruction in basic principles, typical laboratory and field applications, and current practices.

**A. Fundamental Knowledge of Ecosystem Components and Ecosystem Functioning, including Human Systems:**

Students must demonstrate the following competencies:

1. knowledge of the elements of botany, zoology, entomology, plant pathology, plant physiology, and genetics essential to an understanding of higher-order ecological processes;
2. an understanding of taxonomy and systematics and an ability to identify dominant and/or ecologically significant components of the flora and fauna of ecosystems at regional to continental scales;
3. knowledge of the important life history characteristics of dominant and special-concern species;
4. knowledge of soil properties and processes, hydrology, water quality, and watershed functions;
5. an understanding of ecological concepts and principles including the structure and function of ecosystems, plant and animal communities, competition, diversity, population dynamics, succession, disturbance, and nutrient cycling; and
6. an understanding of the effects of climate, fire, pollutants, moisture, nutrients, insects and diseases, and other environmental factors on ecosystem health and functioning at local and landscape scales.

B. Measurement and Assessment of Ecosystem Components, Properties, and Functioning, including Human Systems:

 Students must demonstrate the following competencies:

1. an ability to identify, measure, and map land areas and conduct spatial analyses;
2. an ability to design and implement accurate inventories and assessments of dominant or critical ecosystem components and services, ecosystem properties, and indicators of ecosystem health, including trees and other vegetation, vertebrate fauna, biodiversity, soil and water resources, timber, and recreational opportunities; and
3. an ability to summarize and statistically analyze inventory and assessment data, evaluate the status of important ecosystem components, describe and interpret interactions and relationships, and project future ecosystem conditions.

C. Identification and Evaluation of Management Objectives:

 Students must demonstrate the following competencies:

1. understanding of the valuation procedures, including market and nonmarket forces, that apply to ecosystem goods and services such as timber, water, recreational opportunities, carbon and nutrient cycling, and plant and animal biodiversity;
2. an ability to explain the relationships between demand, costs of production, and availability of those goods and services;
3. an ability to describe procedures for measuring stakeholder values and managing conflicts in the evaluation and establishment of management objectives;
4. an ability to evaluate and understand the economic, ecological, and social trade-offs of alternative land uses and ecosystem management decisions at local, regional, and global scales; and
5. knowledge and understanding of environmental policy as applied to ecosystems and the processes by which it is developed.

D. Management Planning, Practice, and Implementation:

 Students must demonstrate the following competencies:
1. an ability to develop and apply prescriptions for manipulating the composition, structure, and function of ecosystems to achieve management objectives, and to understand the impacts of those prescriptions at local and landscape scales;

2. an ability to identify and control or mitigate specific threats to ecosystems such as insects, diseases, fire, pollutant stressors, and invasive plants or animals;

3. knowledge of the methods and procedures unique to the production of ecosystem goods and services such as timber, recreation, water, and wildlife populations;

4. an ability to describe the process of adaptive management and its application to the management of ecosystems;

5. an understanding of how federal, state, and local laws and regulations apply to management practice;

6. an ability to develop management plans with specific objectives and constraints that are responsive to ownership or stakeholder goals and demonstrate clear and feasible linkages between current condition and desired future condition;

7. an understanding of professional ethics, including the SAF Code, and recognition of the responsibility to adhere to ethical standards in the practice of natural resource management on behalf of clients and the public; and

8. an ability to integrate the knowledge, understanding, and skills from prior coursework in the development of collaborative solutions to realistic management problems.

**Technological Literacy**

Students must be able to use contemporary electronic technologies in professional life.

**Distance Learning**

Any distance-learning component of a program must be consistent with the program's stated objectives. Examples of distance learning include off-campus classroom programs, external degree programs, branch campuses, correspondence courses, and electronically based instruction.

**FOREST TECHNOLOGY**

Forest technology degree programs may take different approaches to curricula: a separate course in one program, for example, may be part of a more comprehensive course in another. In all cases, however, the curriculum must provide a variety of educational experiences. Well-planned experimentation and development are encouraged. Innovative or nontraditional approaches and programs will be evaluated against their intended outcomes.

**General Requirements**

As used below, a *contact hour* is a scheduled class hour of lecture or laboratory, whether indoors or in the field. Online course hours are considered lectures for calculating contact hours; an online course cannot substitute for indoor or field laboratory instruction.

The program must:
1. provide instruction in oral and written communication, mathematics, natural and physical sciences, and social sciences.

2. maintain course syllabi and outlines that clearly state instructional objectives, activities, and resources to be used during instruction. Such documents must be reviewed at least every three years, revised when appropriate, and dated.

3. use technically accurate, up-to-date instructional materials, textbooks, and computers and other electronic resources.

4. provide a minimum 600 contact hours of instruction devoted to indoor and field laboratory instruction.

5. provide appropriate instruction in safety in advance of indoor and field laboratories.

**Technical Education**

The forest technology curriculum must impart student proficiency in the following technical subject areas. Depth of instruction should reflect regional priorities and practices.

**Dendrology:** Students must be able to: identify regionally important species by leaves, twigs, bark, and fruit characteristics; know the family, genus, and species of each specimen; describe species associations and succession; know the major commercial species of trees in North America and their uses in wood products; and use dichotomous keys.

**Forest ecology:** Students must know about: plant succession; site; soils; silvics; environmental protection; weather and climate influences; relationships of trees to other organisms; biodiversity; and ecosystems.

**Silviculture:** Students must understand: methods of regeneration; site preparation; planting practices; intermediate treatments; nursery and seed orchard practices; pesticide use and application; prescribed burning; and pre-commercial thinning, commercial thinning, and harvest cutting.

**Protection:** Students must be able to: describe fire management; threats to forest health; and regional insect, disease, and animal damage problems and their control.

**Measurements:** Students must achieve competence in: forest measurement and equipment; log scaling practices; forest product measurement; sampling statistics; cruising and inventory techniques; log rules and volume tables; log and tree grading; growth measurement; and computer applications and use.

**Land surveying:** Students must be able to: use a hand compass, surveying equipment, pacing, and chains; read conventional and computer maps; conduct deed and title searches; understand land descriptions; and use global positioning systems (GPS) and geographic information systems (GIS).

**Remote sensing:** Students must be able to: acquire and process primary data derived from various sensors; identify and interpret remotely sensed data; determine area, scale, and height; conduct type mapping; locate roads; and obtain bearings and distances.
**Woods safety:** Students must know basic first aid; be able to identify hazards; understand hand and power tool safety; and use pesticides safely.

**Forest products manufacturing:** Students must understand: the importance of regionally manufactured primary and secondary forest products; and the manufacturing processes by which forest products are produced.

**Harvesting techniques:** Students must understand: harvesting systems; cost analysis; logging plans; wood identification; road layout and construction; and best management practices (BMPs).

**Multiple use of forestland:** Students must demonstrate an understanding of: forest wildlife; fish habitat; recreation; wilderness; watershed; timber; range; minerals; and public conflicts and public participation.

**Forest management practices:** Students must know about: timber appraisal; contracts; forest management and ecosystem management principles; regional forest management regulations; sustainable forest management concepts and certification; and business recordkeeping and basic accounting.

**Human resources management:** Students must demonstrate an understanding of: the behavior of groups and individuals; motivation; leadership; team building and dynamics; planning; decision making; rating and evaluation; work force management; conflict resolution; and ethics.

Students must complete a forestry-related work experience of at least 80 hours, such as on-the-job training or a comprehensive field project. The experience should simulate working conditions of typical employers and include full-day schedules with appropriate assignments.

**STANDARD VI: FACULTY**

**FORESTRY**

The faculty must provide high-quality instruction, keep the curriculum current and in concert with the program's educational goals and objectives, and provide effective guidance for students. The program must follow the parent institution’s policies and guidelines in the recruitment and retention of faculty members who reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity.

The program must have a minimum of 8 full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty members who are substantively connected to the program. Connectivity is fundamentally shown as having primary academic responsibility in that program and reporting to the program’s academic head. Faculty members who teach required and/or restricted elective courses in the professional subject areas, but do not report to the program head, may show connectivity by also participating in one or more of the following: curriculum development; advising undergraduate students; providing input to program outcome assessment; by the program’s head having formal input into the faculty member’s annual evaluation. The teaching assignments of the faculty members who make up the 8 FTEs must be reasonably distributed across the required areas of professional education as defined in Standard V.
**Academic and Professional Competency**

The faculty must represent a diversity of professional experiences and education relevant to forestry from a variety of academic institutions. The program should have close and continuing relationships with external forestry professionals and may use such individuals to provide additional expertise and breadth of experience.

**Teaching Skills**

The faculty members must demonstrate expertise in their areas of instruction, be enthusiastic and effective teachers, have an aptitude for working closely with students, be able to stimulate independent thinking, and provide intellectual leadership. They must be involved in continuous professional development and scholarly activities appropriate to their disciplines.

**URBAN FORESTRY**

The faculty must provide high-quality instruction, keep the curriculum current and in concert with the program’s educational goals and objectives, and provide effective guidance for students. The program must follow the parent institution’s policies and guidelines in the recruitment and retention of faculty members who reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity.

The program must have a minimum of 8 full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty members who are substantively connected to the program. At least one of the full-time faculty members must have urban forestry expertise. Connectivity is fundamentally shown as having primary academic responsibility in that program and reporting to the program’s academic head. Faculty members who teach required and/or restricted elective courses in the professional subject areas, but do not report to the program head, may show connectivity by also participating in one or more of the following: curriculum development; advising undergraduate students; providing input to program outcome assessment; by the program’s head having formal input into the faculty member’s annual evaluation. The teaching assignments of the faculty members who make up the 8 FTEs must be reasonably distributed across the required areas of professional education as defined in Standard V.

**Academic and Professional Competency**

The faculty must represent a diversity of professional experiences and education relevant to urban forestry from a variety of academic institutions. The program should have close and continuing relationships with external urban forestry professionals and may use such individuals to provide additional expertise and breadth of experience.

**Teaching Skills**

The faculty members must demonstrate expertise in their areas of instruction, be enthusiastic and effective teachers, have an aptitude for working closely with students, be able to stimulate independent thinking, and provide intellectual leadership. They must be involved in continuous professional development and scholarly activities appropriate to their disciplines.
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

The faculty must provide high-quality instruction, keep the curriculum current and in concert with the program’s educational goals and objectives, and provide effective guidance for students. The program must follow the parent institution’s policies and guidelines in the recruitment and retention of faculty members who reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity.

The program must have a minimum of 8 full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty members who are substantively connected to the program. Connectivity is fundamentally shown as having primary academic responsibility in that program and reporting to the program’s academic head. Faculty members who teach required and/or restricted elective courses in the professional subject areas, but do not report to the program head, may show connectivity by also participating in one or more of the following: curriculum development; advising undergraduate students; providing input to program outcome assessment; by the program’s head having formal input into the faculty member’s annual evaluation. The teaching assignments of the faculty members who make up the 8 FTEs must be reasonably distributed across the required areas of professional education as defined in Standard V.

Academic and Professional Competency

The faculty must represent a diversity of professional experiences and education relevant to natural resources and ecosystem management from a variety of academic institutions. The program should have close and continuing relationships with external natural resource professionals and may use such individuals to provide additional expertise and breadth of experience.

Teaching Skills

The faculty members must demonstrate expertise in their areas of instruction, be enthusiastic and effective teachers, have an aptitude for working closely with students, be able to stimulate independent thinking, and provide intellectual leadership. They must be involved in continuous professional development and scholarly activities appropriate to their disciplines.

FOREST TECHNOLOGY

The faculty must provide high-quality instruction, keep the curriculum current and in concert with the program’s educational goals and objectives, and provide effective guidance for students. The program must follow the parent institution’s policies and guidelines in the recruitment and retention of faculty members who reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity.

Academic and Professional Competency

As used below, a full-time instructor has a minimum nine-month-per-year contract, and a full-time student takes 30 (semester) hours or 45 (quarter) hours of instruction per year.

The program must have at least two full-time instructors whose primary responsibility is the forest technology program and its students.

One of the full-time instructors must hold a SAF-accredited or CFAB/BCAF-accredited bachelor’s or higher degree. The other full-time instructor must hold a bachelor’s or higher degree in forestry or a closely related field.
All adjunct instructors and assistants in forestry-related subject matter must be qualified on the basis of formal training or extensive practical experience.

The ratio of full-time-equivalent students to full-time-equivalent instructors in the degree program should not exceed 25 to 1.

The ratio of full-time-equivalent students to full-time-equivalent instructors should not exceed 20 to 1 in indoor and field laboratories, and should not exceed 12 to 1 in laboratories where hazardous equipment, such as logging or sawmilling equipment, is used.

The program should have close and continuing relationships with external natural resource professionals and may use such individuals to provide additional expertise and breadth of experience.

**Teaching Skills**

The faculty members must demonstrate expertise in their areas of instruction, be enthusiastic and effective teachers, have an aptitude for working closely with students, be able to stimulate independent thinking, and provide professional and ethical leadership. They must participate in continuing professional development through professional, scientific, technical, or scholarly endeavors, such as professional or public service, research, consulting, continuing education, and publication.
SECTION III: GUIDELINES FOR THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This section suggests guidelines for presenting self-evaluation information required by the Committee and the visiting team for each program seeking accreditation. Its use is not intended to limit the scope of comments about the program; however, SAF requests that the report correspond to the recommended outline.

Continuous self-study and self-evaluation are the essential first steps in the accrediting process. The SAF accreditation standards are the framework for the self-evaluation report and assessment procedures used by a visiting team. While a goal of the self-evaluation is to demonstrate compliance with SAF accreditation standards, program self-evaluation also should determine accountability and provide the basis for program planning and improvement.

A self-evaluation is valuable only if it is candid and realistic, and assesses all aspects of the program(s) under review. The self-evaluation report should include materials that show both evidence of critical thinking, planning, development, and implementation during the period since the last SAF review, and anticipated future program directions and changes.

The self-evaluation report is considered the property of the institution and SAF will not release its contents unless authorized in writing to do so.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

The quality of the self-evaluation is more important than the quantity of the materials submitted. The self-evaluation is a major undertaking, requiring full support of all those involved in the program. It requires collecting and analyzing extensive amounts of data in preparation for the SAF visiting team. Questions and comments may be directed to the SAF Director of Science and Education, who is available to assist the program in undertaking its self-evaluation and on-site visit.

Suggestions for conducting the self-evaluation include:

- Appoint a small steering committee with a strong and capable coordinator to plan the work and keep it on schedule. It is helpful for the committee to include a person who was actively involved with a previous self-evaluation.

- Provide the coordinator with adequate time to carry out this important function. Make sure the committee has adequate support services throughout the self-evaluation process.

- The steering committee must become very familiar with the SAF accreditation standards and be ready to question, analyze, and debate the contents of the report.

- Determine early what factual and statistical data are required and request the appropriate institutional persons or committees to prepare them.

- Set up subcommittees to accomplish tasks. Existing standing committees can be used.
Adopt and adhere to a definite and realistic timetable. The report is due at least 30 days in advance of the scheduled on-site visit, but should not be written more than 12 months in advance of the visit.

The steering committee should inform the program’s community and constituencies about the self-evaluation and encourage involvement. Involve faculty, administrators (including central administrative officers), advisory boards, staff, students, employer groups, and alumni in the self-evaluation process.

Allow at least a month prior to the submission date for final editing and copying. The steering committee must reduce the bulk of materials to a concise, comprehensive report that the visiting team can be expected to read, study, and understand.

Send the report, along with supporting materials, electronically to the SAF Director of Science and Education.

Conciseness in the main body of the report is suggested. Supportive data, summaries in graphic and tabular form, and other materials documenting the main body summaries should be included in clearly defined appendices.

OUTLINE OF INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

Use the following outline in conjunction with the Accreditation Handbook, Section II to determine appropriate information to include in the self-evaluation report. This outline suggests the type of response required to satisfy each standard. It is not presented to restrict a program's description of how compliance with a standard is achieved. However, SAF requires that certain data be submitted in the format shown (see documents A-F and Program F_S Calculations).

NOTE: Programs should provide separate discussions for each accredited degree program as appropriate.

If an academic program is, for example, accrediting one degree program under the Forestry standard and another under the NREM standard, there must be distinct discussions for standards I, V, and VI.

STANDARD I: PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

It is essential to state clearly and document printed references to the items required by Standard I, as evaluation of subsequent standards is dependent upon a thorough explanation of a program's educational objectives.

1. Document the program’s mission, goals and objectives and describe how they meet Standard I. Show where they appear in publicly disseminated materials.

2. Describe the process for periodic self-evaluation and revision of the program's mission, goals, and objectives.
STANDARD II: PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

1. Document that the program is administered by a person carrying the equivalent title and authority of administrators of comparable units in the institution. Present an organizational chart of the program, showing its relationship to the institution's central administration.

2. Present the published procedure for evaluating and accepting students and for transferring credit to fulfill the general and professional education requirements in the curriculum. Document that transfer courses, advanced placement courses, and courses accepted for students in an accredited master's degree program are equal to or exceed the content and standards of the accepting institution’s courses. In accordance with the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (Buckley Amendment), visiting team members may ask to review student files on site to assess compliance in this area.

3. Describe how high priority is given to quality instruction through faculty appointments, evaluation, and recognition of performance.

4. Describe staff resources with competencies needed to support the students, faculty, and administration and explain why these are/are not adequate.

5. Describe policies and processes for both short- and long-term planning of academic programs and detail how periodic reviews and updates are conducted.

6. Describe in detail the process and methods for assessing educational outcomes of the specific curricular elements articulated in Standard V. Indicate whether academic and professional goals are being met, the elements most contributing to program success or lack thereof, and the means by which assessment findings are used to enhance program outcomes. Describe how the interests of students and external constituents are represented in the assessments.

An outcomes assessment process is judged acceptable if it follows an outcomes assessment procedure endorsed by the parent institution that involves assessment of knowledge enhancement and retention across the curriculum relative to the learning objectives, includes alumni and employer feedback, and has a clearly identified link to curriculum review and improvement. Valid metrics, which need not all be used by any given institution, include, but are not limited to:

- Internal assessments such as group project reports, cumulative exams, capstone course evaluation, videotaping speeches.
- Instruments such as institution-wide competence testing, standardized tests, or evaluations.
- External assessments such as industry/public agency/NGO surveys, graduate surveys, employer surveys.
- External instruments such as state licensing tests, SAF certification, performance in various competency testing.

7. Describe cooperative relations with regional industries, organizations, and agencies. Programs being reviewed under the Forest Technology standard must document that they work with a formal advisory committee.
8. Document all places where accredited status of degree programs is published, including but not limited to, the academic catalog, institution web pages, and program web pages.

9. Document where information on student achievement is publically available. The information may include, but is not limited to, job placement rates of the program, graduation rates of the program, pass rates of professional certification exams, average starting salaries of graduates, and other information as determined by the program and institution.

It is expected that information on student achievement – or links thereto – will be clearly present on department or program web pages. If institutional policy proscribes such information or links, provide an explanation of the policy.

**STANDARD III: STUDENTS**

1. Describe opportunities for students to participate in a range of academic and extracurricular offerings, which encourage the development of technical and leadership skills and promote cultural awareness.

2. Document that the program follows institutional policies and guidelines in recruiting and retaining motivated and academically qualified students who reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity. Describe institution, academic unit and/or program efforts at recruiting and retaining a diverse enrollment.

3. Complete Document F: Graduate Employment Summary and Document G: Student Data Summary

4. Describe the program’s commitment to quality student advising regarding students’ academic, professional, and career opportunities.

**STANDARD IV: PARENT INSTITUTION SUPPORT**

1. Discuss how the parent institution provides adequate funding and other institutional support to: allow the program to attract and retain highly qualified faculty, staff, and administrators; and provide for elements critical to the learning environment such as computers, spatial information technologies, specialized laboratories, and field instruction.

2. Compare support for the program, including faculty salaries by academic rank, to other academic units in the parent institution and indicate changes that have occurred or are anticipated in the educational budget. Provide the program budget for the current fiscal year, and indicate by percent how the budget has changed in the last three years in terms of salaries, equipment, supplies, and travel and its relationship to the overall institutional budget. To the extent data for other similar programs are available, regional comparisons are also encouraged.

3. Document that faculty are provided opportunities for professional development and continuing education.

4. Discuss student support services provided by the parent institution and confirm that these services are readily accessible to students in the program.
5. Discuss major strengths and weaknesses of the parent institution and supporting departments, including breadth and accessibility, and how they affect the program and its students.

6. Describe library facilities, holdings, electronic access to information, and related services to which students have access and discuss their adequacy relative to the program.

7. Describe how the parent institution, in collaboration with the unit housing the program, provides a physical environment that is safe, healthful, and conducive to learning.

8. Describe outdoor laboratory sites and their location relevant to the campus. If sites are not owned by the institution, discuss instructional use agreements that ensure access.

**STANDARD V: CURRICULUM**

1. Complete Documents A-1, A-2, B-1, and B-2. If Document A-2 or B-2 is not relevant, it does not need to be submitted.

   Use the documents appropriate to the standard under which accreditation is sought – Forestry, Urban Forestry, Natural Resources and Ecosystem Management, or Forest Technology.

   Complete a set of A and B documents for each option/concentration/track for which accreditation is sought.

   You may create your own documents, as long as they provide the information requested in the provided forms.

   For Document A-1: *General Education Summary (Required Courses)*: List each course and indicate the credit hours required in each category: (a) Communications; (b) Science and Mathematics; (c) and Social Sciences and Humanities. Where appropriate, total credit hours for each course may be prorated across the areas.

   Use Document A-2: *General Education Summary (Restricted Electives)* to list general education restricted electives, if any, and indicate the credit hours required in each category: (a) Communications; (b) Science and Mathematics; (c) and Social Sciences and Humanities. Where appropriate, total credit hours for each course may be prorated across the areas.

   See also Section II - Standard V: Curriculum, for specific descriptions of the general education components.

   For Document B-1: *Professional Education Summary (Required Courses)*: List each required course and indicate the approximate number of credit hours devoted to each subject area. Where appropriate, total credit hours for each course may be prorated across the areas. For example, the course "Forest Resources Management, 5 credits" might cover topics addressed by subject areas (Management of Forest Resources - 3 credits) and (Forest Resource Policy, Economics, and Administration - 2 credits). Indicate courses with significant fieldwork.

   For Document B-2: *Professional Education Summary (Restricted Electives)*: List each restricted elective course that contributes to the professional education categories and indicate the
approximate number of credit hours devoted to each. Where appropriate, total credit hours for each course may be prorated across these areas. Indicate courses with significant fieldwork.

See also Section II - Standard V: Curriculum, for specific descriptions of each of the professional areas.

*Include course syllabi for professional education required and restricted elective courses as an appendix.*

2. For the professional areas of study, discuss and describe how the curriculum delivers/imparts each of the professional/technical competencies/proficiencies specified in Section II – Standard V: Curriculum.

3. Discuss how oral and written communication skills are reinforced throughout the curriculum.

4. Describe how the curriculum fosters analytical and critical reasoning skills, including systematic problem solving and decision-making by individuals and in a team environment.

5. Describe how student awareness of historical and current issues and policies affecting resource management and conservation is established.

6. Describe how the curriculum provides a variety of educational experiences including lectures, discussion, simulations, computer applications, and individual and group projects in laboratories and field experiences and how these contribute to the program’s stated educational outcomes. Discuss safety instruction provided in advance of indoor and field laboratories.

7. Discuss how the curriculum imparts technological literacy.

8. Describe any distance-learning component of a program and how it is consistent with the program's stated objectives. Distance learning includes off-campus classroom programs, external degree programs, branch campuses, correspondence courses, and off-campus, electronically-based instruction.

9. For programs seeking accreditation under the Forest Technology standard: describe how the forestry-related work experience simulates typical working conditions and how these experiences differ from normal laboratory assignments and exercises.

**Standard IV: Faculty**

1. Complete Document C-1; and C-2 if appropriate; follow the format as presented.

   Use Document C-1: *Background Summary for Faculty Reporting to the Program Head*, to indicate faculty members within the department.

   Use Document C-2: *Background Summary for Faculty Teaching Courses Listed in Forms B-1 and B-2 but NOT Reporting to the Program Head* to indicate faculty members from other departments or outside agencies who teach required professional courses or restricted electives. Document any use of individuals from outside the program.
You may create your own documents, as long as they provide the information requested in the provided forms.

2. **Complete Document D or the Program F_S Calculations form.**

   Baccalaureate and Master’s degree programs should complete Document D: *Academic Summary for Faculty Reporting to the Program Head*, to show the budgeted time allocation for faculty members who report to the program head. Include adjunct or contract faculty who hold joint appointments or are otherwise part-time members of the faculty. List vacant positions now authorized and for which funding is available. Do not list emeritus faculty unless actively teaching.

   You may create your own document, as long as it provides the information requested in the provided form.

   Document D must show that a minimum of eight full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty members are engaged and responsible for delivery of the professional curriculum within the degree program for which accreditation is sought and report to the responsible academic head. It must demonstrate that the teaching assignments of the faculty members who make up these 8 FTEs are reasonably distributed across the required areas of professional education study as defined in Standard V.

   Forest Technology programs should complete the Program F_S Calculations form. You may NOT use your own document.

3. **Complete Document E: Individual Faculty Information for each faculty member who teaches professional subject matter required or restricted elective courses in the curricula.**

   You may create your own document, as long as it provides the information requested in the provided form.

4. **Discuss how the faculty is empowered to (and does) keep the curriculum current and in concert with the program’s educational goals and objectives, and provides effective academic guidance for students.**

5. **Document that the program follows its institution's policies and guidelines in the recruitment and retention of faculty that reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity. Describe institution, academic unit, or program initiatives to recruit and retain a diverse faculty.**

6. **Discuss faculty expertise in the assigned areas of instruction; ability and effectiveness in instructing; aptitude for working closely with students; and ability to stimulate independent thinking, provide intellectual leadership, and model ethical and professional behavior.**

7. **Describe faculty involvement in professional development and scholarly activities appropriate to their disciplines. Discuss the extent to which faculty research enriches the curriculum and any opportunities available to students to participate in research activities.**