



Accreditation Procedures

For Professional Programs in Landscape Architecture

Published September 2024

Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board



Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-------------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | Page |
| Introduction to Accreditation | 1 |
| II. RELATED DOCUMENTS | 1 |
| III. DEFINITIONS | 1 |
| IV. ABOUT LAAB | 5 |
| Mission | 5 |
| Values | 5 |
| Scope and Authority | 5 |
| Board Composition | 5 |
| Community of Interest | 6 |
| Revisions to the Standards | 6 |
| Revisions to Related Documents | 6 |
| Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Recognition | 7 |
| V. ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES | |
| A. Accreditation Process | 8 |
| Candidacy Status | 8 |
| Initial Accreditation | 8 |
| Initiating Accreditation Review | 9 |
| Waiver | 9 |
| Vacating of Application for Accreditation | 10 |
| Delaying a Scheduled Accreditation Visit | 10 |
| Rescheduling Visit | 10 |
| Accreditation Fees | 10 |
| Confidentiality | 11 |
| Reference to Accredited Status | 11 |
| B. Accreditation Roles and Responsibilities | 11 |
| Roster of Visiting Evaluators | 11 |
| Visiting Team | 12 |
| Team Chair | 12 |
| Observer | 12 |
| Principal Reader | 13 |
| C. Visit Planning and Logistics | 13 |
| Pre-Visit | 13 |
| During Visit | 15 |
| After Visit | 16 |
| D. Visits to Institutions with Two LAAB-Accredited Programs | 17 |
| VI. LAAB REVIEW AND ACTIONS | |
| A. LAAB Review and Decision-Making | 17 |
| B. LAAB Actions | 18 |
| Candidacy Status | 18 |
| Initial Accreditation | 18 |
| Renewal of Accreditation | 18 |
| Provisional Accreditation | 19 |
| Accreditation Denial | 19 |
| Probationary Accreditation | 19 |
| Withdrawal of Accreditation | 20 |

| | |
|--|----|
| C. Notification of LAAB Action (Final Action Letter) | 20 |
| D. Term of Accreditation | 20 |
| VII. PROGRAM REPORTING | 21 |
| A. Annual Report | 21 |
| B. Interim Report | 21 |
| C. Special Reports | 22 |
| D. Reporting Substantive Change | 22 |
| VIII. APPEAL PROCEDURE | 22 |
| A. Process | 22 |
| B. Appeal Panel | 23 |
| C. Authority | 23 |
| D. Hearing of Appeal | 23 |
| E. Decision of Appeal Panel | 23 |
| F. Expenses of Appeal Hearing and Deposit | 24 |
| IX. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE | 24 |
| A. Complaint Requirements | 24 |
| B. Complaint Procedures | 25 |
| C. Complaints Against LAAB | 26 |
| APPENDIX | |
| Administrative Policy | 27 |
| Sample Visit Schedules | 28 |

Cover Image:

2020 ASLA Student Collaboration Award of Excellence. Designing a Green New Deal.

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(Image credit: Project Team)

I. INTRODUCTION

The Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) accredits professional programs in landscape architecture. To do that, LAAB creates and applies Accreditation *Standards* and Accreditation *Procedures*, which LAAB develops with input from the community of interest. The Standards are qualitative statements of the essential conditions that a professional program in landscape architecture must meet to achieve accreditation. The Procedures identify the mission, goals, and values of LAAB, define the accreditation process, and establish the basis for decision-making and action undertaken by LAAB. LAAB regularly reviews and assesses the Standards and Procedures, at a minimum of every five years through a process articulated in the Accreditation Procedures.

This document contains the Accreditation Procedures.

Introduction to Accreditation

Accreditation is a nongovernmental, voluntary system of self-regulation and self-evaluation. Accreditation can be sought at both institutional and specialized levels. Institutional accreditation is concerned with an institution as a whole; specialized accreditation is concerned with a specific degree program. The institution or program conducts a self-study to evaluate how well it is meeting its educational objectives. The accrediting agency then provides an independent assessment of that evaluation.

II. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Related documents can be found on the LAAB website (www.asla.org/LAAB) unless otherwise indicated.

[Accreditation Standards](#)

[Self-Evaluation Report Template](#)

[Student Work Guidelines](#)

[Visiting Team Report Template](#)

[Visiting Team Guidelines](#)

[Interim Report Template](#)

Fee Schedule (available from the Accreditation Director)

III. DEFINITIONS

Accreditation: Accreditation is a voluntary process of peer review designed to evaluate programs on the basis of their own stated objectives and the Accreditation Standards that follow.

Accreditation Procedures: Accreditation Procedures define the accreditation process and establish the basis for decision-making and action undertaken by LAAB.

Administrative Probationary Accreditation Status: Administrative Probationary Accreditation Status is assigned when an institution or professional program does not meet its administrative obligations.

Assessment: Assessment is the process or criteria by which a professional program or institution's level of compliance with the Standards, or achievement of the criteria relevant to its accreditation, is evaluated.

Candidacy Status: Candidacy status is an accreditation classification granted to a professional program that is in the planning or early stages of development, or in an intermediate stage of program implementation.

Compliance: Compliance with a Standard is achieved when LAAB concludes, after review of relevant indicators or other evidence, that the Standard is met, as defined below. To achieve LAAB accreditation, a professional program must demonstrate to LAAB—through the Self-Evaluation Report, site visit, and technical accuracy review of the visiting team’s report—that it complies with all Standards.

Criteria: Each LAAB Standard has one or more criteria statements that define the components needed to satisfy the Standard. In that document, criteria are identified by letters (for example: **A. Program Mission**).

Deficiency: A finding of fact that suggests an assessment is not met.

Determination of Non-Compliance: A Determination of Non-Compliance is a decision by LAAB that the program has not met a Standard. Determinations of Non-Compliance are derived from the Preliminary Findings within the visiting team’s report. These are issued *only* by LAAB in the Final Action Letter.

Diversity: Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, encompassing the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. While diversity is often used in reference to race, ethnicity, and gender, LAAB embraces a broader definition of diversity that also includes age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. This definition also includes diversity of thought, ideas, perspectives, and values, and recognizes that some individuals affiliate with multiple identities.

Equity: Equity is fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people. At the same time, equity also demands that we identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. Equity asks us to create greater justice and fairness not only in an institution’s procedures and processes, but also in an institution’s outcomes, including the distribution of its resources. Addressing equity issues effectively requires gaining an ongoing understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities.

Faculty Full-Time Equivalence (FTE): The FTE is a figure representing the aggregated time committed by full- and part-time faculty members to teaching in a department or professional program, including faculty who have their duties or teaching assignments split between an undergraduate and a graduate program and faculty who have their assignments split between disciplines. For purposes of calculation, a faculty member with a part-time appointment of 50 percent (and, presumably, a teaching/scholarship/service assignment roughly equivalent to half that of a full-time faculty member) would be assigned a 0.5 FTE. A full-time faculty member with duties in only one department would be assigned an FTE of 1.0 for that department.

Final Action Letter: A Final Action Letter is an official communication from LAAB to a professional program reporting its accreditation status, compliance to Standards, and any Determination of Non-Compliance.

Inclusion: Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, valued, and supported to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. It is important to note that while an inclusive group is by definition diverse, a diverse group is not always inclusive.

Increasingly, recognition of unconscious or implicit bias helps organizations to be deliberate about addressing issues of inclusivity.

Initial Accreditation: The first period of accreditation for a professional program leading to a degree in landscape architecture is Initial Accreditation. LAAB Initial Accreditation applies to degrees awarded up to two years prior to Initial Accreditation by LAAB.

Intent: A statement of intent explains the purpose of a Standard.

Interim Report: An interim report is required for any program that is notified of one or more Standards not in compliance.

Long-Range Plan: A long-range plan is the output of a process that examines the mission, goals, objectives, and aspirations of a professional program over a minimum of three years. A strategic plan may be a long-range plan provided it meets the terms of this definition.

Met: A “Met” designation indicates that overall program performance in the relevant assessment meets LAAB minimum standards.

Not Met: A “Not Met” designation means that a cited deficiency is not in compliance with an assessment within a Standard.

Preliminary Findings: Preliminary Findings are facts identified by the visiting team that may indicate non-compliance with a Standard. Preliminary Findings identify issues; they do not prescribe solutions.

Principal Reader: A Principal Reader is a member of the LAAB Board and is assigned by the Chair as the primary point of contact for the Visiting Team Chair for procedural and interpretation questions regarding LAAB Standards, Procedures, and related documents, during a program’s accreditation process. The Principal Reader reviews the program’s Self-Evaluation Report, may share observations as an outcome of that review with the Team Chair, and reviews and comments on the draft visiting team report. To assist LAAB in its decision-making, the Principal Reader prepares a report that summarizes the visiting team’s report and its recommendations, and independent recommendations to LAAB.

Professional Program: A professional program in landscape architecture encompasses the body of knowledge common to the profession and promotes acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary to enter professional practice. Such a professional program has an academic offering based on a mission that articulates its purpose and goals and comprises the coursework and other learning experiences leading to a degree. It also has an administration, faculty, staff, facilities, and services that support, sponsor, and provide its mission and learning experiences and that comply with these Standards. At the bachelor’s level, a professional program is typically conducted in a context enriched by the liberal arts along with the natural and social sciences. At the master’s level, a professional program also includes instruction in and application of research and scholarly methods.

Program Administrator: A program administrator is responsible for the operation of the professional program in compliance with the Standards.

Roster of Visiting Evaluators (ROVE): The Roster of Visiting Evaluators is the pool of candidates from which visiting team members are selected. Each visiting team generally consists of one landscape architecture educator, one landscape architecture practitioner, and one current or former academic administrator, who must be affiliated with an institution that has at least one program currently accredited by LAAB.

Self-Evaluation Report (SER): A SER is a document prepared by a professional program that describes its expectations, operations, and resources; assesses its progress toward meeting its mission, goals, and objectives; and measures its performance against the criteria for accreditation.

Shall: In official LAAB Standards and criteria, “shall” indicates mandatory actions for a professional program or institution.

Standards: Standards are qualitative statements of the essential conditions an accredited professional program must meet to achieve accreditation. May also be referred to as *Accreditation Standards*.

Substantive Change: A Substantive Change is any change that compromises a program’s ability to meet one or more of the LAAB Standards or that results in a program’s inability to meet any of the Accreditation Standards.

Track: A Track is an organized curricular or course of study path through a professional program leading to a degree.

IV. ABOUT LAAB

LAAB is a specialized accrediting agency for educational programs leading to professional degrees in landscape architecture at the bachelor's or master's level. It develops and promulgates the Accreditation Standards and Procedures for conducting the accreditation process. In addition to assessing how well a program meets its own specific and institutional educational mission and objectives, LAAB evaluates each program against Standards that define the essential educational components leading to entry-level professional competence. These Standards are developed with input from the community of interest and are regularly reviewed and revised.

LAAB is vested with its authority by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Board of Trustees (Bylaws, Section 916), enacted as follows:

“There shall be a Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB)... LAAB shall be an autonomous working group with responsibility to act in matters concerning accreditation of professional landscape architecture degree programs...”

LAAB is a member of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) and is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

Mission

The mission of LAAB is to evaluate, advance, and advocate for the quality of professional landscape architecture education.

Values

Diversity—Support diversity in all its many forms.

Leadership—Inspire, facilitate, and empower collaboration.

Innovation—Commit to continuous learning and foresight.

Stewardship—Uphold the Standards it establishes while allowing for appropriate flexibility.

Fairness—Hold itself to high standards and ethical behavior.

Scope and Authority

The scope of LAAB accreditation is professional landscape architecture programs at the bachelor's or master's level. Other programs, such as pre-professional and advanced research programs, lie outside LAAB's scope. LAAB reviews eligible programs within educational institutions chartered in the United States and its territories. This scope does not preclude LAAB from forming accords or alliances with other accrediting organizations outside of those within the United States and its territories.

Board Composition

LAAB is a 12-member board composed of representatives from ASLA, the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA), and the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB), three landscape architecture educators, three landscape architecture practitioners, and three representatives of the public, each appointed for three-year terms.

Appointments are arranged so the terms of no more than one educator, one practitioner, and one public member expire in the same year. LAAB members are limited to two consecutive terms of appointment without a break in service. New LAAB members are selected by a vote of current members, with consideration given to diversity, inclusion, professional experiences, and regional representation.

Educators and practitioners must have served on three accreditation visits before being appointed to LAAB. The three public members are selected from nominations received at large and cannot be affiliated with a landscape architecture program, practice, agency, or firm.

Replacement members to fill unexpired terms are appointed in the same manner as original appointees.

Community of Interest

Before adopting or revising any Accreditation Standard, LAAB seeks input from the community of interest, which is defined as:

- Accrediting agencies
- Administrators of accredited landscape architecture programs
- American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)
- Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA)
- Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA)
- Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB)
- General public
- Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF)
- Landscape architecture students
- Roster of Visiting Evaluators (ROVE) members

Revisions to the Standards

LAAB addresses the need for purposeful change, strategic governance, and necessary improvement by reviewing the Accreditation Standards every five years, at a minimum.

LAAB revises the Standards using the following process:

- a. LAAB provides the current Standards to the community of interest for a 30-day comment period to initiate the revision process.
- b. LAAB considers comments, drafts revisions, and approves draft revisions.
- c. LAAB provides the draft revisions to the community of interest for a 30-day comment period.
- d. LAAB considers comments and finalizes revisions.
- e. LAAB approves final revisions by full vote of the Board.

When desirable, LAAB may review the Standards more frequently than every five years and may engage, at LAAB's discretion, in more focused stakeholder involvement.

When a program has an accreditation review within 12 months following the official publication of the revised Standards, the program will be reviewed under the previous Standards.

Revisions to Related Documents

As the Standards are revised, other documents may also be revised as needed.

Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Recognition

LAAB is recognized by CHEA as the official accrediting body for professional programs in landscape architecture and must conform to its standards (www.chea.org). CHEA reviews LAAB Accreditation Standards and Procedures to ensure that they meet its standards.

CHEA recognition signifies to the higher education community and the public that the accrediting organization:

- A. serves institutions and programs with the highest regard for integrity of practice and ethical behavior and demonstrates a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion;*
- B. promotes academic quality and continuous improvement;*
- C. serves higher education, students, and the public by communicating its accreditation decisions;*
- D. makes determinations about academic quality in higher education;*
- E. implements and enforces its standards and policies; and*
- F. acknowledges and affirms the institution and program mission and purposes.*

V. ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

A. Accreditation Process

LAAB has established a series of sequential phases during which institutions seeking to offer accredited programs in landscape architecture must demonstrate their ability to conform to the Accreditation Standards.

1. Candidacy Status

Candidacy status helps non-accredited programs prepare for the accreditation process. Candidacy status may be granted to a program that is in the early stages of program development or in an intermediate stage of program implementation. Candidacy status is **required** prior to applying for Initial Accreditation, and provides evidence to the educational institution, licensing bodies, and the public that at the time of evaluation, the program is working toward and appears capable of meeting the LAAB Standards. All new programs need to obtain Candidacy status prior to applying for Initial Accreditation even if the program belongs to an institution that already has an LAAB-accredited program.

The purpose of the Candidacy period is to allow a professional program working toward becoming accredited to establish a stable, constructive, ongoing, and helpful partnership with LAAB. A program designated as a candidate has voluntarily committed to work toward LAAB accreditation. Candidacy status signifies that the program is demonstrating reasonable progress toward the attainment of accreditation. However, Candidacy status does **not** indicate accredited status, nor does it guarantee eventual accreditation.

To achieve Candidacy status, a program—in consultation with LAAB—must prepare and submit a SER and undergo a program review. This program review is an abbreviated evaluation during which one member of LAAB or one of its visiting evaluators reviews the program's SER, conducts a two- or three-day visit to the program, and writes an evaluative report identifying any program deficiencies with regard to the LAAB Standards and recommending that LAAB either grant or deny Candidacy status. The program is responsible for the expenses of the program review visitor.

At the next scheduled LAAB meeting, LAAB reviews the SER and visiting evaluator's report, and votes on whether or not to grant a program Candidacy status. In addition, LAAB makes recommendations of ways the program can continue to advance toward meeting the Accreditation Standards. If LAAB decides not to grant Candidacy status, this decision is not subject to appeal. The program is informed in writing of LAAB's decision. The program may reapply for Candidacy status after one academic year.

After achieving Candidacy status, a program is required to submit an annual progress report to LAAB. If Initial Accreditation is not granted, the program can retain its Candidacy status for one additional year.

A program that has achieved Candidacy status must pay an annual sustaining fee.

2. Initial Accreditation

A program with Candidacy status can apply for Initial Accreditation once it 1) meets the Accreditation Standards, and 2) has had at least one graduating class. Accreditation applies to degrees awarded up to two years prior to Initial Accreditation by LAAB.

The accreditation process, described below, is the same whether a program is applying for Initial Accreditation or accreditation renewal.

3. Initiating Accreditation Review

Because accreditation is a voluntary process, LAAB cannot conduct a review without an invitation or written notice of approval from the chief executive officer of a candidate program's parent institution. This invitation and notice of preferred dates for the accreditation visit must be submitted to the LAAB Accreditation Director by February 1 for fall reviews and July 1 for spring reviews.

LAAB staff notifies each program of the accreditation schedule and LAAB deadlines. By August 1 (for fall reviews) or December 15 (for spring reviews), the program must submit all required materials as provided under the Planning and Logistics Section below.

If the documents are not submitted by this deadline, the program may be notified that the visit must be postponed. In the case of a currently accredited program, this may result in the suspension or expiration of accreditation.

The program is responsible for all document preparation costs incurred plus an administrative fee. The current LAAB fee schedule can be obtained from the Accreditation Director.

4. Waiver

In limited and exceptional circumstances, LAAB will consider requests to waive the application of certain Accreditation Standards and/or Procedures.

Waiver requests must:

- a. Be submitted to the LAAB office in writing;
- b. Identify the specific Standard(s) and/or Procedure(s) for which a waiver is sought; and
- c. Provide sufficient rationale, justification, and information necessary for LAAB to render a decision.

The application must explain in detail the basis for the request and provide relevant factual support and include appropriate documentation.

LAAB may only grant a waiver if:

- a. The normal application of the Standard, process, or Procedure will create an undue hardship on students;
- b. The intent of the Standard, process, or Procedure will otherwise be met through the granting of the waiver; or
- c. Other special and extenuating circumstances exist that prevent compliance with the Standard, process, or Procedure.

In all instances, a waiver may only be granted if the program demonstrates that educational quality will be promoted; the interests of students will be protected (e.g., the waiver does not create an undue hardship or harm); and the proposed waiver will not represent a compromise of academic quality. Waiver requests that seek simply to excuse non-compliance with Accrediting Standards and Procedures will be denied.

The decision of whether to grant a waiver is made by LAAB, and denials of waivers may not be appealed. LAAB may also impose such conditions as it deems appropriate on the scope or duration of any waiver that it may grant. Waiver requests that effectively seek to amend the Accreditation Standards will not be granted. Instead, programs making such requests should offer proposals for changes to the Standards for LAAB's consideration.

5. Vacating of Application for Accreditation

Any time before action by LAAB, an institution may vacate its application for accreditation without penalty by officially notifying the Accreditation Director in writing. LAAB will not refund fees, and the program will be assessed for expenses incurred by LAAB.

6. Delaying a Scheduled Accreditation Visit

From time to time, a program may want to delay a scheduled accreditation visit. LAAB will grant a site visit delay for up to one academic year if the following conditions are met:

- a. The program received a six-year term of accreditation at its last review.
- b. The program is in compliance with accreditation requirements.
- c. The program has submitted all fees and required reports.

For a program to be granted a delay, the program's school dean or higher-ranking administrator must submit a request in writing to the Accreditation Director, and the program must pay a visit-delay fee. If the request for delay is received after selection of the visiting team has begun, the program must pay the fee plus any visit-related expenses that have been incurred (e.g., non-refundable airline tickets).

If an institution is scheduled to have two programs reviewed at the same time, only one delay fee is charged. Both programs must meet the above conditions for the delay to be approved.

In all cases, regular annual fees still apply.

7. Rescheduling Visit

When a program has been granted a delay and its visit is to be rescheduled, it must cede priority for visit dates to programs hosting visits in their regular cycles.

A delayed visit cannot be postponed a second time for any reason. If the rescheduled review does not take place, the program's accreditation will lapse. If a program then chooses to reapply for accreditation, it will go through the Initial Accreditation process.

8. Accreditation Fees

Various fees apply to the accreditation process. Refer to the current fee schedule for the fees that apply. The following fees may be applicable:

- Annual sustaining fee—applies to all accredited programs and those that have achieved Candidacy status
- Candidacy fee
- Initial visit fee
- Interim visit fee—applies to programs requiring review within the normal 5-year cycle
- Late fee—assessed when annual reports are not filed by the August 1 deadline
- Visit delay fee

Fees are subject to change periodically; the current LAAB fee schedule can be obtained from the Accreditation Director.

9. Confidentiality

LAAB treats as confidential all material generated by a program and by LAAB for its accreditation review, including annual reports. However, LAAB encourages the widest dissemination of all accreditation materials within the institution. Both the visiting team report and the SER are considered to be the property of the institution. LAAB reserves the right to release a complete team report should the institution release a portion of the report that might, in the judgment of LAAB, present a biased or distorted view of the site evaluation's findings.

10. Reference to Accredited Status

A program's accreditation status must be clearly conveyed in all program and institutional literature, including online disclosure. In particular, if a program offers more than one course of study (e.g., MLA, MS in LA), program literature must identify which course(s) of study are accredited.

B. Accreditation Roles and Responsibilities

1. Roster of Visiting Evaluators

LAAB maintains a Roster of Visiting Evaluators (ROVE) from which visiting teams are selected. LAAB seeks to include evaluators who are diverse in experience, expertise, demographics, and other characteristics. LAAB will limit the number of ROVE members from a specific school or region.

There are three categories of evaluators:

Landscape architecture educators, who must hold a professional degree in landscape architecture or be a licensed landscape architect, teach in a currently LAAB-accredited landscape architecture program, and hold the minimum rank of associate professor.

Academic administrators, who must be current or former administrators at the rank of assistant or associate dean (or equivalent), do not have to be landscape architects, and must hold terminal degrees in their respective fields. Academic administrators must be affiliated with an institution that has at least one program currently accredited by LAAB.

Landscape architecture practitioners, who hold a first professional degree in landscape architecture or are licensed landscape architects and have at least five full years of practice experience. Practitioners may be from either the public or private sectors.

To remain current on the Roster, evaluators must participate in regular training—at least once every two years—to stay current with revisions to the Standards and Procedures and related documents, and they must sign LAAB's Volunteer Confidentiality and Professionalism Statement of Agreement. Exceptions to these criteria must be approved by the LAAB Chair.

To ensure wide representation of the community of interest, each accredited program is invited to nominate one landscape architecture educator and one academic administrator to ROVE. Similarly, each ASLA chapter is encouraged to nominate a practitioner to ROVE. LAAB also seeks nominations from other sources, such as individuals and organizations (e.g., CELA and CLARB) and encourages landscape architects to volunteer through the LAAB website: <https://www.asla.org/volunteers.aspx>. LAAB reviews nominations for ROVE and makes appointments to the Roster. Appointments are for five years and are renewable.

2. Visiting Team

LAAB has prepared visiting team guidelines, which provide specific and comprehensive information regarding the roles, duties, and responsibilities of the visiting team.

The visiting team for an accreditation visit consists of one landscape architecture educator, one practitioner, and one academic administrator. For dual program reviews, an additional landscape architecture educator member is included, for a total of four reviewers, with one educator focused on the undergraduate degree and one focused on the graduate degree. The LAAB Chair selects a proposed visiting team from ROVE and designates one member as Team Chair. (Visits for Candidacy status may include one member of LAAB or a visiting evaluator.)

Teams are selected to avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interest. All visiting team members participating in a review of a course of study leading to a professional MLA degree must hold advanced degrees.

The program is advised of the proposed team, including each proposed team member's present position, experience, and areas of expertise. The program has the right to challenge one or more team members for cause. A challenge can be made if the program believes the nominee has an actual or apparent conflict of interest. However, the final decision on team assignments rests with the LAAB Chair.

When the visiting team's composition and the date of the visit are finalized, the team and the program are formally notified by LAAB. Any subsequent change in team makeup because of scheduling conflicts or emergencies is made in consultation with the program.

In addition to becoming thoroughly familiar with LAAB Accreditation Standards and Procedures, as well as the visiting team guidelines and report template, each visiting team member must carefully review the SER and associated materials provided by the program applying for accreditation and be prepared to carry out assignments as the Team Chair directs.

Prior to the site visit, the Team Chair may ask each visiting team member to prepare a draft of the sections for which the team member is responsible. While this is not a requirement, it has proven beneficial by defining specific issues that may require additional information from the program in advance of or during the visit, or further investigation when the team is on site.

3. Team Chair

The Visiting Team Chair is responsible for making assignments, coordinating the team's activities during the site visit and executive work sessions, assembling and transmitting the visiting team's report to the Accreditation Director, and collaborating with the Principal Reader. The Team Chair is also responsible for initiating conversations with program administrators and leading the presentation of the team's observation.

The Team Chair is responsible for verbally conveying Preliminary Findings as identified by the visiting team. The Team Chair is also responsible for notifying all parties that the team's findings are preliminary and subject to review by LAAB.

4. Observer

Where special conditions warrant, such as providing team-member training or assisting with site-evaluation procedures and matters of due process, a four-person team may be assembled, with the fourth member designated as an observer. At the discretion of the LAAB Chair, one of the following may accompany the visiting team: an LAAB member, the Accreditation Director, a

landscape architecture educator who has a specialist background relevant to the program under review, an educator from a related design profession, or a ROVE member participating for training purposes.

An observer may participate in discussions as invited by the Visiting Team Chair. For example, an educator assigned as an observer may be asked to participate in reviews of student work and may ask questions at interviews that the educator member of the team would typically ask. When the observer is an LAAB member, that member will recuse themselves from the LAAB discussion and decision on the program.

5. Principal Reader

One LAAB Board member is appointed to serve as Principal Reader for each program's accreditation review. Throughout the accreditation process, the Principal Reader provides a primary point of contact for the Visiting Team Chair for procedural and interpretation questions regarding the LAAB Standards, Procedures, and related documents. In advance of the visit, the Principal Reader reviews the program's SER and associated materials and may share observations related to the program with the Team Chair.

The Principal Reader reviews and comments on the draft visiting team report before and/or when it is submitted to the Accreditation Director for review and comment. The Principal Reader also reviews the program's response to the visiting team's report and may discuss the program's input with the Team Chair. Prior to the next scheduled LAAB meeting, the Principal Reader prepares a report that includes an executive summary of the visiting team's report and its Preliminary Findings, as well as independent recommendations to LAAB.

Principal Readers are designated by the LAAB Chair and shall not have any potential conflict of interest in a program review, including previous affiliation with the program under review or an affiliation with a program in the same geographic region competing for enrollments or funding.

C. Visit Planning and Logistics

1. Pre-Visit

a. LAAB

The LAAB Chair will assign the Principal Reader.

LAAB staff schedules the dates of the accreditation visit after conferring with the team and the program's parent institution. They provide the visiting team with the appropriate LAAB Accreditation Standards and Procedures, as well as the visiting team guidelines and report template. They also assist in scheduling the 30- and 15-day pre-visit virtual meetings.

Under certain specific circumstances, accreditation visits, or portions thereof, may be conducted remotely/virtually with LAAB approval. LAAB will provide additional instructions at such time as a virtual accreditation visit is approved.

b. Visiting Team

The visiting team is responsible for reviewing the program's SER and all related materials in preparation for the pre-visit meetings. The visiting team is responsible for making their own travel arrangements and providing itineraries and contact information to the program and the Accreditation Director. Travel should be planned to ensure complete participation in all visit events and activities.

c. Program

The program is expected to provide timely responses to requests for information from LAAB and the Visiting Team Chair. The following is a list of activities that the program is expected to undertake.

Submission of SER:

All programs applying for accreditation prepare a SER, course materials, and representative student work in accordance with the required LAAB template.

By August 1 (for fall reviews) or December 15 (for spring reviews), the program is responsible for preparing the visit schedule and forwarding it, along with all the SER documents, to the team members and LAAB staff.

Display of Student Work:

The program may choose to prepare a physical exhibit that includes examples of work representing each year and varied levels of accomplishment of a variety of students enrolled in the program.

Schedule Considerations:

The program is responsible for establishing the visit schedule. It is essential that interviews with the chief administrative official of the institution are scheduled at both the beginning and the end of the team's visit. Early inspection of the program's space and facilities, and an examination of work produced by students in the program, are vital. The visit schedule should accommodate travel time between meeting locations and periodic breaks. No evening events (other than executive sessions) should be scheduled by the program; the team needs this time to work on its report and prepare for the next day.

Visit Schedule:

The site visit schedule (a sample of which is included in the Appendix), prepared by the program, should ordinarily include meetings with its administrative officials and other constituents, including but not limited to the following:

- Chief administrative official of the institution
- Chief administrative official of the college
- Chief administrative official of the division (if applicable)
- Chief administrative official of the department (and/or the immediate supervisor of the program administrator)
- Chief administrative official of the professional program
- Recent graduates, other alumni, and local practitioners
- Faculty
- Students from each academic year of the program
- Others who the program believes contribute to the program's success and the students' experiences

Dedicated Workspace:

The program is responsible for providing a dedicated space in which the visiting team may meet with program constituents throughout the visit and work in executive sessions during the day and evenings. The workspace (or an adjacent room) also needs to accommodate confidential meetings. A printer, projection equipment, internet access, and other furnishings to support the visiting team's activities and their executive sessions are also necessary within

the workspace. In addition to securing the workspace, the visiting team will need to be able to access secured areas associated with the visit.

Lodging Arrangements:

The program is responsible for making all lodging arrangements for the visiting team. Hotel accommodations must be comfortable and reasonably priced; where possible, the program should select on-campus facilities such as those for visiting faculty or guest lecturers.

Institutions with more than one campus are responsible for the transportation costs between the campuses, including additional airfare (e.g., additional costs for flying into one airport and out of another) if applicable.

Visit Expenses:

The program is responsible for the travel, lodging, and meal expenses of the visiting team.

d. Pre-Visit 30- and 15-day Meetings

Pre-visit meetings are assumed to be virtual. Approximately 30 days prior to the program review visit, the visiting team and Principal Reader meet to discuss visit planning, including travel plans and program review schedule, and to identify any areas of concern or confusion that require preliminary feedback from or additional preparation by the program.

Approximately 15 days prior to the program review visit, the visiting team, Principal Reader, and program administrator meet to finalize the itinerary and visit logistics and resolve any final questions. These meetings are intended to ensure that the review visit runs smoothly, that all necessary constituents are engaged in the review visit, and that the program has adequate time to address any potential points of concern.

e. Cooperation with Other Accrediting Agencies and State Agencies

LAAB seeks to reduce the burden of accreditation on landscape architecture programs by participating with other accrediting bodies if the program under review so requests. The schedule and arrangements must ensure that all aspects of LAAB review can be accomplished.

2. During Visit

a. LAAB Staff

During the accreditation site visit, LAAB staff is available as a resource to all parties.

b. Principal Reader

The Principal Reader remains the primary point of contact for the Visiting Team Chair for procedural and interpretation questions regarding LAAB Standards, Procedures, and related documents, throughout the site visit.

c. Visiting Team

The visiting team is responsible for carrying out four principal objectives:

- i. To verify information in the SER;
- ii. To gather new information through observation and interviews;
- iii. To assess whether the program under review meets LAAB's Accreditation Standards; and
- iv. To identify/verify program strengths and areas for improvement.

More detailed information is provided in the visiting team guidelines.

The team members meet in executive session to prepare a complete report in draft form and to decide on any Preliminary Findings that they believe LAAB should consider in determining the program's accreditation status. The content of this report, particularly in regard to specific findings and strengths and weaknesses of the program, is discussed verbally with the chief executive of the institution, program administrator, faculty, and students prior to the team's departure. Advisory recommendations to LAAB are not to be shared. The Team Chair will also convey the following:

- i. The visiting team report includes Preliminary Findings, which are based on the information provided by the program(s) in the pre-visit conference calls, the SER, additional documents, and input and observations from this accreditation visit.
- ii. The Preliminary Findings are subject to review by LAAB.
- iii. The Final Action Letter that will be sent by LAAB to the program will include the final notice of compliance (or non-compliance) to the Standards. The program will be required to report on progress being made to address Determinations of Non-Compliance.

Prior to departing, the visiting team members typically sign the confidential advisory recommendation form to the Accreditation Director, which is submitted to LAAB as a separate document.

d. Program

Throughout the site visit, the program is responsible for managing the visit schedule, ensuring that visiting team members are able to arrive at each venue as scheduled, and confirming that the designated meeting attendees are present. The program also needs to ensure that the visiting team has access to the resources (as well as facilities) that it may need to successfully undertake their work.

3. After Visit

a. Visiting Team Report

Within 10 days of the last day of the visit, the visiting team's chair finishes compiling the report and sends copies to LAAB staff and the Principal Reader for review. The Principal Reader sends their comments to LAAB staff. Any substantive changes or additions must be referred by LAAB staff to the Team Chair and may result in distribution of the report to the team to review a second time. The report may be edited for grammar, spelling, and style by LAAB staff.

b. Institutional Response

Within 30 days of the last day of the visit, LAAB staff sends copies of the visiting team report to the chief executive officer and the program administrator of the institution for their comments and review of its technical accuracy.

Within 15 days following receipt of the visiting team report, the institution must submit its institutional response (substantive comments and corrections) to LAAB staff. The program shall respond to the Preliminary Findings in writing. This response should include any documentation the program administrator deems pertinent.

The institutional response, which is sent to LAAB staff, is circulated to the Visiting Team Chair and Principal Reader, who may choose to discuss the institution's response.

c. Principal Reader

The Principal Reader prepares a report that includes an executive summary of the visiting team's report and its recommendations, as well as independent recommendations to LAAB.

The Principal Reader's report, visiting team report, and institutional response are sent to the LAAB members at least three weeks before the next scheduled LAAB meeting.

D. Visits to Institutions with Two LAAB-Accredited Programs

LAAB permits institutions with two fully accredited degree programs (a bachelor's degree program and a master's degree program) to have them reviewed for renewal with a combined SER and combined visiting team. Participation is voluntary, by request from the program, and subject to approval of LAAB staff. A program should make this request as part of its letter requesting a renewal visit.

If the two programs don't have the same accreditation term expiration, the visit will be scheduled to align with the date of the program whose term is to expire first.

In a single coordinated review:

1. The makeup of the visiting team will expand to four members, including an administrative member, two educator members, and a practitioner member. As the Team Chair assigns roles to team members, the chair will ask one educator member to take the lead in assessing the bachelor's program and another to take the lead in assessing the master's program.
2. The scheduled visit will be expanded by one day, to allow time for the visiting team to interview an additional set of students and to review an additional set of student work, as well as to expand interviews with administrators, faculty, alumni, and practitioners so that team members can evaluate the differences in expectations and performance between the two programs.

The academic program will prepare a single SER to describe both degree programs. Requirements for the combined SER are described in the SER template.

VI. LAAB REVIEW AND ACTIONS

A. LAAB Review and Decision-Making

The accreditation review decision will take place at the next scheduled LAAB meeting. The meeting agenda package will include a Principal Reader's report, the visiting team report, advisory recommendation form, and institutional response for each program in the accreditation review process. Prior to the LAAB meeting, the Principal Reader may consult with the Team Chair in order to clarify items in the team report or institutional response that have not been resolved. LAAB's decision will be based on the program's SER and annual reports, the visiting team's report, the institution's response, and the Principal Reader's report.

Any adverse accreditation decision will be substantiated with specific reasons, and program administrators will be notified of their right to appeal any such decision. (See Appeal Procedure, below.) A program that has not been granted accredited status, or a program from which accreditation has been withdrawn, may reapply for accreditation when its administrators believe the program meets current requirements.

B. LAAB Actions

LAAB may take the following actions after program review:

1. Candidacy Status

Candidacy status is granted when a program:

- a. is in the early stages of program development or in an intermediate stage of program implementation,
- b. is working towards and demonstrating reasonable progress on the attainment of accreditation, and
- c. appears capable of meeting the Accreditation Standards.

If Initial Accreditation is not granted, a program may retain its Candidacy status for one additional year. After the additional year, if Initial Accreditation is not granted, a program may apply to restart the Candidacy status process.

While Candidacy status signifies that the program is demonstrating reasonable progress toward the attainment of accreditation, it does not indicate accredited status, nor does it guarantee eventual accreditation.

2. Initial Accreditation

Initial Accreditation is granted on a first review when:

- a. a program has obtained Candidacy status,
- b. the program demonstrates compliance with Accreditation Standards, and
- c. the program's continued development and conformation to the Accreditation Standards is deemed likely.

Initial Accreditation may be granted for up to six years.

A program receiving Initial Accreditation will be required to submit an interim report for each Standard it is not in compliance with, and may be required to submit a special progress report at the discretion of LAAB.

3. Renewal of Accreditation

Renewal of accreditation is granted when a program:

- a. meets all Standards, or
- b. has one or more Determinations of Non-Compliance, and
- c. continued overall program quality and conformance to Standards are judged likely to be maintained.

Renewal of accreditation may be granted for up to six years.

A program receiving renewal of accreditation will be required to submit an interim report for each Determination of Non-Compliance and may be required to submit a special progress report at the discretion of LAAB.

4. Provisional Accreditation

Provisional accreditation is granted when:

- a. a program has one or more Determinations of Non-Compliance, or
- b. one or more Determinations of Non-Compliance have not been resolved from the previous Final Action Letter, and
- c. the cited deficiencies are such that continued overall program quality or conformation to Standards is uncertain.

Provisional accreditation may be granted for up to two years and may 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.

5. Accreditation Denial

Accreditation denial results when a program fails to meet one or more Standards. Denial of accreditation is an adverse action and can be appealed. (See Appeal Procedure, below.)

LAAB may take the following actions at any time during the accreditation term:

6. Probationary Accreditation

a. Administrative Probationary Accreditation

LAAB assigns this status if an institution or professional program fails to comply with one or more of the following administrative requirements:

- paying annual fees within 90 days of the invoice date,
- paying a late fee by the due date,
- submitting reports or other required information within 45 days of the due date, or
- agreeing to a reasonable onsite evaluation visit date at or near the time established by LAAB staff.

b. Failure to Maintain Good Standing

Should a program fail to maintain good standing, accreditation may be moved to probationary or withdrawn. LAAB assigns this status if an institution or professional program fails continuously to meet the Accreditation Standards. LAAB must be informed if any of these requirements cannot be met during an accreditation period, in accordance with Reporting Substantive Change, below.

Before taking either of these actions, LAAB will send a show-cause letter requesting that the program explain why accreditation should not be probationary.

A program whose term of accreditation has been moved to probationary will be listed as such on the official list of accredited programs. Probationary status is published in *LAND Online*. Students attending a program with probationary accreditation are considered to be attending an accredited program.

A program can be probationary for a maximum of one year (12 months). If evidence of remedial action is submitted and judged adequate within the one-year period of probation, reinstatement of the previous grant of accreditation may be undertaken by LAAB. In the case of extraordinary extenuating circumstances, LAAB may consider options for extension. If there is no evidence of remedial action, or the remedial action is judged inadequate, LAAB will begin procedures to withdraw accreditation, to immediately take effect when the maximum period of probation is reached.

Probationary accreditation is not deemed to be an adverse action and is not subject to appeal.

7. Withdrawal of Accreditation

Should a program fail to comply with Accreditation Standards, accreditation may be withdrawn. Before withdrawing accreditation, LAAB sends a show-cause letter requesting that the program explain why accreditation should not be withdrawn. LAAB may suggest to the program that an accreditation visit is in order. If after consideration of the program's response to the show-cause letter, LAAB determines that the institution is not in compliance with Accreditation Standards, it will withdraw the institution's accreditation. Withdrawal of accreditation is an adverse action and can be appealed. (See Appeal Procedure, below.)

If the program's parent institution or another program within the institution is placed on probationary status or has accreditation withdrawn by an accrediting agency, LAAB may send a show-cause letter to the landscape architecture program to determine the program's current condition.

A program that has had accreditation withdrawn after exhausting appeal rights may reapply for accreditation through the Candidacy process.

The annually published list of accredited programs includes the accredited status of each program along with its next scheduled accreditation review.

<https://www.asla.org/FullListofAccreditedPrograms.aspx>

LAAB also publishes actions of Candidacy, Initial Accreditation, renewal of accreditation, provisional accreditation, accreditation denial, probationary accreditation, and withdrawal of accreditation in *LAND Online* and <https://www.asla.org/laabnews.aspx>.

C. Notification of LAAB Action (Final Action Letter)

At the scheduled LAAB meeting that follows the completion of the visiting team's report, LAAB makes a determination regarding the accreditation of each program undergoing review. LAAB issues a Final Action Letter officially notifying the program's parent institution about the program's accreditation status and any Determinations of Non-Compliance. Copies of the letter are sent to the program administrator and visiting team, and posted publicly on the LAAB website.

LAAB retains a copy of a program's most recent SER.

D. Term of Accreditation

Accreditation is granted for a period of one to six years. LAAB may vary the term within this range at its discretion; reasons for such variance are supplied to the program. The Final Action Letter to the institution indicates the date on which accreditation will expire. A program may apply for an accreditation review at any time before its term expires but may not defer a visit to extend its term.

When LAAB takes action, the grant of accreditation will begin from the originally scheduled review date regardless of any rescheduling of the program's site visit.

VII. PROGRAM REPORTING

A. Annual Report

Each accredited program submits an annual report to allow LAAB to monitor the program's continuing compliance with accreditation requirements, and to collect annual data in support of SER preparation. Annual reports are due August 1; late reporting will incur a late fee. The report must include notice of:

1. Substantive Changes—changes in curriculum, personnel, administration, fiscal support, and physical facilities that have occurred since the last report;
2. student enrollment, graduation, and employment data;
3. student demographic data;
4. faculty demographic data, credentials, and FTE assignment; and
5. program budget data.

LAAB may choose to alert the program administrator as well as the institution's chief executive officer of its concern regarding potential effects of reported changes.

B. Interim Report

At the time of Initial Accreditation or accreditation renewal, programs that are given Determinations of Non-Compliance will be responsible for submitting an interim report on the status of their progress toward addressing these deficiencies. The interim report will be due to LAAB according to the terms of the accreditation Action Letter, typically two years after the accreditation action.

1. An interim report shall be submitted for each Determination of Non-Compliance that a program receives.
2. Programs will be given up to two years to resolve their Determinations of Non-Compliance. Interim reports describing their efforts to resolve deficiencies shall be submitted to the LAAB Accreditation Director in accordance with the terms of their Action Letter.
3. Programs shall report on Determinations of Non-Compliance actions using the interim reporting template located on LAAB's website.
4. Upon receipt of the interim report, LAAB will accept that the Determinations of Non-Compliance have been addressed—or, if not, the program will be given an additional period to resolve the issues. A second interim report will be due to LAAB on or before four years from the receipt of the Action Letter. If the Determinations of Non-Compliance are not successfully resolved, or if—in the case of longer-term issues—substantial and verifiable progress has not been made at that time, then LAAB may take additional actions or request special reporting.
5. If LAAB accepts that the Determinations of Non-Compliance have been successfully resolved, the program will receive a letter from LAAB releasing them from their interim reporting responsibility. Programs receiving such a letter will no longer be required to submit interim reports. If LAAB determines that the program has made substantial verifiable progress, but that the Determinations of Non-Compliance are not completely resolved, the program must report on resolution of the Determinations of Non-Compliance in its next SER.
6. If a program is given Provisional Accreditation, there is no need to do interim reporting.
7. An LAAB member will be appointed as the Principal Reader to each program that is required to submit an interim report. The Principal Reader will review the interim report and make a

recommendation that will be considered at the next LAAB meeting, regarding the sufficiency of the program's response.

C. Special Reports

From time to time, LAAB may require programs to prepare special reports to describe or explain a certain issue or problem. These issues will be ones that LAAB believes require additional clarification beyond what is included in annual reports and interim reports; deadlines for submitting such reports may differ from the annual report due date.

D. Reporting Substantive Change

In order to support accredited programs as they make changes between regular accreditation visits, LAAB offers consultative reviews of proposed changes prior to submission of an official report of Substantive Change. An institution is encouraged to report any Substantive Change in a program to LAAB prior to its implementation; it must be reported in a program's annual report. Primary responsibility for reporting a Substantive Change rests with the program or institution administrator.

A response regarding a Substantive Change will be provided by LAAB or LAAB staff within 30 days. The program or institution administrator must respond to LAAB within 30 days to remain in good standing.

VIII. APPEAL PROCEDURE

A. Process

When LAAB takes adverse action on accreditation, it provides specific reasons for that action to the program administrator and the chief executive of the institution. Adverse actions include denial or withdrawal of accreditation.

Recipients of adverse action are advised of their right to appeal. An appeal must be based on one or more of the following issues:

- Whether LAAB and/or the visiting team conformed to the Procedures described in this document
- Whether LAAB and/or the visiting team correctly assessed the program's compliance with the Accreditation Standards

Appeals based on challenges to Accreditation Standards or Procedures will be dismissed. Institutions differing with LAAB on the Standards and Procedures established in this document are invited to forward comments to LAAB, which regularly reviews the Standards.

A written notice of appeal signed by the chief executive officer of the program's parent institution must be submitted within 20 days of notice of LAAB's Action Letter. The appeal must be sent to LAAB staff, who shall notify the LAAB Chair. The program must submit within 60 days of LAAB's action a comprehensive written statement of the reasons for the appeal. Failure to submit this statement within 60 days of notice of LAAB's action is equivalent to withdrawing the appeal. During the appeal period, the accredited status of the program before the adverse action does not change. The record of the action upon which the appeal is based shall be limited to the material

that was presented to LAAB at its scheduled meeting from which the Action Letter was issued. The program bears the cost of the appeal.

B. Appeal Panel

The LAAB Chair appoints an appeal panel composed of three persons, including its chair. Each person must have knowledge of and experience with the accreditation of educational institutions or programs. One member of the appeal panel may be a former member of LAAB. One member of the panel may be challenged by the institution for cause; if the challenge is successful, the chair of LAAB appoints a replacement. Panel members may serve concurrently on other ASLA committees, councils, or boards, excluding only LAAB.

C. Authority

The appeal panel, by concurrence of a majority of the members, may either affirm LAAB's decision or recommend to LAAB that it reconsider the decision.

LAAB must review the case if the appeal panel recommends reconsideration. Reasonable scheduling is at LAAB's discretion. In any case remanded to LAAB, the recommendation of the appeal panel does not bind or limit LAAB in any way. The final decision on accreditation rests with LAAB.

The appeal panel may promulgate additional rules for the scheduling and conduct of hearings, provided they are consistent with the procedures specified below. The appeal panel has no jurisdiction or authority over the reasonableness of the Accreditation Standards and Procedures, which is a matter properly in the exclusive jurisdiction of LAAB.

No adverse action is published until the resolution of any appeal.

D. Hearing of Appeal

The chair of the appeal panel designates the time and place of the hearing, which takes place no later than 45 days after receipt of the program's comprehensive written statement.

The chair presides at the hearing and rules on all procedural matters. All three members of the panel must be present.

Both the institution and LAAB may submit briefs before the hearing in a manner prescribed by the appeal panel. The panel also reviews the documents that LAAB had at the time it made its original decision: the SER, the visiting team report, and the institution's response.

The hearing is as informal as is reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances. A party may appear by or with counsel or other representative. The program or institution may waive personal appearance, in which case the matter will be decided solely on the basis of briefs and written statements. The final decision on accreditation rests with LAAB.

E. Decision of Appeal Panel

Every decision must have the concurrence of a majority of the appeal panel's members. Within 30 days after the conclusion of the hearing, the appeal panel issues a written decision stating its reasons and recommendations, if any, to LAAB. The decision indicates the members of the

appeal panel concurring. A dissenting opinion may be filed. LAAB furnishes the majority decision and the dissenting opinion, if any, to the institution.

If the appeal panel affirms the LAAB decision, there is no further remedy available within these Procedures.

If the appeal panel recommends reconsideration of the decision, the determination thereafter by LAAB shall be final.

F. Expenses of Appeal Hearing and Deposit

The program bears the following expenses in connection with the appeal:

- travel and subsistence for the appeal panel members and others, such as Team Chair and LAAB representative; and
- the cost of the hearing room.

A deposit must be made with LAAB at the time of the filing of the notice of appeal, to be applied to the expenses listed above. Before the hearing, LAAB may increase the amount of deposit required to meet a realistic estimate of the expenses involved.

IX. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

LAAB reviews complaints against an accredited program that relate to the accreditation requirements set forth in the Accreditation Standards and Procedures. If a complaint raises a question of possible violation of these requirements, the program will be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint in accordance with the procedural requirements below. If a violation is found, LAAB will take appropriate action. LAAB maintains all records of complaints received against programs.

A. Complaint Requirements

All complaints and supporting documentation must be submitted in writing to LAAB. LAAB reviews complaints that are accompanied by documentation and that set forth facts and circumstances in sufficient detail to permit an effective response from the program.

The complaint should include all of the following:

1. A narrative section for each complaint type.
2. The accreditation requirements published in the current LAAB Accreditation Standards and Procedures that are germane to the complaint.
3. Evidence of efforts to resolve the complaint through the institution or program's internal grievance procedures, or evidence that such efforts would be unproductive.
4. Any additional supporting documentation.

Complaints must be made within 90 days of the last event that is material to the complaint.

LAAB accepts anonymous complaints but will require the program to respond only if, in the absence of the identity of the complainant, it can be determined that the allegations constitute a possible violation of accreditation requirements. When the identity of the complaint is a material fact necessary to permit the program a full and fair opportunity to respond, or the unknown identity of the complainant makes it impossible to determine with reasonable certainty that a

violation of accreditation requirements may have occurred, then the anonymity of the complainant may be a basis for dismissing a complaint. Anonymity will prevent notification to complainants and requests to complainants for additional information set forth in this section, which are therefore not applicable to anonymous complaints.

Complainants may request that LAAB withhold their identity from a program named in the complaint. LAAB will review the complaint but, in its discretion, may not be able to process a complaint where the identity of the complainant is a material fact necessary to determining whether a violation has occurred or is needed to permit the program a full and fair opportunity to respond to the complaint allegations.

LAAB will not intervene on behalf of individuals in cases of personnel action, and will not review an institution or program's internal administrative decisions in such matters as admissions decisions, academic dishonesty, assignment of grades, or similar matters unless the context of an allegation suggests that unethical or unprofessional conduct or action may have occurred that may raise questions about the program's compliance with an LAAB Standard or accreditation requirement.

LAAB's conflict of interest policy apply to the investigation and resolution of complaints.

B. Complaint Procedures

Within 15 days of receipt of the complaint, LAAB will assess whether the complaint states a possible violation of accreditation requirements. For the purposes only of this initial assessment of the complaint, LAAB will accept facts alleged in the complaint as true. If more information is needed to assess the complaint, LAAB will request it from the complainant, who must then provide the information for LAAB to continue the complaint process. A complaint that lacks sufficient detail to permit a program to respond effectively will be dismissed and the complainant so notified.

If the complaint does not allege a violation of accreditation requirements, LAAB will inform the complainant and the file will be closed. The complainant may request in writing that a decision to close the complaint at this stage be reviewed by LAAB leadership. LAAB leadership will consider such a request within 30 days and will either affirm the decision to close the complaint or reopen the case and direct the program to respond. The complainant will be notified of this decision.

LAAB will forward the complaint to the program for a response if the allegation(s) could potentially constitute a violation of accreditation requirements. LAAB will also provide a summary of possible violations of accreditation requirements based on its analysis of the complaint. This summary is not to be taken as comprehensive or conclusive, since LAAB may determine, during further review, that there is evidence of non-compliance with other accreditation requirements not included in the summary.

The program must respond directly to the complaint and provide any specific information or documentation requested by LAAB. The program will be provided no more than 30 days from the date of the LAAB letter to respond to the complaint. The response should be structured as follows:

1. deny the allegation(s) of the complaint and present evidence to the contrary,
2. acknowledge the allegation(s) of the complaint and demonstrate that the allegation(s) do not constitute violation(s) of accreditation requirement(s), and/or

3. accept the allegation(s) and document the actions taken to ensure that the violation has been corrected and will not occur in the future.

Within 15 days of receipt of the response, LAAB will determine whether it appears more likely than not that there is a violation of an accreditation requirement. LAAB may request additional information from either the complainant or respondent if it believes such information is necessary to the resolution of the complaint and will reevaluate the response after the program has had an opportunity to submit such additional information.

The following actions may apply to complaints that have been fully vetted through the LAAB complaint procedure:

1. **No violation.** If it appears there is no violation of accreditation requirements, LAAB will inform both the complainant and the respondent that the complaint has been closed.
2. **Evidence of compliance.** If it appears there was a violation of an accreditation requirement and the program has demonstrated it has taken sufficient corrective action to come into compliance, LAAB will inform both the complainant and the respondent that the complaint has been closed.
3. **Possible violation.** If it appears more likely than not that there may be a violation of an accreditation requirement and the program has not demonstrated sufficient corrective action, or if the complaint review reveals non-compliance of a more systemic nature, the matter will be referred to LAAB leadership for action, and the program will be notified of the referral. Within 30 days of receipt of a referral, LAAB leadership will:
 - a. determine that there is no violation and dismiss the matter,
 - b. request additional information,
 - c. order the institution or program to take specific actions to bring it into compliance,
 - d. issue a show cause order, or
 - e. refer the case to LAAB for action up to and including withdrawal of accreditation.
4. In all cases, the complainant and the respondent will be notified of the disposition of the complaint once it becomes final.

C. Complaints Against LAAB

LAAB reviews complaints against LAAB in a timely, fair, and equitable manner, and applies unbiased judgment to take follow-up action, as appropriate, based on the results of its review. LAAB maintains all records of complaint received against LAAB.

The process for complaints against LAAB is as follows:

1. All complaints against LAAB must be submitted in writing.
2. If the complaint pertains to LAAB staff or any LAAB representative, the written complaint may be addressed to the Accreditation Director directly.
3. If the complaint pertains to the Accreditation Director, the written complaint must be addressed to the LAAB Board Members.
4. The complaint must state in narrative format the specific allegations in sufficient detail and with sufficient supporting documentation to permit understanding of the nature of the complaint and its factual support.
5. The complaint and its supporting documentation will be reviewed within 30 days of receipt by LAAB. Thereafter, the reviewer(s) will act to gather any additional information deemed relevant to the disposition of the complaint.
6. The reviewer(s) will issue a decision on the complaint. Notice of the decision will be provided to the complainant.

APPENDIX

Administrative Policy

ASLA has established an administrative policy regarding LAAB:
<https://www.asla.org/ContentDetail.aspx?id=6352>

Purpose

The purpose of this policy shall be to affirm ASLA's commitment to, and define its in-kind support for, LAAB as an autonomous working group with responsibility to act in matters concerning accreditation of professional landscape architecture degree programs.

Commitment

ASLA has supported accreditation since the 1920s and will continue its commitment to the viability of LAAB for as long as such support is considered beneficial to the advancement of the profession of landscape architecture.

Decision-making authority in all matters concerning accreditation shall rest solely with LAAB. This authority shall include determination of accreditation policies and procedures, establishment of accreditation fees, and allocation of those funds to achieve its mission. ASLA will exert no influence over such decisions beyond that expressed by its one vote on the accreditation board.

In the best interests of its long-term health and stability, ASLA will expect LAAB's decisions to be fiscally responsible and generally follow ASLA management guidelines. ASLA will provide LAAB with a minimum of three (3) years notice of any reduction in the amount of support provided.

In-Kind Support

ASLA will provide staffing support and overhead for the administration of LAAB's affairs. Such support will include: program management, accounting, meeting planning, and library/information resources. In addition, LAAB members and volunteers will be covered by applicable ASLA insurance policies appropriate to the mission and operations of LAAB.

ASLA Administrative Policy, 2005; R2016

Sample Visit Schedules

The following is a sample schedule of activities for a visiting team. This example allows time for all necessary meetings and inspections as well as for report preparation. The visit schedule should accommodate travel time between meeting locations and periodic breaks. While program faculty, staff, and/or students may provide tours of exhibits and facilities such as libraries, labs, studio space, etc., they would only participate in meetings as specifically indicated.

Sample Single Program Visit Schedule

Day 1 (Sunday)

- 12:00 noon Team arrival and check-in.
- 2:00 p.m. Review of student work and facilities.
- 6:00 p.m. Meeting with administrator of the landscape architecture program to finalize schedule and to discuss the program in general.
- 8:00 p.m. Executive session: Confirm team member assignments and plan how the team will conduct various interviews and meetings during the visit.

Day 2 (Monday)

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast with program administrator.
- 9:00 a.m. Meeting with chief executive officer of the institution.
- 9:30 a.m. Meeting with immediate supervisor of the program administrator.
- 10:00 a.m. Familiarization tour of the landscape architectural facilities. (Tour should be brief and may be scheduled for Sunday or Monday, depending on team's arrival schedule).
- 10:30 a.m. Presentation of curriculum by faculty to visiting team. (This presentation demonstrates how the program accomplishes its mission through the curriculum and includes a review of student work from each class and sequence.)
- 12:00 noon Lunch with recent graduates and practitioners, at the discretion of the team and the school. (This meeting is an opportunity to evaluate graduates' satisfaction with the educational process and the degree to which the program prepared them to perform entry-level functions.)
- 1:30 p.m. Interviews with students and faculty. (It is recommended that student interviews take place before faculty interviews. Student interviews are usually conducted with students grouped by year. Faculty interviews are usually a series of individual, confidential meetings at half-hour intervals, to discuss impressions of the program—strengths, weaknesses, faculty input, and faculty development. Group faculty interviews may be conducted if they are acceptable to the faculty and the team.)
- 3:15 p.m. Interviews with students and faculty (continued).
- 5:00 p.m. Break for the day.

7:00 p.m. Team dinner and executive session to review Preliminary Findings.

Day 3 (Tuesday)

7:30 a.m. Breakfast with program administrator.

9:00 a.m. Interviews with students and faculty (continued).

12:30 p.m. Lunch with other department heads.

1:30 p.m. Interviews with students and faculty (if necessary); inspection of library and other supporting facilities, such as computing center, special services, etc.

3:00 p.m. Team executive session: preparation of draft report.

Day 4 (Wednesday)

7:30 a.m. Breakfast with program administrator to advise on Preliminary Findings.

9:00 a.m. Review of team Preliminary Findings with chief executive officer of the institution.

9:45 a.m. Discussions of team Preliminary Findings with immediate supervisor of program administrator.

10:30 a.m. Report of team Preliminary Findings to landscape architecture faculty (may be combined with report to students at team's discretion).

11:15 a.m. Report of team Preliminary Findings to students (may be combined with report to faculty at team's discretion).

12:00 noon Lunch (optional), followed by departure from campus.

Sample Dual Program Visit Schedule

Day 1 (Sunday)

- 12:00 noon Team arrival and check-in.
- 2:00 p.m. Tour of facilities.
- 3:45 p.m. Review BLA curriculum and student work.
- 5:00 p.m. Review MLA curriculum and student work.
- 6:00 p.m. Meeting with administrator of the landscape architecture program to finalize schedule and to discuss the program in general.
- 8:00 p.m. Executive session: Confirm team member assignments and plan how the team will conduct various interviews and meetings during the visit.

Day 2 (Monday)

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast with program administrator.
- 9:00 a.m. Meeting with chief executive officer of the institution.
- 10:00 a.m. Meeting with immediate supervisor of the program administrator.
- 11:00 a.m. Interview with faculty.
- 12:00 noon Lunch with recent graduates and practitioners, at the discretion of the team and the school. (This meeting is an opportunity to evaluate graduates' satisfaction with the educational process and the degree to which the program prepared them to perform entry-level functions.)
- 1:30 p.m. Interviews with fourth-year BLA students. (It is recommended that student interviews take place before faculty interviews. Student interviews are usually conducted with students grouped by year. Faculty interviews are usually a series of individual, confidential meetings at half-hour intervals, to discuss impressions of the program—strengths, weaknesses, faculty input, and faculty development. Group faculty interviews may be conducted if they are acceptable to the faculty and the team.)
- 2:30 p.m. Interviews with MLA students.
- 3:30 p.m. Interview with faculty.
- 5:00 p.m. Check-in meeting with program administrator. Break for the day.
- 5:30 p.m. Team dinner and executive session to review Preliminary Findings.

Day 3 (Tuesday)

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast with program administrator.
- 9:00 a.m. Interviews with third-year BLA students and faculty (continued).
- 11:00 a.m. Meeting with first- and second-year BLA students.
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch with other department heads.
- 1:30 p.m. Interviews with students and faculty (if necessary); inspection of library and other supporting facilities, such as computing center, special services, etc.
- 2:30 p.m. Team executive session.
- 5:00 p.m. Check-in meeting with program administrator. Break for the day.
- TBD Team dinner and executive session to review Preliminary Findings.

Day 4 (Wednesday)

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast with program administrator.
- 9:00 a.m. Meeting with staff.
- 12:00 p.m. Team lunch or lunch with other groups affiliated with the programs.
- 1:30 p.m. Any remaining interviews with students and faculty (if necessary).
- 3:00 p.m. Team executive session: preparation of draft report.
- 5:00 p.m. Check-in meeting with program administrator. Break for the day.
- TBD Team dinner.

Day 5 (Thursday)

- 7:30 a.m. Breakfast with program administrator to advise of team Preliminary Findings.
- 9:30 a.m. Review of team Preliminary Findings with chief executive officer of the institution.
- 10:30 a.m. Discussions of team Preliminary Findings with immediate supervisor of program administrator.
- 11:15 a.m. Report of team Preliminary Findings to landscape architecture faculty and students (may be combined or separate for BLA vs. MLA, and likewise for faculty vs. students, at team's discretion).
- 12:00 noon Lunch (optional), followed by departure from campus.