GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL ACCREDITATION VISITING TEAM MEMBERS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
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INTRODUCTION

This document is intended as a supporting guide to members of AILA Accreditation Visiting Teams. For detailed information on accreditation policy, please refer to the 'Accreditation Standards and Procedures' document.

Accreditation reviews are conducted by a Visiting Team (also commonly referred to as a NART Visiting Team), which is selected by the AILA National Education Committee (NEC) from the National Accreditation Review Team (NART). The reviews provide an important external assessment for programs of landscape architecture. These reviews should provide constructive and positive insights focused on improving the quality of landscape architectural education. As a member of a Visiting Team, you will act as liaison between AILA and the institution seeking accreditation for its Program. As such, you are a representative of AILA. The following guidelines provide information outlining the accreditation process and regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Visiting Team. While it is not possible to put everything into writing, the guidelines are intended to provide Visiting Team members with a better understanding of their role, duties and responsibilities. Specific questions may always be directed back to your supporting AILA administrative team.

Visiting Team Selection

The Visiting Team consists of two landscape architecture academics, two practicing landscape architects and one student. For a review, the NEC Chair selects a Visiting Team from the NART and designates one member as the Visiting Team Chair.

Visiting Teams are selected to avoid potential conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest exists when a NART member is currently involved in the teaching or administrative activities of the Program under review, or has provided advice on their Landscape Architecture Program during that Program's current accreditation period other than as a member of NART. A conflict of interest may also be a recent affiliation with the Program under review, or an affiliation with a Program in the same State or Territory. This would make a member ineligible to be part of the Visiting Team.

The Program is advised of the proposed Visiting Team members, including each member's current position, experience and areas of expertise. The Program has the right to challenge a maximum of one Visiting Team member, with cause. For the purpose of challenge, conflict of interest can be cited if the nominee is affiliated with a competitor university or if they have had a previous affiliation with the university, or if the university can demonstrate that the nominee is not competent to evaluate the Program. However, the final decision on team composition rests with the NEC Chair.

Team members need to be well prepared by reading and reviewing all documents (including any student work provided) prior to and during the visit, and by communicating with each other before arriving at the university. The manner in which the team conducts interviews, reviews work and facilities, the care taken in determining findings and crafting the Visiting Team Report, and the way that findings are presented to the host university determine the success of the visit. Every step in the process requires considered professional input.

OVERVIEW OF THE ACCREDITATION VISIT

Objectives
The objective of the accreditation visit is to assess whether the Program under review meets AILA's accreditation standards as stipulated in the *Accreditation Standards and Procedures* document.

Responsibilities: Landscape Architecture Program
The AILA NEC Chair, after conferring with the Visiting Team and the Institution, schedules the dates for the accreditation visit. The Program is responsible for making all accommodation arrangements for the Visiting Team. Hotel accommodation must be comfortable, reasonably priced and where possible using on-campus facilities, such as those for visiting academic staff or guest lecturers. AILA is responsible for the cost of travel, accommodation and meal expenses of the Visiting Team. The Visiting Team should be supplied with a lockable room with computer and printer, internet access, tea and coffee facilities, lunches, etc.

Following the Program's review of the Visiting Team nominees, the nominees are invited to serve. When the Visiting Team and dates of the review are finalised, the Visiting Team members and the Program are formally notified. Any subsequent changes to the Team makeup, due to scheduling conflicts or emergencies, are made by the NEC Chair in consultation with the Program.

The Program prepares the schedule for the Accreditation visit and forwards it to the NEC Chair, along with the SER, at least 30 business days prior to the visit, whereupon the NEC Chair distributes it to the Visiting Team. The recommended schedule includes interviews with students, academic staff and institutional officials, as well as alumni and local practitioners.

Responsibilities: Visiting Team
1. Verify information provided in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER);
2. Gather new information through observation and interviews. Identify program strengths and areas for improvement;
3. Provide a written report to AILA's NEC after the Program visit;
4. Include in the accompanying report the team's consensus of the appropriate accreditation status for the program, based on their observations. This recommendation is confidential and is not disclosed to the Program during the visit; and,
5. Provide verbal feedback to the Program through exit interviews conducted on the last day of the visit

The Visiting Team Chair is responsible for assigning team members to particular areas and assembling the Visiting Team's post-visit report. Team members receive the *AILA Accreditation Standards and Procedures* and the *Guidelines for National Accreditation Visiting Team Members* and are expected to be thoroughly familiar with these documents before the accreditation visit. Each Visiting Team member must carefully review the Program's Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and carry out their assignments as the Team Chair directs.

Each Visiting Team member should:
- Read the entire Self Evaluation Report (SER);
- Know your assigned area (given by the Visiting Team Chair) and focus on those Standards in the SER whilst identifying any additional information needed;
- Ensure that you have access to representative examples of student work for your assigned area;
- Formulate questions that need to be asked to properly assess Standards assigned to you;
- Be objective, balanced and thorough. Your role is to observe, analyse and report;

- Identify important issues early (at the conclusion of the first day) so you can revisit them and gather additional information that will or will not support them;
- Write clearly, concisely and provide factual information to support any recommendations;
- Avoid vague terms eg "some staff said…" "It was reported…"; and
- During the exit interviews, be prepared to discuss the rationale for any recommendations or suggestions in the Standards.

Visiting Team members may conduct interviews by telephone with persons who are unable to meet with them on campus, such as graduates, practitioners or academic staff on leave. An institutional senior management representative should be interviewed during the Team's visit. Early inspection of space and facilities and student work are vital. No evening events should be scheduled, as the Visiting Team needs this time to work on its report and prepare for the next day.

Observer Responsibilities during Visits

Observers may participate in Visiting Team discussions as invited by the Team Chair. For example, a prospective Visiting Team member may be invited to serve as an observer as an apprenticeship for a future accreditation visit, and may be asked to participate in reviews of student work and ask questions during the Visit that a member of the Visiting Team would typically ask. However, the goal of the observer is to prepare to be a future team member.

Team Member Conduct

AILA expects all Visiting Team members to be completely professional. Visiting Team members must refrain from engaging in any conduct which might be deemed unprofessional or inappropriate. For example, no team member should make any statement or engage in any activity which might offend the reasonable sensibilities of representatives of the program.

Any team member who fails to act in a professional and respectful manner may be dismissed immediately from the Team by the Team Chair.

TEAM REPORT

During the visit, the Visiting Team members meet in private to prepare a complete report in draft form and to decide on a confidential advisory recommendation to AILA NEC on the Program's accreditation status. The content of this report, except the advisory recommendation, is discussed with the institutional senior management representative as well as the Program Director.

Within ten business days following the visit, the Visiting Team Chair completes final editing and sends copies to the other Visiting Team members and the AILA NEC Chair who review the report. The report may be edited for grammar, spelling and style. The Visiting Team members should send any comments to the AILA NEC Chair. Any substantive changes or additions will be referred to the Team Chair and may result in re-distributing the report to the Visiting Team for further review.

The report follows the Visiting Team Report template and has three sections in the report and one separate section which is kept confidential:

1. **Overall analysis.**

2. **Report on each Standard.**

3. **Summary of recommendations and suggestions to the program.**

4. **Confidential recommendation to AILA.**

SECTION 1: OVERALL ANALYSIS

The overall analysis includes two sections:

A. An introduction that sets the tone of the report and provides the reader with a sense of the program's institutional and regional context and a brief summary (two pages at most) of the team's findings. The assessment should include a statement about the focus of the program and its unique characteristics, and a summary of its strengths and challenges.

B. A review of each **Recommendation affecting Accreditation** and **Suggestions for Improvement** from the last accreditation review, with the team's assessment of whether the issue has been adequately addressed. If any of these items are still of concern, they should be addressed in the appropriate section of the report.

SECTION 2: REPORT ON EACH STANDARD

The team must report on each Standard. See the *Accreditation Standards and Procedures* document for definitions. This section has five parts:

A. **Title and Statement of Standard**

B. **Assessment of Program Compliance with each Standard**

C. **Team's Assessment**

D. **Recommendations Affecting Accreditation (if applicable)**

     E.   Suggestions for Improvement (if applicable).

A.   Title and Statement of Standard

Each Standard has a title eg **Standard 1: Program Mission and Objectives** and a statement clarifying it and what the Standard intends to measure. Criteria are identified by letters (eg **A. Program Mission**).

B.   Assessment of Program Compliance with each Standard

The team indicates its conclusions about the program's compliance with the Standard: *met, met with recommendation(s),* or *not met.*

Standard Met

    Evidence shows that overall program performance in this area meets AILA minimum Standards. A Standard may be judged as met even though one or more criteria are not minimally met.

Standard Met with Recommendation

    Deficiencies exist in an area **directly bearing on accreditation**. The problem or problems have observable effects on the overall quality of the program.

    A finding of **"met with recommendation"** must be justified in the rationale section by stating the evidence considered by the team, what deficiencies were found, and why in the team's view, the deficiencies have a serious impact on overall program quality. Since one or more findings of **"met with recommendation"** may result in **Preliminary Accreditation**, the team must provide justification of its assessment.

Standard Not Met

    The reported deficiency is such that the overall quality of the program is compromised and the program's ability to deliver adequate landscape architecture education is impaired.

    A finding of **"not met"** must be supported by evidence that the deficiencies in this area are so severe that overall Program quality is unacceptably compromised. **A Program that has even one Standard assessed as "not met" will be denied accreditation**.

C.   Team Assessment

The intent of this section provides justification for the team's assessment.

Each Standard has criteria statements that state the components needed to satisfy that Standard. If a criterion is not satisfied, it does not automatically lead to an assessment of a Standard as 'not met'. A Program should demonstrate progress towards meeting the criteria in order to be accredited. For a finding of **"Standard met"**, the rationale may appropriately cite areas of strength as well as those of concern. A finding of **"not met"** must be supported by evidence that the deficiencies in this area are so severe that overall program quality is unacceptably compromised.

The Visiting Team must report on each criterion following the format in the example section of this document, using the assessment questions to gauge compliance.

D.   Recommendations Affecting Accreditation

If there are any issues of serious concern directly affecting the quality of the Program, then Recommendations affecting Accreditation are only made when the visiting team assesses a Standard as **"met with recommendation"** or **"not met"**.

Recommendations are derived from areas of weakness in meeting a Standard that are identified in the rationale sections of the Visiting Team report. The Program is required to report progress regularly on these issues. Recommendations affecting accreditation identify issues but do not prescribe solutions.

E.   Suggestions for Improvement

Suggestions for improvement may be made for areas where the Program can build on particular strengths or address an area of concern that does not directly affect accreditation at the time of the AILA review.

Some suggestions may derive from the team's view that, if left unattended, these concerns could lead to a future determination that they are serious enough to warrant a finding of **"met with recommendation"**. Although Programs are not required to take action on suggestions, they must report their response to them, which could range from dismissing them to reporting progress in addressing them. Other suggestions may derive from items that, in the Team's opinion, an area can become a greater strength or improve the Program.

Suggestions can be a very useful part of this peer review process. It is important to keep suggestions to a minimum. The maximum number of suggestions shall be seven (7). A team may direct more than one suggestion to a particular Standard but the total number may not exceed seven. Suggestions, unlike recommendations, may be prescriptive but they should be supported by evidence found in the Standard's intent.

SECTION 3: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS TO PROGRAMS

This section summarizes all **Recommendations Affecting Accreditation**, and **Suggestions for Improvement** from the reports on each Standard. There cannot be any recommendations or suggestions that were not previously identified.

SECTION 4: CONFIDENTIAL ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION TO AILA

The team should agree on its recommendation to AILA of the type of accreditation action. This recommendation is advisory only and **must be kept confidential** and delivered to AILA as a separate document. Do not disclose it in the exit interview(s). The recommendation sheet must be completed and signed by all Visiting Team members before leaving the campus. The Team's recommendation is only advisory as the Program has the opportunity to respond to the team report and supply additional information to AILA. The Team's recommendation must be supported by the report's content.

COMPLETION SCHEDULE

The Visiting Team should complete a draft of their report before the end of the visit. One way to expedite this process is for Team members to bring their own computers and memory stick.

Within ten business days following the visit, the Visiting Team Chair completes final editing and sends copies to the other Visiting Team members and the AILA NEC Chair who review the report. The report may be edited for grammar, spelling and style. The Visiting Team members should send any comments to the AILA NEC Chair. Any substantive changes or additions will be referred to the Team Chair and may result in re-distributing the report to the Visiting Team for further review. If there are any difficulties in producing the report or submitting it within the required time, the Team Chair should contact the AILA National Office and provide a revised submission date for the report.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews with the Program participants are an essential part of the accreditation process.

There is a suggested schedule in the *Accreditation Standards and Procedures* document. The schedule should ensure the availability of key University administrative officials. This is important in assisting the Program with any concerns it may have in terms of resources, etc. In addition, the schedule should be arranged to allow the Visiting Team to develop a good understanding of all facets of the Program by the end of the first full day of the visit.

It is important that the interviews be consistent. This document includes sample questions for each group (administrators, academic staff, students and graduates). The team should agree in advance on the core questions that will be asked in each interview and by whom. The Team Chair may, at his/her discretion, decide to conduct interviews on an individual basis rather than as a team. If so, it is essential to agree on the ground rules. Teams should identify the most important areas to cover, leave time in each interview to probe areas of concern, and allow the interviewee the chance to ask any questions he or she may have. The Team should invite academic staff and students to meet with the entire Team or a member of the Team individually (under conditions of anonymity if necessary) to discuss issues of concern.

Exit Interview
There are four exit interviews in a typical accreditation visit:
- A private one with the Program Director;
- Separate group interviews with the senior staff;
- The Program's teaching staff without the senior staff; and
- With the students.

The Team Chair normally conducts the exit interviews. The exit interviews should provide a balanced picture of the team's findings. Each **Recommendation affecting Accreditation** and **Suggestion for Improvement** should be reported to all groups. It is best to read the recommendations and suggestions to avoid reporting them differently to different audiences that could leave them open to different interpretations. The Program should never be surprised by a **recommendation** or **suggestion** in the Team's written report that was not mentioned in the exit interview.

The team's recommendation on accredited status to AILA should not be disclosed to anyone. This confidential recommendation is restricted to advice to AILA, as outlined in Section 4, above.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE VISITING TEAM

These are examples of questions that can generate conversation and ensure key areas of the Program are discussed. It is not expected that all questions will be asked.

- Avoid questions which elicit information already provided in the Self-Evaluation Report, except as a means of verifying that information.
- The Visiting Team should discuss in advance what questions will give the best information to make an assessment of the program.
- Questions and responses can be used for the Team to comment on more than one Standard or criterion.

Questions to Administrators

1. How is the Program regarded by other elements of the university?
2. How does the Program contribute to the university's mission and record of achievement?
3. How is the future of the Program regarded by others in the university?
4. How are the Program's staff regarded academically and as contributors to the leadership of the university?
5. Are there some issues or questions that the team should pay particular attention to during the visit?
6. How is the Program perceived by the community outside of the university?

Questions to the Department Head/Program Director

1. Has the Department's long-range planning effort influenced recent policy decisions? If so how?
2. How has alumni and practitioner contact influenced facilitating the Program's mission?
3. Are there special efforts underway to recruit able students, particularly women and minorities? How successful have these efforts been? What is the main draw for students who enrol in the program?
4. How do the Standards for academic staff selection, development, promotion, tenure, salary determination etc support the goals of the Program?
5. Is there a strategy to assist the staff in research and professional development? Is it working?
6. What efforts have been undertaken to update and strengthen the curriculum? What prompted these efforts?
7. Do you think the curriculum addresses contemporary issues?
8. How does the Program assist in preparing graduates for employment or additional education opportunities? Does the Program have an advisory board comprised of a variety of experts (both LA and non-LA) to provide feedback and direction?
9. Does the Program have fund raising mechanisms in place?
10. How do you assess course effectiveness in addressing curriculum goals?
11. How often and by what assessment techniques do you evaluate how well the curriculum is addressing your Program mission and goals?
12. How and how often do you assess the overall program mission and goals?
13. How are your assessment/evaluation efforts working? Do you anticipate any revisions?
14. Does the University have resources to help you in these areas?
15. How does the Program contribute to the university's mission?

Questions for Academic Staff Members

1. What are the Dean's /Program Director's expectations for the Program? Have these expectations lead to staff debate? Is this debate healthy or divisive?
2. What is the academic staff's role in the objective-setting process?
3. What effect has long-range planning had on important policy decisions, particularly those involving staff committee considerations? Have the Program's objectives influenced these considerations?
4. How were staff members involved in the preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report?

5. Are the Standards for academic staff selection, development, promotion, and salary determination pulling the Program in the right direction?
6. Are you pleased with the calibre of students attracted to this Program?
7. What are your current teaching-research-service interests? What assistance is available in pursuing these professional interests?
8. What is the greatest source of satisfaction in being in this Program?
9. Is your long-term professional growth well served by remaining here?
10. Do you understand the policies and procedures that lead to your next level of advancement and do you have the mentoring and support to do so?
11. Are administrative and support personnel resources generally adequate?
12. What do you think of the current curriculum?
13. Do you think any changes are necessary in the curriculum?
14. Are the computer and library resources satisfactory for your teaching and research interests?
15. How effective is your program's assessment/evaluation process? For courses? For determining how courses support curriculum goals? How curriculum supports Program mission and goals?
16. Are you excited about any current innovative efforts in the university?
17. How successful are graduates in getting employment? Are they satisfied with the types of positions they obtain?
18. Are you satisfied with the physical facilities that house the program?
19. How effective are the adjunct staff members?
20. How is the Program's relationship with other programs?

Questions for Students
1. What caused you to select this degree program and this university?
2. Would you recommend this Program to others?
3. To what extent are students involved in the policy-making decisions of the School/Department? Have good ideas advanced from such student involvement been implemented?
4. Were students involved in the preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report?
5. How soon after initial enrolment are career and placement counselling opportunities made known to students? Are these services adequate? Is the academic advising adequate? For graduate students, are professional staff and faculty members available as research advisors?
6. Do you think this Program attracts capable students?
7. What do you think of the capabilities of other students in the Program?
8. If teaching evaluation forms are available to students, have the results of these questionnaires made any difference? If they don't exist, should they?
9. Do you get a sense of the profession from your instructors?
10. Do teaching staff seem concerned about their teaching performance? Does the Program emphasize good teaching?
11. How are research and scholarship introduced into the curriculum?
12. Are course prerequisites enforced?
13. What single learning experience has been most exciting and memorable?
14. Have you been expected to utilize the library resources in your courses? Computer resources?
15. Are the Program's handbook, website and course literature accurate in describing the course content from year to year? Is this material effective in helping you select classes to meet your educational objectives?
16. What are the plusses and minuses of the physical facilities? Are you satisfied with them?
17. How effective are the adjunct staff?
18. What is the Program's relationship with other programs?

Questions for Graduates

1. How did the Program prepare you for your career in Landscape Architecture?
2. Were you prepared to handle the work expectations upon graduation? 5 years? Now?
3. What sorts of contact do you have with the Department, School and University generally?
4. Have you hired any graduates recently? Would you recommend hiring one?
5. Are you in contact with any of your classmates?
6. What do you see as the Program's strengths and weaknesses?
7. If requested, and you were available, would you consider advising, participating in the Program and/or serving on an Advisory Board?
8. How were research and scholarship introduced into the curriculum?

Questions for Practitioners

1. What type of practice do you have?
2. What kind of contact do you have with the Program?
3. What do you see as the Program's strengths and weaknesses?
4. Have you employed graduates from this Program?
5. What is their contribution? Do they meet your expectations?
6. How do they compare with employees who graduated from other universities?

EXAMPLE OF A VISITING TEAM REPORT

SECTION 1: OVERALL ANALYSIS

A. Introduction

The Bachelor of Landscape Architecture program resides in the Department of XXX at XXXXX University in xxxxxxx. The Department of Landscape Architecture shares with the Departments of Architecture, Art + Design, Graphic Design and Industrial Design.

The Department of Landscape Architecture has two degree programs; the Bachelor and the Masters. Both programs are approximately the same size at 40 students each. This five year Bachelor program graduates approximately 10 students per year and there is no pressure from the University to increase the program enrolment. At this size, the student /staff ratio for the Bachelor Program is below 15:1 for all classes.

The local area attracts industry and business. This highly developed area is rich in both cultural and environmental amenities. It also has a significant number of landscape architects who have been enlisted by the Department in teaching and in the formal mentoring and advising of students. The Department has recently developed excellent relationships with other Departments, the professional community and with the city and state-wide municipalities.

The School of Design has developed a rich interdisciplinary curriculum that is unusually progressive in the mixing of students and academic staff with a curriculum that engages all students with a *First Year Experience* that is interdepartmental and a later *Swing Studio* that requires mid-curriculum students to enrol in a studio in another course.

The Department is led by Dean xxxxxx who provides strong and enlightened leadership by both building the excellent facilities and IT equipment and support and a leadership team that values cross-disciplinary teaching and learning. In 20xx, Professor xxxxxxx was appointed Department Head. Previous issues of Program isolation, lack of external interaction and support and curriculum issues have been addressed and corrected. The Visiting Team commends his tireless and highly effective leadership efforts.

As is the case with all academic programs in this time of budget constraints, the future will be difficult but with the University, School and external support, and the able School and Departmental leadership, this program should be able to meet the challenges ahead.

All cohorts interviewed and evidence presented suggest that the Bachelor Program at xxxxxx University has met AILA's Standards and satisfies the two recommendations coming out of the 20XX accreditation report.

The overall evaluation of the present B Arch (Landscape Architecture) professional program's direction is commendable.

B. Review of Each Recommendation affecting Accreditation Identified by the previous Review in XXXX

The Visiting Team made three recommendations as part of the 20xx visit. They are

Recommendation 1: *Review the balance of hand graphics and computer technology in design and design implementation courses such that the use of computer technology is more fully integrated into all courses.*

After a thorough examination of the revised curriculum, discussions with the Department head, teaching staff and students and through a careful review of displayed student work, the Visiting Team concluded that this recommendation has been satisfied. (Standard 3: Professional Curriculum)

Recommendation 2: *Expand and solidify the professional practice content on the curriculum.*

Through a formal mentorship initiative which teams a student with a local practitioner, and through the professional practice course, the team concluded that this recommendation has been satisfied. (Standard 3: Professional Curriculum)

Recommendation 3: *Provide the L.A. Department with office and studio space that gives the program more visibility and greater access to other Departments and the School facilities.*

There have been no changes in the Program's facilities so the team concluded that this recommendation has not been satisfied. (See the intent following Standard 7: Facilities, Equipment & Technology).

C.   Visiting Team Members

The Visiting Team consists of two landscape architecture academics, two practicing landscape architects and one student.

Landscape Architecture Academics
- Xxxxxxx – University of xxxxx (Chair)
- Xxxxxxx – University of xxxxx

Practicing Landscape Architects
- Xxxxxxx – xxxxx
- Xxxxxxx – xxxxx

Student
- Xxxxxxx – University of xxxxx.

Standard 1: Program Mission and Objectives (example)

A. TITLE AND STATEMENT OF STANDARD

The Program shall have a clearly defined mission supported by goals and objectives appropriate to the profession of landscape architecture and shall demonstrate progress towards their attainment.

INTENT: Using a clear concise mission statement, each landscape architecture program should define its core values and fundamental purpose for academic staff, students, prospective students and the educational university within which it resides. The mission statement summarises why the program exists and the needs that it seeks to fulfil. It also provides a benchmark for assessing how well the program is meeting the stated objectives.

B. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM COMPLIANCE WITH EACH STANDARD

Standard 1 Assessment:
- ☑ Standard Met
- ☐ Standard Met with Recommendation
- ☐ Standard Not Met

C. TEAM ASSESSMENT

A. Program Mission. The mission statement expresses the underlying purposes, values and distinctiveness of the Program.

Assessment: Does the Program have a clearly stated mission reflecting the purpose and values of the program and does it relate to the university's mission statement?

> Team comments: Yes. The Program mission statement in the Program's 20xx strategic plan focuses primarily on the stewardship and enhancement of the urban environment in an effort to improve the quality of life for the urban populous. This focus is also articulated in the university's mission statement and appropriate to the urban environment in which the university is located.

B. Educational Goals & Objectives. Clearly defined and formally stated academic goals should reflect the mission and demonstrate that attainment of the goals will fulfil the Program mission, while the Learning Outcomes specifically describe how each of the academic goals will be achieved.

Assessment 1: Does the Program have an effective procedure to determine progress in meeting its goals and is it used regularly?

> Team Comments: The academic staff review the work in each course as a means of evaluating how well each course is addressing the program's goals. Reviews are scheduled for about one third of the curriculum each year. At the reviews, staff also discussed how elective choices support program goals.

Assessment 2: Does the Program have clearly defined and achievable Learning Outcomes that describe how the goals will be met?

Team Comments: Yes. The Learning Outcomes describe how the sequence of courses, the focus of specific courses, the relationship between courses during the semester, field trips, study abroad opportunities and internships work together to achieve the academic goals. In addition, the academic staff as a whole annually review the Learning Outcomes to determine if they are appropriate and realistic as a vehicle to achieving program goals.

C. Program Aspirations: Opportunities & Risks. Indication that the Program is engaged in a long-range (3-5 years as a minimum) planning Process.

Assessment: Does the long-range process as presented in the Self Evaluation-Report, describes how the Program's mission and objectives will be met, documents the university's and Program 's review and evaluation processes, identifies strengths and weaknesses, and discusses external and university internal matters that may impact upon the Program 's operation?

Team Comments: The Program has been engaged in long-range planning. The 20xx Strategic Plan defines goals and objectives for a five-year period. The goals addressing the curriculum have a set of objectives which are successfully guiding its development. However, the objectives supporting the goals that address student recruitment and facilities are weak.
The long-range plan is reviewed annually at a departmental retreat just prior to the start of the second semester. It has been an important and effective guide for curriculum development but less so guiding student recruitment and facilities (individual staff offices, tutorial space and computer technology).

D. Program Disclosure. Program literature, website and promotional media accurately describe the Program's mission, objectives, educational experiences and accreditation status.

Assessment: Is the Program information accurate?

Team Comments: All Program media accurately describe the Program's mission, objectives, educational experiences and accreditation status.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS AFFECTING ACCREDITATION

The Program meets the minimum Accreditation expectations for Standard 1

E. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Clearly articulate the Program's mission; and identify supporting educational objective the attainment of which can be demonstrated.
2. Develop a stronger statement of objectives related to outreach and scholarship and the measures that should be used to evaluate progress towards their attainment.
3. Add a clear strategy for student recruitment and improvement of facilities in the long-range plan.

SECTION 3: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS TO PROGRAMS

Examples of <u>Appropriate</u> Recommendations and Suggestions

- Arrange the curriculum with greater flexibility and less conflict in order to meet both major objectives of the MLArch curriculum; providing "basic competency in the fundamental aspects of design and technology", and "advanced study in an area of concentration".

- A specific plan for the full use and maintenance of computer technology for faculty staff and students should be developed and implemented.

- Integrate the use of computers into the curriculum.

- Develop a clear set of measurable objectives for the program which are linked to the curriculum. Improve balance between theory and practice within the curriculum.

Examples of <u>Inappropriate</u> Recommendations and Suggestions

- Add a GIS course to ensure all students have knowledge of GIS.

- Hire two additional landscape architecture staff to reduce student/staff ratios in studios.

- Increase funds allocated to program for purchase of computer hardware and software.

- Change the administrative structure to make landscape architecture a separate Department.

- Require all students to participate in a study abroad program.

- Convert the program from a four-year to five-year program.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

Within ten business days of the receipt of the Visiting Team report, the NEC Chair shall send copies to the Program Director for their comment and for accuracy of matters of fact. Within fifteen business days following receipt of the report, the university shall submit its response (substantive comments and corrections) to the AILA NEC Chair. The Program Director shall respond to any Standard that is assessed as "met with recommendation(s)" or "not met". This response should include any additional documentation the Program Director deems pertinent.

The report and Program Response are sent to the AILA NEC members at least three weeks before the next scheduled NEC meeting.

AILA REVIEW AND DECISION

The accreditation review decision will take place at the next scheduled AILA NEC meeting. The NEC may consult with a member of the Visiting Team (usually the Chair) and/or the Program Director in order to clarify items in the team report or Program Response.

The Program Director may request to appear before the NEC to discuss a pending accreditation decision. The NEC's decision will be based upon the Program's Self-Evaluation Report, annual reports, Visiting Team report and university response.

Any adverse accreditation decision, defined as either "accreditation denial" or "withdrawal of accreditation" will be substantiated with specific reasons and the Program Director will be notified of their right to appeal any such decision (see Appeal Process). A Program which has not been granted accredited status, or a Program from which accreditation has been withdrawn, may reapply for accreditation when the Program Director believes the Program meets current requirements.

Accreditation is granted for a period of one to five years. A Program Director may apply for an accreditation review at any time before its term expires (at its own expense), but may not defer a visit to extend its term.

AILA Actions
AILA can take the following actions:

Accreditation or Preliminary Accreditation
 Accreditation (or Preliminary Accreditation) is granted when all Standards are "met" or when one or more Standards are "met with recommendation(s)" and continued overall Program quality and conformance to Standards are judged likely to be maintained.

 Accreditation or Preliminary Accreditation may be granted up to five (5) years.

 Preliminary Accreditation granted to a Program with Accreditation may be for a period of up to two (2) years.

 Accreditation or Preliminary Accreditation are not subject to appeal.

 A Program receiving Accreditation or Preliminary Accreditation may be required to submit special progress reports.

Accreditation Denial

This status results when one or more Standards are not met. This determination is subject to appeal.

The following two AILA actions are not within the scope of the NART Visiting Team to recommend:

Suspension of Accreditation

This status results if a Program fails to maintain good standing for administrative reasons. Suspension of accreditation is not subject to appeal.

Withdrawal of Accreditation

This status results if a Program fails to comply with accreditation Standards. This determination is subject to appeal.

APPENDIX A – CONFIDENTIAL ADVISORY RECOMMENDATION TO AILA

Date of Visit   _____

University   _____

Program   _____

Visiting Team Recommendation

☐ **Accreditation**
    Period of Accreditation: _____ years
    The maximum period is 5 years

☐ **Preliminary Accreditation**
    1. **New Programs seeking Accreditation**
        Accreditation application is due in 2 _ _ _
        Accreditation application is due once the first student cohort graduates.
    2. **Programs with Accreditation**
        Period of Preliminary Accreditation: _____ years
        The maximum period is 2 years.

☐ **Accreditation Denial**

Names and Signatures:

Team Chair: _____

Member: _____

Member: _____

Member: _____

Member: _____

DEFINITIONS

Accreditation

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 five (5) years.
A program receiving accreditation may be required to submit special progress reports at the discretion of AILA.

Preliminary Accreditation

1. **New Programs seeking 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. Preliminary Accreditation may be granted for up to five (5) years. Programs receiving Preliminary Accreditation must submit a special progress report after two or three years (time determined by AILA). AILA will review the progress report to determine if an accreditation review should be scheduled immediately or as originally scheduled when Preliminary Accreditation was granted.

2. **Program with 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. Preliminary Accreditation may be granted up to two (2) years. This status shall not be granted more than twice without an intervening period of accreditation. Preliminary status is not deemed to be an adverse action and is not subject to be appealed.

Accreditation Denial

This status results when one or more Standards are ***not met***. This determination is subject to appeal.

APPENDIX B – TEAM CHAIR VISIT CHECKLIST

BEFORE VISIT

1. Ensure travel and accommodation confirmation has been received. (AILA staff can assist). Confirm with the Program.
2. Review *Accreditation Standards and Procedures* and *Guidelines for National Accreditation Visiting Team Members*.
3. Review *Self-Evaluation Report* (SER), which is due to arrive not later than 30 business days before visit.
4. Contact other Visiting Team members, discuss assigned areas of interest.
5. Discuss schedule with AILA staff and Program Director.
6. AILA staff provides contact details for Visiting Team members and the Program Director.

DURING VISIT

7. Introduction and orientation session with the Visiting Team.
8. Review SER and other materials.
9. Review Team member responsibilities and potential interview questions.
10. Prepare draft Team Report.
11. Complete and sign Recommendation Form.

AFTER VISIT

12. Complete Visiting Team Report within 10 business days, with liaison as required with NEC Chair.
13. Send copies of Team Report to Visiting Team members and AILA National Office.
14. Submit tax invoices and AILA form for any costs that need to be reimbursed.