

AABInternational

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Form 225

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AVIATION ACCREDITATION BOARD INTERNATIONAL

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Section 1.0 The Aviation Accreditation Board International

1.1. Mission. The Aviation Accreditation Board International advances quality aviation education in partnership with industry.

1.2. Vision. AABI is instrumental in the development of the Next Generation of Aviation Professionals.

1.3. Goals. The goals of AABI are to stimulate collegiate aviation program excellence and self-improvement; establish uniform minimum educational quality standards and criteria; and increase the credibility, integrity, and acceptance of collegiate aviation programs within institutions of higher education and all aspects of the aviation community, including industry, government and the public-at-large.

1.3.1 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). A central mission of AABI is to forge aviation character in tomorrow's aviators, professionals, and leaders. As such, AABI fosters an inclusive environment, embraces diversity, and promotes unique differences of its members inherent to an international organization. The AABI educators, industry leaders, and staff are committed to enabling the people who teach and administer accredited programs in support of the future leaders of aviation to remain vigilant and energized against intolerance and will take decisive action to confront educational, psychological, and physical violence that accompanies systemic intolerance.

AABI accomplishes this by:

- Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion through educational and cultural practices among its members.
- Acknowledging the varied beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and customs of the people that constitute its communities of interest and areas of influence, thereby creating a diverse, multicultural, and inclusive environment.
- Demonstrating sensitivity to all forms of diversity and multiculturalism, which enables and encourages every individual to fully participate in society.
- Expecting AABI-accredited programs to lead the education of students to effectively function in and be supportive of a diverse aviation environment. Exposing students to a wide range of people, ideas, and activities throughout the educational institution, in the classrooms and laboratories, as well as among faculty and staff.

As used in this policy:

- Diversity is the representation of all our varied identities and differences (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, tribe, caste, and socio-economic status), collectively and as individuals. Embracing diversity means seeking to proactively engage, understand, and draw on a variety of perspectives.
- Equity seeks to ensure just treatment, equal opportunity, and fairness in access to information and resources for all persons.
- Inclusion means building a culture of belonging by respecting each individual and actively inviting the contribution and participation of all people.

1.4. Accreditation Objectives. Accreditation is a status granted to an educational institution or a program that has been found to meet or exceed stated criteria of educational quality. In the United States, accreditation is sought voluntarily by institutions and programs, and is conferred by non-governmental bodies. Accreditation, which applies to institutions and/or programs, is distinguished from certification and licensure, which apply to individuals and are normally government issued.

- 1.4.1. Accreditation has three fundamental purposes:
- (1) To ensure the quality of the institution or program;
 - (2) To assist in the improvement of the institution or program; and
 - (3) To maintain relevance and currency of the educational program with the constituencies it serves.

- 1.4.2. National or regional bodies, such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), accredit institutions. Specialized accrediting bodies, such as AABI, accredit programs within the institutions.

1.5. Purposes. Accreditation is a time-honored process for evaluating and substantiating academic programs. An effective accrediting process ensures and promotes high quality educational programs. An aviation program that meets or exceeds stated criteria becomes more credible in the eyes of those considering enrollment in the program, those who are providing support for the program on the campus, as well as future employers of program graduates.

The purposes of AABI are to promote and improve aviation at the postsecondary level, and specifically: (1) to engage in accrediting programs of aviation offered by colleges and universities in the U.S. and throughout the world, at the associate, baccalaureate, and graduate levels; (2) to maintain continuous compliance with published Criteria and Policies & Procedures, consistent with the recognition requirements of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the U. S. Department of Education; (3) to publish current information concerning the Criteria adopted by AABI for accrediting aviation programs; (4) to report the results of its activities; (5) to provide advisory services to colleges and universities offering or planning programs in aviation; (6) to maintain a list of the colleges and universities with accredited programs of study in aviation; and (7) to review at regular intervals the Criteria AABI has adopted to evaluate programs in aviation.

1.6. Responsibilities.

- 1.6.1. **Board of Trustees.** There shall be a governing body of AABI, known as the Board of Trustees, or the Board, as a collective body, with the individuals comprising the AABI Board of Trustees referred to as Trustees, or individually as Trustee. Trustees are elected prior to the Annual Meeting. The Board composition and term of service is defined in the Bylaws of AABI, Article 7.
- 1.6.2. **Officers.** The officers of the Board of Trustees shall be a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer and such other officers and assistant officers as the Board of Trustees considers helpful to AABI. The duties and terms of service are set forth in the Bylaws of AABI, Article 8.

1.7. Scope. In accordance with the CHEA Recognition Policy and Procedures, the Aviation

Accreditation Board International is recognized for the following scope:

To accredit non-engineering aviation programs at the associate, baccalaureate and graduate levels offered by colleges and universities in the United States and throughout the world.

Section 2.0.The Accreditation Process.

2.1. Mandatory Meeting Attendance Requirements for Programs in the Accreditation or Reaffirmation Process. This policy is established to achieve desired efficiency, consistency, and compliance with all applicable Criteria and Policies & Procedures in the completion of accreditation/reaffirmation requirements.

Institutions having programs in the initial accreditation or reaffirmation process **MUST** have at least one institutional representative in attendance at all winter meetings and all annual meetings, during the period beginning one year prior to submission of the Form 202, through completion of all Board actions related to that accreditation/reaffirmation, including completion and final acceptance of required interim reports. In addition, the institution **MUST** have at least one representative as a participant in at least one accreditation seminar or workshop.

In the event that circumstances prevent compliance with this policy, the institution can petition the AABI Executive Committee for appropriate relief or alternative compliance.

2.2. Applications.

2.2.1 AABI Program Definitions. A program is a clearly-delineated major, degree, or option, or combination of options within a major or degree, as defined by the institution. Each program seeking accreditation should have completed at least one full cycle and have graduated at least one class.

2.2.1.1. The institution may submit a degree with several options so long as all options meet the AABI program-specific criteria.

2.2.1.2. The institution may submit an option as a program if it wishes to have the option accredited and listed as a separate program.

2.2.2. Initial Application. When an institution is reasonably certain that the program(s) for review meet AABI application criteria, the institution may submit an application (AABI Form 202) along with payment of the application fee.

2.2.3. Reaffirmation Application. An institution seeking reaffirmation of AABI-accredited programs will submit an application (Form 202) 24 months prior to the expiration date of their accreditation. Any delay in meeting an application deadline could result in a lapse in accredited status.

2.2.4. Approach Options for Associate, Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs Conducted in Partnership Between Two or More Institutions. One of two approaches can be used to achieve accreditation of partnered programs:

2.2.4.1. When applying for accreditation, the participating programs may write a joint self-study, and will be reviewed by a team that will visit all institutions involved and write a comprehensive report. The Board will review and act on the entire report and recommendations from the Accreditation Committee.

2.2.4.2. If the degree granting institution partners only with institutions having corresponding AABI-accredited programs, then only the degree granting institution will be reviewed.

2.3. Pre-Accreditation Review.

- 2.3.1. The institution must be in Candidate status (if assistance with the application is needed, that can come from the president, the vice president for accreditation, or the home office). Candidacy status signifies that the institution is demonstrating reasonable progress toward the attainment of accreditation but does NOT indicate accredited status nor guarantee eventual accreditation.
- 2.3.2. The institution will pay a fee for the pre-accreditation review, to include a stipend for the assigned reviewer. There are three levels of pre-accreditation review:
 - A. Occasional phone conversations – Fee \$200 (includes a \$100 stipend).
 - B. Frequent interactions to include online web conference review of documents – Fee \$1000 (includes a \$500 stipend).
 - C. On-site pre-accreditation review – Fee \$1000 plus a \$200 stipend per day of actual visitation. In addition, travel (including business class airfare) is to be paid for by the institution using the “visiting team process” of a pre-visit deposit and an invoice for remaining expenses.
- 2.3.3. The institution must request a pre-accreditation review by email to the AABI vice-president of operations and approved by the chair of the Guidance Committee within 30 days of candidate status being granted, to maintain the ten months timeline for the self-study report.
- 2.3.4. The pre-accreditation review is suggested for all institutions that have no current AABI-accredited programs, or currently accredited programs that had two or more interim reports required within the last cycle. The institution will determine the level of pre-accreditation review (A, B, or C above).
- 2.3.5. The chair of the Guidance Committee (with approval of the president and vice-president of accreditation) will appoint the pre-accreditation reviewer based on the reviewer’s area of expertise and willingness to serve. An institution may request a reviewer; however, the chair of the Guidance Committee has complete discretion on reviewer assignments.
- 2.3.6. The pre-accreditation review process is limited to ten months while the institution is writing the self-study. (Extensions may be considered with extenuating circumstances.)
- 2.3.7. The pre-accreditation reviewer must be a current or former academic who is:

- A. a member of an institution with one or more AABI-accredited programs and has experience in the most recent accreditation process with their institution; or
- B. an AABI member in good standing with experience on at least two visiting teams within the last three years; or
- C. a combination of previous experience equivalent to A and B and at the discretion of the Guidance Committee, president and vice president of accreditation.

2.3.8. Whenever members serve as pre-accreditation reviewers, they cannot be on the visiting team for that institution and must recuse themselves from all discussions and voting in AABI Accreditation Committee and Board meetings associated with that institution's current accreditation cycle.

2.3.9. If any AABI member receives a request for a review or visit, the member should ask the requester to send a pre-accreditation review request by email to the AABI vice-president of operations.

2.4. Self-Study. Once the institution has been approved as a candidate, it will undertake a Self-Study in accordance with the outline presented in AABI Form 204. This will be completed and submitted within ten months from the date of candidacy. The ten-month time allotment for completion of the Self-Study Report allows for a two month period for the review and approval process, which includes pre-visit briefings for assessment and safety two weeks prior to the team visit.

2.4.1. The Self-Study Report (SSR) serves three purposes:

- (1) To guide the aviation unit (and its faculty) through a critical review of its operations;
- (2) To provide information to AABI so that a fair evaluation of the program can be made; and
- (3) To serve as a historical document for the aviation unit.

These purposes should be kept in mind when preparing the report. Sufficient information should be provided without being superfluous. However, extra information may be included to enhance the historical value of the document.

A detailed manual for the preparation of the Self-Study Report has been published by AABI (Form 204).

2.4.2. A critical examination will be made of all facets of each academic program for which accreditation is sought, including its faculty, staff, administration, students and resources. Performance histories of students will be analyzed, as well as projected enrollments and placement opportunities for graduates. The foregoing information will be compiled in a narrative Self-Study Report (SSR) with accompanying data in appropriate tables, charts and graphs. The SSR will be furnished to AABI and must be on a CD-ROM, flash drive, or an emailed Google Drive link. Please note SSRs will not be accepted via email.

2.4.3. The Self-Study Report, including appendices, and all associated communications will be written in the English language.

- 2.4.4. **Reporting Program Changes after Submission of the Self-Study Report.** The Self-Study Report is intended to be a “snap shot” of the institution’s programs at the time of its submission to AABI, and program changes may occur between the completion of the SSR and the site visit. Because one purpose of the site visit is to verify the institution’s self-evaluation, the visiting team must know of changes that have occurred since its preparation and submission. To enable the visiting team to be fully prepared to conduct the visit and prepare their report effectively and efficiently, the institution will notify AABI of any substantive changes from the conditions reported in the Self-Study as soon as possible prior to the site visit. The institution will also provide a revision to any affected section(s) of the Self-Study at least sixty days prior to the scheduled date of the site visit.

2.5. Team Visit. Members of the accreditation visiting teams will be selected from the roster of qualified AABI institutional and industry members. Qualifications for visiting team members and chairs are set forth in AABI Form 218. Each team will be made up of members having different areas of interest and competence so that the institution's programs will receive a thorough and rigorous review. The team will include one industry representative, at a minimum. The team visit will have four major purposes:

1. To validate the accuracy of the Self-Study Report.
2. To determine if the program is in compliance with AABI criteria.
3. To assess the intangible factors, which do not lend themselves to quantitative analysis and which cannot be adequately described in the Self-Study, yet may have profound effects on the overall quality of the programs. These intangible issues may include:
 - (a) Issues of faculty, staff and student morale;
 - (b) Intellectual atmosphere;
 - (c) Caliber of the faculty, staff and students; and
 - (d) The nature and quality of student work.
4. To assist the institution in identifying and assessing its strengths and weaknesses.

2.5.1. Pre-Visit Briefing on Assessment. The AABI vice president of operations will schedule the pre-visit briefing on assessment to be held on a date approximately two weeks prior to the campus visit, as mutually agreed upon by the institution, the AABI Visiting Team chair, the AABI president, and the AABI vice president of accreditation. The pre-visit briefing on assessment is a required part of the official AABI visit. It is the Visiting Team chair’s responsibility to conduct the meeting, to invite other members of the Visiting Team if desired, and to report the information collected in Section XI (Continuous Assessment and Improvement) of the Visiting Team Report.

2.5.2. Pre-Visit Briefing on Safety Culture and Program. The pre-visit briefing on safety culture and program is required for Aviation units that have flight, maintenance, avionics, and other aviation laboratories utilized to support the programs for which the institution is seeking AABI accreditation/reaffirmation. The AABI vice president of operations will schedule the pre-visit briefing on safety culture and program to be held on a date approximately two weeks prior to the campus visit, as mutually agreed upon by the institution, the AABI Visiting Team chair, the AABI president, and the AABI vice president of accreditation. The pre-visit briefing on safety culture and program is a required part of the official AABI visit. It is the Visiting Team chair’s responsibility to conduct the meeting, to invite other members of the Visiting Team if desired, and to report the information collected in Section IX (Aviation Safety Culture and Program) of the Visiting Team Report.

2.6. Visiting Team Report. Upon completion of the visit, the visiting team will prepare a report describing its findings. (See AABI Form 209.)

- 2.6.1. The visiting team chair will send a draft of the full report to the team, the AABI office, the vice president of accreditation, and the chair of the Accreditation Committee who will approve the report after required changes. The team chair will then revise the report as necessary and send to the program coordinator of the visited institution. This report will include strengths and weaknesses without any suggestions or recommendations. The institution can only comment on any factual error found in the document.
- 2.6.2. When the institution's response is received, the visiting team chair will incorporate any factual corrections into a Final Visiting Team Report for transmittal to the AABI president, vice president of accreditation and the chair of the Accreditation Committee.
- 2.6.3. The president, or his/her designee, will forward the Final Visiting Team Report to the CEO of the institution for review and response to the recommendations (required) and suggestions (optional) by the deadline specified.

2.7. Accreditation Committee Review and Action. As part of the accreditation process, the AABI Accreditation Committee is charged with reviewing each Visiting Team Report and recommending an accreditation action to the Board of Trustees in accordance with Form 211.

2.8. Board of Trustees Review and Action. The Board of Trustees has the authority to accept or reject the recommendations of the visiting team and the Accreditation Committee. The Board can elect to take any of the following actions:

- a. Grant accreditation as an initial action.
- b. Grant provisional accreditation, for a period determined by the Board.
- c. Not to accredit.
- d. Reaffirm accreditation for existing accredited programs.
- e. Extend accreditation for accredited programs that may expire.
- f. Revoke accreditation for existing accredited programs.
- g. Defer accreditation for additional information/actions by the institutions.
- h. Suspend accreditation for a specified period of time.
- i. Reinstate accreditation for programs in suspended status.

2.9. Distribution and Disposition of the AABI Accreditation Report. The decision on an institution's program accreditation status is transmitted to the chief executive officer of the institution and the aviation program(s) administrator(s) following Board action. Distribution and disposition of the AABI Accreditation Report sent to the institution are considered to be the responsibility of the officials of the institution.

2.9.1. **Informing the Public.** Once the institution has been notified of the Board's action, AABI is required by CHEA to inform the public about its accreditation decisions (Paragraph 12[B][5], *2010 CHEA Recognition Policy and Procedures*). The "Summary of Recent Actions" will be published on the AABI Web site (www.aabi.aero) following each Winter and Annual Meeting.

2.10. Period of Accreditation. The initial and subsequent periods of accreditation will be for five years unless a shorter term is prescribed by the Board (see Section 2.7). If the Board determines that another visit is warranted at an institution in less than five years, the institution will be so advised in writing with the reasons for an earlier review set forth.

A copy of the Accreditation Committee executive summary will be provided to the Board of Trustees for its next scheduled Board meeting. The institution will be notified by the president of the action taken by the Board within thirty (30) days following the Board meeting. The Board may elect to require one or more interim reports and may require an additional visit to confirm the institution's compliance with AABI criteria.

2.11. Accreditation Timetable. In order to meet the required timetable for completion of the application and self-study that will lead to initial accreditation or reaffirmation, institutions will be responsible for the submission of required documents and arranging for the team visit on a timetable furnished by AABI. For institutions seeking initial program accreditation, failure to adhere to this timetable will delay initial accreditation by AABI. For institutions seeking reaffirmation, failure to adhere to this timetable may result in the termination of accreditation, which would require submission of an initial application as a new program, with associated fees.

Section 3.0. General Policies

3.1. Statement of Accreditation and General Policies. Accreditation of programs is accomplished under the following general policies. These Policies and Procedures are provided as a framework for the accreditation of aviation programs.

3.1.1. AABI provides assistance for institutions seeking accredited status. Documents (AABI forms) provide guidance and can be downloaded from the AABI Web site (<http://www.aabi.aero/about-aabi/forms-and-publications/>) or can be requested from the AABI office.

3.1.2. The Aviation Accreditation Board International will:

- a. Evaluate for accreditation only those programs at institutions with regional or internationally recognized equivalent national or international accreditation, recognized by CHEA (Council for Higher Education Accreditation) or its equivalent.
- b. Evaluate for accreditation only those academic programs that lead to the associate, baccalaureate and/or graduate degrees, or internationally recognized equivalents.
- c. Accredite only those programs complying with the Accreditation Criteria and Policies & Procedures as approved by the AABI Board of Trustees.
- d. Establish criteria and procedures for granting, denying, reaffirming, extending, revoking, deferring, suspending or reinstating accreditation of aviation programs.
- e. Invite institutions to voluntarily seek accreditation of their aviation programs.
- f. Accredite based on well-defined criteria; but encourage innovation and experimentation.

- g. Encourage the development of programs that advance aviation as an academic discipline.
- h. Require accredited programs to state accreditation status in an accurate and clear manner in all institutional publications, including electronic.
- i. Insist that its evaluations be objective and fair, but reserve the right to be the final authority on matters of accreditation.
- j. Publish a list of accredited programs and candidates for accreditation at least twice a year.

3.2. Continuous Compliance with AABI Criteria. An accredited institution is expected to continuously comply with AABI Criteria and Policies & Procedures during the accreditation period.

3.2.1. Initial Accreditation. As an accrediting body recognized by CHEA, AABI is required to accredit programs based on CHEA recognition criteria. This includes compliance with AABI Criteria and Policy & Procedures. If a program does not meet all Criteria or Policies & Procedures, accreditation action **COULD** be deferred to give the program time to come into compliance, **not to exceed two years**. Institutions in this situation can expect a follow-up team visit prior to board action.

3.2.2. Reaffirmation. Institutions with accredited programs applying for reaffirmation must demonstrate that each accredited program meets current Criteria and Policies & Procedures and has addressed conditions and recommendations of prior interim report requirements. Any failure to meet all Criteria and Policies & Procedures could lead to deferral of accredited status requiring the program to meet any deficient areas within a specified period of time.

3.2.3. Reporting Requirements. If an institution has any cause for concern regarding their ability to continue to meet Accreditation Criteria and Policies & Procedures, a report to AABI is required. If such a report is received, or other information is forthcoming that would question the institution's ability to continuously maintain compliance with the Criteria and Policies & Procedures, the chairperson of the Accreditation Committee, with the advice and consent of the AABI chairperson, will appoint two or more members to conduct a review of that program.

3.2.3.1. During the period of review *for institutions that voluntarily report compliance concerns*, the accreditation status of the program will remain unchanged. Notwithstanding this, the institution is required to provide a report to AABI on the progress of its efforts to maintain compliance, as stipulated by AABI.

3.2.4. Revocation of Accreditation. If the Board determines that the institution is not in compliance, and does not have an adequate plan to return to compliance within a reasonable period of time, **not to exceed two years**, the Board will send a letter of proposed revocation of accreditation. If, in the opinion of the Board, the institutional response to this letter is inadequate, accreditation will be revoked.

3.3. Accreditation Appeal Policy. The decision to not accredit, or to suspend or to revoke accreditation can be appealed. If an institution wishes to appeal a decision, AABI must receive a

letter of intent to appeal within 30 days of the date the AABI notification letter was postmarked. Upon receiving the letter of intent to appeal, AABI will appoint a panel of three current or past Board members, who have not voted as a Board member in the prior action, to hear the appeal. AABI must receive the institution's formal letter of appeal within 60 days of the date of the AABI notification letter. The panel will convene in conjunction with the next regularly scheduled meeting of AABI **or** a special meeting of the Board. The panel will report its findings to AABI within seven days following hearing the appeal. The AABI Board of Trustees will then take final action on the appeal at its next scheduled meeting.

3.4. Public Release Policy. The institution **MUST** accurately publish the period of accreditation as stated on the Certificate of Accreditation on the public website of each accredited program. In addition, any references to the period of accreditation used for other types of public release **MUST** also list the period of accreditation as stated on the Certificate of Accreditation. The institution may use the term 'accredited' only for those specific programs accredited by AABI. If accreditation is deferred, suspended or revoked, the institution may not use the phrase "accredited by AABI," even if the phrase states or implies prior or future accreditation.

3.4.1. **Accurate Representation of Accreditation Status in Catalogues and Other Documents.** Institutions **MUST** clearly and accurately represent their current accreditation status in all institutional documents and publications, including on-line documents, in which they refer to AABI accreditation. Failure to adhere to this requirement may result in revocation of accreditation for all AABI accredited programs at the institution.

3.4.2. It is AABI's policy to respond to all public inquiries in accordance with the provisions of Section 3.5 of this document.

AABI will respond to written requests/complaints from students and parents of students enrolled in accredited programs, if appropriate, or will refer the request/complaint to the institution.

AABI will maintain a file of all inquiries and responses for review by CHEA.

3.5. Confidentiality of Information. Information supplied by the institution is for the confidential use of AABI and its agents, and will not be disclosed without the specific written authorization of the institution concerned.

3.5.1. The contents of all materials furnished for review purposes and discussion are considered privileged information. This includes all materials used by the visiting team, including the Self-Study Report. All deliberations by the Accreditation Committee and the AABI Board of Trustees regarding accreditation decisions are privileged and confidential.

3.5.2. The contents of all related documents, including business files, and the accreditation actions taken by the Board of Trustees may not be disclosed except under circumstances specifically approved by the AABI president or the Board of Trustees.

3.6. Conflict of Interest. The Board shall, from time to time, adopt rules and regulations governing the conduct of officers, trustees, members or employees, with respect to matters in

which they have an interest in conflict with the interests of the AABI. Such rules and regulations shall forbid officers, trustees, members or employees from personally participating in AABI action with respect to any contract, transaction, accreditation or other matter in which any such officer, trustee, member or employee, has any interest, financial or otherwise, unless said officer, trustee, member or employee makes full disclosure of the circumstances to the AABI Board and said Board determines that (a) the interest is not so substantial as to affect the integrity of AABI and the services being rendered by said officer, trustee, member or employee; or (b) on the basis of Criteria to be established in such rules and regulations, the interest of said officer, trustee, member or employee is too remote or too inconsequential to affect the integrity of AABI and the services being rendered. This proscription against personal participation, set forth immediately above, shall be deemed to require any such affected officer, trustee, member or employee to recuse himself or herself (leave the room) during deliberations by the Board or any Committee of the Board concerning any such contract, transaction, accreditation or other matter giving rise to the appearance of a conflict of interest. The removal of any such person for such reason shall not defeat an otherwise valid quorum.

3.6.1.

- a. If service as an AABI Board member or alternate, as a committee chair, member or observer, leads to conflicts of interest, or questions regarding the objectivity and credibility of the accreditation process, then such a member **MUST** recuse himself or herself from the process. The AABI Board of Trustees expects members to disclose real or perceived conflicts of interest, and to recuse themselves from discussion or decisions so related. The intent of this policy is: To maintain credibility in the accreditation process and confidence in the work and recommendations of the visiting team as well as in the deliberation and recommendations of the Accreditation Committee, and in the deliberation and ruling of the Board of Trustees;
- b. To assure fairness and impartiality in the decision making process; and
- c. To act impartially and avoid the appearance of impropriety.

3.6.2. Individuals representing AABI must not participate on a team visit or in any decision-making capacity if they have or have had a close, active association with a program or institution that is being considered for accreditation by AABI. Close association includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Current or past employment as faculty, staff or consultant at the institution or program;
- b. Current or past discussion or negotiation of employment with the institution or program;
- c. Attendance as student at the institution;
- d. Receipt of an honorary degree from the institution;
- e. An institution or program where a close family relative is a student or employee;
- f. An unpaid official relationship with an institution, e.g., membership on the institution's board of trustees or industry advisory board; or
- g. A current or pending business relationship with the institution.

3.6.3. Records of Perceived Conflicts of Interest:

- 3.6.3.1. Individuals will provide the central office a copy of this record for the purpose of reporting any real or perceived conflicts of interest. Copies of these

records will be provided to the individuals responsible for selection of team chairs and members.

3.6.3.2. All individuals representing AABI must sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality statement indicating that they have read and understand these policies.

3.6.3.3. The names of individuals who have recused themselves during a meeting for conflicts of interest will be recorded.

3.7 Complaints. This section discusses the procedure for complaints against an AABI-accredited program as well as complaints against AABI.

Unless required by law, AABI will not share the identity or contact information of the complainant with any outside entity; the details of complaints will only be shared with the appropriate stakeholders, and a non-disclosure agreement may be required.

3.7.1 Complaints Against an AABI-accredited Program. AABI-accredited programs are subject to complaints from students and other public stakeholders. AABI will initiate the required process for investigating these concerns if they target non-compliance issues related to AABI Criteria. All complaints must be submitted in writing using the fillable Complaint Form on <https://www.aabi.aero/contact-us/>. The Complaint Form must be signed by the complainants and must show evidence that steps to reach a resolution at the sponsoring institution or program have been exhausted. AABI will protect the identity of the complainant; however, the written complaint submitted to AABI must be signed.

3.7.2 Procedure for Processing Complaints Against an AABI-accredited Program. AABI will acknowledge a complaint within five (5) business days of its receipt. Within 60 business days after acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the AABI staff will review the complaint and determine whether:

- it is related to the program's accreditation status,
- it is within the scope of AABI policies and procedures, and/or
- it demonstrates the sponsoring institution's or program's noncompliance with the AABI Criteria, an AABI policy, and/or the sponsoring institution's or program's own published policy as said policy relates to the AABI Criteria, and there is adequate evidence in support of the allegations made in the complaint.

If the complaint does not have sufficient substance to warrant further review, AABI will communicate this to the complainant, in writing, within 15 business days of reaching this conclusion.

If the complaint has sufficient substance to warrant further review, it will be referred to the AABI Executive Committee, and the Committee's resolutions will be communicated to complainants within 30 days of receiving complaints.

When a complaint is reviewed further by the AABI Executive Committee, a copy of the complaint will be forwarded to the administrator of the aviation unit, who will be asked to respond to AABI within 20 business days. Upon receipt of a response from the administrator of the aviation unit, AABI reserves the right to request additional materials, as needed, from the complainant and/or administrator of the aviation unit.

If there is insufficient evidence of non-compliance, the complaint will not be processed further. The decision of the AABI Executive Committee is final, and the complainant and administrator of the aviation unit will be notified of this outcome.

If there appears to be sufficient evidence of non-compliance or if the AABI staff are unable to determine compliance, the following actions may be taken by the AABI Executive Committee (the complainant and administrator of the aviation unit will be notified of this outcome):

- The complaint may be forwarded directly to the AABI Board of Trustees for review and action.
- The AABI Executive Committee may authorize a focused visit to evaluate the sponsoring institution or program. The focused team visit will examine documents and interview institutional personnel to analyze and make a judgment regarding compliance, after which they will prepare a focused site visit report. This report will be forwarded to the AABI Board of Trustees for review and action at the next meeting of the Board. Following that meeting, the complainant and administrator of the aviation unit will be notified of the Board's decision.
- The complaint allegations may be reviewed as part of an upcoming scheduled visit to the aviation program. The visiting team will examine documents and interview institutional personnel to analyze and make a judgment regarding compliance, after which they will prepare a Visiting Team Report to be forwarded to the AABI Board of Trustees for review and action at the next meeting of the Board. Following that meeting, the complainant and administrator of the aviation unit will be notified of the decision of the Board.

3.7.3 Complaints Against AABI. Complaints may be submitted to the AABI office that are related to AABI's own practices, activities, and policies and procedures. All complaints must be submitted in writing and signed by the complainants, using the fillable Complaint Form on <https://www.aabi.aero/contact-us/>.

3.7.4 AABI Procedure for Resolving Complaints Against AABI. The complainant must submit an AABI Complaint Form (available on the AABI website). The complaint will be

acknowledged within five (5) business days, a respondent will be assigned, and the complaint shall be managed as follows:

- If the complaint concerns an accreditation issue, it will be forwarded to the Vice President of Accreditation, for resolution by the Accreditation Committee.
- If the complaint concerns a staff issue, it will be forwarded to the President, for resolution by the Executive Committee. However, if the complaint concerns the AABI President, the complaint will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees Chairperson, for resolution by the Executive Committee.
- If the complaint concerns an AABI officer, it will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees Chairperson, for resolution by the Executive Committee. However, if the complaint concerns the Board of Trustees Chairperson, it will be forwarded to the Vice-Chairperson for resolution by the Board of Trustees.
- If the complaint concerns member(s) of the Board of Trustees, it will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees Chairperson (or President) who will convene a Board committee of at least three Board members not involved in the complaint, for resolution.
- If the complaint concerns a person representing AABI, such as a visiting team member or committee chair, it will be forwarded to the Executive Committee for resolution.

Absent extraordinary circumstances, the complaint shall, within ten (10) business days, be forwarded to and acknowledged by the respondent.

Within ten (10) business days after receiving the complaint, the assigned investigator will convene a panel. Within this ten-day period, the respondent may also conduct a formal conference with the complainant.

Absent extraordinary circumstances, a written response shall be rendered within thirty (30) business days of the review. The response shall be sent to the complainant and all members of the panel. For monitoring purposes, a copy of the report shall be maintained in official AABI files.

Section 4.0. Policies Related to Programs.

4.1. Programs are Accredited, not Institutions.

4.1.1. Accreditation is a status granted to a program that has been found to meet or exceed stated criteria of educational quality. Accreditation is to be distinguished from certification and licensure, which apply to individuals.

4.2. Educational programs leading to degrees, rather than departments, are accredited.

In order for a program to be accredited, all routes to completion of the program must satisfy the appropriate criteria.

4.2.1. A program is an organized educational experience that consists of a cohesive set of courses or other educational modules sequenced so that reasonable depth is obtained in the upper-level courses. The program should develop the ability to apply pertinent knowledge to the practice of the defined area of the program. A program

must also involve the broadening educational objectives expected in modern post-secondary education. Program criteria that define specific program requirements within the general disciplinary realm are developed by the Criteria Committee and approved by the Board of Trustees. (AABI Form 201.)

Programs to be considered for accreditation by AABI are collegiate programs that embrace aviation and aviation-related disciplines.

4.2.2. Program Criteria. Some program titles imply a specialization within a broader educational area. Program criteria have been developed for many such areas of specialization. If a program title implies a specialization for which program criteria have been developed, in addition to the general criteria, the program must satisfy the AABI criteria for that specialization.

4.2.3. AABI Program Criteria.

- a. Aviation Management
- b. Aviation Maintenance
- c. Aviation Electronics
- d. Aviation Studies
- e. Flight Education
- f. Safety Science
- g. Air Traffic Control
- h. Unmanned Aircraft Systems
- i. Graduate Studies

4.2.4. Program Differentiation. The general criteria for accrediting programs address:

- a. Students
- b. Program Mission and Educational Goals
- c. Student Learning Outcomes
- d. Curriculum
- e. Faculty and Staff
- f. Facilities, Equipment and Services
- g. Institutional Structure and Support
- h. Aviation Safety Culture and Program
- i. Relations with Industry
- j. Continuous Assessment and Improvement
- k. Complementary Degree Programs
- l. Credit for Non-Collegiate Achievement

Programs may be differentiated and separately accredited if there are differences in any of the above categories so that the configuration of one program offering is subject to judgments different from other **programs**. Not only do different curricula and disciplines require separate accreditation, but the use of two or more substantially different faculties, facilities, student characteristics or administrations within the same discipline implies that there are two or more programs, each of which may require separate accreditation.

4.2.5. Options. Alternative curricula within a program (commonly called options) leading to a degree in a sub-field of the major discipline should be accredited and listed as separate programs, if such programs are submitted as such in the

application (Form 202) and approved as a candidate. In such cases, the option must have been formally designated by the institution prior to the request for evaluation. It must conform to the general criteria and to any program-level criteria applicable to independent programs in the same curricular area as the option. The accreditation status of the option must be clearly identified and distinguished from any non-accredited options within the same major program and from any other program in all institution literature (see 3.4.1).

4.2.6. Program Breadth. Broad programs that will prepare a student to take advantage of as many different career opportunities as possible are encouraged. Further, programs that omit instruction in a significant portion of a subject in which a professional in a particular field may reasonably be expected to have competence, will not be eligible for accreditation.

4.2.7. Experimental or Innovative Programs. Recognizing the value of innovation and experimentation in educational programs and the possibility that such programs may have difficulty meeting specific quantitative criteria, innovative or experimental programs will be evaluated, on request, on the basis of their demonstrated ability to satisfy the intent of the appropriate criteria and to produce graduates fully qualified to enter the practice of the appropriate discipline. Programs are encouraged to adopt innovative procedures and approaches that meet the criteria and that improve the program.

4.3 Multi-Campus Programs. AABI offers system-wide accreditation for institutions which deliver their programs at multiple sites.

4.3.1. Definitions. The following definitions are offered to assist in clarifying the policies associated with multi-campus accreditation.

- **Administrative Central Location:** All institutions which offer aviation programs at more than one campus, must designate an administrative location in which all AABI correspondence will originate.
- **Branch Campus:** Is a standalone teaching location that is geographically separated from the administrative central location, is permanent in nature, offers courses leading to an aviation degree, has its own administrative staff, and has its own budget.
- **Educational Site:** Is a location away from the main or branch campuses that offers teaching, however is supported by either the main campus or branch campus.
- **Large Multi-Campus:** Institutions that have 10 or more campuses that offer the aviation program.
- **Small Multi-Campus:** Institutions that have less than 10 campuses that offer the aviation program

4.3.2. Accreditation Process.

4.3.2.1 Application. Institutions with multi-campus programs may complete one application. This application will include information on all campuses.

4.3.2.2 Self Study. Institutions with multi-campus programs will complete one self-study that will include information on all campuses.

4.3.2.3 Site Visit. The site visit will be conducted with a team slightly larger than a traditional AABI visiting team. The site visit will conclude at the Administrative Central Location with all visiting team members. The team will split up to visit additional campuses as determined by AABI.

4.3.2.4. Campus Selection.

- Each campus included for a small multi-campus accreditation visit will be visited by at least one visiting team member.
- A set number of campuses will be designated for visitation for large multi-campus programs based on a review from AABI. This will represent at least 15 percent of the campuses or as determined by the Accreditation Committee. Each of the campuses selected will be visited by at least one member of the visiting team. All campuses not selected for a visit may be evaluated by other means as determined by the visiting team.
- All campuses which offer programs in Flight Education, Aviation Maintenance and Aviation Electronics will require an individual site visit to ensure that proper safety, equipment and oversight protocols are in place.