

## AABI PROCESS FOR ACCREDITATION

**The following is a listing of the process utilized by the AABI Board to ensure that an institution and its candidate aviation program(s) is/are in compliance with the AABI Criteria and Policies and Procedures, and thereby to base accreditation decisions on the degree to which each candidate program meets the AABI Criteria.** Please see the applicable forms (available on the AABI website) for additional details. The process can also be found on the AABI website at <http://www.aabi.aero/accreditation/steps-to-accreditation/>.

1. The institution must be an educator member of AABI to be eligible for accreditation of its aviation degree programs.
2. The institution begins the process by contacting the AABI Central Office. The Central Office will provide guidance for submitting the appropriate application fee and accessing the Weave platform to submit the application materials for each program. Using Weave, the institution will submit an application (which includes the AABI Institutional Information Form and the AABI Form 202 A, 202B, and/or 202G respectively, for Associate degree/2-year programs; Baccalaureate degree programs; and Graduate programs).
3. After the institution has submitted the appropriate Form 202 for each program to be considered, the AABI Vice President of Accreditation (who also serves as the Accreditation Committee Chair), and the assigned Accreditation Evaluator (AE) review the application documents. The purpose of this review process is to determine the institution's program status (i.e., admission to candidate status, deferred for additional information/evidence, or denied). If the decision at this point is to defer candidacy pending submission of additional information or evidence, the institution's Accreditation Liaison (AL) is advised of the required additional information. When each Form 202 has been reviewed and accepted by the Vice President of Accreditation, the document (with review comments/guidance) is returned via Weave to the institution's AL for guidance in preparing the Self-Study Report (SSR—AABI Form 204). At this time, the institution's programs are admitted to candidacy.
4. The Vice President of Accreditation notifies the President and AABI office staff of the decision regarding candidate status.
5. The AABI President notifies the institution, by letter, advising of the status decision. If the program(s) is/are approved for candidate status, the notification also includes the current Form 201 (Accreditation Criteria Manual) and notification of WEAVE access to submit the Form 204 for each program in candidate status. If deferred or denied, the office staff advises the institution of the reasons for deferral or denial and provides the reviewers' guidance for additional information or evidence that must be submitted to bring the application to accepted status and the program(s) to candidacy.
6. Once its program(s) are admitted to candidacy, the institution completes a Self-Study Report (SSR). The SSR must be completed and submitted through WEAVE within 10 months of the date of candidacy. If an extension to the expected time interval for submission of the SSR is requested by the institution, and approved by the AABI

President and Vice President of Accreditation, the institution is assessed additional fees for the SSR submission extension.

7. Once submitted, the SSR(s) is/are reviewed by the Vice President of Accreditation and the assigned AE. As was done for the review of the Form 202, the assigned AE submits their observations, concerns, and recommendations to the Vice President of Accreditation, who also reviews each SSR and, when the SSR is accepted, compiles the responses into a master review document. In this case, the master review document and the evidence files submitted by the institution are provided to the Visiting Team Chair, for use by the Visiting Team .
8. The Vice President of Accreditation advises the President whether the SSR is complete and accepted, or additional information/evidence is required before SSR acceptance and scheduling of the Team Visit. If the SSR is accepted, the Vice President of Accreditation recommends scheduling of the Team Visit and selection of the Visiting Team Chair and Visiting Team members.
9. After the review and acceptance of the SSR, the AABI office notifies the institution of three possible dates for a Team Visit. A list of Visiting Team members is sent to the institution; the institution has the option of striking up to five members from this list, for reasons of conflict of interest. When the institution has responded with their requested date and the list of potential Team members to be removed from consideration, the Vice President of Accreditation and the Vice President of Operations collaborate to select a Chair for the Visiting Team.
10. When the Team Chair has been selected and has agreed to serve, the AABI office, in consultation with the Vice President of Accreditation and the Chair of the Visiting Team, selects the Visiting Team members and secures their willingness to serve on the visit.
11. The AABI office notifies the institution's Accreditation Liaison of the confirmed date of the visit, the names of the Visiting Team Chair and Team Members and sends AABI Form 206 (Information and Procedures for the Visiting Team), Form 207 (Typical Schedule for a Visiting Team), and Form 208 (Evidence Guide) to the members of the Visiting Team. All Team members also receive a copy of the, the SSR master review document and the evidence files submitted by the institution. In addition, the Team Chair is provided with a copy of the application (Form 202) Weave summary report and, if this is a reaffirmation, the Chair is also sent the previous Visiting Team Report and interim report(s), if applicable.
12. The AABI office sends the Visiting Team members a travel expense report (with explanation of travel procedures) and Form 214 (Team Member Assessment of the Performance of the Visiting Team Chairperson) to Team members, and Form 215 (Chairperson's Assessment of the Performance of the Visiting Team Member) to the Team Chair. The latter performance assessments are to be completed and returned to the AABI office within 10 days of the completion of the visit. AABI pays the expenses of the Visiting Team, including an honorarium for each Team member, from the deposit paid by the institution prior to the visit. The institution is invoiced for any amount exceeding the deposit or reimbursed for any unused deposit funds.

13. The AABI office sends the Visiting Team Chair a Form 210 (Visiting Team Recommendation to the Accreditation Committee and Board of Trustees) to be completed and submitted for each program evaluated.
14. The Visiting Team Chair coordinates with the institution's Accreditation Liaison to prepare a detailed schedule for the visit. A timetable worksheet, including Board action, is prepared by the AABI office. Copies are sent to the Team and the institution's Accreditation Liaison.
15. Approximately two weeks prior to the on-site portion of the Team Visit, two (separate) virtual pre-briefing sessions are conducted by the Visiting Team, with the Team Chair presiding over the briefings. One of these briefings is to review the program(s)' Assessment and Continuous Improvement process, and the second is to review the program(s)' Safety Culture and Safety Program (for those programs that utilize laboratory equipment, including flight programs that operate training aircraft). The AABI staff have developed a detailed checklist for each briefing topic virtual session, which lists for the institution the persons (by title) expected to attend and participate in the briefing and the evidence/briefing material expected to be presented. The AABI President and Vice President of Accreditation generally attend these briefing sessions as observers. The goal of the two briefings and the purpose for conducting them prior to the on-site portion of the Team Visit is to ensure the institution has (and is actively using) an Assessment Plan and Process, and (for programs utilizing laboratory equipment) the institution has (and is actively using) a verifiable Safety Plan and Process, which includes elements of the four pillars of SMS (Safety Management System). These two areas have consistently been areas of weakness for many AABI accredited programs, and the pre-visit briefings allow both the Visiting Team and the institution to fully evaluate each area, determine what evidence is available or not available, and allow the Team Chair to request additional evidence prior to the onsite portion of the Visit.
16. Normally, the Visiting Team members conduct the on-site portion of the visit as planned and coordinated with the institution. When required by health issues (e.g., COVID) or other issues that preclude a safe environment for an in-person visit, AABI may elect to have the Team conduct its visit and fact-finding via virtual meetings. This option is only available if AABI deems it necessary. An AABI staff liaison or other designated AABI observer may participate when deemed necessary by the Visiting Team Chair, the Vice President of Accreditation, and/or the President.
17. After the Team visit, the Vice President of Accreditation and the AABI office receive the Visiting Team's first draft of the Visiting Team Report (VTR) from the Team Chair, for review and appropriate input. The resulting staff comments and suggested edits are sent to the Team Chair, who will consider and generally incorporate their input into the second draft of the VTR.
18. The Chair of the Visiting Team sends the second draft of the Visiting Team Report to the institution's Accreditation Liaison, for review and correction of factual errors *only*. This version of the VTR contains the list of Strengths and Weaknesses identified by the Visiting Team but does not include any Suggestions or Recommendations. The AL is given seven days to complete this review and return the document with the list of errors and corresponding correct information to the Visiting Team Chair.

19. The Visiting Team Chair incorporates these corrections to errors in fact in the “master” VTR, which results in the final Visiting Team Report. The final version of the VTR is then sent by the Visiting Team Chair to the Vice President of Accreditation, the AABI office, and the AABI President, along with Form(s) 210 to the AABI office only.
20. The Chair of the Visiting Team completes a Chairperson’s Assessment of the Performance of the Visiting Team Members (AABI Form 215) for each Team member. The other Visiting Team members must each complete a Team Member’s Assessment of the Performance of Visiting Team Chairperson (AABI Form 214). These are returned to the AABI office to be filed in the Visiting Team members’ files.
21. The AABI President sends the final Visiting Team Report to the president of the institution, for the institution’s official response to all Recommendations cited by the Visiting Team. Recommendations are cited for failure to comply with a MUST statement in the AABI Criteria. Although not required, the institution may elect to also respond to the Suggestions cited by the Team. Suggestions result from a Weakness observed/cited by the Visiting Team, when the Weakness is not a failure to meet a MUST statement.
22. The institution submits their institutional response to the final Visiting Team Report to the AABI President. The response must be signed by the institution’s president (or equivalent). Typically, the institution is allowed 30 days to complete and return their official response.
23. At least thirty days prior to the AABI Board meeting at which the candidate program is to be reviewed, the AABI office sends the final Visiting Team Report and the institution’s response to the members of the Board of Trustees and the members of the Accreditation Committee (who also receive the Form 210s).
24. The Accreditation Committee reviews the Visiting Team Report and the institutional response, in closed session. The Vice President of Accreditation Chairs the meeting and prepares Accreditation Committee meeting minutes for the Board of Trustees, which are presented orally by the Vice President of Accreditation to the Board, in closed session.
25. The Board discusses the report of the Accreditation Committee and its recommended actions and by formal vote makes its decision regarding the accreditation/reaffirmation of the candidate program(s).
26. Within thirty days of the Board meeting, an official Board Action Letter is sent to the institution by the AABI President outlining the Board’s decision and any follow-up action required by the institution. This letter is sent to the President of the institution or a person in an equivalent position (e.g., Chancellor).
27. The Board may also require one or more Interim Reports to provide evidence of completion of specific actions required by the Board, and the due date for submission of the report outlining the completion of those actions.