

Site Visitor Training

Accreditation Purpose and Process



P A B

Planning
Accreditation
Board

Becoming a Site Visitor

- Nominated by either AICP or ACSP and approved by PAB to either the “educator pool” or the “practitioner pool” of potential site visitors
- Complete all training modules
- Assigned to a Site Visit Team



Focus of this Training Module

- Section 1: Accreditation in the U.S.
- Section 2: Planning Accreditation Board
- Section 3: The Site Visit
- Section 4: The Site Visit Report
- Section 5: Expectations of Site Visitors



Your Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Summarize the purpose of accreditation in higher education
- Recognize the role PAB plays in the accreditation system in the U.S.
- Describe the PAB site visit process and timeline
- Summarize your role and responsibilities as a site visitor



Section 1

Accreditation in the U.S.

Accreditation in Higher Education

Purpose



Accreditation in Higher Education

- Both a Process and a Status
 - Process
 - External peer review
 - Standards defined and assessed
 - Decision by independent third party and due process
 - Status
 - University – “accredited”
 - Professional/Specialized Program – “accredited”



Accreditation in Higher Education

- Institutional – Regional Accreditors



Accreditation in Higher Education

- Professional/Specialized Accreditors



Planning
Accreditation
Board



...and many more



Planning
Accreditation
Board

Section 2



Planning Accreditation Board

Planning Accreditation Board

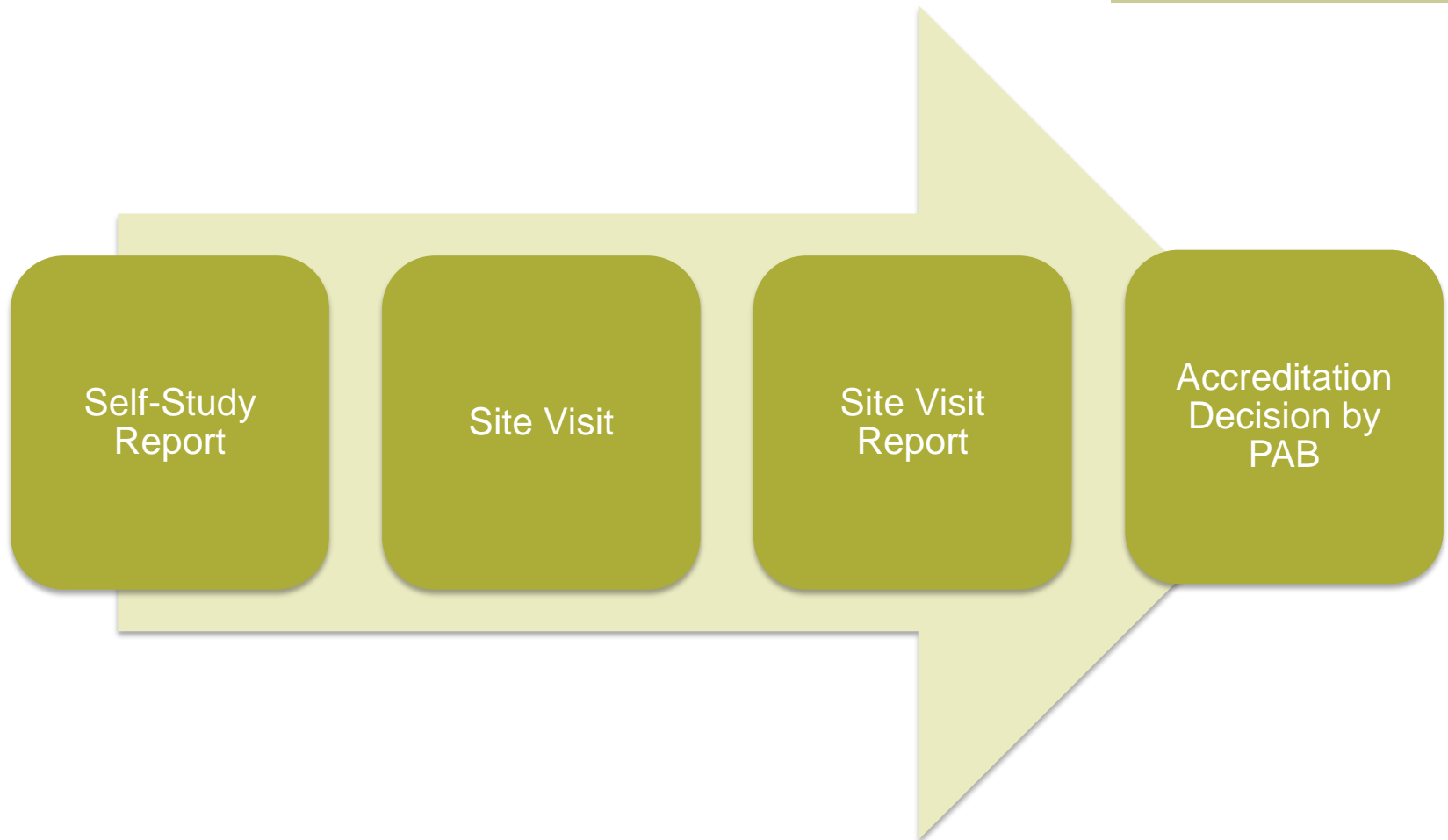
Mission:

To ensure high quality education for future urban planners.

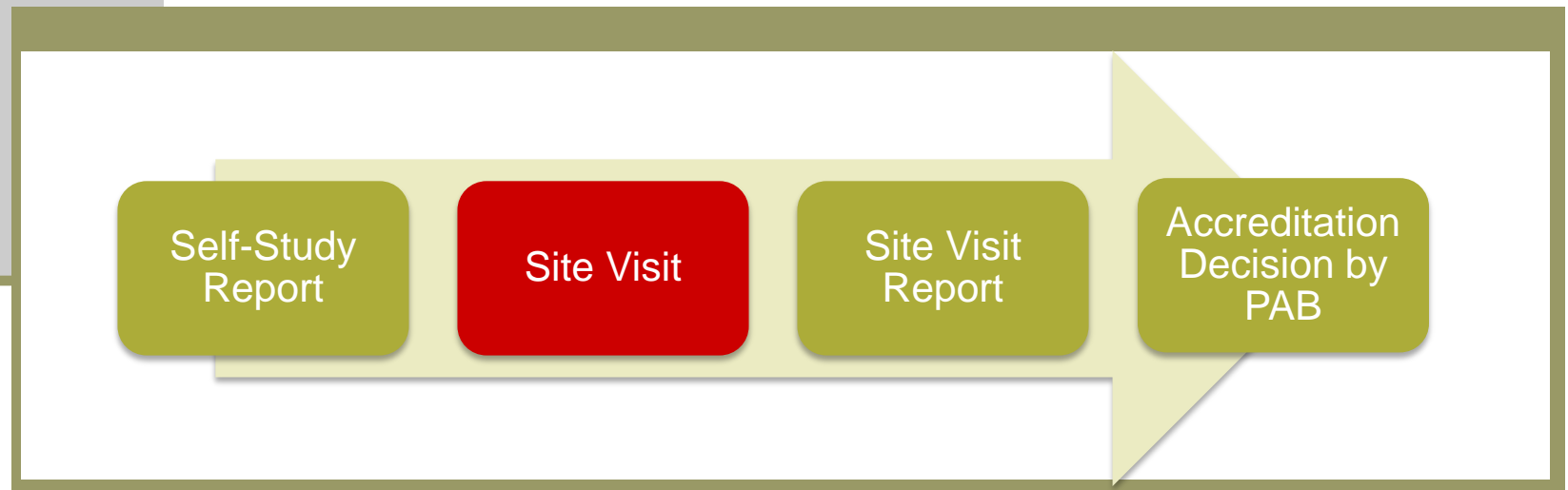
Sponsoring Organizations



The PAB Accreditation Process



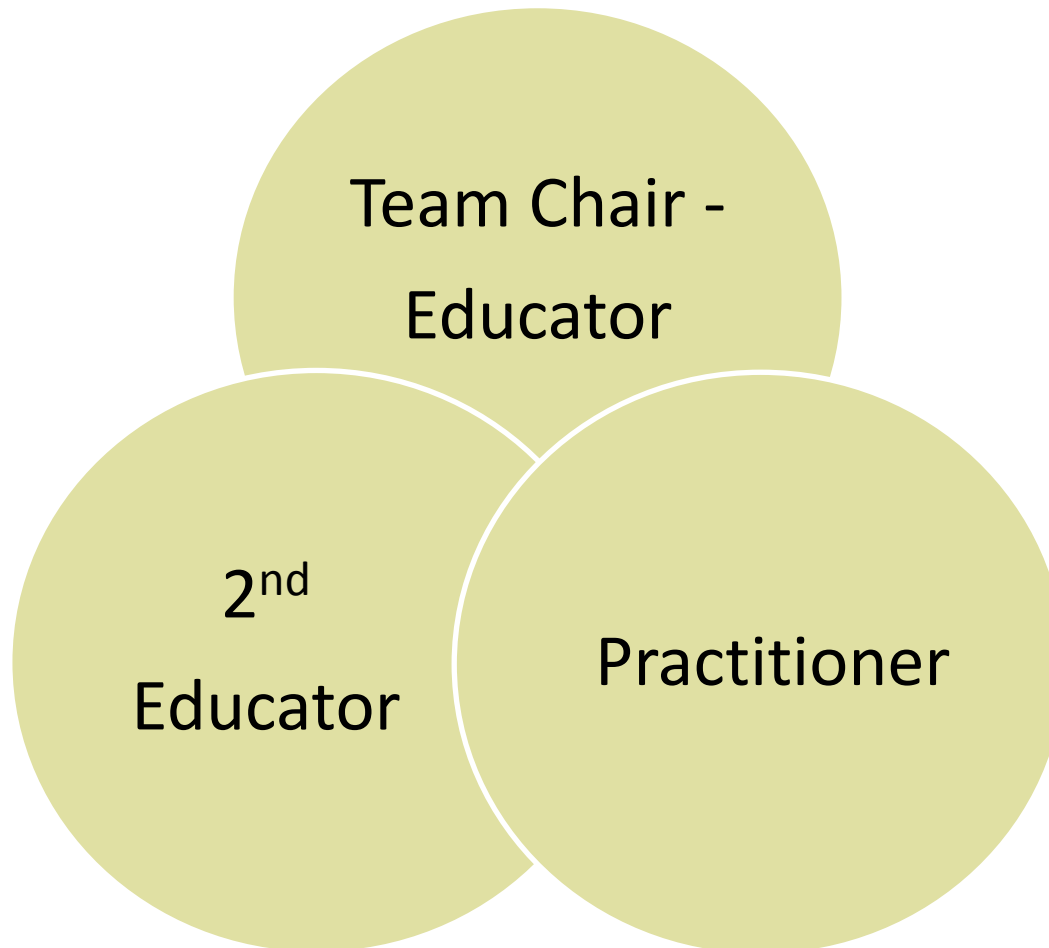
Section 3



The Site Visit



The Site Visit Team (SVT)



The Site Visit Objectives

- Verify information in SSR
- Gather new information through observations and interviews
- Assess the degree to which the Program meets the PAB accreditation standards; and
- Identify/verify program strengths and areas of improvement

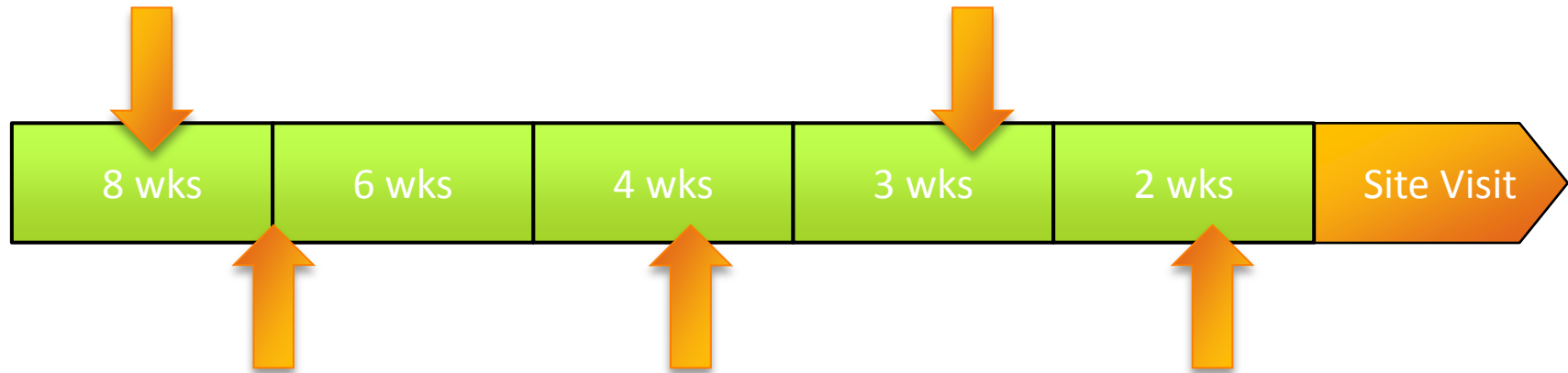
Pre-Site Visit Checklist

- ☑ Confirm participation – time, availability
- ☑ Complete conflict of interest form
- ☑ Read Self-Study Report (SSR)
- ☑ Develop preliminary assessments of standards
- ☑ Complete travel logistics
- ☑ Participate in team conference call (share preliminary assessments, discuss logistics)

Pre-Site Visit Timeline

SVT receives electronic and hard copy, if requested, of materials from PAB staff

PAB staff arranges initial conference call for SVT members

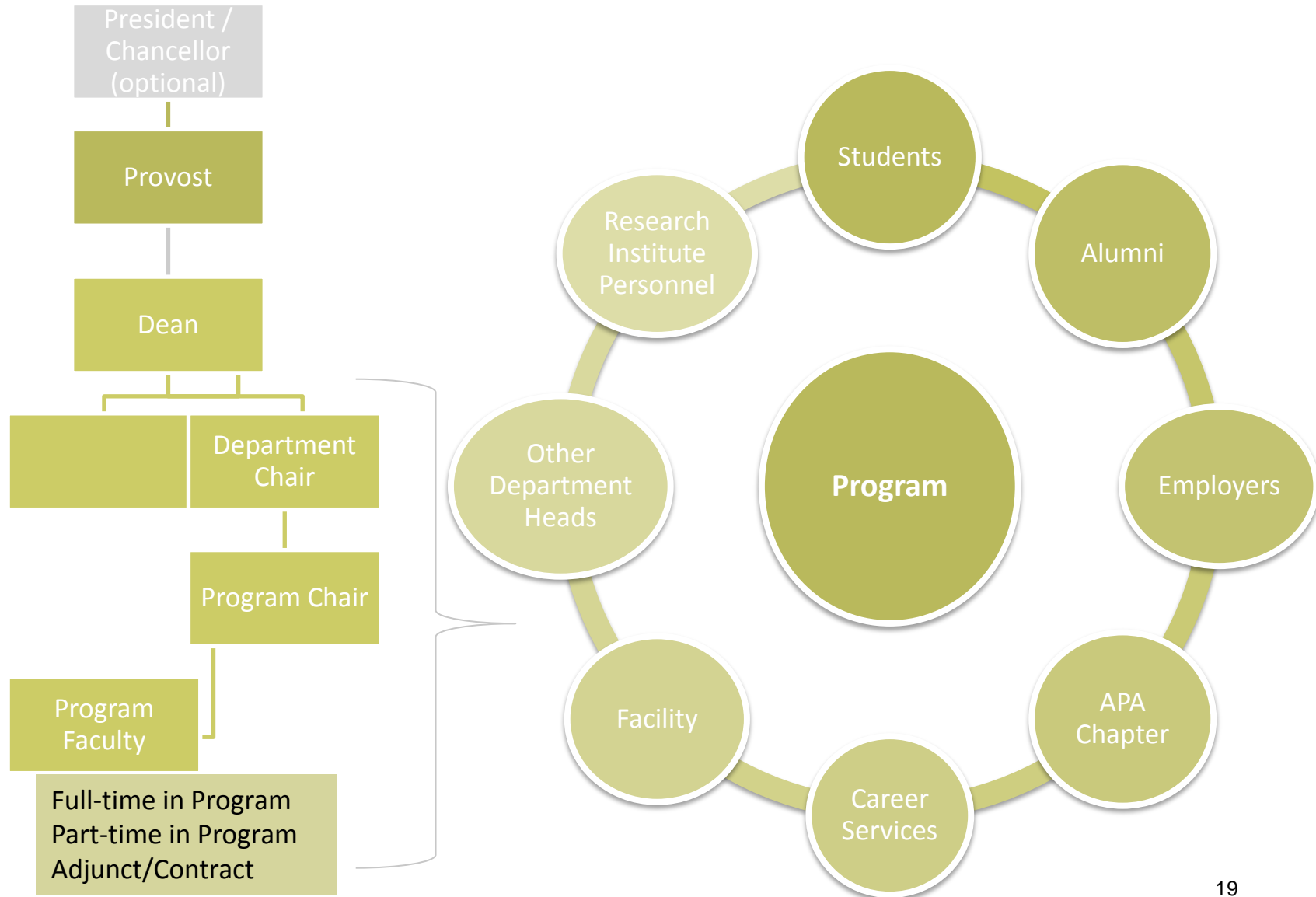


SVT members make travel arrangements

SVT Chair receives draft schedule for review and comment

Initial SVT conference call

The Site Visit Schedule



Interviews

- Prepare questions in advance to share with your team
- Decide who will lead interview, who will take notes
- Begin with introductions and background (usually by SVT chair):
 - Describe who you are and why you are here
 - Set ground rules, including the timeframe
 - Provide assurance of confidentiality

Interviews

- Have a positive attitude and tone
- Do not express views that could be interpreted as biased about program content and outcomes
- Be thorough and objective
- Pursue the interview as a means of verifying the information the program provided

Interviews

- Do not compare with your program or experience
 - Program is being assessed against the standards
 - What your program does or what your experience was is not directly important

Exit Interviews

- Thank your hosts
- Be specific with chair; get less specific with dean/provost
- List the strengths of the program

Exit Interviews

- Do not state number of partially-met or unmet assessments
- Do not give an indication of team recommendation on reaccreditation
- Write a script
- Take your time and allow time for questions

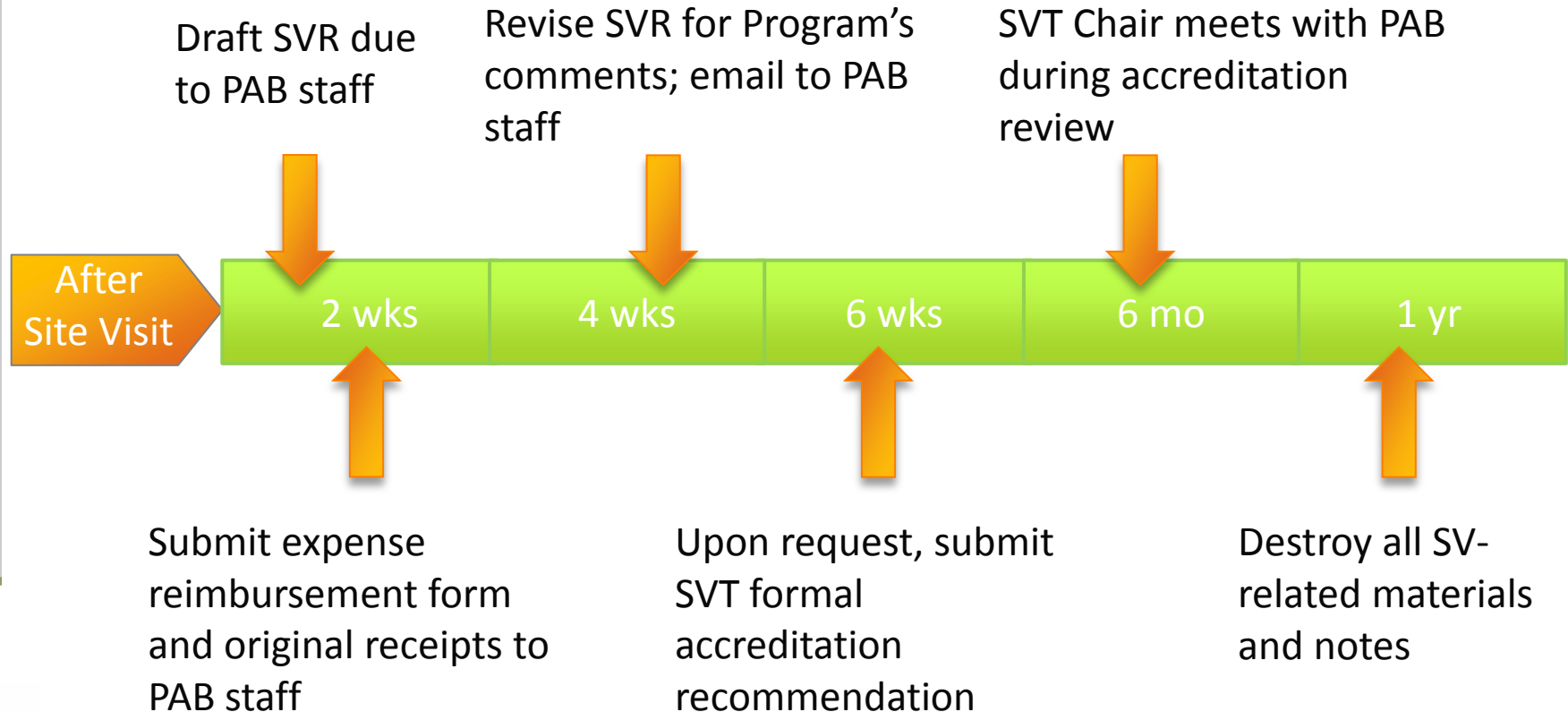
Site Visit Checklist

- ☑ Work together as a team
- ☑ Conduct interviews and take notes
- ☑ Review student work and tour facilities
- ☑ Participate in team discussions
- ☑ Refine assessments of standards and recommendations

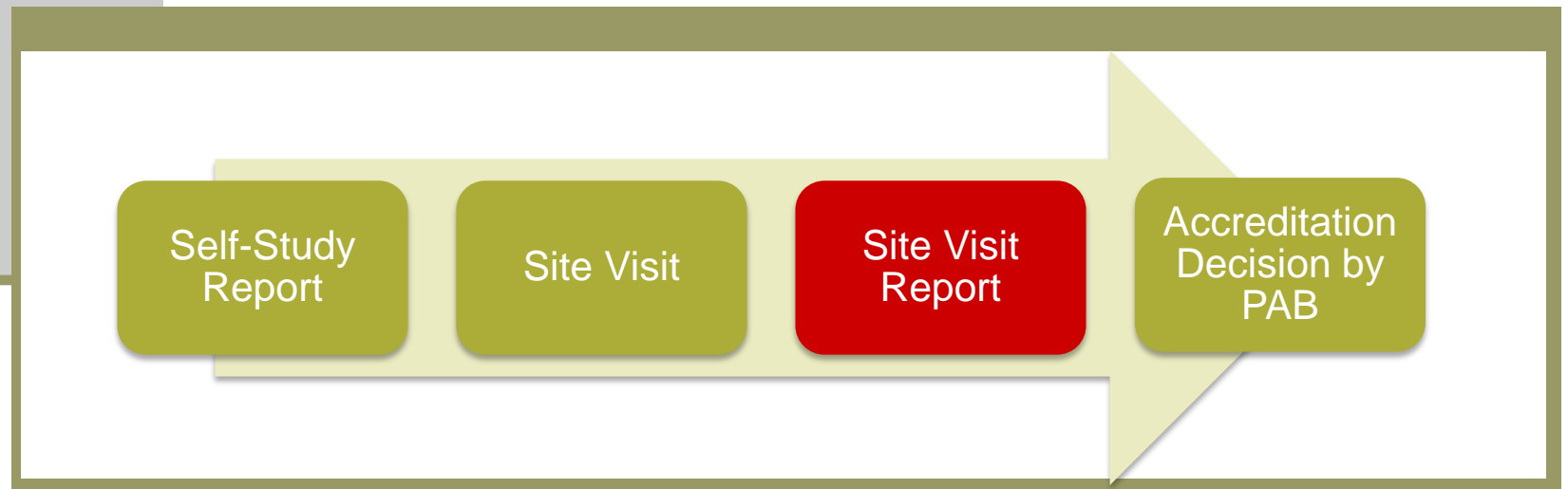
Post-Site Visit Checklist

- ☑ Submit travel expenses for reimbursement
- ☑ Keep records for 1 year
- ☑ Maintain confidentiality forever
- ☑ Write the Site Visit Report
- ☑ Provide team recommendation to PAB

Post Site Visit Timeline and other logistics....



Section 4



The Site Visit Report (SVR)

- Part 1 – Compliance Checklist
- Part 2 – Program Overview and Compliance
- Part 3 – Assessment and Recommendations
 - Met, Partially-Met, or Unmet
- Part 4 – Program Strengths
- Part 5 – Furthering Excellence

Tips for the Site Visit Report

- Recognize the broad audience reading SVR
- Provide some context
- Explain evaluations of Met/Partially-met/Unmet
- Avoid individual names and superlatives
- Tailor “recommendations” for Partially-met and Unmet criteria:
 - Be creative, not prescriptive
 - Limit to those affecting the Program

More Tips for the SVR

2. Students

E. Student engagement in the profession

This criterion was assessed as met based on the SVT review of the SSR, and materials gathered during the Site Visit.



E. Student engagement in the profession

There are numerous opportunities for the students to engage with the profession. Students are required to take a studio course which deals with a real world project and client. The program maintains a lecture series where researchers, officials, professional planners and academics discuss a range of topics with the students. In addition, the program encourages and provides funding for students to attend state and national APA conferences.



Section 5

Expectations of Site Visitors

Expectations of Site Visitors

- ☑ Understand accreditation process
- ☑ Agree to PAB site visitor policies, procedures, timelines
- ☑ Prepare, prepare, prepare
- ☑ Make fair assessments based on evidence
- ☑ Provide useful recommendations and suggestions to help program improve

Expectations of Site Visitors

- ☑ Provide input to team
 - ☑ Contribute to SVR
 - ☑ Maintain confidentiality
-
- ☑ Learn about planning education

Additional Resources

- Site Visit Manual



- Interview Book



Thank you!

www.planningaccreditationboard.org



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