



## Planning Accreditation Board

# Policies and Procedures Manual

November 2021

Changes made since May 2017:

1. §2.5 Voluntary Withdrawal from or Revocation of Accreditation modified and policy for Teach-out Plans added
2. §3.9 Elimination of Site Visit Team recommendation and modification of policy related to Site Visit Team retention of materials
3. §4.2 Progress Report due date modification
4. §3.5 Coordination of Site Visits with other accreditors, state agencies, or institutional reviewers
5. §5.3 Harassment, including Sexual Harassment
6. §3.6 Clarification of preferences for Site Visitor Pool nominees
7. §3.15 revision to Independent Consultant Policy
8. §5.2 revision to the Public Notice Policy
9. §3.14 revision to the Site Visit Observation Policy
10. §1.3 revision to the Program Representation at Board Meeting Policy
11. §5.2 revision to the Public Notification Policy

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Preface</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Planning Accreditation Board</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Policies and Procedures</b>	
<b>Section 1. Accreditation Review Process</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Seeking Accreditation / Candidacy Status Review	5
1.2 Accreditation Review	6
1.3 Program Representation at Board Meeting	7
<b>Section 2. PAB Reviews and Decisions</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Accreditation Decision Categories	7
2.2 Effective Dates	9
2.3 Notification of Decision	9
2.4 Withdrawal from Accreditation Process	10
2.5 Voluntary Withdrawal from or Revocation of Accreditation	10
2.6 Administrative Probationary Accreditation	11
2.7 Maintaining Compliance with PAB Accreditation Standards	11
2.8 Interim Reviews and Actions	11
<b>Section 3. Site Visits and Site Visitor Pool</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1 Site Visit Dates	12
3.2 Delayed Site Visits	12
3.3 PAB Determination of a Rescheduled Site Visit	13
3.4 Focused Site Visit	13
3.5 Coordinated Site Visits with Other Entities	14
3.6 Site Visitor Pool	14
3.7 Site Visit Team Composition	15
3.8 Site Visit Team Responsibilities	16
3.9 Conflicts of Interest	16
3.10 Confidentiality, Disclosure and Retention of Information	16
3.11 Travel	17
3.12 Site Visit Report	17
3.13 Dissenting Opinions in the Site Visit Reports	17
3.14 Site Visit Observation	17
3.15 Independent Consultant	18

<b>Section 4. Reporting Requirements</b>	<b>20</b>
4.1 Self-Study Reports	20
4.2 Progress Reports	20
4.3 Annual Reports	20
4.4 Substantive Change	21
<b>Section 5. PAB General Policies</b>	<b>21</b>
5.1 Public Notice of Upcoming Reviews	21
5.2 Confidentiality and Disclosure	21
5.3 Harassment, including Sexual Harassment	23
5.4 PAB Logo	24
5.5 Gifts	24
5.6 Electronic and Facsimile Documents and Signatures	24
<b>Section 6. Fees</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Section 7. Complaints</b>	<b>25</b>
7.1 Compliance Complaints	25
7.2 Confidentiality	26
7.3 Limitations	26
7.4 Complaints against PAB	26
<b>Section 8. PAB Appeal Process</b>	<b>26</b>
8.1 Policy Statements	26
8.2 Procedure	27
8.3 PAB Appeal Hearing Format	31
<b>Section 9. Standards Revision and Accreditation Review Process</b>	<b>32</b>
9.1 Proposals for Amendments and Revisions	32
9.2 Effect of Amendments and Revisions	32
9.3 Ongoing Standards Reviews and Revision	32
9.4 Ongoing Review of Accreditation Practices	33

# Preface

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The *PAB Policies and Procedures Manual* describes the policies and procedures used by the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) in the accreditation of planning programs. It is intended for a variety of audiences, including: accredited programs; unaccredited programs interested in accreditation; Site Visitors; and interested organizations, agencies and individuals who desire information on the accreditation practices of the PAB. Please note, the Planning Accreditation Board is referred to as “PAB” or “the Board” in this document; “PAB staff” refers to employees of PAB in this document.

This manual provides guidance on the review process and expectations of the PAB. It should be used in conjunction with the following documents, all of which are available on the PAB website:

- *Accreditation Standards*  
This document contains PAB’s preconditions to accreditation and the accreditation standards and criteria. All accredited programs and those applying for accreditation must demonstrate substantial compliance with the standards.
- *Self-Study Report Manual and Template*  
This document details the process and procedures for writing and distributing a Self-Study Report. The document also contains the rationale for each accreditation standard and guidance for demonstrating compliance with the standards. The sole appendix to the manual is the template which must be used when submitting a Self-Study Report.
- *Site Visit Manual for Program Administrators*  
This document contains the processes and procedures used for conducting a Site Visit. It includes guidance for Program Administrators in preparing for the Site Visit.
- *Site Visit Manual for Site Visitors*  
This document contains the processes and procedures used for conducting a Site Visit. It includes guidance for Site Visitors in preparing for an accreditation review and the Site Visit. This document contains the Self-Study Report Manual as an exhibit.
- *Fee Schedule*  
The fee schedule posted on the PAB website contains the current fees associated with accreditation.

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Questions about the accreditation process as administered by the Planning Accreditation Board should be directed to:

Planning Accreditation Board  
2334 W. Lawrence Avenue, Suite 209  
Chicago, IL 60625  
(773) 334-7200/10  
[www.planningaccreditationboard.org](http://www.planningaccreditationboard.org)

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# The Planning Accreditation Board

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The Planning Accreditation Board (PAB), is an autonomous 501(c) 3 corporation responsible for the accreditation of undergraduate and graduate degrees in planning in North America. Accreditation is a means of strengthening planning education and providing formal recognition that a program measures up to the profession's high educational standards and is therefore qualified to train its future practitioners.

Accreditation activities seek to:

- Provide assurances to prospective students, employers, and the public-at-large regarding the basic quality of accredited programs;
- Provide schools with an incentive for careful and thorough self-examination, and with constructive recommendations for improvement;
- Provide schools with information on trends and innovations in planning education, using knowledge gained through the ongoing accreditation review process;
- Assist planning faculty and administrators in achieving institutional support for their programs;
- Provide a vehicle for engaging practitioners and academicians in joint and ongoing deliberations regarding the roles, content, and effectiveness of planning education;
- Aid in the process of preparing planners for certification by the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), and assist AICP in evaluating the qualifications of applicants for certification.

A program applying for accreditation will be evaluated in light of both the accreditation standards and its own stated goals and objectives. Educational experimentation and innovation, as well as institutional freedom and autonomy, are encouraged.

PAB is sponsored jointly by the three organizations: The Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP), the American Planning Association (APA), and its American Institute of Certified Planner (AICP). This collaboration recognizes that all parties to the planning enterprise – practitioners, educators, students, elected officials, and citizens – have a vital stake in the quality of the nation's programs of planning education.

## ***PAB Mission***

The Planning Accreditation Board's mission is to ensure excellence among planning programs and ensure high quality education for future urban planners.

## ***PAB Membership***

The PAB has eight members. The president of ACSP appoints four members - three planning educators and one higher education administrator. The president of AICP appoints three planning practitioners, one of whom has recently been a student. The president of APA appoints one public member.

## ***PAB Terms of Office***

Three-year terms begin on December 1 and end on November 30. No individual may serve more than two consecutive terms. If a vacancy occurs before a term expires, the new member shall be appointed for the duration of the previous member's term.

## ***PAB Meetings***

The PAB meets in-person twice each year to review applications for accreditation and candidacy status, during the national conferences of the APA and ACSP. The Board may meet via conference call to conduct business as needed. PAB meetings are closed, unless noted otherwise.

# Policies and Procedures

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## Section 1. Accreditation Review Process

The PAB performs two types of reviews: candidacy status review and accreditation review. Candidacy status review is reserved for unaccredited programs which meet the eligibility requirements stated in section 1.1. Accreditation reviews are for programs either with candidacy status or with an accreditation term about to expire. In both reviews, programs must submit a Self-Study Report (SSR). Greater detail on the Self-Study Report can be found in the *Self-Study Report Manual*.

### **1.1 Seeking Accreditation / Candidacy Status Review**

Programs which are not currently accredited may apply for Candidacy Status. If a program is advanced to Candidacy Status, it may then apply for Accreditation.

#### ***Eligibility***

Unaccredited programs which meet the five preconditions to accreditation are eligible to apply for Candidacy Status. Programs interested in applying for Candidacy Status are advised to contact the PAB staff at the earliest opportunity in order to discuss the review process and any particular issues affecting it.

#### ***Invitation from Institution***

The PAB conducts a Candidacy Status review only at the request of the institution's chief executive officer. By April 1, the chief executive officer must send written notification of intent to the PAB, accompanied by documentation of compliance with PAB's preconditions to accreditation.

The PAB Executive Committee will review the materials to determine that the preconditions to accreditation are met.

#### ***Application Materials***

Once the Executive Committee has confirmed the preconditions have been met, the program is considered to be a Pre-Candidate for Accreditation. It will be asked to produce a Self-Study Report as part of its Application for Candidacy Status wherein it will demonstrate its capacity to operate as an accredited program. This Self-Study Report is the same as that for programs undergoing accreditation review.

The draft Self-Study Report is due via PABs online accreditation management system on August 1. The candidacy status application fee is also due at this time. The PAB staff will review the draft materials to determine that the Self-Study Report is complete and in good order. This review encompasses format, required charts/data and text addressing all standards. The staff review does not extend to content or compliance with the standards.

#### ***PAB Review and Meeting***

PAB will review the Application for Candidacy Status at its fall meeting. PAB staff will notify the program administrator of the agenda date and time.

The program administrator will present a brief summary of the most pertinent aspects of the Application for Candidacy Status. The Board will have the opportunity to direct questions to the program administrator, who will also have the opportunity to present any concluding remarks.

### **PAB Candidacy Decisions**

Detailed information on the accreditation decision categories is found in [Section 2](#) of this document.

### **Withdrawal of Application**

A Pre-Candidate may withdraw its application at any time prior to PAB's review and decision.

## **1.2 Accreditation Review**

### **Eligibility**

Programs granted Candidacy Status and currently-accredited programs are eligible to apply for an accreditation review.

### **Notification**

Programs in good standing with an accreditation period or candidacy status designation set to expire will be notified by PAB staff of the date of their scheduled review. The notice will be sent in the spring, one academic year prior to the year of the scheduled review.

### **Application Materials**

The draft Self-Study Report is due via PAB's online accreditation management system by June 15 or September 15. PAB staff will review the draft within 2 business days to ensure it is complete and in good order. This review encompasses format, required charts/data and text addressing all standards. The staff review does not extend to content or compliance with the standards. Two weeks after staff provides comments, the final Self-Study Report is submitted online. The original signature page is mailed to PAB offices.

**Figure 1: SSR Submission Process**



### **Site Visit**

Site Visits are conducted in the fall and spring. Arrangements for a specific visit shall be determined by the PAB staff, in consultation with the planning program. The arrangements will reflect the complexity and needs of the program to be visited, as well as the nature of the review. At the beginning of the year in which the Self-Study Report is due, PAB staff will work with the program administrator to schedule the visit.

### **Rescheduled Site Visits**

A program's failure to file a suitable Self-Study Report by the deadline, and/or its failure to provide suitable Site Visit arrangements by the deadline, may necessitate a rescheduled Site Visit. Rescheduled Site Visits are accompanied by fees and an Administrative Probationary Accreditation designation (See [Section 2.6](#)).

### **Cost of Accreditation Reviews**

Upon the completion of the Site Visit, PAB staff will invoice the program for the Site Visit Fee. [Section 6](#) of this document and the PAB website contain further details on the Site Visit Fee.

### **PAB Review and Meeting**

PAB will take action at its spring meeting for programs hosting fall Site Visits. Programs hosting spring visits are reviewed at the fall meeting. The program administrator shall appear before PAB as part of its application for accreditation.

### **PAB Decision Categories**

Detailed information on the accreditation decision categories is found in [Section 2](#) of this document.

### **Withdrawal of Application**

An accredited program may withdraw its application at any time prior to PAB's review and decision.

## **1.3 Program Representation at Board Meeting**

The Program Administrator is expected to meet with the Board in-person, via conference call or virtually during the Program's review at either the fall or spring Board meeting. In the event the program administrator cannot meet with the Board, the program administrator may appoint a designee to represent the program. The designee is expected to be able to respond to substantive questions and issues raised in the Site Visit Report. The program representative may be accompanied by one person from their program or higher administration. A maximum of two representatives may attend the PAB Board Meeting.

## **Section 2. PAB Reviews and Decisions**

### **2.1 Accreditation Decision Categories**

PAB may take any of the following actions at the accreditation review:

**Table 1: Accreditation Decision Categories for Programs in Various Stages of Accreditation**

<b>Program in Pre-Candidacy</b>	<b>Program with Candidacy Status</b>	<b>Accredited Program</b>	<b>Program on Probation (after a focused Site Visit)</b>
Candidacy Status	Accreditation	Accreditation	Accreditation
Denial * [of Candidacy Status]	Denial * [of Accreditation]	Revocation * [of Accreditation]	Revocation * [of Accreditation]
Deferral [of the Decision]	Deferral [of the Decision]	Deferral [of the Decision]	Probation

\* denotes appealable decisions

### **Candidacy Status**

**Eligibility:** Unaccredited programs which: (a) have submitted a Letter of Intent subsequently approved by PAB; (b) have submitted a Self-Study Report; and (c) have paid the Candidacy Application Fee.

**Basis:** Granted to a program demonstrating, via a Self-Study Report only, substantial compliance with the accreditation standards.

**Duration:** Two-year term.

## **Accreditation**

**Eligibility:** Unaccredited programs with Candidacy Status and accredited programs, including those with Probationary Accreditation.

**Basis:** Granted to a program demonstrating, via a Self-Study Report and Site Visit, the capability of maintaining substantial compliance with accreditation standards over the term of accreditation granted.

**Duration:** Varies from three (3) to seven (7) years, depending upon the extent to which substantial compliance exists and is expected to continue to exist.

The granting of Accreditation may be accompanied by a requirement for an interim Progress Report on the program's compliance with specific standards. PAB may extend accreditation for good cause when it determines, on the basis of a Progress Report, that a program has made sufficient progress toward compliance to constitute good cause for extension.

**Degree status:** Students who graduate after the beginning of the fall term of the academic year in which the Site Visit occurs for an unaccredited program with candidacy status that is subsequently granted accreditation, shall be considered to have graduated from an accredited program.

**Appeal:** Decisions for accreditation terms of less than seven years may not be appealed.

## **Probationary Accreditation**

**Eligibility:** Accredited programs only.

**Basis:** Granted to a program which, in the judgment of PAB, has failed to demonstrate substantial compliance with accreditation standards but which may be able to correct cited deficiencies within two years.

**Duration:** Two years, non-renewable.

The determination of Probationary Accreditation will be accompanied by a focused Self-Study Report and focused Site Visit on the program's compliance with specific standards. Additional information on the focused Site Visit can be found in [Section 3](#).

**Appeal:** Decisions of Probationary Accreditation may not be appealed.

## **Denial**

**Eligibility:** Unaccredited programs in Pre-Candidacy and unaccredited programs with Candidacy Status.

**Basis:** Granted to a program in Pre-Candidacy or program with Candidacy Status which, in the judgment of the PAB, has failed to demonstrate substantial compliance with accreditation standards.

**Re-application:** An application for Candidacy Status and fee may be submitted after one year from the date the denial occurred.

**Appeal:** Decisions of denial may be appealed.

## **Revocation**

**Eligibility:** Accredited programs, including those with Probationary Accreditation.

**Basis:** Granted to an accredited program which, in the judgment of the PAB, has failed to demonstrate substantial compliance with accreditation standards and has deficiencies of a major nature that cannot be adequately resolved during a probationary period. Revocation also applies when an institution disestablishes or closes an accredited planning program.

**Degree Status:** Any student enrolled at the time that the program held Accreditation Status, including Probationary Accreditation, who earns the degree within the three years from the effective date of the Revocation of Accreditation, will be considered to be a graduate of an accredited program.

**Re-application:** An application for Candidacy Status may be submitted after one year from the date upon which revocation of accreditation occurred.

**Appeal:** Decisions of Revocation may be appealed.

## **Deferral of the Decision**

**Eligibility:** Unaccredited programs either in Pre-Candidacy or with Candidacy Status, and accredited programs. Deferral is not applicable to programs with Probationary Accreditation.

**Basis:** Granted in rare circumstances, when PAB may require further information to be able to make an appropriate decision. PAB will define a specific time limit for Deferral. The Program will maintain its existing accreditation status (e.g. Program with Candidacy Status) until the time of PAB's next decision. Failure to initiate the resumption of the review will automatically result in the termination of the review process and the Revocation or Denial of Accreditation (if any). Should this occur, the program may file an Application for Candidacy Status and fee at any time.

**Appeal:** Decisions of deferral may not be appealed.

## **2.2 Effective Dates**

Whatever action is taken, PAB shall establish the specific dates for the beginning and end of the appropriate period of accreditation. Decisions are typically effective January 1 following the year in which they are made.

## **2.3 Notification of Decision**

The PAB chairperson shall send a letter to the chief executive officer of the institution notifying him or her of the decision within 30 days of the Board meeting. The letter shall stipulate the basis for the decision. Copies of the letter will be sent to the chief academic officer, dean (or next-higher administrator for the program), and program administrator. PAB staff will notify the planning student organization, the APA chapter, and the Site Visit Team of the action taken, and will update the PAB website. In the case of denial or revocation of accreditation, the PAB website will provide specific reasons for the decision accompanied by a response, related to the final decision, from the institution or program.

Appealable decisions are not made public for 15 calendar days following notification, during which time the Program may file its notice of intent to appeal. In the event the Program does not file within the stipulated time, the PAB's decision becomes final. The appeals process is described in [Section 8](#).

## **2.4 Withdrawal from Accreditation Process**

A planning program may withdraw from accreditation status (Accreditation or Probationary Accreditation) at any time by sending a letter from the planning program administrator to the PAB, noting the effective date. The PAB staff will place a notice of the withdrawal on the PAB website.

## **2.5 Voluntary Withdrawal from or Revocation of Accreditation**

Individual programs must submit a Notice of Substantive Change when they intend to voluntarily let accreditation lapse (also known as withdrawal from accreditation). Programs withdrawing from accreditation, and those whose accreditation was revoked by PAB, must make provisions to assure that all currently enrolled students have the ability to complete their education in order to obtain an accredited degree.

Per PAB policy, any student enrolled at the time that the Program held accreditation status (including probationary accreditation), and who earns the degree within three years from the effective date of the revocation of that status, is considered to be a graduate of an accredited program.

As such, the Program will be required to maintain reporting requirements for a maximum of three years from the date accreditation lapses or expires. If an application for accreditation is due prior to the voluntary withdrawal, a Progress Report may be required in lieu of a Self-Study Report.

### ***Information Required***

The Program must provide narrative and documentation about the scheduled lapse of accreditation including:

- Date the Program's accreditation will lapse
- Information on why the Program is withdrawing from accreditation
- General description of resources (faculty, advising, physical facilities, etc.) that are available to enrolled students
- List of students currently enrolled in the program
- List of courses that each enrolled student must complete for graduation/program completion and date of expected completion
- How enrolled and prospective students will be informed of the Program's decision to withdraw from accreditation

### ***Teach-out Plan***

The Program must also provide an annual teach-out plan concurrent with its Annual Report, using the appropriate template. A teach-out plan is a written plan developed by the planning program that provides for the equitable treatment of students to complete their education, including any teach-out agreements that the program and institution has entered into or intends to enter into with another institution.

At a minimum, the proposed teach-out plan must ensure that all students who enrolled in the program receive all of the education required for the degree, including student services and support.

The teach-out plan must:

1. Include a description and timetable demonstrating how all current students will have the opportunity to successfully complete their education within a specified timeframe.
2. Demonstrate consistency with the Accreditation Standards.

3. Demonstrate that there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified faculty to carry out instructional activities in the Program of study until all students graduate.
4. Demonstrate that there will be a continuation of essential academic and student support services to facilitate enrolled students' success in the Program for 3 years following the expiration of accreditation, or graduation, whichever occurs first.

## **2.6 Administrative Probationary Accreditation**

Administrative Probationary Accreditation status is assigned when an institution/program fails to comply with one or more of the following administrative requirements:

1. paying annual fees within 105 days of the invoice date;
2. paying a late fee by the due date;
3. submitting reports or other required information within 45 days of the due date; and/or
4. agreeing to a reasonable on-site evaluation visit date at or near the time established by PAB staff.

Administrative Probationary Accreditation is an accreditation category not subject to appeal. The Program is recognized and listed as accredited with this designation until the underlying requirement has been fully satisfied. Failure to completely remedy the situation by the date specified in the probationary letter may result in Revocation of Accreditation.

## **2.7 Maintaining Compliance with PAB Accreditation Standards**

Accredited programs are expected to remain in substantial compliance with PAB accreditation standards at all times. Failure to remain in such compliance may result in PAB action. The Board will review any evidence, deliberate and then take one of the following actions:

- seek additional information from the Program Administrator and others to inform decision; or
- schedule a Site Visit in the next cycle to investigate further

## **2.8 Interim Reviews and Actions**

The PAB has an ongoing obligation to its specific constituencies and to the public to ensure that accredited programs continue to fulfill their responsibilities. The PAB may, in unusual instances, take an interim action regarding a program's accreditation status.

### **Grounds for Revocation of Accreditation**

PAB, in granting Accreditation or Probationary Accreditation, presumes that the information presented in the Self-Study Report and in other pertinent materials is accurate. If, with the passing of time, PAB determines that inaccurate and/or fraudulent information was intentionally submitted, it may, at its discretion, revoke the accreditation designation.

Decisions on Revocation of Accreditation may be appealed.

### **Grounds for Reconsidering and/or Changing the Accreditation Status**

Should PAB obtain evidence, either through the Annual Report or other means, that a program may no longer be in substantial compliance with the accreditation standards, it may seek additional information from the program administrator and others, or it may initiate an interim review for the purpose of reconsidering the accreditation status. PAB will determine whether a focused Site Visit is required as part of the interim review. PAB may, at its discretion, change the term of accreditation, change the status to Probationary Accreditation, or revoke accreditation.

Interim accreditation review decisions resulting in revocation of accreditation may be appealed. Interim decisions resulting in Probationary Accreditation may not be appealed.

## Section 3. Site Visits and Site Visitor Pool

### **3.1 Site Visit Dates**

Most visits are scheduled to provide two and one-half working days on the campus. Institutions with two accredited degrees may require an additional half-day on site. Time is allocated for interviews and meetings, review of student work, and examination of the facilities. Time is also provided throughout the visit for reflection, analysis, and report drafting by the team members. Detailed guidelines on conducting a Site Visit are provided in the Site Visit Manuals.

#### ***Programs with a Secondary-Site Campus (or Multi-Campus Site Visits)***

For programs that offer the planning degree at a secondary-site campus, the site visit dates may be longer than customary. A secondary-site campus is defined as a location of a program that is geographically separate from the primary accredited program site, but dependent on it, where:

- The degree program is led by the same qualified administrator
- Program curriculum, topical content and degree requirements are the same
- Students have appropriate access to student support services, instructors, etc.

The Site Visit Team must visit the secondary-site campus separately as part of the accreditation review. The visit should be of a length and breadth necessary to ensure the experience meets PAB standards.

### **3.2 Delayed Site Visits**

#### ***Program Request for Delayed Site Visit***

Acceptable reasons for such a request include, but are not limited to:

- an emergency, such as a natural disaster or major medical event for key person; or
- an institutional reorganization or coordination with other external or internal reviewers.

#### ***Process for Requesting a Delayed Site Visit***

The program administrator, dean or chief academic officer must submit a written request for a delay to PAB. The request shall:

- explain the reasons for the request;
- explain any steps being taken by the Program to address reasons for the request; and
- propose a revised schedule.

#### ***PAB Review of Delayed Site Visit Requests***

Delay requests are granted at the discretion of PAB's Executive Committee. The Committee's decisions regarding delay requests will be based on the following factors:

- reasons cited for delay request;
- past record of the Program in meeting accreditation standards;
- past performance of the Program throughout the accreditation review process;
- current status of the Program, particularly its leadership and commitment to students;
- fairness and consistency among programs; and
- burden on PAB Site Visit scheduling and/or operations.

PAB confirms its decision regarding the delay request to the Program Administrator, Dean and Chief Academic Officer. The Program will maintain its existing accreditation status until the time of the PAB's review of it.

If a delay is granted, the circumstances leading to the delay and the decision itself become part of the record reviewed by the Board at the Program's subsequent accreditation review, and may affect whether certain standards are deemed met, the length of the accreditation term, and imposition of a Progress Report requirement.

A Delayed Site Visit Fee is assessed if the request is approved.

### **3.3 PAB Determination of a Rescheduled Site Visit**

Reasons for a rescheduling include, but are not limited to:

- an accredited program fails to initiate or file a suitable Self-Study Report by its deadline; or
- an accredited program fails to provide suitable Site Visit arrangements by its deadline.

If PAB determines there is reasonable cause to Reschedule a Site Visit, the program will be placed on Administrative Probationary Accreditation and a Rescheduled Site Visit Fee will be assessed.

The circumstances leading to the rescheduled visit will become part of the record reviewed by the Board at the Program's subsequent accreditation review, and may affect whether certain criteria are deemed met, the length of the accreditation term, and imposition of a Progress Report requirement.

### **3.4 Focused Site Visit**

A focused Self-Study Report and a focused Site Visit are required for removal of Probationary Accreditation. Most incidents of Probationary Accreditation are based on evidence substantiated during a Site Visit; however, PAB may place a program on Probationary Accreditation if it obtains evidence, either through the Annual Report or other means that the program may no longer be in substantial compliance with the accreditation standards.

The PAB decision letter will provide a clear statement of each deficiency contributing to the Program's failure to be in substantial compliance with the standards or with the requirements for maintaining accreditation. PAB will also specify the due date for the focused Self-Study Report, which shall be no less than one year from the date of the decision letter. The focused Site Visit shall be scheduled no less than eight weeks after the due date of the focused Self-Study Report.

The resulting Site Visit Report will contain the Site Visit Team's assessment of the Program's compliance with the deficiencies noted by PAB in its decision letter. The Site Visit Team's assessments will be based on its observations of the focused Self-Study Report and the focused Site Visit. To the extent the Site Visit Team becomes aware of other deficiencies not noted by PAB, the Site Visit and the resulting Site Visit Report may be expanded to address those deficiencies.

PAB, at its next regularly scheduled meeting, shall review the Program to determine if it has come into substantial compliance with the standards cited in the decision letter, including any additional deficiencies as noted in the Site Visit Report. PAB may accredit or revoke the accreditation of the Program pursuant to the decision categories as detailed in this document.

### **3.5 Coordinated Site Visits with Other Entities**

The Planning Accreditation Board supports the coordination of Site Visits with other programmatic and institutional accrediting agencies, state agencies, and/or institutional reviewers. However, Site Visits to programs applying for initial accreditation will be conducted separately and distinct of any other review. The Program must submit a request in writing to PAB staff no later than 3 months before the Site Visit date.

During a coordinated review, PAB must maintain the integrity of the accreditation process while cooperating with the Institution to reduce redundant time and costs. PAB Site Visitors will fully devote their efforts to PAB's accreditation process and procedures; the Site Visit Team's (SVT) formal reporting responsibilities are solely to PAB.

The Site Visit schedule will include meetings as stated in PAB's Site Visit Manual. Additional meetings outside of the normal PAB protocol must be approved by both the PAB and Site Visit Team Chair prior to the Site Visit. This request should be made in writing during the initial request for a coordinated review.

For purposes of this policy, reviewers from the institution and other accrediting agencies will be called "External Reviewers."

The External Reviewer(s) may accompany the PAB Site Visit Team and participate in interview sessions, but (a) will not serve as a replacement for a PAB Site Visitors and (b) their role should be clearly articulated in each meeting. If the External Reviewer must ask questions, then it must be coordinated with the SVT prior to the meeting. When the team requests private meetings, the External Reviewer will not attend.

The External Reviewer will not attend the team's working sessions and will not participate in preparing the Site Visit Report. The Site Visit Team Chair has the discretion and authority to determine which sessions are working sessions.

The External Reviewer should not opine and/or influence the SVT assessment of compliance with PAB accreditation standards.

The External Reviewer will function solely as an observer in the exit interviews.

The External Reviewer will not have prior right to review or approve the Site Visit Report or the final accreditation decision of the PAB Board.

Correspondence regarding the PAB accreditation review will continue to be between the PAB and the program under review.

Upon approval by the SVT Chair, the External Reviewer may participate in the pre-Site Visit Team conference call.

### **3.6 Site Visitor Pool**

#### ***Nominations to Site Visitor Pool***

ACSP and AICP are responsible for recruiting and nominating members to the PAB Site Visitor pool, based on their respective policies. Although ACSP and AICP determine qualifications for educators and practitioners, respectively, PAB has formally expressed its preference that: ACSP nominees be drawn from

PAB-accredited schools with AICP membership highly desirable; and nominees from both groups have substantial administrative experience. The appointment of members and the composition of the Site Visitor pool should reflect racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. PAB's priorities for Site Visitors also depends on the nature of the existing Site Visitor Pool (for example, low numbers of Full Professors able to Chair site visits due to retirements). As such, PAB will convey these priorities to both ACSP and AICP in their annual reports.

The ACSP and AICP presidents nominate individuals for the pool, and provide appropriate supporting documentation: CVs/resumes, letters of application, and letters of recommendation. PAB shall review the nominees and their materials, and shall take action as soon as practicable.

While each organization has its own process for recruiting and vetting applicants to the Site Visitor pool, it is the President of each who formally nominates all applicants.

PAB will review the roster of applicants, and may seek any additional guidance it deems appropriate and relevant. PAB will take official action for final approval of applicants to its Site Visitor Pool.

Nominees who are retired, or who are expected to be retired shortly after nomination, will not be accepted into the pool. For practitioner nominees, PAB uses AICP's definition of retirement.

#### ***Tenure***

Members of the Site Visitor pool are appointed for five-year terms, renewable upon mutual consent of the individual and PAB. PAB staff will coordinate term renewals, confirm continued AICP status of practitioners, and request updated CVs as part of this process. At this time individuals may both voluntarily withdraw or may be retired from the pool.

#### ***Retention in the Site Visitor Pool***

A Site Visitor may withdraw from the pool, or request to be moved to inactive status, at any time. Site Visitors are organized in 5-year cohorts such that each year roughly 20% of members are reviewed for renewal or removal from the pool. The renewal/removal process takes into account performance reviews from post-Site Visit surveys as well as the need to create greater balance and opportunity for both mid-career faculty and mid-career professionals. PAB, at its discretion, may remove someone from the pool for performance-related concerns or if an inactive visitor has retired. A Site Visitor who is active in the pool at the time of retirement has a 5-year window for continued participation in the pool.

#### ***Training***

Site Visitors must participate in an introductory training session before participating on a Site Visit Team. Site Visitors who have not participated in a training session or on a Site Visit in a five-year period must participate in a refresher training session before participating on a Site Visit Team.

Educator Site Visitors with rank of full professor who have participated on at least 3 Site Visits are eligible to chair Site Visits. Prospective Site Visit Team chairs must participate in a chair training session before serving as the Chair of a Site Visit Team.

### **3.7 Site Visit Team Composition**

The Site Visit Team shall normally consist of three planners – two educators and one practitioner. The team members will be selected from a Site Visitor pool which has been approved by PAB. PAB staff will appoint one team member to chair the Site Visit Team. Occasionally, a new PAB Board member may observe a Site Visit prior to the start of his/her term on the board.

Refer to the Site Visit Manuals for greater detail on selection of Site Visit Team members.

### **3.8 Site Visit Team Responsibilities**

The Site Visit Team is responsible for:

- Reviewing the Program's Self-Study Report, the prior Site Visit Report, the *Site Visit Manual for Site Visitors*, and any related materials provided by the Program or by the PAB staff;
- Assessing the adequacy of the evidence in the Self-Study Report and, if necessary, requesting additional evidence before and/or during the visit;
- Examining the operation, resources, and general nature of the program, to include (1) interviews with: the university's chief executive officer and/or chief academic officer; other appropriate administrators; the planning program administrator; the planning faculty, students, and alumni residing or working in the area; employers of program students and graduates; representatives of the APA chapter; and any other individuals or groups as may be appropriate; (2) reviews of student work (studio or workshop products, theses or other terminal projects, etc.); and (3) visits to program and institution facilities;
- Conducting its evaluation and visit with complete confidentiality; and
- Submitting to the PAB a written report detailing the team's evaluation of the program's compliance with the accreditation standards, and a separate recommendation regarding accreditation. The recommendation shall be confidential, for review by PAB only.

### **3.9 Conflicts of Interest**

Prospective Site Visitors are asked to disclose any conflicts of interest with a particular planning program for which they are being considered. Site Visitors must sign and submit a "No Conflict of Interest" statement attesting to that fact. Programs hosting Site Visits must also disclose any conflicts of interest with proposed Site Visitors prior to the confirmation of the team. PAB makes the final determination of the existence of a conflict of interest between a Site Visitor and a program.

Conflicts of Interest for a Site Visitor include:

- serving on a previous Site Visit Team (SVT) for the Program under consideration;
- serving with the head of the Program on a previous SVT;
- attending, teaching, or receiving degree from any unit of the host institution;
- teaching at an institution where the head of the Program used to teach or from which the SVT pool member received a degree;
- serving as head of a program visited by a SVT chaired by the Program Administrator; or
- residing in the same region or competing within the same geographic market as the Program.

If a conflict of interest between a program and Site Visitor is discovered before or during a Site Visit, the Site Visitor with the conflict will be immediately replaced, or removed from the team, and will also be removed from the Site Visitor pool. The failure by either a Site Visitor or a Program Administrator to disclose a conflict of interest will be considered cause for disqualification of the Site Visit Report and for the removal of the Site Visitor from the pool.

### **3.10 Confidentiality, Disclosure and Retention of Information**

Site Visitors receive a great deal of information, most of which is confidential, during an accreditation review. The following information is considered confidential:

- all materials and information received and generated in conjunction with serving as a Site Visit Team member (including Self-Study Reports, Site Visit Reports, Progress Reports, student and APA

- evaluations, etc.);
- notes from the Site Visit;
- Site Visit Report (SVR);
- Site Visit evaluation forms; and
- Board actions on accreditation.

Site Visitors should destroy all materials connected with the Site Visit (including email messages, individual personal notes, and drafts of the Site Visit Report) once the Site Visit Report is final.

### **3.11 Travel**

Site Visitors are expected to take cost saving measures when making their travel arrangements. Site Visitors will be reimbursed for all travel and out-of-pocket expenses associated with the Site Visit. Expenses not submitted within 90 days of incurrence will not be reimbursed. For policies and procedures governing transportation, lodging arrangements, meals and reimbursements, please refer to the Site Visit Manuals.

### **3.12 Site Visit Report (SVR)**

At the conclusion of the Site Visit, the Site Visit Team will produce a Site Visit Report. Programs will have the opportunity to comment on the Site Visit Report prior to its finalization. Detailed information on procedures governing Site Visit Reports can be found in the Site Visit Manuals.

#### ***Report Distribution***

All report recipients shall be informed that the Site Visit Report is confidential, and that it is not to be distributed, or referenced, outside of the comment period.

The planning program shall not release the Site Visit Report to outside parties until after the PAB's decision, unless permission to do so has been gained from the PAB.

### **3.13 Dissenting Opinions in Site Visit Reports**

If the Site Visit Team cannot reach consensus on one or more aspects of the its report, despite every effort (such as stating the majority view in the Site Visit Report while acknowledging a range of views or specific concerns within the team), the Site Visit Team Chair should submit the majority report to PAB, and the dissenting team member should submit a dissenting report to PAB.

Though the majority report represents the Site Visit Team's final assessment, PAB will review a dissenting report in its determination in order to provide for consistency in the assessment and accreditation process.

### **3.14 Site Visit Observation**

PAB's ACSP Higher Education Administrator and APA Public Member appointees cannot, by definition, be members of PAB's Site Visitor pool. They are, however, required to observe a Site Visit prior to the beginning of their terms on the Board. Beyond this, any PAB board member may observe a Site Visit to any program other than one with which [s]he has a conflict of interest as defined by the PAB Bylaws.

The purpose of the observation is to gain direct exposure to: the mechanics of a Site Visit (SV); the accreditation standards and assessment thereof; and the drafting of the Site Visit Report (SVR). The SVR, together with the Self-Study Report (SSR) are the principal documents upon which the PAB relies during an

accreditation review. Site Visit experience enhances the quality of a review and improves the consistency of the Board's deliberations.

In addition, other third parties (including new Site Visitors and/or program administrators) may request the opportunity to observe a Site Visit for personal and/or professional development purposes. The granting of such a request is contingent upon:

1. the Program's acceptance of the applicant as an observer;
2. the Site Visit Team (SVT) Chair's acceptance of the applicant as an observer; and
3. the applicant's signed confidentiality agreement (provided by PAB).

Whereas the cost of a PAB member observer is borne by PAB, a third-party observer will be responsible for any and all costs associated with his/her observation.

Observers may interact with the Program and the Site Visit Team, though they should not participate in or contribute to the Site Visit Team's decisions or the development of the Site Visit Report. More specifically:

1. The observer should be familiar with the materials provided to all SVT members, and should be included in the pre-Site Visit conference call.
2. The observer should not verbally participate in the team's interviews and meetings.
3. The observer is welcome to ask questions and engage in discussions with the SVT during breaks, in between meetings, and during the evening work sessions.
4. The observer should not opine and/or influence the SVT's assessment of compliance with PAB accreditation standards. The SVT Chair should remind the team, when necessary, that the observer's role does not extend to any matters related to the assessment of compliance with PAB standards.
5. The observer should not participate in sharing the team's findings during the exit meetings, nor should [s]he participate in the drafting of the Site Visit Report.
6. The Site Visit Team Chair has the discretion and authority to manage the observer's actions on site.

PAB Board member-observers may choose to not attend exit meetings with the program and/or university administrators.

### **3.15 Independent Consultants**

The term Site Visitor as used in this document shall also include a former PAB Board Member unless expressly excluded.

Planning programs accredited by or seeking accreditation with PAB occasionally ask PAB Site Visitors to serve as independent consultants. This policy provides guidance to institutions and Site Visitors who engage in such arrangements.

Site Visitors may accept independent compensated consulting assignments to accredited programs or those seeking accreditation; however, a Site Visitor may not accept a compensated or non-compensated consulting assignment if he or she previously evaluated the program as part of a PAB Site Visit for a minimum of three years after the PAB accreditation action. Individuals who are currently serving on the PAB Board are not eligible to serve during their term of office, or for one year following their term, as consultants to accredited programs or programs seeking accreditation.

In addition, the Site Visitor will not be assigned by PAB to review an institution for which he or she has served as a consultant. Therefore, it is essential that Site Visitors keep PAB informed of any consulting activity to its accredited institutions or those seeking accreditation.

***Identification of Site Visitors to Serve as Independent Consultants***

The roster of PAB Site Visitors is available on the PAB website. PAB is not recommending these Site Visitors as independent consultants, nor is it sponsoring or directing any consulting assignment that may result from an institution or organization identifying a Site Visitor from the website. The list is available to make the public aware of who serves on PAB teams, rather than to provide a list of available or qualified consultants.

Any information requested of PAB staff by an accredited program or a program seeking accreditation in selecting an independent consultant shall be accompanied by the following statement:

PAB does not have an approved list of consultants to provide interested parties. The individuals on the attached list are PAB Site Visitors who have participated on at least three PAB Site Visits. PAB offers no formal endorsement of their qualifications and the hiring of a consultant from this list is not a guarantee of future accreditation or reaccreditation for a program. All arrangements, including financial, are directly and solely between the institution and the consultant.

In acknowledging receipt of this list, the recipient understands and acknowledges that:

1. Any PAB Site Visitor hired for consulting purposes does not represent PAB, and neither the consultant nor the views or advice provided by the consultant are endorsed or recommended by PAB;
2. The views and advice provided during the consultation are strictly the opinion of the Consultant, and cannot and should not be assumed to be the views or advice of PAB;
3. The views and advice provided during the consultation should not be considered inclusive of all relevant information or guidance relating to the accreditation of a planning program, and it is the responsibility of the planning program to determine which information and guidance may be the most helpful;
4. The Consultant cannot predict any future PAB action regarding the planning program; and
5. In no event shall PAB be responsible for any information included in or omitted from the consultation, or for any decision made or action taken by the consultant or by the planning program in reliance on such information.

***Guidelines Related to Site Visitors Serving as Independent Consultants***

1. A PAB Site Visitor who accepts an independent consulting assignment is not representing or otherwise speaking for PAB in this activity. The Site Visitor is acting solely in his or her own personal capacity during the assignment within the scope of an agreement between the Site Visitor and the institution or other organization to which PAB is not a party.
2. It is the Site Visitor's responsibility to make sure that the institution or other entity requesting the consulting understands that the Site Visitor does not represent the PAB in the consulting activity. All contracts or other written agreements between the Site Visitor and the institution reflect this understanding.
3. In considering an assignment, the Site Visitor should be aware of any special conditions, such as probationary accreditation, affecting the institution's accreditation status.
4. A Site Visitor acting as an independent consultant should not identify himself or herself as a PAB Site Visitor while on the campus or in any other aspect of the consultancy. The Site Visitor should not include this role for the PAB on business cards or similar forms of

- identification.
5. Any advice or recommendations coming from this consultancy are not binding on PAB or the institution and have no bearing on PAB's processes or decisions.
  6. PAB indemnification or insurance policies do not apply to independent consulting activities conducted by Site Visitors. The Site Visitor is solely responsible for the advice provided and may want to seek professional advice about the risk of personal liability in such activities and the need for appropriate insurance.
  7. It is the Site Visitor's responsibility to notify the PAB of such consulting activity so that future conflicts of interest can be avoided.

## Section 4. Reporting Requirements

Accredited programs are expected to remain in substantial compliance with PAB accreditation standards at all times. Failure to remain in such compliance may result in PAB action. See [Section 2.6](#) of this document for further details.

### **4.1 Self-Study Reports**

SSRs are due from programs by June 15 (for programs hosting fall Site Visits) or September 15 (for programs hosting spring Site Visits). Reports not submitted by the deadline, without prior permission from PAB, are subject to late fees. Reports from programs approved for Candidacy Status are due by August 1.

### **4.2 Progress Reports**

Progress Reports may be required as a condition of accreditation, when the Board wants the Program to document efforts and progress towards full compliance with certain accreditation criteria. Progress reports are due from programs by July 1 of the year noted in the decision letter PAB sends to programs immediately after completion of an accreditation review. Reports not submitted by the deadline, without prior permission from PAB, are subject to late fees.

### **4.3 Annual Reports**

As the granting of accreditation entails the expectation that the accreditation standards will be met throughout the designated period, accredited programs have an obligation to submit annual reports to the PAB indicating any changes that have occurred which are pertinent to the continued compliance with the standards (see section. Substantive Change). This information is due each January 31, via submission of an Annual Report. Reports not submitted by the deadline are subject to late fees. Annual Reports are the principal vehicle by which programs report Substantive Changes, and PAB collects student and faculty composition data. Substantive Changes are considered confidential; however, student and faculty composition data are considered public information. PAB encourages and supports the distribution of this data, which is available on the PAB website.

Additionally, accredited programs are expected to participate in periodic PAB surveys requesting information on various aspects of the programs. Data provided by means of the survey questionnaire will not be employed to determine continued compliance with accreditation standards. Such data may provide the basis for periodic reports on the dimensions and status of planning education.

#### **4.4 Substantive Change**

A Substantive Change is any organizational and/or programmatic change that may affect the Program's ability to comply with one or more of the pre-conditions to accreditation, and/or any of the PAB accreditation standards and criteria. Substantive Changes include, but are not limited to:

- the withdrawal, or risk thereof, of institutional accreditation;
- a change or variation in the name of the Program and/or Degree title;
- a change or variation in the length of the Program (i.e. minimum of 2 and 4 years of full-time study for graduate and undergraduate degrees, respectively);
- a change or variation in the Program's primary focus;
- a change in location or administrative unit for the Program;
- a significant change in curriculum requirements and/or credit hours;
- a significant change in the method of delivery of courses such that  $\geq 25\%$  of required credit hours are offered through distance, correspondence, or other alternate delivery;
- the appointment of a program administrator or interim administrator who does not have tenure, or who does not have an educational background or substantial experience in planning;
- an increase or decrease of 20% or more in the number of enrolled students;
- a decrease of 20% or more in the number of teaching faculty;
- a decrease of 50% or more of the number of minority or female faculty; and/or
- a change in resources affecting the ability to deliver the Program, including the addition of a new degree program.

Programs must notify PAB of a Substantive Change as soon as possible using the [Substantive Change Reporting Form](#) and shall demonstrate how the change(s) will allow for continued compliance with the standards. The Board may, at its discretion, request additional information. Programs must also report Substantive Changes via PAB's Annual Report.

If at any time, PAB discovers a program has undergone a substantive and unreported change, it will request additional information from the Program along with a comprehensive report of any substantive changes that have occurred since the last accreditation review.

If a program fails to submit the requested report, or submits an incomplete or unsatisfactory report, the Board may, at its discretion, place the Program on probation or may revoke its accreditation.

If PAB determines that a program may no longer be in substantial compliance with any accreditation standards, it may initiate an interim review to re-consider the accreditation decision.

### **Section 5. PAB General Policies**

#### **5.1 Public Notice of Upcoming Reviews**

The PAB website contains a calendar listing of upcoming accreditation reviews.

#### **5.2 Confidentiality and Disclosure**

PAB considers the following information public and, therefore, not confidential:

- list of accredited programs, including those with Candidacy Status, on Administrative Probationary Accreditation, and/or with Probationary Accreditation;
- faculty and student data submitted via Annual Reports

PAB considers the following information confidential and does not make any of this information available to the public:

- Self-Study Reports (SSR);
- Site Visit Reports (SVR);
- Site Visit Team recommendation;
- Board deliberations; and
- Site Visit evaluation forms

In the interest of public disclosure, the planning program is encouraged to make its Self-Study Report available to the general public and to make its Site Visit Report available after the PAB decision.

### ***Self-Study Reports (SSRs)***

Programs must share their Self-Study Reports with their students, faculty, staff and university administrators, and should share them with their alumni and local professional community; these disclosures should occur as early as possible in the development and writing of the report. Programs may publish any portion of their SSR at any time in any format. PAB will not share any portion of a program's SSR.

### ***Site Visit Reports***

Once PAB has made its accreditation decision, a program may publish its SVR only in its entirety. Programs may not publish excerpts from, redacted or edited versions of the report.

Programs may not release their SVR before PAB has made an accreditation decision, unless the Program has obtained PAB's prior written permission to do so.

Violations of this policy, documented in the form of a letter from PAB to the Program, become part of the record reviewed by the Board at the Program's subsequent accreditation review.

### ***Public Notification***

PAB is required to provide timely notification to the public regarding accreditation decisions per recognition requirement of the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) regarding accountability. As stated in the *CHEA Standards and Procedures for Recognition*, accrediting agencies must inform the public of the program's accreditation status and the reason(s) for the accreditation action(s) in a timely and readily accessible manner.

Consistent with CHEA recognition policies, PAB provides the following information on its website:

- (1) Name of sponsoring institution
- (2) Name of program
- (3) PAB Decision Categories
  - a. Candidacy Status granted;
  - b. Accreditation granted;
  - c. Denial of Accreditation;
  - d. Revocation of Accreditation;
  - e. Probationary Accreditation granted;
  - f. Deferral of Decision.
- (4) Interval of accreditation decision
- (5) Basis for accreditation decision; **and** a response from the institution/program regarding that decision, if any.

PAB publishes a summary of accreditation actions within 60 calendar days of its regularly scheduled board meetings at which such decisions are made regarding individual programs/institutions. The Program has the opportunity to provide a written response regarding the information posted on the PAB website. The Program's written response will be posted to the website.

### **5.3 Harassment, including Sexual Harassment**

PAB is committed to providing a harassment-free environment for all participants in the accreditation process, including Site Visitors, Programs, PAB members, and staff. PAB does not and will not tolerate any form of harassment or discrimination. Any form of harassment or discrimination related to an individual's race, color, religion, pregnancy, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, military status, disability, or any other status or condition protected by applicable state and federal laws, is a violation of this policy and will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

The term "harassment" includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, sex (including same-sex), religion, national origin, citizenship, age, or disability. "Harassment" also includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, unwelcome or offensive touching and other verbal, graphic, or physical conduct, or electronic communications (including e-mail) of a sexual nature involving either members of the same sex or opposite sex. Prohibited harassment includes conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a person's work performance or experience or creating an environment that is hostile, intimidating or offensive.

#### **When Discrimination is Experienced or Suspected**

If you believe you have been the victim of harassment by a PAB representative, or while you are representing PAB, report it immediately to the Executive Director. If you are aware of harassment directed at, or by, another PAB representative, report it immediately to the Executive Director. You are protected when filing a complaint of discrimination or assisting in an investigation of discrimination.

If these avenues of reporting are not satisfactory to you, then you can direct your questions, suggestions, problems, or complaints to the PAB Chair. If for any reason you do not want to discuss the matter with this individual, then report to the PAB Vice Chair.

You are not required to directly confront the person who is the source of your report, question, or complaint before making a report of harassment. But if you are harassed, you are required to make a reasonable effort to make harassment known should it exist. Discussing or reporting acts of harassment to any person not listed above does not constitute a report of harassment.

Retaliation or discrimination for making a good faith report or participating in an investigation of harassment is also strictly prohibited.

PAB will investigate allegations of discrimination, including harassment. PAB may use third parties to assist in such investigations.

#### **Disciplinary Action**

If harassment is found to have occurred, appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary action will be swiftly taken including, but not limited to, removal from the Site Visitor Pool. Disciplinary and/or corrective action will also be taken against individuals who make knowingly false or frivolous accusations including accusations made maliciously or recklessly.

## **5.4 PAB Logo**

PAB maintains two separate logos: one to identify PAB; one to be used by programs to denote their accredited status.

The PAB logo is the exclusive property of PAB. However, PAB allows accredited programs and their institutions to use the specific PAB logo designed for accredited programs in their publications and displays according to the following guidelines:

1. The logo must be used in its entirety and not modified, except that it may be reduced or enlarged as long as the scale of the elements is retained.
2. The logo may not be used by programs that have applied for, but have not yet received accreditation.
3. When non-accredited programs are included in the publication and/or display of materials using the logo, text must be included that makes it clear which programs are accredited and which are not.
4. The logo may be reproduced only in black and white or PAB Green (i.e. Red 130 + Green 120 + Blue 48).
5. PAB retains the right to revoke or deny permission to use its logo for any reason.

Upon request and confirmation of acceptance of policy, PAB will provide an electronic copy of the specific logo programs can use to demonstrate their accredited status.

## **5.5 Gifts**

Neither the PAB Board, nor staff, nor Site Visitors should accept gifts from PAB-accredited programs, programs seeking PAB accreditation, or any faculty members of those programs.

## **5.6 Electronic and Facsimile Documents and Signatures**

With the exception of original hard copy signature pages to a program's SSR, electronic and facsimile documents and signatures are valid for purposes of submitting reports to PAB and for official recordkeeping.

## **Section 6. Fees**

Fees for accreditation shall be established by the PAB, in consultation with the AICP Commission and the ACSP Governing Board. Specific fees are stipulated in the [PAB's Fee Schedule](#), which is available on the PAB website.

### ***Candidacy Status Application Fee***

Non-accredited programs seeking Candidacy Status pay a non-refundable fee upon application. If Accreditation is granted, the institution will be placed on the regular billing cycle for the Annual Fee. (No institution shall be assessed both a Candidacy Application Fee and an Annual Fee for the same program for the same academic year).

### ***Annual Fee***

Each October 1 PAB invoices institutions for Annual Fees which are due December 1.

**Site Visit Fee**

After completion of a Site Visit, PAB invoices programs for the Site Visit Fee, which is due 60 calendar days from the invoice date. If a program has not paid its Site Visit Fee by the time PAB takes action on the accreditation decision, PAB will not publish the decision or report it to the institution. The decision will be reported and published once the outstanding fee is paid.

**Late Fee**

A late fee is assessed if any report or fees not received by the stated due date. If the report and/or fee is not submitted within the following 45 calendar days, the Executive Director shall place the Program on Administrative Probationary Accreditation, and shall notify the Board and/or Executive Committee accordingly.

**Appeal Fee**

Programs appealing a PAB decision must submit a non-refundable Appeal Fee. For details on the Appeal Process, see Section 8.

**Delayed Site Visit Fee**

Programs granted a Delayed Site Visit request (see [Section 3](#)), are assessed a Delayed Site Visit Fee.

**Rescheduled Site Visit Fee**

If PAB determines there is a reasonable cause to reschedule a Site Visit (see [Section 3](#)) a Rescheduled Site Visit Fee will be assessed.

## Section 7. Complaints

### **7.1 Compliance Complaints**

PAB will review all written and signed complaints, received from any source, which are directed against an accredited program, and which are related to compliance with PAB's standards, criteria, guidelines, or procedures. PAB will acknowledge receipt of compliance complaints within 15 calendar days.

Complaints against an accredited program should be sent to PAB's Executive Director, who performs an initial review of all complaints against accredited programs. If the Executive Director determines a complaint is not within the purview of PAB, PAB notifies the complainant and takes no further action. If the complaint appears to warrant further investigation, the Executive Director forwards it within 30 calendar days of receipt to the Program or institution against which the complaint has been lodged (with copy to the PAB's Executive Committee) with a letter requesting a response. The Program or institution has 30 calendar days from the date of the letter to respond to the complaint.

Following receipt of the Program's response, the Executive Committee will consider the matter. The Executive Committee's action is limited to determining whether the documentation demonstrates the potential for nonconformity with the standards. If the Executive Committee determines the potential for nonconformity exists, the Board will consider the matter at its next regularly scheduled meeting. PAB may ask the Program for a special report, schedule a comprehensive review, or take other action.

All parties involved are notified of the final disposition of the complaint.

## **7.2 Confidentiality**

PAB attempts to maintain the confidentiality of complaints against accredited programs, including any corroborating materials. However, by submitting a complaint to PAB, the complainant authorizes:

1. PAB to release any information contained in the complaint or supporting materials to PAB Board Members, staff, Site Visitors and their respective attorneys, the accredited program which is the subject of the complaints and its respective attorneys, and any other persons deemed necessary by PAB to fully investigate the complaint.
2. The accredited program, which is the subject of the complaint, to release any information deemed necessary by PAB to fully investigate the complaint.

## **7.3 Limitations**

PAB does not pursue anonymous or non-written complaints about compliance.

PAB does not assume authority for enforcing the policies of programs or institutions regarding faculty, professional staff, or student rights.

PAB does not adjudicate, arbitrate or mediate individual grievances against a program or institution.

## **7.4 Complaints Against PAB**

PAB Staff and Board members have an obligation to respond to any complaints brought against PAB by any party involved in the accreditation process. Any such complaint should be in writing, signed, and submitted to PAB Executive Director (or PAB Chair in the event PAB Staff is the subject of the complaint). The Executive Director will, in consultation with the Executive Committee, determine the facts surrounding the issue and attempt to resolve the matter(s) in a fair and equitable manner. Complaints that cannot be resolved through this process will be considered and acted on at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board. The complainant will receive written notice of the final disposition of the complaint within 15 calendar days of this meeting.

# Section 8. PAB Appeal Process

## **8.1 Policy Statements**

The Planning Accreditation Board (PAB):

Recognizes the right of programs to appeal PAB actions of: Denial of Candidacy Status; Denial of Accreditation of programs with Candidacy Status; Revocation of Accreditation of accredited programs and those currently on Probation. All other actions are final and are not subject to appeal.

Permits appeals based on the claim that the PAB action, determined by the record on which the PAB took action, (a) was not supported by substantial, credible and relevant evidence; or (b) was not made in substantial compliance with PAB policies governing the process of accreditation of educational programs, and this lack of substantial compliance adversely prejudiced the PAB action. The burden of persuasion on appeal is on the Program.

Permits a program to withdraw its application from the accreditation process at any time during the appeal process.

Considers its accreditation action final if the Program does not request appeal within the established time period or otherwise pursue the Appeal.

Considers the accreditation status of the Program, during the process of appeal, to remain as it was prior to the PAB action.

## **8.2 Procedure**

1. The Program may file an appeal with a Notice of Intent to file an appeal. The Notice shall be in writing and delivered personally, by certified mail, or by courier to the PAB office, within fifteen (15) calendar days of the postmark of the PAB decision letter.

If a program does not file a Notice of Appeal within the fifteen (15)-day period, the PAB action will be final.

2. The Program must file an Appeal Document, accompanied by payment of a non-refundable Appeal Fee in the amount of \$2,500. The Appeal Document shall be in writing, and delivered personally, by certified mail, or by courier to the PAB office within thirty (30) calendar days of the postmark of the PAB decision letter.

The Appeal Document shall identify the basis for the Appeal as (a) the PAB action was not supported by substantial, credible and relevant evidence, and/or, (b) was not made in substantial compliance with PAB accreditation policies governing the process of accreditation of educational programs, and this lack of substantial compliance adversely prejudiced the PAB action. The Appeal Document must include an itemized list of each component of the action that the Program believes warrants reversal and the rationale for the Program's position on each point.

If a program does not file an Appeal Document accompanied by payment of the Appeal Fee within the thirty (30)-day period, the PAB action will be final.

3. Within thirty (30) calendar days of the postmark of the Appeal Document, an Appeal Panel shall be formed. The panel shall consist of two educators and one practitioner, reflecting the Site Visit Team composition. One educator panel member shall be appointed by the President of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP). One practitioner panel member shall be appointed by the President of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). A second educator panel member, who shall serve as the Chairperson of the panel, shall be appointed by the Chair of the PAB.

All of the Appeal Panel members shall:

- a. be active members of the PAB's Site Visitor pool with at least three (3) Site Visit experiences;
- b. have no conflicts of interest, as defined by PAB, with the appealing institution or program;
- c. have no involvement in the PAB process which led to the accreditation action under appeal; and
- d. not be current members of the governing bodies of ACSP, AICP, or the American

Planning Association (APA).

4. Within seven (7) calendar days of the formation of the Appeal Panel, the Program shall notify PAB in writing of any objections it has to the appointed Appeal Panel members and the rationale for the objection. If the Chair of the PAB believes the Program has shown good cause for why one or more of the Appeal Panel members should not serve on the Appeal Panel, the PAB Chair will appoint a replacement Appeal Panel member or members and notify the Program of the new appointment(s).
5. Within thirty (30) calendar days from the postmark of the Appeal Document, the Program shall provide to PAB an additional payment in the amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be applied to the costs of the Appeal which are to be paid by the Program pursuant to Item 14 below. In the event that costs are less than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), the balance shall be returned to the Program. In the event that costs exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000), the Program shall pay the additional expenses within twenty (20) calendar days of the postmark on the invoice for such expenses from PAB.
6. Within thirty (30) calendar days from the postmark of the Appeal Document, PAB shall respond to the Program's Appeal Document, or notify the Appeal Panel and the Program that it shall not submit a pre-hearing response.
7. Within ten (10) calendar days after constituting the Appeal Panel, PAB shall provide each panel member with an electronic version of the following documents, which shall comprise the Record on Appeal:
  - a. The record upon which the PAB took action, including:
    - i. PAB's prior decision letter and any interim correspondence with or between the Program;
    - ii. the Program's Self-Study Report;
    - iii. the final Site Visit Report;
    - iv. the Program's comments to the final Site Visit Report;
    - v. any comments from other stakeholders to the final Site Visit Report; and
    - vi. the Program's Post Site Visit Report, if any; prepared for the PAB's consideration at the review date.
  - b. PAB's decision letter transmitting the action being appealed;
  - c. The Program's Notice of Intent;
  - d. The Program's Appeal Document; and
  - e. PAB's pre-hearing response.

A list of the materials comprising the Record on Appeal shall be made and provided to the Program.

8. The scope of the Appeal shall be limited to all information and documents in the Record on Appeal. The Appeal Panel shall not consider any new facts or evidence. A fact or piece of evidence shall be considered new if (a) it was not presented in any of the documents comprising the Record on Appeal, even if the omission was inadvertent; or (b) it relates to circumstances arising after the time of the PAB action.

On appeal, the Program has the burden of persuasion that the PAB action (a) was not supported by substantial, credible and relevant evidence; or (b) was not made in substantial

compliance with PAB policies governing the process of accreditation of educational programs, and this lack of substantial compliance adversely prejudiced the PAB action.

The Appeal Panel shall neither receive nor consider facts not previously presented to the PAB since it does not sit as an initial reviewing body.

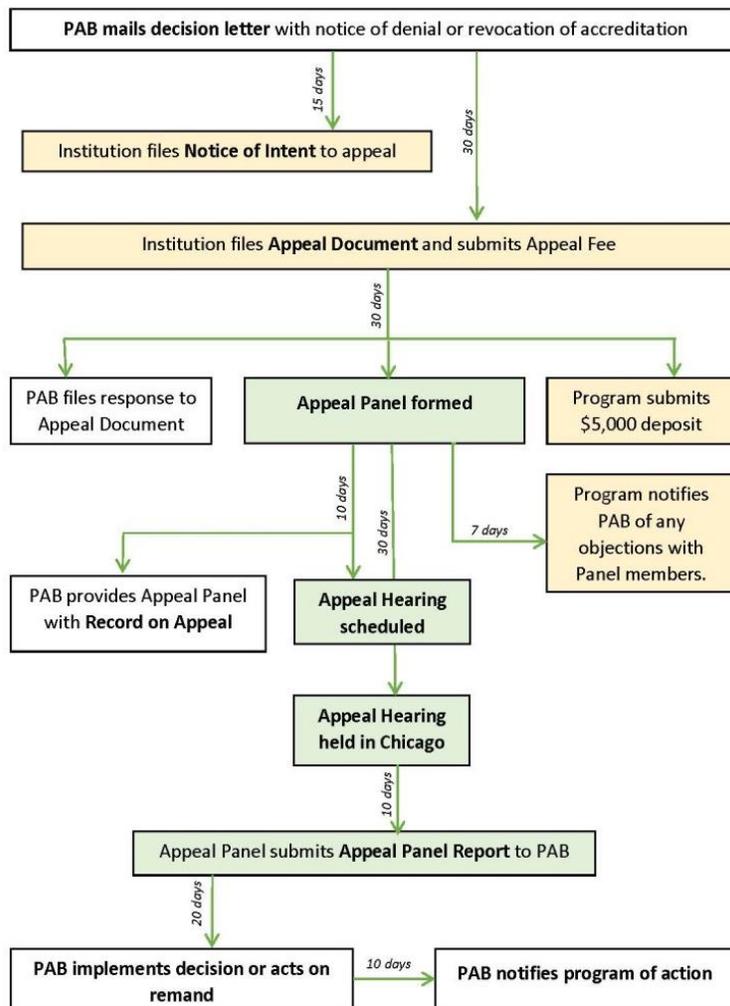
In addition, the Appeal Panel shall not consider any grounds for remanding or upholding the PAB action that were not raised in the Appeal Document.

9. Within ten (10) calendar days after constituting the Appeal Panel, a hearing shall be scheduled in Chicago, Illinois, on a date within thirty (30) calendar days after the Appeal Panel is constituted. Once scheduled, notice of the date, time and location of the hearing shall be sent to Appeal Panel members, the Program, and copied to the PAB Chair.
10. The hearing shall be conducted by the Appeal Panel Chair according to the PAB Appeal Hearing Format. At the hearing:
  - a. The hearing shall be audio recorded. Either party may, at its expense, require such recording be transcribed.
  - b. A representative of the Program shall present an oral statement in support of the Appeal, and shall answer any questions from the Appeal Panel. Presentation at the hearing shall be restricted to a review of documents and testimony relevant to the standard(s) on which the accreditation action was based, or a review of the process and procedure used to arrive at the action, as appropriate. No telephonic (or other electronic means of transmission) presentation shall be permitted.
  - c. A representative of the PAB shall present an oral statement in support of the action under appeal, and shall answer any questions from the Appeal Panel. Presentation at the hearing shall be restricted to a review of documents and testimony relevant to the standard(s) on which the accreditation action was based, or a review of the process and procedure used to arrive at the action, as appropriate. No telephonic (or other electronic means of transmission) presentation shall be permitted.
  - d. Legal counsel for the Program and/or PAB may be present. Because the hearing is an administrative mechanism for peer review rather than an adversarial proceeding, there is no provision for cross-examination of the representative(s) of either side.
  - e. Presentations are limited to clarification of the record and explanations demonstrating the extent to which the Program complied with the relevant accreditation standards at the time of the Site Visit and the PAB review of the Program in accordance with its accreditation procedures.
11. Within ten (10) calendar days of the adjournment of the hearing the Appeal Panel shall prepare its report, using the PAB template titled Appeal Panel Findings and Recommendation, and submit it via email to the PAB office. The Report shall address each point raised in the Program's appeal and shall describe the Appeal Panel's decision. If the Appeal Panel remands the decision for further consideration by PAB, the Appeal Panel shall identify specific issues that PAB must address.
12. Within seven (7) calendar days after the Appeal Panel submits its report, the PAB staff shall

forward a copy of it to each member of the PAB and designate the manner in which PAB shall review it (regular meeting, mail ballot, conference call). Within twenty (20) calendar days from the date of the submission of the Appeal Panel Report PAB will implement its decision, or in the event of a remand, act on the remand and any instructions relative to the recommendation.

13. Within ten (10) calendar days after the PAB action, the Chair of the PAB shall notify the Program of the action in writing via certified, return receipt mail or courier, and provide the Program with a copy of the Appeal Panel Report.
14. The action of the PAB is final and is not subject to further appeal.
15. All costs of the Appeal shall be borne by the Program. Costs include, but are not limited to, all administrative and meeting costs, including the travel and other expenses of the Appeal Panel, program representatives, and PAB representatives.
16. All correspondence and communication between the Program, the Appeal Panel, and/or PAB during the appeal process shall be appropriately addressed and sent in care of the PAB office. Staff at the PAB office shall be responsible for distributing appeal documents.

**Figure 2: Appeal Process Flowchart**



### **8.3 PAB Appeal Hearing Format**

1. Appeal Panel Chairperson calls meeting to order. The Chairperson shall:
  - a. assure that the proceedings are conducted in a fair and impartial manner;
  - b. maintain decorum and order throughout the procedure;
  - c. permit each party to the Appeal to have a reasonable opportunity to present; and
  - d. determine any questions of procedure or agenda raised during the course of the review.

All procedural requests or challenges, including the appropriateness of evidence to be heard, shall be made to the Chairperson, who shall render a decision, after consultation with the other members of the Appeal Panel.

2. Introduction of Appeal Panel members and other attendees
3. Appeal Panel Chairperson's opening statement, including review of procedural hearing rules:
  - a. Only information about the conditions of the Program available to PAB when it formulated its accreditation action is relevant.
  - b. The Program may not present new, revised or updated information which was not available to PAB when the underlying action was made.
  - c. The purpose of the appeal hearing is to determine whether the record supports PAB's original accreditation action and/or whether due process and proper procedures were followed.
  - d. The Appeal Panel determines the relevance and materiality of the information presented.
4. The Program makes an oral presentation, without interruption, of not greater than one (1) hour.
5. The Appeal Panel questions the representatives of the Program.
6. The Chair of the PAB or his/her representative makes an oral presentation, without interruption, of not greater than one (1) hour.
7. The Appeal Panel questions the representatives of PAB.
8. The Program makes a closing statement of not greater than ten (10) minutes.
9. The Chairperson reviews the timetable of remaining steps in the process.
10. The Appeal Panel excuses the representatives of the Program and PAB and adjourns the appeal hearing.
11. The Appeal Panel deliberates in an executive session, and reaches a decision. The Appeal Panel shall affirm or remand the decision back to PAB, and report its findings using the PAB report template titled Appeal Panel Findings and Recommendation.

If the Appeal Panel affirms the PAB's action, PAB's accreditation action becomes final as of the PAB action date and is published and implemented as described by PAB policies and procedures. If the Appeal Panel remands the action to PAB for further consideration, the Appeal Panel shall identify specific issues PAB must address. PAB's action following remand is final, is not subject to appeal, and is published and implemented as described by PAB policies and procedures.

## Section 9. Standards Revision and Accreditation Review Process

The PAB involves each of its constituencies and the public in reviewing all aspects of its accreditation standards. Proposals for amendments can be submitted to the PAB for consideration at any time. The PAB itself will consider the need for such revisions on an ongoing basis as part of its regular duties. Final approval, authority, and responsibility for revising the accreditation policies, procedures, and standards, however, rests with the PAB.

### **9.1 Proposals for Amendments and Revisions**

Proposals for amending accreditation standards shall first be submitted to the PAB for review and recommendation. If the PAB recommends an amendment to the standards, the PAB will notify the AICP president and the ACSP president. Notices regarding the proposed amendment will be: placed on the PAB website and in APA/AICP and ACSP publications; directed to administrators of accredited and non-accredited programs and their chief executive officers; and directed to other specialized accreditation bodies recognized by CHEA. All parties will be invited to submit their comments within thirty (30) days of the respective notices. At the end of the thirty (30) days those comments regarding the proposed amendment will be placed on the PAB website.

Following review of these comments, the PAB may revise the proposed amendment before forwarding it to the AICP Commission, the APA Board, the ACSP Governing Board, and placing it on the PAB website. A second thirty (30) day comment period follows, at the end of which the PAB will consider advisory recommendations from the AICP Commission in consultation with the APA Board, and the ACSP Governing Board, as well as any other comments received. PAB may further revise the proposed amendment prior to taking official action for final Board approval.

### **9.2 Effect of Amendments and Revisions**

No approved amendment or revision shall affect the accreditation status of any school prior to the submittal of its next application for accreditation. The accreditation standards that shall apply to a program with Candidacy Status are those that were in effect at the time that the application was filed.

### **9.3 Ongoing Standards Review and Revision**

PAB periodically reviews and revises the standards by which it evaluates degree programs for accreditation and the procedures by which it carries out this responsibility. Comprehensive review and development of standards shall occur approximately every five years, but may occur more frequently at the Board's discretion.

Any comments that are received regarding the standards, whether formally during the standards review process, or informally through unsolicited submission at any time, are shared with the PAB Standards Committee and collected/reviewed as part of the subsequent five-year process.

Whenever substantive changes in its standards are considered by PAB, changes in standards are made available for review and comment by the public for two separate 30-day periods, once in a preliminary draft phase and once before final adoption. The revisions to the PAB standards will apply for Self-Study Reports due in the subsequent calendar year, unless a specific implementation date is specified at the time of adoption.

#### **9.4 Ongoing Review of Accreditation Practices**

Standards for recognition by the Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) require that accrediting agencies demonstrate ongoing review of accreditation practices. Such review should include examination of the accreditor's value to the institution and impact of its standards and procedures thereon.

PAB regularly reviews its operations to ensure both responsiveness and accountability to its constituents as well as efficiency and effectiveness of its services to institutions or programs. In addition, PAB reviews its value to institutions and the impact of its standards and procedures approximately every five years.