# Handbook for International Certification Visits

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## I. ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is prepared by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) for program administrators and visiting teams for NAAB International Certification visits conducted beginning in calendar year 2020. The handbook has two purposes:

- To supplement the *2019 Conditions for NAAB International Certification* and *2019 Procedures for NAAB International Certification*, by providing advice designed to continually improve consistency in the international certification process for all international professional programs certified by the NAAB.

- To serve as a guide for all the participants in the visit process to use in organizing and conducting an international certification visit beginning in 2020.

The NAAB welcomes your comments and suggestions for ways to improve this document. Please send your suggestions to forum@naab.org and include "ICert Handbook" in the subject line.

## II. INTRODUCTION

### A. About the National Architectural Accrediting Board

The NAAB was founded in 1940 to "produce and maintain current a list of accredited schools of architecture in the United States and its possessions, with the general objective that a well-integrated and coordinated program of architecture education be developed that is national in scope and affords opportunity for architectural schools with varying resources and operating conditions to find places appropriate to their objectives and do high class work therein."

Since 1975, the NAAB has accredited professional degree programs rather than schools or universities and only accredits the first professional degree program offered by any school or university. As such, the NAAB does not accredit pre-professional degrees or other preparatory education that may serve as a prerequisite for admission to a professional degree program or post-professional graduate degrees.

The NAAB is the only agency recognized by registration boards in U.S. jurisdictions to accredit professional degree programs in architecture. Because most registration boards require an applicant for licensure to hold a NAAB-accredited degree, obtaining such a degree is an essential part of gaining access to the licensed practice of architecture.

The Board of Directors holds three regular meetings per year: winter, summer, and autumn. International Certification decisions rest solely with the NAAB Board of Directors, upon the recommendation of the International Committee.

### B. Vision, Mission, and Values of the NAAB

*From the 1940 Founding Agreement:*

"The . . . societies creating this accrediting board, here record their intent not to create conditions, nor to have conditions created, that will tend toward standardization of educational philosophies or practices, but rather to create and maintain conditions that will encourage the development of practices suited to the conditions which are special to the individual school. The accrediting board must be guided by this intent."

Since 1975, the NAAB *Conditions for Accreditation* have emphasized self-assessment and student performance as central elements of the NAAB model. The directors have maintained their commitment to both of these as core tenets of the NAAB's criteria and procedures.

#### 1. Vision

The NAAB advances educational quality assurance standards and processes that anticipate the needs of academic programs, the profession, and society, to promote a better built environment.

#### 2. Mission

The NAAB develops and maintains an accreditation system in professional degree education that enhances the value, relevance, and effectiveness of the profession of architecture.

#### 3. Core Values

The NAAB aspires to follow four core values in the way it approaches its work and mission:

- Commitment to Excellence: Foster a culture of continual improvement that seeks positive organizational transformation and responds to external change.

- Diversity and Inclusion: Celebrate unique institutional perspectives and ensure the inclusion of diverse populations to enrich the learning environment.

- Effective Communication: Articulate the value of an accredited architecture education to students, the profession, and the communities architects serve.

- Spirit of Collaboration: Promote transparency and collateral cooperation in the shared responsibility of preparing graduates for professional practice.

The NAAB is an independent nonprofit 501(c) 3 corporation with an office in Washington, D.C. It adheres to nondiscriminatory practices and is funded equally by the AIA, ACSA, and NCARB, with a contribution by the AIAS. Directors and visiting team members are not compensated but are reimbursed for expenses.

## C. International Activities

The NAAB aspires to be the leader in establishing educational quality assurance standards to enhance the value, relevance, and effectiveness of the architecture profession. Architecture programs (outside the United States and Canada) that can meet the *NAAB Conditions for Accreditation* are eligible for full accreditation under the terms of the *Conditions for Accreditation* and related procedures. Programs (outside the U.S. and Canada) that cannot meet the NAAB *Conditions,* largely because the institution in which they reside is not accredited by one of the U.S. regional accreditation agencies, as required in the NAAB *Conditions for Accreditation*, are eligible to be evaluated for International Certification (ICert). Following are some of the ways in which the NAAB provides services internationally:

The NAAB Board of Directors established its first international assessment program in 2003, then known as Substantial Equivalency (SE). Between 2003 and 2019, 16 programs achieved the SE designation. In mid-2019, the NAAB conducted two surveys of its constituent programs to examine all aspects of the SE program and, based on the survey results, decided to change the name from Substantial Equivalency to International Certification (ICert). "NAAB International Certification" identifies a program as comparable in educational outcomes in all significant aspects to a NAAB-accredited U.S.-based program and indicates that it provides an educational experience meeting acceptable standards, even though such program may differ in format or method of delivery. It further indicates that a program has met the *Conditions for NAAB International Certification*, which are comparable to the NAAB *Conditions for Accreditation* in all significant aspects. Although NAAB International Certification is *not* accreditation, ICert recognition by the NAAB represents that a program of architecture has achieved the highest standard of quality assurance in professional architecture education.

Graduates of architecture programs holding ICert recognition by the NAAB (at the point of graduation) may not meet the education requirements for registration in a U.S. jurisdiction. However, the Education Evaluation Services for Architects (EESA) provides assistance to individuals who do not have a professional degree in architecture from a NAAB-accredited program and who wish to either apply for an NCARB Certificate or for registration by an NCARB member board. ICert graduates are eligible for an expedited review at a discounted fee. Visit eesa.org for more information.

Programs with International Certification interested in gaining full NAAB accreditation must first present proof that the institution in which they reside has been accredited by one of the U.S. regional accreditation agencies.

## D. International Committee

The NAAB's International Committee, formed in 2017, is responsible for implementing the NAAB's strategic goals related to international engagement. It focuses efforts on the following areas:
1. Oversight of the NAAB's programs and activities related to accreditation and certification outside the regulatory context of the United States and its legal jurisdictions. This includes ongoing administration of the International Certification program and oversight of the *Conditions* and

> *Procedures for NAAB International Certification.* The committee also provides recommendations to the NAAB board on matters of policy related to ICert.
2. Oversight of the NAAB's programs and activities related to the evaluation of education credentials for licensure candidates educated abroad.
3. Together with NAAB staff, the International Committee serves as liaison between the NAAB board and international partnerships related to architecture accreditation and certification. This includes the Canberra Accord on Architectural Education, the International Union of Architects (UIA), and the professional accreditation organizations in countries holding mutual recognition agreements with NCARB.
4. The NAAB can provide advice and consultation to organizations in other countries that are developing accreditation standards and procedures. Such consulting is provided for a fee.
5. The NAAB serves as the Secretariat for the Canberra Accord (CA). The CA is a multilateral agreement among accrediting agencies acknowledging the substantial equivalency of their systems of accreditation/validation/recognition in architecture education.

## E. International Certification Documents

The *Conditions for NAAB International Certification* and the *Procedures for NAAB International Certification* outline the requirements that degree programs must meet and the procedures they and the visiting teams must follow to ensure minimum standards and a uniform review process. These documents also contain suggestions that programs and teams are encouraged to follow.

This handbook is a supplement to the current editions of the *Conditions for NAAB International Certification and Procedures for NAAB International Certification.* It is meant to provide information to participants on visiting teams and should be read in the context of the *Conditions* and *Procedures.* This handbook serves as a guide to program administrators, team chairs, and visiting team members rather than as a statement of NAAB policy.

Throughout the text, the use of "must," "shall," or the imperative form sets forth a minimum requirement.

Areas and levels of excellence will vary among degree programs as will approaches to meeting the conditions and reporting requirements. Nevertheless, schools must present complete and accurate information to demonstrate compliance with each of the NAAB's International Certification conditions. In addition, positive aspects of a degree program in one area cannot override deficiencies in another.

English is the official language of the NAAB. All documents prepared for the International Certification process, including student work, must be submitted in English.

The *Conditions for NAAB International Certification* apply to all programs seeking International Certification or continued International Certification beginning January 1, 2020. Program administrators and visiting team members are advised to review the *Procedures for NAAB International Certification* currently in effect for information on the visit sequence and other procedures that apply to each stage in the process.

The NAAB reserves the right to vary from these published procedures if such an action is in the best interests of a program(s). The Board of Directors has delegated responsibility for establishing and maintaining the operating procedures that support ICert activities, including the implementation of these *Procedures,* to the International Committee.

## III. WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION?

International certification is a voluntary quality assurance process under which services and operations are evaluated by a third party against a set of standards set by the third party with input and collaboration from peers in the field. Voluntary international certification is distinguished by five components:

- It is provided through private agencies.

- It requires a significant degree of self-evaluation by the institution or program, the results of which are summarized in a report to the agency.

- A team is formed and conducts a visit.

- Recommendations or judgments about international certification are made by expert and trained peers.

- Institutions have the opportunity to respond to most steps in the process.

### A. What is International Certification in Architecture Education?

International certification is a primary means by which degree programs demonstrate quality to students and the public.

Certified status is a signal that a professional degree program meets established standards for student learning, resources, facilities, student services, and public information.

### B. Setting the Context for NAAB International Certification Visits and Visiting Teams

It is the expectation of the NAAB, and the public, that each certified professional degree program in architecture satisfies the *Conditions for NAAB International Certification*.

The extent to which the conditions are satisfied, and the manner in which they have been satisfied, will vary among programs. Visiting teams are expected to respect the differences between programs in terms of pedagogy, curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices.

Visiting teams will review student work that represents both outstanding performance and minimal achievement.

It is the visiting team's responsibility to verify, to the degree possible, that standards are being met by all students from all programs at the time of graduation. The *2019 Conditions for NAAB International Certification* and the *Procedures for NAAB International Certification,* 2019 edition, serve as the fundamental specifications for the ICert process. All participants in the process must be thoroughly familiar with both documents.

The following sections of the Procedures are especially important:

- o Section 1. Term of International Certification
- o Section 2. General Information
- o Section 3. Procedures for Visit One: Eligibility
- o Section 4. Procedures for Visit Two: Candidacy
- o Section 5. Procedures for Visit Three:  International Certification
- o Section 6. Conflicts of Interest
- o Section 7. Special Circumstances

## C. Basic Principles

Several basic principles are central to the NAAB's purposes and process. These are explained in detail throughout this document and are summarized below:

1. Teams have five tools with which to work during the visit:

    a. *2019 Conditions for NAAB International Certification*

    b. *Procedures for NAAB International Certification*, 2019 edition

    c. Program Self-Evaluation Report (PSER)

    d. Team room with student work and curricular materials

    e. Meetings with individuals and groups conducted during the visit

2. It is the NAAB's responsibility to verity, to the degree possible, that standards are being met by all students from all programs *at the time of graduation.*

3. The primary concern of the NAAB is to determine through a peer-review process whether a professional degree in architecture meets the *Conditions* established by the NAAB for international certification.

4. Program administrators and team members must understand the difference between the two levels of achievement for the student performance criteria (SPC): *understanding* and *ability*.

5. Outstanding aspects of programmatic compliance with the conditions or SPC cannot override significant deficiencies in other aspects.

## IV. WHO'S WHO
This section describes the team, how teams are formed, and the responsibilities of the team chair.

### A. Composition of Teams
The composition of visiting teams depends on the type of visit to be conducted. See Sections 3, 4, and 5 of the 2019 *Procedures* for additional information.

### B. Sequence for Forming Visiting Teams
Once dates are set for visits, the NAAB office reviews a roster of individuals eligible to serve on visiting teams and makes preliminary assignments.

Team members are then advised to "save the date," with the understanding that the program must confirm the members of the team before its composition is considered final.

Teams are then proposed to the program administrators, who may challenge members on the basis of the NAAB's Conflict of Interest policy (see Section 6 of the *2019 Procedures*).

Subsequent changes in teams are coordinated by the NAAB's director of international services, with the approval of the visiting team chair and the program administrator.

### C. Team Chairs
The team chair is the designated leader of a NAAB visiting team. He/she has responsibilities before, during, and after the site visit.

Individuals who have completed at least three site visits (including U.S. and/or international), and have received positive evaluations on each of these visits, are included in the pool of potential team chairs. Visiting team chairs may also be nominated from among former directors of the NAAB. Team chairs must complete the ICert training program before chairing an ICert visit.

Visiting team chairs are nominated by the NAAB staff from among the pool of potential team chairs and approved by the NAAB's International Committee. The nomination is based on a review of the résumés of current visiting team chairs and experienced visiting team members, team member evaluations, and evaluations of VTR quality. Every effort is made to avoid conflicts of interest in making nominations and to ensure the team chairs represent a diverse group of individuals.

Once a team chair has been approved by the International Committee, the NAAB staff sends the nominee's résumé to the program administrator for approval. The administrator may challenge the nomination on the basis of potential conflicts of interest (see section 6 of the *Procedures*). Once the chair has been confirmed, the administrator and the chair work together to select a date for the visit.

Upon agreeing to serve, the team chair is in charge throughout the visit process, including visit preparation, conduct of the visit, and visit follow-up. The team chair should immediately contact the program head to initiate a cooperative working relationship, address ground rules for the visit, and the nomination process for local facilitators.

The team chair is encouraged to contact each team member, either individually or via conference call, to discuss planning for the visit and assignment of work that needs to be completed before the visit. In addition, all teams must hold at least one previsit conference call.

### D. Facilitators
To facilitate communication and foster a spirit of collaboration, the program is encouraged to nominate one facilitator to participate in the site visit. He/she may provide insight into the local cultural and professional context and the program's unique qualities and history and may also serve as a translator. The program is responsible for the expenses of the facilitator.

The nominations are approved by the NAAB staff in consultation with the International Committee and the team chair. Nominations must be accompanied by a résumé or vitae and a brief description of the relationship between the individual and the program.

See Sections 4.2 and 5.4 of the *2019 Procedures* for additional information.

All facilitators must agree in advance to abide by the principles of confidentiality as outlined in this document and by the Conflict of Interest policies in Section 6 of the *Procedures*.

## V. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN

### A. Before the Visit

Once a team has been approved by the program, the members should begin making travel arrangements. Programs often purchase the round-trip airfare for teams, but you will be expected to provide an itinerary and other information to the program. See details of ICert travel policies in the *Procedures.* Team members should expect to arrive in time to begin work based on the schedule set by the team chair and program administrator.  Also see the section VIII on Logistics in this Handbook.

Team members are also expected to use the time before the visit to review the *Conditions* and *Procedures.* Sixty days before the visit is scheduled to begin, each team member will receive a copy of the Program Self-Evaluation Report (PSER, see Section VI.A) directly from the program.

All team members are expected to read the PSER at least twice before they arrive on-site and to develop a list of questions and discussion items that will form the basis of the team's previsit conference call.

All team members are required to participate in a mandatory previsit conference call.

### 1. Team Conference Call

Team members and the facilitator participate in a mandatory pre-visit conference call approximately 30 days before the visit. The purpose of the call is to:

- Review the PSER and discuss initial reactions to it
- Review the *Conditions* and *Procedures*
- Review travel plans (arrival/departure dates and times, hotel information, etc.) and any special customs and etiquette related to the specific visit
- Identify and prioritize the questions to be addressed in material reviewed before the visit as well as during the visit

### 2. Document Review

Part One of the *Conditions* contains 12 conditions related to institutional support and commitment to continuous improvement. These include:
- Mission and history of the program
- Social equity
- Learning culture and studio culture
- Response to Five Perspectives: leadership and collaboration, stewardship of the environment, design, community and social responsibility, professional opportunity
- Program's self-assessment activities
- Resources (financial, physical, information, and human) that support the program

Teams do not assess whether these conditions/resources are good or bad—in other words, they are not judged like the Student Performance Criteria nor are assessed as either Met or Not Met. Instead, the team confirms whether the program's response has "demonstrated" or "described" the resources in support of student learning and continuous improvement.

As far as possible, the material prepared in support of these conditions will be reviewed by the NAAB team before the visit begins. This allows the team to focus its attention during the visit on student learning, educational outcomes and curriculum, and progress since the previous visit.

### B. During the Visit

Visit One for Eligibility lasts two days. Visits two and three typically last four days, with the bulk of the time spent in meetings, in the team room reviewing student work, and preparing the draft VTR. This is a very short time in which to comprehend the full nature of a program. Making an informed evaluation of the program and its unique educational structure requires a team that is well prepared before the visit begins.

Under certain circumstances a visit may be extended or shortened; see section 7 of the *Procedures* for more information.

### 1. Visit Agenda

The visit agenda is described in Sections 3.3, 4.3 and 5.5 of the *Procedures.* The program administrator and the team chair work together to develop the specific itinerary for the visit.

All visiting team members, including the facilitator, are expected to be present for the entire visit.

Team chairs are encouraged to reserve as much of the agenda as possible for the team to work in the team room.

**Typical Elements of the Site Visit Agenda:**

- Large blocks of time for the team to work alone in the team room (one hour or more each)
    - Review of student work, course materials
    - Debrief meetings
    - Review admissions and advising files
    - Draft the VTR
- Shorter periods of time (15-60 minutes each)
    - Tour of the facilities
    - Entrance meetings with program or college administrators, faculty, and students
    - Meetings with student representatives
    - Meeting with library and information resources staff
    - Exit meetings with program or college administrators, chief academic officer of the institution, faculty, staff, and students
- Contact with alumni and local practitioners (optional)

In setting the visit agenda, the team chair should:

- Be flexible and expect disruptions
- Allow adequate time to visit additional teaching sites
- Account for fatigue – "a tired team is an unproductive team."

The afternoon of the last day before departure should be cleared of meetings and other activities so that the team can work on the VTR.

As far as possible, visit agendas should be finalized six weeks before the visit begins. The team chair has final authority in setting the agenda. It is not necessary to send a copy of the visit schedule to the NAAB office; the agenda is not required for the VTR

### 2. Meetings

Team members are advised to prepare a list of questions about specific conditions to be addressed during meetings. The following list of meetings includes suggested topics. This list is by no means exhaustive, and it is provided only to aid administrators and teams in planning.

- Chief Academic Officer (e.g., provost)
    - Role and purpose of the NAAB visit
    - Administrative structure
    - Resources
    - Challenges facing the institution
- Head of the academic unit in which the program is located (e.g., dean or department head)

- o  Resources
- o  Challenges facing the program
- o  Faculty professional development
- o  Curriculum review and development
- Program Administrator – the team should be prepared to discuss all of the conditions with this individual
- Faculty
  - o  Tenure
  - o  Professional development
  - o  Curriculum review and development
  - o  Governance
  - o  Learning culture
  - o  Social equity
- Staff
  - o  Professional development
  - o  Resources
  - o  Governance
  - o  Social equity
- Students
  - o  Learning culture
  - o  Social equity
  - o  Challenges or concerns
  - o  Career/academic advisors

Meetings with alumni and local practitioners are optional. Sometimes they are scheduled as social events. If a meeting is scheduled with this group, the team is advised to use the time as an informal opportunity to gain a better understanding of the program.

### 3. What to Say in Exit Interviews

Exit interviews can be challenging, especially with senior institutional administrators who may want to ask questions of the team.

Team deliberations should have finished and the VTR should be substantially complete before the exit interviews.

Exit interviews are led by the team chair.  The chair may call upon other team members to offer comments.

Based on feedback from experienced team chairs, the NAAB recommends that during each exit interview, the team chair read, *verbatim*, the following sections of the draft VTR*:*

Part I

Section 1 – Observations and Acknowledgments

Section 2 – Conditions Not Met/Not-Yet Met

Part III (Optional)

This practice eliminates any subtle differences between the various exit interviews and ensures that all audiences receive the same message.

All questions should be answered by the team chair.

Throughout the exit interviews, it is very important to resist the impulse to:

- Give advice or suggestions about how to improve the program or respond to any deficiencies (e.g., "You might think about changing the content of the pro practice class…") or

- Speak extemporaneously after reading the text of the VTR (e.g., "What we mean is…")

In the final interview, with the program's faculty, staff, and students:

- It is appropriate to say thank you and to acknowledge the program's effort to prepare for and host the visit.

- The chair may invite other team members to add a personal, positive observation that ties in to thanks for the efforts made by the program for the visit (e.g., "I really appreciated the way student work was displayed throughout the building, and I hope you encourage students and faculty from other disciplines to visit while the displays are still up....etc.).

- Comments should never express negative conclusions, "minority opinions," or otherwise qualify or editorialize what has been read in the official comments.

Finally, please remember that *under no circumstances* is the team to reveal its recommendation. The recommendation is confidential in perpetuity. In addition, it should not be revealed to the facilitator.

## C. After the Visit

Once the visit ends, the team chair is responsible for completing the draft VTR and submitting it to the NAAB office. Team members are advised to be available to the chair for consultation and/or to review the final draft.

**Review/Acceptance/Transmittal by the Team**. The team chair must transmit a final draft of the VTR to the NAAB office within 30 calendar days after the visit ends. During the interim, the team chair is responsible for completing the draft and collecting additional input or suggested text from the other members of the team.

**Review by NAAB Staff**. Upon receiving the draft from the team chair, the NAAB staff reviews the draft report for completeness and edits the document (for grammar, spelling, unclear writing, and the like). In addition, the report is reviewed for completeness and comprehension and to ensure the team has not offered advice or recommendations for changes or modifications to the program. This draft, without the confidential recommendation, is then sent to the program administrator.

**Corrections of Fact (COF) and Optional Response.** The program administrator is then asked to review the draft VTR to make corrections of fact (misspelled names, incorrect course titles, and the like) and to write an optional response to the VTR. The optional response is sent to NAAB staff in a separate file from the VTR. The NAAB sends the COF draft to the team chair for acceptance. The team chair has five days to review and accept the COF.

Team members should submit their requests for reimbursements promptly as well as complete any team assessments/questionnaires. Additional information about reimbursements is in Section VIII.E.

## VI. KEY DOCUMENTS AND COMPONENTS OF THE VISIT

Key elements include the Program Self-Evaluation Report (PSER), the team room, and the Visiting Team Report (VTR).

### A. Program Self-Evaluation Report (PSER)
The PSER introduces the program to the team.

It describes the mission, vision, and history of the institution and the program and serves as the program's comprehensive, reflective self-study relative to the *Conditions for NAAB International Certification.*

Teams should review this report carefully and frequently. The PSER forms the basis for the visiting team to prepare for the site visit and evaluate evidence during the visit.

Finally, the PSER may be used to aid the team in offering informed observations at the end of the visit. It may also be reviewed by the international committee and the NAAB directors when recommending and making a decision to grant or deny international certification.

Each team member receives a PDF of the PSER directly from the program 60 days before the visit.

The PSER is reviewed by the team chair after it has been received by the NAAB. The purpose of the review is to determine the clarity and completeness of the PSER, and to discern the complexity of the program's structure. The PSER review does not assess the quality of the program.

### B. Team Rooms
The characteristics of the team room are described in the *Procedures* Sections 4.4 and 5.6.

Its purpose is to provide the team with a secure, reasonably soundproof work space in which to review and discuss the program's documentation in confidence.

Student work must

- Be clearly, consistently, and easily accessible.
- Include high-pass and minimum-pass work.
- Be of sufficient quantity to demonstrate that all graduates are meeting the performance criteria.
- Have been executed since the previous site visit and span no less that two previous academic years.

### 1. Display of Student Work

Student work presented as evidence of student outcomes should be displayed <u>only</u> in the team room because (1) student work used by the visiting team must include indications of high pass and minimum pass, and (2) the team needs privacy for confidential discussions of the work being presented.

Under some circumstances, programs may wish to use the International Certification visit as an opportunity to celebrate the program. The team room does not serve this purpose. Any public display should be curated and made available after the visit concludes. Any student work on display outside the team room is not used as evidence for determining whether a particular SPC is met.

### 2. Digital Team Rooms

The NAAB encourages but does not require the use of digital presentations of student work. Some programs may choose to present all work in digital format, others may use both digital and analog forms; still others may present all the work in hard copy. The NAAB has established guidelines for conducting digital visits, available on the NAAB website. These include:

A standard file structure based on SPC.

📁 SPC Number (e.g., B.3)

    📁 Course Number & Title (e.g., ARCH 210)

📁   Item (use consistent identifiers; e.g., "Spring 2016_Min Achieve)

Viewers must be able to enlarge or zoom into sections of the file which must be legible.

Programs may also choose to present course notebooks in digital format before the visit. These can be available either by USB drive or on a digital portal like Dropbox or Google Docs, or through a site set up by the school.

### C. Visiting Team Report (VTR)
**The VTR is the only artifact of the visit**.

It is the culmination of the team's analysis and review, and transmits the team's findings to the international committee which presents a recommendation to the board, which in turn makes a final decision on international certification.

The VTR addresses all of the conditions. It must be concise and consistent.

VTRs must not include advice to the program about whether or how to address deficiencies.

VTRs are prepared according to a template provided by the NAAB. The template will cite the specific deficiencies and causes of concern that were found in the previous visit to the program.

### *1. Remember the Reader*

The most important readers of a VTR are the members of the International Committee and the NAAB directors. The report must convey to them, in the clearest, simplest language the assessment of the visiting team for each condition and SPC and then provide an assessment of the program overall.

The VTR is the only resource the international committee and the NAAB directors have to ensure their understanding of the team's recommendation on international certification. When the contents of the VTR do not clearly and succinctly support the recommendation or are vague or poorly written, the international committee and the board are faced with the difficult task of attempting to re-create the team's logic. VTR*s* that are vague or inconsistent result in lengthy deliberations and, sometimes, a decision not fully represented by the VTR. The following areas are of the greatest interest to the International Committee and the board:

- Acknowledgments and Observations
- Progress Since the Previous Visit
- Items to Address
- Conditions Not Met
- Comments that follow an initial Met/Not Met assessment of each condition or SPC

Editorial commentary or advice to programs is not helpful.

Teams are advised to be certain that deficiencies noted in one part of the report are not later noted as areas of distinction in another part of the report. Likewise, the team's recommendation should be consistent with the overall results of the visit.

In the event that teams encounter inconsistencies during a visit—for example, one group cites something as a problem, while another group sees the same item as a strength—then the team should document this disparity in the report.

Define all acronyms the first time they appear in the text. For example, everyone on the campus of the program you visited may know that SOAP stands for the School of Architecture and Planning, but your reader does not.

All draft VTRs are reviewed by the NAAB staff for grammar, style, and clarity. If the staff believes the report contains unclear language, is prescriptive, or indicates a lack of consistency between assessments and team comments and the recommendation, the report will be returned to the chair for additional editing and revisions.

### *2. VTR Format and Instructions*

### a. Cover Page
On the cover page of the report, list all the degree programs covered by the report. Include the following for each degree program or track for completing the degree program:

> For example:

> Bachelor of Architecture (159 credits)

> Master of Architecture (Undergraduate degree + 90 graduate credits)

### b. Summary of Visit
This section should be written last, after the rest of the report has been completed.

This section has three parts:

▸ Acknowledgment of the program's hospitality and everyone who worked to make the visit possible.

▸ A brief (200-word) overview of the program's successes, innovations, or assets. This may also include a summary of the team's findings overall and identify, in general terms, the state of the program as the visiting team finds it.

▸ A brief (200-word) overview of the program's deficiencies **relative to the Conditions.** In this section, the team may also identify any areas beyond the program's control that may have affected the visit (e.g., budget cuts during the recession, construction projects that are behind schedule, or illness/unavailability of certain personnel).

Finally, avoid using the following phrases, as they are over-used and not given serious consideration:

- The program has improved since the last visit, however…

- The students were all enthusiastic, committed, and excited by the program (or words to that effect).

List the conditions and SPC with numbers and titles.

> For example,

>> I.2 Social Equity

>> II.1.C.3 Integrative Design

### c. Items to Address
This is a list of specific concerns of not-met conditions or of conditions that may have been met within the strict definition of the condition/criterion but for which the team has concerns or questions. Avoid making recommendations or speculating about future outcomes.

### d. Progress Since the Previous Visit
The International Committee and NAAB directors take a keen interest in this section of the VTR, especially if deficiencies in conditions or SPC identified in the previous visit remain deficient in the current

visit. The NAAB staff will include the relevant sections in the template. Please follow the format for the written response to each one, as follows:

>A.4 Technical Documentation (2012 Conditions for SE): *Ability* to make technically clear drawings, write outline specifications, and prepare models illustrating and identifying the assembly of materials, systems, and components appropriate for a building design.
>
>Previous Team Report (2015): **Not Met**. *Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisicing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.*
>
>>***2021 Visiting Team Assessment: This SPC is now Met [or, This SPC remains Not Met].*** *Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.*

NOTE: All references to conditions and SPC in this section of the report will be based on the *2012 Conditions for Substantial Equivalency*.

**e. Identity and Self-Assessment: Conditions I.1.1–I.1.6**

This section is a report; it is *not* an assessment by the team.

This section of the VTR provides the team with the opportunity to do two things:

- Introduce the program to the international committee and the board.

- Demonstrate its understanding of the following six areas relative to the program under review.

Teams are asked to summarize the program's

- History and mission

- Learning cultures

- Policies and programs related to social equity

- Approach(es) to the five perspectives

- Long-range planning

- Self-assessment

**f. Resources: Conditions I.2.1–I.2.5**

Again, teams are not assessing whether a program's resources are good or bad. The team is confirming that the program has demonstrated or described its resources in support of student learning.

**g. Educational Outcomes and Curriculum: Conditions II.1–II.4**

In this section, teams determine whether the program has met a condition or SPC for International Certification.

**h. Appendices**

Appendix 1: Conditions Met with Distinction

Provide a list of the conditions or SPC with the number and title of the condition or SPC for which the team wishes to cite the program as having demonstrated significant success, innovation, or achievement. Please include a brief statement of the team's rationale for citing each condition or SPC.

For example,

- II.1.B.4 Technical Documentation

    "Students showed admirable skill in the design and construction of physical scale models."

Appendix 2: Team SPC Matrix

The team is required to complete an SPC matrix that identifies the course(s) in which student work was found that demonstrated the program's compliance with Part II, Section 1.

The program is required to provide the team with a blank matrix that identifies courses by number and title on the y axis and the NAAB SPC on the x axis. This matrix is to be completed in Excel and converted to Adobe PDF and then added to the final VTR.

Appendix 3: Report Signatures
On the last page of the report, all team members sign and submit the report to the board. This page is signed by all members of the team including the facilitator.

**i. Confidential Recommendation**
The confidential recommendation is a separate document submitted by the team at the same time as the VTR. It is advisory, nonbinding on the international committee's recommendation to the board, and confidential in perpetuity.

It is signed only by the members of the team and must not include the signature of the facilitator.

The recommendation is absolutely confidential. It should not be shared with anyone, including the facilitator, spouses, and colleagues. The NAAB has determined that this document will remain confidential in perpetuity. Volunteers are not permitted to second-guess this decision.

The recommendation must be consistent with the team's findings and be supported by the report. The team must use the template provided by the NAAB.

Two templates will be provided to teams that review two degree programs for continuing international certification.

**j. Writing the VTR: Style Requirements**

### i. Team Comments after Each Condition or Criterion for Conditions I.2.1–II.4.7

After each condition or SPC, regardless of the team's determination, the team **must** include a brief comment or statement. Four examples follow:

In the case of a condition being assessed positively (e.g., met): "The language required in Appendix 6 of the *2019 Conditions for International Certification,* was found in all promotional materials for the program, including online materials."

In the case of a condition that is not "described" or "demonstrated": "The team reviewed the PSER and the description of the administrative structure for the program. After reviewing the diagram, text, and asking questions of the program's leadership, the team was not able to fully understand the program's administrative structure within the university."

In the case of an SPC being met, "The team found evidence of student achievement at the level of ability in work prepared for ARC 651, Studio 6. The team noted the significant integration of classroom projects in life safety, building materials and assemblies, and building service systems with studio projects prepared for this course."

In the case of an SPC determined to be not met: "Evidence provided by the program did not demonstrate that students had reached the required level of ability."

Generally, throughout the VTR:

| DO | DO NOT |
|---|---|
| Focus on what the evidence tells you | Give advice |

| Use words like *has*, *has not* | Use words like *must*, *should*, *ought* |
|---|---|
| Identify challenges or deficiencies without speculation.<br><br>For example: During the visit, the vice president for facilities made clear that replacing the building would not be a priority until late 2022. | Speculate on possible out-year consequences if challenges or deficiencies are not addressed.<br><br>For example: The lack of commitment by the university to replace the building before 2022 is likely to severely curtail student recruitment, faculty retention, and major gifts.) |
| Write short, objective sentences.<br><br>For example: As part of Big State University, the program is included in institution-wide initiatives for recruiting faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups. This includes access to funds within the provost's office for recruiting new faculty. Most recently, the program used funds from this initiative to recruit three minority faculty. | Write long, literate sentences that might imply something about the program.<br><br>For example: Big State University has a long history of difficulty attracting and retaining faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups. However, with help from a fund managed by the provost's office, the program has finally been able to recruit three minority faculty. |
| Document a program's intent to correct deficiencies or lack thereof. | Be overly critical or take deficiencies out of context. |

### *ii. Degree Titles and Abbreviations*
NAAB-internationally certified degrees may differ from the accredited degrees and abbreviations used in the U.S.:

- Bachelor of Architecture = B. Arch.

- Master of Architecture = M. Arch.

- Doctor of Architecture = D. Arch.

Degree titles should be identified using the title of the degree granted by the institution, any prerequisites plus the total number and type[1] of credits to be earned at the institution offering the internationally certified program. For example:

- Bachelor of Science in Architecture (x undergraduate credits)

- Master of Architecture (single-institution: y undergraduate credits + z graduate credits)

- Master of Architecture (pre-professional degree + xx graduate credits)

- Master of Architecture (non-pre-professional degree + yy graduate credits)


### *iii. Capital Letters*
Do not capitalize any noun that is not a proper name, including the names of institutions or academic units within institutions. For example,

---

[1] Semester or quarter; graduate or undergraduate

> The Russell College of Art and Design is located on the central campus of the University of Someplace...
>
> The design college is on the central campus of the university …

You may capitalize someone's title if it is immediately followed by his/her last name (e.g., Dean Winters). However, if you are using his/her title, without the last name, the word should not be capitalized (e.g., I saw the dean leave the building). Further, a title should not be capitalized when it is used as follows, "Dr. Jan Winters, dean of the college…"

Generally speaking, these words **do not** need capital letters:

| | |
|---|---|
| architecture | head |
| architect | director |
| students | team |
| president | visiting team |
| provost | team room |
| vice president | professor |
| college | program |
| program | curriculum/a |
| department | alumnus/a/i/ae |
| faculty | bachelor |
| university | master |
| dean | doctorate |
| chair | |

### iv. Should/Ought/Would/Could

Do not write recommendations for changes or alterations to a particular element of the program. Rather than, "… the program is encouraged to develop a plan for addressing this matter before the next visit," write, "… having a plan to address this matter is an element of Condition I.1.2."

### v. Consistency of Assessments and Comments ("Met, but…")

Even with the changes to the conditions and the VTR template, there are, with limited exceptions, only two choices:

- Demonstrated/Not Demonstrated

- Described/Not Described

- Met/Not Met

In the case of assessing programs in candidacy, the team may indicate that a condition or SPC is not-yet-met, in-progress, or not applicable.

The team's assessment of an individual condition or SPC should be consistent with the comments that follow each assessment (see below). Inconsistencies between these two elements are confusing to the international committee and the board and raise concerns within the program. This is the most common obstacle to ensuring the international committee and the board understands the team's recommendation on international certification.

Teams may not assess any individual condition or SPC with extra adjectives or qualifiers such as "minimally met," "mostly adequate," or "met with concern," or any other variations. Thus, do not score "Met," or its equivalent, on an individual condition or SPC and then follow that assessment with a narrative describing the team's concerns. This sends mixed messages to

the international committee and the board and later to the program. The team must decide whether the condition or SPC *is* or *is not* met.

If the team believes there are sufficient concerns or deficiencies, they should choose "not met," or its equivalent, and briefly describe the concerns.

VTRs that use inconsistent or "met, but" language will be returned to the team chair for revision.

## k. Programs with Multiple Tracks for Completion of the Internationally Certified Degree

Many institutions offer alternative pathways for completing the internationally certified degree. These are, for the most part, found in graduate programs and are generally referred to as tracks.

Tracks are designed to allow students with differing preparatory education to be admitted to the graduate program and to earn an internationally certified graduate degree.

Individual tracks for completing an internationally certified degree do not constitute separate degree programs and should not be evaluated as such.

When a team is evaluating a graduate degree with multiple tracks, the team should pay close attention to materials submitted for Condition II.2. Curricular Framework, Condition II.3, Evaluation of Preparatory Education, and the SPC matrix.

Next, the team is advised to look closely at the individual curriculum for each track and to determine whether students admitted with pre-professional degrees in architecture are following a significantly different curriculum from students admitted with undergraduate degrees in other disciplines.

The program must provide work from all students in all tracks, especially if students in one track are following a curriculum that differs significantly from another.

Finally, under such circumstances, the team will prepare a single VTR. The tracks are not to be identified within the VTR, except on the cover. Separate tracks should also be identified in the confidential recommendation. The assessment, as written in the VTR, should be for the degree program as a single unit.

In the event, the team believes that students in one track are not achieving at the prescribed level for a particular SPC, then the team is expected to assess the SPC as "Not Met." In the accompanying narrative, the team should explain its reasoning and clearly identify which group of students may not be achieving at the prescribed level.

## l. Assessing II.1. C.3. Integrative Design

This SPC is defined as follows:

**Integrative Design:** *Ability* to make design decisions within a complex architectural project while demonstrating broad integration and consideration of environmental stewardship, technical documentation, accessibility, site conditions, life safety, environmental systems, structural systems, and building envelope systems and assemblies.

This SPC requires students to demonstrate the integrative thinking and application of technical knowledge and design skills that shape complex design and technical solutions.

The student work must demonstrate the ability to resolve the multiple demands of site, program, codes, environmental stewardship, accessibility and building systems through a rigorous process of decision making and then to document or represent their choices accurately.

Programs are not required to demonstrate evidence of integration of all issues (i.e., environmental stewardship, technical documentation, accessibility, site conditions, life safety, environmental systems, structural systems, and building envelope systems and assemblies) simultaneously in single projects. However, students should carry out projects of sufficient complexity to achieve the learning outcomes of this SPC.

Integrative design may be taught in single studios, or over multiple courses (e.g., a design studio coupled with a technical documentation course). Programs are encouraged to explore the best format for achieving this SPC.

There is more about C.3 in Section VII.D.

**m. Advice from the NAAB Directors**

Each year, the NAAB directors review and evaluate the VTR*s*. The following comments are based on the results of their evaluations of VTR*s* from previous visits.

- Do not add check boxes to those sections that are not being evaluated by the team. If you find one in your template and it isn't supposed to be there, you may delete it.

- Do not use hyperlinks in VTR*s* – they often break in the transfer and editing process.

- Be sure to appropriately cite or quote references to PSERs in VTR*s*. Do not assume the board understands the references or has ready access to the PSER.

- If you copy material from the PSER into the VTR, be sure to quote it directly and cite the source; e.g., "…**we developed a new studio to address both social responsibility and resiliency (PSER, Section VI.A).**

- If you choose to reference material from the PSER and write the section from the team's point of view, be sure to change the appropriate nouns/pronouns to match the point of view of the team: **according to the PSER the program developed a new studio** … [no quotation marks].

- Be sure to identify whether a program is on semesters or quarters or equivalent in the cover page:

  E.g., "Track I (pre-professional degree + 60 semester credit hours) or B. Arch. (225 undergraduate quarter credit hours)

  Convert European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System credits (ECTS) to U.S. credit system. For example, 5 ECTS credits = 2.5 U.S. credits, or a 2:1 ratio.

- Establish a consistent vocabulary for identifying tracks in a graduate program; do not use "Track I" and "4+2" interchangeably. Only you and the program know what is meant by this shorthand.

- If you have requested additional student work as part of the visit, be sure to acknowledge it in the VTR.

> E.g., "**A.4 Architectural Design Skills:** *Ability* to effectively use basic formal, organizational, and environmental principles and the capacity of each to inform two- and three-dimensional design.
>
> **[X] Met**
>
> **[ ] Not Met**
>
> **2018 Team Assessment:** In addition to work presented in the team room at the start of the visit, the program provided student work during the course of the visit. As a result, evidence of student achievement at the prescribed level was found in student work prepared for ARCH 505 Design Studio II.

- Only those items found to be deficient during the course of a visit and identified as such in a VTR form the scope of a program's Interim Progress Report. If your team wants to ensure that the program will be required to report on its progress toward addressing a deficiency, you must identify the condition or SPC as deficient (e.g., Not Met, or its equivalent).

  If a team is having difficulty writing the VTR, please feel free to call the NAAB's director of international certification at 202.783.2007. After hours, please send email to JRumbarger@naab.org.

## VII. THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

In this section, we will provide you with some basic protocols, what to do if something goes wrong during a visit, and the answers to commonly asked questions.

### A. Site Visit Protocols

- **Treat all programs with the same degree of respect:** Deficiencies encountered at a prestigious institution should be provided with the same objective assessment offered to programs in less prestigious institutions. It is inappropriate to minimize or turn a blind eye to deficiencies or concerns out of deference to an institution's perceived stature.

- **Treat all programs with the same degree of openness.** One of the strengths of the NAAB system is that the conditions are written to avoid homogenization of educational experiences. Programs are encouraged to innovate and to be creative in how they deliver education. Team members must be open to creative solutions and focus on *whether* programs meet the *Conditions* rather than *how* they do so.

- **Celebrate success.** International Certification is meant to be a constructive process to improve architecture education.

- **Do not superimpose preconceived attitudes about architectural education or curriculum.** Every program should be understood in the context of its own unique mission, culture, and institutional setting.

- **Do not publicly divulge insider information:** All the information obtained by a team member in the course of a site visit is privileged and confidential. Disclosure of such information is grounds for a reconsideration of a term of international certification.

- **Do not privately divulge insider information:** A visiting team's sole assignment is to assess a program's compliance with the conditions for international certification. It is a breach of trust to disclose any information that is not pertinent to this assignment within the program or the institution.

- **Do not use the international certification visit as a recruiting opportunity:** It is inappropriate to solicit personnel for your own program or office during a site visit. It is inappropriate to indicate your interest in being employed by an institution in any capacity until after the institution has received its international certification decision.

- **Do not accept institutional gifts:** It is inappropriate to accept any institutional gifts, favors, or services during a site visit. Do your best to politely decline, unless cultural protocols require you to accept these. Let the chair decide.

- **Do not overreact to or ignore deficiencies:** Bear in mind that the international certification process includes a structured method by which a program can improve and correct its deficiencies. It is inappropriate to react to deficiencies in a punitive, threatening manner or, conversely, to ignore them out of unfounded optimism.

- **Do not forget your role:** The long hours, intensive work, and fatigue can lead you to lower your guard in an attempt to lighten the mood or cut tension. Do not forget that visiting teams are under observation at all times. Your comments and behavior, including your presence on social media (see below), are closely analyzed and can be misinterpreted.

- **Do not offer personal solutions:** It is inappropriate to suggest how a program might meet the *Conditions for NAAB International Certification* or in any way impose your personal views on program structure, administration, and pedagogy.

- **Do not speculate on whether or how deficiencies may affect a program over time.** Programs, generally, are aware of their deficiencies and are unlikely to be surprised at the final interview. That said, it is inappropriate to use the VTR as a platform for speculating on whether or how a given deficiency may affect a program over time. If you find yourself tempted to add

something like "the failure of the university to provide a new building will affect student recruitment" to the VTR, take a moment to delete that phrase.

- **Be circumspect when using social media.** It is important that teams and team members conduct themselves professionally at all times. Team members are not prohibited from using social media while on a visit; however, team members are advised to refrain from posting anything that could be interpreted later as an assessment of the program, a commentary on the program's compliance with the *Conditions for International Certification*, or a recommendation on a term of international certification. To be completely safe, team members are encouraged, to paraphrase George Bernard Shaw, "to stick to two subjects: the weather and everybody's health."

- **Alcohol.** The NAAB does not reimburse team members for alcoholic beverages. Further, the NAAB encourages all team members to avoid consuming alcohol during any on-campus event that includes members of the faculty, staff, student body, or the public. Be sure to know and understand the laws and cultural customs concerning alcohol consumption in the country you are visiting.

## B. What to Wear
Team members are encouraged to wear business attire during the visit. Business casual is appropriate for travel to and from the site. Comfortable shoes and a scarf or sweater are also recommended. Team members should check the expected weather for the season and the country they will visit. Also consider any attire restrictions in public that may be in effect in the country you will visit.

## C. Problems That May Be Encountered During Visits

### 1. Conditions under which a visit might be terminated

Visits may be terminated only under extreme circumstances or catastrophic conditions. See Section 7 of the *2019 Procedures.*

### 2. When a team member violates protocol

In the event a team member violates a protocol, particularly in handling confidential information, or in behavior, the team chair should address the lapse with the individual, discuss the consequences and determine whether the lapse constitutes a breach of procedure that could be grounds for reconsideration of a term of international certification. Next, the team chair should document the lapse and subsequent discussions in a confidential memorandum to the NAAB executive director.

In the event a team chair violates a protocol, it is the responsibility of the other members of the team to address the situation with him/her and to designate an individual to document the lapse in a confidential memorandum to the NAAB executive director.

To avoid these situations, the team chair should review protocols with team members before the visit begins.

### 3. When a facilitator violates protocol

If the team finds that a facilitator's attendance is irregular or disruptive or if he/she advocates for the program or otherwise excuses deficiencies, the team chair must address the behavior with the individual directly. The chair may also discuss the problem with the program administrator. The team chair has the discretion to dismiss the facilitator if difficulties cannot be resolved.

## D. Commonly Asked Questions
### What is required in the program's self-assessment?

Self-assessment is a means for programs to evaluate their progress toward achieving long-term or strategic goals. It includes a description of the process and the types of data and information

gathered in the assessment process. The *2019 Condition*s establish the expectation that the entire academic community is included in the process of self-assessment. Institutional self-assessment procedures may complement or supplement the program's own self-assessment. Ask about these if they are not described in the *PSER*.

**Are there differences between major and minor deficiencies?**

In distinguishing between "major" and "minor" deficiencies, the team is encouraged to look at the previous VTR, then to consult with the current leadership, and to identify to what extent the "intent to correct" is present within the program. It may also be appropriate, depending on the nature of the deficiency, for the team to consider whether the program or the institution has the "capacity to correct" the problem. Parsing the difference between intent and capacity may aid the team in deciding whether something is a deficiency or a temporary interruption. Further, the team is advised to consider the deficiency in light of its effect on student learning.

**When does a problem become a deficiency?**

Some conditions are easily discernible as being "met" or "deficient" (for example, Condition II.4: Public Information). Others allow for more subjectivity, making consistency across teams more difficult.

Where deficiencies have existed for more than one review cycle, the team is expected to highlight this in the report.

**Should the visiting team take into account how long a deficiency has existed?**

Yes.

The length of time a particular problem has existed without being adequately addressed is part of the international committee's recommendation and the board's consideration in making its decision and therefore, should be part of the team's consideration in making its assessment and recommendation.

The previous VTR should be appended to the PSER. Reading this gives the team an opportunity to determine how long the deficiency has existed and what steps the program has taken to address the problem. Based on that information, and direct questioning of program administrators during the visit, the team must determine whether the program is making a good-faith effort to address the deficiency. If programs have continuously or willfully failed to address a deficiency over at least one review cycle, the team is expected to note this in the report.

**Does the visiting team make a holistic assessment of the program, or individual assessments of each of the Conditions and SPC?**

The VTR is formatted to allow the team to evaluate each of the conditions and SPC individually.

In the first section of the VTR (Summary of Visit), the team is expected to offer a holistic evaluation of the program."

In addition, the team is also asked to assess the program's response to the previous VTR. The results of all these assessments, taken together, should inform and support the team's recommendation to the board.

The overall evaluation and team recommendation should be based on both the individual evaluations and the more holistic evaluation.

**Are there separate VTRs for different degree programs or paths at the same institution?**

No.

When one team is conducting a concurrent review for continuing international certification of more than one degree program, a single VTR is prepared. The team will receive a VTR template that includes all the relevant sections for both degree programs.

When one team is reviewing a single internationally certified degree program with multiple tracks for completing the degree (NOTE: This is often the situation when reviewing graduate degrees), a single VTR is prepared. The tracks are not to be identified within the VTR, except on the cover and in the confidential recommendation.

**Should the team recommendation be made public?**

No.

The team's recommendation is advisory and nonbinding. It is kept confidential in perpetuity. Failure to maintain this level of confidentiality may be grounds for a reconsideration of a term of international certification.

**How do programs demonstrate satisfaction of Criterion C.3. Integrative Design?**

The program must identify the course/s in which integrative design is most fully met and then provide evidence that students are achieving at the level of ability by displaying student work that demonstrates their achievement. It is not up to the team to determine when and how a particular program teaches integrative design.

**In Condition I.2.2 Physical Resources, what is the meaning of "space to support and encourage the full range of faculty roles and responsibilities including preparation for teaching, research, mentoring, and student advising?"**

Faculty members have four areas of responsibility: teaching, research, mentoring, and advising. In order for each faculty member to meet his/her responsibilities in each area, he/she is expected to have the use of an office or other workspace that can accommodate all four roles and provide the necessary privacy to mentor and advise students in confidence. This is generally applied only to full-time instructional faculty and not to adjuncts or to other faculty that do not have responsibilities for advising students.

**What should a team member do if he/she is lobbied by the faculty, students, or others to address a perceived deficiency in resources so that the program can lobby the university for additional resources?**

This is a common occurrence during visits. Faculty, staff, and students may approach a team member or the chair and ask him/her to "really emphasize that we need more faculty" in the VTR. Under such circumstances, the best course of action is to listen carefully to the individual, but to make no commitments.

**What should a team member do if a member of the university administration asks the team to assess the qualifications of the program administrator?**

This type of question places the team in an awkward situation. The best response is to let the chair respond by saying, "I am sorry, but I cannot answer that question. That type of evaluation isn't part of an international certification visit."

## VIII. LOGISTICS

### A. Team Travel

Travelers are strongly encouraged to use the NAAB's travel service, Concur (www.concursolutions.com), to purchase flights. Concur will bill NAAB directly for authorized tickets. Travelers are able to earn frequent-flyer miles once their information is entered into the traveler's profile in Concur, although they must be willing to fly on airlines for which no frequent flyer miles or points are available. Travelers who choose not to use Concur for their travel arrangements assume the risk of not receiving full reimbursement if the stated Concur ticket price is exceeded. All team travel should be in accordance with NAAB *Procedures*.

#### 1. Business class for International Travel

Business-class (nonrefundable) tickets may be authorized for international flights that are greater than eight hours in total (including layovers) or if one leg alone is eight hours or more. All legs departing and arriving in the same country (e.g., in the U.S., local flights to major international hubs) may be purchased at the lowest nonrefundable coach/economy fare available.

#### 2. Tickets Purchased by the Program

Programs hosting an IC visit have the option to purchase the team's tickets. Programs must follow the NAAB's policies on providing business-class tickets and must also arrange for any local flights within the U.S. necessary to reach a major international airport. Team members may be asked to provide their preferred itineraries from their home base to the major international airport near the school.

The NAAB will not accept any liability for expenses incurred by the program or institution that cannot be recovered in the event that an ICert visit cannot be completed.

If a program has purchased the team's tickets, and a team member must withdraw from the team because of illness, death, or other catastrophic event, the program that purchased the ticket will be responsible for its full cost. If there is sufficient time before the visit, the NAAB will work to find a replacement team member, and the program may seek to transfer the ticket to the new team member. The consequences of withdrawing from a team depend on which ICert visit is affected:

- Visits One and Two: If there is not sufficient time before the visit to appoint a replacement team member, the visit will be canceled and rescheduled for a later date.

- Visit Three: If there is not sufficient time before the visit to appoint a replacement team member, the visit may, at the discretion of the team chair and the program administrator, be conducted by a team of three people, instead of four.

#### 3. Tickets Purchased by the NAAB

If the NAAB has purchased the flight tickets for team members and the visit must be canceled (due to illness, death, or other catastrophic event beyond the control of the team, program, or institution), the program will reimburse the NAAB for expenses incurred to date.

In the event that a team member must change his/her travel arrangements and thereby incur an additional expense or penalty for cancelling the ticket (except for illness, death, or other catastrophic event), the team member will be responsible for that additional expense. The NAAB will send an invoice to the team member for this cost.

Important Caveats to Note

- Given the security concerns and logistical challenges of arranging visits outside the U.S., the NAAB does not support other people (e.g., spouses, family members, or friends) accompanying a visiting team member on the visit.

- The NAAB will not arrange (or ask the host program/institution to arrange) side trips, stays before or after a visit, or multiday layovers in other cities.

## B. Visas, Passports, and Other Entry Documents

The school or institution hosting the ICert visiting team is responsible for ensuring that all documentation and other assistance requested by the NAAB to support or facilitate applications for visas and/or other entry requirements (if required) for team members is provided in a timely manner. Failure to obtain visas and/or other entry requirements for member(s) of the visiting team constitutes grounds for cancellation or postponement of a visit.

The NAAB uses a visa processing agency to obtain visa stamps from the relevant embassy/consulate in the U.S. Travelers must send their passports and other required forms and photos to the NAAB for this process. A timely response to the NAAB's request for these documents is very important; lack of a prompt response may result in removal from the visiting team. The program will reimburse the NAAB for the costs incurred in obtaining visas.

All travelers will need a passport to exit and reenter the U.S. The cost of obtaining or renewing a passport will not be reimbursed by the NAAB or the host program.

Travelers should check the expiration date of their passport. Some countries require that passports remain valid for a certain period of time (often six months) beyond the date of entry. Additional restrictions may apply; for example, some countries in the Middle East restrict visitors who have a stamp from Israel on their passport. Many countries also require a minimum number of blank facing pages in the passport.

## C. Travel Advisories

The NAAB regularly monitors travel warnings and travel advisories of the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other organizations that release travel advisories and warnings.

The U.S. Department of State has adopted the following ranking for travel advisories:

Level 1 – Exercise Normal Precautions: This is the lowest advisory level for safety and security risk. There is some risk in any international travel. Conditions in other countries may differ from those in the United States and may change at any time.

Level 2 – Exercise Increased Caution: Be aware of heightened risks to safety and security. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

Level 3 – Reconsider Travel: Avoid travel due to serious risks to safety and security. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

Level 4 – Do Not Travel: This is the highest advisory level due to greater likelihood of life-threatening risks. During an emergency, the U.S. government may have very limited ability to provide assistance. The Department of State advises that U.S. citizens not travel to the country or leave as soon as it is safe to do so. The Department of State provides additional advice for travelers in these areas in the Travel Advisory. Conditions in any country may change at any time.

In addition, the U.S. State Department may assign a higher level of advisory to a specific geographic region of a country, which NAAB will take into consideration when a decision is made whether to sanction travel to the applicable country.

### 1. NAAB Policy on Travel Advisories

Unless specific conditions exist that would make travel unsafe, travel to countries with Level 1 or Level 2 Travel Advisories are likely be approved by the NAAB. The executive director will

determine whether visiting teams will travel to countries/areas with a Level 3 Travel Advisory. Travel will be canceled or not approved for countries with a Level 4 Travel Advisory.

The NAAB may choose to alter or reverse this policy based on new information received at any time before or after travel commences. The executive director will decide whether to cancel, discontinue, or postpone travel.

**D. Insurance**
The NAAB also protects visiting team members with medical and security evacuation insurance. These services include:

• Evacuation from the point of illness or injury to the home country hospital of your choice.

• Advisory services for security emergencies and natural disasters.

• Deployable medical and field rescue teams.

The program will reimburse the NAAB for the cost of each team member's policy.

**E. Requests for Reimbursements**
Requests for reimbursement must be submitted within 30 days of the end of the visit. Requests for reimbursement must include:

• Invoice/itinerary for transportation (air or rail)

• Receipts for ground transportation, including rental cars

• Itemized receipts for all meals and incidental expenses (except mileage and tips).

Reimbursement items that are not accompanied by a receipt will not be honored, and the total amount of the reimbursement will be adjusted accordingly.

Requests for reimbursement submitted more than 30 days after the visit must be reviewed by the NAAB International Committee before being processed.

All requests for reimbursement must be submitted in U.S. dollars, not in the currency of the country visited.

The NAAB does not reimburse expenses for alcoholic beverages, vaccinations or immunizations, personal items, dry cleaning, laundry, pet or child-care services, travel/health insurance, or entertainment.

**F. Potential Liability and Indemnification**
The NAAB has explored the potential risks to site visit teams of potential legal liability in the event of complaints from schools visited or associated individuals. NAAB has taken a number of steps to address this risk and to set the minds of volunteers at rest.

The NAAB may in the future contract for liability insurance covering accreditation activities involving volunteers engaged in domestic and international visiting teams, to the extent that conduct of such teams comports with NAAB policies (including policies against harassment).

The NAAB has included a "hold harmless" clause in its agreements with international programs being visited for purposes of determining whether those programs should be certified by NAAB as meeting its international program standards. The "hold harmless" provisions specify that an institution being visited will be responsible to hold NAAB, its directors and officers, employees and volunteers, harmless against any assertions of liability in connection with site visits or the certification process more generally. The "hold harmless" clause also calls for institutions seeking certification to reimburse NAAB, its officers, directors, employees, and volunteers for any costs associated with legal claims brought in the institutions' home jurisdictions, the District of Columbia, or elsewhere.

The NAAB believes that this approach will provide adequate protection for all volunteers, officers, directors, and employees involved in the international certification program.

**G. Team Accommodations**

The program being visited pays for hotel and subsistence expenses, including all local travel incurred during the visit, for a facilitator nominated by the program or institution, and for any additional team members including those required because the program offers two or more professional degrees.

**H. Correspondence between the Team Chair and the Program**

The NAAB office is copied on all correspondence between the team chair and the program, and kept informed of the progress on visit agenda finalization.

## IX. THE 2019 CONDITIONS FOR NAAB INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION

This section reviews the *2019 Conditions for NAAB International Certification* with emphasis on several sections.

### A. Conditions I.1-I.2

Part I of the *2019 Conditions* includes twelve distinct conditions for accreditation. These are related to institutional support and commitment to continuous improvement.

Programs demonstrate their compliance with Part One in two ways:

- A narrative report that briefly responds to each request to "demonstrate, describe, or document."

- A review of evidence, artifacts, and observations by the visiting team, as well as through interviews conducted during the visit.

Part I - Section 1 has six conditions related to identity and self-assessment and includes the following:

- The mission and history of the program

- Social equity

- Learning culture

- The program's response to the Five Perspectives

- The program's long-range planning activities

- The program's self-assessment activities (NOTE: there are two self-assessment conditions)

Teams do not evaluate or assess a program's responses to Part I-Section 1. Instead the team will summarize the information provided by the program in the *PSER* and confirmed by the team during the visit in the VTR.

Part I – Section 2 has five conditions related to administrative structure and the resources (human, financial, physical, information, and administrative structure and governance) that support the program given its mission, history, and culture.

Part I is designed to be evaluated on the basis of whether

- The program has clearly identified its mission and history and culture and supports a culture of planning and assessment (Conditions I.1.1-I.1.6).

- The program has adequate resources for delivering a professional education in architecture within the framework of its mission and culture (Conditions I.2.1-I.2.5).

Teams determine on the basis of information presented in the *PSER*, supplemental information appended to the *PSER*, and interviews during the visit whether the program has described or demonstrated its resources and administrative structure.

These determinations are, generally, based on a review of several types of artifacts:

- The *PSER*.

- The university catalog (usually online, but not exclusively)

- The program's website

- Supporting documents presented electronically 30 days in advance of the visit (see 2019 Procedures, Sections 4 and 5).

- Face-to-face meetings with faculty, staff, students, and administrators.

If a team member does not believe he/she has sufficient material to make an assessment on a specific Condition, he/she should advise the team chair and make a list of the materials needed.

## B. Condition II.1: Student Performance Criteria (SPC)
Part II. Section 1 contains the 26 individual SPC grouped into four realms.

- Realm A: Critical Thinking and Representation

- Realm B: Integrated Building Practices, Technical Skills and Knowledge

- Realm C: Integrated Architectural Solutions

- Realm D: Professional Practice

The objectives of each realm are intended as aspirations rather than a list of "musts" and "shoulds." While the realm itself will not be assessed as met/not met, the visiting team is asked to provide a brief narrative in the VTR that describes how the program reflects or responds to the aspirations of each realm.

The NAAB establishes performance criteria to ensure that internationally certified degree programs prepare students for the profession while encouraging educational practices suited to the individual degree program.

The internationally certified degree program must demonstrate that each graduate possesses the knowledge and skills defined by the 26 criteria. The knowledge and skills are the minimum for meeting the demands leading to licensure for practice.

The program must provide evidence that its graduates have satisfied each criterion through required coursework.  If credits are granted for courses taken at other institutions or online, evidence must be provided that the courses are comparable to those offered in the internationally certified degree program.

Although the NAAB stipulates the SPC that must be met, it does not specify the educational format or the form of student work that may serve as evidence for having met the criteria.

Programs are encouraged to develop unique learning and teaching strategies, methods, and materials to satisfy these criteria. The NAAB encourages innovative methods for satisfying the criteria, provided the program has a formal evaluation process for assessing student achievement of these criteria and documenting the results.

For the purpose of international certification, graduating students must demonstrate understanding or ability as defined below. The criteria encompass two levels of accomplishment[2]

*Understanding*— The capacity to classify, compare, summarize, explain and/or interpret information.

*Ability—* Proficiency in using specific information to accomplish a task, correctly selecting the appropriate information, and accurately applying it to the solution of a specific problem, while also distinguishing the effects of its implementation.

## C. Conditions II.2-II.4
The last twelve Conditions address three important areas:

- Professional Degrees and Curriculum (II.2.)

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[2] See also *Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.* L.W. Anderson & D.R. Krathwold, Eds. (New York; Longman 2001).

- Evaluation of Preparatory/Pre-professional Education (II.3)
- Public Information (II.4)

Condition II.2 contains two conditions related to the curricular framework for the internationally certified degree program(s) including:

- National Authorization and Institutional Quality Assurance
- Professional Degrees and Curriculum

Condition II.3 remains a stand-alone condition on the requirement that all programs have both policies and processes for evaluating the preparatory education of students admitted to the NAAB-internationally certified program. Programs must demonstrate that students entering graduate programs that require preparatory education are being evaluated and advised appropriately.

Conditions II.4.1-II.4.5 identify five distinct items related to how the program represents itself to prospective students and the public. These include:

- Statement on International Certification Degrees (II.4.1 and Appendix 6).
- Access to *Conditions* and *Procedures for NAAB International Certification* (II.4.2)
- Access to career development information to students and their parents (II.4.3)
- Public access to *PSERs* and VTR*s* (II.4.4)
- Admissions and advising (II.4.5)

## X. PROCEDURES FOR NAAB INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION, 2019 EDITION, SECTION 1. TERM OF INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION

**Programs seeking continuing International Certification may receive the following term of International Certification:**

**A. Six-Year Term.** This term indicates that deficiencies, if any, are minor, and the intent to correct them is ensured. The program is granted International Certification for a six-year period.

The procedure for requesting reconsideration of a decision by the Board of Directors to deny ICert is described in Section 13 of the *Procedures*. The program may reapply for ICert in the year following the date of the decision and no later than three years after the decision. Programs that do not apply within the three-year timeframe must begin the ICert process at visit two (candidacy).

**B. Revocation of International Certification**
Programs holding NAAB International Certification are required to submit a narrative interim progress report (IPR) in the third year after they receive a six-year term of ICert. The NAAB International Committee may consider recommending revocation of the program's ICert status to the Board of Directors for the program's failure to submit an IPR. International Certification can also be revoked if the team observes and documents substantial and uncorrectable noncompliance with the NAAB *Conditions* during any site visit.

**C. Term of International Certification**
The ICert designation is valid for six years. Programs are also required to provide an Interim Progress Report in three years, For example, a program that receives ICert in 2021 will have its next visit in six years, or 2027. An Interim Progress Report will be due in 2024.

### D. International Certification Decisions

The final decision on granting international certification is made by the board. In making its decision, the board relies upon the documented observations and assessments of the visiting team, as recorded in the VTR, and the recommendation of the International Committee. The board may also review the PSER and the program's response to the VTR (if any).

The decision to grant international certification is based on whether the visiting team has indicated in the VTR that the program:

- Is making reasonable progress toward eliminating the deficiencies identified during the previous site visit;
- Offers an overall learning environment that meets the NAAB *Conditions* for a professional degree program;
- Is producing graduates whose work demonstrates satisfaction of the SPC;
- Has the human, physical, information, and financial resources to sustain an adequate level of achievement.

## XI. THE INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION/VISIT SEQUENCE

**Typical Timeline for Spring 2021 ICert Visits Two and Three**

| Month/Timing (approx.) | Activity |
|---|---|
| **Fall–Winter 2020** | Program Self-Evaluation Reports due 120 days before the date of the visit |
| | After receipt of the PSER, team chairs and programs set exact dates for visits |
| | Team training |
| **November 2020–January 2021** | Chairs review PSERs |
| | NAAB completes the team nominations |
| | Programs approve teams |
| **February–mid-April 2021** | Visits take place |
| **10 days after the visit ends** | First draft of Visiting Team Report (VTR) due in NAAB office |
| **Late March–mid-June 2020** | VTRs are edited and reviewed by the NAAB |
| | VTRs are sent to programs for corrections of errors of fact and the option to write a response to the report |
| | Chairs complete a final edit including a review of the corrections of  fact |
| | International Committee reviews VTRs and recommends a decision to the NAAB board |
| **July 2021** | Board of Directors reviews VTRs and makes decisions on whether to advance a program to visit three or to grant International Certification for a six-year term |
| **14 days after July 2021 board meeting** | Decision letters sent to institution's president with copies to program administrator and team |

The sequence for fall visits is similar to that for spring visits. Fall visits are held between late September and mid-November. PSERs are due between May and July. Decisions are made at the spring board meeting following the visit.