



**Adventist  
Accrediting  
Association**

**Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Worker-Training Schools**

**COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION**

**ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK**

**Mid-level Training Institutions**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Division**

## INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY FUNCTIONS

The development of an institutional Self-Study is a significant part of the accreditation process. In particular, it serves the following vital functions:

1. For an educational institution, it provides an opportunity for a formal review and evaluation of its mission, objectives, resources, and outcomes and the relationships among them.
2. For the Adventist Accrediting Association evaluation team, it provides the detailed information that enables them to familiarize themselves with the institution and its direction and draft relevant commendations and recommendations.
3. For the Adventist Accrediting Association and the institution, it reveals the strengths and weaknesses of an institution in relation to how well it meets the accreditation standards. Thus, the Self-Study indicates the areas where the institution must grow and improve, of its own volition, as a means of achieving or maintaining eligibility as an accredited institution.
4. For other colleges, universities, and accrediting bodies, it provides a mechanism with which to determine the value of the courses, and qualifications offered by the institution.

## SELF-STUDY PROCESS

An institution is advised to start the Self-Study process as soon as they have notification of an AAA visit. The Self-Study should be developed with wide input across the campus. A steering committee (and, if appropriate, subordinate task forces) should be appointed to prepare the document. The completed Self-Study shall be approved by the administrative committee of the institution and will be sent to all team members from the office of the institution leader. The team members should receive the material at least one month prior to the time of the accreditation visit.

**While the Self-Study should provide essential information, its focus should be on analysis and evaluation of institutional processes. The AAA expects to find an institution that is self-reflective and proactive in development of its spiritual mission and identity.**

## SELF-STUDY INSTRUMENT

There will be two sections to the Self-Study.

### ***Self-Study Section A***

Section A of the Self-Study will respond to the recommendations from the last accreditation visit and to any additional recommendations from any interim reports.

The institution will identify:

1. Those items that have been fully implemented and the means by which the implementation was accomplished.
2. Those items that have not been implemented and the reason for non-compliance.

In their response to Section A the team will consider what percentage of recommendations have been met, if there is **evidence** they have been met, and if the reasons for not meeting recommendations are acceptable.

### **Self-Study Section B**

Section B of the Self-Study will provide documentation (evidence) in response to the standards identified by AAA as indications of excellence.

In the table that follows, each standard will be identified. This will be followed in the left hand column by a list of the documentation that an institution will be expected to include in its Self-Study. While an institution may include other information it considers relevant evidence, this is a guide to the minimum expectation.

In the right-hand column are examples of what the accreditation team might consider in evaluating the evidence provided by the institution. These lists are given to assist the institution in knowing what types of issues will be considered relevant. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list and team members will use this table only as a guide.

## CRITERIA FOR REVIEW

<b>Area 1: History, Philosophy, Mission, and Objectives</b>	
<i>Standard: The institution must have a clear sense of mission and identity, seen in statements of mission, philosophy, objectives, and ethics, and evidenced in the total life of the institution.</i>	
<b>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study.</b>	<b>The visiting team may consider the following:</b>
1.1 A copy of the institutional mission and objectives, indicating the bodies that approved the statements and the date.	<i>Precision and relevance of statement(s); relation to constituency expectation and the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; procedure followed in its development, approval, and latest revision; evidence of its application in the real life of the institution.</i>
1.2 A copy of the statement of professional ethics, approved by the board and the administration, with evidence of compliance by all employees of the institution.	<i>Scope and specificity of statement; procedure for approval; agreement with Adventist church expectations; compliance by administration, faculty, and staff.</i>
1.3 A detailed description of administration and staff involvement in and support of the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.	<i>The relationship between the school and its local church, conference, and union; the active support of church standards, ideals and mission by the administration and staff; their personal commitment to biblical/Christian values and lifestyle.</i>
1.4 A description with examples and evaluation of how the institution is cooperating with other Seventh-day Adventist institutions, in helping the church achieve its mission.	<i>Formal and informal relationships with other SDA institutions; collaborative projects; support of programs (e.g., in other schools/churches), and how institutional relationships and collaboration support church mission.</i>
1.5 An analysis of educational trends in the country with a description of how the institution is making plans to meet possible future opportunities and challenges.	<i>The institution's understanding of the education issues in the country; the institution's role and place in the local educational environment; its success in maintaining both local credibility and denominational focus.</i>

## Area 2: Spiritual Development, Service, and Witnessing

*Standard: The institution will have a strong and vibrant spiritual life program, encapsulated in a spiritual master plan, that widely involves and impacts on both the institution and communities beyond.*

<b>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in the Self-study:</b>	<b>The visiting team may consider the following:</b>
<p>2.1 A detailed description of the spiritual master plan of the institution, including a chart of responsibilities, a list of beliefs and values to be conveyed to the students, the process to evaluate the achievements of the plan, and the procedure for implementing changes in the plan.</p>	<p><i>Procedure for spiritual planning/development, including staff involvement; scope and organization of plan(s); specific objectives for the intentional transmission of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, principles, values, and lifestyle through curricular and co-curricular activities; action plan with identified responsibilities; assessment instrument; effectiveness of process of updating and changing plan to meet current needs; frequency of reporting to board.</i></p>
<p>2.2 A description and evaluation of the involvement of administration and staff in the spiritual development of the students, including in-reach, nurture, service, and witnessing activities.</p>	<p><i>Quality of the overall program; devotional and worship meetings; work on behalf of non-Adventist and off-campus students; programs or requirements for student services; outreach programs; level of involvement by administration and staff in specific activities.</i></p>
<p>2.3 A description and evaluation of student involvement in nurture, service, and witnessing programs such as in-reach devotional meetings, study groups, drug and alcohol prevention, ministry outings, periods of spiritual emphasis, chapels, vespers, church services, Sabbath School and outreach activities to the community.</p>	<p><i>Selection of student spiritual leaders; involvement of students in planning for in-reach and mission activities; breadth of possibilities for student involvement in spiritual activities; strength of student missionary program; number of students actively involved in in-reach or outreach activities; student survey responses on strength of spiritual program opportunities.</i></p>

<p>2.4 A job description and outline of the role carried by the chaplain and associates in the spiritual formation and life of the students.</p>	<p><i>Job description; line of authority and responsibility; involvement in the development and implementation of spiritual master plan; relationships with administration, staff, students, and denominational structure; evaluation of services.</i></p>
<p>2.5 An outline of the role carried by the pastor of the local church(es) in the spiritual formation and life of the students.</p>	<p><i>Relationship between church and school; cooperative planning; organizational relationship with chaplaincy of institution; involvement in in-reach/outreach activities of institution.</i></p>
<p>2.6 Reports on the institution's spiritual life presented to the Board of Trustees during the last three years prior to the accreditation visit.</p>	<p><i>Review and assessment of a recent report on the institution's spiritual life and the outcomes presented to the Board.</i></p>

### **Area 3: Governance, Organization, and Administration**

*Standard: The institution will have a governance structure and administrative leadership that provides strong mission-driven direction to the institution, ensures the institution's educational objectives can be met and nurtures a school environment characterized by good communication, inclusive decision-making, and strong internal quality management processes.*

<b>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in the Self-study:</b>	<b>The visiting team may consider the following:</b>
3.1 The role and operating parameters of the Board of Trustees.	<i>Level of board representation of constituency; handbook outlining authority and responsibilities (the board governs, and the administration administers); process of induction of new board members; quality of contacts with the institutional community; implementation of actions; attitude to and evident support of the institution by board members.</i>
3.2 A description of how strategic planning takes place at the school, with evidence that an existing plan is in place and is being used in planning decisions, particularly as this relates to institutional mission.	<i>Strategic plan: content, process for development and updating, evidence of the plan being an active document; effective of communication of plan to key constituent groups; links between mission and strategy.</i>
3.3 A description and evaluation of the procedures used by the administration and Board of Trustees to determine how successful the institution is in achieving its church-related mission, including the results of the most recent assessment.	<i>Process for, results and follow up of board self-evaluation; means and effectiveness of board evaluation of institutional mission; the success of the evaluation process.</i>
3.4 A report that identifies and evaluates the work of all campus committees. This should include an identification of membership, terms of reference, and frequency of meetings, and a self-reflection on the effectiveness of these processes.	<i>Scope of committee terms of reference; breadth of membership (administration, faculty, staff, students); reporting processes; evaluation processes; impact of committees on spiritual life of institution; relationship between committees and total planning processes of institution.</i>

<p>3.5 A description and analysis of the processes in place for quality assurance and outcomes assessment, with reference to how feedback on the success of the institution in fulfilling its mission as an SDA institution is collected, evaluated and used in planning. This should include reference to internal and external constituencies, including past students, and the results of recent surveys.</p>	<p><i>The choice of areas for institutional research; effectiveness and efficiency of processes to receive feedback; evaluation of feedback; relationship between evaluation and institutional planning; communication of information; relationship between research tools and institutional mission.</i></p>
<p>3.6 A description of the relationship between the administration and the following: the board of trustees, the founding body, the community, parents, and alumni</p>	<p><i>Review minutes and records and reports of meetings and interactions and any newsletters</i></p>
<p>3.7 Evidence that official institution documents, including titles, registrations, accreditations, are well taken care of</p>	<p><i>Examines the documents and their security</i></p>

**Area 4: Finances, Financial Structure, and Industries**

*Standard: The institution will have a financial operation that has a strong financial base (including support from the church), is managed efficiently, and the administration selects budget priorities to support institutional mission.*

<p><b>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study:</b></p>	<p><b>The visiting team may consider the following:</b></p>
<p>4.1 A report on the commitment of the sponsoring church organizations to the institution’s financial viability including annual church subsidies and appropriations since the last accreditation visit.</p>	<p><i>Adequacy of level of church support; stability of institutional finances; dependency on church for crisis financial support; impact of institutional finances on financial stability of supporting church organization(s).</i></p>
<p>4.2 An account of total government funds received with a copy of institutional policies that govern the receipt of such funds.</p>	<p><i>Level of dependence of institution on external government funding; relationship between external funding and institutional freedom.</i></p>
<p>4.3 A description of the budgeting process, identifying how priorities are decided, and how this process reflects the institutional mission.</p>	<p><i>Involvement of cost centers in budgeting; process for deciding budget priorities; evidence that institutional mission has been considered in setting budget priorities.</i></p>
<p>4.4 An identification of the reason for and amount of any institutional debts, and the planned process to meet these obligations.</p>	<p><i>Approval processes for debt; processes for resolving debts; pattern of debts; reliance on church organizations for resolution of debts; impact of support on wider health of church.</i></p>
<p>4.5 A table identifying operating losses and gains for the last five years, and the working capital/liquidity ratios at the end of each of those years</p>	<p><i>Pattern of institutional financial health; effectiveness of institutional processes to ensure ongoing financial stability or restore financial stability. If working capital and liquidity percentages are not at policy level, timed plans should be in place to ensure that policy expectations are met.</i></p>

<p>4.6 The institutional master plan (5- and 10-year), with supporting documents for the physical plant, faculty and staff housing, student residences, library, church building, etc. Schedules for building development should be included.</p>	<p><i>Review of the institutional master plan in relation to the physical plant; financial backing for plans; realism of plans.</i></p>
<p>4.7 A description of the maintenance responsibilities and procedures for campus buildings and facilities, gardens and landscape, including the budget assignment.</p>	<p><i>Cleanliness; conditions of buildings; aesthetics of grounds; regularity of maintenance; adequacy of budget allocation.</i></p>
<p>4.8 A description of the laboratory facilities that support academic programs and an evaluation of their adequacy.</p>	<p><i>Size and number of facilities; amount and adequacy of equipment for courses taught; accessibility.</i></p>

<b>Area 5: Programs of Study</b>	
<i>Standard: A curriculum that, evidenced by appropriate outcomes, meets the mission and objectives of the institution and church, particularly in giving students a vision for service in the church, providing an education of excellence, and in the integration of faith and learning throughout all disciplines.</i>	
<b>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study:</b>	<b>The visiting team may consider the following:</b>
5.1 A description and evaluation of how the institutional procedures for curricular development focus on the church mission of the institution and the integration of faith and learning. Identify changes made in curriculum since the last AAA visit that reflect this focus.	<i>Level of integration of mission-focus into institutional processes for curricular development; evidence of mission considerations in course development priorities.</i>
5.2 A description and evaluation of (a) the way the beliefs, values, and lifestyle practices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are conveyed through the curriculum offered by the institution, and (b) the programs and procedures that encourage and ensure the staff to integrate their faith with their teaching and have a positive effect on student learning of Christian values.	<i>Adequacy of procedures that encourage faculty to approach each course from a biblical-Christian perspective that conveys Christian values, and fosters the transmission of Adventist beliefs; evidence of this integration in course syllabi and student course evaluations.</i>
5.3 A description of the success of the institution in meeting government expectations regarding quality and an analysis of plans to improve on areas identified by the institution as in need of development and/or improvement.	<i>Results in external examinations; nature of student intake; facilities for dealing with special needs; benchmarking with similar institutions. Is the institution providing the quality of education that will encourage SDA parents to send their children to the school?</i>
5.4 A description of the preparations, planning, and classroom practices, propriety of instructional procedures employed, and substance of course content.	<i>Appropriateness and adequacy of lesson plans, tests and examinations, and instructional strategies.</i>

<p>5.5 A description of the comprehensiveness and sufficiency of the course curriculum, and how this meets or exceeds the expectations for the profession.</p>	<p><i>Course subjects are relevant to the profession and in compliance with government requirements.</i></p>
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<b>Area 6: Staff</b>	
<i>Standard: Staff will be personally supportive of the institutional mission, effective in their transmission of both their discipline and values in the classroom, and the administrative processes of the institution will ensure that staff development and evaluation procedures include mission-focused elements.</i>	
<b>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study.</b>	<b>The visiting team may consider the following:</b>
6.1 <b>A Staff Handbook with</b> policies pertaining to the religious affiliation of the institution’s staff and to their support of the values and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church including: hiring criteria, terms of employment contracts, grievance procedures, and academic freedom and responsibility for teachers in the context of the institution’s mission. The percentage of staff that are SDA should be identified.	<i>Integration of church mission expectations into institutional policies and procedures that strengthen mission and vision. These should include identifying and hiring staff, employment contracts, promotion and re-appointment procedures, staff induction processes, statement of academic freedom and responsibility and evidence of its application in the functioning of the institution.</i>
6.2 A description and evaluation of the processes and plans for staff development and performance evaluation (on job performance and service) that assist the personal growth that assists staff and supports the mission of the institution and the Seventh-day Adventist church.	<i>Integration of institutional and church mission expectations into processes for both the development and evaluation of staff.</i>

**Area 7: Library and Resource Centers**

*Standard: The institution will provide resource centers (library and computer services, in particular) that while providing quality resources also show ethical and mission concerns in the resourcing choices that are made.*

<p><b>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study:</b></p>	<p><b>The visiting team may consider the following:</b></p>
<p>7.1 Policies and procedures used for accessioning new materials that support the Seventh-day Adventist ethos of the institution.</p>	<p><i>Intentional plans to support institutional ethos through accession policies and procedures; impact of policy on academic freedom and responsibility in library operation.</i></p>
<p>7.2 Policies and procedures for computer use and internet access that reflect the mission of the institution.</p>	<p><i>Appropriateness of policies and procedures; communication of policies; procedures in case of abuse of policies.</i></p>
<p>7.3 Policies and procedures for acquiring and maintenance of other relevant learning resources</p>	<p><i>Appropriateness and Policies, procedures, and maintenance of resources</i></p>

<b>Area 8: Student Services</b>	
<i>Standard: The institution's student services will provide strong support for the personal and spiritual needs of students and model and nurture Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle in a constructive manner in all areas of student life.</i>	
<b>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study:</b>	<b>The visiting team may consider the following:</b>
8.1 An outline of the student services staff, flow-chart, and job descriptions, including students enrolled in distance education programs.	<i>Organizational flow-chart, job descriptions, budget; contacts with parents/guardians: whether they are adequate and effective; support for students enrolled in distance education programs.</i>
8.2 An analysis of how student services support the spiritual plans for the institution.	<i>Evidence of conscious consideration of institutional and church mission in planning; student feedback on success of planning; student input into planning processes.</i>
8.3 A description and assessment of the student counseling, career planning, guidance, and placement programs.	<i>Quality of staff and services for academic and career planning; personal guidance; programs and facilities for contacts with faculty outside the classroom; training of staff for distance education students.</i>
8.4 A demographic analysis of students, which may include age ranges, gender, nationality, off-campus and residence hall status, denominational affiliation, etc. The report should identify how the school identifies the unique needs among these groups, and the plans in place to address these, particularly in relation to the spiritual mission of the institution. It should also identify the percentage of SDA students enrolled.	<i>Balance of students; number of non-SDA students; institutional processes for identifying unique needs and responding to these; integration of off-campus and non-SDA students into campus life; links between student demographics and spiritual life planning.</i>
8.6 A description of discipline procedures, with an analysis of the institution's effectiveness in developing discipline processes that are redemptive and focus on Christian ideals.	<i>Regulations as identified in student handbook; discipline records; evidence of consistency; student perceptions of fairness.</i>

<p>8.7 Policies, guidelines, and opportunities for student labor including supervision, performance evaluation, etc.</p>	<p><i>Opportunities available in institutional industries and services, including sale of Adventist literature off-campus; quality of supervision and evaluation of student performance; adequacy of pay.</i></p>
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## Area 9: Public Relations and External Constituencies

*Standard: The institution's public relations program will provide an opportunity for dialogue with external constituencies that results in useful and accurate feedback to the institution and that positions the school and its mission positively in the minds of the various constituent groups.*

<b>The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-study:</b>	<b>The visiting team may consider the following:</b>
9.1 A multi-year enrollment/recruiting plan which supports the institutional strategy and mission of the institution.	<i>Link of strategy with total institutional plan and mission; main markets; potential new markets.</i>
9.2 A multi-year public relations plan which includes a description of how branding, publications, advertising, publicity, and community relations foster an understanding of the spiritual values of the institution	<i>Link of strategy with total institutional plan and mission; branding decisions; link between decisions on priorities and spiritual values of institution; impact of actions on understanding of institution in the community.</i>
9.3 A description of how the school maintains a positive and on-going relationship with its external constituencies, including planned processes for communication and encouragement of feedback.	<i>Perception of the institution in the eyes of the local and church communities; effectiveness of processes to receive feedback from external constituencies, including alumni; communication processes; effectiveness of use of feedback.</i>

**Area 10: Academic Policies and Records**

*Standard: The institution will have academic policy and records procedures that are efficient and secure, and which reflect best practice in tertiary institutions.*

**The institution will include information on and analysis of at least the following items in its Self-Study:**

**The visiting team may consider the following:**

- 10.1 Reference to policies and procedures regarding:
- student recruitment, including financial aid
  - admission and registration
  - class schedules and length of academic terms
  - student records, with notation of any off-campus sites
  - academic conduct (including plagiarism)
  - assessment procedures and processes
  - advancement to candidacy, academic probation, and honors
  - residence requirements, transfer credits, and graduation requirements
  - alumni records
  - differentiation between undergraduate, graduate, and professional students.

*Clarity of policies, availability to students, expectations compared with other tertiary institutions, communication of policies; consistency of application.*

10.2 A summary of grade distribution by department for the past two academic years.

*Spread of grades; consistency in approach to grading.*

10.3 A description and assessment of the way in which the academic policies and records and its staff promote and support the transmission of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and values and the spiritual development of students.

*Department attitude towards students; ethical policies; involvement of staff in church and institutional activities that support the mission of the institution.*