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# ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

Standards, Procedures, and Guidelines for  
Accrediting Educational Programs in Professional Forestry

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NOTE: This Handbook will be in effect for all accreditation-related activities occurring ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 2010.



## **RECOGNITION OF ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS**

The Society of American Foresters is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening higher education through strengthening accreditation. CHEA recognition of accrediting organizations has three basic purposes:

- **TO ADVANCE ACADEMIC QUALITY.**

To confirm:

- that accrediting organizations have standards that advance academic quality in higher education;
- that those standards emphasize student achievement and high expectations of teaching and learning, research, and service; and
- that those standards are developed within the framework of institutional mission.

- **TO DEMONSTRATE ACCOUNTABILITY.**

To confirm that accrediting organizations have standards that assure accountability through consistent, clear, and coherent communication to the public and the higher education community about the results of educational efforts. Accountability also includes a commitment by the accrediting organization to involve the public in accreditation decision making.

- **TO ENCOURAGE, WHERE APPROPRIATE, SCRUTINY AND PLANNING FOR CHANGE AND FOR NEEDED IMPROVEMENT.**

To confirm that accrediting organizations have standards that encourage institutions to plan, where appropriate, for change and for needed improvement; to develop and sustain activities that anticipate and address needed change; and to stress student achievement.

Address all inquiries concerning the **ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK** to the:

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## FOREWORD

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) is the national scientific and educational organization representing the forestry profession in the United States. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1900 by Gifford Pinchot, it is the largest professional society for foresters in the world. SAF members include natural resource practitioners in public and private settings, researchers, CEOs, administrators, educators, and students.

The Society of American Foresters defines forestry as:

*The profession embracing the science, art, and practice of creating, managing, using, and conserving forests and associated resources for human benefit and in a sustainable manner to meet desired goals, needs, and values. Note that the broad field of forestry consists of those biological, quantitative, managerial, and social sciences that are applied to forest management and conservation including such specialized fields as agro-forestry, urban forestry, industrial forestry, non-industrial forestry, and wilderness and recreation forestry. (Helms, 1998<sup>1</sup>)*

Professional accreditation of forestry programs has been a critically important function of the Society since accreditation was initiated in 1935. Over the years, accreditation processes and standards have been reviewed and revised periodically to assure that professional foresters continue to meet contemporary needs.

As part of this continuous quality improvement process, the SAF Council established the SAF Task Force on Forestry Education Accreditation in October 1998. The charter for the Task Force listed two objectives: (1) to involve forestry educators and employers in a dialogue to address how the Society of American Foresters can assist U.S. professional forestry education by preparing graduates for entry-level forestry employment, and (2) to recommend to SAF Council appropriate actions to maintain effective professional forestry accreditation. In their report, the Task Force concluded:

*[We] believe that the role SAF seeks to play in ensuring that forest resource management decisions are made with the advice of qualified forestry professionals is among the clearest and most direct ways of communicating to the public that forests are important and valuable resources, and that decisions regarding their management and sustainable use should reflect current professional knowledge of the art and science of forestry.*

The SAF Council accepted the Task Force report in June 2000.

A joint workgroup co-sponsored by SAF and the National Association of Professional Forestry Schools and Colleges guided the revision of this handbook to comply with the new standards. The

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<sup>1</sup> HELMS, JOHN A., ed. 1998. *The Dictionary of Forestry*. P. 72. Bethesda, Maryland: The Society of American Foresters.

SAF Council accepted the revised ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK in June 2003, for use beginning with the 2004/05 academic year.

The SAF Council established the Educational Policy Review Committee in 2003 to monitor all aspects of professional forestry education, including the SAF accreditation standards and procedures, and to make recommendations on such matters to the SAF Council. In 2005, the Committee was charged by the SAF Council to review the SAF Standards, Procedures, and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Professional Forestry and make recommendations regarding the development of specialized urban forestry accreditation standards, procedures and guidelines for the SAF Council's consideration. The committee was expanded to include additional members with expertise in urban forestry for the evaluation. The Committee recommendations, in the form of Standards for Specialized Accreditation of Educational Programs in Urban Forestry were accepted by the SAF Council in December 2006. In June 2007, after the new standards were circulated for review and comment, the SAF Council approved the revised Standards for Specialized Accreditation of Educational Programs in Urban Forestry for incorporation into the ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK and for implementation on August 1, 2007.

The Standards for Specialized Accreditation of Educational Programs in Urban Forestry make use of the existing procedures for application, review and appeal; however, the specialized urban forestry standards are independent of the pre-existing standards for the accreditation of forestry programs. An urban forestry program seeking SAF specialized accreditation must meet the urban forestry standards whether or not it meets the general forestry accreditation standards.

The SAF Council approved the *Standards, Procedures, and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology* on June 7, 2008 for implementation beginning August 1, 2009. The effective date amended to January 1, 2009 by vote of Council on December 8, 2009 to facilitate implementation. The *Standards, Procedures, and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology* are separate document not to be confused with this *Accreditation Handbook*.

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## PREFACE

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) has prepared this **ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK** and a companion publication, the **Accreditation Visiting Team Manual**, as the primary references for an accreditation review and evaluation of professional forestry programs. The Handbook and Manual are respectively designed to guide program administrators as they pursue improvement of educational quality and to assist evaluators as they assess program achievements.

This handbook is organized as follows:

- Part I presents the SAF Accreditation Standards, which serve as the minimum criteria for assessing a forestry program's candidate (initial) or continuing accreditation status. Part I is further subdivided into:
  - Section I: Standards for General Accreditation applies to the accreditation of forestry programs in general. Forestry programs that seek general SAF accreditation for forestry curricula must meet these standards.
  - Section II: Standards for Specialized Accreditation in Urban Forestry applies to specialized urban forestry programs. Urban forestry programs that seek SAF specialized accreditation of urban forestry curricula must meet these standards *whether or not* they meet the standards for general SAF accreditation.
- Part II outlines SAF Procedures for establishing candidacy or renewing accreditation, including general institutional requirements and time lines.
- Part III offers specific Guidelines for organizing the SAF self-evaluation report in preparation for the on-site visitation.

NOTE: This document is periodically evaluated and may be modified when and where appropriate by the Council of the Society of American Foresters, after opportunity for comment and review by the SAF Committee on Accreditation, other task forces of the SAF, or by forestry program heads. This document supersedes all previously published standards, procedures, and guidelines on professional forestry accreditation. Responses to questions regarding clarification, interpretation, or application are official only if in writing and only if issued by the SAF executive vice-president.

## INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) is to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry; to enhance the competency of its members; to establish professional excellence; and to use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society. In furtherance of these objectives, the SAF is responsible for accrediting educational programs in the United States that lead to a professional degree (bachelor's or higher) in forestry. The Society of American Foresters defines forestry as:

*The profession embracing the science, art, and practice of creating, managing, using, and conserving forests and associated resources for human benefit and in a sustainable manner to meet desired goals, needs, and values. Note that the broad field of forestry consists of those biological, quantitative, managerial, and social sciences that are applied to forest management and conservation including such specialized fields as agro-forestry, urban forestry, industrial forestry, non-industrial forestry, and wilderness and recreation forestry. (Helms, 1998<sup>2</sup>)*

The objectives of SAF accreditation are to:

- Improve the overall quality of professional forestry education through periodic program self-evaluation and peer review by qualified educators and practicing foresters;
- Foster integrity and excellence through the development, use, and periodic revision of Standards for Accreditation in order to assess the educational environment and effectiveness of forestry programs; and to
- Assure students, employers, the general public, and other organizations and agencies that SAF accredited programs have educational objectives consistent with professional standards, have the resources to accomplish those objectives, and are expected to continue to offer a quality forestry education.

The Standards and Procedures set forth in this Handbook incorporate the experience gained through more than six decades of application. Accreditation standards were first adopted by the SAF Council in 1935 and are revised approximately every ten years. In 2006, the SAF Council approved the first specialized program of accreditation for urban forestry programs in recognition of the need for professionals with an education in both the core forestry subjects and in subjects specifically required to meet the basic needs of this growing field. The specialized program of accreditation for urban forestry curricula was approved for implementation in 2007.

The six Standards describe the essential elements of a professional forestry education program: forestry program mission, goals, and objectives; curriculum; forestry program organization and administration; faculty; students; and parent institution support. The Standards emphasize qualitative considerations. In addition, the Standards provide latitude for the institution's and program's rights and obligations for initiative, experimentation, and variation.

The SAF Committee on Accreditation carries out the accreditation process and makes final decisions. The SAF Council, with addition of a public member, is responsible for all accreditation appeals. The specific procedures of the accreditation and appeals processes are found in Part II.

Evaluation depends on the self-evaluation report, analysis by the visiting team, and the SAF Committee on Accreditation's professional judgment. Recognizing that no two institutions are alike, SAF's policy is to

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<sup>2</sup> HELMS, JOHN A., ed. 1998. *The Dictionary of Forestry*. P. 72. Bethesda, Maryland: The Society of American Foresters.

evaluate each program independently on its individual merits. Decisions are based on assessment of the total program and its environment for stimulating intellectual professional development and growth.

The SAF recognizes the need for diversity and encourages a rich learning environment composed of students, faculty, and external constituents and representing both genders and a variety of ages, cultures, experiences, and viewpoints.

While the SAF is concerned with the quality of the institution maintaining the forestry program, it does not examine the total institution in detail. It relies on regional accrediting bodies for this function and requires that the parent institution in which the forestry program is housed be accepted and accredited by its regional accrediting agency.

Competencies, as used herein, refer to student outcomes that indicate students have the necessary background to function as forestry professionals. The term curriculum defines the sequence of courses leading to a degree that prepares an individual for entry into the forestry profession. It is intended to include all courses and prerequisites that constitute the professional degree. The appropriate unit for accreditation is the academic program leading to a professional forestry degree. Program is defined as the curriculum put forth by the institution for accreditation *and* the institutional resources needed to support that specific degree program. SAF does not accredit universities, colleges, departments, or other academic units. It accredits academic programs within these institutional structures. One or more programs may be accredited within a single academic unit. Similarly, an academic unit may contain both accredited and non-accredited academic programs.

The standards are divided into two Sections:

- Section I: Standards for General Accreditation applies to the accreditation of forestry programs in general. Forestry programs that seek general SAF accreditation for forestry curricula must meet these standards.
- Section II: Standards for Specialized Accreditation in Urban Forestry applies to specialized urban forestry programs. The Society of American Foresters defines urban forestry as:

*The art, science, and technology of managing trees and forest resources in and around urban community ecosystems for the physiological, sociological, economic, and aesthetic benefits trees provide society.* (Helms, 1998<sup>3</sup>)

Urban forestry programs that seek SAF specialized accreditation of urban forestry curricula must meet these standards *whether or not* they meet the standards for general SAF accreditation.

In the following Standards, “must” refers to items that substantially bear on compliance with a standard and where documentation is required. It is the responsibility of the institution seeking initial or continued accreditation or candidacy status to be thoroughly familiar with all sections of the Standards, Procedures, and Guidelines.

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<sup>3</sup> HELMS, JOHN A., ed. 1998. *The Dictionary of Forestry*. P. 193. Bethesda, Maryland: The Society of American Foresters.

## **SECTION I: STANDARDS FOR GENERAL ACCREDITATION**

### ***STANDARD I: FORESTRY PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES***

Accreditation is based on an assessment of the total educational program, the institution's environment for stimulating intellectual and professional growth, and support for the program. Accreditation ensures that the environment, facilities, faculty, and infrastructure for the forestry program are sufficient and appropriate to meet the forestry program's stated mission, goals, and objectives.

The forestry program must be clearly defined and publicly state its mission, goals, and objectives. The program must provide the rationale and purpose for its existence and show how the goals and objectives of its current program meet the mission statement.

Dynamic forestry programs change with time. Periodic self-evaluation and revision of the program's mission, goals, and objectives are expected and must be documented. The program must also provide specific evaluations and measures of performance based on the integration of mission, goals, and objectives with the SAF Standards of Accreditation.

Accredited forestry programs' statements of mission, goals, and objectives must reflect:

1. The SAF Standards for Accreditation presented in the Accreditation Handbook.
2. The distinction of forestry as an interdisciplinary profession.
3. The needs of the constituencies that the program seeks to serve.
4. Sensitivity to the role of professional foresters in meeting diverse and changing social, cultural, economic, and environmental needs and values.
5. The professionalism and ethical behavior necessary to manage and use forest resources for the benefit of society.

### ***STANDARD II: CURRICULUM***

Subject matter described below may be incorporated differently by different programs. What may be a separate course in one program may be part of a more comprehensive course in another. What may be a required course in one program may be a restricted elective in another.

Forestry education is built upon the fundamentals of written and oral communication; mathematics; biological, social, and physical sciences; and the humanities. These general education subject areas are usually incorporated in, but are not limited to, instruction delivered by arts and science units at the university. Although certain courses delivered by the forestry unit may satisfy university general education requirements, this section differentiates between such courses and the broader scope of general education requirements that are critical to an urban forestry professional's development and ability to progress professionally.

The professional education areas of study must provide in-depth coverage of ecology and biology; measurement of forest resources; management of forest resources; and forest resource policy, economics, and administration. The forestry curriculum must be presented in a manner that fosters analytical and critical reasoning skills, including systematic problem solving and decision-making. Awareness of historical and current issues and policies affecting resource management and conservation must be established.

The forestry curriculum must provide a variety of educational experiences including lectures, discussion, simulations, computer applications, and individual and group projects in laboratories and field experiences. The purpose of these experiences is to enable students to apply scientific methodologies necessary to attain an array of beneficial forest products, services, and conditions.

## **General Education**

### **A. *Communications:***

Programs must document how oral and written communication skills are reinforced throughout the curriculum.

1. *Oral:* Competencies must be documented as an ability in preparing, and delivering effective oral presentations.
2. *Written:* Competencies must be documented as:
  - a. A proficiency in English composition, technical/business writing, and writing for non-professional audiences.
  - b. An ability to read with comprehension a variety of documents, and critically evaluate opposing viewpoints.

### **B. *Science and Mathematics:***

Biological and physical sciences and mathematics must be included:

1. *Biological sciences:* Competencies must be documented as:
  - a. An understanding of the components, patterns, and processes of biological and ecological systems across spatial and temporal scales,
  - b. An understanding of molecular biology, cells, organisms, populations, species, communities, and ecosystems.
2. *Physical sciences:* Competencies must be documented as an understanding of physical and chemical properties, measurements, structure, and states of matter.
3. *Mathematics:* Competencies must be documented as the ability to understand and use the basic approaches and applications of mathematics and statistics for analysis and problem solving as appropriate for the programs stated outcomes.

### **C. *Social Sciences and Humanities:***

Competencies must be documented as an:

1. Understanding of, and an ability to address, moral and ethical questions and an ability to use critical reasoning skills.
2. Understanding of human behavior and social and economic structures, processes, and institutions of importance across a broad range of societies.
3. Understanding of the diverse dimensions of the human experience and culture.

## **Professional Education**

The forestry program must document depth, breadth, and balance among the four major subject matter categories shown below. In each category, adequate instruction in basic principles, typical laboratory and field applications, and current practices must be provided.

### ***A. Ecology and Biology:***

Competencies must be documented as an:

1. Understanding of taxonomy and ability to identify forest and other tree species, their distribution, and associated vegetation and wildlife.
2. Understanding of soil properties and processes, hydrology, water quality, and watershed functions.
3. Understanding of ecological concepts and principles including the structure and function of ecosystems, plant and animal communities, competition, diversity, population dynamics, succession, disturbance, and nutrient cycling.
4. Ability to make ecosystem, forest, and stand assessments.
5. Understanding of tree physiology and the effects of climate, fire, pollutants, moisture, nutrients, genetics, insects and diseases on tree and forest health and productivity.

### ***B. Measurement of Forest Resources:***

Competencies must be documented as an:

1. Ability to identify and measure land areas and conduct spatial analysis.
2. Ability to design and implement comprehensive inventories that meet specific objectives using appropriate sampling methods and units of measurement.
3. Ability to analyze inventory data and project future forest, stand, and tree conditions.

### ***C. Management of Forest Resources:***

Competencies must be documented as an:

1. Ability to develop and apply silvicultural prescriptions appropriate to management objectives, including methods of establishing and influencing the composition, growth, and quality of forests, and understand the impacts of those prescriptions.
2. Ability to analyze the economic, environmental, and social consequences of forest resource management strategies and decisions.
3. Ability to develop management plans with specific multiple objectives and constraints.
4. Understanding of the valuation procedures, market forces, processing systems, transportation and harvesting activities that translate human demands for timber-based and other consumable forest products into the availability of those products.
5. Understanding of the valuation procedures, market, and non-market forces that avail humans the opportunities to enjoy non-consumptive products and services of forests.
6. Understanding of the administration, ownership, and organization of forest management enterprises.

#### ***D. Forest Resource Policy, Economics, and Administration:***

Competencies must be documented as an

1. Understanding of forest policy and the processes by which it is developed.
2. Understanding of how federal, state, and local laws and regulations govern the practice of forestry.
3. Understanding of professional ethics, including the SAF Code, and recognition of the responsibility to adhere to ethical standards in forestry decision making on behalf of clients and the public.
4. Ability to understand the integration of technical, financial, human resources, and legal aspects of public and private enterprises.

#### **Computer Literacy**

Competencies must be documented as an ability to use computers and other contemporary electronic technologies in professional life.

#### **Distance Learning**

Any distance-learning component of a program must be consistent with the program's stated objectives. Distance learning includes but is not limited to off-campus classroom programs, external degree programs, branch campuses, correspondence courses, and off-campus, electronically-based instruction.

### ***STANDARD III: FORESTRY PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION***

#### **Administrator**

The program must be administered by a person carrying the equivalent title and authority of administrators of comparable units in the institution.

#### **Student Recruitment, Admissions and Transfers**

There must be a clear, published university, department, and/or program procedure for evaluating and accepting students and for transferring credit to fulfill the general and professional education requirements in the forestry curriculum. Transfer courses and advance placement courses **must** equal or exceed the content and standards of the accepting institution's courses.

#### **Teaching**

The administration must document that high priority is given to quality instruction through faculty appointments, evaluation, and recognition of performance.

#### **Administrative Support**

The forestry program must have adequate staff resources with competencies needed to support the students, faculty, and administration.

#### **Program Planning and Outcomes Assessment**

Policies, processes, and/or practices for both short- and long-term planning of academic programs must outline how periodic reviews and updates are conducted. The interests of students and external constituents must be represented in the assessment of educational outcomes. These assessments must

indicate whether academic and professional goals have been met, the elements contributing to program success or lack thereof, and the means by which assessment findings are used to enhance program outcomes.

#### ***STANDARD IV: FACULTY***

The faculty must provide high quality instruction, is expected and empowered to keep the curriculum current and in concert with the program's educational goals and objectives, and provide effective guidance for students. The program must document that it follows its institution's policies and guidelines in the recruitment and retention of faculty that reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity.

The educational program for which accreditation is sought must show that a minimum of eight full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty members who participate in the program have their primary academic responsibilities in the forestry program and report to the responsible academic head.

##### **Academic and Professional Competency**

Collectively, the faculty must have a diversity of backgrounds as evidenced by varied professional experiences and education relevant to forestry from a variety of academic institutions. Close and continuing communication with the forestry profession and use of individuals from outside the forestry program can provide additional expertise and breadth of experience.

##### **Teaching Skills**

Faculty competence in teaching must be documented by expertise in their assigned areas of instruction; enthusiasm, ability, and effectiveness in instructing; an aptitude for working closely with students; and an ability to stimulate independent thinking and provide intellectual leadership. Faculty must be involved in continuous professional development and scholarly activities appropriate to their disciplines.

#### ***STANDARD V: STUDENTS***

An important index of a program's commitment to its students is a well-planned effort, in line with the program's goals and objectives, to provide a broad range of academic and extracurricular offerings extending from recruitment to placement activities.

##### **Recruitment and Retention**

Following institutional policies and guidelines, the program must document that it seeks to recruit and retain motivated and academically qualified students who reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity.

##### **Advising**

The program must document its commitment to quality student advising. Advisors must be readily available to students enrolled in the program for counsel regarding the student's academic, professional, and career opportunities.

#### ***STANDARD VI: PARENT INSTITUTION SUPPORT***

The parent institution must provide resources needed to support the program being considered for initial or continuing accreditation. Opportunities must be provided for faculty development and continuing education.

## **Forestry Program Support**

The parent institution must provide adequate funding and other institutional support to allow the program to attract and retain highly qualified faculty, staff, and administrators. Adequate resources must also be provided for elements critical to the learning environment for professional foresters such as computers, spatial information technologies, specialized laboratories, and field instruction.

## **Supporting Programs**

The parent institution must provide strong, well-staffed student support programs. Courses and support programs must be readily accessible for forestry students. Adequate library facilities, holdings, electronic access to information, and related services must be provided.

## **Physical Resources and Facilities**

The parent institution, in collaboration with the unit housing the program, must provide a physical environment that is safe, healthful, and conducive to learning.

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# **SECTION II: STANDARDS FOR SPECIALIZED ACCREDITATION IN URBAN FORESTRY**

## ***STANDARD I: URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES***

Accreditation is based on an assessment of the total educational program, the institution's environment for stimulating intellectual and professional growth, and support for the program. Accreditation ensures that the environment, facilities, faculty, and infrastructure for the urban forestry program are sufficient and appropriate to meet the urban forestry program's stated mission, goals, and objectives.

The urban forestry program must be clearly defined and publicly state its mission, goals, and objectives. The program must provide the rationale and purpose for its existence and show how the goals and objectives of its current program meet the mission statement.

Dynamic urban forestry programs change with time. Periodic self-evaluation and revision of the program's mission, goals, and objectives are expected and must be documented. The program must also provide specific evaluations and measures of performance based on the integration of mission, goals, and objectives with the SAF Urban Forestry Standards of Accreditation.

Accredited urban forestry programs' statements of mission, goals, and objectives must reflect:

1. The SAF Urban Forestry Standards for Accreditation presented in the Accreditation Handbook.
2. The distinction of urban forestry as a multidisciplinary profession.
3. The needs of the constituencies that the program seeks to serve.
4. Sensitivity to the role of professional urban foresters and arborists in meeting diverse and changing social, cultural, economic, and environmental needs and values.
5. The professionalism and ethical behavior necessary to manage and use urban forest resources for the benefit of society.

## ***STANDARD II: CURRICULUM***

Subject matter described below may be incorporated differently by different programs. What may be a separate course in one program may be part of a more comprehensive course in another. What may be a required course in one program may be a restricted elective in another.

Urban forestry education is built upon the fundamentals of written and oral communication; mathematics; biological, social, and physical sciences; and the humanities. These general education subject areas are usually incorporated in, but are not limited to, instruction delivered by arts and science units at the university. Although certain courses delivered by the forestry unit may satisfy university general education requirements, this section differentiates between such courses and the broader scope of general education requirements that are critical to an urban forestry professional's development and ability to progress professionally.

The professional education must provide in-depth coverage of ecology and biology; measurement of urban forests and other forest resources in urban settings, management of urban forests and trees in an urban environment; and urban forest resource policy, standards, economics, business, administration, and law. The urban forestry curriculum must be presented in a manner that fosters analytical and critical reasoning skills, including systematic problem solving and decision-making. Awareness of historical and current issues and policies affecting urban forest management and conservation must be established.

The urban forestry curriculum must provide a variety of educational experiences including lectures, discussion, simulations, computer applications, and individual and group projects in laboratories and field experiences. The SAF strongly encourages urban forestry programs to require practical, hands-on experience in urban forestry/arboriculture through an internship, summer job, or other comparable experience of several weeks duration. The purpose of these experiences is to enable students to apply scientific methodologies necessary to attain an array of beneficial urban forest resources, services, and conditions.

### **General Education**

#### ***A. Communications:***

Programs must document how oral and written communication skills are reinforced throughout the curriculum.

1. *Oral:* Competencies must be documented as an ability to prepare and deliver effective oral presentations.
2. *Written:* Competencies must be documented as:
  - a. A proficiency in English composition, technical/business writing, and writing for non-professional audiences.
  - b. An ability to read with comprehension a variety of documents and critically evaluate opposing viewpoints.

#### ***B. Science and Mathematics:***

Biological and physical sciences and mathematics must be included:

1. *Biological sciences:* Competencies must be documented as:
  - a. An understanding of the components, patterns, and processes of biological and ecological systems.

- b. An understanding of molecular biology, cells, organisms, populations, species, communities, and ecosystems.
2. *Physical sciences*. Competencies must be documented as an understanding of physical and chemical properties, measurements, structure, and states of matter.
3. *Mathematics*: Competencies must be documented as the ability to understand and use the basic approaches and applications of mathematics and statistics for analysis and problem solving as appropriate for the programs stated outcomes.

**C. *Social Sciences and Humanities*:**

Competencies must be documented as an:

1. Understanding of, and an ability to address, moral and ethical questions and an ability to use critical reasoning skills.
2. Understanding of human behavior including public and private social and economic structures, processes, and institutions of importance across a broad range of societies.
3. Understanding of human diversity and the diverse dimensions of the human experience and culture in urban and suburban environments.

**Professional Education**

The urban forestry program must document depth, breadth, and balance among the four major subject matter categories shown below. In each category, adequate instruction in basic principles, typical laboratory and field applications, and current practices must be provided.

**A. *Ecology and Biology*:**

Competencies must be documented as an:

1. Understanding of taxonomy and ability to identify a wide range of woody plant species, including native forest species and introduced urban forest species, their growth and health in urban and suburban environments.
2. Understanding of soil properties, biology, and processes, especially soil nutrients, soil compaction issues and mitigation, hydrology, water quality, and watershed function.
3. Understanding of ecological concepts and principles including the structure and function of ecosystems and especially the growth and performance of various tree species in urban/suburban settings, plant and animal communities common to urban forests, diversity, and disturbance.
4. Having a core competency in arboriculture including an understanding of tree establishment and maintenance in urban settings, and an understanding of basic tools and equipment and their use.
5. Understanding of tree physiology and anatomy and effects of climate, fire, pollutants, moisture, genetics, construction, insects, diseases and cultural problems on tree health and urban forest composition.
6. Knowledge of urban wildlife, and their interactions with urban forest components.
7. Knowledge and ability to practice arboriculture and urban forestry in multiple cultural, physical and housing density settings.
8. Thorough understanding of the compartmentalization of decay in trees, defect development, tree failure patterns and tree structure evaluation.

***B. Measurement of Urban Forests and other Forest Resources in Urban Settings:***

Competencies must be documented as an:

1. Ability to identify and place trees in an appropriate location relative to each other and relative to structures in an urban/suburban environment and evaluate the health and benefits of urban forests.
2. Ability to measure, assess and recommend regarding the appropriateness and value of existing trees and urban forests.
3. Knowledge and ability to assess tree risk, health and value (appraisal).
4. Knowledge of statistical sampling methods and ability to conduct and analyze inventory data to model future urban forest changes, assess green space, and monitor tree health.
5. Knowledge of spatial analysis and ability to utilize GIS and remote sensing tools/skills in urban-rural interfaces.
6. The ability to understand and apply appropriate appraisal methods to value urban trees taking into account species, site, landscape location, condition and market value.

***C. Management of Urban Forests and Trees in an Urban Environment:***

Competencies must be documented as an:

1. Ability to develop and apply prescriptions appropriate to management objectives, including methods of establishing and influencing the composition, growth, and quality of trees and urban forests and understand the impact of those prescriptions.
2. Ability to analyze the economics, environmental, and social consequences of urban forest management strategies and decisions.
3. Ability to develop management plans with specific multiple objectives and constraints.
4. Knowledge of urban and land use planning including the fundamentals of site planning and landscape design.
5. Knowledge of basic accounting and business skills, including working with budget development and management.
6. Understanding of wildlife habitat management in urban environments, including habitat enhancement and wildlife pest management.

***D. Urban Forest Resource Policy, Economics, and Administration and Law:***

Competencies must be documented as an:

1. Understanding of processes and legal aspects of municipal policy formation.
2. Understanding of federal, state and local laws, ordinances and regulations relative to the practice of urban forestry.
3. Understanding of professional ethics and recognition of the responsibilities to adhere to ethical standards in urban forestry decision-making on behalf of clients and the public.
4. Demonstrated ability to communicate as an urban forestry professional.
5. Understanding industry best management practices and the applicable federal, state and local guidelines and standards for safety and performance.
6. Understanding of the administration, ownership and organizational implications for urban forests under both private and public ownership, including appraisals.

## **Computer Literacy**

Competencies must be documented as an ability to use computers and other contemporary electronic technologies in professional life.

## **Distance Learning**

Any distance learning component of a program must be consistent with the program's stated objectives. Distance learning includes but is not limited to off-campus classroom programs, external degree programs, branch campuses, correspondence courses, and off-campus, electronically-based instruction.

## ***STANDARD III: FORESTRY PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION***

### **Administrator**

The program must be administered by a person carrying the equivalent title and authority of administrators of comparable units in the institution.

### **Student Recruitment, Admissions and Transfers**

There must be a clear, published university, department, and/or program procedure for evaluating and accepting students and for transferring credit to fulfill the general and professional education requirements in the urban forestry curriculum. Transfer courses and advance placement courses must equal or exceed the content and standards of the accepting institution's courses.

### **Teaching**

The administration must document that high priority is given to quality instruction through faculty appointments, evaluation, and recognition of performance.

### **Administrative Support**

The urban forestry program must have adequate staff resources with competencies needed to support the students, faculty, and administration.

### **Program Planning and Outcomes Assessment**

Policies, processes, and/or practices for both short- and long-term planning of academic programs must outline how periodic reviews and updates are conducted. The interests of students and external constituents must be represented in the assessment of educational outcomes. These assessments must indicate whether academic and professional goals have been met, the elements contributing to program success or lack thereof, and the means by which assessment findings are used to enhance program outcomes.

## ***STANDARD IV: FACULTY***

The faculty must provide high quality instruction, is expected and empowered to keep the curriculum current and in concert with the program's educational goals and objectives, and provide effective guidance for students. The program must document that it follows its institution's policies and guidelines in the recruitment and retention of faculty that reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity.

The educational program for which accreditation is sought must show that at least one full-time faculty member plus other faculty members as appropriate who participate in the program have their primary academic responsibilities in the urban forestry program and report to the responsible academic head.

## **Academic and Professional Competency**

Collectively, the faculty must have a diversity of backgrounds as evidenced by varied professional experiences and education relevant to urban forestry from a variety of academic institutions. Close and continuing communication with the urban forestry profession and use of individuals from outside the urban forestry program can provide additional expertise and breadth of experience.

## **Teaching Skills**

Faculty competence in teaching must be documented by expertise in their assigned areas of instruction; enthusiasm, ability, and effectiveness in instructing; an aptitude for working closely with students; and an ability to stimulate independent thinking and provide intellectual leadership. Faculty must be involved in continuous professional development and scholarly activities appropriate to their disciplines.

## ***STANDARD V: STUDENTS***

An important index of a program's commitment to its students is a well-planned effort, in line with the program's goals and objectives, to provide a broad range of academic and extracurricular offerings extending from recruitment to placement activities.

### **Recruitment and Retention**

Following institutional policies and guidelines, the program must document that it seeks to recruit and retain motivated and academically qualified students who reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity.

### **Advising**

The program must document its commitment to quality student advising. Advisors must be readily available to students enrolled in the program for counsel regarding the student's academic, professional, and career opportunities.

## ***STANDARD VI: PARENT INSTITUTION SUPPORT***

The parent institution must provide resources needed to support the program being considered for initial or continuing accreditation. Opportunities must be provided for faculty development and continuing education.

### **Urban Forestry Program Support**

The parent institution must provide adequate funding and other institutional support to allow the program to attract and retain highly qualified faculty, staff, and administrators. Adequate resources must also be provided for elements critical to the learning environment for professional urban foresters such as computers, spatial information technologies, specialized laboratories, and field instruction.

### **Supporting Programs**

The parent institution must provide strong, well-staffed student support programs. Courses and support programs must be readily accessible for forestry students. Adequate library facilities, holdings, electronic access to information, and related services must be provided.

### **Physical Resources and Facilities**

The parent institution, in collaboration with the unit housing the program, must provide a physical environment that is safe, healthful, and conducive to learning.

## **PART II: CANDIDACY AND ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES**

Institutions may seek candidacy or accreditation for programs that lead to baccalaureate, masters, or doctoral degrees. All programs, regardless of the degree that is awarded, will be required to conform to all SAF Accreditation Standards to obtain or retain professional forestry accreditation.

Both the Society of American Foresters and universities must be clear in specifying which degree programs are accredited when communicating with students, employers, and the public. This "truth-in-advertising" principle is becoming increasingly important as forestry schools and departments develop programs related to general natural resource or environmental curricula in which the core competencies for professional foresters may not be offered.

Forestry program administrators must work with their university-wide information offices to assure that only accredited programs are so designated in catalogs and promotional materials. Similarly, SAF must assure that all literature it publishes accurately identifies accredited programs and only accredited programs.

### ***CANDIDACY PROCEDURES***

#### **Definition of Candidacy**

Candidate status offers professional forestry programs the opportunity to establish an initial, formal, and publicly recognized designation. It is a status designed for both developing or established programs.

Candidacy indicates that a program has achieved initial recognition and is progressing toward accreditation. This status provides the program with a period of no more than five years to organize its operations; establish sound policies, procedures, and management functions; improve quality; and demonstrate compliance with SAF Accreditation Standards. Candidacy does not ensure eventual accreditation.

#### **Prerequisites for Candidacy**

Prior to making a formal application a candidate program must meet these prerequisites:

1. Be in an institution accredited by its regional commission on accreditation;
2. Show parent institution commitment to achieving and maintaining an accredited forestry degree program; and
3. Require study in a curriculum meeting the criteria established in the Standards section of this Handbook.

#### **Candidate Eligibility Review**

If a program meets the prerequisites listed above, the program's administrators must submit the following materials to the SAF Committee on Accreditation (COA) in care of the SAF Director of Science and Education:

1. A letter from the chief administrative/academic officer of the institution requesting that the forestry program(s) be considered for candidate status.

2. Twelve (12) copies of a factual, concise (not more than 20 pages) "Report on Candidate Eligibility." This report must demonstrate the extent to which the program meets or exceeds the candidacy prerequisites and the SAF Accreditation Standards. Supporting documents such as the current catalog(s), curriculum, budget(s), and faculty resumes can be included on CD-ROM or in hard copy; website references are also acceptable.
3. A non-refundable candidate eligibility review fee (see Fees and Charges).

Candidacy materials must be received by April 1 for consideration during that calendar year.

The SAF COA will review the program's eligibility report at its next regularly scheduled meeting, usually in the fall, and decide whether the program may receive candidacy. The forestry program head will be asked to meet with the COA at the program's expense. The COA will determine if the prerequisite criteria have been met and if the program has promise of meeting SAF Accreditation Standards within a five-year period.

The SAF executive vice president will notify the institution's chief administrative/academic officer of the COA's decision. A program that is denied candidate status may reapply when it can demonstrate substantial improvement in those aspects of its operation identified in the COA's decision. A second candidate review fee will be required. A program may also appeal a negative decision (see Appeal of SAF Accreditation Decisions).

### **Candidate Status Requirements**

Programs granted candidate status must keep the COA informed of progress through an annual report containing details on any significant changes or developments. The COA may terminate a program's candidacy status, after due notice, if evidence of progress is lacking or if the conditions on which the program was admitted to candidacy are significantly altered. Candidacy lapses when a program fails to achieve accredited status within the five-year period from the date of initial candidate status unless extended by COA action. Program heads must wait at least one year after the lapse of their candidacy status to reapply, and only after deficiencies have been corrected. Reapplication procedures are the same as for initial candidacy.

### **Reference to Candidate Status in Institutional Publications**

Institutions whose professional forestry programs have been granted candidate status must use the following statement or equivalent wording when describing that status publicly in their catalogs or elsewhere.

The educational program(s) in [*list curricula, majors, options*] leading to the professional degree in forestry of [*list degree title(s)*] is/are candidates for accreditation by the Society of American Foresters (SAF). The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) recognizes SAF as the specialized accrediting body for forestry education in the United States.

### **Candidate Status Time Line**

- April 1 – Deadline for request from chief academic officer of institution for candidate status consideration during that calendar year; summer due date for candidate eligibility report will be set following request for consideration.
- COA reviews the candidate eligibility report during its Fall meeting and acts on request.

- If the COA decision is favorable, the institution submits a progress report annually, and must apply for initial accreditation no later than the end of the five-year candidate period.
- If there is a negative decision, the program may appeal the process within 30 days of notification. The original decision may be affirmed or reversed.

### **Application for Initial Accreditation Status**

If a program is granted candidacy through the preceding process, the chief administrative/academic officer of the institution must then submit a formal letter of application for initial accreditation no later than at the end of the five-year candidate status period as outlined in the *When and How to Apply* section below. The application fee (see Fees and Charges) must accompany the application letter. The program will be required to submit a self-evaluation and undergo an on-site review. The procedures for self-evaluation, on-site visit, and selection of visiting team members are the same as those described in the Accreditation Procedures section. The SAF Director of Science and Education will be available to assist the program in undertaking its self-evaluation and scheduling the on-site visit.

The COA will consider the program's self-evaluation and visiting team report at its next regularly scheduled meeting, and make a decision on the request for initial accreditation. The COA procedures and notification action are the same as those for continued accreditation.

All forestry curricula must undergo a second self-evaluation and on-site review within five years after first being granted accredited status. Continued accreditation, after this initial five-year period, requires comprehensive self-evaluation and on-site review at least every 10 years.

## ***ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES***

### **Accreditation Status**

A forestry program will be accredited by SAF if it has:

1. Met the criteria for candidacy;
2. Requested an accreditation review and paid required fees;
3. Conducted a comprehensive self-evaluation;
4. Undergone an on-site assessment by an SAF-appointed external review team; and
5. Demonstrated to the SAF Committee on Accreditation (COA) that the educational program leads to a professional degree (bachelor's or higher) that complies with the SAF Accreditation Standards.

### **Accreditation Period**

Accreditation is granted for a specific period of time, usually 10 years. Because of circumstances or program changes taking place or being contemplated, this period may vary among institutions, and among curricula within a program.

Once a forestry curriculum is accredited, it is subject to periodic review as determined by the COA. All forestry curricula must undergo self-evaluation and on-site review within five years after first being

granted accredited status. Continued accreditation, after this initial five-year period, requires comprehensive self-evaluation and on-site review at least every 10 years.

Between comprehensive self-evaluations and on-site reviews, continued accreditation is contingent upon on-going compliance with SAF Accreditation Standards. Notification of substantive program changes occurring between reporting periods is mandatory. The SAF Director of Science and Education will request substantive change information annually (see also *Substantive Change Reports*).

### **Application Process and Eligibility**

The decision to seek initial or continued SAF accreditation is that of the forestry program, as supported by the chief administrative/academic officer of the institution. General application and review processes for initial or continued accreditation are:

1. A letter, with the application fee, from the institution's chief administrative/academic officer requesting an accreditation review of the forestry program.
2. A program self-evaluation report prepared in accordance with SAF guidelines.
3. An on-site review and report by an SAF visiting team.
4. Review of the self-evaluation report, visiting team report, oral comments presented at the COA meeting, and other appropriate materials by the COA.
5. Final action by the COA.

### **Withdrawal from Accreditation Status**

Upon request from the chief administrative/academic officer, programs are permitted to withdraw voluntarily from any status of accreditation or candidacy at any time. Programs that voluntarily withdraw following COA action will have this decision published by the Society. Half the application fee will be refunded if the withdrawal comes prior to final selection of the visiting team. There will be no refund of the application fee once the visiting team has been selected and the forestry program head notified.

### **When and How to Apply**

*Notification:* For programs currently accredited, the SAF Office of Science and Education will notify the institution's chief administrative/academic officer **by January 31 of the year prior to the date of expiration**. The letter will (1) advise the officer of the pending expiration, (2) ask whether the officer wishes to have the forestry program reviewed, and (3) outline the procedures to be followed. A copy of the letter, with enclosures, will be sent to the head of the forestry program.

*Postponement:* The letter will also ask if there are any circumstances that might warrant postponement of the review. Postponement may be considered in cases of temporary but significant organizational, personnel, or other changes, or to enable coordination with other internal or external reviews. Whether a postponement is warranted will be at the discretion of the SAF Director of Science and Education in consultation with the COA chair. Postponement will not exceed one year without consideration by the full COA.

## Accreditation Status Timeline

Year prior to accreditation or candidacy expiration	January 31	SAF notifies chief academic officer of institution that current accredited or candidate status expires the end of the next calendar year. Copy to forestry program head.
	April 1	Deadline for request from chief academic officer of institution for initial or reaccreditation and payment of the on-site review fee.
	Spring/Summer	Conduct self-evaluation within 12 months prior to the on-site visit.
	Summer	Institution and SAF agree on preferred dates for two and a half-day on-site visit in upcoming academic year.
Academic year prior to accreditation or candidacy expiration	Fall/Winter	Visiting team is selected and confirmed once on-site visit dates are set.
	30 days in advance of onsite visit	Self-evaluation report is received by SAF and team members.
Spring/Summer – Year of accreditation or candidacy expiration	45 days after onsite visit	Visiting-team report is due to institution’s chief academic officer for comments on report’s factual accuracy. Copies are sent to the program head, team members, and the SAF Director of Science and Education.
	60 days of receipt of visiting team report	Chief academic officer’s comments are due back to Visiting Team Chair. If no comments are received in 60 days, the COA will assume the report is accurate.
	30 days of receipt of comments	Any comments received from the institution will be incorporated or appended to copies of the visiting team report at the team leader’s discretion. The final report is forwarded to SAF.
	Summer	The forestry program head and the visiting team chair are invited to meet with the COA during the meeting.
Fall/Winter – Year of accreditation or candidacy expiration	45 days prior to COA meeting	The forestry program head submits written comments regarding activities or plans occurring after the on-site visit.
	COA meeting	The COA reviews all documentation, consults with visiting team chair and program head, deliberates, and acts on each request.
	60 days following final COA action	The SAF executive vice president notifies the chief administrative/academic officer of COA decision. Copy to program head.
Winter – Year following accreditation or candidacy expiration	30 days from notification	Institution’s appeal of unfavorable decision must be made to SAF Council.
	90 days from notification	Institution submits detailed documentation supporting its position and its request.

*Application:* The institution's chief administrative/academic officer must write the SAF Director of Science and Education **by April 1 of the year prior to the year of expiration**, and formally request an accreditation review during the following academic year. SAF will conduct an accreditation review only at the request of the chief administrative/academic officer. The appropriate application fee must accompany the letter. (See Fees and Charges).

It is the responsibility of the institution's and program's administrators to be thoroughly familiar with the SAF Accreditation Standards and to consult with the SAF Director of Science and Education as needed to verify readiness prior to application.

*Scheduling:* Upon receipt of the chief administrative/academic officer's request and payment of fees, the SAF Director of Science and Education will write the head of the forestry program or others designated by the chief administrative/academic officer to transmit guidelines and offer advice and assistance in preparing for the accreditation review. The on-site visit, which occurs over two and a half days, is scheduled approximately six months in advance; the self-evaluation report and supporting documentation are due no less than 30 days prior to the on-site visit.

*Action:* The COA customarily meets during the fall of each year. Thus, normal duration between application and the COA decision is 18-20 months. (See also Accreditation Status Timeline.)

### ***Step 1: Self-Evaluation***

Self-evaluation is the essential first step in the accrediting process. The SAF Accreditation Standards and Procedures provide a framework for important considerations during the self-evaluation and the assessment by a visiting team. The aim of a program self-evaluation is to demonstrate compliance with SAF Accreditation Standards. The self-evaluation is also intended to provide the basis for program planning and improvement.

A self-evaluation is valuable only if it is candid, realistic, and comprehensive. A program's ability to collectively assess its strengths and opportunities for improvement is vital to accreditation. Guidelines for preparation of the self-evaluation report are presented in Part III.

The self-evaluation report is considered the property of the institution and SAF will not release its contents unless authorized, in writing, to do so.

### ***Step 2: On-Site Visit***

The on-site visit by an SAF review team is the second stage in accreditation following completion of the self-evaluation. SAF's policy is to employ visiting teams as information gathering and verifying bodies. The team validates the self-evaluation and gathers information on less documentable items such as morale, motivation, leadership, cooperation, and the learning environment. The visiting team's function is to analyze, for the use of both the institution and the COA, the program's strengths and opportunities for improvement, the quality of its performance, the effectiveness of its procedures, and the adequacy of its resources for sustaining its performance. The visiting team does not make decisions regarding the accreditation of a program.

The report and opinions of the visiting team are given great weight and respect in the accreditation process. However, as described later, the COA makes the final decision. The COA may substitute its judgment for that of the visiting team in instances where the COA feels the evidence fails to substantiate the team's findings or analysis, or where additional facts have come to light since the on-site visit.

The visiting team will evaluate the program in terms of the mission, goals, and objectives that the program seeks to attain, provided these are consistent with the Accreditation Standards. The visiting team's independent insights, based on careful reading of the program's self-evaluation and the brief but intensive on-site review, can serve to:

1. Confirm and validate the conclusions of the self-evaluation;
2. Identify any areas in which the program is in questionable compliance with the SAF Standards;
3. Assure the COA that the institution has been responsive to recommendations resulting from previous reviews; and
4. Reinforce the program's commitment to the continuing pursuit of excellence.

Visiting team members are encouraged to offer constructive comments for improvement of forestry programs along the guidelines suggested by the Standards. However, the program administrators may wish to engage the visiting team members in a more in-depth discussion of opportunities once the on-site review is completed (see also Visiting Team Consultation).

The dates for all on-site visits will be set to permit the team to spend at least two and one-half days on campus while the institution is in session and when there are no major events that would conflict with the team's review. Given mutual agreement, the visit may be timed to coincide with regional accreditation reviews or other similar activities.

### **Responsibilities of the Program Head -- On-Site Visit**

The forestry program head has the responsibility to:

1. Be thoroughly familiar with the SAF Accreditation Standards and Procedures.
2. Keep all of the institution's appropriate administration, faculty, students, and staff informed of the accreditation process, its significance, and its progress.
3. Accept, or challenge for cause, team members assigned by SAF.
4. Mail CD copies of the self-evaluation report and supporting documentation directly to the visiting team members and the SAF Director of Science and Education at least 30 days in advance of the visit. Hard copies of the self-evaluation report and supporting documentation may be provided at the discretion of the program head.
5. Mail one CD copy of self-evaluation report and supporting documentation directly to each member of the COA.
6. Make arrangements for lodging and on-site transportation for the visiting team well in advance of the visit.
7. Prepare an agenda and schedule appointments with key personnel well in advance of the visit, and alert administrators, faculty, students, staff, and others as to the nature and purpose of the forthcoming visit and request that they make time available as needed to meet with the team members.
8. Provide both a private meeting room for the visiting team for the duration of the visit and access, including evenings, to supporting data and materials and support services such as word processing, printer availability, photocopying, and reference materials.
9. Provide final written comment on the visiting team's report, and attend the COA meeting to discuss the review prior to the COA's decision.

10. Pay visiting team expenses, including travel of the team and accompanying staff, lodging, meals, and miscellaneous expenses related to the visit.

### **Selection of the Visiting Team**

SAF visiting team members will be selected on the basis of interest, experience, training, and overall knowledge of assessment processes in professional settings. Of primary importance will be the ability to develop and articulate objective opinions and judgments free of self-interest or professional bias. The nomination of qualified persons by individuals and organizations is encouraged at all times.

The SAF Director of Science and Education, in consultation with the COA chair as needed, will appoint a visiting team following consultation with the forestry program head, who may challenge for cause the appointment of specific team members.

The team will consist of at least three persons. The team chair must be a forestry educator with academic administrative experience. At least one team member must come from the nonacademic sector; it is recommended that this practitioner be representative of an important employment sector for the graduates. The third participant must be a member of the COA. In addition, a member of the SAF staff may accompany the team and serve in a support capacity. All team members must be SAF members or hold SAF committee appointments as public representatives. Each must reside outside the program's home or contiguous states. No team member may be an alumnus, past faculty member, or employee of the institution being reviewed. No team member may have even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

The program head may request a team consisting of more than three members and suggest general specialty areas to be represented by these additional members. Appointment of such additional members is at the discretion of the SAF Director of Science and Education, and, as with other team members, at the institution's expense. Additional team members may be appointed by SAF for purposes of training, and SAF will be responsible for the travel and related expenses in this instance.

**Generalists:** Initial accreditation visits and applications for candidacy status may require a generalist associated with the regional accrediting association or with academic administration as an additional team member. Generalists are typically presidents, vice-presidents, or other institutional officers familiar with general university administration and selected for breadth of experience as administrators. Generalists bring to the attention of the team any information concerning policies of the institution as a whole that are relevant to the appraisal of the forestry program. This may include such areas as governance and administrative relationships, financial support, general education requirements, recruitment and admissions policies, and assessment of supporting departments.

For continued accreditation, if five or more years have elapsed since a full regional accreditation review has been conducted; the institution may be required to invite a generalist as an additional member of the SAF team. The decision to include a generalist will be at the discretion of the SAF Director of Science and Education in consultation with the forestry program head and COA chair. No generalist will be required if a concurrent institutional accreditation review is undertaken.

Following receipt of names and addresses of team members, the program head and team chair, in consultation with the SAF Director of Science and Education, make final arrangements for the visit.

## Visiting Team Consultation

Following the completion of the on-site review, visiting team members have a unique perspective on the institution's strengths and weaknesses. The institution may request an "off the record" consultation with visiting team members to discuss the institution's strategic opportunities. A consultative visit occurs after all formal exit interviews are conducted, but must be scheduled in advance to ensure that travel plans can accommodate additional discussion. Consultative discussions will *not* be included in the team's report.

## Representative Agenda for SAF Accreditation On-Site Visit

*(Provided as a guide; programs may suggest alternatives to the visiting team chair)*

### Arrival Day

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Afternoon      Team arrives, checks in  
7:00 p.m.      Dinner with program head:  
                    Review agenda, logistics, discuss program  
9:00 p.m.      Team meeting  
                    Review assignments, documentation, and areas of concentration

### Day 1

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7:00 a.m.      Breakfast, usually with program head  
Morning      Meetings with following as applicable:  
                    **[Note: Unless specified, forestry program head should not attend]**  
                    A. Chief executive officer of institution (optional)  
                    B. Chief academic officer and others (may wish to combine with A)  
                    C. College administration (if other than forestry)  
                    D. Forestry school administration (program head and others)  
Late a.m.      Tour relevant campus facilities  
  
12:00 Noon    Working luncheon with small group of employers or recent graduates  
                    **[Note: it is imperative that the team meet with a small, representative group of employers of graduates to assess competencies. It is suggested that alumni employers be kept to a minimum. Alumni or advisory groups are welcome to meet with the team at other, appropriate functions.]**  
2:00 p.m.      Begin faculty interviews  
                    Scheduling is critical; groups should be kept small and may be composed by subject area, need at least 45 minutes per session. Interviews with forestry faculty should be given top priority.  
4:00 p.m.      Meet with representative undergraduates  
                    **[Note: this should be an "open" undergraduate meeting scheduled at a time to permit the greatest representation from the student body (all years, all majors under review...etc.). Those not available should be invited to present comments to the team.]**

- 5:00 p.m. Return to hotel
- 6:30 p.m. Dinner – Opportunity for team to meet informally with small group of administrators, faculty, students, alumni, etc.
- 8:30 p.m. Team meeting

## **Day 2**

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- 7:00 a.m. Breakfast (can meet with program head or other program administrators)
  - 8:00 a.m. Continue faculty interviews or other scheduled meetings.
  - 11:30 a.m. Working luncheon (with any group not represented on first day's lunch (alumni, employers, faculty from supporting areas or other groups, as appropriate)
  - 1:30 p.m. Meeting with representative graduate students
  - 2:30 p.m. Visit supporting facilities: library, computer, field, research, etc.
  - 3:30 p.m. Scheduled special meeting(s), if required
  - 4:30 p.m. Return to hotel; team begins work on report as soon as possible
  - 6:30 p.m. Dinner - team only
- Work on report; no other activities scheduled

## **Day 3**

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- 7:00 a.m. Breakfast with program head
- 8:00 a.m. Team checks out of hotel; luggage ready for transport to airport
- 8:30 a.m. Exiting meeting with chief executive and other administrators, as appropriate (30 to 45 minutes; this is a team reporting process-discussion will be minimal)
- 9:30 a.m. OPTIONAL -- Separate, additional exit meeting may be appropriate with institution administration, if different from forestry program administration)
- 10:30 a.m. Exit meeting with program faculty and staff (30 to 45 minutes; this is a team reporting process-discussion will be minimal)
- 11:30 a.m. Team departs for airport — **OR** —
- 11:30 a.m. Visiting Team Consultation begins (see previous page for details)

## ***COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION ACTION***

### **Time Frame**

The SAF COA meets annually, usually immediately preceding the SAF national convention. The purpose of the meeting is to review and make final decisions on all accreditation activities conducted or reviewed during the previous academic year.

The forestry program head and the visiting team chair will be asked to meet with the COA during the meeting; the agenda will be provided well in advance of the meeting to facilitate travel plans. The forestry program head will be invited to submit written comments regarding activities or plans occurring after the on-site visit. Such comments must be submitted to the SAF Director of Science and Education at least 45 days prior to the meeting of the COA. Any documentation submitted after this date may not reach the COA in time for consideration.

At least 60 days in advance of the meeting, the SAF Director of Science and Education will send the COA members copies of the self-evaluations, supporting documentation, visiting team reports, and institutional comments. The COA will systematically review the documentation and consult with the visiting team chair and the program head prior to making their final decision. It is the function of the COA to make an independent analysis of the facts and to determine whether a program's accreditation is initially granted or continued.

### **Actions**

The COA's final action may include, but is not limited to, the general actions of granting or denial of initial accreditation or candidacy, or the granting or denial of continued accreditation or candidacy. Accreditation may be continued for a maximum of 10 years; candidate and initial accredited status is for maximum of five years.

The COA will decide the specific educational programs to be approved, the duration of the accreditation or candidacy, any conditions or requests for additional information, including limited on-site visits, and the format and due date for any requested report. The SAF Director of Science and Education will inform the forestry program head of the format of the requested report and due date. Between on-site reviews, the SAF staff will annually request substantive change information on behalf of the COA.

The COA may decide that a program be placed on probation or that it be requested to show cause why candidacy or accreditation should not be terminated.

#### ***Probation:***

Probation may be recommended when a program, in the opinion of the COA, has failed to respond satisfactorily to previous COA requests or when it has deviated significantly from SAF Accreditation Standards.

#### ***Show Cause Request:***

A request to show cause may be made when a program has not responded satisfactorily to conditions imposed on it as a result of significant noncompliance with SAF Accreditation Standards.

In either of these two cases, the COA's action must include specific findings related to specific Standards. The action must also specify the date by which the institution is requested to respond and the actions it must take to remedy the situation.

## **Notification**

The COA findings will be transmitted to the institution as part of the COA's final action. The documents are considered confidential and the property of SAF. SAF will not publicly release their contents. However, in the event that the institution releases portions, SAF reserves the right to release these documents in their entirety.

Once the SAF COA has taken final action, the SAF executive vice president will notify the chief administrative/academic officer, program head, and public of the COA's decision, as follows:

1. Notify by formal letter to the institution's chief administrative/academic officer and forestry program head no later than sixty (60) days following final COA action. Notification will include a copy of the COA's decision and any recommendations or required actions.
2. Publish on the SAF website and in the Journal of Forestry or other SAF publication of the general action, the duration of the action, and the educational curricula involved. Journal notice of denial of initial or continued candidacy or accreditation will be delayed pending an opportunity for the institution to appeal.
3. Within ninety (90) days, notify appropriate agencies such as the Council on Higher Education Accreditation of the COA's general accreditation actions and the duration of the action. Notification of denial of initial or continued candidacy or accreditation will be delayed pending appropriate opportunity for the institution to appeal.

## ***REFERENCE TO ACCREDITED STATUS IN INSTITUTIONAL PUBLICATIONS***

Both the Society of American Foresters and universities must be clear in specifying which degree programs are accredited when communicating with students, employers, and the public. Institutions with SAF-accredited curricula must use the following statement, or equivalent wording, to describe programs with accredited status publicly in their catalogs or elsewhere:

The educational program(s) in [*list curricula, majors, options*] leading to the professional degree in forestry of [*list degree title(s)*] is/are accredited by the Society of American Foresters (SAF). The Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognizes SAF as the specialized accrediting body for forestry education in the United States.

## ***SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE REPORTS***

The forestry program head is responsible for reporting substantive changes in a program to the COA. A substantive change is one that may significantly affect the quality or direction of a program. It includes, but is not limited to, such factors as a major change in:

- Objectives,
- Complement of faculty,
- Curriculum,
- Financial support,
- The administration of a program, or
- Revisions of student admissions or retention standards.

Preparation of the report must follow the Guidelines in Part III of this document and reference the appropriate standard.

The COA will review substantive change reports at its annual meeting or as necessary. The COA may (1) request additional information; (2) acknowledge the change with or without reservation, or (3) request that an on-site visit or other action be scheduled. Failure to report a substantive change may result in probation or a show-cause recommendation.

The SAF Director of Science and Education will provide a checklist annually to facilitate substantive change assessment and reporting.

## ***FEES AND CHARGES***

The SAF Council sets fees and charges. The schedule of fees and charges is as follows:

***Annual accreditation fee:*** \$500; billed July 1.

***On-site review fee:*** \$2,500; billed January 31. (*Note: this fee is in addition to the annual fee.*)

***Candidate eligibility review fee:*** \$1,200

***Substantive change fee:*** None

***Visiting team expenses:*** Variable; the responsibility of the academic institution under review.

### **Explanation of Fees and Charges**

The ***annual accreditation fee*** is assessed to the program administering the accredited curricula, but is not assessed to each individual accredited curriculum. Once candidate status is conferred, the program is also assessed the annual fee.

***Annual and review fee*** revenues help underwrite educational review committee costs, maintenance of Council on Higher Education Accreditation recognition status, marketing of accreditation to prospective employers and students, and other program expenses directly associated with the accreditation process. SAF also allocates a percentage of membership dues revenue to accreditation activities, and absorbs overhead normally associated with these expenses.

***Visiting team expenses*** include travel expenses for the team members including any accompanying SAF staff—lodging, meals, and miscellaneous expenses related to the conduct of the visit. These expenses are paid by the academic institution under review, and are in addition to the on-site review fee. Unless otherwise requested, SAF will arrange team travel, reimburse expenses of team members, and subsequently invoice the institution undergoing the on-site visit.

### **Receipt of Fees and Charges**

All review fees and charges are due and payable when invoiced. Late payments may jeopardize a program's application or accreditation status.

## ***APPEAL OF SAF ACCREDITATION OR CANDIDATE STATUS DECISIONS***

An institution may appeal a negative decision of the COA. Appeals are heard and decided by the Society's governing body, the SAF Council, which for this purpose includes a public member representative. A negative decision is defined as a denial of initial or continued candidacy status or accredited status.

### **Grounds**

Grounds for appeal are limited to allegations that the COA has made an erroneous decision by:

1. Failing to adhere to Accreditation Standards;
2. Failing to follow Accreditation Procedures; or
3. Failing to consider or accurately interpret all the evidence and documentation presented on behalf of the applicant.

The status of the program will remain unchanged pending the outcome of the appeal. There will be no public notice of a negative decision until the appeal is complete and the Council has taken final action on the appeal.

### **Process**

The appeal must:

1. Be made within 30 days of the date of the SAF executive vice president's formal letter giving notice of the negative decision;
2. Come from the chief administrative/academic officer of the institution,
3. Be in writing to the SAF president, and copied to the SAF executive vice president,
4. Specify the grounds for the appeal, and
5. Request a hearing.

The institution has 90 days from the date of notification from SAF to submit detailed documentation supporting its position and its request. This documentation will be made a part of the record. It must state the issues clearly and must contain sufficient detail and information to support the position of the institution.

### **Review**

The hearing will be held before the Council at its next regularly scheduled meeting occurring 45 or more days after receipt of the detailed documentation. The institution will have the opportunity to present its case and to respond to questions. The COA chair will be available to answer questions regarding the COA's decision. The SAF and the institution shall each be responsible for its own expenses.

In addition to considering the written documentation and the testimony introduced by the institution at the hearing, the Council will consider the institution's self-evaluation report, the visiting team's report, and any other material upon which the COA based its findings and decision.

## **Actions**

The Council's decision in an appeal case will be to:

1. Uphold the decision of the COA, or
2. Remand the decision to the COA, along with rationale for so doing, or
3. Overturn the decision of the COA.

The Council shall issue a written statement of its decision on the appeal, including the facts and reasons that are the basis for its action, and respond to the program's grounds for an appeal within 45 days after the hearing.

In this action, all decisions of the Council shall be final.

If the decision to deny or withhold candidate or accredited status is upheld, the program may reapply only after it is prepared to demonstrate that it has corrected the deficiencies noted in the COA action. In any event, it must wait at least one year before reapplying.

## ***PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS AGAINST ACCREDITED AND CANDIDATE PROGRAMS***

The SAF is concerned that candidate and accredited program performance is consistent with the SAF Accreditation Standards, program accountability, and program integrity. SAF cannot intervene in internal procedures of institutions or perform as a regulatory body but will respond to documented complaints. The SAF's review of complaints is based upon the Standards for Accreditation.

### **Process**

A complaint to the SAF about a candidate or accredited program must:

1. Be typewritten, signed, and addressed to the COA in care of the SAF Director of Science and Education;
2. Clearly identify the individual, group, or legal entity making the complaint;
3. Present substantial evidence that a program has made substantive changes affecting its quality or has been or is engaging in practices that violate SAF Accreditation Standards; such evidence must state relevant facts, and, when possible, cite written materials and individuals for corroboration; and
4. Demonstrate, when reasonably possible, that a serious effort has been made to pursue the issue with the institution or program and that all review procedures provided within the institution and the program have been exhausted.

### **Review**

The SAF Director of Science and Education, in consultation with the COA Chair, will review the complaint. If it does not appear to be within the scope of the SAF's policies and jurisdiction, the complainant shall be so informed within a 30-day period of receipt of documentation. If the complaint appears to be within the scope of the SAF's policies and jurisdiction, the complainant will be notified within a 30-day period that the complaint is being forwarded to the institution and program for response.

The chief administrative/academic officer of the institution will be requested to respond and advise the COA what action if any has been or is being taken to resolve the issue. The institution will have 60 days in which to respond.

### **Actions**

The COA will review the complaint and response from the institution within 120 days of receipt of the complaint and determine whether the matter should be closed or discussed for further action. If no response is received from the institution under the above guidelines, the COA shall take action, which may include a request to show cause why accreditation or candidacy should not be terminated.

The complainant will be informed periodically of the steps taken by the SAF in investigating the complaint, including any action taken by the COA. If appropriate, material relating to a complaint will be filed and reviewed at the time of the next regularly scheduled review or on-site visit.

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## **PART III: GUIDELINES FOR THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

This section suggests guidelines for presenting self-evaluation information required by the SAF Committee on Accreditation (COA) and the visiting team for each forestry program seeking accreditation status or re-accreditation. Its use is not intended to limit the scope of comments about the program; however, SAF requests that the report correspond to the recommended outline.

Continuous self-study and self-evaluation are the essential first steps in the accrediting process. The SAF Accreditation Standards are the framework for the self-evaluation report and assessment procedures used by a visiting team. The goal of the self-evaluation is to demonstrate compliance with SAF Accreditation Standards. Program self-evaluation also should determine accountability and provide the basis for program planning and improvement.

A self-evaluation is valuable only if it is candid, realistic, and assesses all aspects of the program(s) under review. The self-evaluation report should include materials that show both evidence of critical thinking, planning, development, and implementation during the period since the last SAF review, and anticipated future program directions and changes.

### ***SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT***

The quality of the self-evaluation is more important than the quantity of the materials submitted. The self-evaluation is a major undertaking, requiring full support of all those involved in the program. It requires collecting and analyzing extensive amounts of data in preparation for the SAF visiting team. Questions and comment may be directed to the SAF Director of Science and Education, who is available to assist the program in undertaking its self-evaluation and on-site visit.

Suggestions for conducting the self-evaluation include:

- Complete the self-evaluation no more than 12 months in advance of the on-site visit.
- Appoint a small steering committee with a strong and capable coordinator to plan the work and keep it on schedule. It is helpful for the committee to include a person who was actively involved with a previous self-evaluation.
- Provide the coordinator with adequate time to carry out this important function. Make sure the committee has adequate support services throughout the self-evaluation process.
- The committee must become very familiar with the SAF Accreditation Standards and be ready to question, analyze, and debate the contents of the report.
- Determine early what factual and statistical data are required and request the appropriate institutional persons or committees to prepare them.
- Set up subcommittees to accomplish tasks. Existing standing committees can be used.
- Adopt and adhere to a definite and realistic timetable. The report is due at least 30 days in advance of the scheduled on-site visit.
- The steering committee should inform the forestry program community and constituencies about the self-evaluation and encourage involvement. Involve faculty, administrators (including central

administrative officers), advisory boards, staff, students, employer groups, and alumni in the self-evaluation process.

- Allow at least a month prior to the mailing date for final editing and copying. The steering committee must reduce the bulk of materials to a concise, comprehensive report that the visiting team can be expected to read, study, and understand.
- Send copies, along with supporting materials, directly to each of the visiting team members and members of the COA; mailing information will be provided by SAF. Send three copies to the SAF Director of Science and Education.

Conciseness in the main body of the report is suggested. Supportive data, summaries in graphic and tabular form, and other materials documenting the main body summaries must be included, where requested, in clearly defined appendices.

The self-evaluation report is considered the property of the institution and SAF will not release its contents unless authorized in writing, to do so.

### ***OUTLINE OF INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT***

Use the following outline in conjunction with the SAF Accreditation Standards (Part I) to determine appropriate information to include in your self-evaluation report. This outline suggests the type of response required to satisfy each Standard. It is not presented to restrict a program's description of how compliance with a Standard is achieved. However, SAF requires that certain data be submitted in the format shown (see documents A-F).

**NOTE: Forestry programs must provide separate discussion on the following items for EACH accredited degree program.**

#### **Standard I: Forestry/Urban Forestry Program Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

It is essential to clearly state and document printed references to the items required by Standard I, as evaluation of subsequent standards is dependent upon a thorough explanation of a program's educational objectives.

1. Document how the forestry/urban forestry program's mission, goals and objectives (1) are consistent with the SAF Standards for Accreditation, (2) reflect the distinction of forestry as an interdisciplinary profession, (3) respond to the needs of the constituencies that the program seeks to serve, (4) reflect sensitivity to the role of professional foresters in meeting diverse and changing social, cultural, economic, and environmental needs and values, (5) maintain the professionalism and ethical behavior necessary to manage and use forest resources and urban forests and trees for the benefit of society. Show where they appear in publicly disseminated materials.
2. Document the process for periodic self-evaluation and revision of the program's mission, goals, and objectives.

## Standard II: Curriculum

The forestry/urban forestry program must document that general education subject areas—communications, science and mathematics, and social sciences and humanities—are included in the forestry curriculum, and that students are computer literate.

Further, the forestry/urban forestry program must document depth, breadth, and balance among the four major professional subject matter categories of ecology and biology; measurement of forest resources/measurement of urban forests and other forest resources in urban settings; management of forest resources/management of urban forests and trees in an urban environment; and forest resource policy, economics, and administration/urban forest resource policy, economics, and administration and law.

1. Complete Documents A-1, B-1, and B-2; complete A-2 if needed. Follow the format as presented.

For Document A-1: *General Education Summary (Required Courses)*: Specify each forest resources curriculum, major, or option for which accreditation is sought. For each curriculum, show how the following areas are covered by listing each course and indicating the credit hours required: (a) Communications; (b) Science and Mathematics; (c) and Social Sciences and Humanities. Use Document A-2: *General Education Summary (Restricted Electives)* to list general education restricted electives, if any, and the required elective credit hour totals for curriculum. See also Part 1 - Standard II: Curriculum, for specific descriptions of the general education components.

For Document B-1: *Forestry Education Summary (Required Courses)*: Specify each forest resources curriculum, major, or option for which accreditation is sought. For each curriculum, show how the following areas of study are covered by listing each required course and indicating approximate number of credit hours devoted to each (a) Ecology and Biology; (b) Measurement of Forest Resources/Measurement of Urban Forests and other Forest Resources in Urban Settings; (c) Management of Forest Resources/Management of Urban Forests and Trees in an Urban Environment; and (d) Forest Resource Policy, Economics, and Administration/Urban Forest Resource Policy, Economics, and Administration and Law. Where appropriate, total credit hours for each course may be prorated across these four areas. For example, the course "Forest Resources Management, five credits" might cover topics addressed by subject areas (c - 3 credits) and (d - 2 credits). Indicate courses with significant fieldwork. See also Part 1 - Standard II: Curriculum, for specific descriptions of each of the professional areas.

For Document B-2: *Forestry Education Summary (Restricted Electives)*: For the purpose of accreditation, restricted electives meet the professional education requirements to the extent that each individual elective contributes the professional education requirements. Specify each forestry curriculum, major, or option for which accreditation is sought. For each curriculum, show how restricted electives address the following areas of study by listing each restricted elective course and indicating approximate number of credit hours devoted to each (a) Ecology and Biology; (b) Measurement of Forest Resources/Measurement of Urban Forests and other Forest Resources in Urban Settings; (c) Management of Forest Resources/Management of Urban Forests and Trees in an Urban Environment; and (d) Forest Resource Policy, Economics, and Administration/Urban Forest Resource Policy, Economics, and Administration and Law. Where appropriate, total credit hours for each course may be prorated across these four areas. Indicate courses with significant fieldwork. See also Part 1 - Standard II: Curriculum, for specific descriptions of each of the professional areas.

2. Document how oral and written communication skills are reinforced throughout the curriculum.

3. For the four areas of study, document how adequate instruction is provided in basic principles, typical applications, and current practices.

Sample topics for ecology and biology include dendrology, forest soils, hydrology, water quality, watershed functions, forest ecology, forest protection, fire, pathology, entomology, decay and failure patterns, silvics, and arboriculture.

Sample topics for measurement of forest resources/measurement of urban forests and other forest resources in urban settings include land measurement, photogrammetry and remote sensing; sampling theory and methods; measurement of trees, forests, and forest products; wildlife habitat assessment; measurement of water yields and quality; evaluation of health and benefits of urban forests; assessment of tree risk, health and value; and assessment of air quality.

Sample topics for management of forest resources/management of urban forests and trees in an urban environment include integrated forest resource management on stand, system and landscape scales, with consideration of wood, forage, water, wildlife, fish, recreation, cultural, educational and aesthetic benefits and the composition, growth, and quality of trees and urban forests; develop and apply prescriptions appropriate to management objectives; basic accounting and business skills; forest engineering, harvesting and utilization as appropriate to program goals.

Sample topics for forest resource policy, economics, and administration/urban forest resource policy, economics, and administration and law include policy development, ethics, valuation, administration, land and resource planning, budgeting, safety, and financial and personnel management. This area of study provides the student with an understanding of the social, cultural, political, legal, economic, institutional, and historical influences on forestry.

4. Document how adequate field instruction and practice are provided to ensure that graduates have the opportunity to be competent to practice forestry as professionals.
5. Document how the forestry curriculum fosters analytical and critical reasoning skills, including systematic problem solving and decision-making for individuals and in a team environment.
6. Document how student awareness of historical and current issues and policies affecting resource management and conservation is established.
7. Document that the forestry curriculum provides a variety of educational experiences including lectures, discussion, simulations, computer applications, and individual and group projects in laboratories and field experiences, enabling students to apply the scientific methodologies necessary to attain an array of beneficial forest products, services, and conditions.
8. Document that any distance-learning component of a program is consistent with the program's stated objectives. Distance learning includes off-campus classroom programs, external degree programs, branch campuses, correspondence courses, and off-campus, electronically-based instruction.
9. Describe the extent to which faculty research enriches the curriculum and opportunities available to students to participate in research activities.
10. Discuss where and how professional ethics are incorporated into the professional curriculum and reinforced by faculty.

### **Standard III: Forestry Program Organization and Administration**

1. Document that the program is administered by a person carrying the equivalent title and authority of administrators of comparable units in the institution. Present an organizational chart of the forestry program, showing its relationship to the institution's central administration.
2. Document that high priority is given to quality instruction through faculty appointments, evaluation, and recognition of performance.
3. Document that the forestry program has adequate staff resources with competencies needed to support the students, faculty, and administration.
4. Present the published procedure for evaluating and accepting students and for transferring credit to fulfill the general and professional education requirements in the forestry curriculum at the bachelor's or accredited master's level. Document that transfer courses, advance placement courses, and courses accepted for students in an accredited master's degree program are equal to or exceed the content and standards of the accepting institution's courses. In accordance with the Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (Buckley Amendment), visiting team members may ask to review files for students to assess compliance in this area.
5. Document that policies and processes for both short- and long-term planning of academic programs detail how periodic reviews and updates are conducted.
6. Document in detail the process and methods for assessing educational outcomes of the specific curricular elements articulated in Standard II. Indicate whether academic and professional goals are being met, the elements most contributing to program success or lack thereof, and the means by which assessment findings are used to enhance program outcomes. Document that the interests of students and external constituents are represented in the assessments.

An outcomes assessment process is judged acceptable if it follows an outcomes assessment procedure endorsed by the parent institution that involves assessment of knowledge enhancement and retention across the curriculum relative to the learning objectives, includes alumni and employer feedback, and has a clearly identified link to curriculum review and improvement. Valid metrics, which need not all be used by any given institution, include

- Internal assessments such as senior interviews, group project reports, cumulative exams capstone course evaluation, video taping speeches.
- Instruments such as institution-wide competence testing, standardized tests, or evaluations.
- External assessments such as industry/public agency/NGO surveys, graduate surveys, employer surveys.
- External instruments such as state licensing tests, SAF certification, performance in various competency testing, postgraduate course work.

### **Standard IV: Faculty**

1. Complete Document C-1, C-2, and Document D; follow the format as presented.

Use Document C-1: Background Summary for Faculty Reporting to the Forest Resources Program Head, to show that faculty have a diversity of backgrounds as evidenced by varied professional experiences and education relevant to forestry from a variety of academic institutions. Use

Document C-2: Background Summary for Faculty Teaching Courses Listed in Forms B-1 and B-2 but NOT Reporting to the Program Head to indicate faculty from other departments or outside agencies who teach required professional courses or restricted electives. Document any use of individuals from outside the forestry program.

Use Document D: Academic Summary for Faculty Reporting to the Forest Resources Program Head, to show the budgeted time allocation for faculty members who report to the forest resources program head; include adjunct or contract faculty who hold joint appointments or are otherwise part-time members of the forestry faculty. List vacant positions now authorized and for which funding is available. Do not list emeritus faculty unless actively teaching.

Document D must document that a minimum of eight full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty members who participate in the program have their primary academic responsibilities in the forestry program and report to the responsible academic head.

2. Complete Document E: Individual Faculty Information for each forestry faculty member who teaches forestry or forestry-related, professional-level courses required in the curricula.
3. Document that the faculty provide high quality instruction, are empowered to keep the curriculum current and in concert with the program's educational goals and objectives, and provide effective guidance for students.
4. Document faculty expertise in their assigned areas of instruction; ability and effectiveness in instructing; aptitude for working closely with students; and ability to stimulate independent thinking and provide intellectual leadership.
5. Document faculty involvement in professional development and scholarly activities appropriate to their disciplines.
6. Document that the program follows its institution's policies and guidelines in the recruitment and retention of faculty that reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity.

### **Standard V: Students**

1. Complete Document F: Forestry Graduate Employment Summary. Summarize the forestry employment record for the graduates.
2. Document that the program follows institutional policies and guidelines in recruiting and retaining motivated and academically qualified students who reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity. Include data for accredited graduate degree students and identifiable pre-forestry students. Use Document G: Student Data Summary to show the total current undergraduate enrollment by class, gender, and race/ethnic diversity; provide those figures for the previous three years and the expected number during the next three years. Show the number of forestry graduates for the last three years and the expected number during the next three years.
3. Document the program's commitment to quality student advising. Document that advisors are readily available to students enrolled in the program for counsel regarding the student's academic, professional, and career opportunities.

## **Standard VI: Parent Institution Support**

1. Document the degree to which the parent institution provides resources needed to support the program being considered for accreditation. Document that the parent institution provides adequate funding and other institutional support to (1) allow the program to attract and retain highly qualified faculty, staff, and administrators, and (2) provide for elements critical to the learning environment for professional foresters such as computers, spatial information technologies, specialized laboratories, and field instruction.
2. Compare support for the forestry program, including faculty salaries by academic rank, to other academic units in the parent institution and indicate changes that have occurred or are anticipated in the educational budget. Provide the forestry program budget for the current fiscal year, and indicate by percent how the budget has changed in the last three years in terms of salaries, equipment, supplies, and travel and its relationship to the overall institutional budget. To the extent data for other forestry programs are available, regional comparisons are also encouraged.
3. Document that faculty are provided opportunities for development and continuing education.
4. Document that the parent institution provides strong, well-staffed student support programs, and that non-forestry courses and support programs are readily accessible to forestry students.
5. Document major strengths and weaknesses of the parent institution and supporting departments, including breadth and accessibility, and how they affect the forestry program
6. Document that adequate library facilities, holdings, electronic access to information, and related services are provided.
7. Document that the parent institution, in collaboration with the unit housing the program, provides a physical environment that is safe, healthful, and conducive to learning.

# ***REQUIRED FORMS***

**Document A-1: General Education Summary—Required Courses**

Institution Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Degree Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Option Title: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Required Courses: # &amp; Title</b>	Total Credit Hours		
	Communications	Science and Mathematics	Social Science & Humanities
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>			

**Document A-2: General Education Summary—Restricted Electives**

Institution Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Degree Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Option Title: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Restricted<sup>1</sup> Electives Courses: # &amp; Title</b>	<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		
	<b>Communications</b>	<b>Science and Mathematics</b>	<b>Social Science &amp; Humanities</b>
<b>Total Available Restricted Elective Credit Hours</b>			
<b>Minimum Credit Hours Required</b>			

<sup>1</sup> List general education restricted electives, if any, and include required elective credit hour totals for curriculum.

## Document B-1: Forestry Education Summary – Required Courses

Institution Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Degree Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Option Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Required <sup>1</sup> Courses # & Title	Credit Hours in SAF- Required Areas of Study <sup>2</sup>				Course Contains Significant Content in <i>(check all that apply)</i> :					Total Credit Hours
	Ecology and Biology	Measurement of Forest Resources/ Urban Forests	Management of Forest Resources/ Urban Forests	Policy, Economics, and Administration and Law	Field Work	Ethics	Oral and Written Communications	Integrated Resource Management	Computer Literacy	
<b>Total Required Credit Hours</b>										

1 Include only required courses in forestry, natural resource, or other professional areas. Do not include electives, restricted electives, or basic, general education courses such as math, basic sciences, or English.

2 See SAF Standard II: Curriculum, for specific areas of study definitions. Credit hours may be distributed among two or more areas of study for a listed course.

## Document B-2: Forestry Education Summary—Restricted Electives

Institution Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Degree Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Option Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Restricted Elective <sup>1</sup> Courses # & Title	Credit Hours in SAF- Required Areas of Study <sup>2</sup>				Course Contains Significant Content in ( <i>check all that apply</i> ):					Total Credit Hours
	Ecology and Biology	Measurement of Forest Resources/ Urban Forests	Management of Forest Resources/ Urban Forests	Policy, Economics, and Administration and Law	Field Work	Ethics	Oral and Written Communications	Integrated Resource Management	Computer Literacy	
<b>Total Available Restricted Elective Credit Hours</b>										
<b>Minimum Credit Hours Required</b>										

<sup>1</sup> Include only restricted electives in forestry, natural resource, or other professional areas. Do not include free electives or basic, general education courses such as math, basic sciences, or English.

<sup>2</sup> Credit hours may be distributed among two or more areas of study for a listed course.

**Document C-1: Background Summary for Faculty Reporting to the Forestry Program Head**

Institution Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Degree Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Option Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Member	Academic Rank or Title	Major Field	Highest Degree Held Degree/Year/Inst.	Experience (years)		
				Current Institution	Other Institution	Non-academic

**Document C-2: Background Summary for Faculty Teaching Courses Listed in Forms B-1 and B-2  
but NOT reporting to the Forestry Program Head**

Institution Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Degree Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Option Title: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Faculty Member</b>	<b>Course(s) Taught</b>	<b>Academic Rank or Title</b>	<b>Major Field</b>	<b>Highest Degree Held Degree/ Yr./Inst.</b>

**Document D: Academic Summary for Faculty Reporting to the Forestry Program Head**

Institution Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Degree Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Option Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Member <sup>1</sup>	Budgeted Time Allocation (%)				All Courses Taught						
	Teaching	Research	Extension	Other	Title and Course #	Required <sup>2</sup>	Credit Hours	Contact Hours	Total Enrollment		# of Advisees
									Undergrad	Graduate	

1 At institutions without budgeted time allocations by category, the administrator should estimate percentages.

2 Indicate which accredited curriculum (if any) requires this course.

## Document E: Individual Faculty Information

*[In format chosen by the program; please include...]*

1. Name
2. Academic Rank, specialization, appointment basis (9- or 12-month, etc.)
3. Academic education background:  
Degrees, institution, major field of study, dates attended, date degree earned or expected.
4. Professional and research experience:  
Employer, nature of work, title, dates, total years
5. Teaching experience:  
Institutions, rank, specialization, dates, total academic years
6. Dates of appointment and promotions at present institution
7. List in bibliographical style publications during the last five years
8. Off-campus consulting, or other professional activities, special honors, recognition, during the past five years
9. Membership and offices held in professional organizations
10. Major professional self-improvement activities during past 10 years (including sabbatical)
11. External grants and other research funding during the last five years

**Document F: Forestry Graduate Employment Summary**

Institution Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Degree Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Option Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Graduation Status	NUMBER OF GRADUATES FOR PAST FIVE YEARS										
	Yr: ____		Yr: ____		Yr: ____		Yr: ____		Yr: ____		Total Graduates
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
<i>Employed permanent:</i>											
<i>Forestry</i>											
<i>Forestry-related</i>											
<i>Other employed</i>											
<i>Employed temporary:</i>											
<i>Forestry</i>											
<i>Forestry-related</i>											
<i>Other employed</i>											
<i>Graduate Study:</i>											
<i>Unemployed:</i>											
<i>Unknown:</i>											
<b>Total Number and Percentage of Graduates</b>											

## Document G: Student Data Summary

Institution Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Degree Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Option Title: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENTS ENROLLED	Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior		Total Students	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Current Enrollment										
Last Year										
Two Years Ago										
Three Years Ago										

STUDENTS ENROLLED	TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS					
	African Amer	Asian	Caucasian	Hispanic	Native Amer.	Other
Current Enrollment						
Last Year						
Two Years Ago						
Three Years Ago						

Projected Total Enrollment for Next Three Years	Year: _____	Year: _____	Year: _____

GRADUATING CLASS	TOTAL NUMBER OF GRADUATING STUDENTS							
	Female	Male	Afric. Amer	Asian	Caucasian	Hispanic	Native Amer	Other
Current Graduating Class								
Last Year								
Two Years Ago								
Three Years Ago								

Projected Total Graduates for Next Three Years	Year: _____	Year: _____	Year: _____