

**STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES
FOR
ACCREDITING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
IN
FOREST TECHNOLOGY**



NOTE: This Handbook will be in effect for all forest technology educational program accreditation-related activities occurring ON OR AFTER January 1, 2009.

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Society of American Foresters
5400 Grosvenor Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814

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, SAF is the largest professional society for foresters in the world.

The SAF first established guidelines for recognizing educational programs in forest technology in 1971. The SAF Council adopted the *Standards and Procedures for Recognizing Educational Programs in Forest Technology* in 1982. In 1982, the SAF Council also established the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation to evaluate and periodically review programs for the teaching of forest technology and to make decisions concerning SAF's accreditation of such programs.

The *Recognition Standards* were revised in 1997 and the *Standards and Procedures for Recognizing Educational Programs in Forest Technology*, were revised in 1999, 2000, 2004 and 2007. The SAF Council approved the current revisions to 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.

Address all inquiries concerning the Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology to the:

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SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR ACCREDITING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN FOREST TECHNOLOGY

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Standards and Procedures for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology

PART I: ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) was founded in 1900. SAF is the national organization that represents all segments of the forestry profession including public and private practitioners, researchers, administrators, educators, forest technicians, and students. The Society's Mission is to advance the science, technology, education, and practice of professional 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.

The SAF first established guidelines for recognizing educational programs in forest technology in 1971. The objectives of the SAF technology education accreditation program are to:

1. Seek continued advancement in the quality of technical forestry education.
2. Give students, employers, SAF members, and the general public assurance that graduates of SAF-recognized programs have been instructed in the basic knowledge and skills, as well as environmental ethics and values.
3. Provide prospective students, employers, SAF members, and the general public assurance that a quality educational environment is available at SAF-recognized programs.
4. Establish, maintain and improve standards to guide and measure achievement for programs.

The seven Standards describe the essential elements of a forestry technology education program: program mission, goals, and objectives; curriculum; forestry program organization and administration; faculty; students; parent institution support facilities. Well-planned experimentation and development are encouraged. Innovative or nontraditional approaches and programs, when identified and documented, will be evaluated against the intent of the minimums established.

The word shall as used in these standards is defined to mean a required or mandatory criterion. The word should is defined to mean a recommended criterion.

Standard I: Program Objectives

To be accredited by SAF, educational programs in forest technology **shall** be offered as two-year, associate degrees or their equivalent in contact hours and content. They **shall** consist of classroom, indoor laboratory, and field laboratory experiences necessary to develop field competence. Correspondence and pre-forestry programs do not qualify.

The program **shall** have clearly defined, publicly stated objectives expressed in terms of the educational results it is seeking to achieve. These objectives should express:

1. The specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes sought to be imparted to the student,
2. Consistency with the objectives of the parent institution,

3. Responsiveness to the needs of the constituencies that the program seeks to serve, and
4. Sensitivity to the role of forest technology in meeting the increasingly diverse needs of society and the profession of forestry.

Standard II: Curriculum

The forest technology curriculum must provide a variety of educational experiences. 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. Well-planned experimentation and development are encouraged. Innovative or nontraditional approaches and programs, when identified and documented, will be evaluated against the intent of the minimums established.

1. The program **shall** provide for a minimum total of 800 contact hours of instruction in forestry and related technical development courses, of which a minimum of 530 hours is devoted to indoor and field laboratory instruction. (A contact hour is a clock or a classroom hour allocated for lectures and scheduled indoor and field laboratories.)

2. The forest technology curriculum **shall** include instruction in these technical subject areas:

- a. Dendrology
- b. Forest Ecology
- c. Silviculture
- d. Protection
- e. Measurements
- f. Land Surveying
- g. Aerial Photo Interpretation
- h. Woods Safety
- i. Harvesting Techniques
- j. Multiple Use of Forest Land
- k. Forest Management Practices
- l. Principles of Human Resource (Personnel) Management

Broad content descriptions of these subject matter areas follow (Depth of instruction should reflect regional priorities and practices):

Dendrology: Field identification of regionally important species by leaves, twigs, bark and fruit characteristics; knowledge of family, genus, and species of each specimen; knowledge of species association and succession; knowledge of the major commercial species of trees in North America and their uses; understanding of the use of dichotomous keys.

Forest Ecology: Plant succession; site; soils; silvics; environmental protection; weather and climate influences; relations of trees to other organisms; biodiversity; ecosystems.

Silviculture: Methods of regeneration; site preparation; planting practices; intermediate treatments; nursery practice; seed orchards; pesticide use and application; prescribed burning; pre-commercial thinning, commercial thinning, and harvest cutting.

Protection: Fire management; regional problems and control of insects, diseases, and animal damage; threats to forest health.

Measurements: Forest measuring equipment; log scaling practices; forest product measurement; sampling statistics; cruising and inventory techniques; log rules and volume tables; log and tree grading; growth measurement; computer applications and usage.

Land Surveying: Hand compass; surveying equipment and procedures; pacing and chaining; map reading; deed and title search; land descriptions; computer mapping; global positioning systems (GPS); geographic information systems (GIS).

Remote Sensing: Acquisition and processing of the primary data derived from various sensors—identification and interpretation; area determination; scale; height measurement; type mapping; road location; bearings and distances.

Woods Safety: Basic first aid; identification of hazards; hand and power tool safety; pesticide herbicide safety.

Harvesting Techniques: Harvesting Systems; cost analysis; logging plans; wood identification; wood products; road layout and construction; best management practices (BMPs).

Multiple Use of Forest Land: Wildlife; fish habitat; recreation; wilderness; watershed; timber; range; minerals; public conflicts and public participation.

Forest Management Practices: Timber appraisal; contracts; forest management principles; principles of ecosystem (landscape) based management; regional forest management regulations; sustainable forest management concepts/certification; record keeping and basic accounting.

Principles of Human Resource (Personnel) Management: Human behavior: groups, individuals; motivation; leadership; team building and dynamics; planning; decision-making; rating and evaluation; controlling the work force; conflict resolution; and ethics.

3. In order to advance the basic attainment of the students, the curriculum shall also include general education requirements. The curriculum shall provide instruction in oral and written communication, mathematics, natural and physical sciences, social sciences, and business and computer skills.
4. Course syllabi and outlines shall be maintained that clearly state instructional objectives, activities, and resources to be utilized during instruction. Such documents shall be reviewed at least every three years and revised when appropriate, and dated.
5. Technically accurate, up-to-date instructional materials, textbooks, and computer and electronic related resources shall be utilized by students to support instruction.
6. Instruction in safety shall be provided as needed in advance of indoor and field laboratories.
7. A forestry-related work experience of reasonable duration, such as on-the-job training or comprehensive field projects, shall be required before graduation. The experience should simulate working conditions of typical employing organizations, i.e., full-day schedules with appropriate assignments.
8. Online course hours will be designated as a lecture component when calculating instruction hours for SAF Accreditation. An online course cannot meet indoor and field laboratory instruction.

Standard III: Faculty

1. The forest technology faculty **shall** consist at minimum of two full-time (minimum 9-month contract per year) instructors dedicated primarily to the success of the forest technology program and its students. The member of the forest technology faculty deemed to be the head of the forest technology program, i.e., is responsible for administrative and academic supervision and direction, shall hold a bachelor's or higher degree in forestry. All personnel teaching or assisting in forestry or forestry-related subject matter **shall** be qualified on the basis of formal training or extensive practical experience.
2. During the academic year, the teaching ratio between full-time-equivalent students taught by the forest technician faculty and full-time-equivalent teachers on the forest technician faculty should not exceed 20 to 1. A full-time-equivalent student is calculated as one whose schedule equals 30 semester, or 45 quarter, hours per academic year.
3. The number of students per faculty or qualified staff member should not exceed 25 in indoor and field laboratories, and should not exceed 12 in laboratories where hazardous equipment, such as logging or sawmilling equipment, is used.
4. Faculty members **shall** participate in continuing professional development through or participation in various professional, scientific, technical, or scholarly endeavors such as professional or public service, research, consulting, continuing education, and publication.

Standard IV: Students

1. The program, within the guidelines of the institution, **shall** formulate student recruitment, admission, retention, and graduation policies that contribute to the realization of the program's objectives and that meet or exceed the minimum standards of the parent institution for equivalent programs.
2. The program or institution **shall** provide opportunity for academic and career guidance and counseling to the student.
3. The program or institution **shall** provide opportunity and encouragement for student participation in activities that will develop technical skills, leadership, and cultural awareness.

Standard V: Program

1. Where the forest technology program is offered at an institution having a baccalaureate program in forestry, the technology faculty **should** be separate and distinct from that of the baccalaureate faculty. The purpose of this separation is to give the technology faculty visibility and control of the program's content.
2. A technical advisory body **shall** be in operation and function under written guidelines that specify the length of a member's term, responsibilities, and the operational procedures. The advisory body should meet at least once a year. Consideration should be given to including members from representative professional associations such as SAF or the Canadian Institute of Forestry/Institut Forestier du Canada, forestry baccalaureate programs, forest industries, public forestry agencies, and the interested public.
3. General cooperative working relations should exist and be maintained with regional industries, organizations, and agencies.
4. The program should have adequate technical, secretarial, clerical, and custodial support.

Standard VI: Parent Institution and Supporting Areas

1. Students shall have ready access to library facilities having current forestry literature, including: forestry journals; forestry-related journals, such as soils, recreation, range, wildlife, surveying; research publications; current forestry and related books as well as the Internet.
2. The instructional program **shall** have a separate, identifiable budget that considers the program's needs. Included are:
 - staff compensation;
 - facility operation and maintenance;
 - equipment and material purchase and replacement;
 - consumable supplies;
 - travel and per diem;
 - transportation for field trips;
 - in-service education; and
 - professional improvement

In cases where the forest technology program's budget is part of an overall division or department budget, the budget administrator **shall** provide documentation concerning how the budget/financial process operates, how the needs of the forest technology program are evaluated and accommodated, and budget figures. The forest technology program shall document recent equipment/supplies purchases, professional development, and any other expenditures that can be identified.

3. The institution or the program **shall** assist in placing students and conduct periodic follow-up surveys of graduates. A file should be maintained at the program level regarding student placement and subsequent employment and educational status.

Standard VII: Physical Resources and Facilities

1. An outdoor laboratory or school forest **shall** be available and utilized. It should be readily accessible and within reasonable commuting time. Such forests may be privately owned, or under public control, for which instructional use agreements have been contracted.
2. The classroom, shops, and laboratory facilities **shall** be adequate for the number of students in each class section. The training equipment **shall** be consistent with that found in contemporary forestry organizations employing forest technology graduates.
3. Modern audio-visual aids, computer graphics, instructional materials, computers, and training equipment **shall** be available and used in the instructional program.
4. Transportation **shall** be arranged by the program and available to students for scheduled, off-campus class activities.
5. Classroom, shop and laboratory facilities, and equipment should be arranged for effective teaching, class control, safety, and economy.

PART II: ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

Accreditation Status

A forest technology program will be accredited if it demonstrates to the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation that it:

1. Has an educational program that leads to a two-year associate's degree or its equivalent in contact hours and content, and meets or exceeds all of the standards,
2. Operates at a satisfactory level of quality consistent with its stated objectives,
3. Exhibits sufficient resources and facilities to support existing and planned activities at a satisfactory level of quality,
4. Demonstrates that resources and facilities will continue to be adequate in the future, and
5. Encourages program improvement, periodic self-evaluation, and continuing compliance with *SAF Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology*.

Application Process and Eligibility

To be considered for accreditation, the program must meet the following:

1. Be in an institution accredited by its regional commission on accreditation (or appropriate provincial review for Canadian programs),
2. Have offered the forest technology program for at least three years and graduated classes in that program for at least one year, and
3. Require for completion of the degree study in a curriculum meeting the criteria established for curricula in the **Part I: Accreditation Standards**. The decision to seek initial or continued SAF accreditation is that of the forest technology program, as supported by the chief administrative officer of the institution.

General application and review processes for initial or continued accreditation includes:

1. A letter, with the application fee (See Fees, below), from the institution's chief administrative officer requesting an accreditation review of the forest technology program.
2. A program self-evaluation report prepared in accordance with SAF guidelines.
3. Review of the self-evaluation, review of visiting team report, and other appropriate materials by the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation.
4. Final action by the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. Upon request from the chief administrative officer, programs are permitted to withdraw voluntarily from any status of accreditation at any time before final action by the Committee (See Fees section, below). Programs that voluntarily withdraw following Committee action will have this decision published by the Society.

Accreditation Period

Accreditation is granted for a specific time. This period may vary among institutions and among curricula within a program due to program changes taking place or being contemplated.

Once a forest technology curriculum is accredited, it is subject to periodic review as determined by the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. Continued accreditation requires comprehensive self-evaluation at least every 10 years. Between comprehensive self-evaluations and on-site reviews, continued accreditation is contingent upon on-going compliance with the *SAF Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology*. 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*). The Committee may also require periodic progress review reports to show actions taken to correct or respond to identified concerns.

When and How to Apply

It is the responsibility of the institution and program administrators to be thoroughly familiar with the Standards and Procedures for Forest Technology School Accreditation and to consult with the SAF Director of Science and Education to verify readiness before application.

For programs currently recognized, the SAF Director of Science and Education will notify the institution's chief administrative officer by January 31, 2009. The letter will advise the officer of the transition process for accreditation including a detailed description of fee structure, ask whether the officer wishes to have the forest technology program reviewed, and outline the procedures to be followed. The letter will include the URL to the *Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology* on the SAF website. A copy of the letter will be sent to the head of the forest technology program.

The letter will also ask if there are 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 SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation chair. Postponement will result in the program being moved to the end of the list of institutions requesting accreditation.

The institution's chief administrative officer must write the SAF Director of Science and Education by April 1 to formally request an accreditation review before accreditation expiration. SAF will conduct an accreditation review only at the request of the chief administrative officer. The letter must be accompanied by the appropriate application fee of \$500 (see Fees and Charges).

Upon receipt of the chief administrative officer's request, the SAF Director of Science and Education will write the head of the forest technology program to transmit guidelines and due dates for the self evaluation, establish dates for the panel review, and offer advice and assistance in preparing for the accreditation review. The self-evaluation report and supporting documentation are due at least 30 days in advance of onsite visit.

Step 1: Self-Evaluation Review

Self-evaluation is the essential first step in the accreditation process. The SAF Standards and Procedures for Recognizing Educational Programs in Forest Technology provide important considerations for the self-evaluation and procedures for assessment by a review panel. The aim of a program self evaluation is to demonstrate compliance with SAF Accreditation Standards and Procedures, to determine accountability and to provide the basis for program planning and improvement.

A program's ability to candidly assess its strengths and opportunities for improvement is vital to accreditation. The self-evaluation report should include materials that demonstrate evidence of critical thinking, planning,

development, and implementation over a specific period of time. 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 items that cannot be easily documented 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 SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation, 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 SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation makes the final decision. The SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation may substitute its judgment for that of the visiting team in instances where the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation feels the evidence fails to substantiate the team's findings or analysis, or where additional facts have come to light since the onsite 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. Call attention to opportunities for program improvement;
4. Assure the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation that the institution has been responsive to recommendations resulting from previous reviews and reinforce the program's commitment to the continuing pursuit of excellence.

Responsibilities of the Program Head – On- Site Visit for Accreditation Review

The forest technology program head has the responsibility to:

1. Be thoroughly familiar with the SAF Standards and Procedures for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology, the Accreditation Guidelines contained in Part III, and other related documentation.
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, review team members assigned by SAF.
4. Mail 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.
5. Mail three additional sets of the same materials to the SAF office and one copy to each member of the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation.
6. Make arrangements for lodging and on-site transportation for the visiting team well in advance of the visit. The program head may choose to utilize suitable institutional facilities for the team's lodging and meals, or seek the assistance of the institution's alumni or the local SAF chapter members.

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. If requested, attend the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation's meeting.
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. 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 Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation chair, will appoint a visiting team following consultation with the forest technology program head, who may challenge for cause the appointment of specific team members.

The team will consist of at least three persons and no more than five persons, including any SAF staff member. All team members must be SAF members or hold SAF committee appointments as public representatives. The team chair must be a forestry educator with academic administrative experience. At least one team member must come from the nonacademic sector. This practitioner should reside in the program's home or contiguous state or province and be generally familiar with current forest technology practice in organizations employing forest technicians. Selection of this individual may be made in consultation with the local SAF state society chair. No visiting team member may be an alumnus, past faculty member, or employee of the institution being reviewed. No team member should have even the appearance of a conflict of interest. The third participant must be a member of the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. In addition, a member of the SAF staff may accompany the team and serve in a support capacity. The staff liaison to the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation shall accompany all visiting teams considering initial accreditation or re-accreditation when the committee deems this presence useful.

All team members must be SAF members or hold SAF committee appointments as public representatives. 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.

Responsibilities of the Visiting Team Chair

The team chair will organize the team, consult with the program head to confirm the final agenda, conduct the visit in accordance with SAF Handbook for Visiting Team Members, and complete the visiting team report in a timely manner. On-site the team will meet with administrators, faculty, students, employers, and others; visit facilities; and review records and documents as necessary to accomplish its objectives. Under the direction of the chair and before leaving the campus, the team will conduct an exit interview with appropriate officials to verify its findings.

Within two weeks of the visit, the team chair will circulate an edited draft of the visiting team report to the team members and the SAF Director of Science and Education and request comments. See timeline below for additional deadlines.

The visiting team report is considered the property of SAF. SAF will not publicly release its contents. However, SAF reserves the right to release the document in its entirety in the event the institution releases only portions.

Representative Agenda for SAF Technician Program Accreditation Visit
(Provided as a guide; programs may suggest alternatives)

Arrival Day

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

Review Day

7:00 a.m.	Breakfast, usually with Program Head
8:00 a.m.	Briefing with Program Head
9:00 a.m.	Meet with College Administrator (This would be the president or chief academic officer at your college)
10:00 a.m.	Meet with Forest Technology Faculty (And any other faculty that are directly involved with the program)
11:00 a.m.	Meet with Students
12:00 noon	Lunch with Advisory Committee/Employers/Alumni (This assumes that the advisory committee includes employers and alumni. Additional employers and alumni could be invited.)
1:30 p.m.	Tour relevant campus facilities/ view equipment
3:30 p.m.	Time for the team to discuss findings
4:00 p.m.	Briefing with Program Head (and Faculty if desired)
5:00 p.m.	Departure

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.

Accreditation Status Time Line

- January – SAF sends notice to chief academic officer of institution, with copy to forest technology program

head, that current accredited or candidate status will expire the end of the next calendar year.

- April 1 – deadline for request from chief academic officer of institution for initial or reaccreditation in calendar year prior to expiration of current status; on-site review fee also due at this time.
- Self-evaluation is conducted within 12 months prior to the on-site visit
- Approximately six months in advance, institution and SAF agree on preferred dates for one and a half-day on-site visit, to occur in academic year of the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation decision.
- Visiting team is confirmed once on-site visit dates are set.
- Self-evaluation report is received by SAF and team members at least 30 days in advance of on-site visit.
- 45 days after 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.
- Chief academic officer's comments are due back within 60 days of receipt of visiting team report. If no comments are received in 60 days, the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation will assume the report is accurate.
- Any comments received from the institution will be incorporated or appended to copies of the visiting team report at the team leader's discretion and the final report forwarded to SAF within 30 days.
- At its fall meeting, the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation reviews all documentation, consults with visiting team chair and program head, deliberates and acts on each request.
- Appeal of unfavorable decision must be made to SAF Council within 30 days of SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation action. Original decision may be affirmed or reversed.

Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation Action

The SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation meets annually in executive session, 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. In advance of the meeting, the Committee chair will organize the Committee and establish an agenda.

At least 30 days in advance of the meeting, the SAF Director of Science and Education will send to the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation members, copies of the self-evaluations, supporting documentation, visiting team reports, and any institutional comments. It is the function of the Committee to make an independent analysis of the facts and to determine whether a program's accreditation is granted or continued.

The Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation's final action may include, but is not limited to, the general actions of denial or granting of initial accreditation, continued accreditation, or provisional accreditation; placing on probation; or requesting the program to show cause why accreditation should not be terminated. Provisional accreditation or probation may be recommended when a program, in the opinion of the Committee, has failed to respond satisfactorily to previous Committee requests or when it has deviated significantly from SAF Standards or Procedures. 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. A provisional, probationary or show cause action must specify the date the institution is requested to respond and the actions it must take to remedy the situation. When the action is to deny, or to provisionally recognize, place on probation or request to show cause, specific reason(s) and/or conditions are clearly stated. The Committee will also decide, where appropriate, the effective dates and duration of the accreditation, the due date for any interim status reports, the specific educational programs to be approved, and any conditions or requests for additional information, such as progress review reports.

The findings of the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation will be transmitted to the institution as part of the Committee'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 portions are released by the institution, SAF reserves the right to release these documents in their entirety.

Once the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation has taken final action, the SAF executive vice president will notify the chief administrative officer, program head, and public of the Committee's decision, as follows:

1. Notification will be made by a formal letter to the institution's chief administrative officer and forest technology program head no later than thirty days following final Committee action. Notification will include a copy of the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation'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 accreditation will be delayed pending an opportunity for the institution to appeal. Only negative actions, defined as a denial of initial accreditation or continued accreditation, may be appealed (see Appeal of SAF Accreditation Decisions).
3. Notification within 30 days to appropriate state, federal, provincial or accreditation agencies/commissions, as required by law and/or general public reporting procedures adhered to by SAF. Notification of denial of initial or continued accreditation will be delayed pending appropriate opportunity for the institution to appeal, as provided for in the SAF accreditation procedures.
4. Public availability of a list of the SAF-accredited educational programs in forest technology.

Reference to Accreditation 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 [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.

Progress Review Reports

Program heads may be requested to submit Progress Review Reports to the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation to show actions taken toward correcting deficiencies or to be responsive to recommendations. The SAF Director of Science and Education will inform the forest technology program head of the format and due date in advance. No fees associated with filing a progress review report.

Substantive Change Reports

It is the responsibility of the forest technology program head to report substantive changes in a technology program to the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation.

A substantive change is one that may significantly affect the quality or direction of a technology program. It includes, but is not limited to, such factors as:

- a major change in objectives,
- a new or major revision of a curriculum,
- major changes in faculty,
- major revisions of student admissions or retention standards,
- major changes in financial support, or
- major changes in the administration of a technology program.

Preparation of the report should follow the Accreditation Guidelines in Part III of this document by referencing the appropriate standard.

The Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation will review substantive change reports at its annual meeting or as necessary. The Committee may request additional information or it may decide that the change is acknowledged with or without reservation, or that other action be scheduled.

Fees and Charges

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

Initial Application Fee: \$500

Annual Accreditation fee: \$375; billed July 1.

Onsite Review fee: None

Substantive Change fee: None

Visiting Team expenses: Variable; the responsibility of the academic institution under review

Explanation of Fees and Charges

The **Annual fee** is assessed to the program administering the accredited curricula, but is not assessed to each individual accredited curriculum.

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. Team member expenses are not to exceed the per diem rate of the institution under review. 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.

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

Appeal of SAF Accreditation Status Decisions

An institution may appeal a negative action of the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. 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 accreditation status. Grounds for appeal are limited to allegations that the Committee has made an erroneous decision by:

1. Failing to adhere to Accreditation Standards (See Part I);
2. Failing to follow Accreditation Procedures (See Part II); or
3. Failing to consider or accurately interpret all the evidence and documentation presented on behalf of the application (See Part III).

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.

The appeal must come from the chief administrative officer of the institution, must be in writing to the SAF president, must specify the grounds for the appeal, and must request a hearing. This request for a hearing must be made within 30 days of the date of the SAF executive vice president's formal letter giving notice of the negative decision.

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 should be organized to state the issues clearly and must contain sufficient detail and information to support the position of the institution. 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 be given at least 30 days notice of the time and place. The hearing will be conducted in accord with due process, i.e., the institution will have the opportunity to present its case and to respond to questions. The institution's chief administrative officer may request, at the time of submitting the documentation, that the chair, Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation be available to answer questions regarding the Committee'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, Council will consider the institution's self-evaluation report, the visiting team's report, and any other material upon which the Committee based its findings and decision.

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

1. Uphold the decision of the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation,
2. Recommend remanding the decision to the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation, with reasons to explain this action, or
3. To overturn the decision of the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation.

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

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

Procedures for Responding to Complaints Against Accredited Programs

The SAF is concerned with accredited program's performance 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 and Procedures for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology.

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

1. Be typewritten, signed, and addressed to the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation 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 Standards and Procedures for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology; such evidence should state relevant facts, and, when possible, cite written materials and individuals for corroboration.
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.

The SAF Director of Science and Education, in consultation with the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation, 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 officer of the institution will be requested to respond and advise the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation what action has been or is being taken to resolve the issue. The reply from the institution should be responsive. If no reply is received from the institution within the following 45 days, a second and final request will be sent.

The Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation will review the response from the institution at its next scheduled meeting and determine whether the matter should be closed or discussed for action. If no response is received from the institution under the above guidelines, the Committee shall act, which may include a request why accreditation 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 Committee. If appropriate, material relating to a complaint will be filed and reviewed at the time of the next regularly scheduled review.

PART III: GUIDELINES FOR FOREST TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM ACCREDITATION REPORTS

The Procedures for SAF accreditation of education programs in forest technology require an accreditation report (report) to be submitted by the program head for review by a visiting team and the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. The report is intended as a document to show compliance with each of the criteria within each of the standards for accreditation. The report should consist of a narrative addressing, describing, explaining, and analyzing each of the criteria, standard-by-standard. Included in the body of the narrative or referenced in appended exhibits should be appropriate documentary evidence showing compliance with the criteria; such as lists, tables, publications, photos, letters, etc.

All SAF Recognition Reports are required to be submitted in twelve bound copies. One copy will be sent to each member of the Committee and three copies to the SAF National Office. Programs are encouraged to submit an electronic version of the report with the bound copy. Electronic versions will eventually be the standard for document transmittal.

Suggestions regarding format, content, and documentation are as follows:

Assembly

All copies of the report shall be bound in some fashion, such as a loose-leaf binder.

Tabs separating and identifying sections and exhibits are helpful.

A table of contents should identify major sections of the report; all pages shall be numbered.

A minimum of 12 copies will be needed by SAF.

The **Title Page** shall include:

- Title of report, including purpose; i.e., initial or continued accreditation
- Name of institution
- Name of program
- Date report prepared
- Name, address, and phone number of program head or other contact persons

Narrative

Shall be organized standard-by-standard, criterion-by-criterion, with reference to the standard and criterion being addressed.

Statements must describe, explain, and analyze how the criterion is met - not just state that it is met.

Reference to exhibits should be by exhibit number and page.

Documentation

Each exhibit shall be clearly numbered or otherwise identified.

Documentation may be incorporated within the narrative or appended as appropriate.

A list of documents providing exhibit number and document title shall be included in the table of contents or the forward to the appendix.

An "*" before a document item in the following section means that documentation is required; all other listed items are suggestions.

Suggested Narrative Content and Documentation for Each Accreditation Standard

Standard I: Program Objectives

Narrative shall include:

1. Name of institution, name of academic unit within institution where forest technology program is housed, title of educational program(s) being submitted for accreditation, full and exact title of degree granted to graduates of the program, full and exact title of degree information carried on the academic transcript of graduates of the program.
2. Statement that program is offered as a two-year, associate degree program or its equivalent and that it is not a correspondence or pre-professional course of study.
3. Detailed statement of the program goals and objectives with specific reference to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes sought to be imparted to the student.
4. Specific examples of how the program objectives are consistent with those of the parent institution, who the program's primary constituencies are, how the objectives serve those constituencies, and how the objectives meet the needs of society and the forestry profession.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. Statements from, or references to, specific pages of the current academic catalog, brochures, pamphlets, or other documents showing where objectives are publicly stated and available.
- *2. Copies of current academic catalogs, brochures, pamphlets, etc. showing programs and degrees offered.
3. Excerpts from appropriate institutional reports or other sources.

Standard II: Curriculum

Narrative shall include:

1. General summary of how the current curriculum was developed, current curriculum planning, and changes being considered.
2. Contact hours - number of lecture and laboratory contact hours in program.
3. Technical subject matter areas -
 - a. List of subject areas and which courses in curriculum provide complete or partial coverage of each area
 - b. Statement as to strengths and weaknesses of curriculum to provide coverage of the broad content description of each subject matter area
4. General education - summary of general education goals and objectives and listing of specific courses used to meet these objectives.
5. Course syllabi or outlines - statement of status and review procedures.
6. Instructional materials and textbooks - summary of which courses require textbooks, which do not, which textbooks are used, and what additional or alternative instructional materials are used.
7. Safety instruction - specific examples of all formal safety instruction.
8. Forestry-related work experience of a reasonable duration - statement and examples as to how this criterion is met.
9. Online instruction - online course hours will designated as a lecture component when calculating instruction hours for SAF Recognition. An online course cannot meet indoor and field laboratory instruction.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. Copies of current official curriculum, including course descriptions.
- *2. Listing of scheduled lecture and laboratory hours in each course including a listing of any online course hours.
- *3. Copies of current course outlines and syllabi for technical subject matter areas noted in Standard #2, showing date last revised.
- *4. Listing of instructional materials and textbooks used in each course, including reference materials and handouts.
- *5. List of courses that expose students to hazardous situations and the safety equipment or procedures used to minimize those hazards.
6. Internal student/advisor curriculum guides.
7. Examples of final exams.
8. Copies of departmental course book requisitions.
- *9. Examples of work experience documentation required by institution, field project course descriptions, duration, and field project reports or paid work experience contracts.
10. A summary matrix displaying the relationship between required technical subject areas and the college's major courses.

Standard III: Faculty

Narrative shall include:

1. General - statement as to who the forest technician faculty are, how they are organized and administered, role of each faculty member in the program, how the faculty functions as a group, and the faculty's current adequacy.
2. Student/Faculty laboratory ratios - summary statement of average number of students per faculty member in various laboratory course, based on past two academic years.
3. Full-time equivalent student/teacher ratio - calculation, showing figures, of FTE student/teacher ratio

$$\text{Ratio} = (x/y)/z$$

Where:

x = Total credit hour production of forest technician faculty; equal to the grand sum of course enrollment times course credit hours for each course taught by each forest technician faculty member for past academic year, including courses outside forest technician program.

y = Credit hours taken by FTE student; equal to 30 semester, or 45 quarter, hours per academic year.

z = FTE teachers on forest technician faculty.

4. Faculty development - summary with specific examples, of professional development activities of each faculty member over past five years; including dates, locations, and assignments as appropriate.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. A table listing each of forest technician program faculty and containing: name, rank (title), appointment (full-time, part-time; 9 mo., 12 mo.), full-time equivalent teaching assignment and all courses taught or participated in the past academic year, including the type of participation (laboratory, lecture, recitation).
- *2. Current resume for each person involved in teaching or assisting in forestry or forestry-related subject matter; including name, rank, educational background, employment history, professional memberships, and professional, scientific, technical, or scholarly activities for past five years.
- *3. Job descriptions for program head, faculty, and staff.
- *4. Course/lab class enrollments or rosters for past two years.
- *5. Completed FTE documentation sheet.

Standard IV: Students

Narrative shall include:

1. General - summary statement of current and projected student trends; including enrollment, graduation, and employment trends and student body profile.
2. Recruitment, admissions, retention, and graduation policies - summary of these policies including how they contribute to realization of program objectives and compare to parent institution policies.
3. Advising, counseling, and career guidance - summary statement of these activities including who is responsible, role of faculty and others, current pattern of academic guidance, and student opportunities for remedial assistance.

4. Leadership and cultural awareness opportunities - summary statement of specific opportunities including degree of student involvement, organizations, courses, and activities.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. Summary tables of enrollments and degrees granted for past five years.
- *2. Copies of official admissions, probation and dismissal, and graduation policies or requirements.
- *3. Statements from individual recent graduates or student/graduate organizations giving their assessment of the program within the context of the standards.
- 4. Summary tables showing mean and range of standardized test scores, such as SAT or ACT, for entering freshmen for past several years.
- 5. Copies of program degree schedules (academic advisor plan sheets).
- 6. Brochures or references on available counseling services or other available advising and career services.
- 6. Copies of current student affairs reports listing student organizations, cultural activities, or course descriptions.

Standard V: Program

Narrative shall include:

- 1. Technology program faculty separate and distinct - summarize how the forest technology program fits in the overall institution and its relation to other units, including reporting and supervising lines of the program head.
- 2. Advisory body - summary statement of role and function of advisory body including its meeting schedule, general size, and make-up.
- 3. Cooperative relations - summary, with specific examples of regional industries, organizations, and agencies the program is working with and in what manner.
- 4. Technical, clerical, secretarial, and custodial support - summary statement of adequacy of this support, including amounts and types available.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. Organizational chart showing program position in institution and reporting lines.
- *2. List of current advisory body members with titles and addresses; minutes of recent advisory body meetings; copy of written guidelines showing length of member's term, responsibilities, and operational procedures.
- 3. Listing of technical, secretarial, clerical, and custodial personnel including appointment and function.
- 4. Letters from individuals or groups providing assessment of program.
- *5. Sample work agreements, letters of cooperation, or other documentation showing cooperative activities.

Standard VI: Parent Institution and Supporting Areas

Narrative shall include:

1. General - summary statement of history, mission, accreditation status, and recent changes or trends of parent institution.
2. Library facilities - summary of general library resources and services available with specific reference to forestry and forestry-related materials and services.
3. Budget - summary of institutional and program budgets; including trends, specific reference to adequacy of funds for noted criteria listed in standard, and role of program in development of budget.
4. Student placement - summary statement, with specific examples, of placement services available to students, follow-up surveys conducted, and history of placement success for past five years.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. Copies of, or reference to, institutional mission and scope statement and accreditation status.
- *2. Listing of current forestry-related periodicals and resource materials added during the past two years.
- *3. Copies of program and/or department's budgets for past two fiscal years.
- *4. Table showing placement record of graduates for past five years by employment type and employer type.
5. Brochures on placement services, samples of placement questionnaires, or listing of past employers.

Standard VII: Physical Resources and Facilities

Narrative shall include:

1. Outdoor laboratories/school forest - summary statement regarding adequacy, availability, and utilization; including type, size, and location of forestlands and specific examples of student usage.
2. Classrooms, laboratories, shops, and equipment - summary statement regarding adequacy, availability, and utilization; including type, size, and location.
3. Audio-visual and instructional materials and equipment - summary statement regarding adequacy, availability, and utilization; including types and where they are incorporated into program, with specific references to computer resources.
4. Student transportation - summary statement of adequacy, availability, and utilization of student transportation on field projects; including how students are transported and how transportation is funded.
5. Arrangement of facilities - summary statement of adequacy; including description of facilities.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. Map(s) and/or aerial photographs showing vegetation type, size, and location of field laboratories relative to campus.
- *2. Campus map(s) showing location of forest technician program and other facilities such as library, shops, school forests, etc.
- *3. List of classroom, laboratory, office, shop, or other space utilized by program; including size, use, capacity, and campus unit controlling assignment.

*4. List of current inventory of equipment and vehicles available to program including campus unit controlling the items.

5. Photos of facilities and resources utilized by program.

6. Lists of films or other audio-visual materials used.

7. Brochures regarding facilities, resources, or materials.

* Indicates required documentation

NOTE: These standards and procedures are reviewed periodically and may be modified when appropriate. Answers to questions regarding clarification, interpretation, or application may be issued only by the SAF national office