



Accreditation Procedures

Step-by-Step

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Table of Contents

Preamble	3
Introduction.....	3
Preparation Phase – Pre-Registration.....	5
Step 1. Registration.....	5
Step 2. Pre-Eligibility.....	5
Step 3. Eligibility	6
Step 4. Site Visit Preparation	7
On-Site Visit Phase	7
Step 5. Site Visit	7
Post-Site Visit Phase	8
Step 6. Post Visit	8
Step 7. Accreditation Decision	8
Step 8. Follow-Up.....	8
Accreditation Obligations	9
References.....	10

Preamble

This is a general overview of the steps in the NCAAA accreditation process. Detailed requirements and explanations are contained in the material referenced in this document. As the NCAAA practices its own continuous quality improvement process, these procedures may be revised, amended, or improved to incorporate the best national and international practices, process. Before starting the institution or program in the accreditation process, please be sure that the most current versions of the standards, forms, and templates are being used. Current information and documents are available on the NCAAA website, www.ncaaa.org.sa.

Introduction

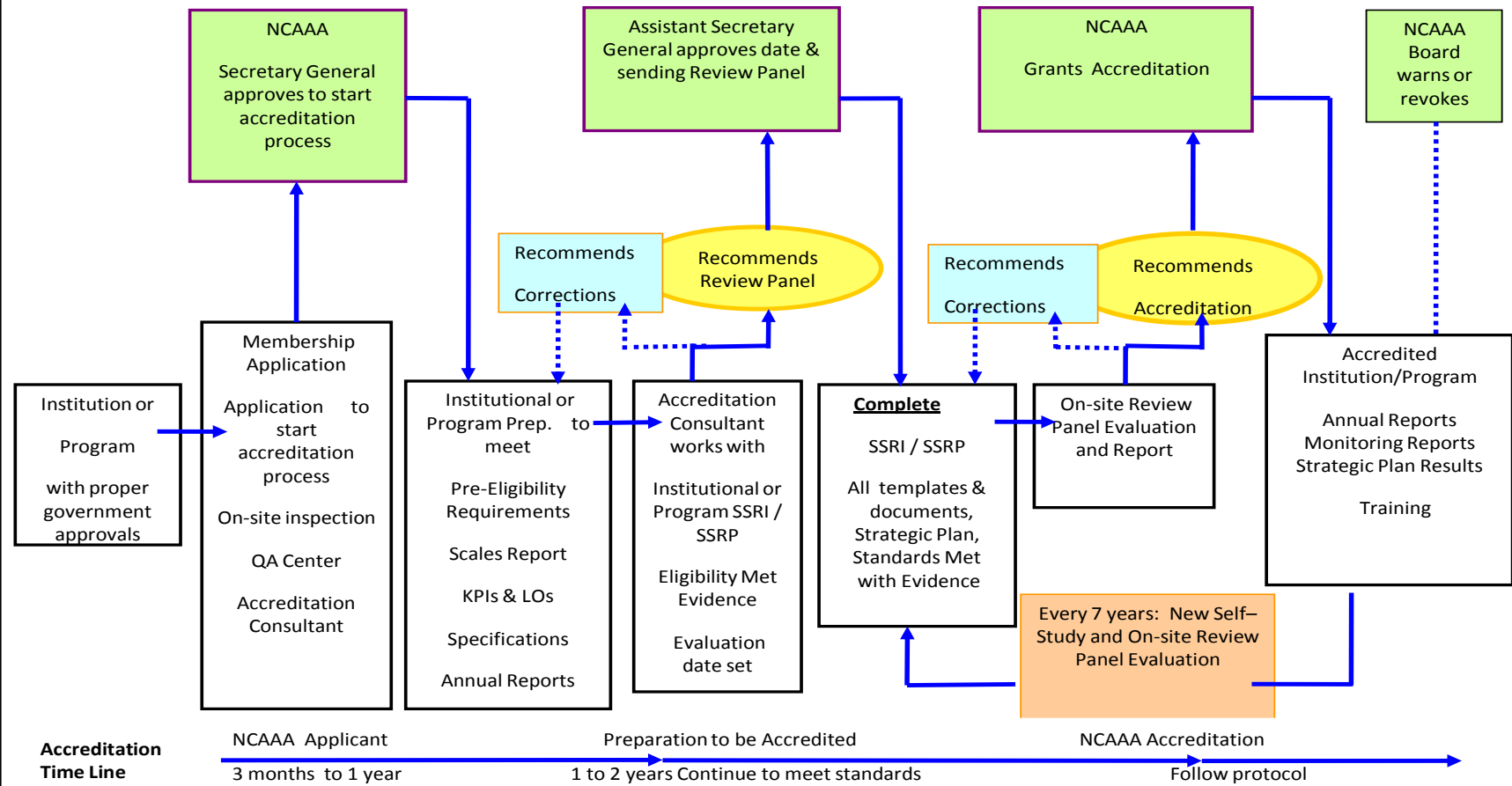
Accreditation of an institution or program is recognition of its quality. Accreditation is an external and independent validation of academic and quality practices and the extent to which the institution or program complies with the eleven NCAAA *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions/Programs*. An onsite visit by a panel of experts reviews and observes the findings of the self assessment and provides a report detailing their professional assessment of academic quality in relation to the standards. The NCAAA, after considering the recommendations of the Review Panel, makes a decision regarding accreditation.

Before undertaking the NCAAA accreditation review, the institution or program should be reasonably certain that it can meet the core elements of all eleven standards and comply with the terms and conditions of its official approval by the Ministry of Education. These core elements include its scope or range of programs, the levels at which the programs are offered, its official title or name, its processes for quality assurance, and any special conditions specified within its license. The governing board must approve its mission, strategic plan for the achievement of the mission, and its major objectives for quality improvement.

The overall NCAAA accreditation protocol is provided below. This flowchart pictures the process for both NCAAA and the institution or program from the beginning to the end. It is important to understand that the accreditation protocol is an interactive process where NCAAA provides quality assurance and accreditation services and the institution or program is responsible to earn recognition by completing the work required in the protocol.

National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA)

Accreditation Protocol



The accreditation steps are detailed procedures that are broadly defined in three distinct phases of the review process: 1. Preparations that take place before the on-site visit; 2. Activities that take place during the on-site visit; and 3. On-going activities and responsibilities that occur after the on-site visit.

Preparation Phase

Pre-Registration

In order to get started an institution or program should submit an official letter to the NCAAA Secretary General requesting a Registration Application. The registration process includes completing the application, the registration contract, and paying the registration fee.

Step 1. NCAAA Registration

When the institution or program is ready to begin the accreditation review process, it should formally register with NCAAA (use forms F1 for institutions or F2 for programs). Registration includes submitting profile information that is used to provide basic factual information and initial benchmarks for continuous assessment and improvement. The institution Rector or President authorizes the registration. The complete terms and conditions governing registration and use of the AIMS are given in F1 and F2.

After acceptance of the complete registration by NCAAA, and payment of the registration fee by the institution or program, access to the Accreditation Management System (AIMS) is provided. In addition, NCAAA assigns an Accreditation Consultant to provide advice and ongoing support for the accreditation review process. NCAAA also provides training workshops, consultation visits, access to the accreditation aggregate statistics, and AIMS technical support.

The NCAAA Accreditation Management System (AIMS)

The institution or program should begin to populate the required templates and forms, including submitting the appropriate attachments and evidence. The accreditation protocol is designed by AIMS according to 8 steps that are provided to successfully guide users through the process. "Help" tabs are available throughout AIMS to clarify what is required or to answer basic questions.

AIMS is designed to provide web-based, internet access to current publications, templates, forms, and a data-bank. AIMS also provides archival information; for example, contact information, annual profile statistics, key performance indicators with benchmarking data, national aggregated statistics, past reports and evidence submitted, and other information that is useful for the Commission or Ministry of Education.

Step 2. Pre-Eligibility

Pre-Eligibility includes reviewing the following core elements:

- a. **Intuition Strategic Plan.** This plan includes a business plan for the institution up to the time of the review, a Quality Assurance Center, and a Quality Assurance Plan for the institution or program.
- b. **Initial Self Evaluation Scales Report.** Information about the current levels of performance with benchmarks against which future improvements can be assessed and the independent opinion review. A response to the independent opinion report should be prepared.
- c. **Initial Annual Program Report (APR).** Each program in an institution should complete its first report, or for a program review, submit its initial report.
- d. **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).** Select institutional and program level KPIs with initial benchmarking. KPIs should be approved by the appropriate Council and secure in an established data base.
- e. **Student and Faculty Evaluation Surveys.** Initial student surveys should be developed for analysis and improvement. Data should be collected regularly and stored in the data base.
- f. **Annual Fee should be paid.**

Step 3. Eligibility

There are 19 eligibility requirements for institutions (see **F3.I**) and 21 requirements for programs, including 12 program specific requirements and nine key institutional arrangements. (**F3.P**).

Eligibility includes reviewing the following core elements:

- a. **Self Study Report (SSRI or SSRP).** Initial draft, including KPIs Report.
- b. **Notations.** Response to Notations Report, including rejoinders.
- c. **Self Evaluation Scales Report.** If more than two years have passes since the initial **Eligibility Requirements Checklist** for institutions or for programs.
- d. **Program Specifications.** Individual templates for all programs or representative samples for large public universities.
- e. **Annual Program Reports.** Two consecutive sample reports for each program are required or for large public institutional representative samples.
- f. **Course Specifications.** Individual template representative samples.
- g. **Course Reports.** Individual template representative samples.

- h. **Field Experience Specifications.** Two consecutive sample reports for each program are required or for large public institutional representative samples.
- i. **Field Experience Reports.** Individual template representative samples.
- j. report a second report may be required.
- k. **Evaluation Surveys.** Evaluation survey summaries for all stakeholders should be complete, including alumni and employer surveys.

Step 4. Site Visit Preparation

Site visit preparations include:

- a. **SSRI or SSRP.** Final Draft (eight weeks or more before the review date).
- b. All documents, templates, evidence, information required for Steps 1 to 3, including current statistical data and report updates (eight weeks or more before the review date).
- c. **Letter** specifying dates of the review.
- d. Signed **Conflict of Interest** form.
- e. Approved **Site-Visit Schedule**.
- f. **Prep Workshop.** Provided by Accreditation Consultant.
- g. **Accreditation Consultant Report** on Eligibility.

On-Site Visit Phase

Step 5. Site Visit

The Review Panel visits on-site, has meetings with the stakeholders, inspects relevant documents and evidence, and tours the facilities that support the academic activities.

The purpose of the site visit is to observe and verify activities and evidence that cannot be assessed from the Self Study Report; including observing the condition of the facilities, assessing student educational experiences, and writing the initial Review Panel Report (RPR).

Site visit activities include:

- a. Provide hard copies of SSR and supporting documentation.
- b. Provide hardcopy update information.

Post-Site Visit Phase

Step 6. Post Visit

Review Panel Report

The Review Panel prepares an initial, unedited Review Panel Report (RPR) during the site visit. Within two to three weeks an edited version of the RPR is sent to NCAAA by the Chair. Subsequently the RPR is sent to the Rector or President, without the accreditation decision recommendation, for initial review and for factual errors. It is then returned to NCAAA for factual error corrections. Next the RPR is sent to the Rector or President for response to Review Panel recommendations. After the response to recommendations or action plan is submitted to NCAAA, the RPR is assessed internally by the Commission and evaluated by an independent Accreditation Review Committee. The final RPR includes the accreditation decision and is sent to the Rector or President.

Post site visit activities include:

- a. **Factual Errors.** There is opportunity to ensure the RPR is factually accurate. If factual errors are identified the report is revised using template T15.I for institutions or T15.P for programs.
- b. **Response to Recommendations – Action Plan.** The institution or program is responsible to create an action plan in response to the RPR recommendations using template T16. Once the action plan is complete it is submitted to NCAAA.
- c. **Periodic Monitoring Reports.** NCAAA may request periodic monitoring reports and documentation in response to action taken to demonstrate the completion of the action plan.
- d. **Monitoring Reports.** NCAAA may request reports and documentation as a result of substantive change or issues of concern that may arise.

Step 7. Accreditation Decision

Accreditation Decision

NCAAA may award full accreditation recognition, conditional accreditation recognition or deny accreditation. Full accreditation is for seven years and conditional accreditation for a limited period, up to three and one-half years.

Step 8. Accreditation Follow-Up

Accreditation Procedures

An accredited institution or program exercises full responsibility for all academic offerings and other activities provided. All accredited institutions and programs are expected to maintain compliance with all eleven NCAAAA academic standards and protocol, including branch locations.

Follow-up responsibilities include:

- a. **Annual Program Report (APR).** All programs are responsible to submit an APR, including action plan updates for accredited programs.
- b. **Response to Conditional Accreditation.** In the event that an institution or program is awarded accreditation that is conditional, then template T17 is to be complete.
- c. **Substantive Changes.** NCAAAA recognizes that developments will be required by accredited institutions or programs in response to the changing educational environment. Major changes may affect the status of accreditation. It is the obligation of the accredited institution or program to notify the Commission of any substantive changes that could affect continued compliance with its Standards. This includes changes in the name of specific programs, personnel, curriculum, or other factors that may affect educational quality.
- d. **Monitoring Reports.** NCAAAA may request reports and documentation as a result of substantive change or issues of concern that may arise.

Accreditation Obligations

1. Fees

There are three different kinds of costs associated with NCAAAA accreditation: 1. Registration and access to AIMS fees; 2. Site visit fees; 3. Annual fees.

Fees are determined by the NCAAAA Board of Directors. The current fee structure is given in F1 and F2.

2. Information and Public Disclosure

NCAAAA maintains a website where it posts its policy book, accreditation standards, templates, handbooks, publications, and a list of accredited institutions and programs.

3. Re-Accreditation

NCAAAA awards accreditation for seven years. Therefore, re-accreditation for institutions or programs is required. Normally the re-accreditation process begins after five years and is complete at the conclusion of the seventh year. Re-accreditation requires a self study and a corresponding SSRI or SSRP with all documentation, templates and evidence, and an on-site visit by an external Review Panel. All statistical data and surveys should be kept current.

References

The NCAAA website provides further information about the system for accreditation and quality assurance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; www.ncaaa.org.sa

1. *Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Saudi Arabia
Part 1-The System for Quality Assurance and Accreditation*
2. *Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Saudi Arabia
Part 2- Internal Quality Assurance Arrangements*
3. *Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Saudi Arabia
Part 3-External Reviews for Accreditation and Quality Assurance*
4. *National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*
5. *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*
6. *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs*
7. *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs Offered by
Distance Education*
8. *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions*
9. *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs*
10. *Terms and Conditions for use of the NCAAA Accreditation Management System*
11. *NCAAA Accreditation Registration and Accreditation Fee Structure*