

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

MANUAL OF ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES FOR CANADIAN PROGRAMS OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1 - Landscape Architecture Accreditation Council – Overview	4
1.1 Mission	4
1.2 Mandate	4
1.3 Scope	5
1.4 Operating Principles	5
1.5 Core Values	5
1.6 Definitions, Interpretation, and Application	6
1.7 Related Accreditation Documentation	8
SECTION 2 - Accreditation Procedures and Process	9
2.1 Applying for Accreditation	9
2.2 Modified Faculty Requirements for New Programs	9
2.3 Candidacy Status	9
2.4 Self-Evaluation Report	10
2.5 Pre-Visit Sequence of Events and Timeline	10
2.6 Roster of Visiting Evaluators	11
2.7 Visiting Team Selection	11
2.8 Pre-Visit Responsibilities: Visiting Team	12
2.9 Pre-Visit Responsibilities: Program	12
2.10 Sample Visit Schedule	13
2.11 Visiting Team Report	15
2.12 Institutional Response	15
2.13 Distribution to LAAC Council	15
2.14 Withdrawing an Application for Accreditation	16
2.15 LAAC Decision Meeting	16
2.16 LAAC Actions	16
2.17 Notification of Accreditation Decisions and Actions	17
2.18 Confidentiality	17
2.19 Reference to Accredited Status	17
2.20 Delaying a Scheduled Accreditation Visit	18
2.21 Rescheduling Visit	18
2.22 Term of Accreditation	18
2.23 Annual Report	18
2.24 Substantive Change	19
2.25 Other Reports	19
2.26 Maintaining Good Standing	19
2.27 Administrative Suspension of Accreditation	19
2.28 Withdrawal of Accreditation	20
2.29 Document Retention	20
2.30 Accreditation Fees	20

SECTION 3 - Appeal Procedure	21
3.1 Decisions Subject to Appeal	21
3.2 Notice and Basis of Appeal	21
3.3 Appeal Panel	21
3.4 Decision of the Appeal Panel	21
3.5 Expenses of an Appeal	22
APPENDICES	23
Appendix A – Electronic Presentation of Student Work Guidelines	23
Appendix B – Conflict of Interest Policy and Declaration	24
Appendix C – Self Evaluation Report and Curriculum Map Templates	25

SECTION 1 - Landscape Architecture Accreditation Council – Overview

1.1 Mission

The mission of the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Council (LAAC) is to evaluate, advocate for and advance the quality of education in Canadian landscape architecture programs.

In pursuit of this mission, it is the policy of the Council to ensure a minimum level of achievement of commonly accepted professional skills while encouraging experimentation, innovation, and flexibility in curriculum. It is also intended that the LAAC work proactively to assist the programs to define their intended learning outcomes, evaluate their programs, and refine their curricula on an on-going basis.

1.2 Mandate

The LAAC has operated continuously since its inception in 1978 as a Standing Committee of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA). The current Bylaws of the Society that define the Accreditation Council's roles and responsibilities are as follows:

- a. Be the body of the Society responsible for accrediting professional university undergraduate and graduate degree programs in landscape architecture;
- b. Comprise six members, appointed by the Board for a normal term of office of five years, and including two landscape architecture educators and one non-landscape architect, with one member being replaced annually;
- c. Elect a Chair whose term of office shall be three years;
- d. Keep funds received for accreditation in an account separate from those of the Society and shall only apply those funds to activities of the Accreditation Council; and
- e. Be responsible for:
 - i. Appointing teams to undertake accreditation;
 - ii. Recruiting and training accreditation team members;
 - iii. Reviewing and approving accreditation team reports;
 - iv. Reviewing and approving annual reports from postsecondary accredited programs;
 - v. Advising the Board of decisions; and,
 - vi. Maintaining contact with the American Society of Landscape Architects' Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board and other accrediting bodies to ensure consistency of standards.

Decision-making authority in all accreditation matters rests solely with LAAC, which operates independently of the CSLA and its Component Associations. This authority includes determination of accreditation standards, policies, and procedures; establishment of program fees; and allocation of all accreditation revenues to the achievement of its mission.

The LAAC is designed to be financially self-sustaining; however, it can appeal to the CSLA in the event of funding shortfalls or to undertake special initiatives. The CSLA is also committed to provide in-kind staffing support and overhead for the administration of the LAAC, which typically includes accounting, banking services, meeting planning, record-keeping, Internet/web access, and communications with the Association's membership. LAAC members and volunteers are also covered by the applicable CSLA insurance policies.

The duties of the Council Chair are to act as President of the Council; coordinate the work of the Council on all accreditation matters; and be responsible for liaison with the CSLA Board of Directors, other accrediting bodies, and the directors of the various Landscape Architecture programs across Canada.

LAAC members must be formally approved by the CSLA Board of Directors and are limited to two consecutive five-year terms without a break in service. Both practitioner and educator members should have served on at least one

accreditation visit prior to being appointed to the Board, with consideration also given to diverse experiences and regional representation. Practitioners should have at least 10 years of relevant experience and be a member of CSLA. The non-landscape architecture member of the Council shall be drawn from a related design or planning discipline.

The Accreditation Council is required to meet at least once each year but can meet as often as required to review and decide on all questions of accreditation.

1.3 Scope

The LAAC is a specialized, non-governmental evaluating body that accredits educational programs leading to first-professional degrees at the Bachelor's or Master's level in Canada. Other programs, such as technical, pre-professional, and advanced professional programs, lie outside LAAC's scope.

In addition to assessing how well programs meet their own specific and institutional educational mission and objectives, accreditation evaluates programs against published standards to ensure that the essential educational components leading to entry-level professional competence are continuously achieved. The LAAC formally reviews and assesses the Standards and Procedures every six years and seeks advice and input from landscape architecture educators and practitioners during the process. Minor changes can be reviewed annually, and the document can be amended to reflect those changes at any time.

1.4 Operating Principles

To achieve its mission, the LAAC seeks to:

- Uphold the standards it establishes in an ethical, non-discriminatory, and non-punitive manner.
- Promote transparency and clarity in its decisions and actions.
- Support diversity in all its varied forms.
- Encourage experimentation, innovation, and flexibility in curriculum.
- Promote self-examination and self-analysis of programs and their curriculum by accredited programs.
- Aspire to achieve educational excellence as the foundation of professional practice.
- Encourage education that prepares students to succeed in a complex and dynamic global context.

1.5 Core Values

The profession of landscape architecture serves two primary principles in the planning, design, and stewardship of natural and built environments: 1) to protect the health, safety, and well-being of people and communities, including future generations; and 2) to safeguard the health and resilience of natural systems, ecosystems, and non-human inhabitants. LAAC believes the following Core Values are essential to the education of future landscape architects. These Core Values are informed by the [Canadian Landscape Charter](#); [CSLA Code of Professional Conduct](#); [CSLA Statement of Reconciliation](#); the [CSLA Resilient, Transformative and Sustainable: A Positive Approach to a Changing Future position paper](#), and, [CSLA Statement of Inequality and Injustice](#). Accordingly, the professional program shall embed these Core Values into its curriculum, policies, community, processes, and activities, and identify and engage in contemporary issues in alignment with these Core Values.

1. Environmental Health, Sustainability, Resilience, and Stewardship: Landscape architects preserve, plan, design, and steward healthy environmental systems that promote the health and climate resilience of the environment, people, and cultures. Well-functioning ecological and biological systems are assets essential to the well-being, sustainability, and resiliency of current and future generations.

2. **Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** Landscape architects, through their professional undertakings and products, strive to create and maintain an inclusive and welcoming climate which embraces differences, offers respect in words and actions, displays cultural sensitivity and competence, and values all people and their perspectives as essential for the health and well-being of diverse individuals and communities.
3. **Truth and Reconciliation:** Landscape architects share responsibility to positively contribute to the process of reconciliation and to be capable partners with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada. Inclusion and consideration of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, their values, their voices, and their knowledge in the planning, design and management of the Canadian landscape should be the goal of all landscape architects.
4. **Human and Community Health and Safety:** Landscape architectural practice impacts individual and community health, safety, and well-being. Landscape architects commit to methodologies that study and understand the public protections, policies, and environmental justice outcomes that improve individual and community health.
5. **Professional Ethics and Responsibility:** Landscape architects serve the environment, the public, and their clients; address inherent conflicts in those services with honesty, integrity, fairness, equality, dignity, and with a recognition of diverse and individual rights; and advocate for the principles of the profession.
6. **Leadership and Innovation:** To practice effectively in changing contexts, landscape architects seek continuous advancement of their own and the discipline's values, knowledge, and skills; create new ideas and knowledge; effect positive change in the environment; and lead, inspire, facilitate, and empower innovation.
7. **Application of the Sciences to the Design of Natural and Built Landscapes:** As practitioners of a discipline firmly rooted in the natural, physical, and social sciences, landscape architects utilize science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as well as Indigenous Knowledge Systems to develop innovative, site-specific design solutions that protect both human and environmental health and safety.

1.6 Definitions, Interpretation, and Application

In addition to the following terms, the LAAC utilizes the CSLA Glossary of Acronyms located at <https://www.csla-aapc.ca/career-resources/glossary-acronyms>

Accreditation – A non-governmental, voluntary process of peer review designed to evaluate programs based on their stated mission, objectives and learning outcomes and the accreditation standards that follow.

Action Letter – Official communication from LAAC to a Program reporting the accreditation decision and providing a summary of recommendations affecting accreditation of the program.

Assessment – Each criterion has one or more questions that seek qualitative and quantitative evidence that is used to assess the level of compliance with, or achievement of, the related criteria.

Candidacy Status – An academic unit that has enrolled in a working relationship with the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Council to ensure that it is properly positioned for a successful Initial Accreditation Review and approval.

Compliance – Achieved when the LAAC concludes, after review of relevant indicators or other evidence, that a standard is "met" or "met with recommendation" as defined below. To achieve accreditation a program must demonstrate to the LAAC, through the Self-Evaluation Report, site visit, and technical accuracy review of the Visiting Team Report, that it complies with published standards.

Continuing Accreditation Status – An established academic unit that has already achieved Initial Accreditation and is working towards its second (or subsequent) accreditation renewal.

Core Values – The seven (7) foundational values identified by LAAC and further described by these Accreditation Standards that inform the education of future landscape architects.

Criteria – Each standard has one or more criteria statements that define the components needed to satisfy the related standard. Not satisfying a criterion does not automatically lead to an assessment of a standard as "not met". To be accredited a program demonstrates progress towards meeting the criteria. In this document, criteria are identified by letters (e.g., A. Program Mission).

Curriculum Map – The Curriculum Map template provides a means of reporting the sequence of courses that meet the required Learning Outcomes.

Diversity – Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ. While diversity is often used in reference to race, ethnicity, and gender, we embrace a broader definition of diversity that also includes abilities, age, education, gender identity, language, marital status, national origin, physical appearance, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Our definition also includes diversity of ideas, perspectives, and values. We also recognize that individuals affiliate with multiple identities.

Equity – Equity is the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people. Equity demands that we identify and understand the root causes of unjust outcomes, eliminate systemic barriers to justice, and strive to create a more equal society.

First-Professional Landscape Architecture Program – A "first-professional program" in landscape architecture encompasses the body of knowledge common to the landscape architecture profession and promotes acquisition of knowledge and abilities necessary to enter the professional practice of landscape architecture:

- a) At the **Bachelor's level** – in a context that is enriched by a broad foundation in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences,
- b) At the **Master's level** – in a context that provides instruction in and application of research and/or scholarly methods.

Full-Time Equivalent Faculty (FTE) – FTE is a figure representing the aggregated time committed by full- and part-time faculty members to teaching in a department or program, including faculty who have their duties or teaching assignments split between an undergraduate and a graduate program and faculty who have their assignments split between disciplines.

Full-Time Faculty – Members of the faculty engaged in a full course load of instruction as defined by the norms of the governing institution and accepted practice within the Canadian university context.

Initial Accreditation – The first accreditation for a program leading to a degree in landscape architecture. Initial Accreditation applies retroactively to degrees awarded by the program in the year in which the review takes place, as well as degrees granted in the immediately preceding year.

Intent – Explains the purpose of the standard.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems – Indigenous Knowledge refers to a set of complex knowledge systems based on the worldviews of Indigenous Peoples. It reflects the unique cultures, languages, values, histories, governance, and legal systems of Indigenous Peoples. It is place-based, cumulative and dynamic. Indigenous Knowledge systems involve living well with, and being in relationship with, the natural world. [Indigenous Knowledge Systems](#) build upon the experiences of earlier generations, inform the practice of current generations, and evolve in the context of contemporary society.

Learning Outcomes – Learning Outcomes are statements that describe significant and essential knowledge, abilities (skills) and values that students are expected to achieve and reliably demonstrate at the end of a course or program.

Learning Outcomes Levels of Achievement – required minimum levels of achievement for the criterion of each Learning Outcome are prescribed in the Curriculum Map template. The levels are:

Awareness: Student work demonstrates that students were introduced to this topic and are aware of how it potentially contributes to the profession of landscape architecture.

Development: Student work demonstrates that students were introduced to this topic; applied the knowledge and skills to their coursework; and understand how it can be applied to the profession of landscape architecture.

Entry Level Competency: Student work demonstrates that students were introduced to this topic; applied the knowledge and skills to their project coursework on multiple projects; and are able to apply the principles to real world projects in an entry-level position.

New Program Status – A program that has successfully completed its initial Accreditation review and has commenced its first review cycle.

Part-Time Faculty – Members of the faculty without a full course load of instruction, typically characterized as Adjunct, Affiliate, and/or Sessional Lecturers, but not including Teaching Assistants drawn from the student body.

Professional Program – An inclusive term for the coursework and other learning experiences leading to a professional degree and the supporting administration, faculty, facilities, and student services that sponsor and provide those experiences.

Program Administrator – An individual holding a full academic appointment and exercising the leadership and management functions of the program. Note, this is an all-inclusive term used in this text to describe an administrative position that may be characterized in a particular institution as: Head, Director, Coordinator, Chairperson, or equivalent.

Recommendations Affecting Accreditation – Issues of serious concern, directly affecting the quality of the program. Recommendations Affecting Accreditation are only made when the visiting team assesses a standard as met with recommendation or not met. Recommendations are derived from the identified areas of weakness in meeting a standard that are described in the rationale sections of the visiting team report. The program is required to report progress regularly on these issues. Recommendations Affecting Accreditation identify issues and do not prescribe solutions.

Self-Evaluation Report (SER) – An SER is a document prepared by a program that describes its expectations, operations, and resources; assesses its progress toward meeting its mission, goals, and objectives; and measures its performance against the criteria for accreditation.

Shall – Wherever used in the Standards is defined as "mandatory".

Should – Wherever used in the Standards is defined as "prescriptive".

Standards – Qualitative and quantitative statements of the essential conditions that an accredited professional program must continuously meet. A professional program must demonstrate adequate evidence of compliance with all LAAC standards to achieve and maintain accreditation.

Standard Met – Is employed when evidence shows that overall program performance in this area meets LAAC minimum standards. Note, a standard may be judged as met even though one or more indicators are not minimally met.

Standard Met with Recommendation – Is employed when deficiencies exist in an area directly bearing on accreditation. The problem or problems are determined to have observable effects on the overall quality of the Program.

Standard Not Met – Indicates that the cited deficiency is so severe that the overall quality of the program is compromised and the program's ability to deliver adequate landscape architecture education is impaired.

Suggestions for Improvement – Areas where the program can build on a strength or address an area of concern that does not directly affect accreditation at the time of the LAAC review.

1.7 Related Accreditation Documentation

The CSLA Manual of Accreditation Standards and Procedures must be read together with the following companion documents, which are all available in hard copy from the CSLA, or by download from the CSLA website (<https://www.csla-aapc.ca/about-csla/accreditation-council>):

- ASLA – CSLA Reciprocity Agreement
- Guidelines for preparation of a Digital/Electronic Compendium of Student Work (see Appendix B)
- Visiting Team Guidelines
- Visiting Team Report Template
- Visiting Team Conflict of Interest Form

The LAAC reserves the right to vary from these published documents and procedures if such an action is in the best interest of a Program.

SECTION 2 - Accreditation Procedures and Process

2.1 Applying for Accreditation

Process – Applications for both Initial Accreditation and on-going Accreditation Renewal must be received by the LAAC at least four months prior to the anticipated review visit. In all cases, applications must be in the form of a letter from the Dean of the Faculty or College in which the Landscape Architecture program is housed.

Fees – Initial Accreditation visits are subject to a specific visit fee that is set at a level designed to cover the LAAC review expenses and related costs. In the case of routine renewal of accreditation for established programs, the visit costs are covered in the accumulated annual fees charged to the program and a specific visit fee is not required. For all relevant LAAC fees, refer to the Schedule of Fees available on-line at the CSLA website.

Compliance Rules:

- a) Established programs that have achieved Continuing Accreditation Status and are applying for routine accreditation renewal must demonstrate compliance with all seven published Accreditation Standards.
- b) In the case of New Programs, however, in recognition of their developing/emerging status, programs applying for their Initial Accreditation are granted partial relief from the rules regarding the number of Faculty. In all other respects, however, New Programs must demonstrate compliance with the published Standards. These modified rules are more fully described below.

2.2 Modified Faculty Requirements for New Programs

A New Program that offers a first professional degree program at the bachelor's level shall have at least three FTE instructional faculty who hold professional degrees in landscape architecture, at least one of whom shall be full-time. The majority of the instructional faculty members shall also be members of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects or an equivalent professional institution.

A New Program that offers a first-professional degree program at both the bachelor's level and master's levels shall have at least six FTE instructional faculty, five of whom shall hold professional degrees in landscape architecture, at least two of whom shall be full-time. The majority of the instructional faculty members shall also be members of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects or an equivalent professional institution.

Before formally applying for an Initial Accreditation review, however, a New Program must in all other respects be in full compliance with all seven LAAC Standards. The program must also have granted degrees to at least one graduating class.

Once granted Initial Accreditation, a New Program must progressively increase its faculty numbers to meet the full LAAC Faculty Standard no later than three years from the date of approval.

2.3 Candidacy Status

The LAAC has developed an optional "Candidacy Status" to help non-accredited programs prepare for the accreditation process. Candidacy Status is a classification granted to any program in the planning or developmental stages of implementation. This classification provides evidence to the educational institution, professional associations, students, and the public that the program under development appears to have the potential to ultimately meet the LAAC accreditation standards. Once granted Candidacy Status, the CSLA will acknowledge the program's status on their website.

The purpose of Candidacy Status is to establish an on-going constructive partnership between LAAC and the institution working towards accreditation. Programs designated with "Candidacy Status" have voluntarily committed to work toward LAAC accreditation. While Candidacy Status signifies that the program is demonstrating reasonable progress

towards accreditation, it does not indicate that the program is presently accredited, nor that it is ultimately guaranteed to achieve full accreditation.

To achieve Candidacy Status, a program must submit a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and undergo a preliminary program review. The SER must fully explain the program's strategic plan to achieve full compliance with the Standards and the present state of its progress toward that goal. The program is also encouraged to explain in the SER any regional or local aspects of the program that differentiate the school, course, and program from those already being offered in Canada. The preliminary program review also requires a mini accreditation visit during which two members of the LAAC, and/or the Roster of Visiting Evaluators, examine the program's SER and conduct a 1–2-day visit to the program.

The LAAC will vote on whether to grant a program Candidacy Status at its next regularly scheduled meeting after reviewing the program's SER and the report from the mini-review team. If the LAAC decides not to grant Candidacy Status, the decision is not subject to appeal. The program will be informed in writing of the LAAC's decision.

After achieving Candidacy Status, programs are required to submit annual progress reports to LAAC. These reports will be reviewed and LAAC will make recommendations and suggestions on how the program can continue to advance towards meeting the accreditation standards.

After achieving Candidacy Status, a program must formally apply for Initial Accreditation within one year of graduating its first class. If initial Accreditation is not granted at that time, the program can retain its Candidacy Status for one additional year.

Candidacy Status programs are responsible for all expenses of the initial mini review, as well as an annual sustaining fee, as set out in the Schedule of LAAC Fees available from the CSLA website.

2.4 Self-Evaluation Report

All programs applying for accreditation prepare a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) using the SER template provided by LAAC (link provided in Appendix). The SER describes the program's mission and intended learning outcomes, its self-assessment, and future plans; provides a detailed response to the recommendations of the previous visiting team; and details the program's compliance with each accreditation standard. It is important that faculty, administrators, and students all participate in preparing the self-evaluation report. The SER must include a statement explaining the participation of each group.

The SER must include a condensed resume (maximum two pages) for each faculty member currently teaching in the program. The resume must list:

- the courses currently taught;
- educational background;
- recent honors and awards;
- recent research, scholarship, and creative activity;
- recent publications;
- current academic, professional, and public service; and
- professional memberships.

The term "recent" refers to accomplishments and changes since the last accreditation visit.

2.5 Pre-Visit Sequence of Events and Timeline

The following summarizes the timeline and critical sequence of events prior to the team visit:

- Prior to the intended review, the program arranges to have the Dean issue a formal visit request in writing. This request must be submitted at least 120 days prior to the desired visit and must identify the preferred

visit dates. LAAC will work with the program to ensure that the proposed visit timing does not overlap or otherwise conflict with the timing of reviews by other Accrediting and Professional Agencies.

- At least 60 days prior to the agreed visit, the program shall submit a draft copy of the SER to the LAAC Chair for a preliminary review. The primary purpose of this preliminary review is not to assess the quality of the program, but rather to determine the completeness and clarity of the SER.
- Within 15 days of receipt of the draft SER, the Chair shall advise the program of any required revisions or additions.
- The program shall have a further 15 days to make any necessary revisions and issue the final SER in digital PDF format, to the LAAC.
- Regardless of the above-noted deadlines, the final approved SER shall be available to the Visiting Team at least 30 days prior to the visit.
- One copy of the SER and Appendices shall be made available in hard copy format in the Team Room during the visit of the Visiting Team. The program is responsible for all related printing costs for the SER.
- If the documents are not submitted by the required deadline, the program may be notified that the visit has been postponed. In the case of a currently accredited program, this may result in the suspension of accreditation and/or the term of accreditation expiring.

2.6 Roster of Visiting Evaluators

The LAAC maintains the Roster of Visiting Evaluators (ROVE). Visiting Team members are typically selected from this Roster, but may, at the discretion of the LAAC, also be recruited from the ASLA LAAB Roster or other suitable candidates.

There are three categories of evaluators:

Landscape Architecture Educators who hold a first-professional degree in landscape architecture, teach in an accredited program, and are full-time teaching instructors with six or more years of experience. Academic team members undertaking a review of a master's level program should typically possess a minimum of an MLA degree.

Academic Administrators (current or former) who hold the minimum rank of assistant or associate dean, including non-landscape architects, and who hold a terminal degree in their respective fields. While preference in this category will be for candidates drawn from a related design or planning discipline, this is not considered mandatory.

Landscape Architecture Practitioners who have a first-professional degree in landscape architecture and at least 10 years of practice experience. Practitioner team members undertaking a review of a master's level program should typically possess a minimum of an MLA degree.

Exceptions to these criteria can be made at the discretion of the LAAC chair.

To ensure wide representation of the educational community, accredited programs are invited to nominate one Landscape Architecture Educator and one Academic Administrator to the ROVE. Similarly, each CSLA component chapter is encouraged to nominate a minimum of two practitioners to the ROVE. The LAAC will evaluate the qualifications of ROVE nominees and will provide orientation and training for those chosen to attend an evaluation visit. Appointments are for 5 years and are renewable at the discretion of the LAAC. Information required of all ROVE candidates and members shall include current location, school affiliations, and previous visits, as well as a resume. On request, the LAAC will make the current ROVE database available to the programs.

2.7 Visiting Team Selection

The Visiting Team consists of one landscape architecture educator, one practitioner, and one academic administrator. The LAAC Chair selects a proposed visiting team and designates one member as Team Chair, who will typically be an experienced educator, or an experienced practitioner who has knowledge of university contexts. LAAC will strive for a

team representing the LAAC definition of diversity (pg 24). The majority of the visiting team should be fluent in the language of the Program being reviewed.

Teams are selected to avoid potential conflicts of interest and must execute the standard LAAC Conflict of Interest Declaration (see Appendix C), which stipulates that Visiting Team Members must not have:

- Attended as a student or graduated from the program (within the preceding six years).
- Been employed by the program as a professor, associate professor, adjunct professor, visiting professor, sessional lecturer, or similar position (within the preceding five years).
- Is seeking, or currently being considered for, employment with the program.
- Served on an advisory, governing, research or evaluation body associated with the program (within the preceding five years).
- Been a collaborator or editor on a consulting project, book, journal article, report, paper, or similar learned undertaking with any of the existing faculty of the program (within the preceding five years).
- Formed a predetermined opinion regarding the quality and/or reputation of the program, or any of its faculty, that might adversely affect the objectivity of the review.
- A family relationship with faculty, administrators, or current students of the program.
- A close personal or professional relationship with faculty in the program.
- Monetary or other personal interests in the outcome of the accreditation decision.

The program is advised of the proposed team, including each proposed team member's present position, experience, and areas of expertise. The program has the right to challenge one team member, but must show reasonable cause, which typically requires documentation that the nominee is not competent to evaluate the program or has an undisclosed or irresolvable conflict of interest. However, the final decision on team assignments rests with the LAAC Chair.

Following the program's review and approval of the potential visiting team members, the selected participants are invited to serve. When the Visiting Team composition and date of the review have been finalized, the team and the program are formally notified. Any subsequent changes in team make-up arising due to scheduling conflicts or emergencies are made in consultation with the program.

Where special conditions warrant, such as providing team member training or assisting with site-evaluation procedures and matters of due process, a four-person team may be assembled. At the discretion of the LAAC chair, one of the following additional individuals may be selected to accompany the standard three-person team: a LAAC member; a landscape architecture educator, or a professional practitioner, who has a specialist background relevant to the program under review; an educator from a related design profession, or a ROVE member assigned for training purposes.

2.8 Pre-Visit Responsibilities: Visiting Team

The team chair is responsible for making assignments and assembling the Visiting Team report. Team members receive the Accreditation Standards and Procedures Manual and the LAAC Visiting Team Guidelines and are expected to be thoroughly familiar with these documents before the accreditation visit. Each Visiting Team member must carefully review the Self-Evaluation Report and carry out assignments as the team chair directs.

2.9 Pre-Visit Responsibilities: Program

The LAAC Chair, after conferring with the team and the institution, schedules the dates of the accreditation visit. The program is responsible for arranging:

- All lodging for the visiting team. Hotel accommodation must be comfortable, reasonably priced, close to the institution, and, where possible, should make use of existing campus facilities such as those for visiting faculty

or guest lecturers. Note that the LAAC is responsible for the cost of the travel, lodging, and meal expenses of the visiting team.

- A Team Room in which the visiting team can work throughout the entire site visit. This room shall be private and secure from both students and faculty members.
- Temporary computer facilities, including: a digital projector, access to the Internet; an electronic compilation of the SER and representative student work; and all other supporting documentation.
- Arrangements for a brief meeting with a cross-section of representatives from the alumni, practitioners, and the local professional association.
- Advanced notice to the component organization.

2.10 Sample Visit Schedule

The following is a sample activity schedule for a visiting LAAC team. Based on past experience, this outline is considered reasonable to undertake all necessary tasks and provide adequate time for preparation of a draft report. It is important to note that this schedule assumes that the team members have all had adequate time prior to the visit to thoroughly review the SER and examine the Digital Compendium of Student Work. The LAAC recognizes that a greater length of time may be required for a particular visit due to special circumstances and will work with the chair of the Visiting Team to make any necessary scheduling and/or financial adjustments.

Day 1 (Saturday)

This day is set aside in the schedule for those Visiting Team members who may need to travel to the site from distant points in Canada or the United States and is intended to allow those individuals the opportunity to take advantage of reasonable flight times, get established at the pre-arranged hotel, adjust to any time zone changes, relax, and generally prepare for the next few days of intensive activity.

Day 2 (Sunday)

- 12:00 - 2:00 pm Any Visiting Team members who did not arrive on Saturday are expected to arrive and check into the prearranged hotel by the early afternoon.
- 2:00 - 2:30 pm Members meet and get acquainted.
- 2:30 - 3:30 pm Team meets with the Program Administrator to finalize the detailed visit schedule and discuss the program in general.
- 3:30 - 5:30 pm Team tours the facility with the Program Administrator, is introduced to the Team Room, and establishes any required network access.
- 5:30 - 7:00 pm Break time and dinner.
- 7:00 pm Executive session at the hotel: team confirms visit assignments and plans how the team will conduct interviews and various meetings that will take place during the visit.

Day 3 (Monday)

- 8:00 - 9:00 am Team breakfast at hotel and travel to program
- 9:00 - 9:30 am If the program is a component of a multidisciplinary academic unit, meet with the Program Administrator and the relevant Chair or Director of the Faculty/Department/School.
- 9:30 - 10:00 am Meet with the Dean of the College in which the program resides.
- 10:00 - 10:30 am Team members briefly tour the facility while classes and studios are in active session to gain an understanding of the character and personality of the program and the student body.
- 10:30 - 12:00 am The Visiting Team is given a detailed curriculum overview and learning outcomes by the Program Administrator and Department Heads.
- 12:00 - 1:30 pm Working lunch sessions with delegated student representatives from each academic year (maximum of two representatives/year). The purpose of this session is to interview students and evaluate their satisfaction with the educational process. To the extent possible, this should not be a collective student social encounter. Rather, it is recommended that representatives from each academic year be interviewed separately over lunch by one Visiting Team member, with the results subsequently shared with the full team.

- 1:30 - 3:00 pm Faculty interviews: separate half-hour sessions with individual faculty members to discuss in confidence their impressions of the program, its strengths, weaknesses, faculty input, and faculty development. Group faculty interviews can be conducted if determined to be more acceptable to the faculty and the team.
- 3:00 - 3:15 pm Break
- 3:15 - 5:00 pm Resume faculty interviews.
- 5:00 - 6:00 pm Meeting with representative recent graduates of the program to evaluate their satisfaction with the educational process and the degree to which the program prepared them to perform entry-level functions.
- 6:00 - 7:30 pm Team dinner.
- 7:30 pm Team meets in executive session at hotel to review findings and plan for the next day's activities.

Day 4 (Tuesday)

- 8:00 - 9:00 am Team breakfast at hotel and travel to program
- 9:00 - 12:00 pm Complete faculty interviews.
- 12:00 - 1:30 pm Working lunch with representatives from the local component association of the CSLA and selected local practitioners to assess level of involvement by the profession in the program, satisfaction with the curriculum, and the level of preparedness of graduates for entry-level positions in the profession.
- 1:30 - 3:00 pm Team completes remainder of faculty interviews as necessary and inspects library and other supporting facilities, e.g., computing center, special services, etc.
- 3:00 - 6:00 pm Visiting Team executive session: preparation of the report.
- 6:00 - 7:00 pm Dinner break.
- 7:00 pm Visiting Team executive session to finalize report in draft.

Day 5 (Wednesday)

- 8:00 - 9:00 am Team breakfast at hotel and travel to program
- 9:00 - 10:00 am Meeting with Program Administrator to review findings.
- 10:00 - 10:30 am In the case of multi-disciplinary academic units: meet with the relevant Chair or Director of the Faculty/Department/School to review findings.
- 10:30 - 11:00 am Meet with the Dean of the Faculty and the President of the university to review findings.
- 11:00 - 12:00 am Report team findings to landscape architecture faculty.
- 12:00 pm Team lunch, return to hotel, review final report responsibilities, check-out of hotel and depart campus.
- 1:30 - 3:00 pm Final presentation to staff and students

The program prepares the preliminary Visit Schedule, SER and Digital Compendium of Student Work well in advance of the visit and ensures that these documents are forwarded to the Visiting Team members at least thirty days prior to the visit.

As the recommended Visit Schedule includes interviews with students, recent graduates, faculty, and administration officials, as well as alumni and local practitioners, the Program Administrator must ensure that these interview arrangements are formalized well in advance of the visit.

Team members typically conduct interviews in person but may elect to conduct interviews by videoconference with persons such as alumni, practitioners, or faculty on leave who are otherwise unable to meet on campus. No evening events should be scheduled as the Visiting Team needs this time to work on its report and prepare for the next day.

The team members meet in executive sessions in the evenings to prepare the report in draft form and to decide on an advisory recommendation to the LAAC on the program's proposed accredited status. The team discusses the content of this draft report (in outline form only) with the Program Administrator, Director/Chair, Faculty, Dean, and President of the University, but does not disclose the advisory recommendation that it will subsequently make to the LAAC. The

outline report should address the strengths and weaknesses of the program, recommendations affecting accreditation, and suggestions for program improvement. The final report should be prepared after the visit and submitted to the LAAC.

2.11 Visiting Team Report

Prior to the visit, the LAAC provides the Visiting Team with copies of the Accreditation Standards and Procedures and the Visiting Team Guidelines. The guidelines also include a format (template) for the Visiting Team Report that is designed to ensure complete responses are provided to all LAAC requirements and accreditation standards. The Team Chair assigns writing tasks to individual team members as necessary and is responsible for compiling the final report.

Preparation of the Initial Draft Visiting Team Report – Within 15 days following the visit, the Team Chair completes an initial compilation and edit of the Visiting Team Report, which is then sent as a draft to the other team members and the LAAC Chair for review. The principal reason for this review is to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the content, but may also address matters of grammar, spelling and style.

Finalization of Visiting Team Report – Within a further 15 days, the Visiting Team members direct any comments or concerns regarding the draft report to the LAAC Chair. Any substantive changes or additions recommended by the team members will be referred by the LAAC Chair to the Team Chair for revisions, which may result in a redistribution of report to the team members for a second round of review and confirmation. Once all revisions are complete, the Team Chair submits the Final Visiting Team Report to the LAAC Chair in a form suitable for distribution to the program and LAAC Council.

Schedule Expectations for Distribution to the Program – Taking the above-noted timing considerations into account, under normal circumstances distribution of the Final Visiting Report by the LAAC Chair to the institution should typically occur within 30-45 days of the Accreditation Team Visit.

2.12 Institutional Response

Distribution of Final Visiting Team Report to Institution –The LAAC Chair distributes the final report to the Program Administrator, including copies to the: Head/Chair of the relevant Faculty, Department or School; Dean of the Faculty; and President/Vice-President/Provost of the University. This version of the Visiting Team Report is submitted without including the Visiting Team's advisory accreditation recommendation.

Institutional Review and Response – Within 15 days of receipt of the final report, the program shall submit its institutional response to the LAAC Chair. This response shall deal exclusively with those Standards that were assessed by the Visiting Team as “Met with Recommendation” or “Not Met” and shall be limited to substantive comments and corrections of factual matters. The institutional response may also include any supplementary documentation that the program deems pertinent to the Visiting Team's assessment and the ultimate LAAC decision.

2.13 Distribution to LAAC Council

The Visiting Team Report and advisory accreditation recommendation, as well as the program's institutional response, are then assembled by the LAAC Chair and distributed to individual Council members for their review prior to the decision meeting.

2.14 Withdrawing an Application for Accreditation

Any time before a decision action by the LAAC, an institution may withdraw its accreditation application without penalty by written notification to the LAAC Chair. The LAAC will not refund fees and the program will be assessed for expenses incurred by LAAC up to the point of withdrawal.

2.15 LAAC Decision Meeting

The LAAC decision meeting shall be scheduled to occur within 30 days of receipt of the program's institutional response and will typically be conducted as a teleconference. However, if circumstances require, the decision meeting may be convened as a face-to-face session.

LAAC's decision will be based upon a holistic view of the program, and, in addition to considering the Visiting Team's report and advisory recommendation, will also take into consideration the program's self-evaluation report, annual reports, and institutional response. Prior to the decision meeting, the LAAC may choose to consult with a member of the Visiting Team (usually the Chair) and/or the Program Administrator to clarify items in the team report or the institutional response.

Programs may request the opportunity to appear before the LAAC to discuss the pending accreditation decision but are not permitted to be present during deliberations or voting. The LAAC may also elect to invite representatives from the program and/or the Visiting Team Chair at the decision meeting.

Any LAAC decision to "Deny" or "Withdraw" accreditation will be substantiated with specific reasons, and Program Administrators will be notified of their right to appeal any such decision (see Appeal Process). A program which has not been granted accredited status, or a program from which accreditation has been withdrawn, may reapply for accreditation when its administrators believe the program meets current requirements.

2.16 LAAC Actions

Accreditation is granted for a period of one to six years. A program may apply for an accreditation review at any time before its term expires but may not defer a visit to extend its term. The LAAC may vary these normal terms at its discretion. Reasons for such variance will be supplied to the program. The official action letter to the institution indicates the date on which accreditation will expire.

A list of accredited programs is published on the CSLA website on an annual basis, which includes: the accredited status of each program; the next scheduled accreditation review date; and a copy of the accreditation action letter and summary of recommendations. As this information is also posted on the ASLA website, the LAAC ensures that the Landscape Accreditation Board records and published information are up-to-date and consistent with the CSLA site. The LAAC can take the following actions:

Accreditation

- Granted when all standards are met, or when one or more standards are met with recommendations, and continued overall program quality and conformance to standards are judged likely to be maintained.
- Accreditation will typically be granted for six years, but reduced periods may be established at the discretion of LAAC.
- A program granted Accreditation may be required to submit special progress reports at the discretion of LAAC.

Provisional Accreditation

- Granted when one or more standards are met with recommendation and the cited deficiencies are such that continued overall program quality or conformance to standards is uncertain.
- Provisional Accreditation may be granted for up to three years.
- This status shall not be granted more than twice without an intervening period of full Accreditation.

- Provisional status is not subject to appeal.

Initial Accreditation of a New Program

- Granted on a first review when all standards (with the exception of Faculty numbers) are at least minimally met and the program's continued development and conformance to the accreditation standards are considered likely.
- Once granted Initial Accreditation, New Programs must progressively increase its faculty numbers to meet the full LAAC Faculty Standard no later than three years from the date of approval.
- Programs receiving Initial Accreditation must also submit a Special Progress Report after three years to report on the program's overall development and to confirm that the standard for the number of faculty has been achieved.
- Initial Accreditation is typically granted for six years, however; the Special Progress Report will be reviewed by LAAC to determine if an earlier accreditation review should be scheduled or if it should remain as originally granted.

Administrative Suspension of Accreditation

- This status results if a program fails to maintain good standing for administrative reasons.
- Suspension of Accreditation is not subject to appeal.

Accreditation Denial

- This status results when an accreditation visit review determines one or more standards are not met.
- This determination is subject to appeal.

Withdrawal of Accreditation

- This status results if a program fails to comply with accreditation standards.
- This determination is subject to appeal.

2.17 Notification of Accreditation Decisions and Actions

The LAAC notifies the program in writing of the accreditation decision in the form of an Action Letter. Copies of the Action Letter are addressed to the Program Administrator; Head/Chair of the relevant Faculty, Department or School; Dean of the Faculty; President/Vice-President/Provost of the University; and the Board of the CSLA.

2.18 Confidentiality

Except for the Action Letter and Summary of Recommendations published on the CSLA website, the LAAC treats all material generated by the program and LAAC related to the accreditation review as confidential. While the Visiting Team Report and Self-Evaluation Report are the property of the institution, the LAAC encourages the widest dissemination of these materials within the institution.

The LAAC reserves the right to disclose the complete report should the institution incorrectly advise the public, applicants to the program, or existing students regarding the report contents that might, in the judgment of the LAAC, present a biased or distorted view of the site-evaluation findings.

2.19 Reference to Accredited Status

A program's accreditation status must be clearly conveyed in all program and institutional literature, websites and other public media directed to student enrollment. In particular, if a program offers more than one course of study leading to the same degree, (e.g., first professional and post-professional MLAs) program literature must identify which course(s) of study is (are) accredited.

2.20 Delaying a Scheduled Accreditation Visit

From time to time a program may need to delay a scheduled accreditation visit because of unexpected circumstances. LAAC will grant a site visit delay for up to one year if the following conditions are met:

- The program received a six-year term of accreditation at its last review.
- The program is currently in compliance with all published Accreditation Standards.
- All required annual fees and reports have been submitted.

To request a delay, the LAAC must receive a letter from the Dean of the College, or higher-ranking administrator, and must include the reasons for the delay.

If a delay is granted, the program shall pay a visit delay fee as specified in the LAAC Schedule of Fees. If the request for delay is received after the Visiting Team selection process has begun and LAAC has incurred non-refundable expenses (e.g., airfares, hotel deposits, etc.) the program shall pay the delay fee, plus all related visit expenses that have been incurred by the LAAC.

If an institution is scheduled to have two programs reviewed at the same time, only one delay fee is charged (both must meet above conditions). Regular annual fees still apply.

2.21 Rescheduling Visit

When the visit is rescheduled, priority for selecting visit dates will go to those programs hosting their visits in accordance with their regular cycle.

A delayed visit cannot be postponed a second time for any reason. If the rescheduled review does not take place, the program's accreditation will lapse. If a program subsequently chooses to re-apply for accreditation, it will be subject to the full Initial Accreditation process.

2.22 Term of Accreditation

When LAAC grants a full or provisional accreditation as a result of a regular accreditation review, the start of the new term shall be considered to extend from the date of the accreditation visit and shall be so noted in the Action Letter.

If LAAC issues a Suspension or Withdrawal of Accreditation, the program's accreditation immediately expires, and all program literature and websites must be revised immediately to remove all references to accreditation.

2.23 Annual Report

Each accredited program shall submit an Annual Report using the template provided by LAAC to allow LAAC to monitor the program's continuing compliance with accreditation requirements. The report shall be prepared on an academic year basis and must be received by LAAC by July 31st of each year. Annual Reports are not typically required in a year in which a Self-Evaluation Report has been issued and a regularly scheduled accreditation visit has taken place.

Annual Reports shall include:

- a. Changes in curriculum, personnel, administration, fiscal support, and/or physical facilities that have occurred since the last report.
- b. Summary of the enrollment and graduation statistics, presented in a tabular form reflecting all years since the last review.
- c. Report on employment, or enrollment in graduate school, for the previous year's graduates.

- d. Progress toward complying with the recommendations of the most recent accreditation review.

The LAAC will review the Annual Report and acknowledge acceptance by the start of the next academic year. If there are significant concerns with the changes identified in the report, the LAAC will communicate these to the Program Administrator and may also alert, at its discretion, higher-level administrative officials.

2.24 Substantive Change

Substantive Change is any change that compromises a program's ability to meet continuously one or more of the accreditation standards approved and published by LAAC.

Responsibility for reporting and fully disclosing the impact of a pending Substantive Change rests with the Program Administrator, who is encouraged to notify the LAAC as soon as the change is contemplated. Regardless, all Substantive Changes must be fully disclosed in the next scheduled Annual Report.

LAAC will provide a response to the proposed Substantive Change within 30 days. To remain in good standing, the program must respond to the LAAC commentary and conditions within a further 30 days. The response must be in writing from the Program Administrator or a higher-level administrative official of the institution.

2.25 Other Reports

From time to time, the LAAC may require programs to prepare Special Reports to explain or describe a particular issue or problem. These issues will be ones that the LAAC believes are of a nature that requires additional explanation beyond that typically included in an Annual Report, or because the concerns are of a sufficiently urgent nature that they must be addressed before the next scheduled reporting period.

2.26 Maintaining Good Standing

To maintain good standing a program must continuously meet the published Accreditation Standards. The LAAC must be informed if any of these requirements cannot be met during an accreditation period. Should a program fail to maintain good standing, accreditation may be suspended or withdrawn.

2.27 Administrative Suspension of Accreditation

Should a program fail to maintain good standing for administrative reasons (such as failure to pay required fees or submit required reports) accreditation may be suspended. Before this action is taken the LAAC shall send a letter to the Program Administrator and the appropriate higher-level administrative officials of the institution requesting an explanation of why accreditation should not be suspended.

A program whose term of accreditation has been suspended will be listed as such on the official list of accredited programs included in the LAAC Annual Report to the CSLA and will also be removed from the list of accredited programs on the CSLA website. Students attending a program with suspended accreditation are still considered to be attending an accredited program. A program can be suspended for a maximum of one year. When the maximum period of suspension is reached, the LAAC will begin procedures to withdraw accreditation to take effect immediately.

If evidence of remedial action is submitted and judged adequate within the one-year period of suspension, reinstatement of the previous grant of accreditation may be made.

As suspension occurs in this situation only for administrative reasons, it is not subject to appeal.

2.28 Withdrawal of Accreditation

Should annual reports or other information indicate that the accreditation standards are no longer being met, LAAC may withdraw the accreditation of a program at any time during the six-year accreditation term.

The procedure for Withdrawal of Accreditation is as follows:

- a. The LAAC provides written notice to the Program Administrator and the appropriate higher-level administrative officials of the institution that it has reason to believe that the accreditation standards are no longer being met.
- b. As soon as possible, at a time agreed by LAAC and the program, a Visiting Team shall be selected to carry out a full accreditation review of the program.
- c. The Visiting Team shall report its findings in writing to the LAAC.
- d. The LAAC shall promptly convene a special meeting and decide whether accreditation should be withdrawn or sustained. At the discretion of the LAAC, the Visiting Team Chair may be requested to make a presentation to the Council.
- e. The LAAC decision and detailed summary of findings shall be provided in writing to the Program Administrator and the appropriate higher-level administrative officials of the institution.
- f. In the event the decision is to Withdraw Accreditation, the program is entitled to apply for reinstatement after a six-month period has elapsed. In this case, the typical procedures for re-accreditation shall be followed.

A decision to Withdraw Accreditation can be appealed in accordance with the Appeal Procedures outlined in Section 4.0.

2.29 Document Retention

The LAAC retains electronic records in accordance with the CSLA Archiving Policy and Guidelines.

2.30 Accreditation Fees

LAAC fees are set at levels considered adequate to cover the costs of accreditation visits, all related program services, LAAC meeting costs, and all routine administrative expenses. Fees are reviewed annually and are subject to change. The current LAAC Schedule of Fees can be consulted at: <https://www.csla-aapc.ca/about-csla/accreditation-council>

SECTION 3 - Appeal Procedure

3.1 Decisions Subject to Appeal

LAAC actions that are subject to appeal include only Denial of Accreditation or Withdrawal of Accreditation. In all such cases, the affected programs shall be notified of the LAAC action and of their right to appeal. Administrative Suspensions and Provisional Accreditations are actions that cannot be appealed.

3.2 Notice and Basis of Appeal

A written notice of appeal signed by the Dean of the College must be submitted to the Chair of the LAAC, with copies to the CSLA Board of Directors, within 20 days of notice of the LAAC action. The program must submit, within 60 days of the LAAC notice of action, a comprehensive written statement of the reasons for the appeal. Failure to submit this statement within the specified period is considered equivalent to withdrawing the appeal. During the appeal period, the accredited status of the program will not change.

LAAC decisions may only be contested on one or more of the following grounds:

- a. Procedures followed by the LAAC and Visiting Team did not conform to those defined in this document.
- b. An incorrect interpretation of the facts of the case was made by the Visiting Team.
- c. The standards for accreditation were applied incorrectly to these facts.

Appeals based on challenges to accreditation standards or procedures will be dismissed.

3.3 Appeal Panel

The CSLA Board shall conduct an enquiry and adjudicate the final accreditation decision. On receipt of the notice of appeal, the Board of Directors shall appoint a three-person panel, composed of members of the College of Fellows, to examine the decision. Fellows appointed to the appeal panel shall have demonstrated knowledge of and experience with the accreditation of educational institutions or programs. One member of the proposed appeal panel may be challenged by the program and a replacement will be appointed by the CSLA Board.

3.4 Decision of the Appeal Panel

The members of the appeal panel shall choose a chair from among themselves and shall receive all relevant documents from both the LAAC and the program, including: the Self-Evaluation report, the Visiting Team Report, the notice of appeal by the program, and any other documents furnished by the program during the original inspection visit. The appeal panel shall interview representatives of the LAAC, the program and the Visiting Team. The appeal panel also has the discretion and authority to carry out an additional inspection visit to the program.

The appeal panel shall make its decision exclusively on the basis of the interviews, site visit and documents provided and cannot amend or overrule the published accreditation standards and procedures, which are properly the exclusive jurisdiction of the LAAC.

The panel shall reach a decision within two months following the receipt of the notice of appeal. They shall inform the Board of Directors, the program, and the LAAC of their decision concerning accreditation status and their reason for the decision. The panel's decision is final and there can be no further appeal.

3.5 Expenses of an Appeal

The program will bear the following expenses in connection with the appeal:

1. Travel, food, lodging and incidental expenses incurred by the appeal panel members and other individuals such as the original Visiting Team chair and a LAAC representative, and
2. Cost of the hearing room (if required).

A deposit must be made with the LAAC at the time of the filing of the notice of appeal. This deposit shall be based on a reasonable estimate of the anticipated appeal expenses and may be revised as needed in advance of the appeal.

Appendix A – Electronic Presentation of Student Work Guidelines

The Electronic Presentation of Student Work Guidelines can be viewed and downloaded here: <https://www.csla-aapc.ca/about-csla/accreditation-council>

Appendix B – Conflict of Interest Policy and Declaration

Landscape Architecture Accreditation Council Visiting Team Member Conflict of Interest Policy and Declaration

Visiting Team Members must not:

- within the last five years have attended as a student or graduated from the program;
- within the last five years been employed by the program as a professor, associate professor, adjunct professor, visiting professor, sessional lecturer or similar position;
- be actively seeking or currently being considered for employment with the program;
- have served on an advisory, governing, research or evaluation body associated with the program within the last five years;
- been a collaborator or editor on a consulting project, book, journal article, report, paper or similar learned undertaking with any of the faculty of the program under review within the last five years;
- possess a predetermined opinion regarding the quality and/or reputation of the program or any of its faculty that might adversely affect the objectivity of the review;
- have a family relationship with faculty, administrators, or current students of the program;
- have close personal or professional relationships with faculty in the program; or
- possess a monetary or personal interest in the outcome of the accreditation decision;

I solemnly declare that I have read and understood the above policy and do not, to the best of my knowledge, have a Conflict of Interest that would disqualify me or otherwise adversely affect my judgment as a Visiting Team member in the accreditation review panel for the:

Program: _____

Institution: _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix C – Self Evaluation Report and Curriculum Map Templates

The SER and curriculum map can be viewed and downloaded here: <https://www.csla-aapc.ca/about-csla/accreditation-council>

For further information about the LAAC, please contact:

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