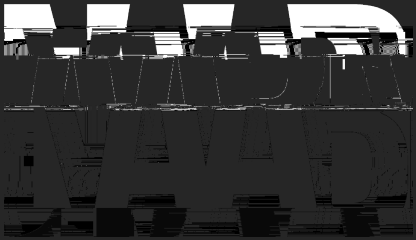


# *Procedures for Accreditation*

**2020 Edition**

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## Introduction

The National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) is both a decision-making and a policy-generating body composed of a 14-member Board of Directors. It is an independent, nonprofit corporation designated as tax-exempt under USC 26 § 501(c)(3). NAAB is the only agency recognized by registration boards in U.S. jurisdictions to accredit professional degree programs in architecture. The NAAB Board of Directors (the Board) has at least three regular meetings per year.

The two major documents that govern accreditation are the NAAB *Conditions for Accreditation* (*Conditions*) and the NAAB *Procedures for Accreditation* (*Procedures*). The *Conditions for Accreditation* define the standards that professional degree programs in architecture are expected to meet. The 2020 *Conditions for Accreditation* apply to all programs seeking continued accreditation, initial candidacy,

## TERMS OF ACCREDITATION

NAAB's system for accreditation of professional degree programs in higher education institutions requires a self-assessment by the accredited-degree program, an evaluation of that assessment by NAAB, and a decision regarding the term of accreditation by the NAAB Board of Directors.

Although there are minor differences among the procedures that apply to eligibility, initial candidacy, continuation of candidacy, initial accreditation, and continuing accreditation, (f) [C.A. 593/205/41.08 Title 8296 (5) 89973 (y) 1529

Initial accreditation is probationary in nature and indicates that, although deficiencies may be present, the institution has established plans and is making sufficient progress toward addressing or removing the deficiencies by the time of the first visit for continuing accreditation.

#### **Stage IV: First Term of Continuing Accreditation Following a Term of Initial Accreditation**

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- c) Copies of receipts for all meals and other expenses.

## **Responsibilities of Team Chairs**

The visiting team chair is responsible for the following:

- Attending team chair training.
- Reviewing the APR and identifying needs for additional information, or requesting changes to the APR.
- Setting the date for the visit, in consultation with the program administrator.
- Developing the agenda for the visit, in consultation with the program administrator.
- Consulting with the program administrator on the format and content of the team room as well as materials to be furnished electronically before the visit.
- Hosting mandatory previsit conference calls with the team.
- Ensuring the team's compliance with the *Procedures for Accreditation* and appropriate standards of conduct during the visit.
- Preparing the final draft of the Visiting Team Report and sending it to the NAAB office within 14 days of the last day of the visit.
- Securing the signatures of all team members on the report.

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Board of Directors, who serves a one-year term. ARC members cannot concurrently serve on the staff or on the board of directors of AIA, AIAS, ACSA, or NCARB.

ARC members are required to complete NAAB training before they begin their first term and are subject to NAAB's Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and other applicable policies.

**Term.** ARC members serve a two-year term and are eligible for reappointment, with the exception of the inaugural ARC, which will have staggered one-, two-, and three-year term(s) to provide continuity. NAAB will initiate a public call for the ARC members. Following the public call, NAAB staff will review applicants to ensure compliance with eligibility criteria and will forward eligible applicants to the NAAB President for review and appointment.

## Conflicts of Interest

A conflict-of-interest arises when a visiting team member, board member, committee/workgroup member, or staff member of NAAB has a relationship with an accrediting organization or a program and/or its representatives that could directly bias the actions, deliberations, or decisions of NAAB. All individuals who act on behalf of NAAB shall not have direct involvement with and/or participate in any decision-making capacity for an architecture program if they have an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest with the program. Any individual that has a conflict of interest must exercise their duty of disclosure as soon as a conflict becomes apparent.

Team members, including observers, are responsible for determining whether they have a conflict of interest and reporting it to the NAAB staff. Staff will provide all team members with a conflict-of-interest form stating the conflict-of-interest provisions (see below) and requesting that within 10 days the individuals state whether any provisions apply to them. Staff shall forward such documentation to the visiting team chair and the program director. A program may veto a visiting team member if it can demonstrate, in writing to NAAB, that an actual or potential conflict of interest exists.

In determining whether to participate as a team member or other NAAB representative, the individual shall consider, even in the absence of a conflict of interest, whether the potential appearance of a conflict of interest is sufficient to dictate the individual's withdrawal from the team.

**Conflicts** of interest may include but are not limited to the following:

- Being an employee, current or former student, n7Tc -0.(t)3.5 ( )0.6 (m)1.7dent,s

- Having had a limited relationship (paid or unpaid) with the program being evaluated as a temporary employee, visiting faculty member, award recipient, volunteer teacher or mentor, or consultant within the 8 years prior to the visit.
- Having participated in an accreditation or consultative review of the program for NAAB within the 8 years prior to the visit.
- Having participated in an accreditation or consultative review of the program for another organization within the 8 years prior to the visit.
- Any other relationship, experience, or circumstance that could hinder impartial decision-making or create an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest.

Exceptions to the above policy may be made if approved by the program administrator in writing or if the program fails to make a timely objection to a team member substitution that is necessary on short notice.

Programs may challenge any member of a visiting team designated by NAAB only based on a conflict of interest. Challenges are to be made in writing within 10 days of receiving notice of the designation of a team chair, visiting team member, or observer. Challenges will be reviewed by the NAAB executive director or director of accreditation. When challenges are found meritorious by the NAAB executive director or director of accreditation, a new team member and/or observer will be assigned. Challenges will not be accepted after the 10-day period.

### **Administrative Probation**

As a condition of accreditation, all accredited architecture programs and programs in candidacy are expected to submit all reports, fees, and other requested materials, on or before the indicated deadlines.

Accredited programs and programs in candidacy that do not submit required reports, fees, or other requested materials, after notice, will be placed on Administrative Probation by the NAAB executive director. Administrative Probation is a public action, and programs placed on Administrative Probation will be listed as such on NAAB's public website until the Administrative Probation is removed.

Programs on Administrative Probation that fail to submit the required information in respon (ed )0.6 (ai)1.4 (nf)1.3 (est)3.6 (



- If NAAB requests a complete revision of the APR, the revised APR is due November 15.
- Primary exhibits supplied as evidence for accreditation criteria that do not require student work must be submitted to the visiting team in an electronic format 45 days before the visit.

**Dissemination of the APR to the Public Before the Visit.** To stimulate broad-based participation, the program should distribute the APR to the school community before and during the site visit. However, the APR may not be shared with the public until the final accreditation decision is communicated by NAAB.

## Visiting Team

**Composition of Teams.** Teams will consist of at least four individuals, each of whom represents one of the four constituent areas of expertise: a practitioner, an educator, a regulator, and a student, all selected from the team pool.

- The NAAB executive committee will approve the team chair recommendations from staff.
- NAAB staff members will compose teams after the date for the visit has been set by the team chair and the program administrator.
- NAAB seeks to balance the team in terms of geography, gender, race/ethnicity, and accreditation experience. Programs may challenge a member of a visiting team based on a conflict of interest as defined in NAAB's Conflict of Interest policy.
- NAAB makes every effort to assemble teams so that no more than one person, excluding the student, is a first-time team member, although this is not always possible.
- In general, individuals may not serve on more than one visiting team to the same program.

**Team Chair.** The responsibilities of the team chair are described in Section 2. Chairs are nominated by the NAAB executive committee before the site visit. The selection is based on a review of the résumés of former visiting team chairs and experienced visiting team members, as well as an evaluation of their performance on previous visits and the quality of previous VTRs. NAAB staff notifies program administrators once a chair has been designated. Once a chair has been confirmed and the APR accepted, the administrator and the chair work together to select a date for the visit.

**Observer.** To add useful perspective on the program's unique qualities or history, or on the institution's policies and context, the program may nominate an observer to join the visiting team.

- **Nomination and Approval.** After the official visiting team has been designated by NAAB and no later than 60 days before the start of the visit, the program administrator may nominate an observer by sending a résumé or curriculum vitae to the NAAB's director of accreditation. The nomination should include a brief description of the relation

and *Procedures* and the APR, and complete a training program before the visit begins. The individual must agree in advance to abide by the principles of confidentiality and anti-harassment and by the Conflict of Interest policy.

- e) Observers who fail to comply with the expectations or responsibilities of participating in a NAAB visit may be dismissed by the visiting team chair before the end of the visit. The team chair shall notify the program administrator and the NAAB director of accreditation.
- **Participation.** The observer must participate throughout the entire site visit, including the mandatory previsit conference calls, and is expected to participate in the activities of the team and undertake tasks assigned by the team chair. The observer generally does not evaluate evidence but can assist in locating it. The team chair has the sole discretion to decide whether the observer may be present at the last team work session during the drafting of the VTR.
- **Additional Observers.** Occasionally, for training purposes, NAAB may ask the program and the team chair to accept a special, additional observer. These individuals may be NAAB board or staff members, an officer or staff member of a collateral organization, or another person who NAAB believes would benefit from observing a site visit. These additional observers may observe all or part of any visit by a visiting team but shall not take part in the evaluation of materials or deliberations of the visiting team regarding the VTR. Additional observers shall be bound by the confidentiality requirements applicable to the visiting team; visit expenses shall be NAAB's or the collateral organization's responsibility.



- Any general team observations and acknowledgments.

Exit meetings are led by the team chair with at least one team member and the observer (if applicable) present. The recommended sequence of exit meetings is as follows:

- Exit meeting with the program administrator.
- Exit meeting with the leadership of the academic unit in which the program is located (e.g., director, chair, dean) and the chief academic officer of the institution (e.g., provost).
- Exit meeting with students, faculty, and staff of the program.
- Team members not involved in the exit meetings may leave after the draft VTR is



and the students' experience of them. The program must provide a narrative description of how the program achieves each criterion. The program must also provide evidence that each criterion is assessed by the program on a recurring basis and must summarize the modifications made to its curricula and/or associated program structures and materials based on findings from these assessment activities since the previous review.

**Supporting Materials:** The program must provide supporting materials demonstrating that its objectives have been accomplished. These may include policy documents, individual course materials (e.g., syllabi) as well as documentation of activities occurring outside specific courses.

- **Primary Evidence for Student Criteria (SC) SC.1 through SC.4.** These criteria will be evaluated at the *understanding* level. The program will submit the primary exhibits as evidence for SC.1-4 to the visiting team in an electronic format 45 days before the visit. Programs must provide the following:

**Narrative:** A narrative description of how the program achieves and evaluates each criterion.

**Self-Assessment:** Evidence that each student learning outcome associated with these criteria is developed and assessed by the program on a recurring basis, with a summary of the modifications the program has made to its curricula and/or individual courses based on findings from its assessments since the previous review.







## SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS

### Institutions with More than One NAAB-Accredited Degree Program

If an institution offers more than one NAAB-accredited degree program, certain adjustments may be made to the schedule, team, and APR.

**Adjustments to the Schedule.** To the extent possible, NAAB prefers to schedule a concurrent review of all NAAB-accredited programs in a single visit. Thus, institutions that offer more than one NAAB-accredited program would be expected to prepare one APR and one team room and to host one team. At the discretion of the team chair and in consultation with the program administrator(s), the visit may be extended by one day to facilitate review of student work.

**Adjustments to the Team.** Teams scheduled for concurrent review for continuing accreditation of more than one NAAB-accredited program at the same institution will have one additional team member, selected from any of the constituent areas of expertise. The presence of this additional team member will not affect the ability of the program to nominate an observer.

#### Adjustment to the APR.

- The APR may provide one response for all accredited degree programs for conditions 1, 2, 4.1, 5.1 through 5.5, and 6.
- The APR must provide separate information for each degree program and for each track for completion of the accredited degree(s) for conditions 3, 4.2, 4.3, and 5.6 through 5.8, demonstrating that there are appropriate resources for each program and track. Information should include:
  - a) Complete information about the curriculum.
  - b) The processes for the analysis and evaluation of the preparatory education of students admitted to each program and track, with special attention to evaluating whether Student Criteria are expected to have been met in educational experiences in non-accredited programs.
  - c) Resources specific to each program.

### Institutions Seeking Candidacy or Initial Accreditation at the Same Time as a Visit for Continuing Accreditation

In the rare case that an institution is seeking candidacy or initial accreditation for an additional NAAB-accredited professional degree program in architecture in the same year as a visit for continuing accreditation, the visits will not be combined. Instead, separate visits will be scheduled with separate

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## PROCEDURES FOR INITIAL CANDIDACY, CONTINUATION OF CANDIDACY, AND INITIAL ACCREDITATION

Initial candidacy and initial accreditation for a new professional degree program in architecture require the completion of five important steps. For institutions that already have at least one NAAB-accredited professional degree program, some of these steps may be waived or modified. Generally, the steps are as follows:

1. Eligibility application by institution to initiate process.
2. Determination of eligibility by NAAB following eligibility visit.
3. Initial candidacy APR and visit (candidacy visit #1).
4. Subsequent evaluations toward accreditation (candidacy visits #2 and #3).
5. Initial accreditation no later than six years after initial candidacy visit.

### Consultation and Support

Institutions interested in establishing a NAAB-accredited professional degree program in architecture are encouraged to contact the NAAB staff, administrators and faculty members at institutions with NAAB-accredited degree programs, and the ACSA for advice and counsel in selecting appropriate degree types and for assistance in preparing the necessary documentation, especially the Plan for Achieving Initial Accreditation. Schools should work with NAAB as soon as possible to establish a calendar for eligibility, candidacy, and initial accreditation.

Institutions seeking to establish more than one NAAB-accredited program must submit separate applications for each. NAAB will not accept applications for candidacy from an institution with a degree program currently in candidacy.

### Eligibility Application

Institutions seeking initial accreditation for a professional degree program in architecture must first be granted candidacy status by the NAAB. The first step in achieving candidacy status is to submit an eligibility application for candidacy. A complete application must include the following:

- A letter from the institution's chief academic officer announcing the intention to seek candidacy for accreditation for a professional degree program in architecture. The letter should include the specific degree name (i.e., B.Arch., M.Arch., or D.Arch.) along with any prerequisites and the total number of credits to be awarded.
- The most recent decision letter from the recognized U.S. regional accrediting agency for the institution (Condition 4.1).
- **Plan for Achieving Initial Accreditation.** The plan serves multiple purposes. It is an analysis of (1) the current status of the program that identifies long-term objectives for establishing and implementing the new accredited degree program, and (2) the extent to which the proposed program already complies with the *Conditions for Accreditation*, with special emphasis on program identity, resources, and the curricular framework. The plan also proposes a course of action for achieving initial accreditation in a maximum of six years. The plan outlines how the program will
  - a) Secure resources not already available to the proposed program (e.g., faculty, space, financial support).
  - b) Secure institutional approvals for the proposed degree program (if required).
  - c) Recruit and retain students, including a scholarship program, as appropriate.



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- For criteria in courses that have not yet been offered and for which only syllabi and descriptions are available for evaluation by the team, the team may determine that the criteria are not-yet met.

**Public Disclosure of Accreditation Outcomes.** After the candidacy decision, the program must disseminate the APR-C, the final VTR and all attachments, and the current editions of the *Conditions* and the *Procedures* and any addenda. These documents must be posted on the program's website and be freely accessible to all.

### **Subsequent Evaluation Visits for Continuation of Candidacy**

Continuation of candidacy is subject to visits at two-year intervals until initial accreditation is achieved within six years of the effective date of the term of initial candidacy. The reporting, team composition, and visit requirements for each subsequent visit are the same as for initial foodac.

than two years before initial accreditation. This education requirement is often called the “two-year rule.”

The full text of the education requirement can be found on the NCARB website. The two-year rule means that, if a program receives an initial term of accreditation effective January 1, 2021, individuals who graduated after January 1, 2021, have an accredited degree, while individuals who graduated between January 1, 2019, and December 31, 2020, are considered to have met the education requirement for an NCARB Certificate. However, meeting the education requirement for the NCARB Certificate may not be equivalent to meeting the education requirement for registration in a specific jurisdiction. Programs are strongly urged to keep this in mind when developing timelines for achieving initial accreditation.

**Request for Initial Accreditation.** Programs in candidacy must notify NAAB of their intention to seek initial accreditation for a professional degree program in architecture.

To initiate the process for achieving initial accreditation, the program must formally request that NAAB schedule a visit for initial accreditation. The request is due by September 7 of the year prior to the year in which the visit for initial accreditation is requested. A request for initial accreditation may result in forfeiture of the program’s remaining time in its six-year candidacy.

The request must include the following:

- a) A letter from the chief academic officer of the institution requesting a visit for initial accreditation of the professional degree program in architecture. The letter should include the specific degree name (e.g., B.Arch., M.Arch., or D.Arch.) and any prerequisites (e.g., M.Arch. [undergraduate degree plus 60 graduate credits]).
- b) A copy of the most recent decision letter from NAAB.
- c) A copy of the most recent decision letter from the recognized U.S. regional accrediting agency for the institution.
- d) A brief assessment of the progress

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- **Visiting Team Report.** In addition to items in the VTR for continuing accreditation, the team is asked to include comments that may be helpful in preparing for future accreditations visits, if any.

### **First Term of Continuing Accreditation Following Initial Accreditation**

Programs that achieve a three-year term of initial accreditation must receive an eight-year term of accreditation or an eight-year term with a Plan to Correct

## **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

### **Request to Postpone a Regularly Scheduled Visit**

Under certain circumstances, a program may request postponement of a regularly scheduled visit for initial candidacy, continuation of candidacy, or continuing accreditation. The process for requesting a postponement is the same in all cases. A program may only request a postponement one time in any accreditation cycle.

NAAB office no later than July 1, one year before the originally scheduled visit for initial accreditation.

- Applications must be submitted as a PDF, and the file may not exceed 200KB. The document is limited to three pages, including all supplemental information. The request should be sent to the

## **Programs at Remote Locations**

NAAB recognizes that institutions continue to seek innovative ways to deliver curricula leading to a NAAB-accredited degree. These innovations



single curriculum. Teaching sites and study abroad programs are reviewed within the context of the curriculum for the NAAB-accredited program.

- d) **Online Learning as Part of a Single Accredited Program.** For the purposes of accreditation, courses offered online will be considered under the definition of teaching sites, unless more than 40 percent (credit hours) of the total NAAB-accredited curriculum is delivered online or the on-campus residency requirement is less than six weeks. In such cases, the online program will be considered an additional site, providing that the online and on-campus curricula are the same.

**Determination of Accreditation Status for Remote Locations or Additional Sites.** In the APR submitted for a visit for continuing accreditation, the program must include its responses to the Remote Location Questionnaire found on the NAAB website and a narrative description of its remote locations, additional sites, teaching sites, and online learning using the definitions above. The narrative must address the following matters:

- Curriculum
- Geographic location
- Administrative structure
- Budgetary and hiring authority and responsibilities
- Faculty access to committee assignments, research and scholarship opportunities, and participation in professional societies
- Student access to services and equipment, and participation in governance
- Physical resources

The team chair and the NAAB staff will use the questionnaire and accompanying narrative to determine which category to assign and what additional requirements may be added to the visit. The program will be notified as part of the APR review and acceptance process for changes to the APR and/or visit.

**Separate APRs and Separate Site Visits.** Programs at branch campuses will be treated as unique, individually accredited programs and will require a separate APR and a separate visit.

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- Displaying student work in a team room at the additional or teaching site. In this case, a day will be added to the visit.
- Displaying student work from the additional or teaching site in the team room at the primary location for the program. The work must be clearly identified as having been produced by students at the additional or teaching site.
- In all cases, the institution will coordinate the location of the display and logistics of the visit with the team chair before the accreditation visit.

**Visiting Team Report.** In all cases, the VTR shall address the additional sites, teaching sites, or online learning relative to the conformance of their administrative structure, financial responsibilities, equipment and facilities, student demographics, curriculum, and student/faculty governance policies to those of the



- Copies of other institutional or state-required approvals for the change. NAAB will not consider substantive change requests that have not met all other requirements for institutional or state-required approvals.

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- **Implementation Plan.** This plan must identify a course of action for implementation of the substantive change within not more than two academic years after receiving approval from NAAB. The plan must include the following:

1. Securing resources not already available to the program (e.g., faculty, space, financial support), if necessary.
2. Developing and implementing new courses and/or curricular sequences, if necessary.
3. Proposed last academic year in which students will be admitted to the program in its current configuration.
4. Plans for ensuring that students in the existing configuration are able to complete the program on time.
5. A plan for communicating with current students, newly admitted students, faculty, staff,

- c) A description of the changes that will be made to the program, while also ensuring that it conforms to NAAB and institutional requirements, including:
  - A narrative that responds to the requirements of Condition 4.2.
  - A new matrix for Student Criteria for the accredited program under its new configuration.
  - Any prerequisites.
  - Assessment of the effect of the proposed changes on Conditions 5.6–5.8.

**Merger or Consolidation of Institutions.** In the event that the merger or consolidation affects NAAB-accredited programs at both institutions, NAAB may request additional material. Under this circumstance, please consult with NAAB early in the process to determine the scope and scale of the review.

1. A description of the current program for Conditions 1, 2, and 5.1–5.5.
2. A description of the resources currently supporting the program for Conditions 5.6–5.8.
3. A description of the effect of the proposed change on the program's compliance with Conditions 5.6–5.8.
4. An assessment of the implications of the existing program on enrollment and for Conditions 1, 2, and 5.1–5.5.

**New or Additional Tracks for Completing a NAAB-Accredited Degree Program.** Proposals for new or additional tracks for completing a NAAB-accredited degree program must include all of the same materials as required for a professional degree and curriculum change (see above), and an assessment of the implications of the new track for the existing program.

**Nomenclature Change.** Programs seeking approval of a nomenclature change must meet the following:

- a) Have a full term of continuing accreditation.
- b) Have met either Condition II.2 (Curricular Framework) of the *2014 Conditions for Accreditation*, or Conditions 4.1 and 4.2 of the *2020 Conditions for Accreditation*, as of the last accreditation visit and VTR.
- c) No element of Condition II.3 of the *2014 Conditions for Accreditation* or Condition 4.3 of the *2020 Conditions for Accreditation*, may be listed as a cause of concern or not met in the most recent VTR.
- d) Have requested the change within four years of the last regularly scheduled accreditation visit.

The proposal for the nomenclature change must include:

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## ANNUAL REPORTS

Programs granted initial accreditation or continuing accreditation by NAAB are required to submit an Annual Report. The purpose of the Annual Report is to update program records and provide NAAB with information about the program's continuing compliance with the *Conditions for Accreditation* during the program's accreditation cycle.

The demographic data provided in the Annual Report will be aggregated and the aggregate data will be reported on the NAAB website. Each program is responsible for posting its own data on its public website with a link to [www.naab.org](http://www.naab.org) in accordance with the *Conditions for Accreditation* and *Procedures for Accreditation*

**Special Report Submission.** Programs submitting a Special Report will provide a narrative and supporting materials to address the area(s) of noncompliance identified in the Annual Report. Special I Sepecial le.4 2 (up)

## COMPLAINTS ABOUT PROGRAMS

Individuals who wish to file a complaint about an accredited program they believe is not complying with the *Conditions for Accreditation* must do so in writing.

### Written Complaints

A letter, addressed to the NAAB president, and sent to the NAAB office at the address identified on the NAAB website, must include the following:

- A description of the specific complaint.
- A description of how the program's or institution's failure to address the complaint will affect the program's accreditation.
- A reference to the specific condition(s) that may be compromised as a result of the program's failure to address the subject of the complaint. ~~st~~MC2w72 479.22Twm



- b) VTR
- c) Program's response to the VTR
- d) Program's Plan to Correct
- e) The program's request for reconsideration.

In addition, the board will consider the following background material:

- a) Visiting team chair's response
- b) NAAB executive director's response
- c) Assigned director's analysis

If the team chair has subsequently become a NAAB director, that individual is excused from the deliberations.

The NAAB directors shall review the record and determine whether to reconsider the accreditation decision. At least eight members of the board must vote in favor of a motion to reconsider the decision.

**Reconsideration of the accreditation decision.** If the motion to reconsider is approved, a new motion on the accreditation action will be made.

- Any new motion regarding a reconsidered term of accreditation must be based only on materials provided in the record.
- Any new motion regarding a reconsidered term of accreditation must have at least eight votes in favor to pass.
- Not less than seven days after the meeting of the Board of Directors where the term of accreditation was reconsidered or failed a motion for reconsideration, the NAAB executive director shall send the institution the decision, which shall be final.

