

Appendix 6 Information Kit for Accreditation Site Visits

A key part of the DAA Accreditation process is the university site visit. The site visit is conducted when DSAAC is satisfied with documentary evidence provided by the university and the branch accreditation working party report. The site visit is the final step in the accreditation process that is managed by DSAAC and enables clear advice to be developed for the DAA Board.

6.1 Site visit team

Three assessors will formally visit the university, with an option to co-opt other consultants onto the team who may or may not be dietitians, e.g. education experts, academic, community and other professional representatives. A DSAAC member will Chair the site visit team, with the Chair of the Branch Accreditation Working Party and another APD making up the team

Where possible the team should include one APD with an academic background, preferably in dietetic education (not from same State), and one APD with experience in practice programs and in liaison between universities and the profession.

6.2 Site visit process

It is the site team chairperson's responsibility to coordinate the site visit and complete the site assessment report. The Professional Services Unit at National Office supports the Chairperson in the administrative aspects of their role.

The visit should allow adequate time to discuss issues with relevant personnel and to draft the issues for completion of the site visit report. The Chairperson of the site visit team will write to the Program Directors explaining the purpose, expectations of the visit and any additional material required to be available for the team to review. The site visit should include discussions with the program coordinator, meetings with the head of school and pro vice chancellor (academic), meetings with staff and students. A review of facilities will also usually take place and a feedback session is provided at the conclusion of the visit.

Site Visit consultations

Who	Issues
Dean of Faculty; Head of School;	Place of the program within the clinical offerings; Strategic directions for the faculty and school
Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic)	Strategic direction in teaching and support for staff
Pro Vice Chancellor (Research)	Strategic direction in research and support for staff
Course Coordinator	Management and Curriculum Issues and planned changes
Placement Coordinator	Sustainability of placements; support and quality assurance mechanisms employed
Dietetics Academic staff	Facilities and teaching support within the university; support for research
Employers and Supervisors	How well students are prepared for placement and employment; support for placement supervisors
Current students from different years within the program	Course experience; resource issues; reasons for selecting course

Funding the visit

Funding of the site visit, including reimbursement of the assessors, will be the responsibility of DAA. It is DAA policy that the members of the site visit team and the chair of the site visit are paid a sitting fee, as determined by the Board from time to time.

Site visit report

The report of the visit will be the responsibility of the Chairperson of the site visit. Its emphasis should reflect how well the program enables graduates to meet the National competency standards for entry-level dietitians and what changes, if any, have occurred between receipt of the program report by the DSAAC and the site visit.

The report will then be forwarded to DSAAC for discussion. The DSAAC recommendation for accreditation will be forwarded to the DAA Board for discussion and ratification. A letter will be developed based on DSAAC's finding and then formal notification to the university will be provided to the Head of School, with a copy to the Dietetic program coordinator.

A copy of this letter to the university will also be sent to the Chair of the Branch Accreditation Working Party and Branch chair to inform them on the accreditation outcome.

Scheduling of visit

Typically most visits are completed within one day, but if there are a significant number of issues to be addressed, or if the review is conducted jointly with the university's regular course review process, then it may require 2 days.

Inspection of facilities is important for new courses, but may be less necessary for re-accreditation of existing courses.

Allow at least one hour toward the end of the visit for discussion and preparation of recommendations before final meeting with Course Coordinator to provide preliminary feedback. This feedback should note strengths and recommendations, but emphasise that final accreditation approval can only be given by the Board, based on DSAAC advice.

6.3 Suggested tasks, roles and timelines for site visits

Task	Who	Timeframe
Communicate with Team members and the University to arrange dates for the site visit.	Professional Services Director	As soon as possible after DSAAC acceptance of Accreditation Report
Review copy of the Accreditation Report, the Branch Working Party Report and any comments on issues in these raised by the external reviewers and DSAAC (hard copies to be provided by National Office)	All members of the site visit team	After consideration of Branch Working Party report by DSAAC
Teleconference to identify key issues for consideration at the site visit, agree on any further information to be requested, and plan the schedule for visit.	All members. Organised by National Office at request of Chairperson	Ideally 2–4 weeks before site visit
Draft letter to the University and send to National Office (Professional Services Director) for forwarding to university. (Attachment 1 provides an example of a letter) Letter to be sent and visit confirmed.	Chairperson	Ideally at least 4 weeks before site visit.
Discussion of visit and agreement on key findings and recommendations	All members of the site visit team.	Afternoon of last day of site visit
Draft report	Chairperson	Within 1 week of visit
Review draft report and make any suggested amendments	All members of site visit team.	Within 2 weeks of visit
Finalise report and forward to National Office to put on agenda of next DSAAC meeting. Note it is helpful if this includes a draft of the letter of advice to be sent to the university (Attachment 2 provides an example of a report).	Chairperson	Within 2 weeks of visit
Payment of team members	Professional Services Director	After acceptance of site visit report at DSAAC meeting
Letter of advice to University (signed by President) – based on draft in Site Report	National Office	After approval by the Board of DSAAC recommendation

Attachment 1 Example of letter to a university arranging the visit

Prof XXXX

Dean of Faculty

ABC University

cc: Chair of DSAAC

Local Working Party and member of DSAAC

other members of site visit team

Dear Prof XXXX

DAA accreditation review of the ABC University

Full accreditation of the BND courses

I am pleased to confirm that the site visit team can attend ABC University on the proposed date, XXXXX, for the formal site visit for full accreditation of your dietetics courses.

I will head the team and the other members will be XXXX, another member of the DAA Dietetics Standards and Accreditation Committee, in company with XXX, who was a member of the Branch working party.

The main purpose of the visit is to:

- verify the degree to which the course continues to comply with DAA's expectations and the entry-level competency standards
- assess evidence to support the information provided to DAA about the course
- document that the course has established goals and plans to ensure minimum standards of excellence are attained and maintained
- confirm that a recommendation can be made to the DAA Dietetic Standards and Accreditation Advisory Committee that the course be accredited
- provide an opportunity for the University to discuss future plans regarding dietetic education.

DAA has reviewed the course material provided by ABC University and the working party of the DAA [State] Branch has undertaken a review of the professional practice aspects of the programs. Overall the members of DSAAC were very pleased with the quality of the programs and their management but as with all site visits we wish to clarify a number of issues during the review process and I would like to advise you of these specifically in advance:

Issues for discussion

XXX

YYY

ZZZ

The DAA representatives would also like to view during their visit:

XXX

YYY

ZZZ

The DAA site visit team and I look forward to meeting you on [date].

Yours sincerely,

XXXXX

Chair, DAA site visit team

Attachment 2 Example of final site visit report

Report on ABC University Provisional Accreditation Site Visit

Site Visit Team:

XXX, Chair of DSAAC Site Visit team

XXX, member of DSAAC

XXX, DAA (State) Branch working party

Recommendation:

The Site Visit Team unanimously recommends that the Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics program at ABC University be given provisional accreditation in accordance with the DAA accreditation process.

Background

The site visit was undertaken following DSAAC review of the following reports:

Provisional Accreditation Report from ABC University

Report of the DAA [State] Branch working party

Prior to the site visit, correspondence from the Chair of DSAAC to Professor XXX, Dean of the Faculty of XXX, had raised some issues of concern arising from the working party report, especially:

XXX

YYY

ZZZ

The University responded to all these concerns.

Additional documentation was provided by the course coordinator, XXX, at the request of the Chair of the site visit. This included:

XXX

YYY

ZZZ

Process for the Visit

The following staff were interviewed in addition to XX students from years 3 and 4 of the course:

Senior University staff

Dean of Faculty

PVC (Academic)

Sub Dean (Research)

etc

Nutrition and Dietetics teaching staff

Head of department

BND course coordinator

Clinical placement coordinator

Research fellow

etc

Dietitian Employers and Supervisors

Written submission was received from:

The team met with the Dean and course coordinator at the end of the day and reported verbally on conclusions, issues of concern and recommendations that would be made in the final report and also sought the university's comments on their experience of the accreditation process. The main feedback was that

University Strategic Directions

Description of the university and its offering

The emphasis of the university is ...

The XYZ Faculty

Plans to develop further options in nutrition and dietetics after the accreditation of the Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics program.....

Key Findings

1) The university has been very responsive to feedback from DAA throughout the accreditation process and acted quickly to make significant changes to the course in 2004 to address issues raised during the accreditation review. Significant specific changes include

xxxx

yyyy

zzzzz

2) Students seem very satisfied with their course experience and particularly noted the helpfulness of the staff

4) The senior dietetic staff is experienced and enthusiastic

4) The maximum number of students is

5) Research capacity is

6) Placement issues

Attachment 3 Draft response to the university

The following draft letter to the Dean of the university covers the main conclusions and recommendations that the team believes should be communicated back to ABC University after acceptance of the accreditation recommendation by the Board.

DRAFT

Professor XXX

Dean, Faculty of XXX

Dear Professor XXX,

Re: Site Visit for Provisional Accreditation of the Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics Program

I am pleased to advise that, at its meeting on XXXXXX, the Board of the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) accepted a recommendation that the Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics at ABC University be provisionally accredited.

All graduates of this course from 200X onwards are therefore now eligible to apply for membership of DAA and for the APD credential. DAA looks forward to their entry into the profession and to their participation in the Associations activities. Accreditation is granted on the understanding that the University keeps DAA informed through its representatives of any incremental changes over that period.

The final site visit team made a number of comments and recommendations that I would like to convey to you.

The course strengths

The team was impressed by

The following elements were noted as worthy of particular commendation:

xxx

yyy

zzz

The students interviewed all commented favourably on their experience at the university and

Concerns

There are some significant issues of concern related to the course.

xxx

yyy

zzz

Recommendations

AAA.

BBB.

CCC.

etc

On behalf of the Board, DSAAC and the [State] Branch Working Party, I take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for your participation in the accreditation process. I look forward to continuing a strong, mutually beneficial relationship between DAA and the University in support of our shared objective of high quality graduates and practitioners.

DAA President