

Section 3 Processes for Accreditation and Re-accreditation

3.1 DAA policy on accreditation and re-accreditation

Accreditation of dietetic programs is necessary to ensure that the standards established by the profession are achieved and maintained by dietetic education programs. The accreditation process should benefit both parties, that is, the university offering the program and the dietetic profession. A high standard of education is assured by accreditation, and this process of quality assurance provides an external validation of program objectives.

DAA has a commitment to working collaboratively with universities educating dietitians, to continue to evaluate programs which commit to mutually agreed standards of competence for dietitians for entry-level practice. Regular accreditation ensures that the commitment has been translated into practice. It is an opportunity for DAA and universities to communicate openly on issues of dietetic education.

Full accreditation indicates that DAA is satisfied that the program complies with the DAA standards of competence for dietitians for entry-level practice. Provisional accreditation indicates that, although it is not yet possible to evaluate the graduate outcomes DAA is satisfied that the university has adequately prepared to commence a program that meets DAA requirements for accreditation.

By submitting a proposal for provisional accreditation or re-accreditation, the university enters into an **accreditation contract** and agrees to participate in the accreditation process as outlined in the DAA Accreditation Manual. This includes complying with the DAA requirements for documentation, (as specified in Appendix 2), and agreeing to respond to requests for evidence that the accreditation requirements are met within the specified timelines (see Section 3.3 Stages in the DAA Accreditation Process).

Failure to abide by the documentation and communication requirements will be considered a breach of the accreditation contract which will have serious consequences on the accreditation status of the program. DAA also has equal responsibilities as part of this contract and is required to also adhere to all processes outlined in the DAA Accreditation Manual.

Suspension of program accreditation

Program accreditation can be suspended by DAA if the university fails to comply with the DAA accreditation process requirements. Suspension of accreditation will occur if the university:

1. Fails to respond adequately to a request for information to enable the accreditation process to progress, within six months of receiving the request;
2. Fails to implement a significant change to the program that results in the program failing to meet the requirements set out in the DAA Accreditation Manual;
3. Modifies the program such that it no longer meets the requirements set out in the DAA Accreditation Manual;
4. Deliberately provides misleading information or incorrect information about the program.

When the accreditation of a program is suspended DAA will outline the requirements for accreditation to be reinstated, including timeframes in which these requirements need to be met. Additional fees will be levied in line with the additional processes that need to be undertaken (eg. extra site visits).

Withdrawal of program accreditation

Failure to rectify any of the issues under clauses 1-4 above, within 12 months of notification of these issues, will result in the withdrawal of program accreditation. Once accreditation status has been withdrawn, a university will be required to commence the provisional accreditation process again to regain accreditation.

All changes to accreditation status will be noted on the DAA website.

The suspension or withdrawal of program accreditation will make graduates ineligible for DAA membership and APD status.

DAA may choose to offer an alternative route for membership and credentialing eligibility for these graduates (eg. DAA dietetic examination) if deemed appropriate. This will be addressed on a case to case base only.

Accreditation reviews are based on the DAA *National Competency Standards for Entry-Level Dietitians* which are described in Section 4 and Appendix 1.1 of the DAA Accreditation Manual.

In submitting a program for DAA accreditation, the Program Coordinators/Directors acknowledge that they are aware of, and accept as objectives of the program, the competencies described in Section 4 and Appendix 1.1 of the DAA Accreditation Manual.

3.2 Phases of accreditation

	Conditions	Time frame
Provisional	DAA consulted during development, and program otherwise complies with all accreditation requirements including a satisfactory site visit. Programs are considered 'Accredited' on completion of this phase.	From commencement of program until first graduates produced
Full	Full compliance with accreditation requirements confirmed after provisional accreditation, including satisfactory site visit	For up to five years (at DAA's discretion). Application for full accreditation within 24 months of first graduates completing program
Re-accreditation (existing program with full accreditation)	Full compliance with DAA requirements, including satisfactory site visit	At end of previous full accreditation period, usually five years (at DAA's discretion). Maximum time between site visits, ten years

3.3 Stages in the DAA accreditation process

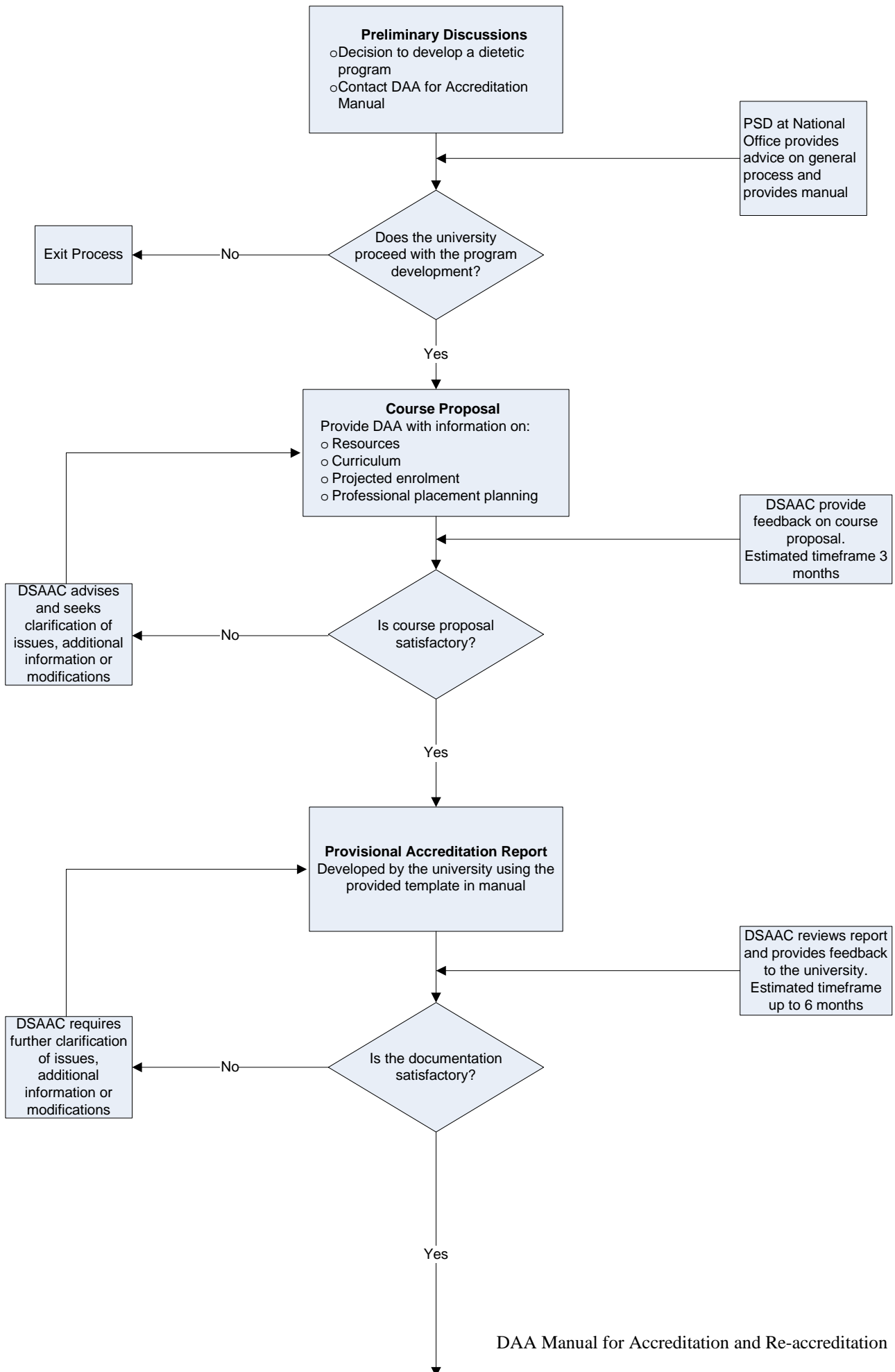
There are five significant stages in the accreditation review process.

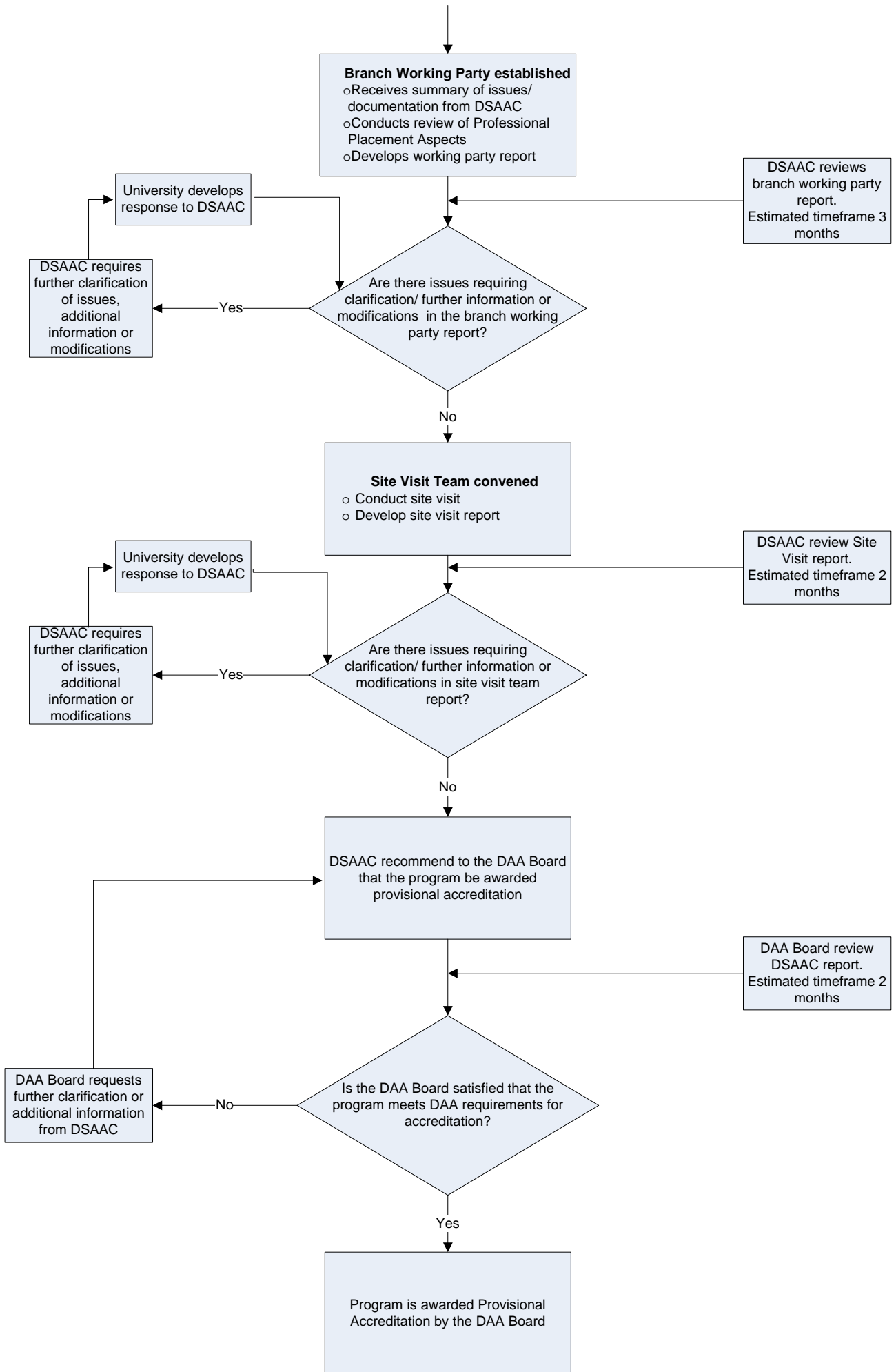
Stage	Action	Suggested Timing
Preliminary negotiation	Discussions between DAA and the University proposing a new program.	The University are encouraged to approach DAA at an early stage of development of concepts, before submission of proposals for University approval.
Program Proposal	Provide DAA with information on: Resources, including staffing and library. Curriculum – structure and content Projected enrolments Professional placement planning The formal university program proposal document may be used to provide this information.	Before formal submission of the program proposal to the university.
Provisional accreditation	Provisional accreditation should be sought once the University has established the new program and before the first graduations from the program. A Provisional Accreditation Report is required. (Appendix 2.1). New dietetic programs will not be listed on the DAA website as being under development until a satisfactory provisional accreditation report has been received from the university.	Provisional Accreditation Report required at least 12 months before first graduation.
Full accreditation	Full accreditation should be sought when the first graduates of a provisionally accredited program have been in the work force for between 12 and 24 months. A Full Accreditation Report is required. (Appendix 2.2)	Report required when indicated by DAA – usually 24 months after first graduates complete.

Stage	Action	Suggested Timing
Re-accreditation	<p>Following full accreditation, an Accreditation Review Report is required prior to every fifth anniversary of full accreditation being granted. (Appendix 2.2)</p> <p>Flexibility with this time is provided to, where possible, align with the university program review processes.</p> <p>Programs are usually given full accreditation for a period of five years, but this may be extended without a full program review and site visit, at the discretion of DAA. In such cases, DAA may require an interim program report to be presented to DSAAC for review. Such a review will not incur additional fees.</p>	Report required at least 12 months prior to expiry of full accreditation.
Changes to program	A letter is required from the university to notify DAA of any changes in the program related to the Key Issues identified in the Full Accreditation Report.	In response to an annual request from DAA

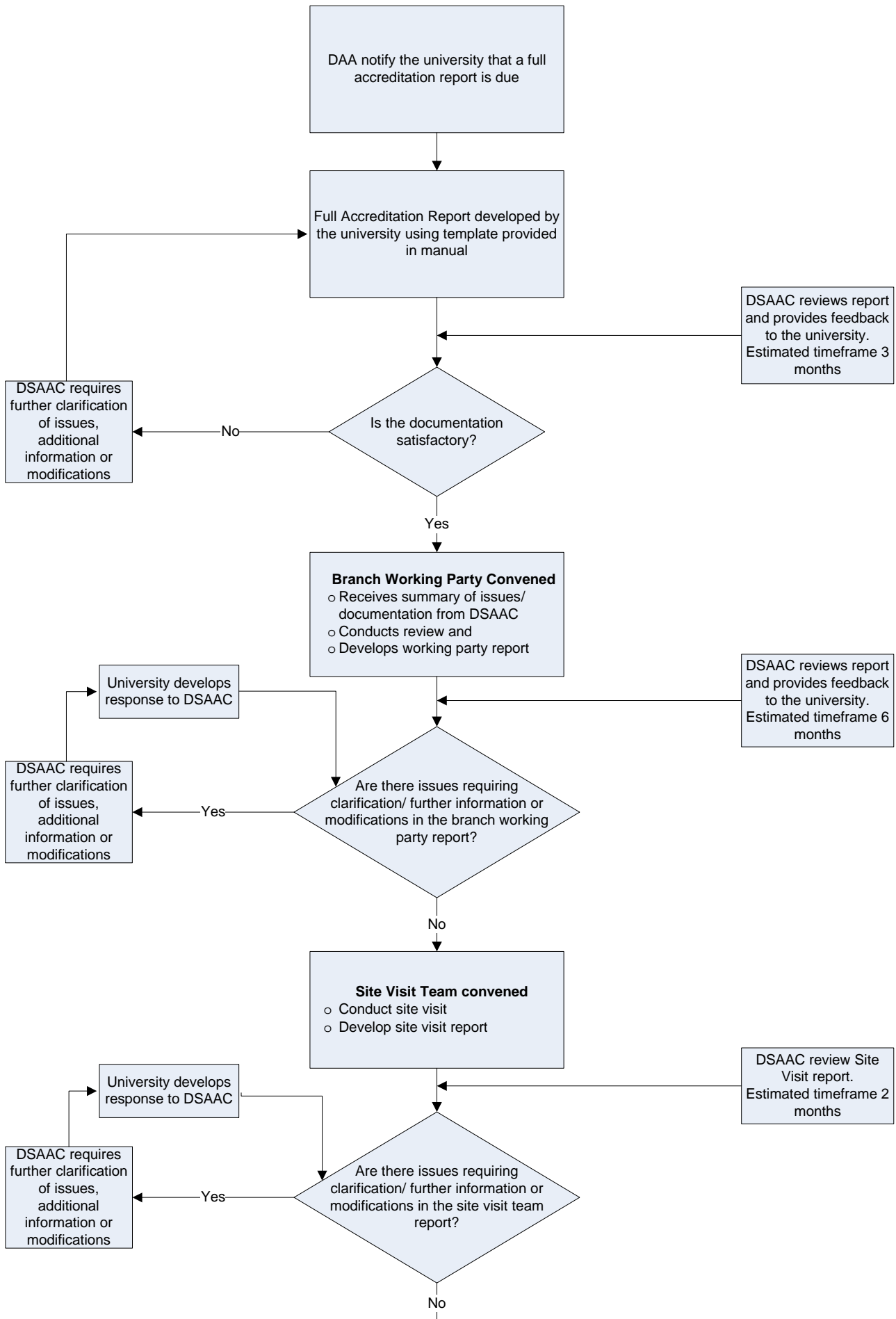
The suggested timeframes provided in this table and in the following flowcharts are based on the assumptions that no major issues are identified in the review process and that requests for additional or clarifying information from universities are responded to in a timely fashion. DAA cannot guarantee the overall timing of the accreditation process. The flow charts on the following pages provide a visual representation of the provisional accreditation, full accreditation and re-accreditation processes.

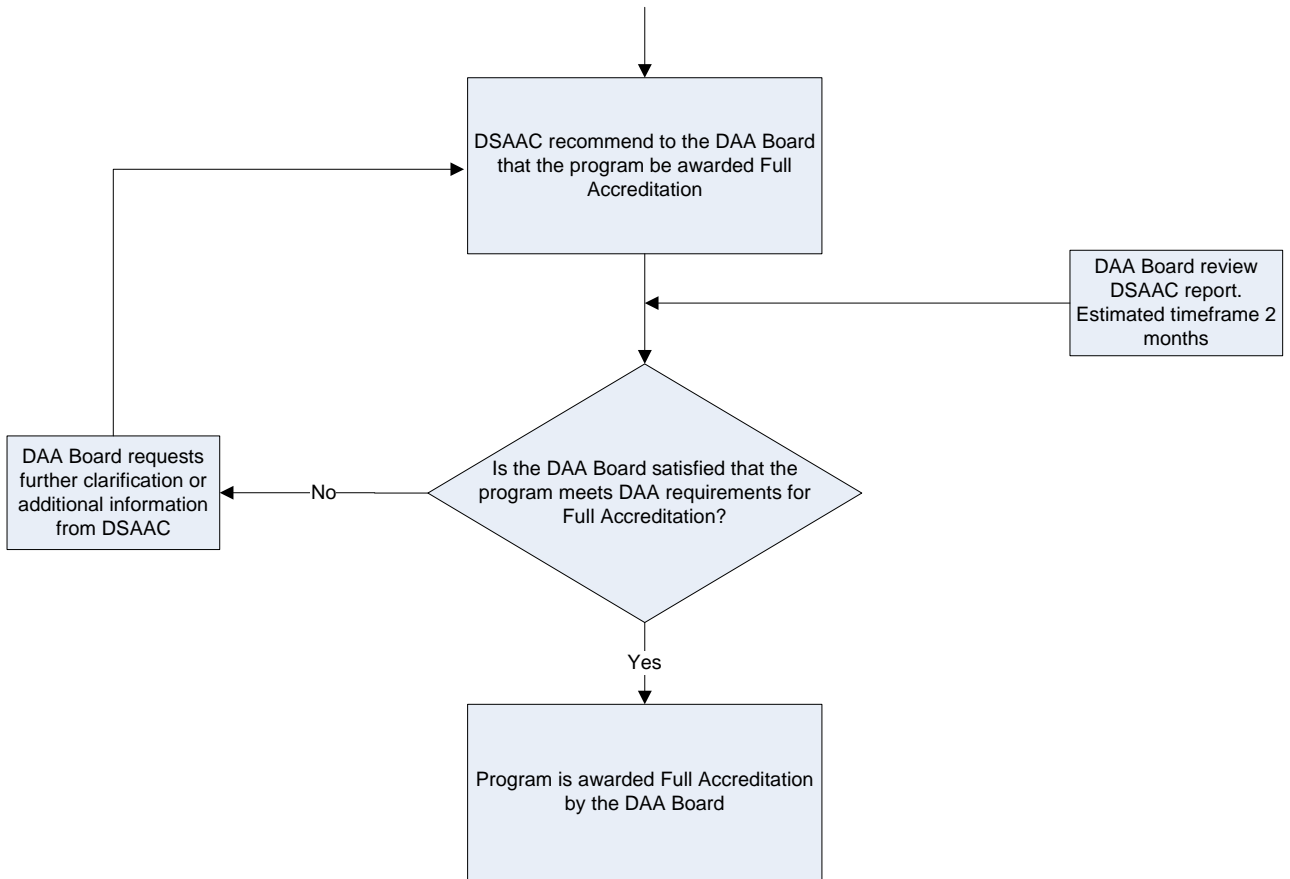
DAA Provisional Accreditation Process



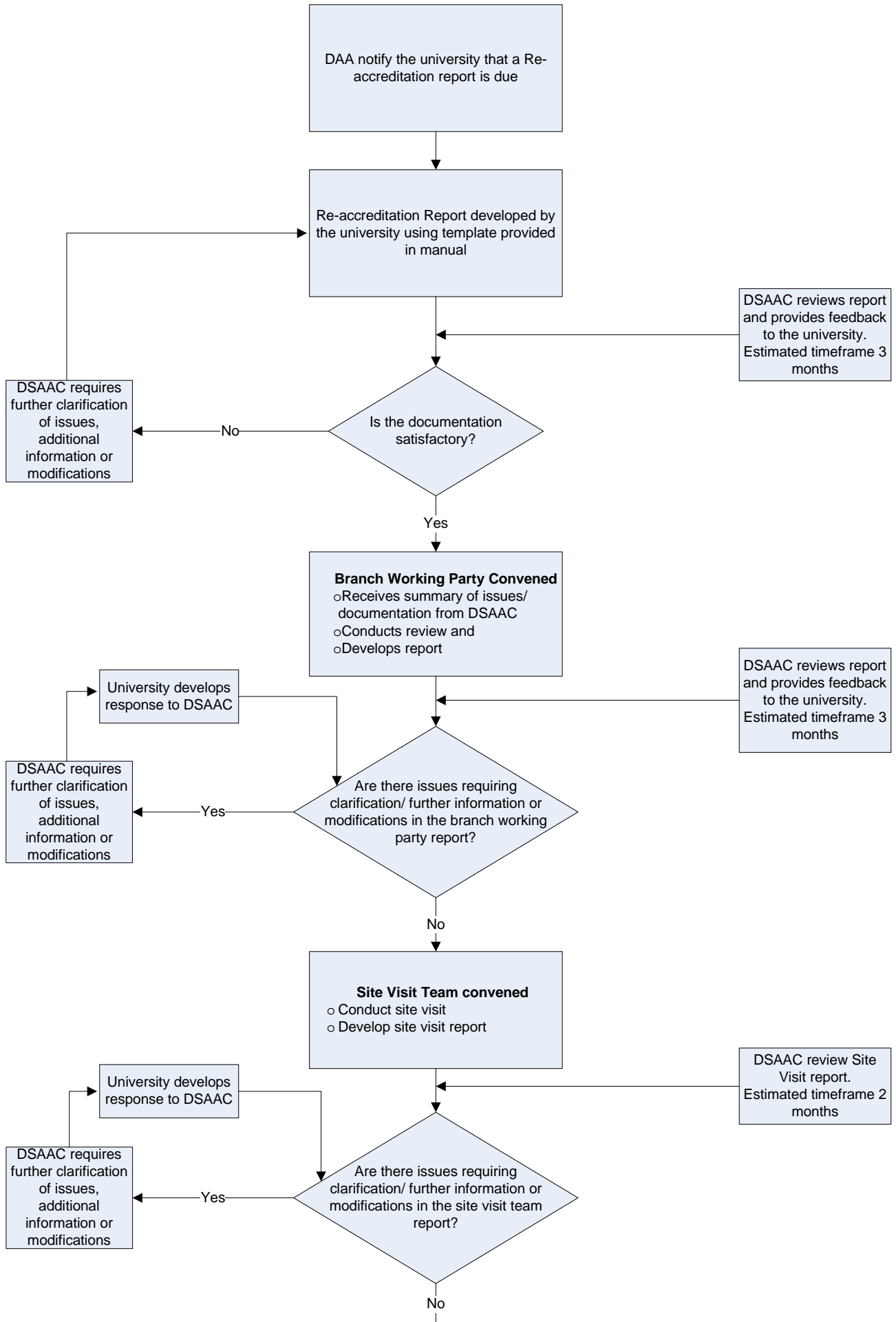


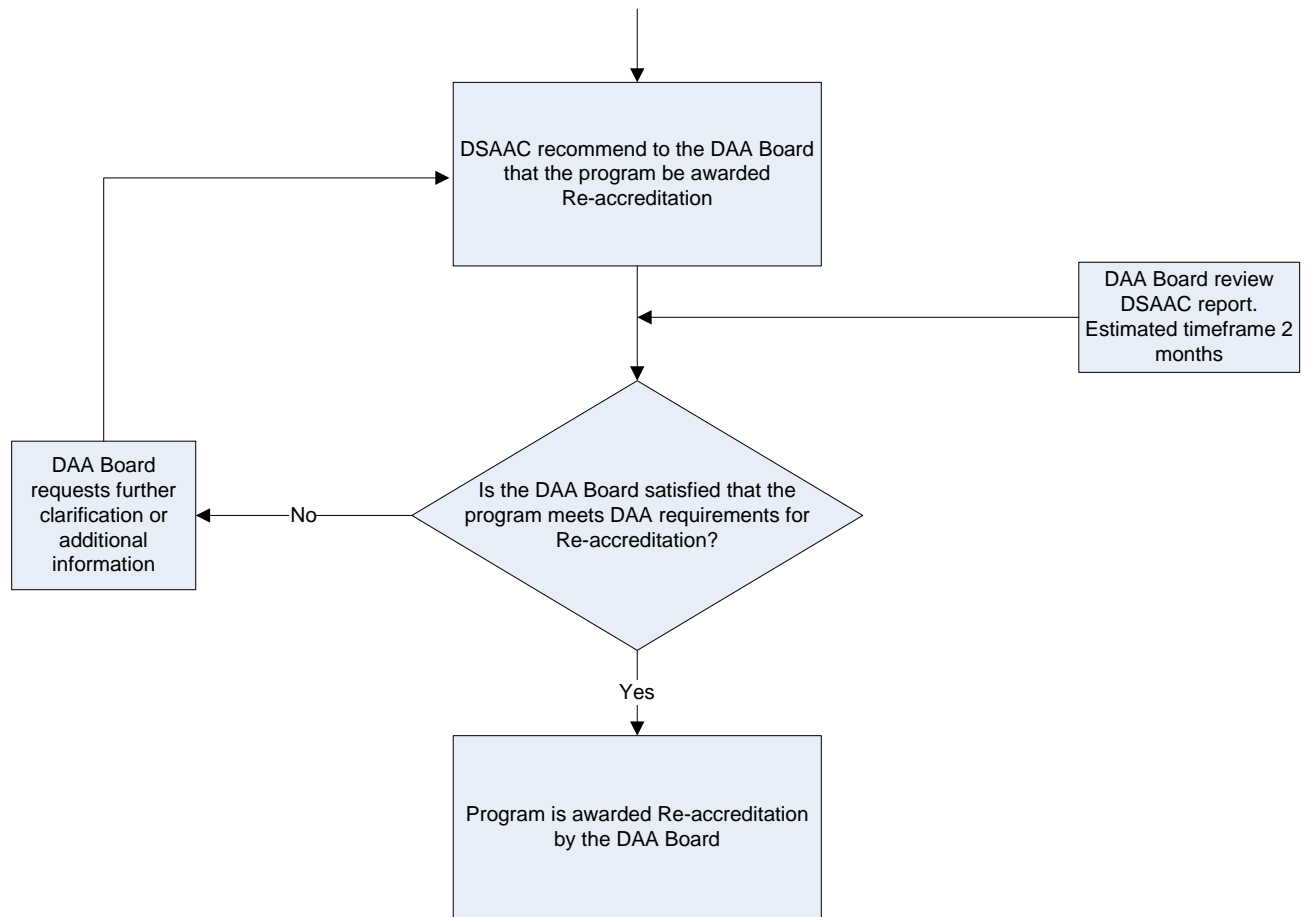
DAA Full Accreditation Process





DAA Re-accreditation Process





3.4 Accreditation reports required by DAA

DAA has a focus on specific issues which are relevant to maintaining a quality practice standards in entrants to the profession. The accreditation reports need to address certain questions which reflect the quality standards. DAA recognises that program documentation is prepared by the University for various purposes. To enable the University to make most effective use of existing documentation, and to facilitate DAA access to the relevant information, the reports are in the format of questions for which a relatively succinct answer can be provided, cross referenced to further detail or evidence in other documentation provided as attachments. An evidence guideline is provided to clarify the nature of the documentary evidence required. Copies of the accreditation report will go to members of DSAAC, selected DSAAC reviewers and to the branch accreditation working group as part of their review process.

Program Directors and/or Co-ordinators are responsible for completing the reports and returning them to the DAA National Office. The completion of program reports should be seen as periodic formal milestones in an on-going process of consultation and negotiation with DAA. Preparation of the report offers the university the opportunity to identify areas that may need improvement, and to begin to make changes if required. Templates to be used for accreditation reports are provided at:

Appendix 2.1 Provisional Accreditation Report

Appendix 2.2 Full Accreditation or Re accreditation Report

3.5 Cost of accreditation

The University will be charged a fee for the management of applications for accreditation. The fees will be set at rates as approved by the Board from time to time. Fees are normally payable at the time of submission of the provisional and re-accreditation reports. These fees partially cover the cost of administration of the accreditation process, including reimbursement of committee members and travel costs associated with site visits. There is no fee payable on submission of a full accreditation (as the fee for the provisional accreditation covers this part of the process) or for a report on changes to program. An up to date fee schedule is available on the DAA website, www.daa.asn.au, in the dietetic careers and education section.

3.6 Key groups involved in the accreditation process

The main DAA groups involved in the accreditation procedure are:

DAA Board

The DAA Board is composed of the President, Vice President, one Director from each Branch and another Director from the Branch from which the Vice President was elected. The Board manages the business of the Association. The DAA Board makes the final decision regarding DAA accreditation of dietetic programs and policy issues related to dietetic education and accreditation.

Dietetic Standards and Accreditation Advisory Committee (DSAAC)

DSAAC is a national advisory committee is composed of DAA members appointed by the Board for a two year term. One of the roles of DSAAC is to advise the Board and develop and progress issues relevant to nutrition and dietetics education and competency standards.

The Terms of Reference for DSAAC and the selection criteria for DSAAC members can be found in Appendix 4.

DAA National Office

The Professional Services Unit is the contact for accreditation issues at DAA National Office. The Professional Services Director manages the accreditation processes and is the primary contact for universities at all stages of accreditation process. Administration support for the accreditation is provided by the Professional Services Unit.

Branch Accreditation Working Party

An Branch Accreditation Working Party, which is convened by the DAA Branch in the state where the university resides, is established to support and advise DSAAC during an accreditation process. This group's primary task is to focus on the professional practice content of the dietetic program and other issues raised by DSAAC.

The Branch Accreditation Working Party are required:

1. To review the relevant sections of the report provided by the university to DSAAC and any other relevant documents and identify any areas where it is believed that the "practice" as experienced by students and the profession at the local level, differs from the information provided by the university and that required by DAA;
2. To determine whether the student placement experience meets the criteria published in the DAA Accreditation manual by surveying key stakeholders such as employers, current students, recent graduates and supervisors for
 - Clinical Experience
 - Community / Public Health / Food Industry experience
 - Food service experience

The stakeholders surveyed will differ depending on the type of review being undertaken.

3. To report to DSAAC on the findings of their review.
4. To participate in a site visit of the university with a representative from DSAAC to meet with the Head of School, staff and students of the university and to view program /program facilities. The Chair of the branch accreditation working party will be a member of the site visit team.

An information kit is available for branch accreditation working parties, which provides the group with a draft terms of reference, an overview of tasks, reporting requirements and sample surveys for use in their review. The kit can be found at Appendix 5.

If there are limited opportunities for the development of a branch accreditation working party to provide feedback to DSAAC, DAA may require a formal visit (of one member of DSAAC) to the placement sites as part of the accreditation process. This visit would be developed in consultation with the university and the cost of such visits will be in addition to the standard accreditation fee.

DAA Branch Representatives on University Program Advisory Committees

Universities should approach the local DAA branch to nominate a formal DAA representative for their program advisory committee. The DAA representative must be an APD with full status and their role is to be a formal representative of the profession on the committee, providing an understanding of the culture and values of the profession. The representative will provide the committee with a view of practice in the local area and insight into any specific workforce issues.

The representative provides the university with a mechanism for feedback on their program from the membership in the local area via the local branch.

The DAA representative on the Advisory committee is required to report back annually to the relevant DAA Branch to ensure they are kept informed of issues raised in the committee meetings. The branch will notify DSAAC of relevant issues raised by the representative.

Other dietitians may participate on advisory committees by direct invitation from the university and this is encouraged, but they are not DAA representatives.

It is important to remember that the Professional Services Director (PSD) at National Office, and not the Branch representative, is the primary contact for the DAA accreditation process. All enquiries with regards to the progress of accreditation or issues raised by DSAAC should be directed to the PSD in the first instance.

3.7 University site visit

Site visits to universities form an integral part of the provisional, full and re-accreditation processes. Site visits occur towards the end of accreditation processes and provide an opportunity for face to face discussion of accreditation issues.

The purposes of a site visit are to:

- Clarify issues raised in the accreditation process
- To engage with the senior dietetic program staff and senior management at the university to discuss issues raised by the DSAAC review of the university report and the branch working party review.

The site visit team who are representing DSAAC are required to:

- Verify that the degree enables graduates to meet DAA's national competency standards for entry level dietitians
- Assess how well the program meets its stated goals and objectives.
- Confirm that the program has established and demonstrates quality management processes.

A detailed information kit has been developed regarding accreditation site visits (see Appendix 6) to support DAA members undertaking this activity, and provide universities with further information about the process.