

International Board of Education  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

**Handbook  
for the Approval of New Degree Programs  
and Institutional Upgrading  
in Seventh-day Adventist Colleges  
and Universities**

Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

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## INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been prepared with the purpose of assisting tertiary institutions in the process of applying for and obtaining the approval of the International Board of Education for new degree programs or institutional upgrading. It also contains guidelines to help members of teams in surveying denominational colleges and universities which have applied for the authorization to offer new instructional programs or for achieving institutional upgrading.

## POLICY BACKGROUND

The International Board of Education (IBE) is the primary medium through which the General Conference Department of Education coordinates the world system of Seventh-day Adventist education. It is authorized to act in areas described in the *General Conference Working Policy* No. F 15 03 and 04.

The IBE is governed by a representative board chaired by a General Conference vice president, with the director of the Education Department serving as executive secretary.

Among the duties of the IBE are the following:

- To establish general guidelines, coordinate the inter-relationship between division programs, and maintain general direction of the education program of the Church.
- To approve the establishment or discontinuance of tertiary-level schools and programs, the upgrading of post-secondary institutions, the affiliation of schools across division boundaries, and the implementation of interdivision extended-campus programs.
- To coordinate, through the Committee on Seventh-day Adventist Theological Education, the total program of theological studies throughout the world field, including the approval of seminaries and advanced programs in religion, theology, and ministry.
- To coordinate all interdivision programs of professional education.

## PROCEDURE FOR SEEKING APPROVAL

**1. Institutional approval and government authorization.** When an accredited Seventh-day Adventist postsecondary educational institution completes a feasibility study and decides to offer a new degree program, it first seeks formal approval from its board. If necessary, and in consultation with the Division director of education or the executive secretary of the Board of Higher Education, the institution explores the likelihood of obtaining authorization from the government or the regional accrediting authorities that have jurisdiction over

its operation. If affirmative, the action of the board is conveyed to the Division Board of Higher Education or Education Committee, The proposal to the Division follows the format “Program Proposal Instrument” included in this *Handbook*. It is also recommended that the proposal provide answers to the main questions listed under “Guidelines for On-Site Surveys of New Degree Program.”

**2. Action by the Division Education Committee/Board of Higher Education.** The proposal submitted to the Division Board of Higher Education or Education Committee will include (a) a rationale for offering the new degree program, (b) the specific objectives, (c) the benefits expected, (d) a complete description of the course of studies, (e) the faculty and administration to be involved in the new program, (f) the physical facilities, equipment, library, and other resources available, and (g) a detailed budget for the following three years.

The Division/Board of Higher Education will decide whether the dimensions of the proposed program warrant a survey visit with personnel from within the Division. At this stage, the Division/Board of Higher Education is encouraged to seek the advice from the General Conference Education Department.

If the Division/Board of Higher Education acts favorably with respect to the new program, the proposal is frequently endorsed by the Division Executive Committee. The proposal is then recommended to the International Board of Education (IBE) through the General Conference Education Department staff, utilizing the “Program Proposal Instrument” form attached.

**3. Involvement of the General Conference Education Department staff.** The General Conference Education Department staff does a preliminary evaluation of the proposal recommended by the Division. If favorable, they place it on the IBE agenda.

If the proposal involves a new course of studies for the training of ministers, Bible instructors, or Bible/religion /theology teachers, the General Conference Education Department staff first submits the proposal to the Committee on Seventh-day Adventist Theological Education of this Board for their evaluation. Their recommendation is then forwarded to the IBE through the General Conference Education Department staff.

If the proposal involves a new course of studies in one of the health sciences, the General Conference Education Department staff will seek the advice of the Committee on Health Professional Education of this Board. Their recommendation is then forwarded to the IBE through the General Conference Education Department staff.

**4. Involvement of the International Board of Education.** Depending on the scope of the new program, the institutional experience in offering similar

programs, and the involvement of an IBE representative in the first survey, the International Board of Education may accept and act on the recommendation received from the Division/Board of Higher Education without further involvement.

Usually, once the IBE approves the concept of the new program, the General Conference Education Department staff will appoint a representative team to conduct an on-site survey of the new degree program, in consultation with the Division Education Department/Board of Higher Education involved. The team usually includes a representative from the General Conference, who chairs the survey team, and of the Division Education Department or the Division Board of Higher Education, who serves as secretary. The team also includes specialists in the areas to be surveyed.

## **THE VISIT**

**Preparation.** In conducting the visit, the survey team will represent several bodies: (1) The General Conference International Board of Education, (2) the Division Education Committee or Board of Higher Education, (3) other Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities, and (4) the constituency supporting the institution (church leaders, parents, students). All of them want assurance regarding the quality of the new program(s) and degree(s) to be offered.

The chairman of the team will inform the administrators of the institution to be visited regarding the date of the survey visit. He/she will ensure that each member receives the necessary instructions and background documents for the visit. Each team member, however, will be responsible for obtaining his/her own documents, visas, and travel tickets and for communicating to the president of the institution information regarding his/her travel plans and need, if any, for local transportation.

The president of the institution to be visited will forward to members of the team an updated version of the proposal for the new program or institutional upgrading, so that they may receive it at least 30 days in advance of the visit.

**Organization of the team.** Upon arrival on campus, the survey team holds an organizational meeting in which the members agree on specific assignments. They also outline a schedule of visits and interviews, in consultation with the administrators of the institution. The team utilizes the "Guidelines for On-Site Surveys of New Degree Programs," included in this document, as the basis of the visit.

**Institutional responsibilities.** The administration of the institution is responsible for providing local transportation, as well as adequate room and

board for the team members. It also provides the team with relevant documents not included in the proposal, as well as answers to questions pertinent to the proposal. Among the documents to be provided at the beginning of the visit are the institutional flow-chart, and a copy of the last audited statement of its financial operation.

The school administration also arranges for top representatives of the institutional board to be present during the visit and especially during the exit report presented by the survey team.

**Expectations.** In carrying out this assignment, the members of the survey team will be expected to demonstrate the best qualities of a Seventh-day Adventist educator or leader:

- ◆ Professionalism in preparing for the visit, in promptly fulfilling the assignments, in expressing judgment, and in all personal contacts and statements relating to the visit.

- ◆ Confidentiality in reporting any sensitive information that has been entrusted to him/her, both during and after the visit, remembering the Golden Rule. If in doubt, the member may seek advice from the chairman of the team.

- ◆ A constructive spirit that assesses objectively the strengths and weaknesses of the institution and the proposal, and also seeks to enhance the potential of all the parties involved through careful counsel and opinion.

In conducting the professional survey, the team will seek a balance between the national or regional standards and the international standards expected from similar programs or institutions within the Seventh-day Adventist educational system.

**Report of the survey.** Within six weeks of completing the visit, the chairman of the team will submit to the secretary of the IBE and to the Division director of education/BHE executive secretary a formal report of the visit and a recommendation accompanied by a list of the members of the survey team and their signatures. (Use the "Recommendation Form" attached.)

If affirmative, the team's report will recommend that the program(s) be approved or the institution upgraded. The recommendation may also stipulate conditions, recommendations, or suggestions on the following basis:

1. *Authorization/recognition without conditions.* Recommend to the IBE that the new degree program be authorized or that the new institution be denominationally recognized without condition or requirement, and that the IBE recommend the new degree program or institution to the Adventist Accrediting Association for candidacy status for a specified period, usually not more than 2 years.

2. *Authorization/recognition with observations or suggestions.*

Recommend to the IBE that the new degree program be authorized or that the new institution be denominationally recognized, and that the IBE recommend the new degree program or institution to the Adventist Accrediting Association for candidacy status for a specified period-usually not more than two years-with observations and/or suggestions to be considered by the institution during the candidacy status period.

3. *Authorization/recognition with recommendations.* Recommend to the IBE that the new degree program be authorized or that the new institution be denominationally recognized, and that the IBE recommend the new degree program or institution to the Adventist Accrediting Association for candidacy status for a specified period-usually not more than two years-with recommendations to be implemented by the institution during the candidacy status period and prior to the first visit of a team from the AAA.

4. *Authorization/recognition with conditions.* Request the institution to fulfill certain condition(s) before the new degree program is submitted to the IBE for authorization or the upgraded institution is recognized by the IBE. Once the secretary of the IBE receives from the administration and board of the institution written evidence that the conditions have been met, he will present to the IBE the report of the site visit team along with the confirmation of implementation, with a recommendation for authorization/recognition and candidacy status formatted as either number 2 or number 3 above.

5. *Recommendation for denial of authorization or recognition.* Recommend to the IBE that the new degree program not be authorized or the new institution not be recognized at this time, providing the rationale for the denial.

**Submitted to the IBE and recommendation to the AAA.** Once the conditions (if any) have been satisfied, the General Conference Education Department submits the report of the survey visit to the IBE. When the IBE acts favorably on the new programs(s) or the institutional upgrading, it will also recommend them to the Adventist Accrediting Association for candidacy status.

The Adventist Accrediting Association usually accepts the recommendation of the IBE, and, in granting candidacy status to the new degree program, it stipulates a date for the first accreditation visit, which generally falls two years after the new program is launched.

## **OUTCOME**

Once the IBE acts upon the team's recommendation, the IBE executive secretary communicates the decision to the Division's director of education/BHE executive secretary, to the chairman of the institutional board, and to the chief administrative officer of the institution visited.

With the approval of the IBE, the institution may begin offering the new degree program(s) or operating as an upgraded institution. From then on, the program will be evaluated by teams appointed by the Adventist Accrediting Association as part of the regular denominational accreditation process.

If the recommendation of the IBE-appointed survey team is negative with respect to the proposed program or institutional upgrading, the IBE will consider the arguments presented and act accordingly. This decision will also be communicated to the Division director of education/BHE executive secretary, to the chairman of the institutional board, and to the chief administrative officer of the institution visited.

### **RIGHT OF APPEAL**

Any action of the IBE involving a specific institution or unit may be appealed by the same in writing within 120 days of notification of such action. Such an appeal may be supported by a representation of no more than three persons before a meeting of the Board. The Board/Executive Committee in closed session shall then render its decision. In extreme and far-reaching decisions, further appeal may be made to the General Conference Executive Committee.

### **SUMMARY OUTLINE OF THE APPROVAL PROCEDURE**

An Adventist secondary school, college or university, after completing a feasibility study, develops a proposal for upgrading it or for offering new degree programs. This is done in consultation with Union/Division leaders, government entities, and consultants. The proposal follows the format outlined in the *IBE Handbook*.



When the institutional board takes positive action, it recommends the plan to the Division Board of Higher Education or Education Committee.



The Division Board of Higher Education or Education Committee studies the proposal in consultation with a member of the GC Education Department staff. Once a positive action is taken, the Division may appoint a survey team.



If a survey team is appointed, the Division Board of Higher Education or Education Committee receives the report and takes action. If affirmative, the recommendation goes to the Division Executive Committee and, if approved, the plan is recommended to the International Board of Education.



The GC Education Department staff does a preliminary evaluation of the proposal

recommended by the Division. If favorable, they place it on the IBE agenda.



The International Board of Education takes action. If favorable, a survey team is appointed in consultation with the Division and the institution is informed.



The IBE team conducts the survey and prepares a report, at times attaching conditions, recommendations, and/or suggestions. The survey team presents an exit report at the institution. Once the conditions (if any) have been satisfied, the report is presented to the IBE for action.



Once the IBE acts, approving the new degree program(s) or the upgraded institution, these are recognized by the denominational system of Adventist colleges and universities. They are also recommended to the Adventist Accrediting Association for a two-year candidacy toward denominational accreditation.



At this point, the new programs or the upgraded institution falls under the jurisdiction of the Adventist Accrediting Association, for regular evaluation purposes.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **FOR ON-SITE SURVEYS OF NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS**

While on campus, the survey team meets separately with representatives of the board, the administration, the faculty and, if possible, with prospective students. In its interviews, the team concentrates its attention of five basic areas, namely (1) the need, (2) the program, (3) the commitment, (4) the resources, and (5) the projections. The following outline may assist in conducting the visit.

#### **1. The Need**

What are the evidences that this new degree program is needed at this time and in this area of the world?

Has there been a reliable needs-assessment?

How well does this proposed program fit within the institution's statement of mission and in what way does it further that institutional mission?

In what specific manner does the new degree program support the Global Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

What is the evidence that there will be enough qualified students applying for admission now and in the near future?

What bodies have recommended that the new program be offered at this

institution?

## **2. The Program**

Is the proposed program sound and balanced?

Does it have clear focus and objectives?

Is it responsive to the needs of the constituency served by the institution?

Does the program provide for both theoretical study and relevant practical experience?

To what extent does it reflect Adventist educational philosophy?

Does it compare well with similar degree programs offered by other Adventist institutions?

Are the admission requirements reasonable?

Is there sufficient evidence that a majority of the students admitted will be Seventh-day Adventists?

Will the program and the degree have credibility among the educational authorities and the professionals in the country where it will be offered?

If this program does not lead to a terminal degree, is its curriculum designed in such a way as to provide graduates with a solid foundation for further studies?

## **3. The Commitment**

What is the evidence that the board, the administration, and the faculty are fully committed to the success of this new program?

Are the Union and the Division on record supporting this program?

Is there a reasonable plan to provide financial support, as needed, for faculty development, facilities, library holdings, research, equipment, etc.?

What specific plans does the institution have to promote and market this new program?

## **4. The Resources**

What evidence can be provided that the launching of this new degree program constitutes the best use of the institution's resources? Or are there existing programs that deserve strengthening before expanding the number of degrees offered by the institution?

Does the institution have the qualified faculty required to offer the courses for the new degree program?

In addition to their degree, do the teachers have the necessary teaching skills?

If contract teachers are to be involved, do they have the necessary qualifications and the commitment to Adventist educational philosophy?

Is the faculty fully aware of what is expected of them in connection with this new program?

Are the projected faculty loads reasonable in view of the requirements of this program?

Will the faculty have enough time for course preparation, student contact, research, publication, and service?

Is the institutional administrative structure conducive to the success of the program?

To what extent are the library collection, equipment, and services adequate support study and research connected with this program?

## **5. Projections**

Are there sufficient evidences to expect that the proposed program will have continuity, both in incoming students and administrative support?

Are the enrollment and financial projections sound?

Specifically, what will students of this program be expected to do upon completing their studies: employment, further studies? What assurance can be provided that these are realistic expectations?

Why is it reasonable to expect that this program will be viable in the foreseeable future?

At what point in the future will the content of the new program be reviewed and by what body, in order to make necessary adjustments?

Is there a mechanism to evaluate the quality of the program on the basis of its graduates?

## **Exit Report**

Before leaving campus, the survey team will present an exit report to the representatives of the institutional board, the administration, and the faculty. This report will highlight the major points of the survey and will summarize the recommendation to be forwarded to the International Board of Education. The team will also answer any questions that may arise in connection with the exit report and make corrections of fact in the draft of their report..

## **Submission of the Report and Recommendation**

Soon after completing the visit, but not later than six weeks afterwards, the chairman of the survey team will ensure that a written report and a recommendation are submitted to the International Board of Education, through the General Conference Education Department, with respect to the proposed degree program(s). If the report is prepared in a language other than English, at

least a summary and the recommendations should be submitted in English. This report will take into consideration the items listed under "Report of the Survey" (above) and will be accompanied by the "Recommendation Form," with the necessary signatures.

The IBE will act on this recommendation and will communicate its decision to the Division education director/BHE executive secretary, to the chairman of the institutional board, and to the chief academic officer of the institution.

If the IBE action is favorable, the new program(s) or the upgraded institution will fall under the jurisdiction of the Adventist Accrediting Association, for regular evaluation visits.

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**RECOMMENDATION FORM**

To: The International Board of Education  
Division Education Committee or Board of Higher Education

From: Team Appointed to Conduct an Educational Survey

Program and  
Institution  
Surveyed:

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Location:

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Dates:

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The team appointed to survey the proposed program(s) listed above wishes to make the following professional recommendation, on the basis of an on-site visit and interviews (indicate whether there are any conditions):

Members of the survey team:

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**PROGRAM PROPOSAL INSTRUMENT**

**Proposal for the Initiation of a New  
Instructional Program**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Institution Submitting Proposal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department in Which Program  
Will Be Offered

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Department Head

\_\_\_\_\_  
Degree to be offered

\_\_\_\_\_  
Proposed Initiation Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title of Proposed Program

\_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved by Institutional Board

\_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved by the Division

\_\_\_\_\_

Date Received by International  
Board of Education

## **Title Page**

The title page of the proposal should follow the format presented in the preceding page.

## **Abstract of Proposal**

An abstract of the proposal (not more than two or three pages) should be inserted between the Title Page and the body of the proposal.

## **Proposal**

The proposal should consist of replies to the questions which follow. Replies should follow the same sequence as the questions. Please precede each reply with the number and letter of the question being answered.

- I. *Objectives of the Program.*
  - A. Please state the specific objectives of the program.
  - B. How would this program help achieve the mission and objectives of your institution in terms of its role and scope within the total system of Seventh-day Adventist higher education in your Union or Division?
  - C. Enumerate any indirect benefits which, in your opinion, may accrue from the establishment of the program.
  - D. Please state the impact of the new program on your institution in terms of institutional size and how it affects existing programs. If the new program will modify existing programs in the institution, please explain these modifications.
- II. *Course of Study Leading to the Proposed Degree.*
  - A. List the courses (title and term credits) that would constitute the course requirements of the proposed program. Place an (x) next to those courses already given at the institution and a (+) next to proposed new courses which will be offered.
  - B. In summary form, state the number of courses required for the

program, the number of courses already available, and the number of new courses to be added with the amount of term credits for each group.

- C. In summary form, please state your strengths in related major fields which would serve as service courses to the new degree program area.

III. *Justification for the Initiation of the Proposed Program.*

- A. What are the needs: of your constituent territory, the nation, and the church for people trained in a program such as is herein proposed? Please describe job opportunities. Refer to any national or church studies on need. (Please supply data from studies used.)
- B. If there is a territorial, national, or church need for more people to be trained in this field, and at the level in the proposed program, are there special reasons why it should be offered at your institution rather than at one of the other institutions in your Union or Division? What special competence does your institution have for offering this program?
- C. Is there interest on the part of local industry, agencies, institutions, etc. in the proposed program?
- D. Please state other justifications for the initiation of this program which may not have been included above.
- E. What priority would you place on the need for the initiation of this program at your institution? Please give a brief rationale for the rating. Make comparisons with the importance of several selected existing programs in your institution.
  - 1. High
  - 2. Medium
  - 3. Low

IV. *Similar Programs Presently Offered in the SDA system.*

- A. List degree programs offered in this specialty at other Seventh-day Adventist institutions in your Union or Division.

V. *Student Interest in the Proposed Program.*

- A. Please provide any indication you might have about student interest in the proposed program from inside the outside of your institution. What is the basis for this opinion? Indicate the enrollment you anticipate during the first four years of the program by year.
- B. What do you think will be the source of most of the students that you expect to enroll in this program?

VI. *Faculty.*

- A. Estimate the number of faculty members that would have to be added during the first year if this program were implemented. (Please estimate salary and fringe benefits.)
- B. How many new faculty members for this program would be anticipated for each of the next five years? (Please estimate salary and fringe benefits.)
- C. What additional clerical or supportive personnel will be needed during the first four years of the program? (Please estimate salary and fringe benefits.)

VII. *Facilities.*

- A. Please list facilities, such as (1) buildings, (2) space, or (3) equipment, which are currently available at your institution for use in the program herein proposed.
- B. What additional facilities, such as special (1) buildings, (2) additional space, or (3) equipment, are needed for the program herein proposed?
- C. What is the anticipated cost of these additional facilities prior to the initiation of the program and for each of the next three years?
- D. What are the anticipated sources of funds?

VIII. *Library Resources.*

- A. What is the anticipated cost of any additional library resources needed to initiate this program and for each of the next three years?
- B. What are the anticipated sources of funds?

IX. *Other Institutional Needs.*

- A. Are there other institutional needs in relation to the program which have not yet been described? If so, please list them; estimate their initial cost and the annual cost for the next three years thereafter.

X. *Accreditation.*

- A. Does the program meet the requirements of appropriate accrediting associations and/or professional societies?
- B. Name the accrediting agencies and/or professional societies which would be concerned with the particular program herein proposed.

XI. *Evaluation of Proposed Program.*

- A. Please name faculty committees or councils of your institution which have reviewed and approved the program herein proposed.
- B. If outside consultants have been employed, list the names of the consultants and their current positions and titles; please append hereto a copy of their reports.

XII. *Summary of Estimated Costs of Program.*

- A. Summarize the estimated costs of the program herein proposed by completing the table on the following page. Include only costs which are additional to those programs currently in operation.

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL COST PER YEAR

	1st Yr Cost	2 Year Cost	3rd Yr Cost
Faculty (salaries and fringe benefits)			
Clerical and Supportive Personnel (Total Costs)			
Construction of New Space or Major Renovation			
Added Plant Services, Maintenance, & Depreciation Because of Added Space			
Equipment			
Library Resources			
Other Major Cost Items (Please List)			
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
Total Cost			
Percentage of Total Anticipated Cost From Tuition			
Percentage of Total Anticipated Cost from Church Appropriations			
Percentage of Total Anticipated Cost from Government Assistance			
Source(s) for the Balance			
1.			
2.			
3.			

XIII. *Organization and Administration.*

- A. How and by whom is policy formulated?
- B. How and by whom was the proposed program structured? Review the minutes of the responsible body.
- C. What is the normal procedure by which curricular change is made?
- D. How is compliance determined and graduation recommended?
- E. Who is directly responsible for administration of the program?  
Vice president  
Dean  
Curriculum Coordinator  
Director  
Division Chairman  
Department Head  
Other
- F. To whom does this administrator report?
- G. If the proposal is for a graduate program:  
  
Is the institution adequately organized and approved to offer graduate education?  
  
Is there a graduate council? A graduate faculty?  
  
How frequently do they meet?  
  
Review the minutes for the past two years.