

Visiting Committee Member Checklist

Previsit Preparation

- ___ 1. Receive first letter from Visiting Committee chairperson that addresses several items:
 - a. Asking for preferred areas of coverage during the visit
 - b. Reminding members about training sessions
 - c. Asking members to review accreditation materials
- ___ 2. Participate in training.
- ___ 3. Study the school description, the *Focus on Learning* manual, and the reference cards.
- ___ 4. Become aware of the expected outcomes of the self-study followed by the school:
 - the involvement and collaboration of all staff and other shareholders in the self-study
 - the clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through expected schoolwide learning results and academic standards
 - the gathering and analyzing of data about students and student achievement
 - the assessment of the entire school program and its impact on student learning in relation to expected schoolwide learning results, academic standards, and WASC/CDE criteria
 - the alignment of a long-range action plan to the school's areas of need; the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the plan; the involvement and collaboration of each shareholder group in the self-study
- ___ 5. Review the WASC/CDE criteria, the criteria guide questions, suggested evidence to examine, rubrics and appropriate academic standards and educational references.
- ___ 6. Receive additional communication from chairperson:
 - a. Assigning writing assignments
 - b. Requesting the review of the criteria as the **entire self-study report is analyzed**
 - c. Requesting *prior to the visit*, the writing of questions to pursue during the visit and tentative narrative statements for assigned sections of the self-study report, i.e., focus groups summaries on criteria categories. (Refer to Visiting Committee Report format.)
 - ➔ **Note:** The chair should receive these prior to the initial team meeting in order to compile a tentative Visiting Committee report.
 - d. Providing a schedule for visit
- ___ 7. After receiving the self-study report, complete previsit preparation:
 - a. Review the criteria with respect to the analysis of the self-study report; study other pertinent materials (e.g., academic standards).

- b. Compare school's self-study findings to the concepts of the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results; critique the schoolwide action plan.

To what extent:

- ✓ do the school's findings and supporting evidence provide a sound basis for determining the effectiveness of the school programs based on the criteria concepts?
- ✓ was the analysis of the school program done in relation to the expected schoolwide learning results, the academic standards, and the concepts of the criteria, and by all students?
- ✓ does the schoolwide action plan address the major identified growth areas and enhance the learning of all students as identified in the student/community profile?
- ✓ are the expected schoolwide learning results being addressed through the action plan?
- ✓ is the implementation of a standards-based system being addressed through the action plan?
- ✓ is the implementation of a standards-based system being addressed through the action plan?
- ✓ has the school integrated other initiatives to create one "umbrella" schoolwide action plan?
- ✓ is the action plan feasible and realistic? Are resources considered for each action plan section?
- ✓ do the ways of assessing progress include the analysis of student learning?
- ✓ is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and system-wide?
- ✓ is there a sound follow-up process that will be used to monitor the accomplishment of the action plan?

- c. Write questions regarding issues, concerns, clarifications and evidence that should be pursued during the visit and develop tentative narrative statements for assigned sections of visiting committee report. **Send these to visiting committee chair prior to visit.**

___ 8. Receive final communication from chairperson:

- a. Confirming receipt of school self-study
- b. Offering assistance/clarification of tasks
- c. Confirming initial meeting time
- d. Reviewing how expenses are to be handled

___ 9. Take following materials to visit:

- a. *Focus on Learning* manual
- b. Reference cards
- c. Self-study report
- d. All notes
- e. Credit card or cash to cover reimbursable expenses

___ 10. Arrive on time for initial meeting and have no other commitments during the visit.

**The Visit: How Do We Know Students Are Learning?
 What Is The Actual Program For Students?**

- ___ 1. Demonstrate a genuine interest in the school’s welfare and a desire to be helpful. Establish rapport with staff.
- ___ 2. Utilize the concepts of the WASC/CDE criteria as a comparison base throughout entire visit.
- ___ 3. Look at the quality of program experienced by students and evidence of successful student learning—the degree to which the expected schoolwide learning results and academic standards are being accomplished.
- ___ 4. Look for evidence of an ongoing process for school improvement.
- ___ 5. Let the program unfold, don't prejudge. Validate, verify, and document. Be aware of personal biases that can influence observation.
- ___ 6. Structure the gathering and review of evidence so needed information is gained, i.e., class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work and other information, and dialogue with subject area/support groups.
- ___ 7. Assure teachers that classroom visits are not evaluative but are planned to observe the general instructional atmosphere and climate of the school.
- ___ 8. Frame open-ended questions to all school committee members and individuals to elicit information without reflecting a value judgment.
- ___ 9. Allow adequate time for responses and give appropriate feedback to responses to questions.
- ___ 10. Concentrate on being a good listener. Be aware of nonverbal feedback.
- ___ 11. Meet and lead discussion with school self-study committees that are assigned areas of writing responsibility. Allow adequate time for the other visiting committee members to explore their concerns and for school staff members to highlight issues important to them. Visiting committee members help all concerned to recognize the needs of the school and develop a desire to improve the instructional program.
 ➔ **Note:** Time is limited, so don't overemphasize particular concerns. The goal is to clarify information already in the self-study report and secure information not yet provided.
- ___ 12. Don't allow pressure groups or individuals to distract you from the main task and schedule.
- ___ 13. Make every effort to avoid involvement in issues that are negotiable.
- ___ 14. Work cooperatively with all other visiting committee members as findings are discussed and decisions made.

- ___ 15. Write quality responses according to the suggested guidelines. Make sure they reflect the important concepts of the criteria in order to serve as guidelines for an effective educational curricular program.
- ___ 16. Give feedback to all staff, noting the regular meetings with the leadership team, and regarding findings as a result of the visit, not the self-study alone.
- ___ 17. Meet with the leadership team to present and thoroughly discuss the synthesis of the concepts of the criteria, the self-study report, and the findings during the visit, as reflected in the draft visiting committee report.
- ___ 18. Meet with other visiting committee members to investigate any issues or questions raised during the leadership team meeting.
- ___ 19. Make necessary visiting committee report modifications and come to closure on them.
- ___ 20. Individually review each WASC/CDE criterion within the five categories and overall findings. Individually make decisions regarding the quality of the school's educational program with respect to the WASC/CDE criteria and the other factors impacting the term.
- ___ 21. Participate in the visiting committee discussion of the Recommendation for a Term of Accreditation with respect to the WASC/CDE criteria categories and all findings.
- ___ 22. Assist the chair in preparing the confidential visiting committee summary for the Commission ensuring that the **correlation is evident** between the recommended term and the visiting committee report.
- ___ 23. Complete expense voucher and chair evaluation form (optional).
- ___ 24. Participate in the presentation of the findings to the entire staff. Don't imply the recommended term of accreditation.
- ___ 25. Support and encourage the school in its ongoing follow-up.