

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. (Sections of *Focus on Learning* to emphasize: The Big Picture; The Self-study: Background Information; The Self-Study; The Visit; The Follow-up; The Tools: Criteria/Suggested Evidence; Expected Schoolwide Learning Results; Gathering Evidence.)

- ___4. Become aware of the parameters of the self study followed by the school:
 - the involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study
 - the clarification of the school’s purpose and expected schoolwide learning results
 - the assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria
 - the development of a schoolwide action plan and integrated subject area/support program action steps to address identified growth needs
 - the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan

- ___5. Review the WASC criteria and suggested evidence and appropriate curricular/ 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 school report. 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 School Report, complete previsit preparation:
 - a. Review the criteria with respect to the analysis of the School Report; study other pertinent materials.
 - b. Compare the school’s self-findings to the concepts of the criteria and the expected

- schoolwide learning results. Critique 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 the 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 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 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 of evidence (class/program, observations, interviews, examination of student work and other information, dialogue with Home Groups) so needed information is gained.
- ___7. Assure teachers that classroom visits are not evaluative, but are planned to observe the general instruction 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 in responses to questions.
- ___ 10. Concentrate on being a good listener. Be aware of nonverbal feedback.
- ___ 11. Meet and lead discussion with the school self-study committees that are assigned areas of writing responsibility. Allow adequate time for the other Visiting Committee members to explore their concern 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 School 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. Provide regular feedback to the Leadership Team and other staff members 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 school 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 it.
- ___ 20. Individually review each WASC criterion within the four categories and overall findings. Individually make decisions regarding the quality of the school's educational program with respect to the four categories of 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 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.