VISITING COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON CHECKLIST

Pre-visit Preparation

___1. Attend WASC chair training and Pacific Union Conference Focus on Learning chair training.

___2. Study the school description, the current Focus on Learning manual for SDA schools, and the accreditation status worksheet.

___3. Review the five outcomes to be accomplished through the self-study:
   a. The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement
   b. The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards
   c. The analysis of data about students and student achievement
   d. The assessment of the entire school program and its impact on student learning in relation to the schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, and WASC criteria
   e. The alignment of a long-range action plan to the school’s areas of need; the capacity to implement and monitor the accomplishment of the plan

___4. Review the WASC criteria, the criteria guide questions, suggested evidence to examine, appropriate academic standards, and educational references.

___5. Begin regular communication with the Principal and Self-Study Coordinator to answer questions or give assistance.

___6. Arrange a one-day preliminary visit. During the visit, plan to meet with the Principal or head of school, Self-Study Coordinator, Leadership Team, and other staff members (possibly speak briefly to entire staff). Discuss the logistics of the full visit.

___7. Understand the school's culture, vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes and review past reports, action plans, etc. Obtain current schoolwide action plan, prior pertinent reports, view website, etc. (e.g., prior self-study and mid-cycle reports, revisit report, and corresponding Visiting Committee reports.)

___8. Communicate with school about the following issues:

   Note: Begin critiquing draft sections of the self-study (e.g., the profile and the summary, schoolwide learner outcomes, identified critical learner needs, and progress report), one or more Focus Group summaries, and draft of the updated schoolwide action plan. Ensure that the critical learner needs are addressed throughout the analysis of the school’s program based on the criteria areas and found in the schoolwide action. Provide timely feedback.
a. The calendar/timeline for the self-study process:
   • Has the timeline been developed so that the self-study will be ready to mail to the Visiting Committee six weeks prior to the visit?
   • How has maximum time for Home and Focus Group meetings been allotted? Are the meetings well-spaced out throughout the self-study process?

b. Committee organization and membership:
   • How is the Leadership Team taking an active role in facilitating the entire self-study process?
   • How is there active involvement of all certificated staff members, including administration, and strong representation of other stakeholder groups?
   • Are all certificated staff serving on two groups—a Home Group (for large schools) and a Focus Group?
   • Has the school reflected upon the type of committee organization that will be most effective in the implementation of the schoolwide action plan? For example, has the school considered maintaining the Focus Groups after the visit to oversee the action plan sections?

c. Refinement and use of the student/constituency profile data:
   • Has the Leadership Team gathered and analyzed all required and other pertinent data to identify the characteristics and trends of achievement of ALL the students?
   • How has the Leadership Team facilitated the discussion of the profile by all certificated staff members and other stakeholders?
   • How are the stakeholders using the profile to guide the inquiry into the school programs, especially the identified critical learner needs and the related important questions noted in the profile summary?

d. Understanding the vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes:
   • Has the Leadership Team involved the stakeholders in a review of the current vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes in relation to the current learner needs and future challenges for the students in order to be globally competent?
   • To what extent is there commitment to accomplishing the schoolwide learner outcomes from all certificated staff, all students, and other stakeholder groups?
   • To what extent has the school developed measurable indicators of the schoolwide learner outcomes and defined their quality accomplishment?
   • Do the stakeholders understand how to use the profile data, including the vision, mission, the critical learner needs, and schoolwide learner outcomes, to guide further inquiry about student achievement and the school programs?
   • Is there understanding of the complementary relationship of schoolwide learner outcomes to academic standards?
e. Progress since previous full self-study:
   - Did the school show how all schoolwide critical areas of follow-up identified by Visiting Committees since the last full self-study were integrated into the action plan?
   - Did the school address each section of the action plan?
   - Did the progress report include data that indicates whether school staff and students met established growth targets?
   - Does the report show how each section impacted student accomplishment of the critical learner needs and one or more schoolwide learner outcomes?
   - Did the school show how other critical areas for follow-up were addressed that were not part of the action plan?

f. Analysis of student program, both discipline-specific and support areas:
   - How has evidence been gathered and analyzed with respect to curricular references, the schoolwide learner outcomes, and the criteria?

h. Use of WASC/AAA criteria and schoolwide learner outcomes, collection and analysis of evidence, synthesis of findings, and the writing of the focus group summaries:
   - Are all certified staff members/or other representative stakeholders using the criteria and schoolwide learner outcomes as the basis for determining “what exists,” “how effective is it,” and “where do we want to be”?
   - Is the information from the student/constituency profile being used to ensure that the comparison to the criteria is being conducted with respect to all students?
   - How are all staff members and other school constituency members taking an in-depth look at the program for all students?
   - How is this evidence being organized and used in the Schoolwide Focus Group discussions?
   - How is additional evidence needed by the respective Schoolwide Focus Groups being gathered and analyzed?
   - Has the school report’s table of contents, a sample of Schoolwide Focus Group summary, and an action plan section been reviewed?
   - Does each Schoolwide Focus Group summary provide the critical findings and evidence that supports the identified growth needs and suggested “next steps”?

h. Development of realistic, specific, and meaningful action plans:
   - Are the action plan sections supported by the subject area/support committees?
   - Will the action plan sections effectively guide the work of the school and ensure quality learning for students?
   - Can the action plan sections be implemented immediately within existing resources?
• Is the schoolwide action plan organized around growth targets and benchmarks for all appropriate student subgroups?

• Do the schoolwide action plan sections address the learning needs of all students as identified in the student/constituency profile?

• Has the school integrated other initiatives to create one single comprehensive schoolwide action plan?

• Are resources dedicated to each growth target?

• Is there an effective process in place to integrate the Visiting Committee suggestions into the schoolwide action plan after the visit?

• Is there a sound follow-up process that will be used to monitor the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan and modify as needed?

• Action plan sections include:
  o A statement of the areas of improvement
  o Brief statement of the rationale for identifying this area
  o Schoolwide learner outcomes addressed
  o Ways of assessing progress
  o Specific steps, including professional development
  o Timeline (month, year)
  o Person(s) responsible (indicate with asterisk) and involved
  o Resources
  o Means to report progress to all members of the school constituency

i. Follow-up process (including school board/district understanding and support of accreditation process):

  • Have the administrators, Self-Study Coordinator, Leadership Team and district representatives begun discussion of a sound follow-up process that includes:
    o Ways of monitoring progress
    o Accountability of all stakeholders
    o Individual commitment
    o Benchmarks/celebration of progress

j. Exhibit of representative evidence for the Visiting Committee:

  • How will exhibit materials that reflect the evidence analyzed in the self-study be organized for the Visiting Committee? (i.e., in classrooms and the Visiting Committee workroom, electronically)

  • Will the evidence reflect:
    o A linkage to schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, and WASC criteria?
    o A linkage to identified critical learner needs, “identified growth areas,” and action plan sections?
    o All students?

  • Will the Visiting Committee be provided a general list of available evidence?

  • What evidence will be available prior to the visit?
k. The visit schedule:
   • How can the schedule maximize time for dialogue with the Schoolwide Focus Groups, the gathering of evidence (i.e., class/program observations, interviews, and examination of student work)?
   • Does the schedule for the visit permit regular dialogue (i.e., daily) with the Leadership Team regarding preliminary findings, thereby building the trust and rapport for ongoing communication and collaboration?

l. Visiting Committee work room and exhibit area at the school site
m. Meeting room at school committee meetings (school to provide LCD projector and other technological equipment as needed)

n. Computer access and compatibility with the system the chair will be using for the draft report
o. Housing and visit arrangements

p. Copies of previous self-study, midterm report, and/or revisit committee reports, current schoolwide action plan, student/constituency profile, current operating statement, audited financial statement, and other pertinent background materials

___9. Receive roster of Visiting Committee members by approximately 60-90 days prior to visit; begin communication (i.e., emails, calls, letters, etc).
   a. Send initial letter, including the school description to the members; WASC will send SDA Focus on Learning manual directly to Visiting Committee members.
   b. Ask for preferred areas of coverage during the visit.
   c. Remind members that they are required to participate in Visiting Committee training.

___10. Maintain contact with school to determine:
   a. If school needs further direct assistance
   b. Progress on report, including actual critique of a sample Focus Group summary and action plan section
      Self-check for self-study committees:
         • Do the summaries address all the important concepts of the criteria found within the category?
         • Is there an indication that appropriate evidence was collected to verify findings?
         • Was the comparison done with respect to evidence of student learning and success?
         • Was the comparison done with respect to the achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes?
         • Will the action plan section realistically impact quality learning for students?
   c. Progress on housing and visit arrangements for Visiting Committee team
   d. Appropriate clerical support
__11. Send second letter to Visiting Committee members:

   a. Provide writing assignments.
   b. Ask the members to review the criteria as the entire self-study report is analyzed.
   c. Ask for the comparison of the school’s self-study findings to the concepts of the criteria, the critical learner needs, and the mission, vision, and schoolwide learner outcomes.
   d. Prior to the visit, require the completion of the pre-visit preparation worksheets (Suggestion: use the Google Drive template).
   e. Use the comments and questions to complete drafts of Chapters I, II, III, and V.
   f. Prior to the visit, require written tentative narrative statements for assigned sections of Visiting Committee report; ensure all work on the criteria sections include analytical comments about all related indicators; assign two people to write to each criteria category.

   Note: The questions and tentative narrative statements should be sent to the Visiting Committee chair prior to the visit. The chair will create a tentative report that will be used at the initial team meeting. Many chairs will use shared documents using Google Drive.

   g. Assign members to write preliminary statements for specified accreditation factors prior to the determination of the accreditation status ratings to ensure correlation with the findings in the Visiting Committee report.
   h. Provide the schedule for the visit.

__12. Maintain regular contact with the school to double check the following:

   a. Progress of the report by actual critique of sample report sections and/or action plan sections
   b. Date the school mailed the self-study report
   c. Preparation of reference and evidence materials for visit
   d. Receipt of list of reference and evidence
   e. Availability and knowledge of clerical support

__13. If an “affiliate” campus is being evaluated, work with a WASC-appointed “coordinator” (one of the chairpersons) to schedule meeting(s) with the conference superintendent.

__14. Make final contact with Visiting Committee members:

   a. Confirm the receipt of the self-study.
   b. Offer assistance with understanding of assigned tasks and pre-writing assignments.
   c. Remind members to send questions and tentative writing.
   d. Offer additional assistance to special Visiting Committee members.
   e. Confirm the initial meeting time.
   f. Remind members to take cash/credit card for any expenses that will be reimbursed.
15. Prepare the first draft of the Visiting Committee report correlated to the self-study report chapters. Ahead of time begin writing the following: Chapter I, summary of key information from the student/constituency profile; Chapter II, response to the school’s progress report; Chapter III, brief comments on the self-study outcomes and Chapter V, ongoing school improvement based on the action plan; include all thoughts from the Visiting Committee members for these sections and their drafts for Chapter IV, the school program based on the WASC/AAA criteria and indicators; have the tentative report ready for the initial orientation Visiting Committee meeting (i.e., Sunday or Monday afternoon).

Note: Using Google Drive will facilitate all members being aware of the draft Visiting Committee report.

16. Plan orientation meeting for Visiting Committee members prior to initial meeting at school. The meeting should cover:

a. Purpose of visit
b. Conducting the visit in an atmosphere of collaborative and open communication
c. Emphasis upon criteria and schoolwide learner outcomes as the basis for the self-study and the visit
d. Discussion of school direction(s) and where school is with respect to the development and refinement of the schoolwide learner outcomes
e. Discussion of self-study report: trends/perceptions, (questions, concerns and tentative written comments); relationship to concepts of criteria and schoolwide learner outcomes; alignment of schoolwide action plan to findings
f. Discussion of ways to gather evidence
g. Review of initial meeting with school and overall schedule
h. Review of accreditation status determination and summary for the commission
i. Remind members to keep expenses to a minimum
The Visit: How Do We Know Students Are Learning? What Is The Actual Program For Students?

___1. Conduct orientation meeting for Visiting Committee members.

___2. Conduct initial meeting with school that includes a reflective discussion on the general perceptions gleaned from study of the school report (planned jointly with chief administrator/Self-Study Coordinator prior to visit) on first day of visit (i.e., Sunday).

___3. Facilitate the visit:
   a. Maintain a positive atmosphere.
   b. Keep to the task.
   c. Maintain open communication and collaboration at all times.
   d. Ensure that all Visiting Committee members are active participants in the school committee meetings.
   e. Ensure that the gathering of evidence (class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work and other data, subject area/support group meetings) is occurring throughout the school.
   f. Ensure that no area is overlooked.
   g. Assist committee members.
   h. Avoid issues related to school policies or negotiations.
   i. Stress with Visiting Committee to avoid prescription and “how we do it at our school” discussion.
   j. Lead all Visiting Committee discussions on the findings, relating them to the WASC/AAA criteria in the four categories.
   k. Coordinate the preparation of the Visiting Committee report.

___4. Facilitate the thorough discussion and synthesis of the key concepts of the criteria in the four categories, the school report, and the Visiting Committee findings at all Visiting Committee meetings during the 3½ days.

___5. Regularly communicate with the school leaders, including the Leadership Team, about Visiting Committee findings.

___6. At the final meeting with the Leadership Team, facilitate a thorough dialogue about the schoolwide action plan based upon the school and Visiting Committee findings in relation to the schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, and the WASC criteria.
   a. Ensure the Leadership Team has an opportunity to ask questions and clarify areas of the report.
   b. Ensure that the critical areas for follow-up include a “who,” “what,” and “why” in terms of impact on student learning. Distinguish the different types of critical areas for follow-up with an introductory stem (e.g., the Visiting Committee concurs with the areas already identified by the school).
c. Point out that after the visit the Leadership Team needs to integrate the Visiting Committee's key issues and critical areas for follow-up into the schoolwide action plan.

d. Work with Visiting Committee members to discuss and investigate any issues or questions raised in the dialogue with the Leadership Team.

___7. Facilitate necessary Visiting Committee report modifications as the Visiting Committee report is finalized.

___8. Have Visiting Committee members individually review each WASC criterion within the four categories. Have them 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 status.

___9. Facilitate the Visiting Committee discussion of the accreditation status worksheet ratings and come to consensus regarding the ratings. Have the members complete the “Documentation and Justification Statement” that includes the ratings and aligned comments that reflect the Visiting Committee report.

___10. Coordinate the completion of the status recommendation accreditation page and the confidential Visiting Committee summary for the commission. Ensure:

- Alignment between the Visiting Committee report and the recommended status
- Member signatures on the status recommendation sheet
- Brief description of the discussion and status options considered by the Visiting Committee
- A clearly stated rationale based upon factors impacting the status of accreditation

___11. Edit final Visiting Committee report with the assistance of the Visiting Committee members. Ensure all key topics of chapters are addressed.

___12. Facilitate the presentation of the Visiting Committee findings to the entire staff at the close of the visit. Do not imply the recommended status of accreditation. The status recommendation is to be kept confidential.

___13. Continually stress the importance of immediate follow-up to integrate the Visiting Committee narrative suggestions and recommendations into the schoolwide action plan for yearly implementation and assessment.

___14. Have Visiting Committee members complete expense vouchers and give them an opportunity to complete the optional chairperson evaluation form. Review expense forms, and submit the member expense vouchers to the school for reimbursement.
After the Visit

___1. Finalize the WASC forms: the recommended status of accreditation and the Visiting Committee summary for the commission. In addition, complete final editing on the Visiting Committee report. Ensure school has final copy of the Visiting Committee report.

___2. Submit copies of the: (1) Accreditation Status Recommendation, (2) Documentation and Justification Statement, and (3) Visiting Committee Report electronically to the WASC office using the Document Upload link on the top navigation bar of the WASC website: www.acswasc.org/document-upload.

___3. Keep copies of ALL WASC forms and Visiting Committee report.

___4. Follow-up on any outstanding reimbursement payment yet to be received. Contact the WASC Business Office if payment has not been received from the school/district within four weeks after the visit.

___5. Send the completed member evaluations to the WASC office.

___6. Send appropriate letters of appreciation.

___7. Communicate to Visiting Committee members the decision of the commission on the final accreditation status awarded to the school. This decision is reached at the January, April or June WASC Commission meeting. (A copy of the official letter will be sent to the chair.)