

Visiting Committee Resources

Visiting Committee Member Checklist

Before the Visit

1. _____ Participate in the ACS WASC member training workshop.
2. _____ Study the ACS WASC *Postsecondary Accreditation Manual* and be familiar with Visiting Committee responsibilities:
 - Understand ACS WASC expectations for Visiting Committee members
 - Represent your own school and ACS WASC professionally
 - Maintain careful confidentiality throughout the visit
 - Do not compare the school to your own school — do not use the words, “At my school, we do it this way...”
 - Understand the purpose of the visit is to help the school improve, not to criticize them, condemn them, or imply authority as a Visiting Committee Member over school personnel_____ Review the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria and the *Self-Study Report* format to prepare to validate the school’s *Self-Study Report*.
3. _____ Receive and respond to instructions from the chair, including narrative prewriting assignments. Members are responsible to prewrite certain sections of the *Visiting Committee Report* and submit them in advance to the chair. The chair will compile the prewriting of all members and come to the site visit with a rough draft of the *Visiting Committee Report*. (Write in narrative style, not with bullets or in outline form).
4. _____ Refer any questions or concerns to the Visiting Committee chair, not to the school directly.
5. _____ Review the site visit schedule and clear your calendar from any conflicts.
6. _____ After receiving the *Self-Study Report* from the school:
 - Read the entire Self-Study Report carefully — note questions, clarifications needed, inconsistencies, areas of strength, key issues to address, etc.
 - Review to what extent the school meets ACS WASC Criteria and the school’s Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs)
 - Validate the schoolwide Action Plan
 - Prepare questions regarding issues and concerns, note clarifications and evidence that should be pursued during the visit
7. _____ Receive final communication from the chair:
 - Confirms initial meeting time and visit logistics
 - Reviews how reimbursable expenses are to be handled

During the Visit

8. ____ Arrive on time for all meetings; be ready to participate in a positive manner.
9. ____ Through observations, interviews, review of documents, examination of student work, and meetings with stakeholder groups, validate the quality of program experienced by students and find evidence of successful student learning.
10. ____ Follow the chair's direction in visiting classrooms, especially if there are multiple sites.
11. ____ Determine to what degree the SLOs are being accomplished.
12. ____ Look for evidence of an ongoing process for school improvement through the use of the schoolwide *Action Plan*.
13. ____ Let the process unfold — don't prejudge; validate, verify, and document your findings.
14. ____ Concentrate on being a good listener. Prepare good questions to ask that will lead to quality discussions, not just short yes or no answers.
15. ____ Prepare to lead Focus Group meetings in your assigned area. Have well-prepared questions ready to go to gain input from all members of the Focus Group.
16. ____ Avoid involvement in school issues that are not pertinent to the self-study visit. Direct all difficult situations or discussions to the chair.
17. ____ Work cooperatively with all other Visiting Committee members as findings are discussed and decisions made. This is a consensus process — be a team player!
18. ____ Support the chair as he/she works with the Leadership Team to thoroughly discuss the synthesis of the concepts of the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria, the Self-Study Report, and the findings during the visit as reflected in the draft *Visiting Committee Report*.
19. ____ Make necessary *Visiting Committee Report* modifications and finalize the report.
20. ____ Assist in the preparation of the *Documentation and Justification Statement* and the accompanying *Accreditation Status Recommendation* that will give the ACS WASC Commission the recommendation for accreditation status.
21. ____ Complete the expense voucher and the optional chair evaluation form. Keep copies of all receipts.
22. ____ Participate in the presentation of the findings to the entire staff. The recommended accreditation status is confidential; do not reveal or imply the Visiting Committee's recommendation to anyone.
23. ____ Send appropriate "thank-you's" for the school's hospitality and cooperation in the self-study process.

The ACS WASC site visit is the culmination of an intensive self-reflection on the part of the school being visited. If done well, the self-evaluation process will be of great value to the school. Team members need to be sensitive to the impact of their presence on the various individuals associated with the school.

For team members, the team experience provides an opportunity to make a professional contribution which is not duplicated by any other experience; it is perhaps one of the best professional development activities in which one can engage. Working together with a group of colleagues, team members are able to become part of the life of a school in a very unique way.

Accreditation evaluations are about verifying and about helping — not about criticizing or a show of force as a committee. Visiting Committees have the responsibility of determining whether the school meets or exceeds the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria of accreditation and of providing guidance to the school in the form of identifying key issues that will improve the effectiveness of the school. The team's opinions about the educational quality of the school assist the Commission in giving assurance to the public that the school is meeting its educational purposes.