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ACS WASC and IB Collaborative Process 2014–2015

**For use by educators and schools undergoing a collaborative
IB evaluation and ACS WASC evaluation/accreditation visit.**

IB/ACS WASC COLLABORATIVE PROCESS
ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS (ACS)
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES (WASC)
AND
INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE ORGANIZATION

Background

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) is one of the regional accrediting associations in the United States that works closely with the U.S. Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools, and is known worldwide. This regional association provides assistance to schools located in California, Hawaii, and worldwide; examples of areas include Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Fiji, and Asia. The Accrediting Commission for Schools is composed of 32 representatives from educational organizations that it serves; this includes a representative from the East Asia Regional Council of Schools (EARCOS) that supports the work of ACS WASC.

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC, extends its services to approximately 4600 public, independent, church-related, and proprietary pre-K-12 and adult schools, works with 17 different associations in joint accreditation processes, and collaborates with other organizations. The Accrediting Commission for Schools has been working with international schools in Asia and other parts of the world since the late 1960s (Hague Apostille, 1961) and collaborates with foreign ministries of education, e.g., China and Thailand. One example is the seamless joint process with the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). There is one initial visit, self-study, full visit and visiting committee report, and ongoing follow-up process but two accreditation awards independently decided by the agencies.

Another example is the collaborative progress with the International Baccalaureate Organization (IB). ACS WASC began conversations and work with IB in the fall of 2002. During the 2007–2008 ACS WASC and IB conducted pilot visits that continued through the fall of 2008. IB schools that had been authorized for each of the three IB programs with or without the IB Career-related Certificate (IBCC) were eligible to conduct the ACS WASC full self-study/visit process in collaboration with the IB self-study/evaluation process every five years. In addition, if a school is only an elementary or secondary school and offers an IB program, coordination is also possible. Schools that are also conducting NCCT accreditation (China) or ONESQA accreditation (Thailand) may also be involved in the coordinated ACS WASC/IB visits. There is a coordinated self-study and full visit process that results in a visiting committee report and a recommendation to the associations about accreditation and next steps along with the IB reports for each of the four programs. Each association reserves the right to make separate decisions as a result of the collaborative self-study and visit; the follow-up process may be coordinated between the five year joint visits.

The philosophy of the Accrediting Commission for Schools centers upon three beliefs: (1) a school's goal is successful student learning; (2) each school has a clear purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes; and (3) a school engages in external and internal evaluations as part of continued school improvement to support student learning. Accreditation is integral to a school's perpetual cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring, and reassessment based

upon student achievement. It fosters excellence in education by encouraging school improvement through a process of continuing evaluation and to recognize, by accreditation, schools that meet an acceptable level of quality, in accordance with established ACS WASC criteria and indicators. In addition to its official title, WASC means *We Are Student-Centered*.

Likewise the International Baccalaureate Organization (IB) is committed to high quality student learning. Its mission is stated below:

“The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.”

The IB learner profile shown below provides a group of learning outcomes for the 21st century that reflect the IB’s mission.

IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

Knowledgeable We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

Thinkers We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

Principled We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

Open-minded We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

Risk-takers We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

Balanced We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives — intellectual, physical, and emotional — to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

Reflective We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

IB has developed high quality standards and practices against which a school can measure the progress towards achieving them as their programs are implemented. The school must make a commitment to work towards meeting each standard and practice. Thus the IB process to ensure quality in the IB programs correlates with the WASC criteria and indicators not only in the curriculum, instruction, assessment area but also philosophy or school purpose, governance, leadership, staff, environment, and resources.

Below is an overall summary of the aspects of the IB/WASC collaborative process for the self-study, visit, and follow-up:

Summary: IB/ACS WASC Collaborative Process

Self-Study Process

The basic parameters of the IB and ACS WASC self-study processes include the following:

- Involvement of all stakeholders in self-study process
- Clarification of the school's purpose and the schoolwide learner outcomes or IB Learner Profile
- Analysis of the school's program (the organization, the curriculum, instruction and assessment, the student support and the resource management and development) and its impact on student learning based on IB and ACS WASC standards/criteria, practices, questions, evidence or documentation and the school's philosophy and schoolwide learner outcomes/IB Learner Profile
- Development of a schoolwide action plan that addresses identified areas for improvement

IB/ACS WASC schools need to complete the

- 1) the IB Programme Evaluation Self-Study for each program and
- 2) the WASC Focus on Learning self-study protocol with the exception of the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment section (Section B).

In order to avoid redundancy schools have been encouraged to complete identified sections of each self-study guideline together so cross-referencing can occur and repetition can be minimized. The table below shows this correlation.

ACS WASC Focus on Learning	IB Self-Study
Chapter I: Student/Community Profile, including School Purpose and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes	School Presentation and Appendices Awareness of IB Learner Profile
Chapter II: Progress Report	
Chapter III: Overall Summary of Profile Analysis and Progress	
Chapter IV: Criteria Category A. Organization for Student Learning 1. School Purpose 2. Governance	Section A: Philosophy, Standard A Section B: Organization, Standard B1

ACS WASC Focus on Learning	IB Self-Study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Leadership 4. Staff 5. School Environment 6. Reporting Student Progress 7. School Improvement Process 	<p>Section B: Organization, Standard B1</p> <p>Section B: Organization, Standard B2</p> <p>Section B: Organization, Standard B2</p> <p>Section C: Curriculum, Standard C4</p> <p>Section B: Organization, Standard B1</p>
<p>Chapter IV: Criterion Category B. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What Students Learn 2. How Students Learn 3. How Assessment Is Used <p>(NOTE: Schools <u>only complete</u> the IB questionnaire for this area for all three programs rather than complete responses for ACS WASC Criteria B1, B2, and B3.</p>	<p>Section C: Curriculum, Standards C1 and C2</p> <p>Section C: Curriculum, Standards C1 and C3</p> <p>Section C: Curriculum, Standards C1 and C4</p>
<p>Chapter IV: Criterion Category C. Student Support for Personal and Academic Growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student Connectedness 2. Parent/Community Involvement 	<p>Section B: Organization, Standard B2</p>
<p>Chapter IV: Criterion Category D. Resource Management and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resources 2. Resource Planning 	<p>Section B: Organization, Standard B2</p>
<p>Chapter V: Schoolwide Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Description of updated plan B. Specific strategies for subjects or program areas aligned with overall schoolwide action plan areas C. Description of school's follow-up process 	<p>Conclusions of the Self-Study Process</p>

Visit

The purpose of the visit is validation and enhancement based on accreditation criteria/standards and IB standards, the self-study (including the IB self-study questionnaires) and findings from the visit.

Visiting Team Composition

- ACS WASC appoints a chair and team members after consultation with the school on its needs; the size of the team is determined based on enrollment and dialogue with the school. The members of the team will be knowledgeable of the IB programs.
- IB appoints members for the three programs: PYP, MYP and DP. One will be designated as the IB co-chair and works collaboratively with the ACS WASC co-chair. The goal is that the team accommodates the needs for evaluation of IB and ACS WASC through the expertise of the designated members. There will be normally 2 IB members for each program.

Visiting Team Training

- All members appointed by ACS WASC will be trained in the ACS WASC process and understand the joint visit. They will be knowledgeable of the ACS WASC criteria and indicators and the IB standards and indicators.
- All IB members will have an understanding of the ACS WASC accreditation process and be knowledgeable of the ACS WASC criteria and indicators.

Visiting Team Process

- All members will be part of the full visit, which normally is 4 ½ days; IB members will arrive on a Sunday and be at the school for 3 days (Monday–Wednesday); the IB co-chair will arrive Saturday like the ACS WASC co-chair and stay through Thursday afternoon.
- All members will work together in one seamless process. Daily the team will share and discuss findings as they plan their meetings with stakeholders and prepare their assigned portions of the written report. Daily the team will meet with the school's leadership team and the chairs will meet with the school head.
- All ACS WASC members and the IB co-chair will participate in the final discussion with the leadership team and oral presentation to the entire school.
- All members will discuss the overall findings and work together on the best accreditation status to support student learning and ongoing improvement at the school.

Visiting Report Structure

The Visiting Report Format is given below:

Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

- Summary of critical information from the profile and IB School Presentation
(Inclusion of any pertinent achievement data to assist the Commission in understanding the school)

Chapter II: Progress Report

- Comments on major changes and the follow-up process since the last self-study/visit
- Discussion of progress on critical areas for follow-up integrated into the schoolwide action plan since the last visit

Chapter III: Self-Study Process

- Comments on the school's self-study process with respect to the self-study outcome.
(includes the school's work on the IB self-study questionnaire)

Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

Part A: For each criterion within each category: Summary of the analysis of what currently exists and its impact on student learning. This includes: highlighted strengths, areas of growth, and evidence that supports strengths and key issues. The categories to be addressed are given below:

A. Organization for Student Learning

1. School Purpose
2. Governance
3. Leadership
4. Staff
5. School Environment
6. Reporting Student Progress
7. School Improvement Process

B. IB Reports on the Evaluation for each Program replaces the summary of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (B1, What Students Learn; B2, How Students Learn; B3, How Assessment Is Used) **NOTE: This is sent to the school and the ACS WASC office as an attachment to the ACS WASC report.**

- A. Philosophy
- B. Organization
- C. Curriculum

C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

1. Student Connectedness
2. Parent/Community Involvement

D. Resource Management and Development

1. Resources
2. Resource Planning

Part B: Synthesis of the schoolwide strengths and critical areas for follow-up (major commendations and recommendations)

These include restatement and support for what the school already identified and additional areas viewed by the team as areas for further improvement such as important curriculum, instruction and assessment emphases emanating from the IB meetings, conversations and observations.

Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

Inclusion of a brief summary of the proposed schoolwide action plan, usually an update of an ongoing schoolwide action plan

Comments regarding the plan that address the following

- the adequacy of the plan in addressing the critical areas for follow-up
- the degree to which the action steps will impact student learning
- the “user-friendly” nature of the plan that has integrated all the initiatives
- the feasibility of the plan
- the degree of stakeholder commitment.

Visit Schedule

The ACS WASC and IB co-chairs and the school will work together on the most effective schedule for the school in collaboration with the school leadership. Each school may have different groups and/or personnel with whom it is important to hold discussions. (A sample schedule is provided for the joint visit; however, the ACS WASC and IB co-chairs will want to ensure the schedule is suitable for the school being visited and adequate time is provided for all the IB meetings with the various programs; it is usually easier for the WASC committee members to adapt their meetings around the IB meetings. Each school will have individuals or groups that will be unique to the school with whom the VC committee should meet.)

Schedule for a full team visit

Day 1 (Sunday unless agreed otherwise) ACS WASC Committee and IB team chair present

0900	ACS WASC and IB chair double check procedures, housekeeping matters, report-writing expectations, initial committee meetings
1100	Meeting with Visiting Committee members to begin group discussion on perceptions of self-study. IB chair should be included (includes lunch)
1400	Initial committee visit departs to school (possible brief tour of school at this time)
1500	Meeting with Leadership Team (includes head of school) to review the purpose of the visit and participate in a reflective discussion of the self-study
1630	Meeting with school board
1800	Reception (optional)
1900	Visiting team meeting: discussion on initial perceptions

Day 2 (Monday unless agreed otherwise) Day 1 for IB team members				
Time	PYP	MYP	DP	ACS WASC
Prior to 0800	Collect visiting team from hotel			
0830–0915	Meeting with head of school/school principals (IB team chair to lead) (This can be consolidated and extended for the ACS WASC members as they discuss A1 school purpose and A2 governance, A3, leadership and A4 staff)			Meeting for chair and team members of Organization Focus Groups, Category A, (especially, A1 School Purpose, A2 Governance, A3, Leadership, A4, Staff, A5, School Environment and A7, School Improvement) (Allow 1½ to 2 hours)
0915–10.00	Meeting with PYP coordinator	Meeting with MYP coordinator	Meeting with DP coordinator	
1000–1015	Break			
1100–1145	Class visits to PK, K	Review of documentation	Meeting with TOK coordinator	Class/program observations, interviews with individual staff members
1145–1230	Class visits to grades 1 and 2	Independent class visits	Meeting with CAS coordinator	Lunch with students and/or staff
1230–1330	Lunch			
1330–1415	Meeting with grade 1 staff	Meeting with sciences staff	Meeting with group 1 staff	Classroom observations/interviews continued ACS WASC chair meets with head of school
1415–1500	Meeting with grade 2 staff	Independent class visits		Parent meeting
1500–1545	Parent meetings, separate venues for each programme			
1545–1615	Follow-up with PYP coordinator	Follow-up with MYP coordinator	Follow-up with DP coordinator	ACS WASC team members meet briefly with Leadership Team at end of day or earlier
1615	Return to hotel.			
	ACS WASC and IB programme meetings (separate)			
1900–2030	ACS WASC and IB teams meet together			

Day 3 (Tuesday unless agreed otherwise) Day 2 for IB team members				
Time	PYP	MYP	DP	ACS WASC
Prior to 0830	Collect visiting team from hotel			
	Team chairs check in with head of school			
0830–0915	Meeting with PYP coordinator	Meeting with librarian		Brief meeting with Leadership Team
0915–1000	Visit to grade 3, 4, 5 classes, library/ICT; specialist areas	Meeting with department heads across MYP/DP		Visiting team members meet Student Support Focus Group, Category C, (Allow 1 ½ to 2 hours)
1000–1045	Meeting with librarian/ICT staff	Meeting with language and literature staff	Meeting with group 2 staff	
1045–1100	Break			
1100–1130	Meeting with PK/K staff	Independent class visits		Meet with a group of certificated staff members (may include lunch)
1130–1215	Meeting with art/music/PE staff	Meeting with language acquisition staff	Meeting with group 3 staff	
1215–1315	Lunch			
1315–1400	Meeting with special learning needs/inclusive education staff	Meeting with maths staff	Meeting with group 4 staff	Classroom observations/interviews with individual staff members
1400–1430 (PYP)	Meeting with additional language staff	Meeting with individuals and societies staff	Meeting with group 5 staff	Potential individual meetings by ACS WASC Team members, e.g., school nurses, admission director, IT Team, librarian(s)
1400–1445 (MYP/DP)				ACS WASC chair meets with head of school
1430–1500 (PYP)	Meeting with grade 3 staff	Meeting with PHE staff	Meeting with group 6 staff	ACS WASC members meet with Resource Focus Group, Category D, (should include business management staff) Allow 1 ½ -2 hours.
1445–1530 (MYP/DP)				(Note: A separate meeting may be necessary with business management staff)

Day 3 (Tuesday unless agreed otherwise) Day 2 for IB team members					
Time	PYP	MYP	DP	ACS WASC	
1500–1530 (PYP)	Meeting with grade 4 staff	Meeting with students from MYP final year	Meeting with students from DP first year	Brief meeting with Leadership Team (optional)	
1530–1615 (MYP/DP)					
1530–1700 (PYP)	Meeting with grade 5 staff (exhibition)	Meeting with design staff	Meeting with careers/tertiary advisor		
1615–1700 (MYP/DP)	Report preparation				
1700	Return to hotel.				
	ACS WASC and IB programme meetings (separate)				
1900–2030	ACS WASC and IB teams meet together				

Day 4 Wednesday unless agreed otherwise (Day 3 for IB team members)				
Time	PYP	MYP	DP	ACS WASC
Prior to 0830	Collect visiting team from hotel Team chairs check in with head of school			
0830–0915	Meeting with PYP coordinator	Meeting re personal project	Meeting with extended essay coordinator	Meeting with student council(s)
0915–1000	Independent class visits	Meeting with arts (music, drama, art) staff	Meeting with students from DP second year	Visiting team meets with support staff members
1000–1045	Consolidation of findings (PYP)	Consolidation of findings (MYP)	Consolidation of findings (DP)	Classroom observations
	Meeting with PYP coordinator as required	Meeting with MYP coordinator as required	Meeting with DP coordinator as required	
1045–1100	Break			
1215–1315	Lunch			
1315–1415	Report-writing continues			Brief meeting with Leadership Team
1415–1500	IB programme exit meetings with programme coordinators			
1500–1545	IB exit meeting with head of school/principals/coordinators—summary of key findings. ACS WASC chair present.			
1545	Return to hotel			
	IB team members depart. IB chair remains.			
1900–2200	WASC team members finalize reports; develop schoolwide strengths and critical areas for follow-up, including important areas from Category B. Completion of accreditation status worksheet.			

Day 5 Thursday unless agreed otherwise (IB Teach Chair present and All ACS WASC Members)

0830	Brief meeting of ACS WASC members and IB co-chair with Leadership Team.
0830–1100	Completion of draft report, contacting school staff as needed
1100–1300	Meeting with the Leadership Team to discuss/clarify findings of visit and the VC report (copies available for all school leadership and VC team)
1500–1700	Closure on issues raised in the earlier session discussing the draft VC report. Revisions may occur in the VC report. VC members finalize report and status recommendation. Prepare for staff presentation.
1700–1745	ACS WASC oral presentation to staff using PowerPoint template. IB team chair present.

Function of evening meetings on days 2 and 3 (days 1 and 2 for IB visiting teams)

The main purpose of the evening meetings is to ensure that both the IB and ACS WASC teams are able to work on their separate reports and that there is opportunity for the IB and ACS WASC teams to meet together to discuss key issues from the day's meetings and to address any points that need clarification.

To this end the evening meeting time is divided into two sessions:

Session 1 (16:15 on day 2; 17:00 on day 3)

- The PYP, MYP, and DP teams meet separately to discuss their findings and work on their reports.
- The PYP, MYP, and DP teams meet together to discuss cross-programme findings that may lead to commendations or recommendations.
- The ACS WASC committees meet separately to discuss their findings and work on their reports.

Session 2 (19:00–20:30)

- The ACS WASC and IB teams meet together.
- Each of the IB programme teams (PYP, MYP, DP) and CIS team give a brief summary of key findings to date and provide clarification as required.
- The IB chair and ACS WASC chair meet at the end of the meeting to ensure mutual understanding between the organizations over any significant issues that may have arisen or are deemed likely to arise.

ACS WASC Commission and IB Decisions

The joint ACS WASC and IB team will work together on the accreditation status and come to consensus on the best time period and conditions to support school improvement. The team will collaboratively discuss the WASC accreditation status worksheet that addresses the status factors. The ACS WASC and IB chairs guide the dialogue and then the ACS WASC chair will complete the documentation/justification statement that is an executive summary of the team's overall findings with the help of the ACS WASC members.

The ACS WASC Commission may grant any status or condition that will support the school. The normal time for renewal in the IB process will be five years; however, a status may be granted for other time periods such as a probationary one or two year status. Special visits or special reports

may be required at any time. In the EARCOS region there is normally a mid-cycle visit; however, this can be waived based on the circumstances at the school.

The accreditation status factors that are rated highly effective, effective, somewhat effective or ineffective based on the rubric and the ACS WASC criteria indicators are listed below:

1. Involvement and Collaboration of All
2. Acceptable Progress by All Students
3. Vision and Purpose — Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (A1)
4. Governance (A2)
5. Leadership and Staff (A3 & A4)
6. School Environment (A5)
7. Reporting Student Progress (A6)
8. School Improvement Process (A7)
9. Curriculum (B1)
10. Instruction (B2)
11. Assessment (B3)
12. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth (C1 & C2)
13. Resource Management and Development (D1 & D2)
14. Alignment of Schoolwide Action Plan to the school's areas of greatest need to support high achievement of all students
15. Use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive school improvement
16. Capacity to implement and monitor the Schoolwide Action Plan

The goal is that the same decision will be granted by both ACS WASC and IB. However, the ACS WASC Commission and the IB reserve the right to grant separate decisions regarding the accreditation and evaluation process. This may include separate follow-up visits or reports but both agencies will keep each other informed to ensure continuity and clarification for the school.

The agencies will inform each other of the decisions made and work together in the ongoing follow-up process.

Follow-Up Process

After the visit the school will update its schoolwide action plan through the integration of the visiting committee's commendations and recommendations and suggestions of areas to be addressed. This will be submitted to the ACS WASC office by June 1 or January 15, depending on the dates of the visit. In addition, the schools submit annual progress reports to ACS WASC.