



Postsecondary Accreditation Manual



2013 ACS WASC EDITION (UPDATED)

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS, WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
www.acswasc.org

Postsecondary Accreditation Manual

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Contents

Introduction

ACS WASC Accreditation Process.....	1
Benefits of ACS WASC Accreditation.....	1
Accreditation Self-Study Expectations.....	2
The ACS WASC Process	2
ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria for Accreditation	3
Participants in the Accreditation Process	4
Responsibilities of Accreditation Participants	5
ACS WASC Six-Year Cycle.....	8

First-Time Applicants — Beginning the Process

Steps to Candidacy or Initial Accreditation Status.....	9
Step 1 — Meet ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria.....	9
Step 2 — Request Affiliation with ACS WASC.....	12
Step 3 — Prepare the Initial Visit Report.....	12
Step 4 — Host an Initial Visit.....	13
How to Advertise ACS WASC Candidacy or Initial Accreditation Status	13

The Self-Study Process

Accreditation Components.....	15
Suggested Timeline of Accreditation Activities.....	15

The Self-Study Report

Self-Study Report Format.....	17
Self-Study Report Template Description	18
Cover/Title Page.....	18
Preface	18
List of Self-Study Committee Members.....	18
Table of Contents	18
Chapters I–IV of the Self-Study Report.....	19
Chapter I — Task 1	19
Chapter II — Task 2	22
Chapter III — Task 3	23
ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria.....	24
Criterion 1: Institutional Mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes	25
Criterion 2: Organizational Infrastructure and School Leadership.....	29
Criterion 3: Faculty and Staff	33
Criterion 4: Curriculum	37
Criterion 5: Instructional Program	41
Criterion 6: Use of Assessment	45
Criterion 7: Student Support Services.....	49
Criterion 8: Resource Management.....	53
Criterion 9: Community Connection	57
Criterion 10: Action Plan for Ongoing Improvement	59
Chapter IV — Task 4.....	61
Sample Action Plan Format.....	62

The Site Visit

Preparing for the Site Visit	66
The Visiting Committee.....	66
Suggested Site Visit Schedule	67
What Occurs During the Site Visit	68
The Exit Meeting.....	69
Visiting Committee Documentation	69
Visiting Committee Report.....	69
Documentation and Justification Statement.....	71
Accreditation Status	71

After the Site Visit

ACS WASC Six-Year Accreditation Cycle.....	73
Possible ACS WASC Visits During the Six-Year Cycle.....	74
Mid-Cycle Visits	74
Probationary Visits.....	74
Special Visits	74
Substantive Change Visits	75

ACS WASC Resources

School Resources.....	79
School Self-Study Coordinator/Administrator Checklist	79
Visiting Committee Resources	81
Visiting Committee Member Checklist.....	81
Visiting Committee Chair Checklist	85
Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet and Documentation and Justification Statement.....	91
ACS WASC Postsecondary Documentation and Justification Statement.....	99
Accreditation Status Recommendation	107

Introduction

ACS WASC Accreditation Process

ACS WASC advances and validates quality ongoing school improvement by supporting its private and public elementary, secondary and postsecondary member institutions as they engage in a rigorous and relevant self-evaluation and peer review process that focuses on student learning.

The review and approval of educational programs around the world is accomplished through the accreditation process. Self-study, internal review, and external validation by trained educators provide educational institutions the opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses and chart a course for ongoing school improvement through the use of a schoolwide *Action Plan*.

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC) is a regional accrediting association in the United States. The ACS WASC Commission provides assistance to over 4,600 educational institutions located in California, Hawaii, the Pacific Islands, Asia, and in other countries around the world. ACS WASC has accredited educational institutions since 1962 and is now considered a trademark that represents quality education throughout its region and beyond.

The Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges not only extends its services to public, charter, independent, religious, and online K–12 schools, but it also provides accreditation for supplementary educational programs and postsecondary schools that are non-profit and non-degree-granting. ACS WASC does not accredit for-profit postsecondary schools.

Examples of non-profit, non-degree granting postsecondary schools include adult schools, ROCs, prison vocational training programs, and private technical institutes. Earning accreditation status allows postsecondary schools to prepare students for meaningful educational advancement with credits that are accepted by other educational institutions.

ACS WASC accredits individual schools, not specific programs that are part of a school. In addition, ACS WASC accreditation does not qualify schools to apply for Title IV funds; achieving Title IV eligibility must be accomplished through another accrediting agency specifically approved for that purpose.

Benefits of ACS WASC Accreditation

The ACS WASC accreditation process validates the integrity of a school's program and identifies it as a trustworthy educational institution. ACS WASC accreditation is a prestigious accomplishment based on rigorous peer review that has a unique focus on student learning. It provides schools with a system to manage change and promote ongoing school improvement.

The benefits of ACS WASC accreditation include the following:

1. ACS WASC has been selected by the California Department of Education as the official accrediting body in California.

2. ACS WASC works with the U.S. Department of State, through the Office of Overseas Schools. In 1961 in The Hague, ACS WASC was identified as a worldwide accrediting agency (Hague Apostille). Therefore, ACS WASC-accredited schools have their credits accepted worldwide.
3. ACS WASC accreditation has been selected by the University of California college/university system. Schools must have ACS WASC accreditation (including candidacy status) in order to submit courses to the University of California, Office of the President (UCOP), for purposes of approval on the UC “a-g approved coursework” list.
4. Possessing ACS WASC-accredited high school transcripts is one of the key requirements for California residents to participate in the Cal Grant Program.
5. ACS WASC accreditation validates student transcripts and provides for the smooth transfer of credits from school to school.
6. ACS WASC accreditation opens the door for acceptance into most colleges and universities.
7. ACS WASC accreditation is necessary for applications to certain scholarship programs.
8. ACS WASC accreditation is strongly encouraged for charter schools.
9. ACS WASC accreditation is necessary for certain post-high school work applications.
10. ACS WASC accreditation provides additional benefits for students planning to enter the United States military.

Accreditation Self-Study Expectations

Throughout the entire ACS WASC self-study accreditation process, there are five overarching expectations that schools must meet:

1. The involvement and collaboration of all stakeholders in the self-study process.
2. The clarification of the school’s mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs).
3. The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the institutional mission, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, and ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria.
4. The creation of a schoolwide *Action Plan* that develops programmatic plans to address identified key issues.
5. The development of an accountability system for monitoring the implementation of the schoolwide *Action Plan*.

The ACS WASC Process

The ACS WASC accreditation process consists of three major components:

1. School self-evaluation based on the school’s mission, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, and ACS WASC criteria resulting in the writing of a *Self-Study Report*.
2. Peer review accomplished by a three and one-half day site visit by a committee of ACS WASC-trained educators.

3. Implementation of the schoolwide *Action Plan* that addresses key issues identified by the school and the ACS WASC Visiting Committee which is annually reviewed and refined based on progress made.

The school's mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs) provide the foundation for the school's entire academic program. Together, these state the global knowledge, skills, and understanding students should possess by the time the student completes the planned instructional program. The attainment of school SLOs drives the instructional program and supports all operations of the school.

Translating the school's purpose in its SLOs for all students is a beginning; the self-study phase of the accreditation process involves an in-depth gathering of evidence that enables the school to take an honest look at what is/what is not working compared to ACS WASC criteria. This verification through evidence is key to learning about the actual instruction experienced by students.

Observable evidence includes analyzing the following:

- What students are doing and producing (student work)
- Student interviews and observations
- Hard data and information, e.g., learning data, student indicators for attendance, special needs, and accomplishment of SLOs.

The writing of the self-evaluation report, the *Self-Study Report*, requires four major tasks that the Leadership Team and Focus Groups must complete:

- Task 1 – Profile, student, and institution characteristics (Chapter I of the *Self-Study Report*)
- Task 2 – Progress Report on the schoolwide *Action Plan* and how well the school has addressed previously identified key issues (Chapter II of the *Self-Study Report*)
- Task 3 – School response to the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria (Chapter III of the *Self-Study Report*)
- Task 4 – Revision of the schoolwide *Action Plan* based on findings from the self-study process (Chapter IV of the *Self-Study Report*).

[Detailed descriptions of the tasks begin on page 19.]

ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria for Accreditation

The ACS WASC accreditation process is built on the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria that represent the foundational areas that postsecondary schools must address to earn accreditation status.

1. Institutional Mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs)
2. Organizational Infrastructure and School Leadership
3. Faculty and Staff
4. Curriculum
5. Instructional Program

6. Use of Assessment
7. Student Support Services
8. Resource Management
9. Community Connection
10. Action Plan for Ongoing Improvement

The ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria are the standards or expectations that schools must address in their written *Self-Study Report*. Each criterion is supported by several “indicators” that unfold different aspects of each criterion. In the *Self-Study Report*, schools are required to respond in narrative form to each indicator as they give an overall response to how well they meet the criterion expectations.

Schools that offer online programs or courses will have additional indicators and discussion questions to answer in the *Self-Study Report*. Schools that do not have online programs or courses can skip those indicators and discussion questions throughout the document.

Participants in the Accreditation Process

The ACS WASC accreditation process brings four groups together — two from the school and two from ACS WASC:

1. School Leadership Team
2. School Focus Groups
3. ACS WASC Visiting Committee
4. ACS WASC Commission.

A major goal of ACS WASC accreditation is to unify all stakeholders in educational institutions so that they work together on self-evaluation and school improvement issues. The accreditation process is most powerful when all stakeholder groups take ownership of the school’s mission, purpose, SLOs, and educational programs and then commit to ongoing school improvement.

Stakeholders are defined as those who have a vested interest in the successful operation of the school. Schools may have different stakeholders depending on how they are organized.

Examples of possible stakeholders are:

- Governing Board (district Board, school Board, private company, etc.)
- Administration
- Faculty
- Support staff (office staff, aides, bookkeeping staff, facilities staff, etc.)
- Students
- Community, business, trade, and/or advisory groups
- Booster club or donor organization.

Each stakeholder group has a specific role to play in the accreditation process. Stakeholders that serve in a school Focus Group or on the Leadership Team contribute to the accomplishment of the successful accreditation process. Depending on the size of the school, individuals may serve

on more than one Focus Group, and, in the case of very small schools, may serve on all Focus Groups as a committee of the whole. It is up to the school to organize the Leadership Team and Focus Groups in the way that is best for them, ensuring that the findings and supporting evidence of the self-study reflect all areas of the school.

Many schools also develop subject-area or programmatic committees that provide valuable evidence that informs Focus Groups as they write their portion of the school's *Self-Study Report*. All possible stakeholders can have access this way through surveys, meetings, or emails to contribute to the Focus Groups as they gather and analyze evidence of student learning. In this way, all departments are represented in the final *Self-Study Report*. This is not required by ACS WASC; it is, however, recommended for larger schools that have sufficient faculty members to form such subject-area, department, or programmatic committees.

Responsibilities of Accreditation Participants

The Leadership Team, Focus Groups, the ACS WASC Visiting Committee, and the ACS WASC Commission all have responsibilities in the accreditation process. Each has products to complete and responsibilities to fulfill.

Leadership Team

Suggested Participants (each school decides how to establish the Leadership Team):

- Administration members
- Self-Study Coordinator
- Chair of each Focus Group
- Other stakeholders the school identifies so that the Leadership Team represents the entire school constituency

Products:

- *Self-Study Report*
- *Action Plan*

Responsibilities:

- Oversee the self-study process and complete the *Self-Study Report*
- Review and synthesize findings of Focus Groups
- Complete Task 1 (School Profile), Task 2 (Progress Report), and Task 4 (Revision of the schoolwide *Action Plan*) in the self-study; these correspond to Chapters I, II, and IV of the *Self-Study Report*
- Prepare a written response to ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, and 10 in Chapter III of the *Self-Study Report*
- Oversee the completion of the schoolwide *Action Plan*
- Hold all committees and stakeholder groups accountable for involvement in the accreditation self-study process
- Review and revise the school mission statement and SLOs as needed

- Coordinate the follow-up process to monitor the successful implementation of the schoolwide *Action Plan*.

Focus Groups

Participants:

- Faculty, staff members, and Board members (as the school determines)
- The size of Focus Groups is up to each school based on school size and type; however, research reveals that smaller groups with less than 15 members are usually more productive; the important factor is that all school departments and programs are represented in each Focus Group
- Four Focus Groups:
 1. Curriculum (ACS WASC Criterion 4)
 2. Instructional Program (ACS WASC Criterion 5)
 3. Use of Assessment (ACS WASC Criterion 6)
 4. Student Support Services (ACS WASC Criterion 7)

Note: Schools may choose to form programmatic committees that represent specific departments or programs (similar to home groups in K–12 schools) that can bring valuable input and evidence that is added into the work of the Focus Groups.

Products:

- Written reports that contribute to Chapter III in the *Self-Study Report*

Responsibilities:

- Review the profile (Chapter I of the *Self-Study Report*) as it provides important evidence that informs Task 3 (Chapter III) of the *Self-Study Report*.
- Each Focus Group should respond to its specific Criterion (4, 5, 6, or 7) and provide written narratives to be included in Chapter III of the *Self-Study Report*.
- Respond to all indicators that describe each criterion.
- The additional discussion questions provided are for school use only as they describe to what extent they meet or exceed the ACS WASC indicator.
- Discussion questions do not have to be individually answered.
- Identify the school's areas of strength and key issues for each criterion.
- Present findings to the Leadership Team and engage in meaningful discussions on how the data and analysis impact the *Self-Study Report*.
- Provide input on Task 4, the revision of the schoolwide *Action Plan*, under the direction of the Leadership Team.

ACS WASC Visiting Committee

Participants:

- ACS WASC-appointed chair who is experienced in the postsecondary accreditation process
- Volunteer educators from ACS WASC member schools

Products:

- *Visiting Committee Report*
- *Documentation and Justification Statement*
- *Accreditation Status Recommendation*

Responsibilities:

- Complete ACS WASC training every year.
- Read the school's *Self-Study Report* completely and analyze the school's findings.
- Complete prewriting assignments as directed by the Visiting Committee chair.
- Commit to a three and one-half day visit without schedule or duty conflicts.
- Collaborate with Visiting Committee members to analyze the school's findings and present schoolwide strengths and key issues that will be integrated into the schoolwide *Action Plan*.

ACS WASC Commission

Participants:

- The ACS WASC Commission consists of 32 representatives from various educational, business, and state organizations who oversee the ACS WASC accreditation process

Products:

- Status determination decisions
- Written policies and procedures to govern the ACS WASC accreditation process

Responsibilities:

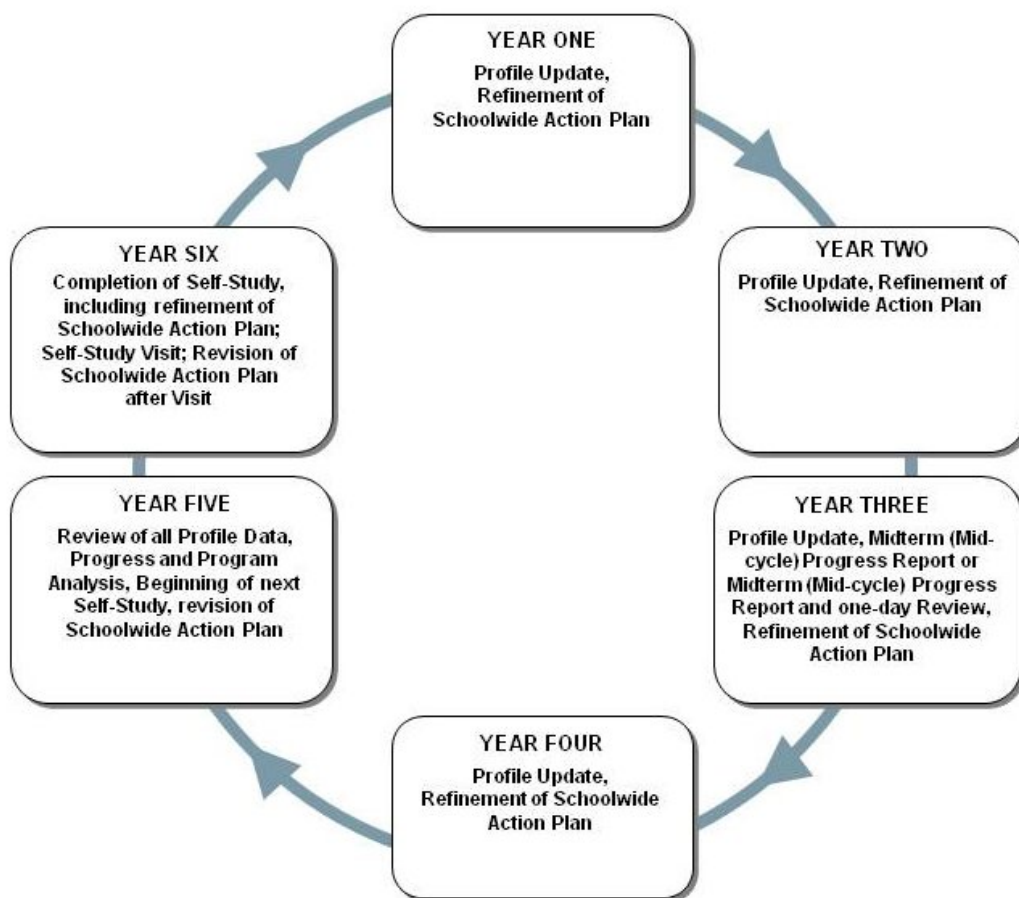
- The Commission meets three times a year to review *Visiting Committee Reports* and *Documentation and Justification Statements* that describe the accreditation visits that have occurred since the last Commission meeting.
- The Commission reviews the effectiveness of the school and then awards accreditation status as appropriate.
- The Commission oversees the policies, procedures, and financial status of ACS WASC.

ACS WASC Six-Year Cycle

The ACS WASC accreditation process is an ongoing process that is most effective when it is embedded into the daily life and activities of the school. Accreditation is a process, not an event. The most successful schools are those that engage in self-evaluation, analysis of student learning data, and *Action Plan* implementation on an ongoing basis.

Visits by ACS WASC-trained educators are scheduled during the six-year cycle according to the status determination by the ACS WASC Commission.

ACS WASC has a six-year cycle of activities that maximizes the impact of school improvement activities connected with the accreditation process as visualized in the following diagram:



ACS WASC Six-Year Accreditation Cycle

First-Time Applicants — Beginning the Process

[This section is for first-time applicants only — those already in the ACS WASC process should go to page 15 where the self-study process description begins.]

Steps to Candidacy or Initial Accreditation Status

There are four steps required to achieve candidacy or initial accreditation status:

1. Meet ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria requirements at least at a basic level
2. Request affiliation with ACS WASC
3. Complete a written *Initial Visit Report*
4. Host a successful one-day initial visit by an ACS WASC representative or team.

Schools that earn candidacy or initial accreditation status have up to three years to prepare for a full site visit that can, from that point on, earn full accredited status within the six-year accreditation cycle.

Step 1 — Meet ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria

Before postsecondary schools contact ACS WASC requesting affiliation, it is important that they have the beginning pieces in place to meet, at least at a basic level, all ten of the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria.

Criterion 1 — Institutional Mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

- Authority — Postsecondary schools must have a charter and/or formal authority from an appropriate governmental agency (where such agency exists) to award a certificate or high school diploma. A school must meet all legal requirements to provide a program of education beyond the secondary level. If incorporated, the school must submit a copy of its articles of incorporation.
- Mission — The school's educational mission must be clearly defined, adopted, and published by its governing Board. The mission must identify its broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to successful student learning. The mission must be foundational for institutional planning and school decision-making processes.
- Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs) — The school must develop measureable learner outcomes that are global in scope and reflect the school's mission and purpose.

Criterion 2 — Organizational Infrastructure and School Leadership

- Governing Board — The school must have a functioning governing Board responsible for the quality, integrity, and financial stability of the school and for ensuring that the school's mission is being carried out. Its membership must be sufficient in size and composition to fulfill all Board responsibilities.

- Administrator/Director — The school must have an administrator/director appointed by the Governing Board who possesses the requisite authority to administer Board policies. This person cannot serve as the chair of the Governing Board.
- Administrative Capacity — The school must have sufficient staff with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support the school's mission, purpose, and academic programs.
- Operational Status — The school must be operational with students actively pursuing its instructional programs for at least one full semester before it applies for accreditation status. Schools may not apply for accreditation before they begin operations.
- Academic Credit — The school must award academic credits based on generally accepted practices. Public schools governed by statutory or system regulatory requirements must provide appropriate information about awarding academic credit. (Non-academic classes such as arts & crafts, senior exercise classes, etc. do not apply). Reminder: ACS WASC accredits schools, not individual programs in schools. All programs will be reviewed during the accreditation site visit.
- Admissions — The school must adopt and adhere to admission policies consistent with its mission that specify the qualifications of students appropriate for its programs.
- Procedural infrastructure — The school must have a system of policies and procedures that govern school operations and administrative decision-making processes.

Criterion 3 — Faculty and Staff

- Faculty — The school must have a qualified faculty which is sufficient in size and experience to support all of the school's educational programs. Faculty member's responsibilities should include their participation in curriculum development, assessment of student learning, and professional development activities.
- Personnel Policies — The school must have policies and procedures that govern how faculty and staff members are hired, evaluated, and compensated.

Criterion 4 — Curriculum

- Educational Programs — The school must offer educational programs in recognized and emerging fields of study that culminate in identified student outcomes leading to certificates, licensure, or other indicators of program completion.
- Curricular Mapping — The school must have an organized curricular plan that provides direction for faculty members as they plan for instruction and assessment.

Criterion 5 — Instructional Program

- Student Learning and Achievement — The school must define and publish the learner outcomes for each program. Through regular and systematic assessment, it must demonstrate that students who complete programs achieve these outcomes.

- **Instructional Strategies** — The school must provide qualified faculty members who use a variety of instructional strategies that meet the diverse learning needs of students.
- **Technology Integration** — The school must develop technology resources for students and have expectations embedded in the instructional program so that students can be prepared with 21st century skills.

Criterion 6 — Use of Assessment

- **Analysis of Learning Data** — The school must have a process in place to gather learning data from multiple sources, disaggregate and analyze the data, draw conclusions and develop recommendations to address identified learner needs that results in ongoing school improvement.
- **Use of Assessment Results** — The school must use learning data analysis results in curriculum review, development of the instructional program, provision of professional growth activities for teachers, and for long-term institutional planning.

Criterion 7 — Student Support Services

- **Student Services** — The school must provide appropriate services (health, safety, technology, etc.) that support student learning and development within the context of its institutional mission.
- **Counseling Services** — The school must provide personal counseling support as well as college planning counseling services.

Criterion 8 — Resource Management

- **Information and Learning Resources** — The school must provide access to sufficient information and learning resources that support its instructional programs.
- **Financial Resources** — The school must manage its financial resources to support student learning programs and services, to improve institutional effectiveness, and to assure financial stability.
- **Financial Accountability** — The school must annually undergo an external financial audit by a certified public accountant or public agency and report results to school stakeholders.
- **Facilities** — The school must provide facilities that are clean, safe, and adequate for the academic programs and courses offered.

Criterion 9 — Community Connection

- **Public Information** — The school must provide a catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate, and current information regarding its programs, available financial aid, admissions requirements, and student fees.
- **Connection to Community** — The school must make an effort to connect to community leaders, businesses, and organizations that can enhance the educational opportunities for students.

Criterion 10 — Action Plan for Ongoing Improvement

- **Institutional Planning and Evaluation** — The school must systematically evaluate and make public how well it is accomplishing its purposes, including the assessment of Schoolwide Learner Outcomes. The school must provide evidence of planning for improvement of institutional operations and processes, student achievement of educational goals, and student learning levels.
- **Schoolwide *Action Plan*** — The school must have a user-friendly schoolwide *Action Plan* that guides school improvement efforts and provides the basis for all ongoing improvement activities.

Once a school has determined that it has met these ten ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria, at least at a basic or beginning level, it can proceed to step #2 in the accreditation process.

Step 2 — Request Affiliation with ACS WASC

Postsecondary schools that are interested in accreditation should complete the “Request for Affiliation” form (available at www.acswasc.org) and submit it with fees to the ACS WASC office at 533 Airport Blvd., Suite 200, Burlingame, CA 94010. This affiliation form allows ACS WASC to confirm that the school meets the ten eligibility requirements necessary to enter the accreditation process and that it is a non-degree granting, non-profit school.

The school must provide assurance that it will adhere to ACS WASC eligibility requirements and accreditation criteria and policies of the ACS WASC Commission. It must describe itself in identical terms to all its accrediting agencies, communicate any changes in its accredited status, and agree to disclose information required by the ACS WASC Commission. The school must agree to comply with Commission requests, directives, decisions, and policies and make complete, accurate, and honest disclosure.

Once the affiliation form has been accepted and approved, the postsecondary school is notified by the ACS WASC office that an initial visit will be held as soon as the school completes the next step in the process, i.e., preparing the *Initial Visit Report*.

Step 3 — Prepare the Initial Visit Report

The *Initial Visit Report* is prepared by the postsecondary school in preparation for a one-day initial visit. This *Initial Visit Report* gives evidence that the postsecondary school meets the eligibility requirements to be considered for accreditation.

Although the *Initial Visit Report* asks for school and community descriptions and lists of program offerings, the majority of the report is directed toward addressing the ten specific eligibility requirements that must be met for the school to proceed in the accreditation process.

Step 4 — Host an Initial Visit

When the school seeking accreditation completes the *Initial Visit Report*, one or two ACS WASC-trained educators will visit the campus for one day and validate the *Initial Visit Report*. The Visiting Committee verifies the contents of the *Initial Visit Report* and then submits a written report to the ACS WASC Commission.

If the Visiting Committee determines that the school meets eligibility requirements for accreditation, it will recommend to the ACS WASC Commission that the school be granted “initial accreditation” status for a three-year period. Schools that have initial accreditation status enjoy all the rights and privileges of full accreditation, although it is still reported as initial accreditation in all publications.

If the school does not meet all the eligibility requirements but does have the potential to meet them within a three-year time period, the Commission will grant the school “candidacy” status. This is not accredited status but simply identifies the school as one that is pursuing accreditation status.

If the school does not meet a majority of the eligibility requirements, the school will be given time to correct deficiencies and then host another initial visit at a later time.

How to Advertise ACS WASC Candidacy or Initial Accreditation Status

Schools that have been granted candidacy status are moving toward full accreditation but have not yet attained it. Initial accreditation status reflects that the school has met basic ACS WASC criteria and has a support system that can sustain the school program into the foreseeable future. If the school has earned initial accreditation status, it has all the rights and privileges of an accredited school.

In advertising, schools must state their accredited status based on the decision of the ACS WASC Commission. Schools will be able to publish or state their status as follows:

- “A Candidate for Accreditation by the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.”
- “Initially Accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.”
- “Fully Accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges” (possible after the first full self-study and site visit).

The Self-Study Process

Accreditation Components

After a school has earned initial accreditation, the next event is a full schoolwide self-evaluation within three years, ending in a written *Self-Study Report* that presents the school's findings. During the three-year period of initial accreditation, the school works on key issues identified by the Initial Visiting Committee. Following the completion of the school's *Self-Study Report*, a Visiting Committee comprised of ACS WASC-trained educators spends three and one-half days on campus validating the *Self-Study Report* and writing a *Visiting Committee Report* that presents its findings to the ACS WASC Commission.

The self-study process consists of three components:

1. School self-evaluation ending in a written *Self-Study Report*
2. Peer review by ACS WASC Visiting Committee ending in a *Visiting Committee Report* to the ACS WASC Commission
3. Ongoing school improvement through the implementation of the schoolwide *Action Plan*.

Suggested Timeline of Accreditation Activities

The self-study process begins for schools immediately upon earning initial accreditation status. ACS WASC accreditation is most effective when schools embed expectations, activities, and a focus on key issues in their entire program. The initial accreditation term lasts for three years and allows the school time to prepare for its first full self-study site visit.

Schools are expected to assign specific personnel to attend all three sessions of ACS WASC training. It is recommended that schools ask their administrator, Self-Study Coordinator, and Focus Group chairs (if possible) to attend training. These training sessions assist schools in understanding ACS WASC criteria and processes and give practical tips on how to gather support from all stakeholders to accomplish accreditation requirements. These sessions are most helpful in guiding schools as they write their school *Self-Study Report* and prepare for the accreditation site visit.

As a school approaches its full site visit, accreditation activities increase. The following timeline gives schools guidance in how to plan ahead for the writing of the *Self-Study Report* and hosting the site visit:

12–18 Months Prior to the Full Site Visit

- Establish or refresh the Leadership Team and Focus Groups
 - Focus Group 1 – Curriculum
 - Focus Group 2 – Instructional Program
 - Focus Group 3 – Use of Assessment
 - Focus Group 4 – Student Services
- School representatives participate in ACS WASC Part One training

- Review the mission statement of the school
- Orient stakeholders to the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria
- Review and revise Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs)
- Develop or update the institutional, community, and student profile (Task 1, Chapter I of the *Self-Study Report*)
- As part of Task 1, begin to focus on student learning data for analysis, drawing conclusions and creating recommendations to address identified key issues
- Review progress on current schoolwide *Action Plan* that integrated the key issues left by the last Visiting Committee, either at the initial visit or at the last full visit (Task 2, Chapter II of the *Self-Study Report*)

6–12 Months Prior to the Full Site Visit

- School representatives participate in Part Two training
- Gather and analyze data from the Leadership Team and Focus Groups and begin writing the *Self-Study Report* in preparation for the site visit
- Address the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria and identify to what extent your school meets or exceeds ACS WASC expectations
- Continue to gather learning data, disaggregate and analyze it, and then draw conclusions that result in specific recommendations for the *Action Plan*
- As part of the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria analysis, identify “School Strengths” and “Key Issues” for each of the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria

3–6 Months Prior to the Full Site Visit

- School representatives participate in Part Three training
- Complete a rough draft of the *Self-Study Report* three months before the site visit and send it out to all stakeholder groups for their final input; also, send a copy or portions as they are completed to the Visiting Committee chair for his/her input
- Use the self-study findings (school strengths and key issues) to revise the schoolwide *Action Plan* (Task 4, Chapter IV of the *Self-Study Report*) with appropriate input and discussions with stakeholders
- Establish a relationship with the assigned Visiting Committee chair by hosting a previsit to collaborate on the Site Visit Schedule, logistical details, and visit expectations
- Assure schoolwide consensus and establish a follow-up process to monitor the implementation of the schoolwide *Action Plan*

1–3 Months Prior to the Full Site Visit

- Complete the *Self-Study Report*; submit the self-study report to the Visiting Committee and the ACS WASC Office no later than six weeks prior to the visit
- Finalize the schoolwide *Action Plan* and have the governing body approve it
- Share copies of final drafts with all stakeholder groups and ask that they read it before the Visiting Committee arrives in order to prepare for meaningful discussions
- Finalize details for the site visit: i.e., schedule, housing, food, meeting locations, etc.
- Stay in close communication with the Visiting Committee chair.

The Self-Study Report

Self-Study Report Format

The *Self-Study Report* should be paginated consecutively and be compiled into one electronic document.

There are eight specific components in the *Self-Study Report* electronic template provided by ACS WASC:

1. Cover/Title Page
2. Preface
3. List of Self-Study Teams, Committees, or Focus Group members
4. Table of Contents
5. Chapter I — Institutional, Community, and Student Characteristics
6. Chapter II — Progress Report on the Schoolwide *Action Plan* Showing Success in Addressing the Key Issues
7. Chapter III — Self-Study Findings based on the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria
8. Chapter IV — The Schoolwide Action Plan Revision.

The most extensive chapter in the *Self-Study Report* is Chapter III — the school's findings on how well it meets or exceeds the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria. These are the standards that must be met for the school to earn accreditation status. Each of the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria has supporting indicators that give a deeper and more complete description of the meaning of each criterion. These indicators are given for each criterion to encourage thoughtful dialogue and judgment about institutional quality by the school's stakeholders engaged in the self-study process.

In addition, the supplied indicators are supported by discussion questions that are intended to provoke thoughtful reflection and discussion among all stakeholders about institutional quality. The discussion questions are provided to help schools evaluate their programs and, though each question does not have to be specifically addressed, conclusions need to be embedded within the overall response to the criterion.

Schools are expected to base their self-study findings on evidence taken from the work of Focus Groups. For evidence to be useful, it must have undergone analysis and reflection by the school's stakeholders in each Focus Group. Evidence should be relevant, verifiable, representative, and accurately presented as it is integrated into Chapter III. A school's *Self-Study Report* is most effective when it is clearly written, well-organized, and thorough. The more transparent a school is in its *Self-Study Report*, the more effective the Visiting Committee can be in guiding the school toward school improvement.

Responses to the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria are to be given in narrative form. The ACS WASC self-study accreditation process is not a compliance process accomplished by checklists; it is a school improvement process that relies on meaningful discussions and reflective comments by the school in its *Self-Study Report*.

After completing the school's response to each of the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria, Focus Groups must identify what the school's strengths and key issues are in relation to the findings. This is an important part of completing each response to the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria because these identified strengths and key issues form the foundation of the school's final conclusions and recommendations for the schoolwide *Action Plan*.

Self-Study Report Template Description

The *Self-Study Report* template may be found on the ACS WASC website (www.acswasc.org). This template provides the structure of the *Self-Study Report* and gives prompts and places for schools to respond to complete the document. In the pages that follow, a complete description is given of the components of the template that can be found online.

Cover/Title Page

The cover includes the name of the school, the school's address, the title of the document (*Self-Study Report*), and the date of the Visiting Committee visit.

Preface

The *Self-Study Report* begins with a preface (500 words or less) written by the administrator/director. It should describe how the accreditation process was implemented in the school, how it was received by stakeholders, and how the self-study process impacted the school and student learning. The administrator/director should confirm to what degree the school meets the five overarching self-study expectations of the ACS WASC process, listed as follows:

1. The involvement and collaboration of all stakeholders in the self-study process
2. The clarification of the school's mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs)
3. The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the institutional mission, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, and the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria
4. The creation of a schoolwide *Action Plan* that develops specific action steps to address the identified key issues
5. The development of an accountability system for monitoring the implementation of the schoolwide *Action Plan* and analyzing its degree of success.

List of Self-Study Committee Members

A list of Self-Study Focus Group members, Leadership Team members, and any other programmatic committees follows the preface. This list makes it easier for the Visiting Committee to contact the people directly responsible for each ACS WASC criterion or program area during the site visit.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents lists the chapters of the *Self-Study Report* and the pages where each chapter heading or subheading begins. It is important that the entire *Self-Study Report* be paginated as one continuous document.

Chapters I–IV of the Self-Study Report

Writing Chapters I–IV of the *Self-Study Report* is accomplished by completing four tasks:

1. Task 1 — Profile, Student, and Institution Characteristics (Chapter I of the *Self-Study Report*)
2. Task 2 — Progress Report on the schoolwide *Action Plan* that addresses previously identified key issues (Chapter II of the *Self-Study Report*)
3. Task 3 — Response to the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria (Chapter III of the *Self-Study Report*)
4. Task 4 — Revision of the schoolwide *Action Plan*, incorporating findings of the self-study process (Chapter IV of the *Self-Study Report*).

Chapter I — Task 1

Task 1: Institutional, Community, and Student Characteristics – Institution’s Mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

Participants:

- Leadership Team

Product:

- *Self-Study Report*, Chapter I

Procedures:

- Review the current mission statement; make any revisions if necessary
- Clarify institutional mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs)
- Include all pertinent data that is relevant to the success of students in the school
- Gather and analyze the learning data and draw conclusions
- Draft succinct narrative descriptions that profile the students and community served by the school; this narrative should include important socioeconomic and demographic data about the students and the community, a specific summary of current student academic performance, and any identified trends that have impacted the school
- Provide a brief summary of all programs offered
- Disseminate the draft to all staff and make modifications after input is received
- Prepare the final summary profile along with supporting charts, graphs, and learning data (past three years if possible).

Specific Information Required:

- Basic Institutional Information:
 - Narrative description of your school — who are you, why do you exist, what do you do best, what makes you unique as a school
 - School address, website, branches, extension sites, etc.

- History of the school (date school began, number of students in first years, original mission and purpose, location, facilities, etc.)
- Description of any significant developments that have had a major impact on the school
- List specific changes in programs since the last visit
- Student demographics (ethnicity, gender, enrollment patterns, etc.)
- Governance structure of the school
- Schoolwide Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
- The total number and types of programs offered and the number of students in attendance
- Typical class size for teachers
- Types of certificates awarded
- Total number of administrative and teaching staff members
- Calendar system used
- Typical load for the average student.
- Community Information:
 - Description of geographic area
 - Population of area served by the school
 - Population characteristics
 - Anticipated changes in school demographic data.
- Student Learning Data:
 - Gathered learning data from multiple sources (as many as possible)
 - Disaggregated and interpreted student learning data (three years if possible)
 - Conclusions drawn from the analysis of learning data (trends, irregularities, and anomalies)
 - Supporting charts and graphs to display learning data
 - Course and program completion rates
 - Job placement rates or military enrollment rates
 - ESL promotion data
 - CASAS benchmark data
 - Licensing exam pass rates
 - GED pass rates
 - Summary of major conclusions of analysis and what recommendations would best address identified critical learner needs in relation to student learning.
- Additional Online School Program and Course Description
 - Provide a succinct summary of all types of online instruction and specialized programs offered, such as IB Diploma Program, college/career readiness programs (CTE, academies, Pathways),

school/college partnerships, AVID, GATE, independent study, and other alternative education programs.

- For each program listed, provide data that demonstrates the impact on student learning. Incorporate the disaggregation of selected data based on the separate program provided: enrollment, achievement completion rate, etc. Note: Some of this data may be referenced as part of schoolwide data.

Describe the school's online programs/courses as follows:

- Types of online instruction
- Learning management system
- Hardware and software requirements
- Teacher and support staff qualifications
- Personnel involved in the instructional process
- Curriculum offered both on-site or outsourced
- Types of instruction offered, synchronous or asynchronous
- Methods and processes used to ensure that all students have access to the instructional programs necessary for learning success
- Types of assessment and assessment processes
- School culture for online environment, including types of school and community activities, opportunities for student involvement, participation data
- Orientation process for incoming students and parents to understand expectations for the online learning environment
- Student/teacher interaction on a typical day
- Student support services, including response to intervention (RTI), academic counseling and support for equal access, personal counseling, college/career preparation support, and health services.

Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

- Select two of the school's Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs)
- Using data generated in this profile describe to what extent the programs/courses are connected to the SLOs and to what extent the SLOs are being achieved.



Self-Check Questions

Task 1 Self-Check Questions: (for Leadership Team reflection after Task 1 is completed; these questions do not have to be answered in writing)

- Has the school community gathered and analyzed all pertinent data in order to clarify the characteristics and achievement of all the students?
- Has the Leadership Team produced a “user-friendly” profile for all stakeholders?
- Have the school faculty and staff members and other stakeholders discussed the

profile data and drawn conclusions to aid in school improvement planning?

- Will the questions raised from the profile analysis be integral to the work of the Focus Groups?
- Will the institutional, community, and student information be regularly updated and used by the stakeholders as the school focuses on student achievement?

Chapter II — Task 2

Task 2: Progress Report on Key Issues since the Previous Self-Study

Participants:

- Leadership Team

Product:

- *Self-Study Report*, Chapter II
 - Significant Developments
 - Procedures for *Action Plan* Implementation and Monitoring
 - Progress on *Action Plan* sections showing the success in addressing the key issues and any additional mid-cycle, revisit, or special visit recommendations

Procedures:

The school is to provide a summary of progress on the *Action Plan* that addresses key issues from the previous *Self-Study Report*. It should also include any recommendations that resulted from any other visit (initial visit, mid-cycle visit, or special visit) or report required by the Commission during the current accreditation cycle since the last full self-study visit.

The school is required to:

- Describe the school's procedures for the implementation and the monitoring of the *Action Plan*.
- Comment on the response to each current *Action Plan* key issue; cite evidence, including how each action step has been completed.
- Describe how progress on the key issues in the *Action Plan* has impacted student learning.



Self-Check Questions

Task 2 Self-Check Questions: (for Leadership Team reflection after Task 2 is completed; these questions do not have to be answered in writing)

- Did the school address each key issue within the schoolwide *Action Plan*?
- Did the school show how all key issues from the last self-study or initial visit were addressed in the schoolwide *Action Plan*?
- Does this chapter show how progress on each key issue has impacted the accomplishment of Schoolwide Learner Outcomes?

Chapter III — Task 3

Task 3: Analysis of the Quality of the School Program

Participants:

- Focus Groups
- Leadership Team

Product:

- Self-Study Report, Chapter III
On the pages that follow, the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria are described along with supporting indicators and discussion questions for schools to use for reflection and discussion.
- The product of Task 3 is Chapter III, a narrative written response to the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria and the supporting indicators.

Procedures:

- Using information gained in Tasks 1 and 2, analyze the quality of the entire school program using the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria as the standard.
- Use appropriate methods to gather pertinent information, focusing on what students are doing and what they are producing. Methods include:
 - Observations of students in classrooms
 - Examination of student work
 - Interviews of students
 - Examination and analysis of student learning data
 - Analysis of student and parent surveys
 - Interviews with school staff and other stakeholders
- Provide narrative responses that describe to what extent the school meets or exceeds expectations of the WASC Postsecondary Criteria by responding with findings and supporting evidence for the accomplishment of each criterion and supporting indicators including their impact on identified critical learner needs. Finish by identifying strengths and key issues to address.

**Self-Check Questions**

Task 3 Self-Check Questions: Based upon the institution's mission, student learning outcomes, and the ACS WASC postsecondary standards, did the school

- Analyze the quality of the school program?
- Synthesize and summarize the findings?
- Determine aligned strengths and growth needs?

ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria

Chapter III is the most extensive chapter in the Self-Study Report. ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria are the backbone of the accreditation process and schools must show to what extent they meet or exceed all ten ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria expectations.

1. Institutional Mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs)
2. Organizational Infrastructure and School Leadership
3. Faculty and Staff
4. Curriculum
5. Instructional Program
6. Use of Assessment
7. Student Support Services
8. Resource Management
9. Community Connection
10. Action Plan for Ongoing Improvement

On the pages that follow, the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria are listed along with supporting indicators and discussion questions.

Under each of the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria, there are supporting indicators that break down the criteria into smaller parts. Schools should respond in narrative form to each indicator and explain to what extent the school meets or exceeds the indicator expectations. The school must comment on every indicator as they provide answers for each of the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria.

Discussion questions (bulleted questions under each indicator) are also provided to help schools understand the exact intent of each indicator. They are provided to help schools evaluate their program and, though each discussion question does not need to be specifically addressed, answers need to be embedded within the overall response to the criterion.

After each criterion and supporting indicators have been addressed, schools are given the opportunity to list evidence that supports the assertions made in the narrative section. This evidence is to be available upon request during the site visit.

There are additional indicators and discussion questions for schools that offer online programs or courses. Only those schools that offer online options are required to respond to these specific indicators and discussion questions.

Criterion 1: Institutional Mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

The school demonstrates a strong commitment to its mission, emphasizing student achievement. The school communicates its mission internally and externally. Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs) are developed and reviewed annually to ensure that they are current and relevant.

Indicator 1.1: The school has a statement of mission that describes its broad educational purpose, its intended student population, and its commitment to high levels of student learning.

Discussion Questions:

- In what ways does the mission statement reflect the school's commitment to high levels of student learning?
- How does the school establish learning programs and services that are aligned with its mission and that match the needs of its student population?
- What documents does the school have that proves that the school is legally authorized by the state or appropriate government agency to grant credits, certificates, or diplomas?

Indicator 1.2: The mission statement is approved by the governing body, published internally and externally, and regularly reviewed and revised to connect to current student learning needs.

Discussion Questions:

- Who was involved in the development of the mission statement and how was it accomplished?
- How is the mission statement communicated to the school's constituents?
- How often is the mission statement reviewed and revised in order to maintain relevancy and effectiveness?
- Who is involved in this review and revision process?

Indicator 1.3: The school's mission statement is central to institutional planning and decision-making activities.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the school consider its mission and SLOs in its planning and decision-making activities? What evidence does the school have to support the use of the mission statement and SLOs in planning processes?
- How is analysis and review of the school's mission and achievement of SLOs related to the revision of the schoolwide *Action Plan* each year?

Indicator 1.4: The school establishes measurable Schoolwide Learner Outcomes that identify the broad, global goals for all students based on current and future student learning needs.

Discussion Questions:

- How were the SLOs developed and how are they measured?
- How do faculty members integrate these SLOs into their lesson planning?
- How are all stakeholders connected to the SLOs?

- How is each Schoolwide Learner Outcome measured? (see chart below)

Suggested chart:

Schoolwide Learner Outcomes	Assessment Methods or Instruments
1.	
2.	
Etc.	

Indicator 1.5: The school demonstrates the incorporation of current research-based ideas into learning programs to ensure that the school's overarching goals (SLOs) are current and relevant.

Discussion Questions:

- What is the process used to evaluate current educational literature and integrate new ideas that address current and future student learning needs?
- What process is used to look at student learning data results to see what needs current students have and explore what new ideas might be useful to address these needs?
- To what extent does the regular review and revision of SLOs include discussion based on current educational research?
- How does the review of profile data impact the review and revision of the SLOs?
- How does the achievement of SLOs connect to the schoolwide *Action Plan*?

Indicator 1.6: The school has a process in place to regularly review the courses and programs offered so that the needs of the community are met.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the school use annual profile data to evaluate course and program offerings?
- To what extent does the school gather input from current students and the community at large to determine future course and program offerings?

Additional Online Indicator and Discussion Questions

Indicator 1.7: The governing authority's online policies are directly connected to the school's vision, mission, and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.

Discussion Questions:

- To what degree are the policies related to online instruction effective in clarifying the vision for the school's use of various types of online curriculum, instruction and support methodologies?
- How does the school upgrade or update technology, develop acceptable use policies, CIPA policies, and policies to ensure internet safety?

School's Strengths and Key Issues for Criterion 1 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

-
-

Key Issues:

-
-

Suggested Sources of Evidence (to be made available upon request during the site visit)

- List of those involved in the development of the mission statement and SLOs
- Minutes of Self-Study Committees, Board meetings, faculty meetings, administrative councils, student committees, etc.
- Minutes of meetings where the mission statement and analysis of learning data are reviewed
- The school's catalog and student handbooks
- Publications, promotional materials, and other media that are used to provide information internally and externally about the school and its mission.

Criterion 2: Organizational Infrastructure and School Leadership

The school utilizes the contributions of leadership throughout the organization to provide for ongoing improvement. The organizational structure and roles of governance are clearly defined and designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning and improve institutional effectiveness. The governing body enables the administrator/director to implement policy and lead the school effectively.

Indicator 2.1: The school has clearly defined roles of governance that provide for ethical and effective leadership and results in ongoing improvement of the school.

Discussion Questions:

- How do the organizational structure and job descriptions promote efficiency and impact school improvement?
- How does the governing body implement its requirements for employment?
- To what extent does the governing body handle policy issues and long-term planning while allowing the administrator/director to oversee the day-to-day operations of the school?
- How does the governing body support the school leadership and hold them accountable without micromanaging them?
- To what extent does the governing body demonstrate honesty and integrity in its relationships with stakeholders, other schools or agencies, and with its own local community members?

Indicator 2.2: The leadership of the school creates a positive learning environment in a collegial and collaborative atmosphere that provides the foundation for school improvement and high levels of achievement for students.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the administrator/director effectively lead the school as both a visionary and academic leader?
- To what extent do school leaders effectively guide the school toward school improvement?
- What evidence exists to show that school leaders are trusted by the stakeholders?
- To what extent do the faculty and staff display that they are motivated by school leaders to bring focus to student learning and school improvement?

Indicator 2.3: The school's governance, decision-making structure, and organizational processes are regularly evaluated to ensure their integrity and effectiveness.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the school include all stakeholders in the regular evaluation of the school as a whole?
- How do stakeholders have a voice in decision-making processes?

- How does the school widely communicate the results of regular evaluations and use them as the basis for school improvement?
- What process does the school use to evaluate its organization, governance structures, and decision-making procedures?

Indicator 2.4: The school has an established infrastructure of policies and procedures that provides stability and consistency for all institutional programs, activities, and events.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the school document its policies and procedures in a Policy Manual?
- How do written policies guide decision-making processes?
- How does the organizational infrastructure support all academic programs, activities, and events so that students are able to achieve Schoolwide Learning Outcomes?
- How often does the school review and update its Policy Manual?
- How do faculty, students, and staff members have established mechanisms for providing input into institutional decisions?
- To what extent is the creation of new policies as well as the decisions made based on current policies done in a transparent and ethical manner?

Additional Online Indicator and Discussion Questions

Indicator 2.5: The school evaluates the effectiveness of online processes and procedures for involving staff in shared responsibility, actions, and accountability to support student learning throughout all online courses.

Discussion Question:

- To what degree do the processes and procedures involve the online staff members in professional development activities that enhance the use of technology in the delivery of instruction and support student learning?

School's Strengths and Key Issues for Criterion 2 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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-

Key Issues:

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Suggested Sources of Evidence (to be made available upon request during the site visit)

- License, charter, or legislative authorization to operate (if applicable)
- Addresses of all campuses affiliated with the school
- List of the school's governing body members by name, title, and professional and/or business affiliations
- Flow chart of organizational governance and decision-making processes
- Policies of the Governing Board and published by-laws of the school
- Copies of Board minutes
- Copy of any contract between the school and any agency, corporation, school, or individual that involves processing financial aid, instruction, administration, recruiting, or placement services, etc.
- Examples of how leadership has empowered the staff to focus on student learning.

Criterion 3: Faculty and Staff

The school employs qualified personnel to support student learning programs and services to ensure institutional effectiveness. Personnel are treated equitably, evaluated regularly, and provided opportunities for professional development that impact student learning.

Indicator 3.1: The school employs personnel who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience in line with its school mission and SLOs.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent are the school's personnel sufficiently qualified to guarantee the effective delivery of programs and services?
- What methods does the school use to assure that qualifications for each position are closely matched to specific programmatic needs and aligned with the school's mission?
- How does the school determine the number of faculty and staff members needed to meet the learning needs of all students?

Indicator 3.2: The school's hiring process is marked by clear communication regarding job descriptions, expected job skills, and procedures for the selection of personnel.

Discussion Questions:

- Who is involved in the hiring process and to what extent is there transparency in the advertisement for open positions?
- To what extent do job descriptions accurately reflect position duties, responsibilities, and employer expectations?
- By what means does the school verify the qualifications of applicants and newly hired personnel?

Indicator 3.3: The school develops personnel policies and procedures that are clearly communicated to all employees.

Discussion Questions:

- What processes and manuals does the school use to develop and publicize its personnel policies?
- How does the school ensure that it administers its personnel policies and procedures consistently and equitably?
- To what extent does the school have a written code for professional ethics for all personnel and communicate expectations to them?
- What are the school's provisions for keeping personnel records secure and confidential?
- How does the school provide employees access to their records?

Indicator 3.4: The school assures the effectiveness of its faculty and staff members by evaluating all personnel systematically.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the school establish written guidelines for evaluating all personnel, including performance of assigned duties and participation in institutional responsibilities?
- How is the evaluation process built on a collegial spirit that fosters growth and improvement?
- By what methods does the school define “effective teaching” in its evaluation process? How is that effectiveness judged?
- Who does the annual evaluations of employees and are the results of such evaluations documented and shared in follow-up meetings with the employees under review?
- What process is in place to assure that evaluations lead to improvement in job performance?

Indicator 3.5: Faculty members take ownership of student progress toward achieving stated Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.

Discussion Questions:

- What are the roles of teachers and other staff members in the development of SLOs?
- How often do faculty members meet to discuss SLOs and analyze student learning data to ensure that students are achieving SLOs?
- What are the measures used to show student attainment of SLOs and how are these measures monitored?

Indicator 3.6: The school provides all personnel with appropriate opportunities for professional development.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the school plan professional development activities that are connected to student learning needs?
- To what extent does the school provide funding for professional development opportunities?
- How does the school ensure meaningful evaluation of professional development activities?
- What impact do professional development activities have on the improvement of teaching and learning? How does the school evaluate that improvement?

Indicator 3.7: The school regularly evaluates all non-teaching support staff members and provides direction and support for improvement of their skills.

Discussion Questions:

- What process is in place for the regular evaluation of all non-teaching personnel?
- To what extent are job descriptions and duty expectations regularly reviewed and revised to meet the current needs of the school?
- How is the support staff included in meetings and processes (as appropriate) to engage them as important stakeholders in the learning programs of the school?

Additional Online Indicator and Discussion Questions

Indicator 3.8: The school implements effective supervision and evaluation procedures in order to promote professional growth of online staff members.

Discussion Questions:

- How effective are the school's supervision and evaluation procedures that promote professional growth of online instructional staff?
- To what degree are online staff evaluated according to their technological competencies, use of technology within the curriculum, and their fulfilling requirements for quality student-teacher interaction?

School's Strengths and Key Issues for Criterion 3 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

-
-

Key Issues:

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Suggested Sources of Evidence (to be made available upon request during the site visit)

- Document describing hiring procedures
- Personnel evaluation forms
- Policy manuals, faculty handbook
- Faculty orientation programs
- Job descriptions
- Copies of written formal evaluations for each staff member
- Plan for professional growth opportunities
- Evidence of faculty participation in professional growth activities that are focused on student learning.

Criterion 4: Curriculum

The school demonstrates its support of student learning through the development of a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum that allows all students the opportunity to reach Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs). The school's curriculum reflects its mission and SLOs and connects directly to current student learning needs. The school pursues current, research-based curriculum development information to keep its programs relevant and effective.

Indicator 4.1: The school has a documented curricular map that outlines courses of study necessary to reach stated outcomes, licensure requirements, or certificate expectations.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the school list all courses and provide course outlines for all stakeholder groups?
- To what extent does each course have clearly defined learner outcomes?
- How is institutional resource allocation connected to curriculum development needs?

Indicator 4.2: The school regularly reviews curriculum in order to ensure that the content taught in the classrooms is accurate and relevant.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the school have a curriculum review cycle in place that includes as many stakeholders as possible?
- To what extent does the curriculum review process result in written conclusions that are used to make allocation decisions?
- What processes are in place to ensure that learning materials are providing accurate and up-to-date information to students?
- To what extent are all teachers involved in the curriculum development process?
- How does the curriculum reflect the school's mission and how does it connect to the school's SLOs?
- How often is the entire school curriculum evaluated for relevancy in light of changing student demographics?

Indicator 4.3: Students have access to texts, learning materials, and information resources that are sufficient to meet the course learning objectives.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the school provide texts and/or learning materials in a timely manner at the beginning of each semester?
- To what extent does the school provide sufficient library resources, or access to such resources, to support classroom instruction?
- How does the school make learning labs, computer labs, etc. available to students to support their learning needs?

- How does the school support the quality of its instructional programs by providing technology and other learning resources that are sufficient in quantity, currency, and variety to facilitate educational offerings?

Additional Online Indicators and Discussion Questions

Indicator 4.4: The school provides a comprehensive and sequential documented online curriculum that is articulated within and across grade levels for the improvement of programs, learning, and teaching.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent do the online curriculum/courses consistently meet state academic standards?
- To what degree is there effective integration of outsourced curriculum into the program?

Indicator 4.5: A rigorous, relevant, and coherent online curriculum to all students is accessible to all students through all courses/programs offered.

Discussion Questions:

- To what degree are their procedures that ensure that students have access to courses that meet the UC “a-g” requirements, including lab courses, if applicable?
- How does the school examine the demographics and situation of students throughout the class offerings?
- To what extent do the school’s instructional practices and other activities facilitate access and success for special needs students?

Indicator 4.6: The school assesses the online curriculum and its rigor, relevancy, and coherency after examination of policies regarding course completion, credits, grading policies, homework, use of technology, etc.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the school determine the effectiveness of its outsourced curriculum to maintain curricular integrity, reliability, and security?

Indicator 4.7: Online students use resources for learning beyond the limits of the textbook such as library/media resources and community resources.

Discussion Question:

- To what degree are there effective opportunities within online instruction for real-world experiences and applications for the students?

School's Strengths and Key Issues for Criterion 4 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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Key Issues:

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Suggested Sources of Evidence (to be made available upon request during the site visit)

- Curriculum guides, documents, etc. that show the overall curricular plan
- Minutes of meetings regarding curriculum development
- Review cycle for texts and other learning materials
- Course descriptions for all classes
- Course learning outcomes for all classes
- Assessment results that show student progress toward curricular goals
- Student achievement data from school profile (Chapter I).

Criterion 5: Instructional Program

The instructional staff uses research-based instructional strategies and teaching methodologies that engage students at high levels of learning and allow them to achieve both Schoolwide Learner Outcomes and course objectives. Faculty members are given ongoing training in various instructional strategies that allows them to address the varied learning styles of students in their classrooms.

Indicator 5.1: The school provides high-level instruction with appropriate breadth, depth, rigor, and sequencing for all programs and courses.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the school measure the quality of instruction in its classrooms?
- How do faculty members keep current in instructional strategies and methodologies in their areas of expertise?

Indicator 5.2: The school uses a variety of delivery modes and teaching methodologies that reflect the diverse needs and learning styles of its students.

Discussion Questions:

- What opportunities for dialogue are provided for faculty members to discuss student learning needs and pedagogical approaches?
- What teaching strategies and methodologies are commonly used?
- To what extent are teachers given support in developing differentiated teaching strategies to ensure that all students' needs are addressed?
- To what extent have faculty members discussed the relationship between teaching strategies/methodologies and student performance?

Indicator 5.3: The school is actively engaged in integrating new technology into the instructional program of the school.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the school have a team in place to review technology advances in instruction and how it can be adapted and used effectively in the school?
- To what extent does the school have policies in place to govern the acceptance of credits earned through outside online programs?
- How are faculty members trained to use technology more effectively in their own classrooms?
- To what extent does the school offer online learning options or virtual classroom experiences for students?

Additional Online Indicators and Discussion Questions

Indicator 5.4: The administrators and teachers use a variety of approaches to remain current in research-based professional knowledge and apply the knowledge to improve teaching and learning in the online environment.

Discussion Questions:

- To what degree are teacher technology competencies assessed during online instruction?
- How are all students, regardless of background and ability, actively involved in the learning that is based on the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes and academic standards?

Indicator 5.5: The online teachers strengthen student understanding and achievement of the learning outcomes through the use of a variety of instructional strategies that effectively engage students at a high level of learning.

Discussion Questions:

- How is the effectiveness of the instructional strategies measured?
- How is the quality of direct instruction and student-teacher interaction evaluated?
- To what extent are the timelines and pacing guides effective for completing coursework for asynchronous online instruction?

Indicator 5.6: Student work demonstrates critical and creative thinking, problem solving, knowledge attainment, and application skills.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent is the reviewing of online student work effective?
- How does the school determine the degree to which online students are analyzing, comprehending and conducting effective research?

Indicator 5.7: Strategies are used by the instructional staff to develop personalized approaches to learning and alternative instructional options which allow access in the rigorous standards-based curriculum.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent is there evidence that the processes and strategies are effective for incoming online students with regard to orientation or induction and the ongoing monitoring and support of the students to ensure all have a full opportunity for academic success?
- To what degree does teacher involvement with all students promote inclusion and engagement of online students?
- To what extent are there processes for the regular review of student and schoolwide profiles that impact the use of interventions for online students?

School's Strengths and Key Issues for Criterion 5 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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Key Issues:

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Suggested Sources of Evidence (to be made available upon request during the site visit)

- Examination of representative student work
- Observations of students engaged in learning
- Student interviews and self-reflections about learning
- Student learning data from school profile
- Documents used in training workshops for teachers related to instructional practices
- Identification of resource materials (books, articles, etc.) that are used to improve the instructional program of the school
- Documents used in the evaluation of teachers that indicate how they are reviewed in regard to instructional practices used in their classrooms.

Criterion 6: Use of Assessment

The instructional staff uses established assessment procedures to design, administer, deliver, and evaluate courses, programs, and student learning levels. The school recognizes the central role of its faculty for improving courses and programs through the assessment instruments and practices used in the school. Assessment is used to measure student progress, to modify learning approaches, and to carry out institutional planning and ongoing school improvement.

Indicator 6.1: Clear learning outcomes are developed for each course so that success can be measured and students who are struggling can be identified and helped.

Discussion Questions:

- How are core competencies and specific learning outcomes developed for every course?
- How are courses regularly evaluated in regard to depth, breadth, rigor, and sequencing?
- What improvements to courses and programs have occurred as a result of analysis of learning data?

Indicator 6.2: The school gathers learning data from multiple sources, disaggregates and analyzes the results, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations for changes based on assessment results.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent do the administration and faculty frequently meet to analyze student learning data and use results to improve the educational program of the school?
- What changes have faculty made in teaching methodologies or instructional strategies to improve learning as a result of learning data analysis?
- How does the school document the conclusions it reaches when analyzing student learning data so that recommendations can be created to address key issues?
- How are assessment results integrated into the school's teaching and learning process with a focus on individual student learning?
- How are the results of data analysis connected to the schoolwide *Action Plan* so that student learning needs are the driving force of the school?
- How are assessment results evaluated with school SLOs in view?

Indicator 6.3: Student learning data analysis is used to make institutional changes that enables students to reach educational goals and achieve academic success.

Discussion Questions:

- How often do the administration and faculty meet to talk about student learning levels, assessment results, etc.?
- To what extent do faculty members use formative and summative assessment results to modify learning and teaching approaches?
- How has the analysis of learning data impacted the instructional program of the school and improved learning levels for students?

- How does the school use assessment results to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs and courses it offers?

Indicator 6.4: Assessment results are reported regularly to all stakeholders so that accountability can be maintained and that student learning remains the focus of the school.

Discussion Questions:

- How often are student learning results reported to appropriate stakeholder groups, i.e., governing body, faculty, and community members? How is this done?
- What processes are in place to use learning data analysis as a way to identify students who require additional help?
- How are learning results reported to the community at large?

Indicator 6.5: The school relies on assessment results for institutional planning, Action Plan revision, and resource allocation.

Discussion Questions:

- Who is involved in the institutional planning of the school? Are all stakeholders represented?
- How often is learning data analysis used to assess the relevance and appropriateness of course offerings at the school?
- To what extent does the governing body and administration make financial allocation decisions based on the analysis of learning data?
- In what way has the assessment of learning data resulted in the modification of the schoolwide *Action Plan*?

Additional Online Indicators and Discussion Questions

Indicator 6.6: The school uses online assessment results to make changes in the school program, professional development activities, and resource allocations demonstrating a results-driven ongoing process.

Discussion Question:

- To what degree is the overall effectiveness of online opportunities, professional development of the staff, and the resource allocations to support student achievement and their needs measured?

Indicator 6.7: The school staff has determined the basis upon which students' grades and their growth and performance levels are determined and uses that information to strengthen high achievement of all students.

Discussion Questions:

- How is it determined if a student is prepared to advance to the next unit, course, or grade level?
- How is course mastery determined and what "steps" or "gates" that are in place to prevent students from proceeding to the next unit if mastery has not been demonstrated?

- To what degree are there procedures for grading online student work, whether it is done electronically or individually by the teachers?
- How do teachers ensure academic integrity and determine students are doing their own work in the online environment?
- To what degree are the results for state-mandated assessments and the high school exit exam used in decisions about student achievement and advancement and improving the instructional program?

Indicator 6.8: A range of examples of student work and other assessments demonstrate online student achievement of the academic standards and the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, including those with special needs.

Discussion Question:

- To what extent are examples of student work and other online assessments (formative and summative) used to demonstrate student achievement of academic standards and the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes?

Strengths and Key Issues for Criterion 6 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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Key Issues:

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Suggested Sources of Evidence (to be made available upon request during the site visit)

- Listing of all assessment instruments and processes and student learning data analysis
- Schoolwide Learner Outcomes and courses objectives for each class or program offered
- Documentation showing pass rate for each program requiring a licensure exam
- Evidence that analysis of learning data is driving the school's programs and is embedded in the schoolwide *Action Plan*.

Criterion 7: Student Support Services

The school recruits and admits students who are able to benefit from its programs. Student support services address the identified needs of students and create a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, learning, and success. The school systematically assesses student support services using faculty, staff, and student input and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of these services.

Indicator 7.1: The school provides sufficient student support services that enhance the learning environment and encourage the achievement of Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.

Discussion Questions:

- What specific support services are provided to the students by the school?
- To what extent does the school offer financial aid counseling, learning resource assistance, academic counseling, personal counseling, technology support, and health services?
- By what means does the school assure the quality of its student support services?
- How does the school demonstrate that these services support student learning?
- How is information regarding student services shared with students so that they know all the options available to them?

Indicator 7.2: The school designs, maintains, and evaluates counseling and/or academic advising programs to support student development and success in the transition to further education or employment opportunities.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the school develop, implement, and evaluate counseling and/or academic advising?
- How does the counseling or academic advising program assist students directly with their transition to advanced educational opportunities or connection to employment opportunities?
- What professional development opportunities are provided to school counselors or advisors?

Indicator 7.3: The school provides support for all students from the recruitment and admissions phase to the successful completion of the school program of choice.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the school address:
 - Marketing, community awareness, recruitment of new students?
 - Transitioning new students into the school?
 - Providing meaningful learning experiences for students?
 - Transitioning students into job placement or further education?

- Assessment of success in years that follow to ensure that the students reach their desired outcomes?
- To what extent does the school have clear admission policies in line with its mission?
- To what extent does the school provide students with information on school policies and procedures that clarifies expectations that impact them?
- How are students given counseling regarding the completion of their program so that they stay on track and successfully meet their goals?

Indicator 7.4: The school regularly evaluates student needs in order to provide support services that increase the likelihood of success for all students.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the school research and identify the learning support needs of its student population and provide appropriate services and programs to address those needs?
- To what extent does the school offer appropriate extra-curricular and co-curricular programs (whenever possible) that meet the needs of its constituency?
- How are online services and services at off-site locations evaluated?
- How frequently does the school evaluate student support services and revise what is offered to meet current student needs?

Indicator 7.5: The school maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially with provision for secure back-up of all files.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the school publish and follow established policies for release of student records?
- To what extent are there institutional policies in place that govern the maintenance and security of student records?
- To what extent are all student records kept in a secure location and protected from fire damage or loss?

Indicator 7.6: Institutional information is easily accessible to all stakeholders and prospective students and is free from misrepresentation or false promises.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the school provide a catalog for its constituents with precise, accurate, and current information?
- How does the school clearly identify where publications with policies and procedures can be accessed?
- How does the school assure that accepted students can benefit from the program they enter?
- How does the school document the accomplishment of the intended outcomes?

Additional Online Indicators and Discussion Questions

Indicator 7.7: The school has available adequate services for online students, including referral services, to support all students in such areas as health, career and personal counseling, and academic assistance.

Discussion Question:

- To what degree are the academic counseling, college preparation support, personal counseling, and health services provided for the students involved in online instruction?

Indicator 7.8: The school leadership and staff ensure that the support services and related activities have a direct relationship to online student involvement in learning, e.g., within and outside the classroom, for all students.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent do the support services and related activities have a direct relationship to student involvement in learning?
- To what degree is there equity of access, availability of computers and internet for students in the online environment?

Indicator 7.9: School leadership and staff link curricular and co-curricular activities for online students to the academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes.

Discussion Question:

- To what extent do the school's processes address the needs of socialization for the students and involvement in the school?

Indicator 7.10: The school has an effective process for regularly evaluating the level of online student involvement in curricular/co-curricular activities and student use of support services.

Discussion Question:

- To what degree is there evidence regarding the effectiveness of the students' involvement in school and community activities, such as clubs, yearbook, newsletter, newspaper, field trips, volunteer work, service projects, college courses, etc.?

School's Strengths and Key Issues for Criterion 7 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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Key Issues:

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Suggested Sources of Evidence (to be made available upon request during the site visit)

- Written policies and procedures connected to student transcripts
- Student personnel records, including admission and scholastic records
- Placement information and follow-up data and studies regarding the transition of students from the program to places of employment
- Description of health services provided
- Professional development opportunities for support staff in charge of student services.

Criterion 8: Resource Management

Financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of programs and services. The school plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both short-term and long-term financial solvency.

Indicator 8.1: The school has sufficient resources to offer its current educational courses and programs.

Discussion Questions:

- Has the school stayed within budget for the past three years?
- What evidence is there that the school has sufficient revenues to support educational improvements?
- How does the school review its mission and goals as part of the annual fiscal planning process?

Indicator 8.2: The school operates with financial integrity and transparency and has a management system in place with appropriate control mechanisms to ensure sound financial practices are followed.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent are clear financial operating procedures in place with appropriate checks and balances?
- What do the annual audit statements reveal about the integrity of the school's financial management?
- How does the school provide timely corrections to audit exceptions and management advice?
- To what extent does the school regularly review financial policies and practices and adjust to changing needs and conditions?
- How does the school report regularly to all stakeholders with financial updates and decisions?
- To what extent is there sufficient cash flow to maintain school programs?
- To what extent are there sufficient reserves in place to respond to emergencies and budget shortfalls?
- To what extent does the school have sufficient insurance?
- How does the school oversee financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations, and institutional investments and assets?

Indicator 8.3: Institutional planning reflects a realistic assessment of current financial resources and looks forward in long-range strategic planning.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the governing body and administration receive regular reports on the financial condition of the school?
- How does the governing body and administration connect short-term and long-term financial planning with the schoolwide *Action Plan*'s identified priorities?
- To what extent are institutional funds currently being used judiciously so that the facilities and support materials are sufficient for all the programs and courses offered?
- To what extent does the school have plans for payments of long-term liabilities and obligations, including debt, health benefits, insurance costs, building maintenance costs, etc.?

Indicator 8.4: The school provides facilities that are clean, safe, and well-maintained in order to provide for an effective learning environment.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the school annually review needs for improved or additional facilities with a focus on student learning?
- How is the learning environment enhanced by the facilities or how are the facilities an impediment to the successful completion of SLOs and course objectives?
- To what extent do the facilities provide a safe and nurturing learning environment for students that makes them feel welcomed?

School's Strengths and Key Issues for Criterion 8 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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Key Issues:

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Suggested Sources of Evidence (to be made available upon request during the site visit)

- Copy of the school's budgets for past three years and projected budget for next year
- Financial management policies and procedures, routine purchasing policies/procedures
- Student financial aid records and procedures
- Copy of financial statements including notes audited by an independent certified public accountant (or other as required by state law) for the last two fiscal years
- Health department inspection reports
- A copy of system and forms used in reporting accidents

- Long-range strategic financial plan (if it exists)
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the maintenance program
- Reports of safety inspections
- Insurance policies for facilities
- Copy of facilities lease agreements
- Evaluations of the safety and security plan
- Earthquake and other natural disaster preparedness and evacuation plans.

Criterion 9: Community Connection

The school seeks to enhance its educational effectiveness by developing close partnerships and relationships with community members. Connections within the community provide students with expanded learning experiences, including additional educational or vocational opportunities.

Indicator 9.1: Efforts are made by the school to connect to community leaders, businesses, and organizations that can enhance the learning opportunities for students.

Discussion Questions:

- What connections with local businesses and organizations are currently in place?
- To what extent do community leaders come on campus for events and activities?

Indicator 9.2: The school has outlets for students in community service or internship opportunities that are connected to student programs that will enhance their learning experiences in line with the school's mission.

Discussion Questions:

- What service or internship opportunities are currently in place for students?
- What evidence can be provided to indicate the reputation of the school in the community?
- What efforts have been made to connect the school with its community through service projects?

Indicator 9.3: The school informs its community regarding its mission, its programs and learning opportunities, recognizing the benefits that community support can bring.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the school use its profile (Chapter I of the *Self-Study Report*) to understand and connect to its community?
- How have students been successful in the community after leaving the school?
- What programs or processes are in place to connect the school to its community?

Additional Online Indicator and Discussion Questions

Indicator 9.4: The school ensures that the parents and school community understand online student achievement of the academic standards/schoolwide learner outcomes through the curricular/co-curricular program.

Discussion Question:

- To what degree do the school's processes ensure that parents understand the expectations for the online instruction in relation to the desired student achievement and to review and counsel families for whom the selected online instruction format may not be the best match?

School's Strengths and Key Issues for Criterion 9 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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Key Issues:

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Suggested Sources of Evidence (to be made available upon request during the site visit)

- List of local businesses that could potentially be of assistance to the school
- List of all service opportunities in the last three years
- Evidence of surveys or other efforts to follow graduates after leaving the school.

Criterion 10: Action Plan for Ongoing Improvement

The school uses the self-study process to identify key issues that are inserted into a schoolwide *Action Plan* that governs school improvement activities and events. The schoolwide *Action Plan* is used regularly, reviewed annually, and monitored consistently by the governing body to ensure ongoing school improvement.

Indicator 10.1: The school has created an *Action Plan* that reflects the efforts of all stakeholders to plan for future growth and improvement.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the *Action Plan* identify specific goals, timelines for completion, persons responsible, reporting instruments, and benchmarks to measure accomplishment?
- How is the *Action Plan* reviewed annually and how are revisions made to respond to changing conditions and current student needs?
- How does the *Action Plan* focus primarily on student learning needs?

Indicator 10.2: As a result of the accreditation process, the school has identified key issues (short- and long-term) that will impact student learning and increase the achievement levels of students.

Discussion Questions:

- How did the self-study process identify the key issues for the school?
- How have the key issues been prioritized by the school?
- To what extent have all stakeholders met to discuss the *Action Plan* and give input to its implementation?

Indicator 10.3: The school has procedures in place to implement the Action Plan with the support of stakeholders.

Discussion Questions:

- For each *Action Plan* key issue, how has the school identified an individual or group responsible to implement the needed action steps to address the key issue?
- To what extent has the governing body and administration funded the activities or events needed to address key issues?
- What opportunities are provided for all stakeholders to have a voice in the regular review and revision of the *Action Plan*?

Indicator 10.4: The school has a definitive plan for how the Action Plan is to be monitored to maintain accountability, as well as to report progress to all stakeholders.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the *Action Plan* specify how the improvement efforts will be monitored and who will oversee the process?
- How will progress be reported to all stakeholders?

Indicator 10.5: The schoolwide *Action Plan* is used for institutional planning, resource allocation, and the evaluation of existing programs.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent is the schoolwide *Action Plan* user-friendly and practical for all stakeholders' involvement?
- How does the governing body use the *Action Plan* in resource allocation discussions?
- To what extent does the school leadership use the *Action Plan* in its decision-making processes?

School's Strengths and Key Issues for Criterion 10 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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Key Issues:

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Suggested Sources of Evidence (to be made available upon request during the site visit)

- Minutes of Board meetings where *Action Plan* was discussed and evaluated
- Copy of long-range strategic plan (if it exists)
- Evidence that the *Action Plan* is regularly used and has brought change to the school.

This concludes Chapter III of the *Self-Study Report* produced in Task 3 that responds to the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria.

Chapter IV — Task 4

Task 4: Revise the schoolwide *Action Plan* based on the key issues identified in the self-study process (Chapters I–III)

Participants:

- Leadership Team

Product:

- *Self-Study Report*, Chapter IV

Procedures:

- Review and discuss the strengths and key issues identified after each criterion response in Chapter III of the *Self-Study Report*.
- Complete the synthesis process described as follows:
 1. Copy all the identified “strengths” from the entire *Self-Study Report* and paste them on one page so that they are in one complete list of all self-study strengths.
 2. Note which strengths are similar in topic or nature and combine them as logically possible. It often works that two or three separate but similar “strengths” can be fused into one more complete and expanded “strength.” Collapse all strengths into common strands or themes.
 3. Through this process, a larger list can be boiled down to a smaller list of major schoolwide strengths. This provides a “big-picture” look at the strengths of the school identified in the entire self-study process.
 4. Next, do the same for “key issues” from the entire report; copy and then paste them into one complete list.
 5. Repeat the synthesis work and create a synthesized list of major key issues.
 6. An added step is involved here — prioritize this list in order of importance, keeping in mind that the areas that most greatly impact student learning are the most critical.
 7. Select the top key issues that you want to add to the schoolwide *Action Plan* as the major key issues to address in the next three years.

After completing the synthesis process and identifying the major key issues, these should be integrated into the schoolwide *Action Plan* and mailed to the ACS WASC office by June 1.

- In the revised *Action Plan*, include the following components to address each key issue:
 - Statement of the key issue
 - Rationale for the key issue based on self-study findings and Visiting Committee recommendations
 - Student Learning Outcomes addressed

- Ways of assessing progress
- Specific steps to address the key issue
- Timeline for specific steps
- Persons responsible and others who are involved
- Resources needed
- Means to monitor and report progress to stakeholders
- Ensure stakeholder consensus on the *Action Plan*
- Develop strategies that provide for the ongoing involvement of stakeholders.

**Self-Check Questions**Task 4 Self-Check Questions:

- Are the sections addressing major identified areas for improvement?
- Are the sections enhancing the learning of all students?
- Are the student learning outcomes addressed through the plan?
- Has the school integrated other initiatives to create one “umbrella” schoolwide action plan?
- Is the action plan feasible & 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?
- Is there a sound follow-up process that will be used to monitor the accomplishment of the action plan?

Sample Action Plan Format

Schools are encouraged to design their own *Action Plan* using a format that best fits their school needs and that will be most usable by all stakeholder groups. The *Action Plan* should be connected to the school’s Self-Study Report.

There are certain components for the *Action Plan* that are required:

- Statement of the Major Key Issue
- Steps Necessary to Address the Key Issue
- Person(s) Responsible for Follow-up
- Timeline for Completion
- Resources Needed
- Assessment Instrument to Measure Progress
- Method to Monitor and Report Progress.

The example below is just one way of organizing *Action Plan* activities; school's can develop the format that they like as long as it includes the key components that are required.

Example of *Action Plan* Format

Key Issue: The administration and faculty should develop the school's assessment process so that it includes gathering learning data from multiple sources, disaggregating the data, drawing conclusions, writing recommendations to address issues identified, and connecting them to the schoolwide *Action Plan* so that the analysis of learning data will drive the school instructional program.

Rationale: This key issue is critical to the improvement of the school because student learning is the most important aspect of the school. Analyzing student learning data should impact school planning, teacher evaluation, professional development activities, and resource allocation. Ongoing school improvement should be driven by the analysis of student learning data.

Steps to Address Key Issue	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline for Completion	Resources Needed	Methods to Assess, Monitor, and Report Progress
Identify and gather multiple sources of learning data	Administration Faculty Appointed leader	Fall – this year	Time provided for this activity	Collected learning data; report to Leadership Team and Board
Disaggregate and analyze learning data	Administration Faculty Appointed leader	Fall – this year	Time provided for this activity	Update provided to Board
Complete written report of conclusions from analysis	Administration Faculty Appointed leader	Spring – next year	None	Written conclusions submitted to Leadership Team and Board
Prepare recommendations to respond to issues raised through the analysis of data	Administration Appointed leader	Spring – next year	None	Recommendations submitted to Leadership Team and Board
Connect recommendations to the schoolwide <i>Action Plan</i>	Administration	Summer – next year	None	Revised <i>Action Plan</i> presented to the Board for approval
Report findings to all stakeholder groups	Administration	Fall – next year	None	Written report provided to students, faculty, and community at large

The Site Visit

After the school has completed its *Self-Study Report*, a three and one-half day site visit follows with ACS WASC-trained educators. The purpose of the visit is to validate the programs and operations of the school based on ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria and provide recommendations for future school improvement. Through observation, interviews, examination of student work, and various meetings, the Visiting Committee gains insight into the school culture and is able to give recommendations to the school as it plans for future school improvements.

The Visiting Committee, made up of professional peers from ACS WASC-accredited schools, offers independent insights based on careful analysis of the *Self-Study Report* during its on-site evaluation.

The mission of the Visiting Committee is to:

- Validate and enhance the school's program to support student learning using the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria as the standard
- Confirm and validate evidence for the assertions in the *Self-Study Report* with the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria in view
- Provide insights on challenges not identified by the school in the *Self-Study Report*
- Assist the school in revising its *Action Plan* to bring the greatest focus to key issues that impact student learning
- Reinforce and extend the school's commitment to ongoing school improvement
- Assure the ACS WASC Commission that the school continues to meet ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria and eligibility requirements
- Assure the ACS WASC Commission that the school has been responsive to key issues identified by previous Visiting Committees
- Assure the ACS WASC Commission that the school has developed sound evaluation and planning procedures to foster improvement of student achievement and success in meeting Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
- Assure the ACS WASC Commission that the school merits reaffirmation of accreditation status or advise the Commission that the team cannot recommend such action.

Visiting Committee members have a special responsibility to maintain the integrity of the accreditation process which enables ACS WASC to provide assurance to the public that the school is worthy of accredited status.

Preparing for the Site Visit

Eighteen months prior to the anticipated date of the evaluation site visit, the ACS WASC office will contact the school regarding the upcoming visit and *Self-Study Report*. It is important that school representatives participate in the training session provided by ACS WASC eighteen months prior to hosting a Visiting Committee.

Approximately nine months in advance of the site visit, the ACS WASC office will assign a Visiting Committee chair to lead the site visit at the school. The chair will establish contact with the school and will serve as a guide for the school throughout the site visit process. The chair functions as a mentor by answering accreditation questions, giving advice on rough drafts of the Self-Study Report, and preparing the school for the visit. The Visiting Committee chair visits the school 6–9 months ahead of the accreditation visit to become better acquainted with the Leadership Team and school personnel.

The Leadership Team (consisting of the Self-Study Coordinator, the chair of each Focus Group, appropriate program/school administrators, and other members of the educational community as determined by the school) is responsible to host the site visit to ensure that it is successful.

The Visiting Committee

The ACS WASC Visiting Committee consists of experienced educators from ACS WASC-accredited schools, either faculty members, administrators, or others who are knowledgeable in the field of postsecondary education. Visiting Committee members are required to attend a member training workshop conducted by ACS WASC prior to the visit.

Every attempt is made to structure Visiting Committees to reflect the unique nature of the school and the community it serves. The size and complexity of the school being reviewed will determine the number of members on the Visiting Committee, usually ranging from 4–7 members.

The Visiting Committee chair organizes the site visit, confirms the schedule with the school, approves hotel accommodations, and oversees the first draft of the Visiting Committee Report (VCR). Prior to the visit, the chair serves as the contact person with the school and coordinates all aspects of the visit with the Leadership Team. During the site visit, the chair organizes team discussions, makes sure that all necessary contacts are made, sees to the needs of the Visiting Committee, and ensures that time is used effectively. At the conclusion of the visit, the chair leads the exit meeting that reports the team's major findings to the school and its stakeholders.

The Visiting Committee chair makes a previsit to the campus the semester before the scheduled team visit. Visiting the school gives the chair the opportunity to establish personal relationships with key individuals, get a sense of the physical layout of the school, and begin finalizing logistical arrangements. The previsit also provides the school with the opportunity to correct any deficiencies the chair notes in the rough draft of the school's *Self-Study Report*.

Visiting Committee members provide an independent peer review of the school. Members use the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria as the foundation as they work as a team to prepare the Visiting Committee Report for both the ACS WASC Commission and the school. The VCR analyzes the adequacy of school resources, the effectiveness of its procedures, the quality of its

performance in pursuit of its stated goals, and its evidence of student achievement and student learning.

Visiting Committee members are expected to disclose any possible conflict of interest before accepting an assignment. ACS WASC Commission policy identifies certain conditions under which a team member should decline an invitation to serve or ask for an assignment to another committee.

ACS WASC will not knowingly assign an educator to serve on a Visiting Committee if he/she has:

- Any current or prior employment at the school being reviewed
- Any current or prior candidacy for employment at the school being reviewed
- Any current or prior service as a paid consultant or other business relationship with the school that may create a conflict or the appearance of a conflict of interest
- Any personal or financial interest in the ownership or operation of the school
- Any close personal or familial relationships with a member of the school
- Any other personal or professional connections that would create either a conflict or the appearance of a conflict of interest
- Any receipt of remuneration, honoraria, honors, or other awards from the school in the past.

A conflict of interest arising from one of the relationships described above typically expires five years after the previous relationship ends. A team member or chair who has any questions about a possible conflict of interest should contact the ACS WASC office for further discussion.

[A Visiting Committee Member Checklist and a Visiting Committee Chair Checklist that describe specific directions and responsibilities can be found in the Resources section at the end of this document.]

Suggested Site Visit Schedule

The schedule for the site visit is developed collaboratively with the Visiting Committee chair and the school's Leadership Team. It is up to the school to notify all stakeholders of meeting times and locations. The site visit schedule should be flexible to accommodate members of committees, Board members, or other stakeholder groups. The schedule may also be modified to accommodate the size of the school, the number of separate campuses, and the number of team members required. It is also possible for smaller schools (under 500 students) to shorten the visit to two and one-half days.

Preparation Day (Sunday)

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1:00–1:30 | Visiting Committee arrives at the hotel or school |
| 1:30–3:30 | Initial Visiting Committee meeting |
| 3:30–4:00 | Tour of the facility (school provides maps, class schedules, personnel lists, etc.) |
| 4:00–5:00 | Visiting Committee meets with the school Leadership Team |

- 5:00–6:00 Schools may arrange (optional) for a brief, informal Board reception or social function that includes institutional personnel, Governing Board members, advisory committee members, local community leaders, etc.

First Day (Monday)

- 7:30–8:30 Meeting with Leadership Team
8:30–12:00 Visiting Committee interviews, class observations, review of documents, etc.
12:00–1:00 Lunch (with student group or faculty)
1:00–2:00 Criteria Discussion Meeting with the Leadership Team
1:00–3:00 Visiting Committee continues visiting, observing, and writing its report
3:00–4:30 Focus Group Meetings
4:30–5:00 Optional Leadership Team Meeting to report on Day One findings

Second Day (Tuesday)

- 7:30–8:30 Meeting with Leadership Team
8:30–12:00 Visiting Committee interviews, class observations, review of documents, etc.
12:00–1:00 Lunch (with student group or faculty)
1:00–2:00 Criteria Discussion Meeting with the Leadership Team (optional)
1:00–3:00 Visiting Committee continues visiting, observing, and writing report
3:00–4:30 Focus Group Meetings
4:30–5:00 Optional Leadership Team Meeting to report on Day Two Findings

Third Day (Wednesday)

- 7:30–8:30 Meeting with Leadership Team
8:30–12:00 Visiting Committee completes written reports
12:00–1:00 Lunch with Leadership Team to present draft of Visiting Committee Report
1:00–3:00 Visiting Committee finishes the Visiting Committee Report and Documentation and Justification Statement, and then signs the Ballot
3:00–3:30 Exit meeting: Committee presents major findings to all stakeholders

What Occurs During the Site Visit

The site visit consists of observations, interviews, and meetings with governing body members, faculty members, students, Leadership Team members, and other identified stakeholders.

The Visiting Committee is there to confirm the accuracy and thoroughness of the *Self-Study Report* and then write a report to the ACS WASC Commission with its visit findings. The Visiting Committee is not there to evaluate individual teachers in the classrooms; the team's observations help them gain a sense of the learning atmosphere on campus and the level of student engagement.

The Visiting Committee meets with administrators, the Leadership Team, and other members of the school's staff most involved in preparation of the *Self-Study Report* in order to ask questions they have from their analysis of the self-study process.

The combination of these activities, added to in-depth discussions among the Visiting Committee members, provides the necessary information to write an accurate *Visiting Committee Report* for the ACS WASC Commission.

The Exit Meeting

The Visiting Committee holds a final open exit meeting with members of the school's constituents on the final day. At this meeting, the Visiting Committee reports its findings and highlights the school's major areas of strength and articulates the major key issues that will become part of the school's *Action Plan* in the future.

After the meeting concludes, Visiting Committee members chat briefly and informally with those in attendance and give appropriate thanks before leaving the campus. The team should keep in mind that under no circumstances should the Visiting Committee's confidential recommendation to the Commission regarding accreditation status recommendation be revealed. The Visiting Committee makes an accreditation status recommendation; it is up to the Commission to make the final decision. Therefore, the Visiting Committee should not express what recommendation they made but allow the Commission to give official notice of the accreditation status granted.

Visiting Committee Documentation

The ultimate result of the visit is 30–40 page *Visiting Committee Report*. This report is submitted both to the school and to the ACS WASC Commission who has the responsibility to grant accreditation status. The *Visiting Committee Report* provides the findings of the Visiting Committee. The most important part of the report is the identification of the school's major strengths and major key issues that need to be addressed for the school's ongoing improvement.

Visiting Committee Report

The following suggestions are offered to Visiting Committee chairs as they guide the Visiting Committee in completing the *Visiting Committee Report* (VCR).

1. The *VCR* should be a concise and constructive document that the Commission can use in making a decision about the accreditation status of the school as well as a document that the school can use for school improvement.
2. In writing the *VCR*:
 - a. Validate the school in light of its own stated mission, objectives, and the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria.
 - b. It is critical that the *VCR* contain the analysis of learning data, along with charts and graphs, taken from the profile section of Chapter I so that the ACS WASC Commission can accurately evaluate the level of student learning taking place.
 - c. Provide evidence to support the key issues identified by the team and provide a fair and useful estimate of the effectiveness of the school.
 - d. Emphasize the analysis of student achievement and the accomplishment of Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.

- e. Avoid naming individuals, either in praise or blame. Comment, if necessary, on the office and not the officeholder when offering recommendations.
 - f. Avoid being prescriptive, leaving specific remedies to be worked out by the school. It is best to write recommendations that include “who” is responsible,” “what” to do, and “why” to do it...leaving the “how” to do it up to them.
3. Questions to ask as the Visiting Committee completes the *VCR*.
- a. Is the *VCR* consistent throughout — no mixed or conflicting messages?
 - b. Does the *VCR* say exactly what is intended, so that there can be no misinterpretations?
 - c. Does the language of the *VCR* clearly represent observations, conclusions, and recommendations as coming from the team as a whole, not just from one member’s perspective?
 - d. Does the *VCR* deal fairly with the entire school, without advocating selectively for certain special interests?
 - e. Does the text of the *VCR* support the key issues identified? Do the observations and conclusions clearly state the context or evidence on which the statements are based? Are the specific ACS WASC criteria cited to refer the school to statements of best practice and Commission expectations?
 - f. Is the tone of the *VCR* appropriate to the circumstances and intended effect? Unduly harsh criticism or language can affect the climate of a school and can be harmful to individuals at the school. The *VCR* should encourage the school to take appropriate actions but should be stated diplomatically.
4. The *VCR* is written for the Commission and the school — be sure that the *VCR* is written with both audiences in view. A template is provided online for the *VCR*. It includes the following components:

Title Page: This page states the name of the school visited, dates of the visit, and the name of the Visiting Committee chair and members.

Chapter I: Introduction: This section is a brief statement of the nature of the school and its accreditation history. General observations about the school and about the visit are stated in the introduction. Briefly summarize the most critical information from the student/community profile that impacts the school, including the following:

- Brief description of the students and community served by the school
- School analysis of student achievement data
- Other pertinent data.

Chapter II: Progress based on the key issues of the previous ACS WASC Visiting Committee: This chapter of the report validates efforts by the school to address key issues from previous Visiting Committees. Thoughtful responses to the key issues are expected from a school.

Chapter III: Evaluation of School’s Response to the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria: This chapter provides most of the substance of the *VCR* and is the

chapter to which each team member makes a contribution. The team report notes whether evidence has been offered to demonstrate that the school is accomplishing its published objectives and that these objectives are appropriate to postsecondary education and consistent with the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria.

Chapter IV: Action Plan Effectiveness: The report ends with the identification of the school's major areas of strength and its major key issues that will be embedded into the schoolwide *Action Plan*.

Documentation and Justification Statement

In addition to the *Visiting Committee Report*, the Visiting Committee also completes a *Documentation and Justification Statement*. This is a confidential document that includes the Visiting Committee's evaluation of the school as it reviews each of the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria and the overarching goals of the self-study process. The last page of the document gives a detailed accounting of how the Visiting Committee arrived at its status recommendation to the ACS WASC Commission (a copy of this document is included in the Resources section).

Accreditation Status

The ACS WASC Commission meets three times a year and reviews the documentation of site visits, reading the *Visiting Committee Report* and *Documentation and Justification Statement* for each school visited. The Commission then grants accreditation status based on the evidence presented. If there are questions that arise during the evaluation of a *Visiting Committee Report*, a call is placed to the Visiting Committee chair for clarification. The principal of each school is notified following the Commission meeting regarding the accreditation status granted.

The ACS WASC Commission members consider the following factors as most important as they make accreditation status decisions:

1. The Commission looks at the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria to see if the school has met them and if the school supports high achievement for all students.
2. The Commission looks at the five overarching goals of the self-study process to determine if the school has successfully accomplished them.
 - a. The involvement and collaboration of all stakeholders in the *Self-Study* process
 - b. The clarification of the school's purpose and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
 - c. The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning
 - d. The development of a schoolwide *Action Plan* that addresses identified key issues
 - e. The development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide *Action Plan*
3. The Commission looks at the quality of the school's *Action Plan* for Ongoing Improvement.

Based on these factors, the Commission may grant accreditation status as follows:

- Six-year accreditation status with a mid-cycle progress report
- Six-year accreditation status with a one- or two-day site review
- Two-year accreditation status with a two-day site visit in two years
- One-year probationary accreditation status, with a two-day visit in one year
- Accreditation status withheld.

After the Site Visit

After the visit, the Self-Study Coordinator and Administrator/Director meet immediately with the Leadership Team to review the *Visiting Committee Report* and begin the follow-up process.

The Leadership Team coordinates the refining and implementation of the action steps for each section of the schoolwide *Action Plan*. The narrative suggestions and key issues identified by the Visiting Committee should be integrated into the *Action Plan*.

The Visiting Committee should submit the *Visiting Committee Report* electronically to ACS WASC using the Document Upload link on the top navigation bar of the ACS WASC website: www.acswasc.org/document-upload/ and to the ACS WASC Southern California office via email to mailsocal@acswasc.org.

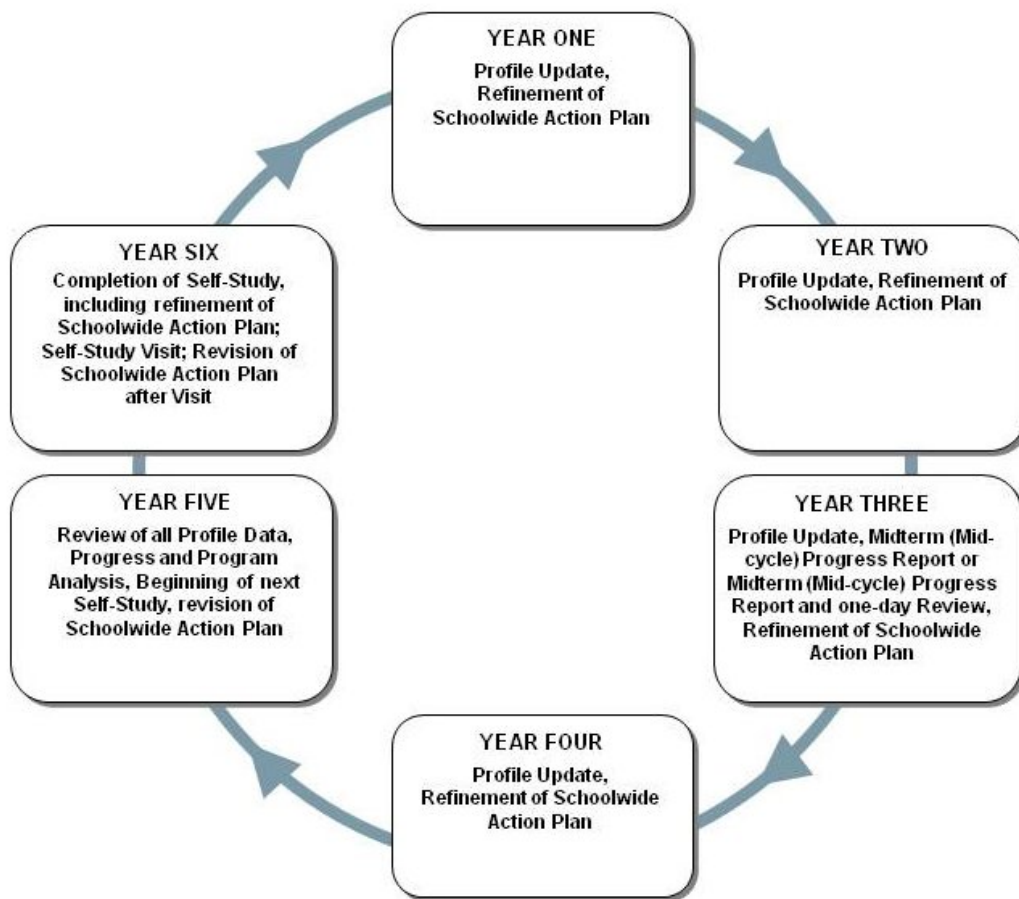
An electronic copy of the modified *Action Plan* should be sent electronically to the ACS WASC Southern California office via email to mailsocal@acswasc.org by June 1. The Leadership Team involves the total staff in annual assessment of progress, including data analysis about student learning in relation to SLOs and academic standards; this will result in modifications annually of the *Action Plan*. If the school annually reviews its *Action Plan* and progress on each key issue, the reports generated will be included in the next full self-study, six years later.

After the visit is completed, the school should do the following:

1. Annually update the student/community profile and analyze it with all shareholders.
2. Annually summarize progress on the *Action Plan* key issues, noting responses and making any necessary modifications or refinements to the *Action Plan*.
3. Periodically, review the school's SLOs.
4. Analyze and synthesize data that provides evidence of school progress and complete a three-year progress report for submission to ACS WASC if granted a full six years of accreditation status.
5. Host a one- or two-day review site visit if the school was granted six years of accreditation status with a one-day or two-day mid-cycle visit.
6. Host a two-day site review site visit if the school was granted one or two years of probationary accreditation status.
7. In preparation for the next full self-study visit (once every six years), ensure that all shareholders are knowledgeable of student achievement data and other current data, including progress on all aspects of the *Action Plan*.
8. Using the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria, involve shareholders through Focus Groups in the examination of the program using the information from the past years about student achievement and program changes.

ACS WASC Six-Year Accreditation Cycle

ACS WASC schools are on a six-year accreditation cycle. A full *Self-Study Report* is completed once every six years. Other written reports and site visits may be required based on accreditation status, but schools complete a full self-study every six years.



ACS WASC Six-Year Accreditation Cycle

Possible ACS WASC Visits During the Six-Year Cycle

Mid-Cycle Visits

Schools that have been granted six years of accreditation status will host either a one- or two-day mid-cycle visit to check on the progress made on the major key issues. The school must prepare a *Mid-cycle Progress Report* for this visit; the Visiting Committee will submit a report to the ACS WASC Commission with their findings.

Probationary Visits

Schools that have been given probationary status will host a two-day visit during the first or second year to check on the progress made on the major key issues. The school must prepare a *Probationary Progress Report* for this visit; the Visiting Committee will submit a report to the ACS WASC Commission with their findings.

Special Visits

Occasionally, circumstances occur that warrant a special visit from ACS WASC to a school site. For example, an official complaint or dramatic changes at the school may generate the need for a follow-up visit.

Substantive Change Visits

The Commission has the responsibility to monitor major changes that occur in postsecondary schools to ensure that the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria is still being met and institutional goals are kept in view. In order to maintain their integrity, schools must guarantee the quality of their programs and services even as changes are made. When a substantive change occurs, a one-day one- or two-member ACS WASC team visits the school to ensure that the changes have had a positive impact on the school.

Below is a list of the conditions which typically require substantive change approval and a one-day site visit:

1. Change in mission, scope, or name of the school
2. Change in the nature of the constituency served (new demographic added to current constituency)
3. Change in the location or geographical area served (new or added location offering at least 50% of instructional services)
4. Change in the control of the school (change in legal status, governance, ownership, merge, split, etc.)
5. Change in courses/programs that represent a significant departure from the current practice (new curriculum, faculty, facilities, certificate program, use of distance learning, etc.) that impacts the entire school.

Schools that require a substantive change visit should complete the “Substantive Change Explanation Form” available on the ACS WASC website (www.acswasc.org) and submit it to the ACS WASC Southern California office. There is a fee assessed for the substantive change visit.

ACS WASC Resources

This section provides ACS WASC resources that are available to assist schools and Visiting Committees in the postsecondary accreditation process. In addition to the resources listed, there are many templates, samples, forms, and explanations that can be found on the ACS WASC website (www.acswasc.org).

ACS WASC resources include:

1. School Resources
 - School Self-Study Coordinator/Administrator Checklist
2. Visiting Committee Resources
 - Visiting Committee Member Checklist
 - Visiting Committee Chair Checklist
 - Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet
 - Sample Documentation and Justification Statement
 - Sample Accreditation Status Recommendation

School Resources

School Self-Study Coordinator/Administrator Checklist

Before the Site Visit

1. _____ Participate in the three-part ACS WASC training sessions.
2. _____ Establish a general calendar for the full self-study events and a more detailed timeline of specific committee meetings and tasks to be accomplished.
3. _____ Ensure there is appropriate support for the visit from governance leaders, district leaders, etc., including the allowance of professional time for staff members, financial resources, and clerical/technical help.
4. _____ Ensure there is appropriate support for the visit from governance leaders, district leaders, etc., including the allowance of professional time for staff members, financial resources, and clerical/technical help.
5. _____ Orient faculty, staff, and students to their roles in the accreditation process. This orientation should include:
 - An overview of the ACS WASC accreditation process and its benefits to the school community
 - Accreditation status factors in the *Documentation and Justification Statement* used by the Visiting Committee
 - The importance of analyzing learning data, drawing conclusions, recommending changes, and embedding recommendations into the schoolwide *Action Plan*
 - The importance of the ongoing improvement process for successful student learning.
6. _____ Appoint leaders and teacher/staff members to appropriate groups:
 - The Leadership Team (composed of the Focus Group chairs, the Self-Study Coordinator, the Administrator/Director and other selected members).
7. _____ Train the Focus Group chairs/leaders and emphasize:
 - A review of the basic purpose of the self-study, visit, and school improvement process
 - The importance of verification and in-depth gathering of evidence
 - The use of the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria, discussion questions, and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
 - How groups should function, how often to meet, what kind of written reports to produce that will become part of the *Self-Study Report*
 - How to synthesize findings and identify clear strengths and key issues for each criterion.
8. _____ Participate in regular meetings to monitor the progress of the Focus Groups.

9. ____ When contacted by the Visiting Committee chair, begin planning for the visit schedule, accommodations, and chair expectations.
10. ____ Oversee the editing and completion of the final *Self-Study Report*. Stakeholders should read it and have input to ensure the document is accurate and representative of all groups.
11. ____ Prepare the *Self-Study Report* to be submitted to the Visiting Committee and the ACS WASC Office no later than six weeks prior to the visit.
12. ____ Submit an electronic copy of the *Self-Study Report* to ACS WASC using the Document Upload link on the top navigation bar of the ACS WASC website: www.acswasc.org/document-upload/ and to the ACS WASC Southern California office via email to mailsocal@acswasc.org.
13. ____ Prior to the site visit, finalize the schedule with the Visiting Committee chair.

During the Site Visit

14. ____ Provide the Visiting Committee with a comfortable working area, institutional map, schedule of classes, parking places, name tags, and needed materials. Ensure that there is adequate technology support as requested by the chair.
15. ____ Remind the Focus Groups of their meeting times; remind Leadership Team of its daily meetings. Stay in continual contact with the Visiting Committee chair to smooth out the visit details.
16. ____ Work with the Leadership Team to revise the schoolwide *Action Plan* according to the findings of the self-study, inserting the major key issues into the *Action Plan*.
17. ____ Arrange a place for the Exit Meeting — be sure that all stakeholders are invited.

After the Site Visit

18. ____ Integrate the findings of the Visiting Committee into the schoolwide *Action Plan*. All major key issues listed in the *Visiting Committee Report* should be inserted into the schoolwide *Action Plan*.
19. ____ Submit the revised *Action Plan* to the ACS WASC Southern California office via email to mailsocal@acswasc.org by June 1 and distribute copies to all stakeholder groups.
20. ____ Begin the implementation process of the schoolwide *Action Plan* and ensure that all stakeholders understand their responsibilities and tasks involved in bringing school improvement to the campus through the *Action Plan*.

It is helpful for schools to understand how they are going to be evaluated during the site visit. The Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet in the Visiting Committee Resource section identifies the factors the Visiting Committee will use to evaluate every aspect of school operations. This rubric can provide great insight to the school as it prepares for their self-study visit.

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.

Visiting Committee Chair Checklist

Previsit Preparation

1. _____ Respond to the ACS WASC invitation accepting the invitation to chair the Visiting Committee.
2. _____ Attend the ACS WASC Chair Training.
3. _____ Become familiar with the *Postsecondary Accreditation Manual*.
4. _____ Begin regular communication with the administrator/director and Self-Study Coordinator to answer questions and give assistance.
5. _____ Arrange a one-day preliminary visit to the school campus.
 - Meet with the administrator/director, Self-Study Coordinator, Leadership Team, and other staff members as possible.
 - Discuss the logistics of the visit, progress made on the self-study, and read the rough draft of early chapters to offer suggestions.
 - Provide an overview of the accreditation process and duties of all stakeholder groups.
 - Validate committee organization/membership.
 - Determine how evidence has been gathered and analyzed with respect to the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.
 - Determine how learning data is analyzed and used in the Focus Group or Leadership Team discussions.
 - Determine if the *Action Plan* is supported by the Focus Groups and Self-Study Committees. Will the *Action Plan* effectively guide the work of the school and ensure quality learning for students? Can the *Action Plan* sections be implemented immediately within existing resources?
 - Establish the visit schedule to maximize time for dialogue with the Focus Groups and Leadership Team, the gathering of evidence (class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work, and meetings with institutional groups), and time for the Visiting Committee to complete its report.
 - Does the schedule for the visit permit daily dialogue with the Leadership Team regarding preliminary findings, thereby building the trust and rapport for ongoing communication and collaboration?
 - Work with the school to finalize the housing and visit arrangements.
 - Obtain the school's previous *Self-Study Report*; the mid-cycle report; the probation reports, if applicable; the current *Action Plan*; the student/community profile; and other pertinent background materials.
6. _____ Receive roster of Visiting Committee members from the ACS WASC office.
 - Call each Visiting Committee member, welcome them to the team, and thank them for their willingness to participate.

- Send initial letter via email, including the school's description, to the members; ACS WASC will send the postsecondary manual directly to the Visiting Committee members.
 - Ask members to fill out the form indicating their preferences for the prewriting assignments for the rough draft of the *Visiting Committee Report*.
 - Remind members that they are required to participate in Visiting Committee training.
 - Make frequent contact with Visiting Committee members and keep them updated on visit details and documents in process.
7. _____ Maintain regular contact with the school.
- Do they need further direct assistance?
 - Is there progress on the self-study?
 - Will the *Action Plan* impact quality learning for students?
8. _____ Send second letter to Visiting Committee members.
- Assign prewriting assignments with careful instructions and deadlines.
 - Remind them to compare the school's self-study to the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.
 - Ask members to send written questions about issues and concerns, and note clarifications and evidence that should be pursued during the visit.
 - Compile a list of questions to bring to the site visit.
 - Include the schedule for the visit.
9. _____ After the *Self-Study Report* has been sent to all Visiting Committee members by the school, contact the Visiting Committee members:
- Confirm the receipt of the *Self-Study Report*.
 - Offer assistance with assigned tasks and prewriting assignments.
 - Remind members to submit written questions to be answered during the visit.
 - Confirm the initial meeting time.
10. _____ Write Chapters I and II of the *Visiting Committee Report*.
11. _____ Add the prewriting sections of Chapter III by the Visiting Committee members and create a rough draft of the *Visiting Committee Report* to bring to the site visit.
12. _____ Plan the orientation meeting for Visiting Committee members prior to the initial meeting at the school (e.g., Sunday afternoon). The meeting should cover:
- The purpose of the visit, conducting the visit in an atmosphere of collaborative and open communication.
 - Emphasis upon the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria and the school's Schoolwide Learner Outcomes as the basis for evaluating the *Self-Study* and the visit.

- Discussion of self-study: trends/perceptions, questions, concerns, and the relationship of the document to the ACS WASC Postsecondary Criteria and the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.
 - Discussion of ways to gather evidence.
 - Review of the overall schedule.
 - Review of the Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet and how consensus will be reached for a recommendation to the ACS WASC Commission.
 - Plan out how to gather evidence through class/program observations, interviews, examination of student work and other data, and program and Focus Group meetings.
 - Stress with Visiting Committee to avoid prescription and “how we do it at our school” discussions.
13. _____ Create a detailed timeline for the visit that will allow the Visiting Committee to complete its tasks of writing the *Visiting Committee Report, Documentation and Justification Statement*, and the *Accreditation Status Recommendation*.

During the Visit

14. _____ Give the school leader a copy of the rough draft of the *Visiting Committee Report* on Sunday so that he/she has the chance to read it through Sunday night.
15. _____ Meet daily with the school leaders, including the Leadership Team, about the Visiting Committee findings, questions, visit logistics, etc.
16. _____ Guide the Visiting Committee members to discuss and investigate any issues or questions raised in the dialogue with the Leadership Team.
17. _____ Facilitate the necessary *Visiting Committee Report* modifications as the report is finalized.
18. _____ Facilitate the Visiting Committee discussion of the accreditation status that will be recommended to the ACS WASC Commission.
19. _____ Complete the *Visiting Committee Report, Documentation and Justification Statement*, and sign the *Accreditation Status Recommendation* that will be submitted to the ACS WASC office.
- Be sure that the *Visiting Committee Report* is consistent and aligned to the *Documentation and Justification Statement*, and the status recommendation.
 - Have Visiting Committee members sign the *Accreditation Status Recommendation*.
20. _____ Have Visiting Committee members complete expense vouchers and give them an opportunity to complete the optional chairperson evaluation form.
21. _____ Plan for the Exit Meeting — read major areas of strength and major key issues; give all members a chance to publicly say “thank you;” have the Visiting Committee stay briefly after the meeting concludes for some social interaction.

- 22. _____ Do not imply the recommendation to the ACS WASC Commission; it is confidential.
- 23. _____ Remind the school leadership to integrate the Visiting Committee suggestions and recommendations into the schoolwide *Action Plan* for immediate implementation.

After the Visit

- 24. _____ Send appropriate “thank-you’s” to school leadership individuals and Visiting Committee members.
- 25. _____ Notify ACS WASC right away of any problems that need to be addressed.
- 26. _____ Submit the Visiting Committee Member evaluations, expense reports, etc. to the ACS WASC office.

Visiting Committee Materials

The pages that follow contain copies of the forms used by the Visiting Committee to determine the accreditation status recommendation made by the Visiting Committee for the ACS WASC Commission.

ACS WASC Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet

Postsecondary Schools

Directions

1. Discuss the evidence reviewed through the *Self-Study Report* and the site visit for each of the ten standards and three factors included in the Documentation and Justification Statement. Particularly examine the **Strengths and the Key Issues** identified that require follow-up by the school.
2. Use the rubrics below to guide the Visiting Committee's discussion that will lead to a recommendation for status to the ACS WASC Commission.
3. As a Visiting Committee, come to **consensus** on the most appropriate rating for each standard and factor.
4. Complete the official "Documentation and Justification Statement" with a consensus rating for each standard and factor.

Rating Options:

- ✓ **Highly Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a high degree of impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- ✓ **Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a satisfactory level of impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- ✓ **Somewhat Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a limited impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- ✓ **Ineffective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had little or no impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.

Criterion 1: Institutional Mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes			
Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has established a recently updated statement of mission/purpose that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the school. The student/community profile data has impacted the development of the school mission/purpose and the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs). A high degree of involvement by representatives of the entire school community has occurred in the development of the school mission/purpose and SLOs. School leaders use current education research in a regular cycle of review and revision of its mission/ purpose and SLOs. There is a clear and systematic network of communication of the school's mission/purpose and SLOs within the school community. School leadership uses the mission/ purpose of the school as the basis for decisions and planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a statement of mission/ purpose that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the school; however, it has not been recently reviewed and updated. Profile data is used occasionally to influence the development and measurement of school SLOs. Most, but not all, stakeholders are involved in the development of SLOs. Educational research is occasionally consulted in the development and measurement of SLOs. Most, but not all, stakeholder groups know the SLOs and are connected with their ongoing evaluation and measurement. School leadership occasionally uses the mission statement and SLOs as the basis for decisions and planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is in the process of developing a statement of mission/purpose. The student/community profile data is not yet used to impact the development and ongoing revision of the school mission/purpose. There is some collaboration on the review of school mission and purpose, but most stakeholders are not yet involved. There is no regularly planned review of school mission/ purpose and school's SLOs nor is current educational research used in any revisions. The entire school constituency is not yet familiar with the school mission/purpose and SLOs. The mission/purpose and SLOs are not often included in the decision-making processes of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school does not yet have a clear statement of purpose/mission. Student/community profile data is not used to develop Schoolwide Learner Outcomes. Stakeholders are not involved in the development of a school mission statement or SLOs. Decisions and planning are not connected in any way to the school mission or SLOs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Criterion 2: Organizational Infrastructure and School Leadership

Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a high functioning governance structure with clear lines of authority and responsibility. The governing Board is actively engaged in the vision and mission of the school. The governing authority has adopted policies that are consistent with the school's mission/purpose and SLOs. The governing authority delegates implementation of school policies to the professional staff. The school's governance and decision-making processes are reviewed regularly to ensure integrity and effectiveness. The school has an established infrastructure of policies and procedures that guide the day-to-day operations. There is a Policy and Procedure Manual in place that is used. School leadership creates a positive learning environment on campus and seeks input from all stakeholders in the ongoing school improvement process. School leaders develop a collegial relationship with the staff that uses their ongoing input to improve the learning environment. School leadership focuses on student learning with the daily operational processes and issues that arise in the background. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a governance structure in place that generally oversees the school's operations. Lines of authority are generally understood. The governing body adopts policies and procedures, although the school's mission and SLOs are only occasionally used as a foundation. The governing body delegates the implementation of most school policies to the professional staff. The school's governance and decision-making processes are reviewed occasionally to ensure integrity and effectiveness. The school has a Policy and Procedure Manual but only occasionally reviews and revises it. School leadership creates a positive learning environment on campus and occasionally seeks input from all stakeholders for school improvement. The school leadership and teaching staff work collaboratively but operate somewhat separately on campus. School leadership is concerned about student learning but spends more time on school daily operations and issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a functioning governance structure; however, lines of authority and responsibility are not clearly assigned. Policy development is not currently tied to the school purpose or SLOs. The governing authority delegates most of the implementation of policies to the professional staff, but still does some micromanaging. There is not yet in place a process to review and revise decision-making processes to ensure integrity and effectiveness. The school is beginning to develop clear policies and procedures to direct consistent day-to-day operations. A Policy and Procedure Manual is not current or just beginning to be constructed. The school is developing a positive learning environment on campus but does not often seek input from all stakeholders regarding the school's goals and operations. School leadership is consumed with day-to-day issues and does not have the chance to highly focus on student learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school does not have a written statement of mission/purpose. The school does not have developed Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs). The governing body is detached and not connected to the school's mission and/or vision. Policies and Procedures are not written and decisions are inconsistent and reactive. School leadership is unstable and changes frequently, making a strong learning environment improbable. School leaders do not consult with faculty members or other stakeholder groups for decision-making or school improvement. School operates mostly with crisis-management – responding to daily issues and crises that arise.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Criterion 3: Faculty and Staff

Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school employs personnel who are qualified and trained for their responsibilities. The school staff supports the mission and purpose of the school and collaborates to reach identified school SLOs. The school's hiring process is marked by integrity and transparency, including the use of clear job descriptions and expected job skills. The school provides the faculty and staff clear written personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school employs personnel who are qualified and trained for their responsibilities, with only minor exceptions. The school mission and purpose are known, but not necessarily used in the hiring and evaluation of personnel. The school has an organized hiring process with most positions supported by clear job descriptions. Personnel policies are written and available to faculty and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school employs some personnel who are not fully qualified educationally. The school does not have a clear hiring process in place and does not use expected job skills in the evaluation of candidates. There are many unwritten policies and procedures that personnel generally follow, but there is not yet a clear policy manual in place. Faculty and staff are randomly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has several personnel who are not qualified for their teaching duties. The school hires in a random manner, often taking the first person who applies without careful reference checking. Policies are not in place; decisions are made randomly based on the momentary circumstances. Faculty and staff are not evaluated for effectiveness nor

<p>policies and procedures that are consistently followed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All faculty and staff members are annually evaluated in order to help them improve. Results are used to determine professional growth planning. School leaders empower the staff and encourage commitment, participation, and shared accountability for student learning and accomplishment of SLOs. The school has a professional development program that supports and funds the growth and improvement of faculty and staff members. The leadership regularly evaluates all non-teaching staff members to maintain a high level of effectiveness. 	<p>staff members. There is general consistency in the application of these policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty members are evaluated at least once every two years. School leaders make SLOs known to the faculty and staff and there are fairly consistent attempts to reach these goals. Professional development opportunities are provided but not necessarily tied to specific growth needs of faculty members. The leadership occasionally evaluates non-teaching staff members. 	<p>evaluated and written reports are not always provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School leaders are just beginning to develop a unity of mission and purpose that empowers staff members in their duties. Professional development opportunities are at the discretion of the faculty members and are often at their own expense. 	<p>are the plans to help the faculty improve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No professional development opportunities are available to teachers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Criterion 4: Curriculum			
Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has defined what all students should know and be able to do for each subject area as revealed in curricular mapping. The school provides all that is necessary for students to reach certificate, licensure, or vocational expectations successfully. The school assists the students extensively so that there is a high degree of success. The school provides clear course descriptions that reveal exact learning objectives that support school SLOs. The school has established a regular cycle of review and revision for each curricular area to ensure a challenging, relevant, and rigorous curriculum for all students. There is full collaboration among stakeholders and consideration of current educational research and thinking related to various subject areas in curricular review and planning. Students have access to texts, support materials and information resources that allows them to meet course learning objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has general educational goals for all subject areas so that teachers know what to teach for each course. Serious curricular mapping is in progress. The school is aware of certificate, licensure, or vocational expectations so that students have clear educational goals in view. Students are responsible to pursue goals successfully. The school provides some course descriptions that reveal learning objectives; not all courses have been connected to SLOs at this time. The school has a review cycle in place to ensure that curriculum is challenging and relevant for students. There is consideration of current educational research that, most of the time, adds to the curricular review and revision. Students generally have access to the curricular materials that are needed for their course of study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a general sense of what students should be learning, but little curricular mapping has taken place. The school provides textbooks for teachers to use but does not yet have a complete curricular overview or course descriptions for all courses that are offered. The school reviews texts and supporting materials occasionally as needed, but no systematic program for review is in place. Most curricular decisions are made independently by the administration, often without consideration of current educational research. School texts and materials are not always readily available to all students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school does not have any curricular plans in place; teachers are responsible to select texts and establish course outcomes. The school does not have any curricular review cycle in place. Curriculum decisions are made randomly and without much collaboration. School learning materials are often unavailable to students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Criterion 5: Instructional Program			
Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The faculty provides high-level instruction with depth, breadth, rigor, and sequencing in all courses. The faculty uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that effectively engage students in learning. The faculty addresses the various learning styles and needs of the students with adapted or differentiated teaching strategies. The faculty discusses current instructional content and research-based methodology and regularly makes changes to improve instruction skills. New technology is evident throughout the instructional program of the school; teachers use technology in instruction and students use technology in their learning experiences and class work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The faculty provides sufficient instructional support so that student learning progresses. The faculty uses a variety of instructional strategies that effectively engage students in learning. The faculty does make some allowances for different learning styles of learners but not in a structured schoolwide manner. The faculty regularly reviews current educational research regarding instructional strategies and some faculty members make changes to improve their teaching. There is evidence that most teachers use technology in the instructional program. Many students use technology in their learning activities and class assignments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The faculty provides adequate instruction but not all students are challenged. The faculty uses a limited number of instructional strategies and is most reliant on the lecture form of instruction. Various learning styles are not often taken into consideration in instructional planning. Faculty members rely on their own experience for teaching strategies and seldom discuss new ideas and instructional methods. There is little evidence of the integration of technology into the learning program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instruction is not always adequate and there are gaps in learning opportunities for students. Faculty members are generally unaware of differing instructional practices and tend to teach the same way they always have. Teachers are unaware that students have different learning styles. Technology is not considered in the teaching and learning process.
□	□	□	□

Criterion 6: Use of Assessment			
Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has developed an overall assessment process that gathers learning data from multiple sources for analysis. Administration and faculty work together to analyze learning results so that meaningful conclusions can be drawn. Conclusions are connected to specific recommendations to address any identified growth needs. Analysis of learning data results in changes to the instructional program and the creation of needed policies and procedures. Individual courses have clear outcomes so that meaningful assessment can occur. Teachers regularly use various assessment instruments and strategies to measure overall student learning success and the achievement of Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs). Analysis of learning data is used in resource planning. The Action Plan is driven by assessment results. Analysis of learning data is reported to all stakeholders on a regular basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has multiple assessment instruments in use and has started to develop an overall school assessment and analysis process. The administration and most of the faculty work together to analyze learning data in order to draw meaningful conclusions. Conclusions from learning data analysis are sometimes used to create strategies to address identified critical areas for follow-up. Analysis of learning data frequently impacts the instructional program and results in changes in policies/procedures. The administration and faculty occasionally use the analysis of learning results to talk about schoolwide learning success and the achievement of school SLOs. Most courses have identified outcomes so that assessment of learning progress can occur. Analysis of learning data is frequently used in resource planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has only a few assessment instruments in use and not all teachers are involved in the analysis of learning results. The administration does most of the data gathering and analysis and shares results with the faculty. The administration and faculty are aware of learning results but seldom use them to develop recommendations for improvement to the instructional program. Analysis of learning data is seldom used to make changes to the instructional program. Discussion of learning data analysis is seldom used in connection with discussions regarding the achievement of school SLOs. Only a few of the classes have clearly identified outcomes so that meaningful assessment can occur. Analysis of learning data is only occasionally used in resource planning. The Action Plan is generally developed apart from learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school may have some assessment instruments in use, but there is no meaningful analysis of learning results. The administration and faculty do not have specific times set aside for discussions regarding the analysis of learning data. Learning data is not used to create recommendations for the school Action Plan. The school does not use the analysis of learning data to make changes to the instructional program. Analysis of learning data is not used in connection to the achievement of school SLOs. Teachers have not yet developed clear outcomes for courses. Resource planning occurs without any connection to learning data analysis. The Action Plan is developed without any discussion of learning data analysis. Learning data analysis is not shared or reported to stakeholder groups.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Action Plan is often impacted by conclusions drawn through data analysis. Analysis of learning data is frequently shared with different stakeholder groups. 	<p>data analysis; every now and then, conclusions do impact the Action Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of learning data is occasionally shared with stakeholder groups (limited only to report cards). 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Criterion 7: Student Support Services

Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school provides sufficient student services that support high achievement and the accomplishment of school SLOs. The learning environment on campus is positive so that most students are engaged in meaningful learning experiences. The school oversees the entire area of support services with personnel staffing that supports all students to achieve their full potential. The school counseling program provides sufficient academic guidance along with college preparation assistance so that students can pursue their college/career goals. The school supports students from the first contact to admissions, to completion of programs, and into the workforce or further education. There are pathways in place for students to provide feedback concerning areas of support that are needed. Institutional information and records are easily and quickly accessible to students. The school carefully monitors all advertising and school documents to ensure that they contain accurate information and do not make promises that cannot be kept. School records are maintained safely, securely, and permanently with proper back-up in case of fire or natural disaster. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school provides basic student services that support student learning success. The learning environment on campus is generally positive for most students. The majority of students are actively engaged in the learning process. The school provides the proper personnel to support student service needs. The school has an organized counseling staff that provides college planning and financial research support. Students have an adequate support system as they enroll at the school up until the time of program completion. Students are frequently given the opportunity to provide feedback concerning the student services they need or desire. Institutional information and student records are usually accessible to students. The school provides accurate and updated information that does not make claims or promises that cannot be kept. School records are kept safely and securely and proper back-up systems are in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school provides a limited number of services to students and they have little impact on student learning levels. The learning environment is unstable, sometimes positive, sometimes not. The student services department is under-staffed and overworked so that students have difficulty accessing the services they need. Students often do not have access to qualified guidance counselors who can assist with academic planning and college preparation. Students do not always have support during the enrollment process and do not always have access to qualified counseling staff. Students are occasionally consulted in regard to what student services are needed or desired. Institutional information and student records are accessible, but it takes time to make it happen. The school is sporadic in overseeing its advertising pieces and does not always update information appropriately. School records are kept safe, but not always backed up or kept in fireproof files. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school offers an inadequate number of services or the services are generally not effective in supporting student learning success. The learning environment is marked by crisis, difficulties, and student dissatisfaction. The school often does not have staffing to provide necessary student services. The school does not regularly provide students with academic or college counseling. Enrollment procedures are up to the student to figure out; there is a lack of support by office personnel. Students do not have the chance to provide input into the development of student services on campus. Institutions do not provide accurate or updated information and school records are difficult to access. Advertising materials are often out-dated, inaccurate, and at times, misleading. School records are kept haphazardly and are not always safe and secure.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Criterion 8: Resource Management

Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has more than sufficient resources to provide a full and complete program in line with its mission and purpose. The school operates with financial integrity and transparency so that the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is financially stable and has sufficient resources to operate the educational program. The school operates with financial integrity and is trusted by its constituency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has limited resources and often seems on the edge financially. Future sustainability is often discussed; sustainability relies solely on enrollment numbers. The school operates its 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school does not have the resources to maintain its program. It struggles from year to year and it is unlikely that the school can continue forward in the future. The school does have the

<p>community has high confidence in the school and its future economic stability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has clearly written financial policies and procedures that allow all students to be handled fairly and consistently. There is a highly developed management system in place with appropriate control mechanisms to ensure that sound financial practices are followed. An external audit is performed annually and there are seldom any findings that negatively impact the school. Institutional planning reflects a realistic assessment of current financial resources as it strategically plans for visionary future growth and development. The school uses the analysis of learning data in its strategic and financial planning, with SLOs in view. The school provides facilities that are exemplary, clean, safe, and well-maintained. The school has an emergency plan in place that is known by all and practiced at least once a year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has established financial policies and procedures that are applied equitably most of the time. The school has a management system with controls that ensure that sound financial practices are followed. There is an outside audit performed at least once every two years. The school does have strategic planning that seeks to anticipate future income. The school often uses the analysis of learning data to make allocation decisions and the meeting of SLOs is usually in view. Facilities are safe, clean, and well-maintained, supporting the school learning environment. The school has an emergency plan in place that is widely known by most faculty, staff, and students. 	<p>finances with limited staffing, limited expertise, and producing inconsistent results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has limited financial policies in place and there is a somewhat inconsistent practice with different students. There is little or no management system in place to ensure that sound financial practices are consistently followed. There is a financial audit performed occasionally. The school does strategic financial planning occasionally. The school seldom uses learning data analysis when making financial decisions. SLOs are seldom in view during financial discussions. Facilities are adequate, but limited. There are many issues related to the classrooms, campus, and maintenance. The school does not have a complete emergency plan in place; most stakeholders are unaware of its existence. 	<p>personnel in place to operate the school with consistency or transparency in its financial matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school does not have written policies or procedures in place and financial operations are haphazard. There is no monitoring of financial practices to ensure reliability. Outside financial audits are not performed. The school does not do any strategic planning; each year is a financial crisis. The school does not use analysis of learning data to inform financial decisions. SLOs are not considered at all during financial discussions. School facilities are inadequate, unsafe, unclean, or not maintained. Facilities discourage learning. The school does not have an emergency plan in place.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Criterion 9: Community Connection

Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is active in seeking community connections, with business leaders and organizations that can enhance the learning opportunities for students. There are planned outlets for students to get involved in community service projects and special activities as a way to give them real-world experiences. The school regularly informs its community regarding its mission, purpose, and value to the community at large. The school has a presence in the community and has a reputation for excellence. The school seeks partnerships that provide internships for students in order to seek practical experience in their career area of choice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school at times seeks to connect to community and business leaders in order to enhance the learning experiences of students. The school does provide opportunities for service projects that allow the students to support the community. The school occasionally makes its mission, purpose, and value known to the community at large. Often this occurs around a fundraising activity or special event. The school allows for internships but does not always seek them out; often the students generate the interest and develop for themselves a connection with a business or organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school rarely seeks connections with community leaders and businesses. It is consumed with day-to-day operations and making it to the next day. The school provides opportunities for service projects on a limited basis. The school seldom informs the community at large about its mission and purpose. The school does not provide internships for students unless a business or organization comes to them and asks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school makes no effort to connect to the community or to business leaders. The school does not offer any service projects in the community for students. Students are on their own to pursue such opportunities. The school makes no effort to reach out to the community; for the most part, the community does not know the school exists. The school does not allow students to pursue internships or connections with local businesses or organizations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Criterion 10: Action Plan for Ongoing Improvement			
Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a school Action Plan that reflects the efforts of all stakeholders to develop a culture of ongoing school improvement. The Action Plan is a key document that is used effectively to move the school forward. The school uses the accreditation process throughout the six-year cycle to identify and prioritize critical areas for follow-up that will highly impact the levels of learning at the school. The school has procedures in place to implement the Action Plan and monitor its effectiveness two or three times a year. The Action Plan is used regularly by the school administration and staff to guide all school improvement efforts. The school maintains accountability to the governing Board and reports progress on Action Plan items to all stakeholders. The Action Plan is always used by the school for planning, resource allocation, and the evaluation of existing programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School Action Plan is in place and reviewed annually so that adjustments can be made as necessary. The school completes all accreditation expectations and meets ACS WASC criteria and includes all stakeholders in the process. The Action Plan is monitored annually and there is accountability maintained to implement the Action Plan. The Action Plan is used by the school to generally direct school improvement activities. Successful implementation of the Action Plan is reported to the governing body and updates are provided to most stakeholder groups. The Action Plan is kept in view frequently for planning, resource allocations, and evaluation of existing programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School Action Plan exists but is not frequently used to guide school improvement activities. The school meets most, but not all, ACS WASC expectations and seems to be last minute and hurried in preparations for accreditation visits. Not all stakeholder groups are included. The Action Plan is not regularly reviewed, monitored, and there is inconsistent accountability to the Board. The Action Plan is used sparingly to guide school improvement activities. The implementation of the Action Plan is reported to the board once a year; neither the school nor the board sees the Action Plan as a vital document to guide the school. The Action Plan is sometimes used for planning, resource allocation, and evaluation of existing programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school either does not have an Action Plan or it is a document that is not used or regularly updated. The school does not complete the self-study in the appropriate manner and does not involve all stakeholders in the process. The Action Plan is not effectively used and there is no monitoring of successful implementation. School improvement is not connected to the Action Plan. The board is not aware of the Action Plan and there is little or no accountability for the school to successfully implement it. The Action Plan is not used for planning, resource allocation, and evaluation of existing programs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Institution Purpose			
Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a clear mission statement that is regularly reviewed and revised. The school has developed Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs) that provide the overarching goals for students. (SLOs may be called ESLRs or any other name that the school chooses). SLOs are well-integrated into every aspect of the school, especially in the instructional program. The school has informed all stakeholders of the mission, purpose, and school SLOs so that there is unity and commitment. The mission creates an excitement among stakeholder groups. The school has imprinted its mission and purpose within the community throughout the year so that it has a positive reputation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a mission statement that is reviewed and revised occasionally. The school has SLOs (or called something else) that provide direction regarding the overarching goals of the school. SLOs are generally integrated into all areas of the school. The school has presented its mission and purpose to most stakeholder groups to gain unity and commitment. The school has informed the community of its mission and purpose at least once a year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School has a mission statement that is not often used nor is it shared with all stakeholder groups. The school has just started to develop SLOs and they have not yet included all stakeholders in their development. SLOs are integrated into the school program on a very limited basis. The school does not frequently inform stakeholders of its mission and purpose. There is a lack of total unity and vision for the future. The school seldom presents its mission and purpose to the community at large. The school is not well known in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school does not have a recent mission statement of purpose that the school uses or shares with others. The school has not yet developed SLOs that form the overarching goals for students. SLOs are not integrated into the school program. The school almost never informs its stakeholders of its mission, purpose, or SLOs. The school is not connected to the community and does not share its mission and purpose; the school is not known by the community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Capacity to Implement the Action Plan			
Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's governing body, administration, and faculty share a solid commitment to implement the Action Plan and carefully monitor results to ensure success. The leadership of the school is strong and stable and gives evidence that it has a high degree of competence to successfully implement the Action Plan. The capacity of the school is marked by ongoing school improvement, commitment to the accreditation process, and an advanced understanding of how to use the Action Plan effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School's governing body, administration, and faculty are committed to using the Action Plan to guide school improvement efforts. Results are generally monitored to ensure success. The leadership of the school is stable and gives evidence that it is competent and will follow through with the implementation of the Action Plan. The capacity of the school is sufficient; there is confidence that the school will follow-through with Action Plan implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School generally is committed to using the Action Plan for ongoing school improvement, but not all the stakeholder groups related to this task (board, administration, faculty) are directly involved. The leadership of the school is not fully stable and there are concerns that the implementation of the Action Plan may not be done well. The capacity of the school is suspect; it affirms it will implement the Action Plan but it is not clear whether they will be able to do so effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school does not understand the role of the Action Plan and does not yet use the Action Plan to guide school improvement efforts. The leadership of the school is unstable or uncertain. The capacity of the school to implement the Action Plan is limited at best. It is not likely the Action Plan will be implemented or monitored in any way.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Success in Addressing Past Key Issues for Follow-Up			
Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school carefully documents all critical areas for follow-up left by the previous ACS WASC accreditation team. The school can demonstrate with extensive evidence that it has addressed critical areas effectively. The school understands well how to use the Action Plan to annually assess school progress and to add new action items or replace completed items during the six-year ACS WASC cycle. The school is highly competent in responding to identified critical areas for follow-up. School improvement is clearly evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School has responded satisfactorily to all critical areas for follow-up left by the previous ACS WASC accreditation team. The school cites evidence to show how it has responded to past critical areas for follow-up. The school does monitor and evaluate the successful responses to identified critical areas for follow-up. The school is competent and able to respond effectively to areas of school improvement left by ACS WASC accreditation teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School has responded to some, but not all, of the critical areas for follow-up left by the previous ACS WASC accreditation team. The school does not always show clear evidence regarding its response to past identified critical issues. The school has good intentions but does not always follow through with responses to identified critical issues. The school has limited competence in responding to identified critical issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is very inconsistent in responding to critical issues identified by the past ACS WASC accreditation team. The school does not monitor responses to past critical areas and cannot show evidence that it has addressed critical areas. The school lacks understanding regarding the proper way to respond to identified critical issues. The school is not competent to respond to critical issues identified by past ACS WASC teams.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ACS WASC POSTSECONDARY DOCUMENTATION AND JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT

For proper processing, please complete the following information:

Chair Name	Name and City of School Visited	
Chair's Work Phone	Chair's Home Phone	Alt. number during end of June (if applicable)
Email address		

Complete the Narrative Rationale for each standard. Check the box of the rating that best fits the results of the self-study and the visit that was selected through Visiting Team dialogue and consensus. [To check a box, double click on the box and select the "Checked" box value.]

- **Highly Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a high degree of impact on student learning, the school's program and the school's operation.
- **Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a satisfactory level of impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- **Somewhat Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a limited impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- **Ineffective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had little or no impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.

ACS WASC Criterion 1: Institutional Mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

The institution demonstrates a strong commitment to its mission, emphasizing student achievement. The school communicates its mission internally and externally. Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs) are developed and reviewed annually to ensure that they are current and relevant.

Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

ACS WASC Criterion 2: Organizational Infrastructure and School Leadership

The institution utilizes the contributions of leadership throughout the organization to provide for ongoing improvement. The organizational structure and roles of governance are clearly defined and designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning and improve institutional effectiveness. The governing body enables the administrator/director to implement policy and lead the institution effectively.

Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

ACS WASC Criterion 3: Faculty and Staff

The institution employs qualified personnel to support student learning programs and services to ensure institutional effectiveness. Personnel are treated equitably, evaluated regularly, and provided opportunities for professional development that impact student learning.

Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

ACS WASC Criterion 4: Curriculum

The institution demonstrates a conscious effort to support student learning through the development of a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum that allows all students the opportunity to reach Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs). The school's curriculum reveals its mission and SLOs and connects directly to current student learning needs. The school pursues current, research-based curriculum development information to keep its programs relevant and effective.

Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

ACS WASC Criterion 5: Instructional Program

The instructional staff uses research-based instructional strategies and teaching methodologies that engage students at high levels of learning and allow them to achieve Schoolwide Learner Outcomes and course objectives. Faculty members are given ongoing training in various instructional strategies that allows them to address the varied learning styles of students in their classrooms.

Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

ACS WASC Criterion 6: Use of Assessment

The instructional staff uses established assessment procedures to design, administer, deliver, and evaluate courses, programs, and student learning levels. The institution recognizes the central role of its faculty for improving courses and programs through the assessment instruments and practices used in the school. Assessment is used to measure student progress, to modify learning approaches, and to carry out institutional planning and ongoing school improvement.

Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

ACS WASC Criterion 7: Student Support Services

The institution recruits and admits students who are able to benefit from its programs. Student support services address the identified needs of students and create a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, learning, and success. The institution systematically assesses student support services using Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, faculty, staff, and student input and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of these services.

Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

ACS WASC Criterion 8: Resource Management

Financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of programs and services. The institution plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both short-term and long-term financial solvency.

Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

ACS WASC Criterion 9: Community Connection

The institution seeks to enhance its educational effectiveness by developing close partnerships and relationships with community members. Connections within the community provide students with expanded learning experiences, including additional educational or vocational opportunities.

Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

ACS WASC Criterion 10: Action Plan for Ongoing Improvement

The institution uses the self-study process to identify key issues that are inserted into a schoolwide *Action Plan* that governs school improvement activities and events. The schoolwide *Action Plan* is used regularly, reviewed annually, and monitored consistently by the governing body to ensure ongoing school improvement.

Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

Institution Purpose: The institution has clarified its mission statement and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes so that there is unity and commitment by all stakeholders to support student meeting overarching school goals.

Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

Capacity to Implement the Action Plan: The institution has the commitment and will to implement the Action Plan and monitor its progress effectively.

Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

Success in Addressing Past Key Issues: The institution has shown that it has successfully responded to key issues identified by previous Visiting Committees, thereby giving the Visiting Committee confidence that it will continue its commitment to ongoing school improvement.

Visiting Committee Rating: ☐ Highly Effective ☐ Effective ☐ Somewhat Effective ☐ Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

Justification Statement

Provide a brief narrative which summarizes the Visiting Committee's rationale for the recommended status (*If there is an unresolved minority opinion, please explain*).

In 1–2 pages, please describe:

- Status options seriously considered
- Evidence that weighed most heavily in the final recommendation
- Specifically what status recommendation the Committee is making
- Reasons for the status recommended
- How did the Visiting Committee reach consensus? Please describe in detail how the discussions progressed, what different points of view were offered, and how final consensus was reached
- How the recommended status best supports school improvement
- Re-state clearly the final status recommendation decision.

SAMPLE



Accrediting Commission for Schools Western Association of Schools and Colleges

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FRED VAN LEUVEN, Ed.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MARILYN S. GEORGE, Ed.D.
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Accreditation Status Recommendation

Name of School Visited:

Name of District:

Manual Used in Self-Study:

Visit:

Date of Visit:

Accredited Grade Span:

Enrollment:

ACS WASC accreditation is an ongoing six-year cycle of quality whereby the school demonstrates the capacity, commitment and competence to support high-quality student learning and ongoing school improvement.

The Visiting Committee's CONFIDENTIAL recommendation to the Accrediting Commission:

- ☐ **Six-Year Accreditation Status with a Mid-cycle Progress Report:** There is compelling evidence that the school needs little, if any, additional support for high-quality student learning and the implementation, monitoring, and accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan, which includes the identified critical areas for follow-up.

Provide the rationale for the accreditation status recommendation in the Justification Statement.

- ☐ **Six-Year Accreditation Status with a Mid-cycle Progress Report and** (choose one option below):

- ☐ **One-Day Visit:** There is compelling evidence that the school needs additional support in strengthening student achievement by addressing the identified critical areas for follow-up. Based on the scope and seriousness of the issues and the size of the school, a one-day visit is recommended.
- ☐ **Two-Day Visit:** There is compelling evidence that the school needs additional support in strengthening student achievement by addressing the identified critical areas for follow-up. Based on the scope and seriousness of the issues and the size of the school, a two-day visit is recommended.

Provide the rationale for the accreditation status recommendation in the Justification Statement.

- ☐ **Probationary Accreditation Status with an In-depth Progress Report and Two-Day Visit** (choose one option below):

- ☐ **One-Year:** There is compelling evidence that the school deviates significantly from the ACS WASC criteria in one or more critical areas requiring immediate attention and support.
- ☐ **Two-Year:** There is compelling evidence that the school deviates significantly from the ACS WASC criteria in one or more critical areas that need to be addressed within two years.

Provide the rationale for the accreditation status recommendation in the Justification Statement.

- ☐ **Accreditation Status Withheld:** There is compelling evidence that the school does not meet one or more of the ACS WASC criteria and deviates significantly in critical areas that impact student learning and well-being, the school's program, and supporting operations.

Provide the rationale for the accreditation status recommendation in the Justification Statement.

Note: The Commission reserves the right to grant accreditation status other than those above, including a recommendation for a full self-study at any time. Such action will follow a Commission review of the Visiting Committee Report. In the event of a formal appeal, this document will be provided to the school's chief administrator.

VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Type or print name

Signature

Committee Chairperson

Date

