ACS WASC Visiting Committee Member Training for International School Visits

2019-2020
ACS WASC accredits K-12 schools and not-for-profit, non-degree granting postsecondary institutions.

Getting Started
Learn how schools can begin the ACS WASC accreditation process.

Schools
ACS WASC accreditation is an ongoing cycle of quality.

Visiting Committees
ACS WASC accreditation relies on a peer-review process.
Serving approx. 5,200 schools worldwide

33 Commissioners

20 Partner Associations
ACS WASC

The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
What is my Role as a Visiting Committee Member?

To be knowledgeable about ... 
- the WASC criteria 
- the Focus on Learning process 
- the culture of the school 
- the school’s self-study and supporting evidence
WHAT DOES ACCREDITATION MEAN?
What does ACCREDITATION mean?

- Self-Renewal and Reflection
- Self-Evaluation of Programs: Effective Structures and Habits/Impact on Students
- Student-Focused
- Schoolwide Collaborative Work

- Inspection
- Report
- Teacher-Focused
- Individual/Small Group work only
Connect – Extend – Challenge

• How do these critical aspects of accreditation connect with my ideas and experience?

• How do these relate to my responsibilities as a visiting committee member?

• Based on these, what challenges do I see in my work as a visiting committee member?
WHAT ARE THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE WASC FOCUS ON LEARNING PROCESS?
Guiding Principles

• Total involvement and collaboration of all stakeholders
• Culture that supports the well-being of all students
• Accomplishment of its vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes
• High achievement of all students related to academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes
• Use of multiple ways to analyze data
• Evaluation of program effectiveness
• Alignment of prioritized findings to a schoolwide action plan focusing on student achievement
• Ongoing improvement responsibility
How might I use the Guiding Principles to help me as I ...

- Read the report
- Prepare my pre-write
- Pose my questions
- Evaluate the school’s focus on student learning
- Make recommendations to move the school forward
ACS WASC Accreditation: A Focus on Learning
How well are all students learning and achieving?
WASC Accreditation
An ongoing journey focusing on students and continuous school improvement
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBER?

UNDERSTAND THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS AND FINDINGS
School Organization

Leadership Team

Profile Team

Home Groups

Focus Groups
Focus on Learning: Reflective Cycle

Assess: WHAT?

FOLLOW UP

Implement, Monitor, and Refine: ONGOING MONITORING

Focus on Learning

Evaluate: SO WHAT?

SELF-STUDY

Design and Plan: NOW WHAT?

VISIT

Focus on Learning: Reflective Cycle

Follow Up

Evaluate: So What?

Self-Study

Implement, Monitor, and Refine: Ongoing Monitoring

Focus on Learning

Design and Plan: Now What?

Visit

Assess: What?
Self-Study Outcomes

• Involvement and collaboration
• Clarification and measurement of schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards
• Data analysis
• Program assessment and its impact on student learning
• Long-range action aligned to school’s areas of need to support student learning
HOW HAS THE SCHOOL EVALUATED WHO THEY ARE? WHAT HAS IMPACTED STUDENT LEARNING?
Task 1—What have we achieved?

Chapter I: Progress Report

1. Significant developments
2. Schoolwide critical areas for follow-up (last full visit and any mid-cycle or special visit)
3. Ongoing follow-up processes
4. Progress, evidence, impact on student learning for Action Plan sections/goals showing integration of schoolwide key issues
5. Critical areas for follow-up not currently in Action Plan
What has the school accomplished during the past 5 or 6 years?
Data and School Background

Task 2—Who are we? What do we believe?

Chapter II: Profile
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBER?

EVALUATE SCHOOL PROFILE AND INTEGRATION OF SCHOOLWIDE LEARNER OUTCOMES

ACS WASC Focus on Learning — ASSESS, DEFINE, EVALUATE
Understanding the School’s Culture
Data and School Background

Student/Community Profile
Data

Demographic

Outcome

Process/Perception
Schoolwide Learner Outcomes: What do We Believe? What do We Intend?

• Global Competencies
  – Apply knowledge and skills; research current global issues; integrated disciplines
  – Interdependence (i.e., economic, political, social, environmental)
  – Multiple perspectives
  – Valuing diversity
  – Communication: multi-lingual literate, technology
  – Responsible service and action: local and global
  – Able to function in interdependent world
What does ACS WASC mean by Schoolwide Learner Outcomes?

What are our schoolwide learner outcomes?
Are our Schoolwide Learner Outcomes meeting the criteria listed below?

Global
Interdisciplinary
All students
Assessable
Sample Schoolwide Learner Outcome

Students will be: **INNOVATIVE THINKERS**

- Build on the ideas, explanations, and reasons of others
- Summarize, analyze, interpret, and evaluate information
- Define problem and use problem-solving strategies appropriate to the context
- Create original work
- Use technology to create products of high quality
Implications of the profile data

Critical Student Learning Needs correlated to Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

Questions for study in Chapter III
Critical Student Learner Needs

Students’ expository writing

Critical thinking & problem solving

English communication skills

Students’ motivation

Transference and application of skills to new contexts
What? So What? Now What?

**WHAT? Assess and Define**
Who are we? What is our ideal?

**SO WHAT? Evaluate**
What currently exists? How effective? Which evidence?

**NOW WHAT? Design, Plan, Implement, Monitor**
What to continue? How to design our next steps?
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBER?

EVALUATE FINDINGS OF SCHOOL BASED UPON ACS WASC CRITERIA
Task 3—Chapter III: **What currently exists? How do we know it is effective?**

**ACS WASC Criteria Categories**

1. **Organization for Student Learning**
2. **School Culture and Environment**
3. **Student Personal and Academic Support**
4. **How Assessment Is Used**
5. **What Students Learn**
6. **How Students Learn**

**Focus on Learning**
ACS WASC International Criteria Categories

A. Organization for Student Learning
B. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth
D. School Culture and Environment
E. ONESQA Standards
F. Boarding Criterion
## Accreditation Criteria/Indicators: School Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the criteria concepts?</th>
<th>What is the ideal? What evidence supports meeting the criteria/indicators?</th>
</tr>
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VC Reviewing and Analyzing Data/Information
B4 Criterion: How Assessment is Used

Teacher and student uses of assessment are frequent and integrated into the learning/teaching process. The assessment results are the basis for (a) measurement of each student’s progress toward the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards; and (b) regular evaluation, modification, and improvement of curriculum and instructional approaches to support the educational progress of every student.
Modification/Decisions based on Assessment Data

Indicator:
Assessment data is collected, analyzed, and used to make changes and decisions about curriculum, instruction, professional development activities, and resource allocation. Teachers modify and revise the curriculum and instruction as a result of student assessment, both collectively and individually.

Prompt:
Evaluate the effectiveness of how assessment data is collected, analyzed and used to make changes about curriculum, instruction, professional development activities and resource allocation.

Findings & Supporting Evidence
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBER?

KNOW ALIGNMENT OF CRITICAL LEARNING NEEDS
Task 4--Chapter IV: What have we learned?
Determine Student Learning Needs

School Profile Findings + Focus Group Findings = Schoolwide Trends and Patterns
Determine Student Learning Needs

School Profile Findings + Focus Group Findings = Schoolwide Trends and Patterns
Task 4/Chapter IV: What have we learned?
Determine Student Learning Needs

School Profile Findings + Focus Group Findings → Schoolwide Patterns & Trends
Task 5—Now What?
Chapter V: One Schoolwide Action Plan
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBER?

EVALUATE ACTION PLAN
WHAT? Assess and Define
Who are we? What is our ideal?

SO WHAT? Evaluate
What currently exists? How effective? Which evidence?

NOW WHAT? Design, Plan, Implement, Monitor
What to continue? How to design our next steps?
One Schoolwide Action Plan
Comments? Questions?
The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBER?

PREPARE BEFORE THE VISIT
Connecting with the Chairperson

Assignments in Chapter III
Information in initial contact with school personnel
Hotel/Schedule

Visiting Committee Member Checklist

www.acswasc.org
Visiting Committee Member Checklist

Previsit Preparation

1. Receive the first letter from Visiting Committee chairperson that addresses:
   a. Requests for preferred areas of coverage during the visit
   b. Training session schedule reminder
   c. The review of accreditation materials

2. Attend WASC member training.

3. Study the school description, the Focus on Learning manual, and the reference cards
   Sections of Focus on Learning to emphasize: The Big Picture; The Self-Study;
   Background Information; The Self-Study; The Visit; The Follow-up; The Tools:
   Criteria/Suggested Evidence; Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (Schoolwide
   Learner Outcomes); Gathering Evidence.

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

VC Member Checklist

Review criteria, indicators, and appropriate curricular references.

What are the major concepts of the criteria and indicators? What critical data/information should be reviewed?
A1 Focus Group

Criterion:
The school has established a clear vision and mission (purpose) that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the institution. The purpose is defined further by adopted schoolwide learner outcomes that reflect defined global competencies and form the basis of the educational program for every student.
Instruction: How Students Learn

B2 Focus Group

Criterion:

The professional staff

a) uses research-based knowledge about teaching and learning; and

b) designs and implements a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school’s purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes.
Global Competencies

• Apply knowledge and skills; research current global issues; integrated disciplines
• Interdependence (i.e., economic, political, social, environmental)
• Multiple perspectives
• Valuing diversity
• Communication: multi-lingual literate, technology
• Responsible service and action: local and global
• Able to function in interdependent world.
Preparing for the Visit

Read the whole report!
Mark it up-Annotate
Look for alignment
Complete previsit worksheet
Comments-Questions
Complete your assignments
Your Prewriting Responsibilities

Use Previsit Worksheet

Comments/questions on all chapters

Chapter III: Criteria Category Assignments
Instruction: How Students Learn

B2 Focus Group
Criterion:
The professional staff

a) uses research-based knowledge about teaching and learning; and

b) designs and implements a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school’s purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes.
B2. Instruction: How Students Learn

Professional Development

Indicator: The school uses ongoing professional development to enhance the curriculum and improve learning and teaching. This includes learning through worldwide partnerships with other teachers and schools.

Prompt: Comment on the effectiveness of how the school uses ongoing professional development to enhance the curriculum and improve learning and teaching.
B2: How Students Learn

**Indicator:** Professional Development

At [school] we have created a four to six week professional development cycle that includes: learning a schoolwide strategy, practicing with teachers, practicing in class, being observed by a peer and analyzing the student work. This cycle has benefitted our teachers, who are mainly new to the profession. They have developed in their instructional skill exponentially, rather than gradually over time.

Peer observation has provided our teachers the opportunity to not only observe their peers using the school-wide strategies, but also to observe their own students in different academic classes and settings. This has proven to be invaluable to our grade level discussions and department meetings particularly as we look to improve writing. Teachers can see what other teachers do to engage students and to challenge them, which fosters tremendous collaboration among our professionals. Cycles have included: Rituals and Routines, Cornell Notes, 7 Habits, Accountable Talk, Frontloading Vocabulary and a cycle of writing instruction is forthcoming.

**Example* From the self-study**
Big Questions

Do the findings respond to what is being asked in the criteria, indicators, and prompts?

Does the evidence support
Findings?
Strengths?
Prioritized growth areas?

What insight has the school gained about student learning, the critical learner needs, the standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes?
• Sounds very interesting
• How qualified are the teacher-leaders?
• Are all teachers comfortable with this approach? Benefitting from it?
• What will students say?
• What to actually look for in the classrooms?
During professional development sessions led by teachers, staff has studied a variety of strategies to engage and challenge students. These have been supported by peer and administrative observations and the report states that teachers’ improvement “has been exponential.” It was not clear in the self-study, the degree to which these strategies have impacted student engagement and learning. The school intends to use this same model as they move forward to improve writing.
Professional Development Cycles, including Peer Observation:

Over the past three years, teachers have participated in professional development sessions led by teachers. They have learned and practiced a variety of strategies to engage and challenge students. Using both peer and administrative observations as checks, a majority of staff regularly use two to five different strategies during each class period to more actively engage students. Writing, speaking, questioning, and responding strategies are all incorporated.

Teachers openly speak with one another about their own growth and continuing areas of weakness. Students are clear in expressing that “things are different all the time” and yet “all the teachers do sort of the same things. That makes it easier for me.” This model will be used as staff moves more directly to improve writing.
B2. Instruction

**Strength:** School leadership and staff’s close working relationship and respect that have helped produce an inexpensive, viable, and effective professional development program designed to support high quality student learning.

**Growth Area:** School leadership and staff expand their strong professional development program to include writing strategies including both assignments and assessment tools to support high quality academic writing for all students.

**Evidence:** Self-Study Report, classroom and professional development observations, conversations with students and teachers.
Previsit Work with VC Members

Staying Organized

**YOU** start writing Chapters I, II, and III; use their comments. If paired, work together in previsit work; share, collapse/combine before coming to you! Then you must complete draft.

Remember:

You're writing an analytical summary.

Continue communicating!
D2. Using Assessment to Monitor and Modify Learning in the Classroom Criterion

Indicator: Student Feedback

Student feedback is an important part of monitoring student and classroom progress over time based on the academic standards, the college-and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes. Interview and dialogue with representative students inform the degree to which learning experiences are understood and relevant in preparing students for college, career, and life. (See next slide.)
According to the self-study, students participate in the School Coordinating Council meetings and in focus groups with teachers and administrators. ASB members also lead feedback sessions with other students. This was corroborated during the visit in conversations with a good cross-section of students. The VC observed teachers eliciting student feedback on their learning during lessons through visual checks, thumbs up checks, all call responses and exit slips. Student surveys also provide school leaders student feedback. These surveys are aligned to the schoolwide learner outcomes.
English Learners and many of our Special Education students are integrated into our General Education courses, to provide further opportunities for rigor, enhanced learning and socialization with their peer group.
To the chair on time!
The School Community’s Work

Previsit Work of VC Members/Chair

Visit and Status Recommendation
As you think about your own school and its accreditation visits, what do you feel are the important characteristics of a quality accreditation visit?
Schedule

Sunday–Thursday (full visit)
Sunday–Tuesday (mid-cycle or revisit)
What have we learned from our previsit preparation?

What types of evidence need to be our focus?

What strengths and growth areas emerging?
How can we focus our review and analysis of evidence through

- Examining student work and other information
- Observing students and other aspects of the program
- Interviewing students and other

What are the primary areas of interest to discuss with school personnel at our initial meeting?
Notes

Careful and Confidential
Observations

Who
Where
When
How

Know what you need to find out!
Interviews

Your assigned areas of study
Key issues
Plan
Documents

Student work
Handbooks
Curriculum documents
Recruiting brochures
School and District website
Meetings

VC and Leadership Team

VC and Focus Groups

VC and Other Groups
Thoughtful Meeting Preparation

Room arrangement
Timekeeper
Ensure clear agenda

VC Team consensus on important questions
Powerful Questions about...

- Action plan
- All students
- Critical learning needs
- Criteria
- Learner outcomes
- Academic standards
- Evidence analyzed
Understanding and use of data
Modifying learning and teaching
Feedback to students
Coaching colleagues in new strategies
Intended impact on student learning
Follow-up process
Powerful Questioning Strategies
Some General Rules

• Phrase your question to presume they are doing it (whatever you want to know more about) - not “do you do this…” rather “Share how you do/did this…”

• Call on individuals, if not by name, then by role. “Let’s hear from a student/family member/science teacher…..”

• Ask ONLY one question at a time. Save the rest for the follow-up question or two

• Phrase open ended questions — “How could we…?”

• Allow wait time. Start with easy and friendly dialogue.

• Share your questions with the other members of the visiting committee
Sample Discussion Starters...

Help us understand...

Please clarify...?

We recognize that...

We understand from the self-study that...however,...

What led to this conclusion?

Is this characteristic of ...?

Which factors contributed to these results?

What elements of the student/community profile are related to...?

Reference Card 2
Sample Questions

What insights have you had since you prepared the report?

How might this impact your identified critical learner needs?

Talk about evidence that led to the conclusions given.

Share what you personally have learned about student learning and success in your classroom/department/grade level? Was this a surprise?

We understand from the self-study that this has occurred. Help us understand what we have observed in relation to this.
How will we increase our understanding of the school’s self-study findings and student learning through the initial dialogue with school leaders?
One Schoolwide Action Plan

- Adequacy
- Action steps
- Understandable
- Feasible
- Commitment

- Support
- Barriers
- Follow-up process
- Alignment with student learning needs
Through implementing the action plan, what will be different for students as global citizens?

One year from now?
Two years from now?
Three years from now?
Visiting Committee Synthesis Meetings

What should the VC include at these daily meetings based on the key concepts of the criteria, the Self-Study, and findings during the visit?

How do you ensure the report reflects accurate school findings and a “Whole Visiting Committee” view?

Rewriting and Revising
VC Schoolwide Strengths

Who?  What?  Why?

What would like to see your own school’s report in relation to clarity and specificity—understanding by All?
What type of strengths would you want to be in a report for your school?

• Administration-led professional development and team building has increased feelings of respect and connectedness among the staff, both classified and certificated.

• The school has a strong and appropriate vision/mission to which it very intentionally aligns its schoolwide learner outcomes, LCAP, and messaging and to which all stakeholders share a strong commitment.

• The school provides a well-maintained and welcoming campus that provides a sense of pride for the community.

• Rigorous, focused and engaging instruction that...

• There is an established culture of academic success and rigor that...

• The students are actively involved in the community that...
Critical Areas for Follow-Up

Those areas that **support** areas already identified in the action plan sections

Those areas that **strengthen** areas already identified in the action plan sections

Potential **additional areas** not addressed by school.
Critical Areas for Follow-Up

Who
What (diagnostic not prescriptive)
Why
Sample Critical Area for Follow-up

Who

The leadership, instructional staff, and other stakeholders increase the use of the results from analyzing student achievement data in modifying instruction, particularly in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and critical thinking skills to improve student learning.
Improve these Samples

The development of a systematic review process to assess the impact of education programs and materials on student learning.

The school needs to explore professional development that meets the instructional needs of the students.

Continue to move forward with curricular integration among the various disciplines.
How do you ensure the VC report reflects accurately school findings and the unified Visiting Committee perspective?
What accreditation status best supports the school’s improvement needs?
Alignment
Status Rationale based on Findings
Accreditation Status Factors:
VC Recommendation and Commission Action

- Highly effective
- Effective
- Somewhat effective
- Ineffective
To what extent is the school demonstrating quality student achievement/improvement?

1. Meeting the ACS WASC international criteria and indicators
2. Clear globally minded purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes
3. Quality processes to analyze student achievement
4. Action plan aligned to areas of greatest need
5. Capacity to implement/monitor action plan
6. Use of prior accreditation findings
7. Involvement and collaboration of all
What’s the evidence?

Have our questions and does our writing support this conclusion?
Accreditation Status for International Schools

- Six-Year Accreditation Status
  Progress Report and two-day visit at mid-cycle and annual progress reports (special conditions can be added, e.g., special visit or report)
- One- or Two-Year Probationary Status with an in-depth progress report and a two-day visit
- Accreditation Status Withheld
ACS WASC Accreditation Status Timeline for International Schools

Self-Study

Six-Year Accreditation Granted

[School Preparing Mid-cycle Report and Visit]

Mid-cycle Report and Two-Day Visit

Special Progress Report and/or Visit (if required)

Special Visit and/or Report (if required)

Probationary Accreditation

Probation Report and Visit

Probation Report and Visit

Probation Report and Visit

Special Visit and/or Report (if required)

Accreditation Withheld

Next Self-Study

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

Year 5

Year 6

* A special visit and/or report may be required at any time in the accreditation cycle.

† Probationary accreditation status may be appealed.
Alignment, Alignment, Alignment

Important learning needs of the students
Correlation of major areas for follow-up to key issues
Rationale for accreditation status recommendation
Doc & Just-
ratings,
comments, and
VC report findings
Documentation and Justification Statement

Short-short-form of the analytical summary of self-study looking at “to what extent” the school meets the criteria

plus rationale for status
Standards-based Student Learning Instruction: Student Engagement that supports high achievement for all students (C2)

- Visiting Committee Rating: Somewhat Effective
- **Narrative Rationale:** The visiting committee did not observe a high rate of student-centered, technology driven, or hands-on types of instruction. Most of the teaching happening in the classrooms that was observed during the visit was very traditional, lecture style teaching. Traditionally underrepresented minorities, ELs and Special Education students are particularly struggling to achieve.
Sample from Doc/Just—Need Elaboration to align with VC Report and help Commissioners

Organization: Staff: Qualified and Professional Development that supports high achievement for all students (A4)

Visiting Committee Rating: Effective

Narrative: The VC suggests a more deliberate professional development plan.
Thursday

VC and Leadership Team meeting
Whole school presentation
On the visit

Do
Be a team player
Validate and extend, not evaluate
Support, not judge
Celebrate successes
Prepare and plan
Listen
Focus on important issues
Work for consensus
Work toward the action plan
Confidentiality

Don’t
Try to solve their problems; diagnostic not prescriptive
Argue over words; do ensure ideas are captured and clear
Focus on small things
Talk about your school
Over eat or over sleep
Not your school
you’re going home

Big Issues

Team

confidential

transparency

learn

we NOT me
We Are Student Centered