

AACSB International

Advancing Quality Management Education Worldwide

Accreditation Process

1. An institution must be a member of AACSB International in order to apply for accreditation.
2. The applicant school submits an Eligibility Application (for business and/or accounting accreditation) as an indication of interest to enter the AACSB Accreditation Process. A school may apply for business and accounting accreditation simultaneously, or for accounting accreditation following the achievement of business accreditation.
3. Eligibility Applications can be submitted at any time during the year. Following a preliminary review by accreditation staff, and if found complete and appropriate, the application is forwarded to the first regular scheduled Initial Accreditation Committee (IAC) meeting for consideration by the full committee.
4. When the application is approved, a volunteer business school administrator (such as a dean) is assigned to the applicant school as a mentor to assist with the development of an Initial Self Evaluation Report (iSER). This assigned mentor must avoid any appearance of conflict of interest. At this time, an AACSB Accreditation Staff Liaison also is assigned. This staff liaison serves as the primary contact person within AACSB for the school for all accreditation-related questions.
5. The applicant school will receive an official letter from AACSB informing the institution that its Eligibility Application has been approved and that a mentor has been assigned. An invoice will be sent to the school and must be paid in full within one month of receipt.
6. The assigned mentor works with the applicant school to determine its current alignment with the accreditation standards and assist with the development of an iSER. If the mentor finds that there is no reasonable expectation that the school can align itself with the accreditation standards in the maximum allotted time, he/she will so advise and recommend that the school withdraws.
7. In the iSER the school evaluates itself on how it aligns with the 15 business standards (and/or 9 accounting standards). For each standard the school should not only evaluate its current situation related to the standards but also document if it feels that it is in alignment with the standard or if additional action is needed to achieve alignment. Along with the iSER the school will submit a Gap Analysis, indicating for each standard if the school is in alignment or not, if not, the school will indicate the actions that need to be completed, who is responsible for what, the financial resources needed and timeline until completion. Along with the iSER and Gap Analysis the school submits completed Tables 2-1, 15-1, and 15-2 (Tables A2-1, A9-1, and A9-2 for accounting accreditation) and its strategic plan.
8. The iSER is generally completed in one year or less, however it may take a maximum of two years.
9. The IAC reviews the iSER. This review will lead to one of the following outcomes:
 - a. Acceptance of the iSER with a recommendation that the school develop a Final Self-Evaluation Report following an invitation to apply for an Initial Accreditation Visit.
 - b. The iSER is accepted with a recommendation that the school enter the action implementation phase. The school is asked to submit updates to the iSER to inform the committee of its progress toward alignment with the standards (a three-year implementation period is permitted). The mentor then continues to work with the school until it is invited to submit an application for Initial Accreditation (for business and/or accounting). Initial Accreditation must be achieved five years following the acceptance of the iSER by the IAC.
 - c. The plan is accepted, however, further development of the alignment plan is needed. A revise and resubmit recommendation is made to the applicant school.
 - d. The iSER is not accepted, as it is determined that the applicant school will not be able to align itself with the AACSB Accreditation Standards within the maximum time allowed to complete the Accreditation process.
10. Approximately, two years in advance of the anticipated accreditation review visit, a Peer Review Team chair (not the full team) is appointed. Chair appointments must avoid any appearance of conflict of interest. The chair guides the school as it develops its Final Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and works with the school to develop the schedule for the visit.
11. The IAC appoints the additional members of the Peer Review Team. The team reviews the SER, as well as prepares and sends a pre-visit letter to the school following review and approval by the IAC.
12. The visit takes place, and the Peer Review Team delivers a visit report to the applicant school, which includes recommendations for accreditation, deferral, or no accreditation. The report and recommendations are forwarded to the IAC for concurrence.
13. Recommendations or denials for accreditation are ratified by the IAC. Recommendations are forwarded to the AACSB Board of Directors for ratification.

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