



Adult School/ROCP Accreditation Manual



2021 ACS WASC EDITION

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

Adult School/ROCP Accreditation Manual

Accrediting Commission for Schools
Western Association of Schools and Colleges
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2021 ACS WASC EDITION

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Introduction

ACS WASC Accreditation Process

ACS WASC advances and validates quality ongoing school improvement by supporting its private and public elementary, secondary and adult/ROCP member organizations 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 organizations 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 5,200 educational organizations located in California, Hawaii, the Pacific Islands, Asia, and in other countries around the world. ACS WASC has accredited educational organizations 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 adult schools and Regional Occupational Centers and Programs (ROCPs) that are non-profit and non-degree-granting. ACS WASC does not accredit for-profit adult schools.

Examples of non-profit, non-degree granting adult schools include correctional educational programs and ROCPs. Earning accreditation status allows adult schools and ROCPs to prepare students for meaningful educational advancement with credits that are accepted by other educational organizations.

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.
3. The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the School Mission, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, and ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria.
4. The creation of a schoolwide *Action Plan* that develops programmatic plans to address identified growth areas.
5. The development of an accountability system for monitoring the implementation of the schoolwide *Action Plan*.

ACS WASC Continuous Improvement 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 Adult School/ROCP 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 growth areas 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 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 Schoolwide Learner Outcomes drives the instructional program and supports all operations of the school.

Translating the school's purpose in its Schoolwide Learner Outcomes 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 Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.

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 school 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 growth areas (Chapter II of the Self-Study Report)
- Task 3: School response to the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP 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 13.]

ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria for Accreditation

The ACS WASC accreditation process is built on the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria that represent the foundational areas that adult schools and ROCPs must address to earn accreditation status.

1. School Mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
2. Governance, Organizational Infrastructure, and School Leadership
3. Faculty and Staff
4. Curriculum
5. Instruction

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

The ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP 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 organizations 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, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, 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 Adult School/ROCP 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 Schoolwide Learner Outcomes 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. Instruction (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 growth areas 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 adult/ROCP accreditation process
- Volunteer educators from ACS WASC member schools

Products:

- *Visiting Committee Report*
- *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 growth areas that will be integrated into the schoolwide *Action Plan*.

ACS WASC Commission

Participants:

- The ACS WASC Commission consists of 35 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:

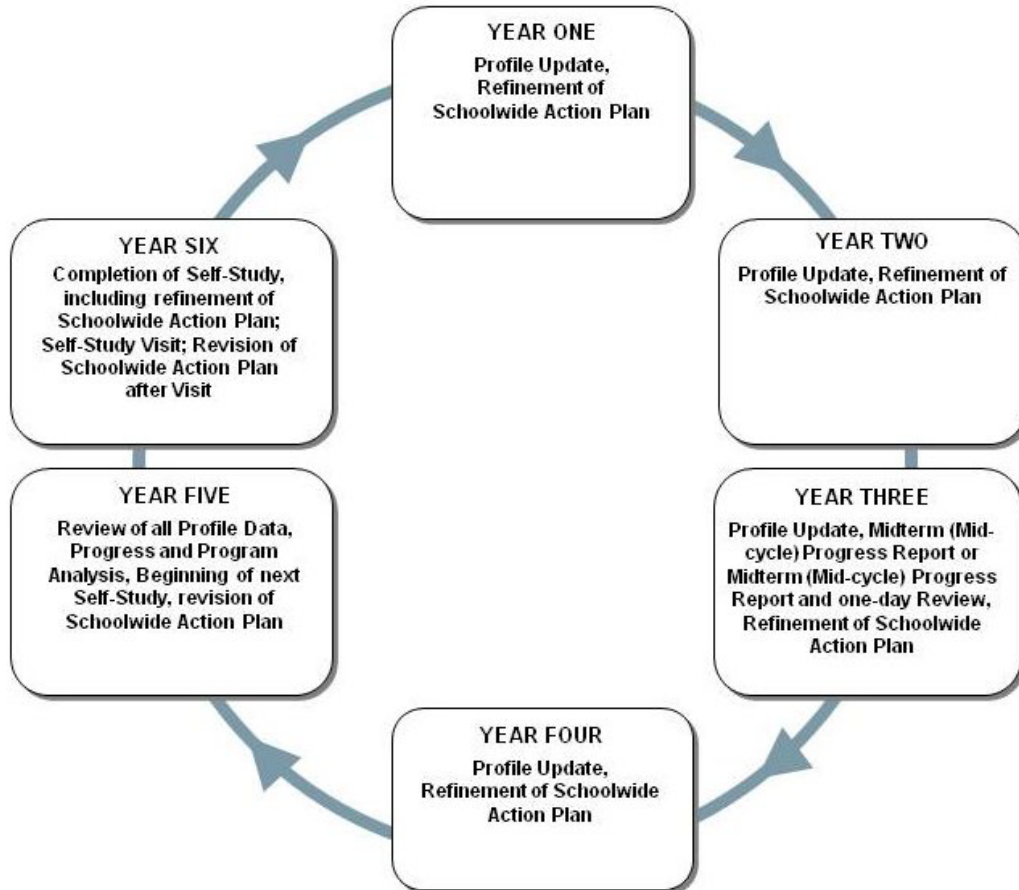
- The Commission meets three times a year to review visiting committee reports that describe the accreditation visits that have occurred since the last Commission meeting.
- The Commission reviews the effectiveness of the school and then awards accreditation status as appropriate.
- The Commission oversees the policies, procedures, and financial status of ACS WASC.

ACS WASC Six-Year Cycle of Quality

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 of Quality

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 growth areas identified by the Initial Visit 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 growth areas 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 Self-Study Site Visit

- Establish or refresh the Leadership Team and Focus Groups
 - Focus Group 1 – Curriculum
 - Focus Group 2 – Instruction
 - Focus Group 3 – Use of Assessment
 - Focus Group 4 – Student Support Services
- School representatives participate in ACS WASC training
- Review the mission statement of the school
- Orient stakeholders to the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria

- Review and revise Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
- Develop or update the school, 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 growth areas
- Review progress on current schoolwide *Action Plan* that integrated the growth areas left by the last visiting committee, either at the initial visit or at the last self-study visit (Task 2, Chapter II of the *Self-Study Report*)

6–12 Months Prior to the Self-Study Site Visit

- School representatives participate in 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 Adult School/ROCP 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 growth areas for the *Action Plan*
- As part of the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria analysis, identify “School Strengths” and “Growth areas” for each of the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria

3–6 Months Prior to the Self-Study Site Visit

- School representatives participate in 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 growth areas) 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 Self-Study 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: Organizational, Community, and Student Characteristics
6. Chapter II: Progress Report on the Schoolwide *Action Plan* Showing Success in Addressing the growth areas
7. Chapter III: Self-Study Findings based on the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria
8. Chapter IV: Synthesis and Prioritizing of Strengths and Growth Areas: Revision of the Schoolwide *Action Plan*

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 Adult School/ROCP Criteria. These are the criteria that must be met for the school. Each of the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP 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 analysis of organizational quality and impact on student learning by the school’s stakeholders engaged in the self-study process.

In addition, the indicators are supported by discussion questions that are intended to provoke thoughtful reflection and dialogue among all stakeholders about organizational quality and impact on student learning. 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 analysis of evidence taken from the work of the Leadership Team and the Focus Groups. For evidence to be useful, it must have undergone analysis and reflection by the school’s stakeholders in each Focus Group and the Leadership Team. 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 facilitating the school toward school improvement.

Responses to the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP 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 Adult School/ROCP Criteria, Focus Groups must identify what the school's strengths and growth areas are in relation to the findings. This is an important part of completing each response to the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria because these identified strengths and growth areas 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 is located in each school's portal in the WASC Accreditation Information Management System. The template provides the structure for the *Self-Study Report*. 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
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 Adult School/ROCP Criteria
4. The creation of a schoolwide *Action Plan* that develops specific action steps to address the identified growth areas
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 Organizational Characteristics (Chapter I of the *Self-Study Report*)
2. Task 2: Progress Report on the schoolwide *Action Plan* that addresses previously identified growth areas (Chapter II of the *Self-Study Report*)
3. Task 3: Response to the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP 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*).

The Self-Study

Chapter I: Task 1

Task 1: Organizational, Community, and Student Characteristics: 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 the Mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
- 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 Organizational 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 learner outcomes

- 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
- Using data generated in this profile describe to what extent the programs/courses are connected to the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes and to what extent the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes 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 organizational, 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 Growth Areas 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 growth areas and any additional mid-cycle, progress, or special visit recommendations

Procedures:

The school is to provide a summary of progress on the *Action Plan* that addresses growth areas 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 the schoolwide *Action Plan*, *noting how the growth areas were embedded within the Action Plan*; cite evidence, including how each action step has been completed.
- Summarize how the progress on the growth areas 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 growth area within the schoolwide *Action Plan*?
- Did the school show how all growth areas from the last self-study or initial visit were addressed in the schoolwide *Action Plan*?
- Does this chapter show how progress on each growth area 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 Adult School/ROCP 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 Adult School/ROCP 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 Adult School/ROCP 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 Adult School/ROCP 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 growth areas to address.



Self-Check Questions

Task 3 Self-Check Questions: Based upon the institution's mission, student learning outcomes, and the ACS WASC adult/ROCP criteria, did the school

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

ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria

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

1. School Mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
2. Governance, Organizational Infrastructure, and School Leadership
3. Faculty and Staff
4. Curriculum
5. Instruction
6. Use of Assessment
7. Student Support Services
8. Resource Management
9. Community Partnerships
10. Action Plan for Continuous Improvement

On the pages that follow, the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria are listed along with supporting indicators and discussion questions.

Under each of the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP 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 with supporting evidence. The school must comment on every indicator as they provide answers for each of the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP 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 explain how evidence supports the findings 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: School 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 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 school’s mission statement is central to organizational planning and decision-making activities. 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?
- How does the school consider its mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes in its planning and decision-making activities? What evidence does the school have to support the use of the mission statement and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes in planning processes?
- How is analysis and review of the school’s mission and achievement of Schoolwide Learner Outcomes related to the revision of the schoolwide *Action Plan* each year?

Indicator 1.3: The school establishes Schoolwide Learner Outcomes that identify the broad, global goals for all students based on current and future student learning needs and current, research based concepts.

Discussion Questions:

- How were the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes developed and how are they measured?
- What is the process used to evaluate current educational literature and integrate new ideas that address current and future student learning needs?
- How does the review of profile data impact the review and revision of the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes?

- 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?
- How are all stakeholders connected to the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes?
- How does the achievement of Schoolwide Learner Outcomes connect to the schoolwide *Action Plan*?

School's Strengths and Growth Areas for Criterion 1 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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Growth Areas:

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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 Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
- 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: Governance, Organizational Infrastructure, and School Leadership

The organizational structure and roles of governance and leadership are clearly defined and designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning and improve organizational effectiveness. The governing body enables the administration 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 continuous 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 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 2.3: The school has an established infrastructure of policies and procedures that provides stability and consistency for all organizational 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 learner 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 organizational 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?

Indicator 2.4: 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 administration effectively focus the school on its vision for the school?
- 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?

School's Strengths and Growth Areas for Criterion 2 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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Growth Areas:

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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 organizational 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 Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.

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 develops personnel policies and procedures that are clearly communicated to all employees. 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:

- 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?
- 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 assures the effectiveness of its faculty and non-teaching support staff members by evaluating all personnel systematically and provides direction and support for their professional growth.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the school establish written guidelines for evaluating all personnel, including performance of assigned duties and participation in organizational 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?
- 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?

Indicator 3.4: The school provides all personnel with appropriate opportunities for professional development and implements processes to measure the impact on student learning.

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?

School’s Strengths and Growth Areas for Criterion 3 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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Growth Areas:

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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 develops and implements a challenging, coherent, relevant and research-based curriculum that allows all students the opportunity to reach Schoolwide Learner Outcomes. The school’s curriculum reflects its mission and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes and connects directly to current student learning needs.

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

Additional indicators for online programs/courses, if applicable:

Indicator 4.1a: A rigorous, relevant, coherent, and articulated online curriculum is accessible to all students through courses/programs offered, within and across grade levels.

Indicator 4.1b: The governing authority’s online policies are directly connected to the school’s vision, mission, and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.

Indicator 4.1c: 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 list all courses and provide course outlines for all stakeholder groups?
- How does the school examine the demographics and situation of students throughout the class offerings?
- To what extent does each course have clearly defined learner outcomes?
- How is organizational resource allocation connected to curriculum development needs?

(Additional Discussion Questions for Online Programs/Courses)

- 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?
- 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?
- How does the school determine the effectiveness of its outsourced curriculum to maintain curricular integrity, reliability, and security?
- 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?
- To what extent do the school’s instructional practices and other activities facilitate access and success for special needs students?

Indicator 4.2: The school has developed and implemented a regularly curricular review cycle in order to ensure that the needs of the community are met and the content taught in the classrooms is accurate and relevant and maintains curricular integrity.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent does the school have a curriculum review cycle in place that includes as many stakeholders as possible?
- How does the curriculum reflect the school's mission and how does it connect to the school's Schoolwide Learner Outcomes?
- How does the school use annual profile data to evaluate course and program offerings?
- How often is the entire school curriculum evaluated for relevancy in light of changing student demographics?
- To what extent does the school gather input from current students and the community at large to determine future course and program offerings?
- To what extent are all teachers involved in the curricular review process?
- What processes are in place to ensure that learning materials are providing accurate and up-to-date information to students?
- To what extent does the curriculum review process result in written conclusions that are used to make allocation decisions?

Indicator 4.3: Students have access to current texts, learning materials, informational resources, and technology 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?

School's Strengths and Growth Areas for Criterion 4 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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Growth Areas:

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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: Instruction

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.

Indicator 5.1: The school provides high-level instruction with appropriate breadth, depth, rigor, and sequencing for all programs and courses and ensures student understanding of the standards/expected performance levels of the programs/courses in order to demonstrate the learning.

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 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.

Discussion Questions:

- To what degree are teacher technology competencies assessed during online or blended 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 5.3: The school is actively engaged in integrating technology into instruction.

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?

Indicator 5.4: All in-person and online teachers strengthen student understanding and achievement of the learning outcomes through the use of a variety of delivery modes and instructional strategies that effectively engage all 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?

- 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?
- To what extent does the school offer online learning options or virtual classroom experiences for students?

Indicator 5.5: 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 5.6: Strategies are used by the instructional staff to develop personalized approaches to learning and alternative instructional options which allow access to the rigorous standards-based curriculum.

Discussion Questions:

- To what extent is there evidence that the processes and strategies are effective for all incoming 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, including those enrolled in online programs?
- To what degree does teacher involvement with all students promote inclusion and engagement of all students, including online students?
- To what extent are there processes for the regular review of all student and schoolwide profiles that impact the use of interventions for all, including online, students?

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

Strengths:

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Growth Areas:

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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 effective assessment procedures to collect, disaggregate, analyze, evaluate, and report performance data for students within courses and programs. Assessment is used to measure student progress, to modify learning approaches, and to carry out organizational planning, allocation of resources, and continuous school improvement. The school recognizes the central role of its faculty for improving courses and programs through the assessment instruments and practices used in the school.

Indicator 6.1: 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 growth areas?
- 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 Schoolwide Learner Outcomes in view?

Indicator 6.2: 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 6.3: Clear learning outcomes are developed for each course so that success criteria 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 6.4: A range of student work and other data analyses are used to assess student achievement of the academic standards and the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes and to make organizational changes to better support all students.

Discussion Questions:

- 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?
- 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 often do the administration and faculty meet to talk about student learning levels, assessment results, etc.?
- How does the school use assessment results to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs and courses it offers?

Indicator 6.5: The school uses assessment results for organizational planning, *Action Plan* revision, and resource allocation.

Discussion Questions:

- Who is involved in the organizational 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*?

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

Strengths:

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Growth Areas:

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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

Student support services address the identified needs of students and create and ensure a supportive learning environment that addresses 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 demonstrate 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 provides and evaluates counseling and/or academic advising programs to support student success in the transition to ongoing 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 enrollment phase to the successful completion of the school course/program of choice in expectation of transition to further education/employment.

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 needed support, including referral services, such areas as health and family support, career and personal counseling, and academic assistance.

Discussion Question:

- 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?
- To what degree are the academic counseling, college preparation support, personal counseling, and health services provided for the students involved in all instruction, including online?
- How frequently does the school evaluate all (on and off site) student support services and refine 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 organizational 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?

School's Strengths and Growth Areas for Criterion 7 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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Growth Areas:

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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 organizational investments and assets?

Indicator 8.3: Organizational 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 organizational 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 and develop/implement plans 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 Schoolwide Learner Outcomes 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 Growth Areas for Criterion 8 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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-

Growth Areas:

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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 plans
- Earthquake and other natural disaster preparedness and evacuation plans.

Criterion 9: Community Partnerships

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 educational experiences and employment opportunities.

Indicator 9.1: The school develops connections with community leaders, businesses, and organizations to enhance the educational 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 provides students with opportunities such as community service or internships to enhance student goals and success.

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 communicates the goals of the adult school program and works collaboratively with the community to meet local needs.

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?

School's Strengths and Growth Areas for Criterion 9 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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Growth Areas:

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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 Continuous Improvement

The school uses the self-study process to identify growth areas that are included in a schoolwide *Action Plan* that facilitates school improvement activities and processes. The schoolwide *Action Plan* is used regularly, reviewed annually, and monitored consistently by the governing body to ensure continuous improvement.

Indicator 10.1: As a result of the accreditation process, the school has identified growth areas (short- and long-term) that will impact student learning and increase the achievement levels of students and developed an *Action Plan* focusing on growth and continuous improvement.

Discussion Questions:

- How did the self-study process identify the growth areas for the school?
- How have the growth areas been prioritized by the school?
- To what extent have all stakeholders met to discuss the *Action Plan* and give input to its implementation?
- 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: The school has procedures in place to implement and monitor the *Action Plan* and assess its impact on student learning, school programs, and operations; this includes communication of progress to all stakeholders.

Discussion Questions:

- For each *Action Plan* growth area, how has the school identified an individual or group responsible to implement the needed action steps to address the growth area?
- To what extent has the governing body and administration funded the activities or events needed to address growth areas?
- What opportunities are provided for all stakeholders to have a voice in the regular review and revision of the *Action Plan*?
- 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 10.3: The schoolwide *Action Plan* is used for organizational 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 Growth Areas for Criterion 10 (no specific number required)

Strengths:

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-
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Growth Areas:

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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 Adult School/ROCP Criteria.

Chapter IV: Task 4

Task 4: Revise the schoolwide *Action Plan* based on the growth areas 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 growth areas 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 “growth areas” 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 growth areas.
 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 growth areas that you want to add to the schoolwide *Action Plan* as the major growth areas to address in the next three years.

After completing the synthesis process and identifying the major growth areas, 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 growth area:
 - Statement of the growth area
 - Rationale for the growth area based on self-study findings and visiting committee recommendations for additional growth areas
 - Schoolwide learner outcomes addressed
 - Ways of assessing progress

- Specific steps to address the growth area
- 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 Growth area
- Steps Necessary to Address the Growth area
- 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; schools can develop the format that they like as long as it includes the key components that are required.

Example of Action Plan Format

Growth area: 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 growth area 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 Growth area	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 Adult School/ROCP 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 Adult School/ROCP Criteria as the standard
- Confirm and validate evidence for the assertions in the *Self-Study Report* with the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP 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 growth areas 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 Adult School/ROCP Criteria and eligibility requirements
- Assure the ACS WASC Commission that the school has been responsive to growth areas 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 adult/ROCP 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 Adult School/ROCP 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.

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 organizational 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 submits the *Accreditation Status Recommendation*
- 3:00–3:30 Exit meeting: Visiting 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 growth areas 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 growth areas 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*.

1. The *Visiting Committee Report* 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 *Visiting Committee Report*:

- a. Validate the school in light of its own stated mission, objectives, and the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria.
 - b. It is critical that the *Visiting Committee Report* 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 growth areas 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 *Visiting Committee Report*.
- a. Is the *Visiting Committee Report* consistent throughout — no mixed or conflicting messages?
 - b. Does the *Visiting Committee Report* say exactly what is intended, so that there can be no misinterpretations?
 - c. Does the language of the *Visiting Committee Report* clearly represent observations, conclusions, and recommendations as coming from the team as a whole, not just from one member’s perspective?
 - d. Does the *Visiting Committee Report* deal fairly with the entire school, without advocating selectively for certain special interests?
 - e. Does the text of the *Visiting Committee Report* support the growth areas 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 *Visiting Committee Report* 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 *Visiting Committee Report* should encourage the school to take appropriate actions but should be stated diplomatically.
4. The *Visiting Committee Report* is written for the Commission and the school — be sure that the *Visiting Committee Report* is written with both audiences in view. A template is provided in the Member Portal for the *Visiting Committee Report*. 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 growth areas of the previous ACS WASC Visiting Committee: This chapter of the report validates efforts by the school to address growth areas from previous visiting committees. Thoughtful responses to the growth areas are expected from a school.

Chapter III: Evaluation of School's Response to the ACS WASC Adult School Criteria: This chapter provides most of the substance of the *Visiting Committee Report* 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 adult education and consistent with the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria.

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

Accreditation Status

The ACS WASC Commission meets three times a year and reviews the documentation of site visits, reading the *Visiting Committee Report* and *Accreditation Status Recommendation* 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 Adult School/ROCP 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 growth areas
 - 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 mid-cycle 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 growth areas identified by the visiting committee should be integrated into the *Action Plan*.

The visiting committee chair submits the final ACS WASC visiting committee through the **Action Card on the [Member Portal](https://acswasc.force.com/memberportal/s/login)** (acswasc.force.com/memberportal/s/login) and the report is made available to the school in the School Portal. Contact the visiting committee chair if the report has not been received within ten working days following the visit.

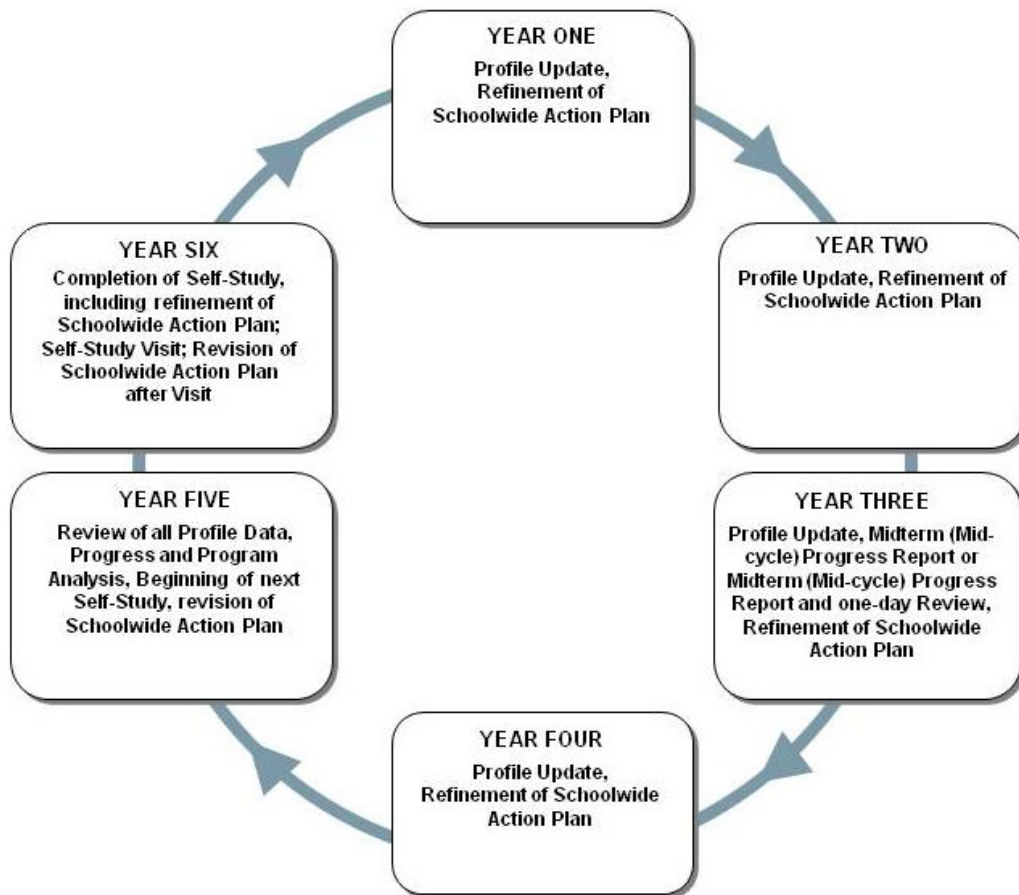
The modified *Action Plan* should be submitted electronically to ACS WASC via the **Action Card on the Reviews/Visits page in the [School Portal](https://acswasc.force.com/schoolportal/s/reviews)** (acswasc.force.com/schoolportal/s/reviews) by June 1. The Leadership Team involves the total staff in annual assessment of progress, including data analysis about student learning in relation to the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes 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 growth area, 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* growth areas, noting responses and making any necessary modifications or refinements to the *Action Plan*.
3. Periodically, review the school's Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.
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- 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 Adult School/ROCP 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 *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 growth areas. 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 growth areas. 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 adult schools and ROCPs to ensure that the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria is still being met and organizational 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 Home page of the ACS WASC School Portal. There is a fee assessed for the substantive change visit if it is determined that a visit is required.

ACS WASC Resources

This section provides ACS WASC resources that are available to assist schools and visiting committees in the adult school/ROCP accreditation process. In addition to the resources listed, there are templates, samples, forms, and explanations that can be found on the ACS WASC School and Member Portals.

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

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 & 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 Adult School/ROCP 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 growth areas 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 via the Action Card on the ACS WASC Member Portal.
13. _____ Prior to the site visit, finalize the schedule with the visiting committee chair.

During the Site Visit

1. _____ Provide the visiting committee with a comfortable working area, organizational map, schedule of classes, parking places, name tags, and needed materials. Ensure that there is adequate technology support as requested by the chair.
2. _____ 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.
3. _____ Work with the Leadership Team to revise the schoolwide *Action Plan* according to the findings of the self-study, inserting the major growth areas into the *Action Plan*.
4. _____ Arrange a place for the Exit Meeting — be sure that all stakeholders are invited.

After the Site Visit

1. _____ Integrate the findings of the visiting committee into the schoolwide *Action Plan*. All major growth areas listed in the *Visiting Committee Report* should be inserted into the schoolwide *Action Plan*.
2. _____ Submit the revised *Action Plan* to ACS WASC via the Action Card on the School Portal by June 1 and distribute copies to all stakeholder groups.
3. _____ 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 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 *Adult School/ROCP 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 Adult School/ROCP 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, growth areas to address, etc.
 - Review to what extent the school meets ACS WASC criteria and the school’s Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
 - 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

1. _____ Arrive on time for all meetings; be ready to participate in a positive manner.
2. _____ 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.
3. _____ Follow the chair's direction in visiting classrooms, especially if there are multiple sites.
4. _____ Determine to what degree the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes are being accomplished.
5. _____ Look for evidence of an ongoing process for school improvement through the use of the schoolwide *Action Plan*.
6. _____ Let the process unfold — don't prejudge; validate, verify, and document your findings.
7. _____ Concentrate on being a good listener. Prepare good questions to ask that will lead to quality discussions, not just short yes or no answers.
8. _____ 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.
9. _____ Avoid involvement in school issues that are not pertinent to the self-study visit. Direct all difficult situations or discussions to the chair.
10. _____ Work cooperatively with all other visiting committee members as findings are discussed and decisions made. This is a consensus process — be a team player!
11. _____ Support the chair as he/she works with the Leadership Team to thoroughly discuss the synthesis of the concepts of the ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP Criteria, the *Self-Study Report*, and the findings during the visit as reflected in the draft *Visiting Committee Report*.
12. _____ Make necessary *Visiting Committee Report* modifications and finalize the report.
13. _____ Assist in the preparation of the *Accreditation Status Recommendation* that will give the ACS WASC Commission the recommendation for accreditation status.
14. _____ If necessary, submit the expense reimbursement form and the optional chair evaluation form. Keep copies of all receipts.
15. _____ 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.
16. _____ 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 Adult School/ROCP Criteria of accreditation and of providing guidance to the school in the form of identifying growth areas 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 ACS WASC Adult School/ROCP 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 Adult School/ROCP 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 organizational 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; the visiting committee members will have access to the manual and materials through the Member Portal.
 - 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 Adult School/ROCP 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 *Self-Study Report* 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 Adult School/ROCP 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 Adult School/ROCP 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* and the *Accreditation Status Recommendation*.

During the Visit

1. _____ 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.
2. _____ Meet daily with the school leaders, including the Leadership Team, about the visiting committee findings, questions, visit logistics, etc.
3. _____ Guide the visiting committee members to discuss and investigate any issues or questions raised in the dialogue with the Leadership Team.
4. _____ Facilitate the necessary *Visiting Committee Report* modifications as the report is finalized.
5. _____ Facilitate the visiting committee discussion of the accreditation status that will be recommended to the ACS WASC Commission.
6. _____ Complete the *Visiting Committee Report* and submit the *Accreditation Status Recommendation*.
 - Be sure that the *Visiting Committee Report* is consistent and aligned to the accreditation status recommendation.
 - Come to consensus on the *Accreditation Status Recommendation* with the visiting committee members.
7. _____ Have visiting committee members complete expense vouchers and give them an opportunity to complete the optional chairperson evaluation form
8. _____ Plan for the Exit Meeting — read major areas of strength and major growth areas; give all members a chance to publicly say “thank you;” have the visiting committee stay briefly after the meeting concludes for some social interaction.
9. _____ Do not imply the recommendation to the ACS WASC Commission; it is confidential.

10. _____ Remind the school leadership to integrate the visiting committee suggestions and recommendations into the schoolwide *Action Plan* for immediate implementation.

After the Visit

1. _____ Send appropriate “thank-you’s” to school leadership individuals and visiting committee members.
2. _____ Notify ACS WASC right away of any problems that need to be addressed.
3. _____ If necessary, submit the visiting committee member evaluations, expense reports, etc. to the ACS WASC office via the Member Portal.

