

## Determining if Your School Should Pursue AACSB Accounting Accreditation

---

**AACSB Accounting Accreditation** is an extension of **AACSB Business Accreditation**, and allows a business school and accounting program to earn an additional quality assurance designation for its accounting programs. Institutions with undergraduate, master's, and/or doctoral accounting degree programs may pursue accounting accreditation after achieving or simultaneously striving for AACSB Business Accreditation. The AACSB Accounting Accreditation specifically evaluates an institution's accounting programs and accounting academic unit. Within the accounting standards, an accounting degree program is defined as "any bachelor's or graduate-level accounting program that is to be included in the process to determine eligibility for accreditation." An academic unit is defined as "the administrative structure (e.g., school, department, faculty, etc.) that has direct oversight for the accounting programs."

An institution that is potentially eligible for AACSB Accounting Accreditation may have accounting programs such as:

- Undergraduate programs with a major or equivalent in accounting.
- Integrated 150-hour degree programs.
- Master's of Business Administration programs with a concentration or major in accounting.
- Masters-level degree programs that have a significant involvement of accounting faculty and prepare students to serve the accounting profession. For example, programs in financial reporting, assurance services, taxation, information systems, managerial accounting, governmental accounting, and internal auditing.
- Doctoral programs with a concentration in accounting.

If your school has one or more of the above characteristics, then you may be in a position to pursue AACSB Accounting Accreditation.

### Is AACSB Accounting Accreditation Beneficial for My School?

AACSB Accounting Accreditation is most beneficial for schools with established accounting academic units, faculty, and curricula that wish seek additional quality assurance status for their accounting programs, and to further develop the processes that surround the continuous improvement of their programs. For example, the accounting accreditation process requires that schools look closely at the accounting unit's mission and strategic management plan, course requirements, faculty, resource allocations, and student learning. In addition to process benefits, the achievement of accreditation can provide competitive advantages over other similar programs and aid in the recruitment of students and faculty.

Here are a few questions to consider:

- Does your program(s) align with professional certification requirements such that graduates may easily qualify to sit for certification examinations in addition to a degree?
- Does your school have multiple types of accounting programs? For instance, programs in auditing, taxation, forensic accounting, etc.
- Do your accounting programs need to hone or improve their strategic plans?
- Is your school seeking to gain a competitive advantage over other accounting programs?
- Do you need to recruit/retain high-quality faculty and students for your accounting programs?

If your school can answer yes to one or more of these questions, you will likely find AACSB Accounting Accreditation beneficial to your objectives.

### **Concerns about Faculty Resources**

As with AACSB Business Accreditation, some of the top challenges for accounting academic units are the faculty requirements. AACSB Accounting Accreditation also has specific faculty requirements for its accredited programs. For instance, Standard 34 requires that a school's accounting unit must have a "sufficient number of individuals with professional accounting credentials, qualifications, or certifications to be consistent with the academic unit's mission, each program's educational objectives, and with each individual's teaching and research responsibilities." Standard 35 requires that faculty should be actively contributing to the scholarship of accounting discipline. And, Standard 36 outlines the responsibility of accounting faculty to "demonstrate sufficient ongoing professional interaction to support their role in achieving the academic unit's mission and each program's educational objectives." All of which can be tough to achieve. Additionally, schools accredited for accounting also must comply with Business Standards 2, 9, and 10 that outline overall faculty sufficiency, qualifications, and intellectual contribution requirements for all business programs.