AACSB Initial Accounting Accreditation Team Member Responsibilities and the Peer Review Process

As you prepare for the visit, please refer to this for guidelines and expectations regarding the peer review team tasks and responsibilities in the initial accreditation process.

1. Transition from the mentor to the Team Chair.

Once the School is invited to apply for initial accounting accreditation the mentor steps aside and the chair takes over the advising role from the mentor. In this position the Chair works closely with the school in the development of the visit schedule and provides advice concerning the content of the Self Evaluation Report. The Chair may (but is not required) conduct an onsite campus visit prior to the official initial accreditation team visit. It is the responsibility of the institution, not the Chair, to present its case for accreditation and continuous improvement (1) in the self-evaluation report, (2) in responses to team requests and questions included in the pre-visit letter, (3) during the on-site visit, and (4) in the optional response to the team report. The Chair's primary role during this period is to raise appropriate questions during the development of the self-evaluation report and prior to submission of the final self-evaluation report to the team and AACSB International.

2. Analysis of the Self-Evaluation Report and submission of the documentation:

All team members review and analyze the Self Evaluation Report. The Peer Review Team Chair contacts the team members to obtain their analysis and to discuss the content of the draft pre-visit letter. The Team Chair drafts the team’s pre-visit letter and submits the document to the Chair of the Accounting Accreditation Committee 6 weeks prior to the next scheduled AAC meeting or to the AACSB staff member assigned as the accreditation staff liaison for the host school to facilitate an electronic review by the committee. Please use the attached pre-visit letter template. Draft pre-visit letters should be sent as an e-mail attachment to AAC@aacsb.edu with a copy to the AACSB staff member assigned as the accreditation staff liaison to the host school.

Guidelines for the Draft Pre-visit Letter and accompanying Standard-by-Standard Analysis:

- The draft pre-visit letter (cover letter) accompanies the team’s analysis of the SER and should include the major issues that are detailed in the team’s analysis section.
- The team’s analysis of the SER should be in a standard-by-standard format specifying issues and concerns and the degree of concern regarding each issue.
- The analysis should clearly state its requests for (a) information to be delivered prior to the visit and (b) information to be provided on-site. Teams should request as much information as possible for review prior to the visit to allow more time for discussions and activities that only can be accomplished on-site.
- Evaluative statements, such as, "no concerns" or "satisfies this standard" are premature during this phase of the review process and should not be included in the pre-visit letter.
- Gratuitous (non-standards specific) comments should be reserved for inclusion in on-site conversations or in appropriate sections of the team’s visit report.
- Preferred words/phrases for the report are suggested in place of those in parentheses: self-evaluation (self-study); Peer Review Team (visit team, visitation team - the team’s role includes more than just the visit); congruence, satisfies, meets the expectations (compliance); does not satisfy, does not meet the expectations, incongruent with (disconformity); application for initial accounting accreditation (letter of intent); pre-visit letter (letter of concerns).
- When an initial accounting accreditation applicant is not being recommended for a visit, specific rationale relating to the standards must be cited in the pre-visit letter. Because the institution can request and proceed with a visit, even though not recommended, please do not remove the visit dates from your schedule until you receive confirmation from AACSB that the visit will not take place.
3. **Review and Distribution of the Final Pre-visit Letter.**

   a. **Pre-visit Letter.** AACSB staff will electronically distribute the draft pre-visit letter to the applicant’s assigned Accounting Accreditation Committee Liaison and Reader. The Team Chair revises the letter to reflect the Committee’s comments and distributes the final pre-visit letter. When possible, the pre-visit letter should be sent to the host dean approximately 45 days prior to the visit.

   b. **Responses to Pre-visit Letters.** If the institution responds to the pre-visit letter, the team should receive the response at least 15 days prior to the visit. The institution should also copy the chair of the Accounting Accreditation Committee (AAC@aacsb.edu).

4. **Visit Schedule Determination:**

   No later than 30 days prior to the visit, the Team Chair should confer with the host dean to clarify and discuss the pre-visit letter and to finalize the visit schedule (discussions on preliminary visit arrangements should begin earlier).

5. **Preparation and Submission of the Team Visit Report.**

   a. **Preparation.** Because the team recommendation is communicated to the school, it is essential that the team reaches its accreditation recommendation prior to leaving the campus. It is recommended that, if at all possible, a draft copy of the report is provided prior to leaving the campus as well. Please use the attached team visit report template can be used for this purpose. The Initial Accounting Accreditation Handbook (see link below) contains additional guidance regarding the preparation of the team visit report.

   b. **Submission.** Within ten days following the visit, the team chair forwards a copy of the team visit report and its recommendation to both the applicant institution and the Accounting Accreditation Committee (AAC@aacsb.edu). The applicant has 10 days to provide the team with a request of corrections of factual information. The applicant institution has the option to submit a response to the team visit report; this response should be provided to the Chair of the Accounting Accreditation Committee (AAC@aacsb.edu) with a copy to each of the peer review team members.

6. **Role of the Accounting Accreditation Committee Liaison.**

   An Accreditation Committee Member serves as liaison between the visit team and the committee. The liaison’s role is to lead discussions regarding the institution at accreditation committee meetings. Prior to committee meetings, the liaison thoroughly reviews the pre-visit letter, visit report, recommendation, and any responses from the institution. The liaison determines if a conference call or other form of information exchange between the team, accreditation committee chair, or AACSB office is necessary, and initiates action accordingly.

For reference, please find the following resources available online:

- Eligibility Procedures and Standards for Accounting Accreditation, Adopted April 2013

- Eligibility Procedures and Standards for Business Accreditation, Adopted April 2013

- Initial Accounting Accreditation Handbook
Please feel free to contact the staff member assigned as the accreditation staff liaison to the host school if you have questions or would like additional information.

Thank you for your time and service.