



Continuous Improvement Review Handbook for Joint Business and Accounting



AACSB International Accreditation Continuous Improvement Review Handbook for Joint Business and Accounting

PREFACE

The *Continuous Improvement Review Handbook for Joint Business and Accounting* is designed to provide assistance and essential information regarding the continuous improvement review and documentation process for institutions whose business school and accounting academic unit that hold AACSB Business and Accounting Accreditation. The handbook also provides key information and guidance for Peer Review Teams conducting joint and collaborative business and accounting accreditation reviews. It describes the philosophy, procedures, and guidelines for the Continuous Improvement Review process, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the business and accounting Peer Review Team members in conducting a thorough and complete AACSB Continuous Improvement Review.

AACSB International has also developed an online peer review training that provides an overview of the roles and processes involved in peer review. The training, found at <https://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/volunteers/training> includes helpful information for schools and reviewers regarding all phases of the accreditation process, including continuous improvement review processes and responsibilities.

Throughout the rest of this document the information, processes and documentation is inferred to be for both business and accounting units, unless noted. The accredited academic business unit is referred to as the (business) school. The term school is used to describe the entity that offers programs and is not meant to imply any particular organizational structure. For accounting units holding separate AACSB Accounting Accreditation, the term accounting academic unit or Unit is used.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The AACSB International Board of Directors adopted the Continuous Improvement Review process and procedures described in this handbook in April 2013. **The Continuous Improvement Review (CIR) process pertains only to institutions already accredited** and this particular handbook outlines the process for those institutions that hold AACSB Business and Accounting Accreditation. All initial accreditation reviews follow the standard-by-standard review process as outlined in the *Initial Accreditation Handbook*.

The Continuous Improvement Review process minimizes the reporting burden on accredited business and accounting academic units. The process creates an ongoing “Continuous Improvement” focus signaling that once an institution has achieved AACSB accreditation, a process of documented continuous improvements in support of the stated mission and strategic management plan will sustain AACSB accreditation status.

The Continuous Improvement Review process is not a standard-by-standard review. By focusing the review on educational improvement, strategic management, and fulfillment of mission, the members of the Peer Review Team will be particularly attuned to educational quality issues and problems that may be revealed in the process. The CIR process relies on extensive and effective communications between the host business school, accounting academic unit, and the Peer Review Teams.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, all schools and units, and the reviewers provide evaluations of the process which informs AACSB of continuous improvement efforts. Changes in the procedures and documentation specifications may be made each year to incorporate opportunities for continuous improvement learned from all participants in the previous year.

Each institution has an assigned accreditation staff liaison to assist with the review process. This individual serves as the designated AACSB staff member for all accreditation related questions and needs for the Peer Review Team, and is the liaison between the institution’s business school and accounting academic unit leadership and the volunteer network (Peer Review Team members, Continuous Improvement Review Committee, Accounting Accreditation Committee, etc.). The staff liaison is available to assist with any questions regarding the Continuous Improvement Review process. The institution’s AACSB staff liaison can be found by logging on to myAACSB (the icon can be found on the upper right at www.aacsb.edu then viewing the institution in the organization directory).

The AACSB Continuous Improvement Review process is conducted every five years and may involve up to two years of engagement by the school and unit inclusive of the year in which the Peer Review Team conducts its campus visit. A Continuous Improvement Review may produce the following recommendations from the Peer Review Team for the school and unit (corresponding but separate recommendations may be made by the AACSB Accounting Accreditation peer review team):

- Extension of Accreditation which may include continuous improvement recommendation(s) to be addressed over the next five years and reported on at the time of the next review.
- Continuous Improvement Review 2 (referred to as CIR2) where specific concern(s) regarding alignment with AACSB accreditation standards that must be addressed within twelve months through a follow up report to the appropriate accreditation committee. The

follow up report must address how the school and/or unit has resolved the specific concern(s) related to the identified accreditation standards.

- Revocation of AACSB accreditation and removal from the Accreditation Council based on the Peer Review Team's assessment that non-alignment with AACSB accreditation standards seriously impact the school/unit's ability to demonstrate overall high quality and continuous improvement supported by engagement, innovation and impact, and that these concerns are likely to be successfully addressed in the next 3-5 years. Such a recommendation must be supported by an analysis documenting the non-alignment issues with specific AACSB accreditation standards.
- The recommendation of the business and accounting peer review teams may yield different recommendations from the above set of possible outcomes.

The Peer Review Team recommendation resulting from the review must be evaluated by the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee. The committee may concur with the Peer Review Team's recommendation or remand it back for further discussion. If the Committee concurs with an Extension or a Revocation recommendation, the accreditation recommendation must go to the AACSB Board of Directors for final ratification. The accreditation recommendation is not final until the Board of Directors acts. In the case of a Revocation of Accreditation that is ratified by the AACSB Board of Directors, the school/unit may appeal the decision in accordance with AACSB appeal procedures (<https://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/resources/policies-and-procedures>).

CIR2 recommendations from a Peer Review Team must be approved by the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee or may be remanded back to the team for further discussions. If a CIR2 recommendation is concurred by the appropriate committee, no further action is taken until the school/unit provides the follow up report which must be evaluated as to adequacy of the progress in addressing the concern(s) stated in the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee decision letter. A member of the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee and a member of the original Peer Review Team will review the report and make a recommendation to the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee. The recommendation may be as follows:

- Extension of Accreditation which may include continuous improvement recommendation(s) to be addressed over the next five years and reported on at the time of the next review. The original review cycle remains in place and the next review will occur in approximately four years. If ratified by the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee, the recommendation is forwarded to the AACSB Board of Directors for final ratification.
- Focused Review (Referred to as FR1 or FR2 depending on the time frame granted by the committee) for up to two additional years if the concern(s) detailed in the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee decision letter have not been adequately addressed where issues of mission achievement and educational quality outcomes are in question. The school/unit will provide a report within one year of the committee's decision on its progress in addressing the specific concern(s). A member of the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee and a member of the original Peer Review Team will review the school/unit's report and make a recommendation to the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee. If a school/unit proceeds into the FR2 stage, the final decision must be either Extension or Revocation of Accreditation. In such cases, a Peer Review Team must visit the school/unit prior to making such a recommendation. For a FR1 review, a campus visit is optional. Extension and Revocation decisions must be ratified by the AACSB Board of Directors to be final. If an Extension recommendation is ratified by the Board of Directors, the school/unit moves forward to its next Continuous

Improvement Review which will occur based on the original Continuous Improvement Review cycle. In the case of a Revocation of Accreditation that is ratified by the AACSB Board of Directors, the school/unit may appeal the decision in accordance with AACSB appeal procedures (<https://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/resources/policies-and-procedures>).

II. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REVIEW APPLICATION

The Continuous Improvement Review (CIR) Application is due on July 1st, two years prior to the review year. This application initiates the Continuous Improvement Review process.

What is Required

The school/unit submits a CIR Application for sustaining accreditation, in which the school/unit provides details on the characteristics that determine alignment with eligibility criteria for accreditation and an update on issue(s) identified at the last AACSB review. The respective CIR application for the review will include:

- Institutional and school/unit demographic information.
- Preferred range of dates for the Peer Review Team to conduct the campus visit. The school/unit must be in academic session during an accreditation visit. AACSB *International will make every effort to accommodate the requested review timeframe. However, AACSB reserves the right to schedule the review in a different period of the originally scheduled year if necessary to evenly distribute the review among available timeframes.*
- List of Degree Programs offered for the business school/accounting academic unit that are to be included in the accreditation review.
- In accordance with Eligibility Criteria D, identification of programs requested for exclusion and justifications - The process for requesting exclusions is described in the *Eligibility Procedures and Standards for Business Accreditation* (<https://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/standards/business>). New documentation does not need to be submitted for exclusions approved from a prior review, either a CIR or initial review. Schools/Units only need to submit exclusion request documentation for new degrees, degrees whose names have changed, or substantive changes in previously excluded degrees that have occurred since the last review.
- Comparable Peers (for consideration to serve on the Peer Review Team) -- *a minimum of six comparable peers are required to compile the statistical data report. Any institutions duplicated in the competitive group do not count towards the minimum of six.*
- Competitive Group (excluded from serving on the Peer Review Team)
- Aspirant Group (for consideration to serve on the Peer Review Team) -- *a minimum of three aspirants are required to compile the statistical data report. Any institutions duplicated in the competitive group do not count towards the minimum of three.*
- Update on how the school/unit addresses: ethical behavior (Eligibility Criteria A); supports a collegiate environment (Eligibility Criteria B); supports and engages in corporate social

responsibility focus areas (Eligibility Criteria C); and how the organizational structure provides proper oversight, accountability and responsibility of the school/unit's operations (Eligibility Criteria E).

- Update on progress addressing concern(s) stated in the last AACSB review and describe the school/unit's actions that have been taken and progress to date.
- Optional opportunity to identify non-accreditation related topic(s) that the school/unit would like to receive consultative feedback on from the team.
- Statement of affirmation of alignment with Eligibility Criterion F in the application documenting ongoing alignment with AACSB standards for and validation of the accuracy of the information being presented.

When to Submit

The CIR application is due by July 1, two years prior to the scheduled year of visit. Please refer to the respective Continuous Improvement Review Timeline for business at <http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/business/continuous-improvement-review/> and accounting at <https://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/resources/journey/accounting/continuous-improvement-review>.

How to Submit

By the July 1 deadline, the school/unit must submit the CIR Application to the [Continuous Improvement Review Committee](#) Chair (circ@aacsb.edu) / [Accounting Accreditation Committee](#) (aac@aacsb.edu) in care of the AACSB International Headquarters. Only electronic files are required, and should be in Adobe PDF format or Microsoft Word format.

What Happens Next

Upon receipt, staff will review the documentation and confirms the sections documenting the response to Eligibility Criteria and the scope of accreditation (degree programs that will be included in the review). In the event that requests are controversial, the request will be forwarded to the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee for a final decision. The process for identifying the accreditation scope must be completed prior to scheduling the on-site review and normally no later than one year in advance of the Peer Review Team visit.

III. COMPARISON / PEER GROUPS

Processes to support an AACSB accreditation review include the selection of comparison or peer groups to form a relevant context for judgments and assist in the selection of Peer Review Team members. Reviewers from comparable institutions/units are better prepared to make evaluative and consultative judgments and recommendations about the school and to understand the school/unit and its aspirations.

What is Required

The school/unit submits three comparison groups selected from members of the AACSB Accreditation Council. The school/unit may select comparison groups on the basis of

institutional or program comparisons and other factors such as public vs. private, size, urban or suburban location, etc. It is important to note that a business school/unit may be chosen in all three groups, as a peer, competitor, and aspirant based upon the particulars of the business school/unit and programs offered. Doctoral programs may have another set.

- **Comparable Peers:** A list of peers considered similar in mission and assumed appropriate for performance comparison. A minimum of six comparable peers must be provided. The peers should be chosen carefully to match key characteristics of the school/unit. In addition to mission, some features that might be salient when choosing comparison institutions include student populations served, size, degree levels, and primary funding source.
- **Competitive Group:** A list of peers so directly competitive that conflict of interest considerations exclude their personnel from the review process. The competitive peers' list may be of any number. Only those peers should be included where the direct competition for students, faculty, or resources is so compelling that the appearance of a conflict of interest is present.
- **Aspirant Group:** A list of peers that provides a developmental goal for the school/unit, represents management education programs or features that the school/unit hopes to emulate, and places the vision and strategy of the school/unit in context. The list of aspirant peers may be of any number, though a minimum of three peers is required to compile a statistical data report that may be used during the CIR.

Comparison groups do not imply categories or rankings of peers or members accredited by AACSB International. AACSB International will not publish or otherwise make available comparison group listings beyond the accreditation process. These lists are for the benefit of the school/unit and the Peer Review Team in the accreditation review.

Although comparison groups include only AACSB International accredited schools, schools/units are encouraged to look beyond academe for examples of best practices and potential Peer Review Team members. Processes for selecting Peer Review Team members will continue to add value and support involvement from corporations and other appropriate persons.

The school/unit should demonstrate in the review that it appropriately relates to the operational levels of the comparison school/unit set. In some circumstances idiosyncratic features of the school/unit may make some of the data non-comparable.

AACSB International has developed an on-line system to assist the school to identify potential comparison peers. The on-line service, available at <https://datadirect.aacsb.edu/public/profiles/search.cfm>, offers advanced search functions that produce peer lists based on optionally selected criteria.

What Happens Next

- **Peer Review Team:** AACSB staff, in conjunction with the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee Chair selects, and proposes to the school/unit for acceptance, the Peer Review Team Chair, suggested by the school/unit that may include participants from the Comparable Peers and Aspirant Group. Additional team members will be selected based upon eligibility, experience, mission fit, and availability. Potential conflicts of interest are also considered. Suggestions for additional team members beyond the

chair will be considered but are not guaranteed. The proposed members are expected to be well-prepared to make evaluative judgments about the school/unit, to understand the school/unit and its aspirations, and to offer consultative suggestions for the school/unit's improvement. If invitees cannot serve, the process is repeated until a full team is selected.

- **Accreditation Statistical Reports:** All AACSB Accreditation Council members are required to complete those sections of the AACSB Business School Questionnaire (BSQ) or the Accounting Program Questionnaire (APQ) that are reserved for accredited business schools. Statistical reports are generated from this data based on the responses from Comparison Groups identified by the review. These reports will help form the context for judgment and consultative elements of the review. Upon request from the institution/unit undergoing the accreditation review or on request of the visit team, AACSB will compile a:
 - Comparable Peer Report (includes data on the school/unit and its comparable peers)
 - Aspirant Group Report (includes data on the school/unit and its aspirant peers)

The data should be used for **background information only and not for making accreditation decisions**. Feedback from the team that identifies those data elements most helpful in promoting useful discussions relating to the accreditation review will be used to further refine the *Accreditation Statistical Reports*.

IV. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REVIEW VISIT MATERIALS

What is Required

AACSB International will provide:

- List of approved included and excluded programs (Scope of Accreditation) for the CIR review. Please note that any new degree programs started after the accreditation decision will be considered accredited until the next review. New degree programs will be reviewed during the next CIR.
- Documentation related to the last accreditation review (CIR or Initial Accreditation Visit Reports and official AACSB correspondence resulting from those reviews).

The school will provide:

- The CIR report is due to the PRT chair at least 60 days prior to the team visit date.

V. FIFTH YEAR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REVIEW REPORT

The Continuous Improvement Review is a holistic review centered around the themes of the 2013 accreditation standards – Engagement – Innovation - Impact. The Continuous Improvement Review Report should not be a standard by standard review, but rather the report is organized around the four areas of accreditation standards.

A Continuous Improvement Report Outline and Guidelines, plus the required tables are available at: <https://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/resources/journey/business/continuous-review>

and [AACSB Accounting Accreditation Continuous Improvement Review](#). The report should be no longer than 50 pages in length, excluding appendices. **A separate report for accounting programs is required when applying for accounting continuous improvement review.**

How to Submit

The school/unit must submit the CIR report and all supporting materials electronically to the [Continuous Improvement Review Committee](#) Chair / [Accounting Accreditation Committee](#) Chair and the Peer Review Team members. Electronic copies should be submitted to circ@aacsb.edu and aac@aacsb.edu, respectively. The school/unit will work with the PRT should they desire to work from paper copies. The electronic copies should be in Adobe PDF or Microsoft Word format.

Materials for the Team at the Time of the Visit

In addition to the CIR Report, the school/unit is expected to provide organized supporting materials for the team to review during the campus visit process. These should be organized and available in one location to facilitate the team's campus visit. The following should be provided:

- Faculty vita on all faculty (ideally in a standardized format focused on the five-year review period).
- Documentation of professional staff educational background and experience.
- Faculty and Professional Staff Management Policies.
- Documentation of curricula management support data including outcomes assessment data, examples of student work assessed, program quality review reports, etc.
- Recent faculty promotion and/or tenure files.
- Access to student records, placement data, success of graduates.
- Annual reports by the school/unit for stakeholders and/or the institution.

The Peer Review Team through its early engagement and dialogue with the school/unit may identify other materials that may be needed to support the review. However, care must be exercised to maintain the spirit and intent of the CIR review process ensuring that all requests for documentation are important to the review process and the school/unit is granted sufficient time to collect and organize the information.

Communication between the Business School/Accounting Academic Unit, the Peer Review Team, and the AACSB Staff Liaison:

In order to maximize the benefits and value of the AACSB CIR review process it is vitally important that all parties engage in active communications as soon as the Peer Review Team is identified and reported to the school/unit. This early engagement allows the Peer Review Teams to gain an in depth understanding of the school/unit, their strengths, their challenges, and underlying characteristics and unique features prior to the visit. This familiarization enhances the value of the visit as the team can focus on the review process and does not have to become familiar with the business school/accounting academic unit late in the process.

VI. THE VISIT

The CIR review process focuses on strategic management, expected outcomes and underlying strategies. The Peer Review Team contributes an external perspective on the school/unit's action items, accomplishments, and progress toward achieving its mission, expected outcomes through implementation of its various strategies. The school/unit should be prepared to respond to questions, such as:

- Are the expected outcomes, underlying strategies reflected in vision and mission statements realistic and the supporting strategic management plan for the school/unit?
- Does the school/unit have a realistic vision and mission, expected outcomes, and strategies relative to its financial, intellectual capital, human capital, and physical capital resources?
- What has the school/unit accomplished relevant to its plan?
- What are the next action items in the pursuit of the mission?
- Is the school/unit taking the necessary steps to see that its educational degree and executive education programs remain current and relevant?
- Does the school/unit have processes to ensure continuous improvement?
- Do the school/unit's accomplishments demonstrate effectiveness of its planning and implementation of its action items?

VISIT SCHEDULE

- The Peer Review Team will have a designated chair. The Peer Review Team Chair works with the administrative head of the business school and accounting academic unit to develop a coordinated schedule for the visit ([see sample schedule on AACSB website](#)). **The school/unit must be in academic session during an accreditation visit.** The visit should include certain individuals and groups. Because of differences in administrative structures, the groups and titles may differ from the following:
 - Administrative officers of the business school/accounting academic unit
 - Strategic management committee
 - Department chairs and academic program directors
 - Promotion and tenure committee
 - Senior faculty representatives, junior faculty representatives, clinical faculty representatives, part-time and adjunct faculty representatives
 - Assessment and curricula committee
 - Student service directors, e.g., graduate admissions, academic support and advising, career services and placement
 - Chief executive and chief academic officers of the institution, e.g., president, chancellor, academic vice president, provost, etc.
 - Student representatives

The meeting of the Peer Review Team with the chief executive and chief academic officers should be one of the final meetings of the visit. During this meeting, the team should present the Peer Review Team recommendations (Section II of the CIR Visit Report) and discuss any effective practices (Section VI) highlighted during the review.

PEER REVIEW TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES IN A JOINT REVIEW

The business and accounting peer review teams should work in a collaborative process to develop the visit schedule working with representatives of the host school. The teams should also collaborate in conducting the on-site visit. To that end, the follow is expected in joint business and accounting CIR reviews:

- The business and accounting peer review teams will collaborate in establishing the visit schedule and requests for documentation to be provided by the applicant at the time of the visit.
- Throughout the campus visit process, the business and accounting peer review teams should provide time for joint meetings to share results and findings and to discuss the possible implications of the findings.
- At the time of drafting the peer review team report, the business and accounting team must discuss their findings and conclusions and their recommendation resulting from the CIR review. The teams should be clear on the conclusions reached by each team and consider the impact of the conclusions of each team on the respective outcomes of the business or accounting review. If the two teams reach different conclusions, all team members must understand the basis for the different conclusions and recommendations.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REVIEW VISIT REPORT

Within ten days following the visit, the Team provides the *Continuous Improvement Review Visit Report* to the school/unit and the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee. Prior to issuing the final report to the school/unit and the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee, the school/unit should be provided a review of the report in order to offer any clarifying comments and corrections related to factual information noted in the report.

The appropriate AACSB accreditation committee will review any response to the visit report from the school/unit at its next scheduled meeting (normally, provided that the report is received at least three weeks in advance of the meeting).

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REVIEW 2

If, during the Continuous Improvement Review, the Peer Review Team finds standards-related issues affecting educational quality, additional investigation, reporting, and a focused review will occur in the following year. The Peer Review Team identifies the weakness or threat to educational quality in Section II of the Continuous Improvement Review Visit Report and states the expectations for the extended reporting period. During the CIR2 process, the accredited status of the school/unit does not change until the review and decision process has been completed.

What Happens Next

The appropriate AACSB accreditation committee selects, and proposes to the school/unit for approval, a revised, smaller team that normally includes one member from the Peer Review Team and one from (or appointed by) the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee. The school/unit submits a Continuous Review 2 Report to the Peer Review Team and appropriate AACSB accreditation committee detailing its response to the specific concerns cited by the Peer Review Team. The Continuous Review 2 Team reviews the response from the school/unit and prepares a Team Report. An on-site review may or may not be required. Please note that the policy for the extension of the CIR review period requires that the school/unit be assessed a Continuous Improvement Review fee. (AACSB accreditation fees are subject to change as approved by the Board of Directors. See [AACSB Accreditation Fees](#) for the most current fee schedule).

Successful completion of the review at the end of the CIR2 earns the institution a five-year Extension of AACSB accreditation with the original review year as the start year and the next scheduled CIR review to take place in year five; i.e., the five-year review cycle remains constant. For example, if the school/unit is reviewed in year 2014-15, the next review will be in year 2019-20, irrespective of whether an extended review period is required. If successful completion is not achieved in by the end of the extended review period, the Peer Review Team will recommend continuing review of accreditation for up to two additional years. Continuing Review is a probationary status and will not be disclosed.

FOCUSED REVIEW

During the continuing review period, the school/unit must rectify the standards-related quality issues identified by the CIR2 Peer Review Team Report before Extension of Accreditation can be formally awarded.

What Happens Next

The appropriate AACSB accreditation committee selects, and proposes to the school/unit, the Focused Review Team that normally includes one member from the CIR2 Review Team and one from (or appointed by) the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee. The CIR2 Review Team may be asked to continue to serve as the Focused Review Team. The Focused Review Team reviews the Focused Review Report submitted by the school/unit and confers with the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee to determine (1) if the concerns have been satisfactorily addressed, (2) how the Focused Review Team and Committee can further assist the school/unit, and (3) if an on-site review is needed. An on-site visit is required in the second year of focused review. The team prepares a Focused Review Team Report. Note that the school/unit will be assessed Focused Review fee. (AACSB accreditation fees are subject to change as approved by the Board of Directors. See [AACSB Accreditation Fees](#) for the most current fee schedule).

Successful completion of the Focused Review earns the institution/accounting academic unit Extension of Accreditation for five-years with the original review year as the start year and the next scheduled CIR review to take place in year five; i.e., the original five-year review cycle remains constant. For example, if the school is reviewed in year 2014-15, the next review will be in year 2019-20, irrespective of whether a CIR2 review and Focused Review period are required. The Focused Review period can be up to two years in duration. If successful completion is not achieved by the end of the Focused Review period, the Focused Review

Team must recommend revocation of accreditation. No additional time will be granted to resolve the issues identified over the review periods.

VII. REVIEW OF TEAM RECOMMENDATION

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REVIEW / ACCOUNTING ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

The role of the Continuous Improvement Review Committee / Accounting Accreditation Committee is to ensure consistent application of AACSB International accreditation standards and processes across Peer Review Teams. Within 10 days following the visit, the Peer Review Team submits the team visit report and its recommendation to the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee.

Two members of the committee will serve as a liaison and a reader, respectively, between the visit team and the committee. The liaison's role is to lead discussions concerning the school/unit at the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee meetings. The reader serves as a back-up should the liaison not be available for the committee meetings. Prior to the committee meetings, the liaison and reader thoroughly review the reports, recommendation, and any responses from the institution/unit and should consult with the Peer Review Team Chair for additional information or clarification.

The appropriate AACSB accreditation committee will normally review the team visit report and any response from the school/unit at its next scheduled meeting. The committee can make the following recommendations:

Continuous Improvement Review / Accounting Accreditation Team Recommendation

- Concur with the team recommendation
- Remand the team's recommendation
 - The committee may remand the recommendation to the team for information, clarification, or similar reconsideration when an apparent inconsistency is noted. A conference call is convened with the committee chair and vice-chair, liaison, reader, Peer Review Team members, and AACSB International staff. The team may submit additional information or a revised recommendation following this conference call.
 - Based on additional information or an updated team recommendation, the committee concurs with the recommendation or refers the case to a panel.
 1. A panel consists of three individuals: one from the original team; one from the committee; and an outside member who is an experienced accreditation reviewer. The outside member serves as chair.
 2. The panel must reach agreement on recommendation
 - Panel decision to extend accreditation or revoke of accreditation is forwarded to the Board of Directors for ratification consideration.
 - Panel decision for Continuous Improvement Review 2 (when the panel consideration is between extending accreditation and continuing review) becomes the decision.

Continuous Improvement Review 2 Team Recommendation

- Process is the same as noted above for original Peer Review Team Recommendation.
- Successful completion of the review in the extended year earns the institution/unit a five-year extension of its accreditation with the original review year as the start year and the next scheduled maintenance review to take place in year five. If successful completion is not achieved in the extended year, the Review Team will recommend continuing review of accreditation for up to two additional years.

Focused Review Team Recommendation

- Process is the same as noted above for original Peer Review Team Recommendation.
- Successful completion of the Focused Review earns the institution/unit a five-year extension of its accreditation with the original review year as the start year and the next scheduled maintenance review to take place in year five. If successful completion is not achieved in the second year of Focused Review, the Focused Review Team must recommend revocation of accreditation.
 - Recommendation for revocation will initiate an invitation to the school/unit to present its case for extension of accreditation at the next appropriate AACSB accreditation committee meeting.
 - When AACSB accreditation is revoked, the member is removed from the Accreditation Council and the listing of accredited institutions / accounting academic units.
 - Revocation of accreditation requires Board of Directors ratification.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Ratifies recommendation for Extension of Accreditation or revocation of accreditation.
- May remand the recommendation to the appropriate AACSB accreditation committee with specific conditions.

SCHOOL / ACCOUNTING ACADEMIC UNIT

- The institution/accounting unit may withdraw its application for accreditation any time prior to consideration by the Board of Directors. In the case of an accredited school / accounting academic unit in the Continuous Improvement Review process a, withdrawal from the process is also a withdrawal from the Accreditation Council.
- As to a revocation decision, the institution/unit may submit an appeal in accordance with AACSB appeal procedures and policies (<https://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/resources/policies-and-procedures>).
- When AACSB accreditation is revoked, the member is removed from the Accreditation Council and the listing of accredited institutions / accounting academic units.

VIII. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REVIEW TIMELINE

The Continuous Improvement Review Process is displayed below as a timeline. This five-year review cycle remains constant throughout the cycle of consecutive review for a school, irrespective of whether a continuous improvement review 2 is required. Therefore, Year 1 represents the academic year immediately following an on-site review, regardless of whether or not an accreditation decision has been made. The next visit will occur in Year 5. The Continuous Improvement Review Committee is responsible for oversight of the Continuous Improvement Review process for review.

Year 1 (July 1 – June 30)	Year 2 (July 1 – June 30)	Year 3 (July 1 – June 30)	Year 4 (July 1 – June 30)	Year 5 (July 1 – June 30)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and Refine Strategic Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and Refine Strategic Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and Refine Strategic Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and Refine Strategic Management Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and Refine Strategic Management Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Key Data and Accreditation Data Sections of the <i>Business School Questionnaire</i> for prior academic year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Key Data and Accreditation Data Sections of the <i>Business School Questionnaire</i> for prior academic year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Key Data and Accreditation Data Sections of the <i>Business School Questionnaire</i> for prior academic year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Key Data and Accreditation Data Sections of the <i>Business School Questionnaire</i> for prior academic year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Key Data and Accreditation Data Sections of the <i>Business School Questionnaire</i> for prior academic year
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 1 two years prior to visit year - Submit Continuous Improvement Review Application(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Review Team and visit date confirmed. See Accreditation Policies & Procedures for Volunteer Deployment and Selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute Completed Continuous Improvement review Report(s) 60 Days Prior to Visit
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIRC or AAC rules on exclusions and the scope of the accreditation visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin communications with Peer Review Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accreditation Statistical Reports will be distributed to applicant and team members by AACSB at least 60 days prior to visit date upon request only
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date and Peer Review Team Nomination Request sent to school (February) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Peer Review Team Chair to finalize the Visit Schedule
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return Date and Peer Review Team Nominations form to AACSB (March) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer Review Team Visit

Appendices

Accreditation Process Timeline, Terminology, and Roles and Responsibilities

[Continuous Improvement Review Timelines](#)

[Accreditation Terminology](#)

[Volunteer Training](#)

[Accreditation Policies & Procedures](#)

The following documents and references within this handbook may be downloaded or accessed from the AACSB International website at:

Business: <http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/business/continuous-improvement-review/>

Accounting: <https://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/resources/journey/accounting/continuous-improvement-review>

Application for Continuous Improvement Review

Business: [Continuous Improvement Review Application Outline](#)

Accounting: [Continuous Improvement Review Application Outline](#)

Fifth Year Continuous Improvement Reports

Business:

[Fifth Year Continuous Improvement Review Report Outline and Guidelines](#)

[Table 2-1 - Five-Year Summary of Intellectual Contributions](#)

[Table 2-2 - Five-Year Summary of Peer Reviewed Journals and Number of Publications in Each \(Effective January 1, 2018\)](#)

[Table 15-1 - Summary of Faculty Sufficiency and Qualifications](#)

[Table 15-2 - Deployment of Participating and Supporting Faculty](#)

Accounting:

[Fifth Year Continuous Improvement Review Report Outline and Guidelines](#)

[Table A2-1 – Five-Year Summary of Intellectual Contributions](#)

[Table A9-1 – Summary of Faculty Sufficiency and Qualifications](#)

[Table A9-2 – Deployment of Participating and Supporting Faculty](#)

[Table A2-1 \(2018 Standards\) – Intellectual Contributions](#)

[Table A6 \(2018 Standards\) – Assignment of Faculty to Team Accounting Courses](#)

Peer Review Team Visits

[Sample CIR Schedule – Business and Accounting](#)