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# Interpretive Guidance

## Accompanies the AACSB Global Standards for Business Education™



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# Introduction

The Interpretive Guidance complements the Global Standards for Business Education™ and supplies additional guidance beyond what is provided in the Global Standards, including examples or sample tables and calculations where appropriate. It also includes regional guidance from business schools across regions in collaboration with the North American Advisory Council, Latin American and Caribbean Advisory Council, European Advisory Council, Middle East and Africa Advisory Council, and Asia Pacific Advisory Council.

This document supports schools in understanding and applying the standards in a principles-based manner. It provides illustrative guidance and examples rather than additional requirements beyond the standards themselves. The document is intended for use by both schools and peer review teams. Call-outs are used to emphasize overall guidance for schools, and to highlight for schools noteworthy items a peer review team may be especially interested in as part of a peer review visit.

> Throughout this document, references to practices, examples, and sample tables are included to illustrate possible approaches; these should not be interpreted as prescriptive requirements. Schools are expected to demonstrate that they meet the intent of the standards, but their approaches may vary based on institutional context, size, resources, and mission.

The Global Standards for Business Education are the responsibility of the Accreditation Council, which consists of representatives of the schools currently holding AACSB business accreditation; however, the Basis for Judgment and Suggested Documentation sections of each standard within the Global Standards may be updated annually as needed by the Global Standards Committee. Likewise, the Global Standards Committee has the responsibility for updating the Interpretive Guidance document, with such updates typically occurring annually.

# Strategic Management

# Standard 1: Strategic Planning

## Rationale

The standard on strategic planning is presented first because AACSB-accredited schools view a robust, well-documented strategic plan as fundamental to achieving and maintaining accreditation. It is one of the first documents peer review teams evaluate to identify the school's mission, its goals and strategic initiatives, how it intends to achieve and measure success, and how leadership will allocate resources to meet the school's goals.

## Clarifying Guidance

The intent of this standard is not to prescribe a specific format or level of detail for strategic planning but to ensure that the school demonstrates a coherent, actionable approach to defining priorities, allocating resources, and assessing progress. Effective strategic plans may vary significantly in structure and level of formality. AACSB is not prescriptive in the form of the plan, and the standards are not intended to provide one template. Schools are free to choose from a variety of strategic plan formats; however, most robust strategic plans contain certain essential elements.

To meet AACSB standards, these elements include a clear and focused mission statement; strategic initiatives, goals, objectives, and key performance indicators; a discussion of how the school intends to make a positive societal impact; a risk assessment and contingency plan; a method for monitoring the plan; and a description of how key stakeholders are meaningfully involved. School strategic plans should align with university strategic plans where applicable.

### Well-Documented Strategic Plan

As a necessary component of strategic planning, the school should identify what it seeks to achieve within its strategic planning cycle, within the time frame identified by the school. For example, a school may have a short-range strategic plan, supplemented with a broader set of goals it would like to achieve over a longer period. AACSB does not prescribe the time frame for a school's strategic planning cycle. The most common time frame is five years, but schools often have shorter time frames, such as three years, or longer time frames, such as seven or 10 years. The time period relative to the plan is a school decision.

The school's strategic planning cycle does not need to align with its accreditation cycle. Sometimes a school's accreditation cycle spans two strategic plans. In this case, the school should include the current strategic plan in its report and can include the prior plan as a supplement in the addendum within myAccreditation as evidence of progress toward achieving its strategic objectives.

A school may update its strategic plan at any time. If a school has delayed updating an expiring strategic plan due to university strategic planning efforts, a change in leadership, or other unforeseen circumstances, the school should provide its latest strategic plan and describe its current situation and progress toward creating a new plan. While strategic plans may be extended past their defined time frame, a peer review team would expect to have an updated plan within a reasonable period after a current strategic plan expires.

Strategic initiatives articulate the priorities the school intends to pursue and support with its resources over a defined period. These initiatives typically extend beyond its normal operational activities, which are not generally included in a strategic plan, although the school may choose to complement the strategic plan with separate operational or implementation plans.

Examples of strategic initiatives include creating or expanding academic programs, entering new geographic or learner markets, developing strategic partnerships, constructing or expanding facilities, launching interdisciplinary initiatives, enhancing the school's research profile, or building recognized areas of thought leadership or societal impact.

In contrast, activities such as routine hiring of faculty and staff, ongoing program administration, annual budget management, learner recruitment, and enrollment operations are generally considered operational activities because they represent the normal day-to-day functions of a business school.

While operational activities are not typically included as strategic initiatives, certain activities may become strategic when they involve significant institutional change, targeted investment, innovation, or a deliberate shift in direction aligned with the school's mission and strategic priorities.

For example, enrollment management is ordinarily an operational activity. However, a school may establish a strategic initiative to expand into new learner populations, delivery modes, or international markets to achieve long-term growth or mission differentiation. Similarly, faculty hiring is generally operational in nature but may become strategic when the school makes targeted investments to strengthen research capacity, develop expertise in emerging disciplines, support doctoral education, or establish leadership in a particular field.

> The distinction between operational and strategic activities is not based solely on the activity itself but on the extent to which the activity represents a purposeful, mission-aligned effort that advances the school's long-term strategic aspirations beyond routine ongoing operations.

## Clear and Focused Mission

A mission statement is not usually represented by a single sentence alone; rather, it is often reflected through a set of statements describing the school's mission, vision, values, and overall purpose. Together, these elements express the school's core identity, intended stakeholders, educational focus, aspirations, and desired areas of impact.

Purpose and mission are related but distinct concepts. *Purpose* generally reflects the school's broader reason for existence and the positive contribution it seeks to make to society, while *mission* is typically more operational and specific, describing what the school does, whom it serves, and how it seeks to achieve impact.

A clear mission communicates, in understandable and specific terms, the school's primary purpose, the learners and stakeholders it intends to serve, the types of degrees or educational offerings it provides, and the impact it seeks to achieve. Clear missions help guide institutional decision-making and provide an important foundation for strategic planning, resource allocation, and assessment of progress and success.

A focused mission demonstrates meaningful priorities and distinguishing characteristics rather than broad or generic aspirations. Schools are not expected to pursue excellence in all areas equally. Instead, the mission should help define

the school's emphasis and provide direction for choices related to programs, faculty deployment, scholarship expectations, learner populations, partnerships, and areas of investment.

Mission statements should also reflect the school's broader institutional and regional context. Factors such as geographic location, cultural environment, available resources, learner populations, disciplinary strengths, regulatory environment, and emphasis on teaching, research, engagement, entrepreneurship, workforce development, or societal impact may appropriately shape the mission.

Mission statements are not expected to be entirely unique, but they should be sufficiently distinctive to communicate characteristics that meaningfully differentiate the school from peer institutions. A mission that is overly broad or generic may fail to provide useful strategic direction or demonstrate the school's distinct identity and priorities.

For example, the following excerpt from a mission statement is positive in tone, but so broad that it could apply to almost any business school:

> We provide high-quality business education, produce impactful research, and prepare future business leaders for success in a global economy."

In contrast, a more focused and distinctive mission might state:

> "We prepare first-generation and regional learners to lead ethically and entrepreneurially in technology-driven industries through applied business education, industry partnerships, and scholarship addressing workforce and economic development challenges in emerging markets."

The second example communicates more focused information regarding the school's learner population, educational approach, areas of emphasis, intended impact, and distinguishing context.

Peer review teams evaluate many aspects of the school using its stated mission as a guide. For example, the mission may influence expectations related to the types of intellectual contributions produced by faculty, the balance between teaching and research, the nature of external engagement activities, learner populations served, portfolio of degree programs, and strategic resource allocation decisions. A school with a mission emphasizing applied business practice, regional workforce development, or teaching excellence may demonstrate different priorities and outputs than a school with a mission emphasizing doctoral education and globally influential basic research.

Peer review teams will look for evidence that:

- The mission communicates meaningful areas of focus and distinction.
- Strategic initiatives and resource allocation align with the mission.
- Faculty activities, curricula, scholarship, and engagement activities support the mission.
- The mission is periodically reviewed and updated through the school's normal planning processed

Missions that emphasize regional development, applied learning, workforce access, entrepreneurship, teaching excellence, research intensity, or societal impact are valid expressions of quality and distinctiveness. The standards do not prescribe a preferred mission model; rather, they expect alignment, clarity, focus, and consistency between the mission and the school's actions and strategic priorities.

## Goals, Objectives, Tactics, and Key Performance Indicators

As a best practice, each strategic initiative should be supported by one or more goals and accompanying objectives that identify the expected outcomes related to that strategic initiative. While *goals* are broad statements that identify what the school wants to achieve, *objectives* are the specific and measurable components that describe how the school will achieve that goal.

AACSB does not prescribe the number of objectives that correspond to a specific goal. However, it is common to see two to four objectives for each goal. A school may have more or fewer objectives as appropriate for their purposes. In comparison, *tactics* support objectives and identify specific activities the school will undertake to achieve a given objective. Tactics can be thought of as the action items necessary to meet objectives.

*Key performance indicators (KPIs)* are metrics that a school identifies to gauge its progress toward meeting its goals. While the school may track a large number of performance metrics operationally, *key performance indicators* by definition include a smaller number of metrics that the school uses to determine whether it is on track strategically. Responsible parties are often specified for KPIs to clarify accountability.

## Stakeholder Involvement

An important component of a well-devised strategic plan is the involvement of key stakeholders at every stage of the process, from creation of the strategic plan to regular review, ideally at least annually, and reporting of progress toward achieving stated goals. Shared governance in this area is particularly important, and faculty input and participation is integral at all stages. A plan that is devised solely with administrative input does not meet the spirit of the standards.

Other key stakeholders normally included in strategic planning include learners, business community representatives, advisory boards, university representatives who have explicit connections and/or provide support to the business school, and alumni. Within the broader university environment, the accredited school's strategic plan must align with and support the university's or parent organization's plan where such a plan exists.

## Societal Impact Focus Areas

The school should be specific in its desired societal impact, and how progress against its societal impact aspirations is measured. Schools are expected to identify one or more focus areas that reflect how they intend to create positive societal impact through curricula, scholarship, and engagement activities. These focus areas may be the same across all three areas or may differ. For example, a school may focus on developing wellness strategies in leaders as part of its curriculum, sustainability within its scholarship, and reducing unemployment in its engagement activities. Or, a

school could choose one area – for example workforce readiness – as its focus area for societal impact and that topic would be embedded in curriculum, scholarship, and engagement activities.

> Allowing different focus areas in societal impact for curriculum, scholarship, and engagement activities is one of the key changes between the 2020 standards and the (2026) Global Standards for Business Education.

The school is responsible for selecting focus areas that align with its mission, strategies, and expected outcomes, and for demonstrating how it supports these priorities through goals, activities, and resource allocation. The identification of societal impact focus areas is intended to guide strategic priorities at the school level. These focus areas are not expected to constrain all curricular, scholarly, or engagement activities, nor should they limit individual faculty interests or academic freedom.

The school will report on progress toward meeting its strategic goals related to societal impact within Standard 9.

## Monitoring the Strategic Plan

The school should actively and systematically monitor progress toward achieving its strategic initiatives, goals, objectives, and key performance indicators. The school's strategic plan is expected to be an ongoing and dynamic process rather than a static document created solely for accreditation purposes. Schools should demonstrate that strategic plans are regularly reviewed, assessed, discussed, and updated in response to changing circumstances, performance outcomes, emerging opportunities, and evolving stakeholder needs.

Monitoring processes often occur through annual reviews, progress reports, dashboard metrics, leadership retreats, faculty governance discussions, or other formal assessment mechanisms. Schools are encouraged to establish meaningful indicators or milestones that allow leadership and stakeholders to evaluate progress toward strategic priorities over time.

Peer review teams will look for evidence that the strategic plan is actively used to guide decision-making, resource allocation, program development, faculty hiring, budgeting priorities, and other major institutional actions. Teams may also review evidence that the school periodically reassesses its mission, strategic initiatives, and associated goals to ensure continued relevance, alignment, and responsiveness to the school's environment and aspirations.

Schools are not expected to achieve every strategic goal fully within a single accreditation cycle. However, they should be able to demonstrate intentionality, evidence of progress, thoughtful reflection on challenges and outcomes, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

## Risk Management

Risk analysis should be meaningfully integrated with the school's strategic planning and resource allocation processes. The school is expected to identify, evaluate, and consider key risks in strategic decision-making.

Typical risks often involve financial, regulatory, demographic, technological, geopolitical, environmental, or operational challenges for which they have not adequately planned. Examples include sudden enrollment declines, significant budget reductions, restrictions on international student mobility, changes in government policy or funding models, cybersecurity threats, leadership instability, reputational crises, natural disasters, rapid technological change, or disruptions affecting labor markets and learner demand. Such events may threaten the school's financial sustainability, operations, reputation, stakeholder trust, or ability to fulfill its mission. It's critical that schools proactively identify risks and have plans for how such risks would be remediated if they arise.

A strong strategic plan includes thoughtful assessment of risks and vulnerabilities, including strategic, financial, technological, reputational, regulatory, and environmental risks, along with appropriate mitigation or contingency planning approaches. Schools should demonstrate that the risk analysis informs strategic priorities, investment decisions, academic planning, and long-term sustainability efforts.

Risk management processes should be proportionate to the school's size, complexity, mission, and operating environment. Schools are not expected to eliminate all risks; rather, they should demonstrate awareness of significant risks, intentional planning, and reasonable preparedness for potential disruptions.

Peer review teams may review documentation related to risk identification, monitoring processes, contingency planning, financial sustainability, scenario analysis, governance oversight, or other mechanisms used to support institutional resilience.

Contingency planning also relates to succession planning, which is especially important for schools or faculties with low turnover, aging faculty populations, or heavy reliance on a small number of key individuals, where multiple vacancies or leadership transitions may arise within a short period of time. As a best practice, schools should integrate succession planning into their broader strategic and workforce planning process.

Risks identified by the school should be considered in relation to its strategic planning time period, with attention to both near-term and longer-term risks that may affect the school's future position, competitiveness, or ability to carry out its mission.

## Examples

The following example demonstrates the relationship between strategic initiatives, goals, objectives, and tactics that are typical of a school's strategic plan. This is not intended to be a template; it is one example that might be used effectively within a school.

**Example 1: Classic Strategic Plan Layout**

| Strategic Goal | Objective | Key Actions/ Tactics | Measures of Success/Targets | Resources/ Investments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Increase global learning opportunities for learners | Integrate international and virtual global experiences into degree programs | Develop collaborative projects with international partner schools; increase faculty-led study abroad and virtual exchange opportunities | Increase learner participation in global learning experiences from 18% to 45% over five years; ensure that at least 60% of undergraduate learners participate in a globally-focused activity | Partnership development funding, study abroad support, faculty development funding |
| Strengthen international partnerships | Build strategic academic and industry relationships in priority global regions | Establish partnerships with universities, employers, and organizations in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe | Establish 8 new active international partnerships within five years, including at least 3 involving collaborative research or joint learner projects | International engagement staffing, partnership travel budget |
| Enhance global relevance of curricula and scholarship | Increase faculty engagement in internationally focused teaching and research initiatives | Support international research collaborations, globally focused curriculum redesign, and faculty participation in international conferences | Increase internationally co-authored scholarly publications by 40%; ensure that 75% of degree programs include globally relevant learning outcomes or course content | Faculty travel funding, curriculum development support, international research seed grants |
| Improve global visibility and reputation | Increase participation and leadership in international academic and professional networks | Encourage faculty leadership roles in international associations, conferences, and accreditation activities | Double the number of faculty serving in international leadership roles; increase international conference presentations by 50% | Professional development funding, association memberships, travel support |

**Example 2: Classic Balanced Scorecard Layout**[1]

This example is provided to demonstrate a different format and would not constitute the entire strategic plan.

## Strategic Purpose

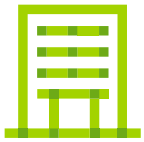
Develop faculty capability, confidence, and leadership in artificial intelligence and emerging technologies to enhance teaching, scholarship, learner success, and operational effectiveness in alignment with the school's mission and future strategic direction.

| Balanced Scorecard Perspective | Strategic Objective | Key Performance Indicators | 5-Year Target | Strategic Actions/ Initiatives |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Financial | Invest strategically in faculty AI capability and supporting infrastructure | Annual investment in AI-related faculty development; external funding secured; technology investment levels | Allocate at least 5% of annual faculty development budget toward AI-related initiatives; secure external funding or partnerships covering 25% of initiative costs within five years | Pursue grants and technology partnerships; invest in AI-enabled teaching and research tools; establish dedicated AI innovation funding |
| Customer/ Stakeholder | Improve learner, employer, and stakeholder confidence in faculty preparedness related to AI and emerging technologies | Employer satisfaction surveys; learner feedback; advisory board input; participation in AI-related executive education | Achieve 85% employer satisfaction regarding graduate preparedness in AI-related competencies; increase participation in AI-focused executive education programs by 50% | Establish AI-focused employer advisory council; expand industry engagement; integrate stakeholder feedback into curriculum and faculty development planning |
| Internal Business Processes | Integrate AI effectively and responsibly into teaching, research, and school operations | Number of courses incorporating AI-enabled learning; adoption of AI-supported operational processes; implementation of AI governance practices | Integrate AI-related learning activities into 75% of core business courses; implement AI-supported processes in advising and learner support functions; establish formal AI governance guidelines within two years | Redesign curricula; pilot AI-supported operational tools; develop schoolwide AI governance and ethical use policies |
| Learning and Growth | Build faculty AI literacy, confidence, innovation, and leadership capability | Faculty participation in AI development programs; AI-related scholarly outputs; interdisciplinary collaborations | 90% of full-time faculty complete foundational AI development training within two years; increase AI-related scholarly outputs by 50% over five years | Launch faculty AI academy; provide workshops on generative AI, analytics, and responsible AI use; support interdisciplinary AI research collaborations and faculty learning communities |

[1] Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D. P. (1992). "The Balanced Scorecard—Measures That Drive Performance." *Harvard Business Review*, 70(1), 71–79.

**SAMPLE RISK ANALYSIS**
**As of 12/31/25**

| Risk Description | Likelihood of Risk Occurring | Impact If Risk Occurs | Severity (Based on Impact and Likelihood) | Mitigating Action(s) | Responsible Parties |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Failure to adequately incorporate artificial intelligence tools leads to less relevant programming and diminishes the value of undergraduate degree | Low | Medium | Low | • Offer faculty workshops focused on AI integration in curriculum design and pedagogy.<br>• Invite guest speakers to share real-world experiences related to AI.<br>• Develop specialized AI course that covers machine-learning, natural language processing, and ethical use of AI in business settings.<br>• Collaborate with industry partners to design AI-related projects in current courses. | Undergraduate Program Director, MIS Chair |
| Expected retirement of several tenured faculty members over the next 3–5 years | High | Medium | High | • Develop promising internal candidates (adjunct faculty) for tenure-track or full-time contract positions.<br>• Obtain Provost's Office approval of 5-year hiring plan. | Dean's Office |
| Failure of Learning Management System and disruption of online and in-person offerings | Low | Medium | Low | • Maintain backup system with copies of course materials/ resources.<br>• Schedule and test regular updates to platform. | IT Department |
| Government policy restrictions lead to reduction in graduate business international student enrollments | High | Medium | Medium | • Provide additional scholarship incentives for current undergraduate learners who continue in graduate programs.<br>• Increase opportunities for revenue generation through continuing education and certificate programs.<br>• Increase advertising, promotion, and recruiting efforts domestically. | Graduate Admissions, Dean's Office, Graduate Program Directors |
| Changing demographics in the region results in fewer future high school graduates and fewer entering first-year students | High | High | High | • Increase promotion and recruiting efforts in more demographically favorable regions.<br>• Explore opportunities for internal and external alliances to add attractive degree program options. | Undergraduate Admissions, University |



# Standard 2: Physical, Digital, and Financial Resources

## Rationale

How a school manages its resources is a crucial part of its success in meeting its mission and other components of its strategic plan. Resources in Standard 2 include physical, digital, and financial resources, except for faculty and professional staff, which are covered in Standard 3. This standard establishes the expectation that a school demonstrates sufficient operational vitality to sustain ongoing operations, as well as the capacity and resources needed to achieve its identified strategic initiatives.

> The standard is evaluated based on whether resources are sufficient, resilient, and intentionally aligned with the school's mission, strategies, and expected outcomes consistent with their peer institutions, not on the school's absolute size, wealth, or scale. Schools are not expected to demonstrate resource levels comparable to institutions with substantially different missions, contexts, or funding models.

Evaluation of resources includes the adequacy and maintenance of facilities and learning environments; the effectiveness of digital infrastructure to support teaching, research, engagement, and administrative operations across relevant instructional modalities; and the strength and sustainability of the school's financial model.

## Clarifying Guidance

### Physical Resources

The peer review team is concerned with the quality of the school's facilities, including buildings, furniture, and fixtures. Is the space in good condition, or is it in disrepair? Are there any safety issues? Additionally, the physical space in which the business school conducts classes should reflect current pedagogies. Sufficient space for team activities and other collaborative activities must be available to learners. That space may be located in places other than the business school.

### Digital Resources

Digital resources are expected to be infused in the curriculum and support production of scholarship and thought leadership. The peer review team will assess whether the school's digital infrastructure, including hardware, software, data resources, and relevant technologies are current, accessible, and sufficient for the

school to achieve its mission and strategic plan. This may include access to data sources and research tools for faculty, as well as technologies that support high-quality teaching and learning in face-to-face, hybrid, and digital environments. Schools should also demonstrate how they evaluate and adopt relevant and emerging technologies (e.g., data analytics or artificial intelligence tools) as appropriate to their mission and strategy.

For example, do faculty have access to databases or other sources of data needed to conduct research? Is the technology infrastructure current to support the desired teaching quality and modality? The standards do not require schools to use specific technologies or platforms for their digital resources. Schools should demonstrate that their digital infrastructure supports effective teaching, learning, and scholarship in a manner consistent with their mission and program delivery models.

### Financial Resources

AACSB does not expect all schools to have the same level or type of financial resources. Rather, resources should be appropriate for and sufficient to support the school's mission and achieve its strategic plan.

Schools are expected to demonstrate financial resilience through sound financial planning and management practices that support both ongoing operations and the achievement of strategic initiatives. This includes maintaining a clear and viable financial model, supported by reliable and transparent budgeting processes that are appropriate to the school's size, scope, and complexity. As part of their financial planning process, schools should regularly assess the viability and performance of their degree programs and broader portfolio to ensure alignment with market demands, mission, and long-term sustainability.

Financial strategies should support the effective deployment of resources across mission-related activities, including teaching, research, and engagement. As part of this effort, schools may consider opportunities to strengthen or diversify revenue streams, such as through executive education, certificate programs, partnerships, or philanthropic support, where appropriate to their mission and context. Smaller schools may demonstrate alignment through focused and targeted resource allocation, while larger or more complex schools may require broader financial structures.

> Approaches to financial management will vary across institutions; however, schools should be able to demonstrate that their financial planning is forward-looking, supports continuous improvement, and enables the school to respond and adapt to changing internal and external conditions over time.

## Sample Table 2-1

Strategic Initiatives and Expected Source of Funds
Aligned with Planning Cycle of Current Strategic Plan
for the Next Accreditation Cycle

| Strategic Initiatives | Time Period for This Strategic Initiative | Total Estimated Investment (in USD) | Expected Source of Funds (if known) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Improve learner-facing technical infrastructure | 2026–28 | $800,000 | Government-provided funds/ grants |
| Increase Scholarly Academic faculty in marketing and management | 2027–30 | $650,000 | University funds |
| Market the new MS in finance degree program | 2026–27 and ongoing | $300,000 | University funds |
| Fund endowed professorship in marketing | 2027 | $1,000,000 | Private donor |

Peer review teams use Table 2-1 to determine if the school's strategic initiatives are realistic as compared with the school's mission and available resources.

# Standard 3: Faculty and Professional Staff Resources

## Rationale

One hallmark that distinguishes an AACSB-accredited school from a non-AACSB accredited school is the quality of faculty and staff employed by the school. AACSB looks at both the degree to which faculty participate in the life of the school on a meaningful basis ("faculty sufficiency") and the academic credential and ongoing activities that sustain faculty currency and relevancy ("faculty qualifications"). These measures combine both input and output elements that serve as proxies for faculty quality.

Standard 3 also requires that teaching effectiveness is incorporated into faculty qualification criteria, evaluation processes, and ongoing development expectations. While Standard 7 focuses on the school's overall approach, infrastructure, and support for teaching effectiveness, Standard 3 ensures that expectations for teaching effectiveness are reflected and applied at the individual faculty level.

In practice, peer review teams evaluate this standard holistically, considering how faculty sufficiency, qualifications, and teaching effectiveness collectively support the quality, currency, and delivery of the school's programs.

## Clarifying Guidance

### Determining Discipline and Specialty Fields

Table 3-1 requires schools to report faculty by discipline, irrespective of organizational structure. For example, a school with a Department of Accounting, Finance, and Information Systems should report the faculty within the disciplines identified by the school according to the discipline (subject) those faculty normally teach. In cases where a school's national regulator requires the school to combine certain disciplines for reporting purposes (e.g., accounting and finance), the school may do so for AACSB purposes, as well.

Additionally, if the school offers an interdisciplinary business degree, it may combine the disciplines in which the degree is offered in its reports, if individual degree programs in these areas are not offered. Moreover, because business administration represents an amalgamation of multiple disciplines rather than a distinct field, it should not be used as a standalone discipline for classification purposes. Faculty should instead be assigned to the specific discipline aligned with their teaching responsibilities (e.g., marketing, accounting, finance, management).

The school's approach to discipline reporting should be discussed with AACSB accreditation staff and the school's peer review team. Teams may request a more detailed breakdown if deemed necessary for the review.

Disciplines are defined by the school based on their faculty complement and program portfolio, in the context of their mission. Selecting disciplines is important, as it affects the ratios the school needs to meet and whether the school aligns with the standard. Normally, the disciplines should align with the degree programs, majors, or concentrations, and will determine whether the school has the intellectual capital to support them. For example, a school offering a Master of Accountancy would normally be expected to identify accounting as a discipline.

However, it is important to note that not every degree program requires a unique discipline. For example, the discipline of management may offer a multitude of degrees and/or majors (e.g., entrepreneurship, strategy, human resources, etc.) for which faculty could all be reported under the discipline of management.

> Discipline reporting should focus on the macro level disciplines (e.g., accounting, finance, management, etc.) instead of individual subdisciplines (e.g., audit, tax, risk, HR, strategy, supply chain, etc.). Commonly, the management discipline is large due to the many subdisciplines contained within it. Please refer to Appendix B for an example of discipline identification.

If the school offers an interdisciplinary business degree, it may combine the disciplines in which the degree is offered in its reports, assuming individual degree programs in these areas are not offered. For example, if a school offers a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Finance, it may combine these two disciplines if individual programs in these respective areas are not offered.

If a faculty member teaches in two disciplines, the faculty member can be apportioned between the disciplines accordingly. In such a case, the faculty member should be classified according to the faculty member's qualification in each discipline. For example, a faculty member who teaches two courses in accounting and two courses in finance, and who achieves SA status in both areas, would be shown in both accounting and finance with teaching hours apportioned for faculty sufficiency purposes; SA status would reflect the appropriate percentage of time devoted to mission in each of the respective disciplines for faculty qualifications purposes.

> Faculty qualification status does not automatically carry over for every discipline in which the faculty member is listed. Rather, faculty members must meet the qualification criteria defined by the school for each discipline, which can mean two different classifications for one faculty member. The burden is on the school to clearly document that the faculty member meets the school's criteria in each discipline the faculty member appears.

The faculty member's intellectual contributions would be shown in accounting and finance as appropriate in Table 8-1. If the amount of teaching in the second discipline is immaterial, the school may choose not to apportion the faculty member but report their qualifications only in the primary teaching discipline, in accordance with a principles-based approach.

Some disciplines may not offer degree programs but in fact may contain courses that service other degree programs. For example, courses or modules in business law may support multiple degree programs without any associated degree programs in business law alone. In that case, the school should list business law as a separate discipline in Table 3-1 and check the box that indicates no degree, majors, etc., are offered in this discipline. This logic carries over to any similar service courses. Common examples of such service courses include, but are not limited to, business law, statistics, and economics (when taught within the business school).

Commonly observed business disciplines include accounting, business law, economics (when taught within the business school), finance, management, marketing, and quantitative analysis (or another form of information systems, such as management information systems or information technology/operations management).

Faculty are also identified in Table 3-1 by their specialty area within their academic discipline. Schools may describe these specialty areas using terminology that aligns with their own academic structure, disciplinary conventions, or internal classifications.

Table 3-1 should also indicate the normal professional responsibilities of each faculty member using the following guide: UT for undergraduate teaching; MT for master's-level teaching, DT for doctoral-level teaching/mentoring, ADM for administration, RES for research, ED for non-degree executive education, and SER for other service and outreach responsibilities. A faculty member may have more than one category assigned to describe their normal responsibilities.

The final column of Table 3-1 is labeled "Brief Description of Basis for Qualification." This column is intended to provide the peer review team with a high-level overview of the basis on which a faculty member is classified as SA, PA, SP, or IP, as reflected in the school's faculty qualifications guidelines. For the benefit of the peer review team, schools should briefly describe the rationale for each faculty member's qualification status. A short-hand key may be used for space purposes when supplemented with the underlying coding system.

## Faculty Sufficiency

A *participating faculty member* is engaged beyond teaching in matters such as policy decisions, advising, research, and service commitments to the school. The faculty member may participate in the governance of the school and be eligible to serve as a member on appropriate committees responsible for academic policymaking and/or other decisions.

Normally, the school considers participating faculty members to be ongoing members of the faculty, regardless of whether their appointment is full-time or part-time, whether their position with the school is considered their principal employment, and whether the school has tenure policies. The individual may be eligible for and participate in faculty development activities and have non-teaching assignments, such as advising or committee appointments, as appropriate to the faculty role the school has defined, considering the depth and breadth of the non-teaching assignment.

A *supporting faculty member* does not normally have deliberative or involvement rights on faculty issues, membership on faculty committees, or assigned responsibilities beyond direct teaching functions (e.g., classroom and office hours). Similar to participating faculty, classification as a supporting faculty member does not rely on the person's contractual status with the institution or full-time/part-time status.

The school may develop criteria, when appropriate, for classifying part-time faculty as participating faculty; however, the depth and breadth of classification of less than full time faculty as participating faculty should be appropriately meaningful and not a tool to inflate the school's participating ratios.

Schools are expected to clearly define and document the criteria used to classify faculty as participating or supporting, including the types and expected levels of engagement in activities beyond teaching. When developing these criteria, the school should benchmark against schools that are similar in size or mission and that offer the same degree program levels. The criteria should be consistently applied and aligned with the school's mission and broader faculty expectations. Similar to faculty qualification criteria (described below), the school should be able to demonstrate how it determines and maintains these classifications over time.

One of the most important pieces of evidence that the peer review team will closely examine is the school's faculty qualifications criteria. Schools should take extra care to ensure their criteria meet the minimum definitions of Standard 3. Otherwise, the peer review team may require Tables 3-1 and 3-2 to be recalculated and submitted.

Depending on the teaching and learning models and associated division of labor across faculty and professional staff, the faculty body is sufficient in numbers and presence to perform or oversee the following functions related to degree programs:

- Curriculum development: A process exists to engage multidisciplinary expertise in creating, monitoring, evaluating, and revising curricula.
- Course development: A process exists to engage content specialists in choosing and creating competencies, learning experiences, media, instructional materials, and learning assessments for each course, module, or session.
- Course delivery: A process exists to ensure learners have access to instruction from appropriately qualified faculty and staff at the course level.
- Assessment and assurance of learning: The obligations specified in the assurance of learning processes for the school are met.
- Other activities that support the instructional goals of the school's mission.

Faculty should be sufficient to ensure the achievement of all mission activities. These could include high-quality and impactful intellectual contributions and, when applicable, executive education, community service, institutional service, service in academic organizations, service that supports economic development, organizational consulting, and other expectations the school holds for faculty members.

**Completion of Table 3-1: Faculty Sufficiency**

According to Standard 3, participating faculty members will normally deliver at least 75 percent of the school's teaching globally (i.e., across the entire accredited unit) and 60 percent of the teaching within each discipline, as defined by the school.

When completing Table 3-1, schools should document the distribution of participating and supporting faculty for the most recently completed, regular academic year prior to the year of a peer review visit (often referred to as the "self-study year"). For example, if School A's visit is in February 2026 and its normal academic year runs from September to June, Table 3-1 will capture September 2024 to June 2025.

The teaching productivity metric used to calculate faculty sufficiency must reflect the operations of the business school (e.g., student credit hours [SCH], European Credit Transfer System [ECTS], contact hours, individual courses, modules, or other designations that are appropriately indicative of each faculty member's teaching contributions). To avoid any unnecessary conflicts, schools are encouraged to concur with the peer review team on all aspects of the metric well in advance of the visit.

If a faculty member has no teaching responsibilities, they must be included in Table 3-1 and reflected in the qualifications section of the table. In this case, the two columns related to faculty sufficiency should be left blank.

Include deans/heads of business units in the table and classify them based on the school's faculty sufficiency and qualifications criteria.

For digital courses, use the same teaching productivity metric used for in-person courses and describe the method.

## Faculty Qualifications

AACSB standards recognize four distinct categories in which faculty members may be classified, depending on the nature of their initial academic preparation and subsequent academic and/or professional engagement activities.

Each school must document the classification for each faculty member in accordance with one of these categories: Scholarly Academic (SA), Practice Academic (PA), Scholarly Practitioner (SP), or Instructional Practitioner (IP). Faculty who do not meet the school's criteria within this framework are classified as Additional (A) faculty. Following is the table reproduced from Standard 3.2 for your convenience.

**Overview of Faculty Qualification Categories (Standard 3.2)**

| | Scholarly Academic (SA) | Practice Academic (PA) | Scholarly Practitioner (SP) | Instructional Practitioner (IP) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Initial Qualification | Terminal academic degree in a field closely related to the area of teaching responsibilities. | Terminal academic degree in a field closely related to the area of teaching responsibilities. | Master's degree in a field closely related to teaching responsibilities.<br><br>Substantial professional experience and expertise relevant to assigned teaching responsibilities. | Master's degree in a field closely related to teaching responsibilities.<br><br>Substantial professional experience and expertise relevant to assigned teaching responsibilities. |
| Maintenance of Qualification | Sustained scholarly activity, including the publication of some PRJs.<br><br>Ongoing sustained and substantive academic activities. | Ongoing sustained and substantive professional engagement activities related to the area of teaching involving interaction with business and management practice. | Ongoing, sustained and substantive scholarly publication activities supporting qualification status.<br><br>Ongoing scholarly engagement activities supporting qualification status. | Ongoing, sustained and substantive professional engagement activities supporting qualification status. |
| | Demonstrated teaching effectiveness in assigned instructional roles. **(Effective with visits in 2029-30)** | | | |

Schools must align their faculty qualifications to this essential criteria in the above table, which can be thought of as a framework containing minimum expectations. The school then builds on and customizes its own faculty qualifications criteria to match its mission and strategic goals.

For example, in the SA column, notice that there is no minimum number of peer reviewed journal articles (PRJs) specified—only the qualifier that *some* PRJs must be produced by a Scholarly Academic in maintenance mode over the six-year accreditation cycle. Depending on the school's mission and strategic priorities, the school may set a low number of PRJs if, for example, their highest degree offered is a bachelor's degree and the school is highly focused on a teaching-intensive mission. Conversely, a research-intensive school may set the number of PRJs higher. In all cases, schools should benchmark against their peer schools for comparability and consistency checks.

While faculty members holding a terminal degree are typically classified as Scholarly Academic (SA) or Practice Academic (PA), a school may classify such individuals as Scholarly Practitioner (SP) or Instructional Practitioner (IP) when doing so reflects a deliberate strategic deployment decision by the school. Classification of faculty is normally relatively consistent over time. A change to an existing faculty member's classification (other than to "Additional" when a lapse in qualification has occurred) should be relatively infrequent and thus, a strategic, not opportunistic decision. In such cases, the school's faculty qualifications criteria should clearly define the circumstances under which this classification is appropriate, and the faculty member should demonstrably fulfill the spirit and intent of the SP or IP category through their qualifications, activities, and contributions to the school's mission.

A peer review team may legitimately question a school's faculty qualifications PRJ criteria if they believe the school is not aligned with its peers. AACSB encourages schools to collaborate and share information across peer institutions to determine appropriate benchmarks.

Note that the faculty qualifications criteria for AACSB purposes are not intended by AACSB to be applied as promotion and tenure criteria. These are two separate purposes.

Below is additional guidance on the essential considerations for the school in establishing or maintaining its faculty qualifications criteria.

| Essential Considerations for Faculty Qualifications Criteria | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Hiring Requirements & Sustained Qualification | The combinations of academic preparation and/or professional experience required of faculty at the time of hiring, as well as the types of academic and/or professional development activities required of faculty to sustain their qualification status after hiring. |
| 2 | Priority & Value of Engagement Activities | A description of how the school assigns priority and value to different continuing academic and professional engagement activities; how such assignments support the school's portfolio of SA, PA, SP, and IP faculty; and how this portfolio of faculty supports the school's mission, expected outcomes, and strategies. |
| 3 | Qualitative Standards for Development Activities | The qualitative standards the school requires for various, specified development activities and the ways that it assures the quality of these activities. |
| 4 | Depth & Breadth of Engagement | The depth and breadth of academic and professional engagement that faculty members are expected to undertake within the normal AACSB review cycle to maintain their qualification status. |
| 5 | Engagement Activities & Teaching Effectiveness | A requirement that faculty meet both the engagement activities appropriate to their classification and the school's established teaching effectiveness criteria to maintain qualification status. |
| 6 | Teaching Effectiveness as Qualification Component | For faculty with instructional responsibilities, teaching effectiveness is an integral component of qualification and should be evaluated using criteria aligned with the school's mission and teaching and learning models. Instructional faculty who do not meet the school's criteria for effective teaching should be classified as Additional (A) faculty. |
| 7 | Faculty Without Instructional Responsibilities | Faculty without instructional responsibilities during the accreditation cycle would not be required to meet the teaching effectiveness criteria as a condition of their faculty qualification status. |

Schools should define how teaching effectiveness is assessed and incorporated into faculty evaluation and development processes. Consistent with Standard 7, criteria should include multiple sources of evidence, such as peer review, student feedback, and demonstrated improvements in course design or delivery. Evidence should focus on meaningful examples of effective teaching and continuous improvement rather than rely on any single metric.

Where teaching performance data are subject to confidentiality or institutional constraints, schools may demonstrate alignment with this expectation through documented processes and policies rather than disclosure of individual-level results.

Examples of teaching effectiveness criteria are found in Standard 3 and Standard 7. Additional examples may include the following (for illustrative purposes only; Schools should define criteria that align with their mission and context):

- Formal peer observations (with documented feedback).
- Average student course evaluation scores.
- Teaching portfolios formally reviewed by the school's teaching effectiveness committee, which include documented feedback, faculty reflection, and evidence of resulting improvements in course design or delivery.
- Teaching awards or significant recognition in teaching excellence.
- Completion of teaching development activities that directly and significantly enhance teaching effectiveness which the faculty can clearly document has improved teaching effectiveness.
- Demonstrated innovation in teaching methods, such as experiential learning, use of emerging technologies, and new delivery models.

Teaching effectiveness is measured over the six-year accreditation cycle in the same way scholarship is evaluated over a six-year period.

School criteria should cover situations in which a faculty member did not teach over the entire six years for any number of reasons. Effectiveness should be measured based on the number of years the individual taught during the six-year cycle. Faculty members are not penalized for periods in which they did not teach.

All faculty are expected to fulfill their teaching responsibilities effectively, regardless of workload allocation or role emphasis. Faculty with significant research expectations are not held to lower standards of instructional performance because of their research responsibilities. Likewise, faculty with teaching-intensive roles are not automatically expected to demonstrate higher levels of teaching effectiveness solely because a greater proportion of their workload is devoted to instruction. The expectation is that all faculty demonstrate teaching effectiveness appropriate to their assigned instructional responsibilities and consistent with the school's mission and expectations for quality.

When legal, regulatory, or collective bargaining agreements prevent disclosure of teaching effectiveness, the school should discuss with the peer review team how Standard 7 and Standard 3 can be reasonably assured for quality. The first peer review visits for which this requirement will be mandated will be in 2029–30 accreditation visits. Until then, AACSB will further explore how schools can address this need and ensure that the Interpretive Guidance evolves accordingly. Schools are encouraged to begin now working with faculty to determine what their teaching effectiveness criteria will look like so that the 2029-30 visits and

those in the following years have data to make an adequate determination.

A single set of criteria may be applied to all faculty resources. Alternatively, the school may choose to vary criteria based on teaching level (e.g., undergraduate vs. graduate) or role, depending on how faculty members contribute to the school's mission. For example, a school may maintain one set of SA criteria for undergraduate faculty and a separate set of criteria for graduate or research faculty. This distinction is particularly relevant for graduate and research faculty, who are expected to produce higher levels of intellectual contributions. Standard 8 provides additional guidance on intellectual contributions by faculty level. Location or modality, in and of themselves, are not sufficient to maintain separate faculty qualifications criteria and would be inappropriate.

In exceptional cases, a faculty member without a terminal degree may be classified as SA or PA (normally not to exceed 10 percent of all faculty). In such instances, the school should clearly demonstrate that the individual is engaged in sustained, substantive academic and/or professional activities that support their currency and contributions, consistent with expectations for other SA faculty. Schools should be prepared to justify these classifications.

Criteria for granting and for maintaining various qualifications for participating faculty who also hold significant administrative appointments (e.g., deans, associate deans, department heads/chairs, or center directors) in the business school may reflect these important administrative roles. That is, a school may maintain different faculty qualification criteria for such administrators within the business school.

Administrators should not be classified as Scholarly Academic unless they maintain some level of ongoing activities consistent with the school's expectations for other SA faculty. Similarly, administrators classified as PA should sustain their currency and relevance through professional engagement activities. Responsibilities related to the administrative role should not be the basis for SA/PA classification.

Title alone is not sufficient to confer qualification status. Administrators who cease administrative functions and return as faculty members should ordinarily be granted a reasonable amount of time to regain currency in teaching or research, as needed, while maintaining their faculty qualification status during this transition time. After the transition period, they should be classified according to the school's normal faculty qualification criteria. The school may define what constitutes a reasonable transition time, but it should normally not exceed three years.

While the standard does not prescribe minimum ratios by degree program, location, and modality, the standard expects the school to have an appropriate blend of qualified faculty across these dimensions. It would not be acceptable to have, for example, a degree program or campus location resourced solely by supporting faculty.

## Completion of Table 3-1: Faculty Qualifications

Do not make structural changes to Table 3-1. The header of Table 3-1 should specify the reporting period of the most recently completed normal academic year, which is termed the "self-study year." Shorter terms, such as summer or intersession terms, may be excluded from the academic year for purposes of Table 3-1 and Table 3-2. Table 3-1 should list all faculty contributing to the mission of the school and who were on faculty at the end of the self-study year. The table below provides guidance on faculty who are normally included in Table 3-1.

| Faculty Included in Table 3-1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Faculty Type | Guidance |
| ✓ | Participating & Supporting Faculty | All participating and supporting faculty contributing to the school's mission should be listed. |
| ✓ | Graduate Learner Instructors | Graduate learners who are instructors of record with formal teaching responsibilities should be included. |
| ✓ | Faculty with Significant Administrative Responsibilities | Include regardless of whether such administrators currently have teaching assignments. |
| ✓ | Faculty Teaching Prerequisite Business Courses | Include faculty teaching prerequisite business courses in the accredited unit, unless specifically excluded in the table below of "Faculty Not Included in Table 3-1" |
| ✓ | Faculty on Short-Term Leave | Faculty on short-term leave who are expected to return should be included, along with a footnote explanation. |
| ✓ | Visiting Faculty | Include and classify according to the host school's criteria for both faculty sufficiency and qualifications. Intellectual contributions from their home school should not be reflected in Table 8-1 unless supported by the host school. |
| | Normally, the determining factor for which faculty members to include in Table 3-1 is the individual's primary engagement with the learner, regardless of the modality and method of course delivery. The instructional faculty members who have primary engagement with the learner must be reported in Table 3-1, regardless of whether they are full-time, adjuncts, or faculty contracted through a third party. | |

**Table 3-1 should *not* include the following faculty members:**

| Faculty Not Included in Table 3-1 | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Faculty Type | Guidance |
| X | Non-Business Course Faculty (Interdisciplinary Programs) | Faculty teaching non-business courses for interdisciplinary programs. |
| X | General University Service Courses | Faculty teaching courses or modules that service the general university population (e.g., accounting for nonbusiness majors). |
| X | Lower-Level Business Communications | Faculty teaching lower-level business communications courses with basic oral and written communications as the primary content. (Note: If the b-comm course consists of higher order critical thinking, decision making, synthesis of information, etc., the school may rightly include the faculty in the table.) |
| X | Nonbusiness Discipline Courses Outside the School | Faculty teaching courses serviced outside the business school taught from a nonbusiness discipline perspective (e.g., business law taught in the law school, economics in a college of arts and letters, or information systems taught in a school of computing from a computer science perspective). |
| X | Nonbusiness Prerequisite Courses | Faculty teaching nonbusiness prerequisite courses taught from a nonbusiness perspective, such as calculus and/or statistics courses serviced outside the business school, or foreign language classes. |
| X | Partner School Faculty (Out-of-Scope Collaborative Programs) | Faculty teaching in partner schools supporting a collaborative provision program deemed out of scope for the AACSB-accredited school. |
| X | Transfer Credit Support Faculty | Faculty supporting any transfer credit, including advanced placement courses, dual credit courses, courses transferred through articulation agreements, or study abroad courses transferred in. |
| X | Noncredit Program Faculty | Faculty members solely dedicated to noncredit executive education programs, noncredit certificates, career services professional readiness programs, etc. Faculty who deliver both noncredit and credit-bearing courses should be included for the credit-bearing courses only. |
| X | Terminated Faculty | Faculty members who terminated employment prior to the most recently completed regular academic year. Faculty who left midyear during the self-study year may be included for the portion of the year they were a faculty member, with an appropriate footnote. Percentage of time devoted to mission should be adjusted accordingly (e.g., a full-time faculty member who left midway through the self-study year = 50% devoted to mission). Faculty who joined midyear are treated similarly. For Table 8-1, the entire intellectual contributions portfolio should be included without apportionment. |
| X | Instructional designers | An individual who designs the course but does not have any subsequent engagement with learners should not be included in the table. |
| X | Teaching Assistants & Tutors | Teaching assistants or tutors who support an instructor of record by assisting in grading, test proctoring, tutoring, and conducting labs may be excluded if they are not functioning as the primary instructor. Schools using such models must document how the model supports high quality instruction. |

## Calculating "Percent of Time Devoted to Mission"

"Percent of time devoted to mission" is intended to broadly represent and encompass all professional responsibilities of each faculty member, including teaching, research, and other professional responsibilities that may be assigned. The faculty qualifications portion of Table 3-1 should not be developed using a metric that only captures teaching. A full-time faculty member's percentage of time devoted to mission is normally 100%. Possible reasons a faculty member might show less than 100 percent include part-time employment, shared appointments with another academic unit, or other assignments that make the faculty member partially unavailable to the school.

For doctoral students who have formal teaching duties, the percent of time devoted to mission should reflect only their teaching duties and not any other activities associated with their roles as a student (e.g., work on a dissertation).

A faculty member teaching in more than one discipline may be listed in each respective discipline, but the percent of time devoted to mission should be reflected proportionally in each discipline and should not total more than 100 percent across disciplines. For part-time faculty, the expected percent is less than 100 and should reflect the amount of time devoted to the mission. If a school used a full-time equivalent (FTE) human resources system, then the FTE may be a reasonable approximation for percent of time devoted to mission. In the absence of an FTE system, the school should have a rational manner (e.g., total contracted hours, etc.) of assigning the percent to part-time faculty. As a best practice, this method should be shared with the peer review team for their approval well in advance of the report submission.

The key is to determine, on a percentage basis, the amount of time a school considers a normal teaching load for a given semester. That amount is then applied to those who are less than full-time to determine the percent of time those individuals are considered "devoted to mission" for all of the duties they perform in a given semester.

## Sample Calculations of Percent of Time Devoted to Mission

The following are three sample calculations under the assumption that a school has a 40/30/30 FTE model, meaning 40 percent of the faculty member's time is devoted to research, 30 percent to teaching, and 30 percent to service.

If an individual is assigned additional duties, this percentage should be added to their percentage of time devoted to teaching.

**Example 1**: Faculty member teaches one three-hour (expressed in student credit hours, or "SCH") class per year and has no additional teaching, research, or service responsibilities. Standard teaching load is nine credit hours per semester, or 18 credit hours per year. The percent-of-time calculation is based on the standard teaching load for a full-time faculty member per year. Thus, the denominator in this example is 18 credit hours, while the numerator is the apportioned effort the school attributes to teaching—in this case 30 percent.

Percent of time devoted to mission is 30%/18 credit hours = 1.67%/credit hour x 3 credit hours for a class = 5%. This is the number that would go in Table 3-1 under the appropriate faculty qualification cell. If that faculty member had taught two classes in the self-study year, that would yield 1.67% x 6 hours = 10% time devoted to mission.

**Example 2**: Faculty member teaches one class per year and has 10 percent service assigned for the year and no research expectations. Standard teaching load is nine credit hours per semester, or 18 hours per academic year.

Percent of time devoted to mission is 5% (same calculation as above) + 10 service% = 15%. This is the number that would go in Table 3-1 under the appropriate faculty qualification cell.

**Example 3**: Faculty member teaches two classes per year and has no additional teaching, research, or service responsibilities. Standard teaching load is 12 credit hours per semester, or 24 hours per academic year.

Percent of time devoted to mission is 30%/24 = 1.25%/credit hour x 6 credit hours = 7.5%. This is the number that would go in Table 3-1 under the appropriate faculty qualification cell.

## Completion of Table 3-2: Deployment of Faculty by Qualification Status in Support of Degree Programs

The school should provide an analysis of how it deploys SA, PA, SP, IP, and Additional faculty by degree program level (bachelor's, master's, doctoral) with respect to teaching.

Only faculty members who had teaching assignments in the self-study year are included in the Table 3-2 computations.

Bachelor's degrees can be combined into one line; postgraduate degrees should be reported separately by degree program. MBA programs may be combined into one line; however, where significant differences exist among types of MBA programs or target audiences, these varying MBA programs should be shown as separate entries (e.g., regular MBA vs. Executive MBA where the admission requirements, audiences, program, and/or experiences may be significantly different). Research and applied doctoral degrees should be listed separately.

The school must complete Table 3-2 in the format provided in this document to demonstrate how faculty resources are deployed across each degree program level.

The school should provide information for the most recently completed regular academic year. Each cell represents the percentage of total teaching (whether measured by credit hours, contact hours, courses taught, or another metric appropriate to the school) for each degree program at each level, by faculty qualification status. The sum across each row should total 100 percent.

The 40% SA requirement does not apply to interpretation of Table 3-2. However, deployment should be consistent with the school's mission, expected outcomes, and strategies. Peer review teams may request more details related to a discipline, program, delivery mode, and/or location. Standard 3 does expect that no degree program levels listed in Table 3-2 exceed the 10% Additional faculty limit.

For CIR visits, peer review teams will flag any program level with greater than 10% Additional faculty for discussion and the school should have a plan for remediation in such a case. Schools in the initial accreditation process must not have greater than 10% Additional faculty anywhere in Table 3-2 to be aligned with Standard 3.

## Faculty and Professional Staff Development

Upon request, the school should be able to produce promotion and tenure policies (if applicable) for the various units of the school, as well as annual evaluation policies. The peer review team will consider whether such policies are clearly communicated and understood by the faculty and staff.

Consistent with Standards 1 and 7, the school is expected to plan and provide resources for assisting faculty in maintaining knowledge of current and emerging technologies. This expectation is especially important in areas in which technology is rapidly changing.

In areas where doctoral students or other graduate learners have teaching responsibilities, the school should describe how it ensures the quality and preparedness of those learners for successful classroom experiences. This is particularly true for doctoral students, consistent with Standard 7.

Development of both faculty and professional staff is also expected and may include internal or external training and upskilling as needed to remain current and support the school's faculty and learners. Certifications such as the Certified Management & Business Educator (CMBE) credential for high-quality teaching, offered by the Chartered Association of Business Schools, provide opportunities for continuous development while also validating expertise. Additionally, the Higher Education Academy HEA Fellows program can be explored to externally validate teaching expertise. These are intended as examples that exist among several programs.

While Standards 3 and 7 have some overlap in addressing teaching resources, they serve distinct purposes. Standard 3 establishes expectations for providing faculty with appropriate training and technology, along with other resources needed for classroom success, while Standard 7 asks schools to describe how these resources have been employed to improve teaching effectiveness and impact.

## Sample Tables

**University of Pirsig School of Business**
**Table 3-1: Faculty Sufficiency and Qualifications Summary**
**for 1 September 2025–30 May 2026**

| Faculty Portfolio by Discipline | | | Faculty Sufficiency Related to Teaching in Student Credit Hours | | Normal Professional Responsibilities | Faculty Qualifications With Respect to Percent of Time Devoted to Mission | | | | | Brief Description of Basis for Qualification |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Faculty Member Name | Specialty Field | Highest Degree, Year Earned | Participating Faculty Teaching Productivity (P) | Supporting Faculty Teaching Productivity (S) | | Scholarly Academic (SA) | Practice Academic (PA) | Scholarly Practitioner (SP) | Instructional Practitioner (IP) | Additional Faculty (A) | |
| **Accounting** Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☒ Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☐ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bora, Byung-Ho | Accounting | PhD, 2012 | 480 | | MT, DT, RES | 100 | | | | | PhD in field; 3 PRJs; editorial board, member. Maintains HEA Teaching Fellow status. Peer evaluation of teaching plus positive student focus group feedback. |
| Levin, Nathalie | Taxation | MST, 1986 | | 450 | UT | | | | 100 | | Active accounting practice; professional online tax seminar; leads college internship program. Peer evaluation of teaching plus positive student focus group feedback. |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Smith, Robert | Accounting | MST, 2015 | 675 | | UT | 100 | | | | | 1 PRJ; 3 conference presentations; 1 grant (NEXUS). 3 documented teaching peer observations. Positive student focus group feedback. Consistent course evaluations meeting departmental criteria. |
| **Total Accounting** | | | **1155** | **450** | | **200 (66.7%)** | **0** | **0** | **100 (33.3%)** | **0** | |
| **Accounting Ratio** | | >= 60% requirement for P met (72%) | | | | | | | | | SA >= 40% met (66.7%)<br>SA+PA+SP+IP >= 90% met (100%) |
| **Finance** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☒** | | **Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☐** | | | | | | | | |
| Hjalmar, Shinobu | Real Estate | PhD, 1995 | 360 | | ADM, UT, MT | | 100 | | | | PhD in field; Dept Chair; program development; Board of Directors (HSBC). 2 documented teaching peer observations. Documented teaching development activity in field. |
| Stone, Bob | Business | MBA, 1990 | | 100 | MT | | | | 16.5 | | Former minister of finance, chairman of bank. Student evaluation scores meet threshold. Peer evaluations with implemented feedback. |
| Tucker, Suzanne | Finance | MBA, 2024 | 420 | | DT, RES | 100 | | | | | ABD; Three teaching development activities through University Center for Teaching Excellence. Teaching mentorship with senior faculty member. |
| **Total Finance** | | | **780** | **100** | | **100 (46.2%)** | **100 (46.2%)** | **0** | **16.5 (7.6%)** | **0** | |
| **Finance Ratio** | | >= 60% requirement for P met (88.6%) | | | | | | | | | SA >= 40% met (46.2%)<br>SA+PA+SP+IP >= 90% met (100%) |

| **Business Law** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☐** | | | **Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☒** | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scott, Christine | Business Law | LLM, 1980 | | 240 | MT | | 25 | | | | Terminal degree, practicing attorney, leader in Bar Association. Student evaluation scores meet threshold. Teaching innovations in 2 courses deployed. |
| Zubar, Justin | Business Law | JD, 2024 | 900 | | UT, MT | 100 | | | | | Recent terminal degree. Member of State Bar of TX and FL. Teaching fellow status ; positive course evaluations |
| **Total Business Law** | | | **900** | **240** | | **100 (80%)** | **25 (20%)** | **0** | **0** | **0** | |
| **Business Law Ratio** | | | >=60%requirement for P met (79%) | | | | | | | | SA >= 40% met (80%)<br>SA+PA+SP+IP >= 90% met (100%) |
| **Marketing** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☐** | | | **Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☒** | | | | | | | |
| Erasmos, Isa | Marketing Research | MBA, 2004 | 279 | | UT, MT, RES | | | | 75 | | MBA; full time work in field until 2018; 2 professional memberships; university teaching award; innovative pedagogy employed |
| Johnson, Sandy | Supply Chain | MBA, 2010 | 429 | | UT, MT | | | | | 25 | Faculty advisor for Student Supply Chain Club; Master teacher status, 2 teaching awards |
| Jones, Justine | Marketing | PhD, 1995 | 0 | 0 | RES ADM | 100 | | | | | Dean, 3 PRJs; 2 conference presentations; Board of Advisors (American Marketing Association). no instructional responsibilities |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rabi, Osama | Marketing | MBA, 1987 | 738 | | UT, ADM | | | 100 | | | MBA; 1 PRJ; Industry Experience; Chair of Center for Consumer Behavior Research. student evaluation scores meet threshold. Teaching innovations in two courses deployed with positive student feedback |
| **Total Marketing** | | | **1446** | **0** | | **100 (33.3%)** | **0 (0%)** | **100 (33.3) %** | **75 (25%)** | **25 (8.4%)** | |
| **Marketing Ratio** | | >= 60% requirement for P met (100%) | | | | SA >= 40% (33.3%)<br>SA+PA+SP+IP >= 90% (91.6%) | | | | | |
| **Grand Total** | | | **4,281** | **790** | | **500 (50.4%)** | **175 (17.7%)** | **100 (10.1%)** | **191.5 (19.3%)** | **25 (2.5%)** | |
| **Overall Ratio** | | | >= 75% requirement for P met (84.4%) | | | SA >= 40% met (53.1%)<br>SA+PA+SP+IP >= 90% met (97.5%) | | | | | |
| Faculty Sufficiency Indicators:<br>• Overall discipline guideline: P/(P+S) ≥ 75% | | | | | | Faculty Qualifications Indicators:<br>• SA guideline: (SA) / (SA +PA + SP + IP +A) ≥ 40%<br>• SA + PA + SP + IP guideline :<br>(SA + PA + SP + IP) / (SA + PA + SP + IP + A) ≥ 90% | | | | | |

**University of Pirsig School of Business**
**Table 3-2: Deployment of Faculty by Qualification Status in Support of Degree Programs**
**1 September 2025–30 May 2026**

| | Faculty percentage of teaching by program and degree level (using Student Credit Hours) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Scholarly Academic (SA) %** | **Practice Academic (PA) %** | **Scholarly Practitioner (SP) %** | **Instructional Practitioner (IP) %** | **Additional (A) %** | **Total %** |
| **BS Commerce and Business Administration** | 23.2% | 15.6% | 25.4% | 35.8% | 0% | 100% |
| **MBA** | 33.6% | 31.1% | 0% | 35.3% | 0% | 100% |
| **Research Doctoral Program** | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| **Applied Doctoral Program** | 90% | 10% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |

The tables below show a sample of how to calculate the deployment of faculty by qualification status in support of degree programs using student credit hours (SCHs).

| | Scholarly Academic | Practice Academic | Scholarly Practitioner | Instructional Practitioner | Additional | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Bachelor's Program** | | | | | | |
| Nathalie Levin | | | | 900 | | |
| Robert Smith | 675 | | | | | |
| Shinobu Hjalmar* | | 240 | | | | |
| Isa Erasmos* | | | | 140 | | |
| Sandy Johnson* | | 215 | | | | |
| Osama Rabi | | | 738 | | | |
| **Total Bachelor's Program** | 675 | 455 | 738 | 1040 | 0 | 2908 |
| **Percent Bachelor's Program** | 23.2% | 15.6% | 25.4% | 35.8% | 0.0% | 100.00% |

*Shinobu Hjalmar, Isa Erasmos, and Sandy Johnson teach at the bachelor's level and in the MBA program.

| | Scholarly Academic | Practice Academic | Scholarly Practitioner | Instructional Practitioner | Additional | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **MBA Program** | | | | | | |
| Bora Byung-Ho | 360 | | | | | |
| Shinobu Hjalmar* | | 120 | | | | |
| Christine Scott | | | | 240 | | |
| Isa Erasmos* | | | | 139 | | |
| Sandy Johnson* | | 214 | | | | |
| **Total MBA Program** | 360 | 334 | 0 | 379 | 0 | 1073 |
| **Percent MBA Program** | 33.6% | 31.1% | 0.0% | 35.3% | 0.0% | 100.00% |

*Bora Byung-Ho, Shinobu Hjalmar, Isa Erasmos, and Sandy Johnson all teach at various degree levels.

| | Scholarly Academic | Practice Academic | Scholarly Practitioner | Instructional Practitioner | Additional | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PhD program** | | | | | | |
| Bora Byung-Ho | 120 | | | | | |
| Thaddeus Thompson | 420 | | | | | |
| **Total PhD Program** | 540 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 540 |
| **Percent PhD Program** | 100.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 100.00% |

*Bora Byung-Ho teaches at both the master's and doctoral degree levels.

# Learner Success

# Standard 4: Curriculum

## Rationale

Business schools provide education primarily through their curriculum. Each degree program, including curricular components that can aggregate to degree programs, is designed to provide learners with a distinct set of competencies. The knowledge and skills in these curricula should prepare learners for desired career outcomes and a lifelong learning mindset.

A business school graduate with either a generalized or specialized degree is expected to have definitive core competencies. Learners should have access to curriculum that is current and relevant. Curriculum should also be innovative, make an impact on graduates, and promote engagement in multiple contexts.

Given the pervasive and rapidly evolving role of technology in business, curricula must intentionally develop learners' ability to apply, adapt to, and critically evaluate current and emerging technologies. Technological agility includes not only proficiency with tools but also the ability to integrate technology into business decision-making, understand its broader implications, and respond effectively to ongoing change.

## Clarifying Guidance

### Curricular Content

AACSB does not prescribe specific curricular content, structures, or required competencies across all schools. Curricula are expected to be mission-driven, reflecting the school's strategic priorities, stakeholder needs, and program levels. The primary objective of the standard is to ensure that the curriculum is properly managed and covers appropriate competencies. Curricula should address competencies that would normally be included in the type of degree program under consideration and should be intentionally aligned with the school's mission, strategies, and expected outcomes. Given the pace of change in business practice today, both knowledge and skill areas may be dynamic over time.

The peer review team will examine each degree program's list of course offerings to ensure currency and relevance. Schools should be able to demonstrate that curricular content reflects input from relevant stakeholders, such as scholars, industry partners, alumni, and employers, to ensure continued relevance and responsiveness to external change.

Curriculum should be managed to ensure appropriate inclusion of technology. For each program level, schools are required to describe the current and emerging business theories, technologies, and practices in which learners are expected to develop competency. The purpose of this requirement is to demonstrate that schools are providing learners with relevant technology competencies in line with what might be expected for business graduates.

As an example, business graduates are generally expected to have a moderate or higher level of competency with standard productivity software. Some business degrees may require competency in artificial intelligence tools, statistical software, coding languages, or database software. When describing these competency expectations, schools should emphasize learners' ability to apply, adapt to, and critically evaluate relevant technologies, rather than proficiency in any specific tool.

The use of technology in degree programs is just one example of curricular currency. The absence of relevant technologies in degree programs may indicate to reviewers that the curriculum is not keeping pace with current practice. Additionally, schools should have policies to ensure the responsible use of technology, including the ethical use of artificial intelligence.

### Curriculum Management

Curriculum should be managed to ensure that it remains current and relevant. The school should have governance that facilitates regular reviews of curricular content and assurance of learning (AoL) processes and outcomes with internal (faculty and staff) and external stakeholders (discussed in Standard 5).

> As a best practice, schools should seek regular input from external stakeholders to ensure curriculum currency and relevancy including from advisory boards, industry partners, alumni, or employers, as part of the process of updating curriculum.

The peer review team can assess the school's governance structure to determine whether committees or task forces are in place to support curriculum updates and AoL. To ensure the school has an active curriculum management process, the peer review team could ask about meeting frequency for any curriculum-related groups and consider reviewing meeting minutes along with any other relevant documentation.

### Digital Agility

As described earlier, schools should clearly demonstrate how their curricula expose learners to current and emerging digital, analytical, and information technologies used in contemporary business practice, and embed technology-related learning objectives across courses and degree programs.

> Expectations related to digital competence and emerging technologies are not tied to specific tools, platforms, or technologies. Schools should ensure that learners develop the ability to interpret, evaluate, and apply technology-generated outputs using sound judgment, critical thinking, and higher-order reasoning.

Expectations related to digital competence and emerging technologies are not tied to specific tools, platforms, or technologies. Schools should ensure that learners develop the ability to interpret, evaluate, and apply technology-generated outputs using sound judgment, critical thinking, and higher-order reasoning.

Schools may demonstrate how they meet this expectation in a variety of ways, depending on their mission and program portfolio.

Examples of how digital agility may be developed include:

- Integrating data analysis, visualization, or decision-support tools into coursework across multiple disciplines.
- Incorporating projects or case studies that require learners to evaluate or apply emerging technologies (e.g., artificial intelligence, automation, or analytics) in business contexts.
- Embedding technology-enabled problem-solving activities that require learners to interpret outputs and exercise judgment.
- Providing experiential learning opportunities, such as simulations, consulting projects, or internships, where technology is applied in real-world settings.
- Designing assignments that require learners to assess the limitations, risks, or ethical implications of technology use.

Schools should also integrate expectations for ethical and responsible technology use in their curriculum, emphasizing human oversight and professional judgment. For example, they might incorporate discussions of data privacy, bias in algorithms, appropriate use of artificial intelligence, and the role of human judgment in decision-making.

### Innovation, Experiential Learning, and Lifelong Learning

An innovative curriculum weaves together cutting-edge content, creative pedagogy, and fresh approaches to delivery. Schools can demonstrate curricular innovation through new courses, new degree programs, or new curricular and co-curricular initiatives — for example, interdisciplinary offerings, emerging topical areas, or requirements for learners to develop proficiency in a programming language or emerging technology.

Pedagogical innovation is equally important. Schools can document faculty experimentation with different teaching approaches, particularly initiatives that recognize diverse learner styles and paces of learning. Delivery modes are themselves an expression of pedagogy, and may include online and technology-enhanced formats, learner-centered classroom settings, or "flipped" classroom designs that shift the locus of active learning.

It is important to acknowledge that innovation requires experimentation and not all experimentation results in a usable outcome. Thus, innovation typically requires many iterations. Failure of an innovation attempt is not negative. In fact, much can be learned by examining what when wrong, why a particular innovation did not produce the expected outcome, and how one might move forward. This is the essence of an innovative school. Schools are encouraged in their discussion of innovation to talk about what has worked and what hasn’t worked as a learning opportunity for all.

Curriculum should include experiential learning opportunities, including those that facilitate the connection between academic and professional experiences. The school should provide the peer review team with examples of experiential learning, such as field trips, guest speakers, and professional development workshops.

Curriculum should foster a lifelong learning mindset. This can be demonstrated in numerous ways, including but not limited to learner engagement with professional associations, assignments that reach beyond classroom teaching or a given course, and demonstrated facility with emerging technologies beyond classroom requirements.

Learners should be prepared for more than just their first jobs following graduation. While learning current practices and technologies is important, the overall purpose of the education should be to equip learners to continue their learning. This is difficult to assess, but the report should discuss how the school develops learners' intellectual curiosity and critical thinking and helps them take ownership of their learning.

## Integration of Research and Teaching

Peer review teams will consider whether there is a clear connection between the school's scholarly strengths and its curriculum, and whether learners are equipped to apply evidence-based approaches in practice.

Curriculum should be informed by current knowledge derived from scholarly inquiry and other credible sources, and learners should be exposed to evidence-based approaches to business decision-making. Integration of research and teaching does not require that all faculty actively publish; rather, the curriculum should reflect contemporary thinking and relevant intellectual contributions.

Integration may be demonstrated in a variety of ways, such as incorporating research findings or industry insights into course content, using current cases or data, and designing assignments or learning activities that require learners to analyze and apply evidence to business problems. Schools are not expected to rely exclusively on peer-reviewed academic research but rather to demonstrate that curricular content and delivery are informed by appropriate and credible sources of knowledge relevant to the school's mission.

## Engagement

Regular, meaningful learner-to-learner, learner-to-faculty, and learner-to-industry engagement are hallmarks of an AACSB-accredited school. The peer review team will seek examples of engagement across all modalities.

### Learner-to-Faculty Engagement.

**Learner-to-faculty engagement** is not simply a matter of availability. It is an expression of the faculty member's professional commitment to learner success. Opportunities for learner-to-faculty engagement should be provided to learners on a routine basis throughout the course and should be primarily initiated by the faculty member. Delivering lectures and delegating all other engagement activities to teaching assistants or other support personnel does not align with the spirit and intent of the standards. Rote re-use of curriculum content and/or assessments, lectures delivered primarily through asynchronous learning management system platforms with no other significant learner-to-faculty engagement and other similar practices is not consistent with excellence in business education and is not aligned with AACSB standards.

High-quality engagement connects learners to the faculty member's expertise, experience, and professional judgment in ways that go beyond content delivery. It creates the conditions for intellectual challenge, mentorship, and the kind of formative feedback that shapes how learners think, not just what they know.

Schools should ensure that engagement expectations are clearly articulated in faculty policies, consistently applied across delivery modalities and locations, and monitored as part of the school's teaching effectiveness processes. Online and hybrid learners should have access to engagement opportunities equivalent to those available in face-to-face settings. The modality may differ, but the quality and frequency of interaction should not.

**Examples of meaningful learner-to-faculty engagement include:**

| | Learner-to-Faculty Engagement | |
|---|---|---|
| # | Engagement Type | Description & Expectations |
| 1 | Synchronous Content Delivery | Delivering synchronous lectures or other course content, including synchronous instructor-led sessions on specific topics aligned with course learning objectives. Faculty should be present and active in these sessions, not simply moderating pre-recorded content. |
| 2 | Personalized Feedback | Providing personalized written and/or verbal feedback directly to learners on assignments, quizzes, tests, and other assessment activities. Feedback should be timely, specific, and actionable, going beyond grades to explain what was done well, what needs improvement, and how learners can develop. |
| 3 | Regular Office Hours | Holding regular office hours for a reasonable length of time and meeting substantively with learners, whether in person, by video, or through other direct communication channels. Office hours should be more than a formality; faculty should actively encourage learners to use them. |
| 4 | Course Platform Engagement | Engaging regularly with learners within the course platform in a number of substantial ways, including responding to discussion posts, initiating conversations about course themes, and providing timely answers to learner questions. |
| 5 | Academic & Professional Guidance | Offering individualized guidance on academic and professional development, including advising learners on research interests, career pathways, graduate study opportunities, and professional skill development. |
| 6 | Professional Network Connections | Connecting learners to professional networks and opportunities by drawing on the faculty member's own industry relationships, scholarly connections, or alumni ties to open doors that advance learners' professional trajectories. |

## Learner-to-Learner Engagement

For **learner-to-learner engagement**, the peer review team might expect that learners will interact with each other outside of class through student organizations, applied projects and service-learning opportunities, and other small and large group activities.

Learner-to-learner engagement is more than a byproduct of group assignments — it is a deliberate pedagogical strategy that develops the collaborative, communicative, and interpersonal competencies that employers consistently identify as essential. Schools should create intentional structures that promote meaningful peer interaction within and beyond the classroom, across all delivery modalities and locations.

**Examples of meaningful learner-to-learner engagement include:**

| | Learner-to-Learner Engagement | |
|---|---|---|
| # | Engagement Type | Description & Expectations |
| 1 | Team-Based Learning | Collaborative projects and team-based learning in which learners work together on real or simulated business challenges, developing skills in negotiation, conflict resolution, shared accountability, and collective decision-making. |
| 2 | Peer Review & Feedback | Peer review and feedback activities that ask learners to evaluate each other's work using structured criteria, building both critical thinking and the ability to give and receive constructive feedback, considered a foundational professional skill. |
| 3 | Case Competitions & Simulations | Case competitions and business simulations that place learners in competitive team environments, requiring them to integrate knowledge across disciplines and perform under conditions that mirror professional settings. |
| 4 | Student Organizations & Leadership | Student organizations and leadership development programs that offer learners governance experience, community engagement, and sustained relationships with peers who share professional interests. |
| 5 | Cohort & Learning Communities | Cohort and learning community structures, particularly in graduate programs, that build a shared identity and mutual accountability among learners progressing through the curriculum together. |
| 6 | Online & Hybrid Peer Engagement | Discussion forums, peer mentoring, and study groups in online and hybrid environments that replicate the social and intellectual richness of in-person learning for learners who cannot be physically present. |
| 7 | Cross-Program Interaction | Cross-program and cross-disciplinary interaction that intentionally brings together learners from different degree programs, backgrounds, or institutions to reflect the diversity of teams they will encounter in professional life. |

Schools should be attentive to equity in learner-to-learner engagement — ensuring that online, part-time, and geographically distributed learners have access to the same quality and frequency of peer interaction as those in traditional residential settings. Engagement structures should be evaluated as part of the school's ongoing assurance of learning processes to confirm they are achieving their intended outcomes.

## Learner-to-Industry Engagement

Learner-to-industry engagement is a distinguishing feature of a high-quality business education and reflects the school's commitment to preparing graduates for the realities of professional life. Schools should create structured, intentional opportunities for learners to interact with practitioners, organizations, and the broader business community throughout the program — not only at graduation or through optional extracurricular activities. Online and hybrid learners should have substantial opportunities to interact with industry, though it is recognized that those opportunities may need tailoring when learners are geographically dispersed.

**Examples of meaningful learner-to-industry engagement include:**

| | Learner-to-Industry Engagement | |
|---|---|---|
| # | Engagement Type | Description & Expectations |
| 1 | Internships, Co-ops & Practicums | Internships, cooperative education, and practicum experiences that place learners in real organizational settings, providing exposure to professional norms, decision-making environments, and workplace dynamics. |
| 2 | Industry-Sponsored Projects | Industry-sponsored projects and consulting engagements in which learners work on live business challenges brought by external partners, applying course concepts to real problems with genuine stakes. |
| 3 | Guest Speakers & Executives-in-Residence | Guest speakers and executive-in-residence programs that bring practicing professionals into the curriculum to share current perspectives, challenge learner assumptions, and model professional judgment. |
| 4 | Site Visits & Field Experiences | Site visits, company tours, and field experiences that give learners direct exposure to industries, sectors, or organizational contexts relevant to their area of study. |
| 5 | Mentorship Programs | Mentorship programs pairing learners with alumni or industry professionals to support career development, professional identity formation, and networking. |
| 6 | Career & Networking Events | Career development and professional networking events such as job fairs, industry panels, pitch competitions, and case competitions that create authentic interactions with prospective employers and sector leaders. |
| 7 | Advisory Board Engagement | Advisory board engagement in which learners participate in presentations, feedback sessions, or advisory activities alongside board members drawn from the professional community. |

# Standard 5: Assurance of Learning (AoL)

## Rationale

Quality faculty, a thoughtful and relevant curriculum, and support for teaching all contribute to learner success. However, to ensure that learners are prepared for careers or further study, schools must assess competencies through a combination of direct and indirect AoL measures. Competencies include knowledge, skills, and abilities and demonstrate a learner's ability to accomplish tasks. Thus, they are more focused on outcomes and are broader in scope than learning goals.

It is important to know whether graduates are satisfied with their program of study, prepared for a world of work or further study, and successful in their future endeavors. The primary goal of AoL is to ensure proficiency with business skills and knowledge. Direct measures are useful because they provide evidence that learners can demonstrate competency; however, indirect measures can be useful in assessing whether a curriculum is accomplishing desired objectives.

## Clarifying Guidance

### Philosophy of AoL

The intent of AoL is to support continuous improvement in learner outcomes. AoL is not intended to be a check-the-box compliance exercise, nor is it intended to be one-size-fits-all. Such an approach deprives a school and its learners of a real opportunity to meaningfully engage in continuous improvement for the degree programs covered by AACSB accreditation.

Peer review teams should not approach AoL purely from a compliance mindset. Rather, they should keep in mind that they are determining whether the school is meeting the spirit and intent of Standard 5 and showing continuous improvement, and whether learners are substantially meeting the stated learning competencies.

The AoL standard is principles-based and is meant to provide guidance in conducting direct and indirect assessment of learner competency. From AACSB's perspective, an effective AoL process does not require great complexity, a large number of competency goals, or annual assessment of every competency. A strong and mature AoL system is defined by a systematic process, informed by the school's mission and strategies, resulting in meaningful improvements in curriculum and learning.

One of the essential elements of AoL is faculty and key stakeholder involvement.

> It cannot be emphasized enough that AoL is not about one or a few members of the faculty or staff doing most of the work. AoL should be driven by faculty, with the majority of faculty involved at some level.

Faculty teaching courses in which AoL competencies are measured have a particularly high responsibility to ensure that the learning competencies are appropriate and meaningful, and that student learning is enhanced through the AoL process. However, the faculty as a whole should be familiar with the school's AoL processes and should be involved in reviewing and providing feedback on a continuous improvement basis.

External stakeholders such as advisory councils can be invaluable assets in helping a school determine whether they have the right competencies specified for a given degree program. AACSB strongly encourages such input.

## Essential Elements of AoL Processes

The essential elements for alignment with Standard 5, derived from the language in the standard and its interpretive guidance, include the following:

**Essential Elements of AoL Processes**

| | Essential Element | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Documented Assessment Plan | A well-documented plan identifying competency goals for each degree program and describing where and when each competency is assessed. |
| 2 | Broad Stakeholder Involvement | A process that involves broad faculty and other key stakeholder involvement. |
| 3 | Systematic Measurement & Curricular Improvement | Competencies measured systematically (i.e., at regular pre-established intervals), with curricular improvements emanating directly from the AoL process. |
| 4 | Direct & Indirect Assessment | A combination of direct and indirect assessments of learning across the degree portfolio, with each degree program able to use direct assessment, indirect assessment, or a combination of both, depending on the school's mission, strategy, and competency goals. |
| 5 | Mission-Aligned Competency Goals | Competency goals consistent with the school's mission, expected outcomes, and strategies established for each degree program. |
| 6 | Evidence of Goal Achievement | Demonstration that degree competency goals have been substantially met, or in cases where goals are not being met, evidence of efforts to eliminate the discrepancy. |

## Direct vs. Indirect Measures

Schools are expected to use both direct and indirect assessment measures within their program portfolios. Direct measures are based on direct observation of individual performance behaviors or outcomes of learners, while indirect measures are based on observations of groups of learners.

Examples of direct measures include:

- Embedded course assessments (e.g., assignments, exams, projects)
- Capstone projects or integrative experiences
- Standardized or common assessment instruments

Examples of indirect measures include:

- Learner self-assessments
- Alumni or employer feedback
- Surveys related to perceived learning outcomes

Any individual program may rely on either direct or indirect measures, or a combination of both. However, the peer review team will expect to see both measures used across all degree programs in the portfolio. The school is expected to provide its rationale for the approach it employs for each degree program.

## Appropriate Use of Indirect Measures for Standard 5 Purposes

AACSB recognizes that there are different types of indirect measures: (1) those that are tied to assessing specified competency goals within a degree program and therefore serve to "close the loop," and (2) those that are more general in nature and not tied to a stated competency goal in a degree program. While both types provide valuable insights to a school, only the indirect measure tied to specified competency goals is relevant for purposes of closing the loop.

Let's look at an example of each.

**Example 1**: A school has specified the following competency goal in its accounting degree program: "demonstration of excellent oral communication skills with real-world clients in a professional setting." The school decides to measure this indirectly through focus groups with employers. The relevant question for the focus group is, "How do our accounting students perform in oral communications in a professional setting?"

The school records the results from this indirect measure and then implements specific curricular improvements based on feedback from the focus group. After these improvements (and within the six-year cycle), the school conducts a similar focus group to determine whether the improvements have had a positive impact and then records those results.

"Closing the loop" for a specified competency goal occurs when a school documents two measurements with an improvement in between. It is an indirect measure because the focus groups are not assessing individual students, but the impressions/opinions overall of groups of students. This is an appropriate use of an indirect measure for the purpose of closing the loop.

**Example 2**: Now consider that the same school also conducts a survey of its school's advisory board to gauge whether the advisory board believes the school's curriculum is current and relevant. This is also considered an indirect measure, but it is not tied to any competency goal within a degree program. While this feedback is invaluable to the school in helping to ensure its curriculum is adequately preparing its learners, it is not an indirect measure that closes the loop on a competency goal.

It is important for schools to be mindful of the type of indirect measure they are using in each scenario. For AoL purposes, indirect measures must be tied to a specified competency goal to be used to "close the loop."

## Determining the Right Amount of Data to Collect and Analyze

In efforts to meet AoL objectives, schools sometimes gather data on every course, every semester, and on every learner. This practice is not the intent of AoL and is not appropriate or sustainable. Sampling is entirely appropriate, provided the school follows principles that ensure a representative sample across the sample frame.

While a robust AoL system should have multiple competency goals for each degree program, AACSB does not prescribe an optimal number of competencies for a given degree program. Competency goals should focus on what is most important for learners to comprehend or possess as a skill. The school should create the AoL system across programs, with a combination of direct and indirect measures, that best supports its mission.

### What the AoL Standard Does Not Prescribe

| | Topic | What the Standard Does Not Require |
|---|---|---|
| X | Number of Competency Goals | Specify the number of competency goals a school should adopt. |
| X | Assessment Measure Type | Require that each competency goal be assessed solely with either direct or indirect measures. |
| X | Prescribed Learning Objectives | Prescribe learning objectives to be included under each competency goal, although many schools choose to do so. |
| X | Definition of a Mature AoL System | Describe specifically what a school needs to do to have a mature AoL system. |
| X | Sub-Degree Components | Require formal AoL processes for components smaller than a degree. |
| X | Non-Degree Executive Education | Require formal AoL processes for non-degree executive education. |

## Does a School Need to Include Both Competency Goals and Learning Objectives?

How schools incorporate operational definitions is their choice. Many schools include learning objectives under each competency goal to make competencies measurable through direct assessment. Like competency goals, if a school chooses to include learning objectives under each competency goal, there is no optimal number of learning objectives; however, as a guideline, schools that use competency goals tend to have one to three learning objectives for each competency goal. This guideline may vary in practice.

An alternative way to incorporate operational definitions is to write competency goals that contain specific and measurable components embedded within the goal so that they are combined into one sentence or concept.

## Closing the Loop

This terminology has been inconsistently interpreted over time.

Let's make this easy!

> Simply put, AACSB interprets closing the loop to mean that a school shows how it improved curriculum through the assurance of learning process, even if the set target was not achieved. It involves an initial measure, a curricular improvement, and a second measure. Data from the second measure allows faculty, a peer review team, or other engaged stakeholders to determine whether the curricular improvements driven by the first round of data were effective in helping students learn and/or perform better.

Schools close the loop at least once in their accreditation cycle for each competency goal in every degree program.

A commonly repeated misconception is that schools must close the loop twice. This misconception likely stems from the common practice of assessing competency goals twice during a normal accreditation cycle.

Examples of interventions in between two measurements that would count towards closing the loop may include:

- Revising course content or course sequencing based on assessment results.
- Introducing new learning activities or instructional approaches.
- Providing additional support or resources for learners in specific areas.
- Increasing emphasis on skill development (e.g., critical thinking, analytics) across multiple courses.
- Integrating real-world or experiential learning opportunities into the curriculum.
- Expanding use of formative assessments to provide earlier feedback to students.
- Adjusting assessment methods to better measure learning outcomes.

Curricular review and revision should occur routinely and systematically and be informed by the AoL process. Because curricular changes emanate from a multitude of sources (e.g., external stakeholder input, university or school strategic choices, financial or competitive drivers, etc.), Standard 5 requires schools to identify the specific curricular changes that were made directly as a result of their AoL process and how student learning was improved as a result.

By the time schools seeking initial AACSB accreditation have their initial visit, they are expected to have measured all learning competencies, implemented curricular changes if needed, and collected a second

measurement to assess whether the improvements have made a positive impact on learning. Additionally, unlike accredited schools, schools in the initial accreditation process must complete Table 5-1 for every degree program.

> PRTs will check the school's AoL results to ensure that all competency goals in all degree programs have closed the loop at least once (that is, each competency goal has been measured twice with an intervention in between the two measurements) within that accreditation cycle. For those seeking initial accreditation, this expectation is an absolute requirement for all degree programs except for newly launched degree programs, where the school may still be in the process of closing the loop.

## Other AoL Regulators and Quality Assurance Organizations

Many institutions are accredited by organizations other than AACSB. In some cases, these accreditors require assessment processes similar to AACSB's AoL requirements. For AACSB purposes, schools must ensure that their AoL process includes the "Essential Elements" listed above, regardless of whether the process was developed for AACSB or a different regulator. Direct substitution of a regional or country regulator is appropriate only where the process meets all of AACSB's "Essential Elements" for AoL.

For example, an assurance of learning process focused on the major, rather than the degree, would not be directly substitutable, but could be built upon and leveraged for AoL purposes at the degree level. When relying on a system developed for a regional or national regulatory system, a school must ensure that gaps in AACSB-required essential elements are identified and filled and tell its assurance of learning story within the AACSB framework.

## Competency-Based Education

Competency-based education (CBE) is an outcomes-based approach to earning a college credential. CBE is commonly equated with prior-learning assessment (PLA) in which learning that occurs outside of the traditional classroom is evaluated for credit toward a degree. While PLA is one type of CBE, another major type of CBE is credit awarded through project-based direct assessment.

According to the standard, CBE should reflect a small percentage of the total academic program. This limitation applies only to CBE based on PLA and not CBE programs that use direct assessment to evaluate the mastery of course concepts. This distinction between CBE based on PLA and CBE based on direct assessment is important in the context of this standard. In the case of direct assessment CBE, there is no limitation on credit earned in this manner. The school must demonstrate that CBE programs are of the same quality and rigor as their traditional degree programs.

## Microlearning Credentials and Non-Degree Executive Education

Microlearning credentials are certificates, badges, executive education courses, or clusters of courses that normally do not lead to degrees. AACSB standards expect these types of credentials to be reviewed for quality; however, a formal AoL process with competency goals in each program is not required.

The standard indicates that non-degree executive education should be reviewed for quality if it exceeds 5 percent of the school's total annual revenues. Because client feedback and program sustainability provide

some measures of AoL for this area, the quality review does not need to entail a comprehensive combination of direct and indirect assessment measures. Like the assessment of other non-degree offerings, the review should ensure that the executive education is of a quality consistent with the school's mission and degree programs.

## AI and the Evolution of Competency Assessment

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into business practice and higher education, schools may need to reconsider how competency attainment is demonstrated and assessed within their AoL systems.

Historically, many competency goals have focused on the successful production of a student artifact or deliverable—such as a report, presentation, analysis, project, or case solution.

In many cases, faculty could reasonably infer that the quality of the final artifact reflects the student's ability to think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, or apply disciplinary knowledge. However, generative AI technologies are almost certainly going to require schools to change how they evaluate whether learning has occurred.

> Generative AI technologies now enable students to rapidly produce sophisticated outputs with varying degrees of human involvement. As a result, the existence of a polished artifact alone may no longer provide sufficient evidence that the student independently demonstrated the underlying competency.

Consequently, schools may increasingly shift AoL processes from emphasizing the quality of the final output alone toward evaluating the reasoning, judgment, and decision-making processes students use in developing that output. For example, in assessing competencies such as critical thinking, ethical reasoning, problem-solving, or strategic analysis, schools may place greater emphasis on students' ability to:

- Evaluate alternative approaches
- Justify decisions and recommendations
- Assess risks and unintended consequences
- Critically evaluate AI-generated content
- Recognize limitations, bias, or inaccuracies in AI outputs
- Explain how conclusions were reached
- Demonstrate appropriate human judgment when using AI-enabled tools

This evolution does not necessarily require schools to abandon existing competencies. Rather, schools may need to reconsider what counts as credible evidence that learners have achieved competency in an AI-enabled environment. Accordingly, schools may supplement traditional artifacts with additional forms of evidence, such as:

- Process documentation
- Reflective analyses
- Oral defenses or presentations
- Iterative drafts
- Records of how AI tools were used

- Evaluations of alternative solutions considered
- Demonstrations of how students validated or challenged AI-generated outputs

How AI is used and assessed is a school choice and AACSB is not prescriptive other than the mandate from Standard 4 that schools incorporate current and emerging technology into the curriculum. For assessment, schools should thoughtfully determine how AI use aligns with the learning objectives of the degree program and ensure that assessment methods remain capable of credibly demonstrating student competency attainment. As AI continues to reshape the nature of work, schools are encouraged to periodically evaluate whether existing competency goals, assessment approaches, and curricular experiences continue to reflect the knowledge, skills, judgment, and capabilities graduates will need in an AI-enabled business environment.

## Sample Tables

For schools in the initial accreditation process, Table 5-1 is mandatory for every degree program in scope for AACSB purposes. Such schools should complete this table to the best of their ability and submit it to the Initial Accreditation Committee.

The table is optional for schools in the continuous improvement review (CIR) process, but many of these schools and their review teams have found the table to be helpful in reporting AoL results.

Schools seeking initial accreditation should provide approximate dates for which assessment milestones will be achieved (e.g., June 2025: first round of data collection, July–August 2025: analysis of data, Sept. 2025: second round of data collection, etc.).

AoL is reported at the degree program level rather than the major level. For example, a school with one BBA program that has 10 majors would have one corresponding table.

The following examples demonstrate a combined competency goal and learning objective (examples 1 and 2), and a single competitive goal measured directly and indirectly (example 3). In this example, the indirect results are identical to the direct results. That is, the employers are telling the school that the graduates are not meeting their expectations in oral communications, which supports what the direct measures also indicate. Normally the direct and indirect measures are taken together to understand the full picture of whether a particular learning competency has been achieved.

**Example 1: Direct Measure**

**Table 5-1**
**Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)**
**Assessment Plan and Results for Most Recently Completed Accreditation Cycle**
**1 September 2020–31 May 2026**

| Competency/ Learning Objective | Measure | | | Data | | | Results | Problem Identified |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Measure | Direct or Indirect | Form of Measure | Target | Where Assessed | When Assessed | | |
| Learners will communicate effectively in professional contexts by delivering clear, well-structured oral presentations that are appropriately tailored to their audience. | First | Direct | Rubric with 5 dimensions of oral competency | 80% of students meet or exceed expectations | Course: ACCFIN 4445 | Sem 1, 2025 | 40% meet or exceed; 60% need improvement | Results indicate that students struggle with real-time oral communication under pressure, specifically in responding to questions with clarity, structure, and confidence. This suggests insufficient opportunities in the curriculum for practice and feedback in unscripted speaking situations |
| | Curricular Intervention:<br>Course: ACCFIN 4445<br>Improvement: Introduce structured Q&A simulation modules requiring students to respond to unanticipated questions under time constraints. Incorporated:<br>Three staged mock presentation sessions with mandatory Q&A components<br>Use of a standardized rubric emphasizing response clarity, organization and confidence<br>Immediate faculty and peer feedback following each session.<br>Person Responsible: A. Devine | | | | | | | |
| | Second | Direct | Rubric with 5 dimensions of oral competency | 80% of students meet or exceed target | Course: ACCFIN 4445 | Sem 1, 2026 | 70% meet or exceed; 30% need improvement | Although student performance improved following the intervention, results indicate that a subset of students continue to fall short of proficiency. This suggests that while practice opportunities increased, variability in feedback quality and limited individualized coaching may be constraining further gains. |
| Check One:<br>Loop Is Closed ☒<br>Loop Is Not Closed ☐ | | | | | | | | |

**Example 2: Indirect Measure**

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Competency/ Learning Objective</th><th colspan="3">Measure</th><th colspan="3">Data</th><th rowspan="2">Results</th><th rowspan="2">Problem Identified</th></tr>
<tr><th>Measure</th><th>Direct or Indirect</th><th>Form of Measure</th><th>Target</th><th>Where Assessed</th><th>When Assessed</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Learners will communicate effectively in professional contexts by delivering clear, well-structured oral presentations that are appropriately tailored to their audience.</td><td>First</td><td>Indirect</td><td>Employer survey</td><td>80% of students meet or exceed expectations</td><td>Email survey of employers from last 3 years</td><td>Sem 1, 2025</td><td>40% meet or exceed; 60% need improvement</td><td>Employer feedback indicates that the majority of graduates do not consistently meet expectations for effective oral communication in profession settings, particularly in responding to client questions with clarity, structure and confidence. These findings are consistent with internal faculty observations, indicating a need for expanded opportunities for practice and feedback in unscripted speaking contexts</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="8">Curricular Intervention:<br>Course: ACCFIN 4445<br>Improvement: Introduce structured opportunities to strengthen real-time communication skills, including:<br>• Integration of Q&A simulation exercises requiring students to respond to unanticipated questions under time constraints<br>• Use of a standardized oral communication rubric aligned with employer expectations (clarity, organization, confidence, audience awareness)<br>• Incorporation of formative feedback from faculty and peers following each simulation<br>In addition, the program will review alignment between curriculum and employer expectations by mapping communication-related assignments across the curriculum to ensure sufficient developmental progression.<br>Person Responsible: A. Devine</td></tr>
<tr><td>Second</td><td>Indirect</td><td>Employer survey</td><td>80% of students meet or exceed target</td><td>Email survey of employers from last 3 years</td><td>Sem 1, 2026</td><td>70% meet or exceed; 30% need improvement</td><td>Employer feedback shows improvement in graduates' oral communication skills following the intervention; however, results indicate that a portion of graduates still fall short of expectations. Given the indirect nature of the measure, specific areas of weakness cannot be fully disaggregated, but continued gaps may reflect inconsistent development of communication skills across courses or variation in student readiness at the point of graduation. These findings suggest the need for more intentional reinforcement and consistency in communication skill development across the curriculum.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="8">Check One:<br>Loop Is Closed ☒<br>Loop Is Not Closed ☐</td></tr>
</table>

**Note that in both examples (1 and 2), the loop is closed even though the target has not yet been achieved. The school would be expected to continue building this competency in its learners**

**Example 3: Combined Direct and Indirect Measure**

| Competency/ Learning Objective | Measure | | | Data | | | Results | Problem Identified |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Measure | Direct or Indirect | Form of Measure | Target | Where Assessed | When Assessed | | |
| Incorporate relevant data and visual elements (charts, graphs, dashboards) to support and enhance key messages | First | Direct | Rubric with 4 dimensions of digital competency | 75% of learners meet or exceed expectations | BBA Capstone | Semester 1 2024 | 62% meet/exceed<br>38% need improvement | Results indicate that students struggle to effectively incorporate data in visual elements to support and enhance key messages. |
| | First | Indirect | Employer survey | 75% of learners meet or exceed expectations | Employer feedback through survey | Semester 2 2025 | 72% meet/exceed<br>28% need improvement | |
| | **Curricular Intervention:**<br>**Course:** Capstone<br>**Improvements:**<br>• Expanded data visualization assignments<br>• Expanded content on data storytelling module<br>• Focused instruction on interpretation of data<br>• Provided examples of strong and weak visual elements from company reports<br>**Person Responsible:** G. Smith | | | | | | | |
| | Second | Direct | Rubric with 4 dimensions of digital competency | 75% of learners meet or exceed expectations | BBA Capstone | Semester 1 2025 | 60% meet/exceed<br>20% need improvement | Feeback<br>Improved clarity and use of visuals<br>Continued gaps in effectively explain data to support key points<br>Results point to meaningful improvement in students' ability to use data and visuals in professional settings, consistent with gains observed in the direct measure.<br>While performance has improved employer feedback indicates continued challenges in clearly explaining and interpreting data. |
| | Second | Indirect | Employer survey | 75% of learners meet or exceed expectations | Employer feedback through survey | Semester 1 2026 | 83% meet/exceed<br>17% need improvement | |

Check One:
Loop Is Closed ☒
Loop Is Not Closed ☐

**The loop is closed, even though the performance decreased on the second measurement.**

# Standard 6: Learner Progression

## Rationale

The desired outcome from a business school's degree and non-degree programs is learner success, broadly defined. Positive outcomes depend on inputs and processes beyond the curriculum. Schools should have admission processes that ensure a learner population with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, consistent with the school's mission. Admitted learners should be able to progress toward program completion and have the potential to achieve desired outcomes, such as further graduate studies or career placement. Professional development programs and extracurricular programs are also highly valued components in learner progression.

## Clarifying Guidance

### Admissions, Progression, Degree Completion, and Career Development Support

> Institutions generally collect, monitor, and report data on incoming learner demographics, learner retention, and graduation rates at the institution level. Standard 6 expects the accredited unit to also collect, monitor, and report these data separately.

If learners are admitted to the university and there are no separate admission requirements for the AACSB accreditation unit, reporting the university's requirements is appropriate. If there are policies and procedures at the unit level, they should be documented. The criteria for admission should be compatible with the school's mission and consistently applied. Information about admission requirements should be publicly available.

Schools are expected to define and clearly communicate policies for evaluating, awarding, and accepting transfer credit. These policies should ensure that academic work accepted from other institutions (whether AACSB-accredited or not) is comparable to the school's degree programs in content, rigor, and learning outcomes.

Programs, policies, and practices should be in place to support learners as they advance toward degree completion. The admitted learner population may vary widely depending on each school's mission. The peer review team will want to know that the school appreciates the characteristics of its learner population and supports learners in their journeys toward graduation.

Data on attrition and degree completion are useful but should be supplemented with information about support services, A school that accepts learners with lower GPAs and test scores is expected to assist those learners in transitioning to college or university study.

Counseling and advising are important parts of learner progression, helping learners pursue programs that best reflect their interests and talents.

Ultimately, the rate of degree completion and the successful placement of graduates, whether in a career or program of further study, can validate that the appropriate admission procedures and other processes are in place to ensure learner success.

### Academic Program Quality and Post-Graduation Success

> Relevant and timely data documenting the school's overall academic program quality and post-graduate success should be available on the accredited unit's website, clearly displayed and distinguishable from university-level aggregated data.

The most common metric of post-graduation success is the attainment of a job in the field of study; however, AACSB recognizes that many learners pursue alternative paths after graduation. Schools are encouraged to provide metrics that capture the range of post-graduation activities and outcomes that contribute to learner success. The peer review team should ensure that these activities align with the school's mission.

Peer review teams should be mindful of the nuances in successful outcomes and placement. Average graduate salaries, for example, will vary significantly depending on whether learners enter finance or consulting, work for nonprofits, or launch entrepreneurial ventures. Schools may analyze and report employment outcomes by category, reflecting different career paths and types of learners.

The standard recognizes that some institutions do not collect or are unable to collect data on post-graduation career placement. For example, some schools have a high percentage of international learners. While data on these learners may be difficult to collect, the school should demonstrate that they have acquired added value from their business degree programs. Schools may provide evidence such as job acceptance rates and case examples of successful graduates.

> Schools should report outcomes that represent typical graduates, not just the most successful. Expectations for evidence should be appropriate to the school's mission and the availability of data in its country or region.

# Pathways to Impact

# Standard 7: Teaching Effectiveness and Impact

## Rationale

Business school faculty engage in three primary activities: teaching, scholarship, and service. Standard 7 concerns effective and impactful teaching. The direct outcome from teaching is successful learners, which is covered elsewhere in standards related to learner success. However, that success is dependent on instructional faculty who are prepared, current, and pedagogically astute. This standard is meant to ensure that the school provides development activities and has evaluation systems that promote teaching effectiveness and ultimately yield discernable positive impact.

> For purposes of Standard 7, the evidence of teaching effectiveness and teaching impact is not at the individual faculty level. It is demonstrated by having support structures in place across the portfolio of faculty that promote and sustain effective and impactful teaching.

## Clarifying Guidance

Teaching effectiveness and teaching impact are related but distinct concepts.

> Teaching effectiveness refers to the quality of instructional practices and the learning experience. Teaching impact refers to the extent to which teaching contributes to meaningful learner outcomes and longer-term success. Schools should demonstrate attention to both concepts through policies, practices, development activities, and evidence of continuous improvement.

| Concept | Focus | Possible Evidence |
|---|---|---|
| Teaching Effectiveness | Quality of instructional practices and learner experience | Peer reviews, learner evaluations, course design, faculty development activities, teaching innovation |
| Teaching Impact | Meaningful outcomes resulting from teaching; longer time frame | Alumni success, employer feedback, learner career readiness, dissemination of teaching innovations, scholarship of teaching and learning |

## Teaching Effectiveness

The peer review team typically reviews materials and policies related to hiring, promoting, and maintaining qualified educators. The school should describe the current teaching and learning strategy, along with major initiatives to maintain and improve performance and impact. The school should demonstrate that resources to maintain effective pedagogy in the relevant discipline are available to all faculty. The peer review team might expect, for example, to see formal evaluation policies for both participating and supporting faculty, as well as orientation programs available to ensure effective teaching for all faculty.

> Institutions frequently anchor on just one teaching evaluation metric. Standard 7 expects schools to use multiple measures to assess teaching quality and effectiveness. Schools should demonstrate not only that multiple measures are used but also how feedback from those evaluations is used to improve teaching practices, course design, and learning outcomes over time.

**Examples of specific documents, governance practices, resources, or processes related to teaching effectiveness that may be reviewed by a peer review team include:**

| Teaching Effectiveness: Evidence That May Be Reviewed | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Category | Documents, Practices & Resources |
| ○ | Faculty Hiring | • Hiring policies that demonstrate that new faculty are qualified to teach.<br>• Hiring policies and practices that seek to attract qualified faculty. |
| ○ | Orientation & Mentoring | • Faculty orientation programs that include teaching.<br>• Availability of teacher mentoring. |
| ○ | Teaching Support Resources | • School or university teaching center and/or access to other programs designed to enhance teaching.<br>• Resources available to faculty to maintain discipline expertise. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ○ | Evaluation & Standards | • Teaching evaluation policies and procedures (multi-measure).<br>• Promotion and tenure standards related to teaching. |
| ○ | Professional Development | • Teaching development activities (e.g., pedagogy workshops, pedagogy grants, faculty attendance at teaching conferences, and classroom visitation and feedback).<br>• Policies and practices to ensure faculty employ current pedagogy.<br>• Policies, practices, development activities, and dedicated resources to ensure faculty are current with appropriate technologies.<br>• Opportunities for faculty to participate in high-quality international conferences of disciplines or in highly regarded global academic organizations. |
| ○ | Faculty Engagement & Recognition | • Recognition practices for outstanding teachers (e.g., awards).<br>• Examples of faculty professional engagement.<br>• Office hour policies and any other policies or practices promoting learner-faculty engagement. |

To assess faculty currency, peer review teams may analyze curricular offerings and select course syllabi. The team may evaluate the composition of faculty teaching particularly innovative courses to determine whether they are full-time faculty or primarily supporting faculty.

While supporting faculty may be effective at delivering highly relevant current or emerging technologies, the school should take care not to rely solely on supporting faculty to do so. Core permanent faculty are charged with remaining current in their fields. Traditional courses and syllabi should also be current and may be reviewed to assess currency and relevance of course content.

Standard 7 asks schools to describe the systems they have in place to promote teaching effectiveness, support and reward excellent teaching, and remediate ineffective teaching. For purposes of this standard, the evidence is not at the individual faculty level but across the faculty portfolio.

**Teaching Effectiveness Examples**

Example 1: Multi-measure Teaching Evaluation System

A business school evaluates teaching effectiveness using multiple measures rather than relying solely on learner evaluations. Faculty teaching reviews include learner course evaluations, peer classroom observations, review of course design and learning materials, evidence of instructional innovation, participation in teaching development activities, and reflection statements describing improvements made based on prior feedback. For example, a faculty member whose learner evaluations identified concerns about course engagement participated in workshops on active learning pedagogy, redesigned class sessions using team-based exercises, and demonstrated measurable improvement in subsequent peer and learner feedback.

Example 2: Faculty Development in Emerging Technologies

A school establishes an annual faculty development initiative focused on emerging technologies relevant to business education. Activities may include workshops on generative AI, data analytics tools, cybersecurity applications, or simulation-based learning technologies. Faculty participation may be supported through internal grants, conference funding, teaching innovation stipends, or release time for

curriculum redesign. Evidence may include revised syllabi, newly developed courses, integration of AI-enabled assignments, or adoption of new instructional technologies.

Example 3: Curricular Currency and Relevance

A peer review team may examine course syllabi to determine whether instructional content reflects current business practices and technologies. For instance, a marketing analytics course may incorporate current AI-enabled customer segmentation tools, while an accounting course may address automation, data visualization, and fraud analytics. Evidence of curricular currency may include updated readings, contemporary case studies, integration of industry software platforms, employer input into course design, or regular curriculum review cycles.

Example 4: Teaching Mentorship and Continuous Improvement

New faculty members participate in a structured teaching mentorship program during their first academic year. Mentors observe classroom instruction, review course materials, and provide coaching on pedagogy, learner engagement, and assessment practices. The school documents how feedback from mentoring activities contributes to continuous improvement in teaching performance and learner outcomes.

Example 5: AI-Enhanced Teaching Effectiveness

Schools may support teaching effectiveness through responsible integration of artificial intelligence into pedagogy. Examples include faculty training on appropriate AI use in instruction, AI-supported tutoring or feedback systems, learner assignments requiring critical evaluation of AI-generated outputs, classroom activities focused on ethical AI use, or assessment redesign to emphasize higher-order thinking and applied problem-solving. Schools should demonstrate that AI integration enhances learner engagement and learning outcomes while preserving academic integrity and meaningful human interaction.

## Teaching Impact

The impact of outstanding teaching can be difficult to assess, but schools can still provide output signals of impactful teaching. Alumni are an excellent source of input for teaching impact, which may be collected through surveys and reflections. Additionally, talented teachers often disseminate their teaching knowledge and skills at seminars, through blogs and other social media outlets, by writing textbooks, and in workshops. The peer review team can look for these types of outputs as a reference for teaching impact. The scholarship of teaching and learning can also reflect teaching impact. Peer review teams can further consider how evidence of teaching impact is used to inform improvements in pedagogy, curriculum design, learner support, and broader institutional strategies.

Like teaching effectiveness, teaching impact is demonstrated across the faculty portfolio and not at the individual faculty level. The standard expects that, overall, the school can provide exemplars of how it is having an impact over time through its teaching enterprise.

**Teaching Impact Examples**

Example 1: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Teaching impact may be demonstrated through contributions to teaching and learning scholarship. Faculty may publish research on innovative pedagogical methods, present at teaching conferences, develop widely adopted instructional materials, or contribute to disciplinary teaching workshops. For example, a faculty member who develops a simulation-based ethics exercise that is later adopted by other institutions demonstrates impact beyond the classroom through dissemination and external adoption of teaching innovations.

Example 2: Evidence of Learner and Career Impact

Schools may demonstrate teaching impact through evidence that instructional practices contribute to learner success and career readiness. Examples may include:

- Strong internship placement rates
- Employer feedback on graduate preparedness
- Alumni reflections or surveys on the relevance of classroom learning
- Learner success in professional certifications

Evidence that graduates effectively apply analytical, technological, or leadership skills in practice

Example 3: Teaching Excellence Recognition and Reputation

Teaching impact may also be reflected through faculty recognition or teaching excellence programs. Examples include institutional or national teaching awards, invitations to lead faculty development workshops, adoption of teaching materials by other institutions, or external demand for faculty expertise related to teaching innovation and pedagogy. Such evidence should demonstrate that the school's teaching practices are influencing learners, institutions, or the broader business education community beyond the school itself.

Example 4: Community and Regional Economic Impact

A business school in an emerging economy partners with local entrepreneurs, small businesses, cooperatives, or nongovernmental organizations to embed applied consulting projects into the curriculum. Through these experiences, learners help organizations address challenges related to digital transformation, financial literacy, supply chain resilience, sustainability, or market access. Teaching impact is demonstrated through evidence that graduates contribute to regional economic development, support underserved communities, or improve organizational capabilities within the local business environment.

Example 5: Global and Cross-Cultural Learning Impact

A school incorporates globally collaborative learning experiences into the curriculum through virtual international projects, multinational student teams, international field experiences, or partnerships with institutions in other countries. Evidence includes learner development of cross-cultural communication skills, learner ability to work effectively in global teams, employer feedback on learners' global readiness, or alumni reflections on how these experiences prepared them to work across international business environments.

Example 6: Responsible Leadership and Societal Outcomes

A business school integrates responsible leadership, ethics, sustainability, or social impact themes throughout its curriculum in alignment with regional or national priorities. Learners participate in projects that address issues such as environmental sustainability, inclusive economic growth, healthcare access, or workforce development. These experiences may translate into meaningful teaching over a long period of time. The school could provide evidence of graduate engagement in socially impactful organizations, employer recognition of graduates' ethical leadership capabilities, or positive alumni contributions to their communities and industries.

Example 7: Workforce Transformation and Lifelong Learning

In regions experiencing rapid technological or economic transformation, a business school may reference executive education, microcredentials, or reskilling programs designed to help working professionals adapt to changing workforce demands. Teaching impact may be reflected through evidence of career advancement, successful workforce transition, employer partnerships, or measurable contributions to regional talent development needs.

# Standard 8: Impact of Scholarship

## Rationale

All business schools are expected to engage in the creation and dissemination of high-quality impactful knowledge that is aligned with their missions. The outcome sought from these intellectual contributions is impact to the theory, practice, and/or teaching of business. The standards seek to elevate the impact of intellectual contributions to more than a simple count of peer-reviewed journal articles.

We encourage schools to incorporate evidence of impact into their assessments of the quality of intellectual contributions for all faculty. This expectation applies equally to teaching- and research-intensive schools; however, the types and volume of intellectual contributions, the stakeholders for whom they are intended, and the resulting degree of impact will differ accordingly.

Schools are encouraged to consult the 2026 AACSB Global Research Impact Task Force report, *A Framework for Research Impact: Insights, Pathways, and Calls to Action*, which offers guidance for understanding, evaluating, and advancing research impact across multiple dimensions.

This report represents the collective input of global experts and calls for "a broader and more intentional approach to research impact in business education—one that recognizes not only scholarly contributions within academia but also influences practice, policy, education, and society." The report provides a much-needed framework for assessing impact beyond traditional academic metrics such as citation counts and publications in highly ranked journals.

## Clarifying Guidance

### Overview

AACSB recognizes that schools may achieve impact through multiple pathways, including basic, applied, and pedagogical scholarship, as well as engagement with external stakeholders. Schools are expected to demonstrate how their chosen approach aligns with their mission and contributes to meaningful outcomes.

In this standard, the school should describe its research strategy, how research is organized and supported, and the outputs and outcomes that result, rather than focusing on quantity of publications. Because schools are heterogeneous, the standard emphasizes alignment of the intellectual portfolio with the school's mission, expected outcomes, and strategy.

The standard also requires schools to assess the quality and impact of its scholarship on the theory, practice, and/or teaching of business. Schools are further required to outline their area(s) of thought leadership and how they are progressing against their impact aspiration. Peer review teams will focus on whether the school demonstrates a coherent and mission-aligned portfolio of intellectual contributions,

evidence of quality and impact across that portfolio, and clear progress toward the school's stated thought leadership aspirations.

## Completion of Table 8-1

Table 8-1 should present faculty intellectual contributions for the six years leading up to and including the self-study year according to the school's normal review cycle.

In Table 8-1 the school should provide a count of intellectual contributions produced by the faculty members employed in the most recently completed regular academic year, aggregated by discipline. The total count in the "Portfolio" section should be the same as the total count in the "Types" section of the table.

> The number of contributions must represent a non-duplicated count for co-authored publications. The count identifies the intellectual contributions for the most recently completed regular accreditation cycle, produced by faculty who were employed in the most recently completed regular academic year; therefore, as a general rule, the faculty included in Table 3-1 are the same faculty whose intellectual contributions are included in Table 8-1, with the exception of contract lecturers who are employed only to teach and visiting faculty whose research is designed to and/or resourced by another school. [2]

## Co-authorship

Frequently faculty co-authorship causes questions about how to complete Table 8-1 accurately. Below are examples of how to include and/or apportion co-authored publications in Table 8-1. The basic principle is that co-authors within the same school, but different disciplines will yield apportioned publications between the disciplines to ensure each co-author's contribution is counted in his/her discipline. When co-authors are at different institutions, the reporting school may report the entire credit for the publication in their Table 8-1 in the appropriate discipline. This principle, then, may be easily extended for additional co-authors.

- Two faculty from the same school but different disciplines:
  50% to discipline X and 50% to discipline Y.
- Two faculty from the same school and in the same discipline:
  100% to discipline X.
- Two faculty at different schools (any discipline):
  100% to discipline X.

[2] While the intellectual contributions of contract lecturers who are employed only to teach, as well as visiting faculty, are not included in Table 8-1, their intellectual contributions are "countable" for the purposes of faculty qualification status in Table 3-1.

## Guidance on Completing Table 8-1 (A) Intellectual Contributions

Table 8.1 (A) has three main components for counting intellectual contributions: portfolio (by category) of intellectual contributions, types of intellectual contributions, and percentage of faculty producing intellectual contributions. All columns for each component are required to be completed.

### Portfolio of Intellectual Contributions

The school is to categorize intellectual contributions based on whether they are basic or discovery scholarship, applied or integrative/application scholarship, or teaching and learning scholarship. This categorization provides summary measures that are useful for the school when discussing alignment of intellectual contributions with mission, expected outcomes, and strategy.

## Types of Intellectual Contributions

> All intellectual contributions for Standard 8 purposes should either be within or closely related to the faculty member's discipline or serve other components of the school's mission (e.g., contributions to the school's chosen area of societal impact or thought leadership).

The standard requires intellectual contributions to also be categorized according to level of peer review or subject matter expert review that occurs for the given item.

A wide variety of examples exist and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Publications in peer-reviewed journals
- Publications in editorial-reviewed journals
- Publications in the popular press
- Published case studies or other teaching materials
- Peer-reviewed academic or professional conference proceedings
- Policy documents
- Academic or practitioner books and book chapters
- Reports derived from research or consulting grants
- Technologies for practical application in business
- Patents

### Percentage of Faculty Producing Intellectual Contributions

The final column of Table 8-1 measures the percentage of faculty producing intellectual contributions.

Sample Calculation: Percentage of Participating Faculty Producing Intellectual Contributions

| Headcount | Faculty Member | P or S | ICs |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Faculty A | P | Yes |
| 2 | Faculty B | P | Yes |
| 3 | Faculty C | P | Yes |
| 4 | Faculty D | P | Yes |
| 5 | Faculty E | P | Yes |
| 6 | Faculty F | P | Yes |
| 7 | Faculty G | P | No |
| 8 | Faculty H | S | Yes |
| 9 | Faculty I | S | No |
| 10 | Faculty J | S | No |

Percentage of participating faculty producing ICs = 85.7% (6/7)

### Table 8-1 (B) Alignment With Mission

The school should describe how its intellectual contributions connect to and support its mission. For example, a school with a highly applied mission may produce a large quantity of white papers that are valuable to business or policymakers. Here, the school may also identify intellectual contributions produced by units within the school or by the school itself.

### Table 8-1 (C) Quality of Intellectual Contributions

The school should describe and justify its measures for analyzing the quality of its intellectual contributions. These can be quantitative measures (e.g., number or percentage of publications in highly ranked journals or number of citations in high-quality newspapers or social media outlets) and can incorporate trend analysis as well as overall measures. The school can also include qualitative measures that identify significant exemplars of quality from within the portfolio.

Validation of intellectual contribution quality includes the traditional academic or professional pre-publication peer review but may also encompass other forms, such as online post-publication peer reviews, ratings, surveys of or feedback from users, research or publication awards, fellowships, media citations, and more.

A school is expected to have quality intellectual contributions in all of its disciplines. It should evaluate the extent to which the portfolio quality meets the school's desired level and identify any plans in place for developing or augmenting the portfolio quality in the next six years.

### Table 8.1 (D) Impact of Intellectual Contributions

Part D addresses the impacts or innovations fostered by its intellectual contributions, for example, what has been changed, accomplished, or improved relative to business theory, practice, and/or teaching. The

school should describe and justify the measures it uses to analyze these results, providing the peer review team with both quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Impact may be demonstrated by, but is not limited to, the following:

- Peer recognition of the originality, scope, and/or significance of intellectual contributions
- Editorial board recognition of the originality, scope, and/or significance of the work
- Applicability and benefits of the new knowledge to business theory, practice, and/or teaching
- Evidence of the work's influence on professional practice, professional standards, legislative processes, and/or public policy
- The work's usefulness and/or originality, including new or different understandings, applications to learning or other areas, and depth and duration of its insights
- Research awards and recognition (e.g., selection as a fellow of an academic society)
- Adoptions and citations of work, including its impact on the intellectual work of others
- Evidence of leadership and team-based contributions to knowledge advancement

Schools should also demonstrate how insights from assessing the quality and impact of its intellectual contributions are used to refine research priorities, resource allocation, and future strategic direction.

## Supporting Faculty Research and Scholarly Impact

Schools are expected to provide an environment that supports faculty success in the creation, dissemination, and impact of intellectual contributions. Consistent with Standard 2, schools should provide appropriate tools, technologies, resources, and support systems that foster scholarly productivity and impact aligned with the school's mission and strategic priorities.

The specific forms of support will vary across institutions based on factors such as mission, available resources, disciplinary focus, regional context, strategic initiatives, faculty composition, and expectations related to scholarship. The below examples are illustrative only and do not represent minimum requirements or a prescribed model.

| Ways Schools Can Support Faculty Research and Scholarship | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Support Area | Examples |
| ✓ | Conference & Travel Support | Providing financial support for faculty to attend and present research at regional, national, or international academic conferences. |
| ✓ | Dedicated Research Time | Offering summer research funding, research stipends, course releases, sabbaticals, or other mechanisms that provide dedicated time for scholarly work. |
| ✓ | Research Assistance | Providing graduate assistants, research assistants, postdoctoral support, or professional staff assistance to aid data collection, analytics, editing, grant administration, or project management. |
| ✓ | Research Tools & Technology | Supporting access to research databases, laboratories, specialized software, artificial intelligence tools, statistical packages, digital libraries, and other scholarly technologies. |
| ✓ | Research Centers & Institutes | Maintaining research centers, institutes, labs, or interdisciplinary collaboratives that facilitate scholarly activity and stakeholder engagement. |
| ✓ | Internal Funding Programs | Offering internal research grants, seed funding, or competitive funding programs to support new or high-potential research initiatives. |
| ✓ | Recognition & Incentives | Recognizing and rewarding impactful scholarship through promotion and tenure criteria, annual evaluations, merit systems, awards, public recognition, or other incentive structures. |
| ✓ | Professional Networks & Service | Supporting faculty participation in editorial boards, academic associations, scholarly networks, or policy advisory groups. |
| ✓ | Mentorship & Career Development | Providing mentorship programs for early-career faculty and doctoral students in areas such as research development, publication strategy, grant writing, or scholarly dissemination. |
| ✓ | Practitioner & Public Dissemination | Supporting practitioner dissemination, policy briefs, case writing, digital scholarship, or translation of research into formats accessible to non-academic audiences. |
| ✓ | Collaborative Research Partnerships | Facilitating collaborative research opportunities with industry, government, nonprofit organizations, or international partners. |
| ✓ | Emerging Methods & Methodologies | Providing development opportunities related to emerging research methodologies, interdisciplinary scholarship, responsible research practices, or evolving technologies. |

Schools should demonstrate not only the existence of support mechanisms but also how the support aligns with the school's mission, faculty expectations, and desired areas of scholarly impact. Peer review teams may consider whether the school's support systems appropriately and sufficiently enable faculty to produce, disseminate, and sustain impactful scholarship over time.

## "Predatory" Journals

Journals that prioritize financial gain or self-interest over rigorous scholarly standards, transparency, and ethical publication practices are often referred to as "predatory journals." These journals may misrepresent peer review processes, editorial oversight, indexing status, acceptance rates, impact metrics, or publication timelines. In some cases, such journals actively solicit submissions through aggressive or misleading practices and may publish articles with little or no meaningful peer review. The growth of predatory and exploitative publishing practices presents risks to the integrity, credibility, and impact of scholarly work. Schools are expected to maintain appropriate oversight and processes for promoting responsible research dissemination and for safeguarding the quality and credibility of faculty scholarship.

AACSB does not endorse any specific journal ranking system, whitelist, blacklist, or external journal evaluation service. Responsibility for evaluating the quality and legitimacy of publication outlets rests with the school and its faculty governance processes.

Schools are encouraged to establish clear policies, guidance, and review mechanisms related to scholarly publication quality. Such practices may include, but are not limited to, the following:

| Scholarly Publication Quality: Recommended Policies and Practices | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Practice | Description |
| ✓ | Faculty Education on Publishing Practices | Educating faculty, doctoral students, and other researchers about responsible publishing practices and common indicators of predatory or exploitative journals. |
| ✓ | Faculty Governance for Journal Quality | Establishing faculty governance processes for evaluating journal quality and publication expectations. |
| ✓ | Encouraging Reputable Publication Outlets | Encouraging publication in journals with transparent peer review processes, recognized editorial boards, and established academic or professional reputations. |
| ✓ | Publication Review in Evaluation Processes | Reviewing publication outlets as part of annual review, promotion, tenure, or qualification processes. |
| ✓ | Mentoring on Journal Selection | Providing early career faculty and doctoral students with mentoring on journal selection and scholarly dissemination. |
| ✓ | Holistic Research Quality Evaluation | Evaluating research quality and impact holistically rather than relying solely on publication counts. |
| ✓ | Monitoring Emerging Publication Risks | Monitoring emerging publication practices, including concerns related to paper mills, manipulated peer review, fabricated citations, or AI-generated fraudulent scholarship. |
| ✓ | Periodic Review of Journal Quality | Regular review of journal quality as the landscape evolves. |

Schools should recognize that journal quality and reputation may vary across disciplines, regions, languages, and scholarly traditions. Peer review teams should therefore consider the school's mission, disciplinary context, and faculty portfolio when evaluating the appropriateness and quality of its publication outlets. The intent of this guidance is not to discourage innovation or emerging journals, but rather to encourage sound scholarly judgment, research integrity, and responsible dissemination of knowledge.

## Thought Leadership

The standards recognize that thought leadership is an evolutionary state and that schools grow and develop their thought leadership reputations over time.

All AACSB-accredited schools are expected to develop as thought leaders over time consistent with their missions. Thought leadership can come from the scholarship produced by a school and/or its engagement activities with external stakeholders. Thought leadership can be the result of a unit's collective effort. For example, a department in the school may run regional, national, or international academic conferences or industry/academic colloquiums. The school may produce a peer-reviewed academic journal or have a case study clearinghouse.

To help schools think about how to build their thought leadership capital, below are some examples observed from different regions of the world with respect to their thought leadership initiatives. These are provided as exemplars only to spur thinking.

| Thought Leadership in Practice: *Illustrative Examples by Region* | |
|---|---|
| **Region key:** [Americas] [Asia Pacific] [EMEA] | |
| **1** | [EMEA] *Top-ranked European business school with undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral offerings and a global focus*<br>**Customer Insight \| Entrepreneurship & Innovation**<br>Two standout areas of thought leadership: customer insight (purchasing behavior, behavioral branding, design, and product development) and entrepreneurship and innovation (managing the corporate cycle from startup through business model development, succession planning, and corporate exit). |
| **2** | [Asia Pacific] *Graduate school in Asia with a strong regional focus*<br>**Analytics, Computing & Complex Systems**<br>Focused on helping industry, government, and business innovate through artificial intelligence and complex systems modeling. Achieved by cross-disciplinary teams of data scientists and data engineers working alongside business academics. |
| **3** | [Americas] *Medium-sized business school with equal emphasis on teaching and research, built on experiential learning*<br>**Launching, Supporting & Growing Small Business**<br>Sought after by business, the local community, and local government. Contributes research in startup and entrepreneurship areas, with deep roots in the surrounding region. |
| **4** | [Asia Pacific] *School in a research-intensive comprehensive university with undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral offerings*<br>**Predictive Analytics for Social Policy \| Work & the Future of Work**<br>Two key areas: predictive analytics to inform policymakers worldwide, and high-quality research on the future of work conducted with policymakers, business, and employee groups through cross-disciplinary academic teams. |
| **5** | [EMEA] *Faith-based comprehensive private university with a liberal arts core, emphasizing principled business leaders*<br>**Sustainable Communities \| Addressing Social Inequities**<br>Many projects, initiatives, and funded research opportunities that make a measurable difference in sustainable community development and the reduction of social inequities. |
| **6** | [Americas] *Medium-sized business school in a comprehensive public university with undergraduate and postgraduate offerings*<br>**Innovation & Entrepreneurship**<br>Thought leadership aligned with the university's innovation orientation, focused on the creation and development of sustainable social and commercial small ventures and the associated pedagogy. |

## Stakeholder Collaboration

Schools should demonstrate how they facilitate meaningful collaboration with external stakeholders (including interdisciplinary partnerships) in creating, applying, and disseminating knowledge. The nature of stakeholder collaboration may vary based on institutional mission, regional context, disciplinary focus, and stakeholder needs. Schools should demonstrate that these collaborations contribute meaningfully to the relevance, application, dissemination, or impact of scholarship. Examples of stakeholder collaboration related to impactful scholarship may include, but are not limited to, the following:

| Stakeholder Collaboration: Examples of Impactful Scholarship | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Collaboration Type | Description |
| ◆ | Industry & Sector Partnerships | Co-created research projects with industry, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, healthcare systems, or multinational corporations. |
| ◆ | Regional & Global Challenges | Collaborative research initiatives designed to address regional, national, or global economic and societal challenges. |
| ◆ | Applied Research Partnerships | Applied research partnerships focused on issues such as sustainability, financial inclusion, responsible business, digital transformation, cybersecurity, healthcare delivery, supply chain resilience, or workforce development. |
| ◆ | Interdisciplinary Collaboration | Interdisciplinary research collaborations involving faculty from business and other fields, such as engineering, public health, agriculture, environmental science, data science, or public policy. |
| ◆ | Advisory & Policy Engagement | Faculty participation in governmental, regulatory, or professional advisory groups that inform research agendas or contribute evidence-based expertise. |
| ◆ | International Research Partnerships | Research collaborations with international universities, research institutes, or global organizations addressing cross-border business and societal issues. |
| ◆ | Stakeholder-Informed Research Agendas | Research agendas developed through ongoing dialogue with employers, industry groups, alumni, community organizations, or policymakers. |
| ◆ | Joint Publications & Reports | Joint research publications, white papers, technical reports, or policy briefs developed with external partners. |
| ◆ | Practitioner Dissemination | Dissemination of research findings through practitioner conferences, industry forums, governmental hearings, professional associations, public workshops, or multilingual outreach efforts. |
| ◆ | Community-Based Research | Scholarship that incorporates community-based participatory research methods or engages local communities in the research process. |
| ◆ | Commercialization & Innovation | Partnerships supporting research commercialization, innovation ecosystems, entrepreneurship, or technology transfer activities. |
| ◆ | Technology-Enabled Collaborative Scholarship | Collaborative scholarship leveraging emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, data analytics, or digital platforms, to address organizational or societal challenges. |
| ◆ | Prototype & Intervention Studies | Prototype, proof-of-concept, and intervention studies that test scholarly ideas in real-world settings. |

## Not Intended by the Standard

The standard does **not** specify:

- A prescribed distribution of intellectual contributions across the categories.
- The actual distribution will depend on the school's mission.
- A prescribed percentage of intellectual contributions in peer-reviewed journals either by individual or by discipline.
- The types of intellectual contributions and the percentage in peer-reviewed journals are decided by the school based on its mission, strategies and expected outcomes, and overall academic portfolio.
- A required set of measures of quality or impact of intellectual contributions.
- A variety of measures exist for both quality and impact, and schools identify the ones that are appropriate for them based on their missions.

## Sample Table

**University of Pirsig School of Business**
**Table 8-1: intellectual contributions over the most recently completed Accreditation cycle**
**1 June 2020–30 May 2026**

| Part A: Summary of Intellectual Contributions Over the Last 6-Year Accreditation Cycle | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Portfolio of Intellectual Contributions | | | | Types of Intellectual Contributions | | | | % of Faculty Producing Intellectual Contributions |
| Aggregate and summarize data by discipline. Do not list by individual faculty member. | Basic or Discovery Scholarship | Applied or Integration/Application Scholarship | Teaching and Learning Scholarship | Total | Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles | Additional Peer- or Editorial-Reviewed Intellectual Contributions | All Other Intellectual Contributions | Total | Percent of Participating Faculty Producing ICs |
| Accounting | 116 | 88.5 | 90 | 294.5 | 90 | 62.5 | 142 | 294.5 | 95 |
| Finance | 174 | 72.5 | 19 | 265.5 | 61 | 43.5 | 161 | 265.5 | 99 |
| Marketing | 300 | 287 | 68 | 655 | 59 | 41 | 555 | 655 | 100 |
| Total | 590 | 448 | 177 | 1215 | 210 | 147 | 858 | 1215 | 96.8 |

| Part B: Alignment With Mission, Strategies, and Expected Outcomes |
| --- |
| Approximately 85% of the school's portfolio of intellectual contributions consists of Basic or Discovery Scholarship and Applied or Integration/Application Scholarship. This distribution aligns with the school's research mission and demonstrates its commitment to contributing to both academic research and professional practice in the disciplines it supports. |
| **Part C: Quality of 6-Year Portfolio of Intellectual Contributions** |
| The school uses the ABDC Journal List as the primary method for assessing the quality of intellectual contributions. For journals not included on the ABDC list, departments evaluate quality using quantitative indicators such as journal impact factors, verified acceptance rates, and citation evidence. In accordance with school policy, publications in predatory journals are not considered. There is also a policy in place providing guidance as to what constitutes a predatory journal.<br><br>The school also incorporates journal acceptance rates into its evaluation process: publications in journals with acceptance rates below 50% are weighted double compared to those with acceptance rates above 50%.<br><br>In addition, Google Scholar citations from the past six years are used to measure the quality, reach, and cumulative academic impact of intellectual contributions. |
| **Part D: Impact of Intellectual Contributions** |
| The school's publications demonstrate exceptional impact. Between 1 June 2020, and 30 May 2026, faculty produced a total of 22,681 citations. Faculty also show strong scholarly influence, with an average career *h*-index exceeding 10.<br><br>Examples of impact during the most recent accreditation cycle include:<br>• Two faculty members authored a widely used business textbook.<br>• Six peer-reviewed journal articles were co-authored with EDBA students, focusing on practice-oriented topics.<br>• Five successful startups and/or new ventures emerged from the application of faculty intellectual contributions.<br><br>These outcomes reflect the school's ability to generate meaningful impact across both academic and practitioner communities. |

# Standard 9: Societal Impact and Engagement

## Rationale

AACSB's vision is to advance positive societal impact through business education. Business schools occupy a unique position in the world: they develop the leaders, generate the knowledge, and build the connections that shape how organizations and communities function. Through their curricula, scholarship, and engagement activities, business schools have the capacity to address some of the most consequential challenges of our time, whether at the local, national, or international level.

Standard 9 asks schools to be intentional about this capacity. It is not enough to educate graduates or produce research in isolation; schools are expected to demonstrate that their work creates meaningful, sustained value for society. This standard invites every school, regardless of size, location, or resource level, to articulate its societal aspirations, pursue them with purpose, and show evidence of the difference it is making over time.

## Clarifying Guidance

### Aspiration

Because schools have different missions and contexts, their societal impact aspirations and their progress to date will differ enormously. The peer review team considers this variance in evaluating th e school's progress toward its societal impact aspiration, including its internal and external activities and initiatives, as well as its plans for the next six years.

### Emphasis and Scale

The standard emphasizes how schools create societal impact through a combination of curriculum, scholarship, and engagement activities, often in collaboration with external stakeholders. AACSB does not prescribe normative benchmarks for societal impact but instead allows schools to develop aspirational metrics in areas consistent with Standard 1.

Business schools operate in different contexts and at different scales. They can therefore achieve societal impact on a local, regional, national, or international scale. AACSB recognizes that impact at each of these levels has value.

## Coverage

When considering what is "in scope" for this standard, the underlying principle is that if the activity is facilitated or sponsored by the business school, rather than the broader university, the activity is considered in scope for the school. Thus, what is in scope covers a wide range of activities and initiatives by the school, both internal and external.

Internal activities are inside the school. Examples include operational aspects that have a societal impact, such as having green-certified buildings, setting high standards for energy-efficient buildings, reducing face-to-face meetings in multicampus universities, using solar panels for energy, providing financial assistance to learners facing financial hardships, and more.

While operational or institutional practices may support societal impact goals, schools are expected to demonstrate that their primary societal impact is achieved through activities grounded in business school expertise.

Business schools undertake a wide range of activities that engage and connect with external stakeholders. Examples include learner projects with business, nonprofit, and government organizations; service-learning requirements that incorporate external stakeholders; student clubs in the business school that undertake social or environmental service roles; experiential learning opportunities that engage with external stakeholders; the establishment of small business development and advice centers in schools; business consortiums brought together by the school to work on real-world issues; and the delivery of executive education programs. All these instances, and others, have the potential to impact society.

## Strategically Chosen Focus Area(s)

Schools are expected to define one or more societal impact focus areas within their strategic plan and demonstrate that these priorities are intentionally implemented across curriculum, scholarship, and engagement activities; supported by measurable goals, adequate resources, and faculty capacity; embedded in decision-making and incentive structures; and grounded in the school's business expertise to produce meaningful and sustained societal impact.

> Schools may choose a single focus area that is reflected across curriculum, scholarship, and engagement activities, or they may identify different focus areas for each of these spheres, if each is clearly defined and aligned with the school's mission and strategy.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of societal impact focus areas. This list is meant to spur thinking, not to define or limit acceptable focus areas. Schools select focus areas based on their individual mission, strategies, context, and resources.

- Sustainability & Environment
- Economic Development & Prosperity
- Community & Connectedness
- Governance, Ethics & Policy
- Technology & Innovation
- Health, Safety & Resilience
- Global Challenges

Faculty are not required to align all research or teaching activities with the school's defined societal impact focus areas. Peer review teams will look for clear evidence of strategic intentionality and follow-through, including how societal impact priorities influence decision-making, resource allocation, and faculty and staff incentives.

## Societal Impact and Engagement

Standard 9 asks schools to demonstrate how they are making a positive difference in the world through three interconnected spheres of activity: curriculum, scholarship, and engagement. Each sphere requires schools to identify at least one societal impact focus area and provide evidence of meaningful, sustained contribution.

## Societal Impact in Curriculum

Integrating societal focus areas into the learning experience

Schools will choose at least one societal impact focus area to integrate into their curriculum, aiming for long-term positive effects on teaching. How this is incorporated varies by program level and mission, and may include courses, co-curricular activities, or experiential learning. The curriculum's focus area may align with or differ from those selected for scholarship and engagement.

Schools should be able to demonstrate how their chosen focus area is meaningfully woven into the learning experience, not simply referenced in a course catalog. Integration should be appropriate to the program level and the school's mission, and the school should describe how its curriculum has evolved over time in response to its societal impact aspirations.

Evidence may include:

- Dedicated courses or course modules addressing the school's societal impact focus area.
- Learning outcomes explicitly tied to societal awareness, ethical reasoning, or responsible practice.
- Experiential learning requirements such as consulting projects, service learning, or community-based research.
- Co-curricular programming including speaker series, case competitions, or student organizations focused on societal impact themes.
- Integration of real-world societal challenges as case studies, simulations, or applied assignments.
- Courses that address financial literacy, social enterprise, sustainability, or public policy.
- Interdisciplinary course offerings connecting business with public policy, environmental science, social work, or other fields.
- Assessment of learner competencies related to societal impact through direct or indirect measures.
- Evidence that curricular content is reviewed and updated to reflect evolving societal challenges and stakeholder expectations.
- Evidence that learner outcomes reflect the school's commitment to producing graduates equipped to make a positive difference.

## Societal Impact in Scholarship

Research and thought leadership with external stakeholders

Schools will choose at least one societal impact focus area related to their intellectual contributions and engagement in thought leadership with external stakeholders. Schools should show how their research strategies align with societal impact areas in their strategic plans. The school's societal impact focus areas help guide priorities but do not restrict faculty from pursuing research outside those areas.
Schools will need to demonstrate that their research creates positive societal impact, such as influencing practice, policy, communities, or education. Evidence of societal impact should use a mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators rather than relying on a single metric or publication outlet.

While addressing societal issues can be achieved by business school researchers alone, impact in this area often results from collaboration between business researchers and those from other disciplines. This interdisciplinary work is highly encouraged and should be reported, with the contribution of the business school and its researchers clearly identified.
The school must present exemplars demonstrating the impact of specific contributions or groups of contributions and undertake an evaluation of progress over the previous six years against its aspirations for societal impact and its plans for the next six years.

Evidence may include:

- Contributions to major world issues.
- Effects on business development.
- Improved financial performance of organizations.
- Contribution to business creation.
- Improved health and safety outcomes.
- Improvement in the brand and/or image of an organization, industry, or profession.
- Knowledge co-creation with external stakeholders.
- Commercialization outcomes.
- Involvement in new venture creation.
- Contributions through membership on boards and government bodies.
- Examples of shaping community debate on important issues.
- Contributions to policy development for local, regional, national, or international public-sector organizations.
- Projects initiated or led in collaboration with external stakeholders.
- Contract research or consultancy projects with the private or public sector.
- Changes to business practice arising from thought leadership engagement.
- Changes or impacts to public-sector policy from engagement with the school.

## Societal Impact in Engagement

Connecting internal and external activities to societal outcomes

The school should provide exemplars linking an internal or external activity to societal impact. It should identify the activity, the extent to which the activity was promoted or supported by the school, faculty involvement (if any) with the activity, the number of learners involved, and the impact the activity had or continues to have on society.

Although examples may be presented in a narrative format, schools are welcome to provide quantitative measures of societal impact where available. Peer review teams will focus on the outcomes and sustained impact of engagement activities rather than the volume or number of activities undertaken.

Evidence may include:

- Contributions to major world issues (e.g., economy, environment, society).
- Effects on business development.
- Graduates' positive contributions to economic vitality resulting from high-quality education.
- Improved financial performance of organizations.
- Contribution to business creation.
- Improved health and safety outcomes.
- Impact on community outcomes.
- Changes to business practice arising from engagement.
- Improved business performance because of engagement with the school.
- Changes or impact to public-sector policy from engagement with the school.
- Positive effects on identified societal issues arising from the school's research contributions, for example, on the social, economic, or physical environment.
- Impact on the local, regional, or national economy.

> Peer review teams will focus on the outcomes and sustained impact of the school's activities across all three spheres, rather than the volume or number of activities undertaken. The emphasis is on meaningful, mission-aligned contribution over time.

### Progress Over Time

Over time, the degree of impact by the school will increase; a wider range of the school's activities will have an impact; the impact will come from a range of departments, centers, programs, and disciplines; and a growing proportion of learners will be involved in initiatives and activities that have a societal impact. Thus, in the report, the school is required to address these points and, in subsequent reports, demonstrate progress.

Further, the school should explicitly identify how it measures, or intends to measure, its progress toward achieving its societal impact aspiration. This information will enable peer review teams to assess performance, provide feedback, and track progress over time.

## Sample Table 9-1

Table 9-1 is required for schools in the initial accreditation process and optional for schools in the continuous improvement review (CIR) process. Its purpose is to capture a school's societal impact activities related to its chosen focus area(s). Whether presented in this table or a narrative format (for CIR schools), the focus should be on the outcomes/impact of the school's activities; it should not simply be a list of activities with no associated outcomes. Schools have some latitude with presentation for this table. The template provided in Standard 9 is intended more to help the schools frame their story in a way that the PRT can easily review.

> It is important for the school to identify a focus area. Schools in some parts of the world choose to use the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to identify their focus areas, while schools in other parts of the world use terminology from different frameworks. What a school calls or labels its focus area is completely a school choice.

The following example completed Table 9-1 is for illustrative purposes only. In this example the school has chosen three focus areas:

- Curriculum: Digital Inclusion
- Scholarship: Sustainable Business and Climate Resilience
- Engagement: Workforce Readiness and Economic Mobility

Note that the school could have just as easily chosen one of these areas and used that single focus area for all three. That choice is up to the school and is one of the key changes between the 2020 standards and the (2026) Global Standards for Business Education.

| Table 9-1: Impact of Societal Impact Activities<br>XYZ Business School \| Most Recently Completed 6-Year Accreditation Cycle \| 1 September 2020 – 30 May 2026 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Strategically Chosen Focus Areas | | |
| Curriculum<br>**Digital Inclusion** | Scholarship<br>**Sustainable Business & Climate Resilience** | Engagement<br>**Workforce Readiness & Economic Mobility** |
| **Part A** | Strategic Vision & Intended Long-Term Societal Impact<br>Narrative linked to the school's strategic plan describing vision and intended impact for curriculum, scholarship, and engagement. | |

XYZ Business School has identified three distinct societal impact focus areas aligned with its mission to prepare responsible business leaders, advance impactful scholarship, and strengthen regional and global communities. These focus areas are integrated into the school's strategic plan and supported through targeted investments, faculty engagement, learner experiences, and external partnerships.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Curriculum | Digital Inclusion | Strategic goal: Improve access to technology-enabled business education and prepare learners with digital competencies necessary to succeed in rapidly evolving economies.<br>• 100% of business graduates complete coursework involving digital literacy, analytics, or responsible AI applications.<br>• At least 80% of learners participate in technology-enabled experiential learning.<br>• Reduced technology access barriers for economically disadvantaged learners.<br>• At least 85% employer satisfaction for graduate preparedness in digital business competencies. |
| Scholarship | Sustainable Business & Climate Resilience | Strategic goal: Advance understanding of environmental sustainability, responsible business practices, and organizational adaptation to climate-related challenges.<br>• Increase sustainability-related scholarly publications by 50% over the accreditation cycle.<br>• Expand interdisciplinary and international sustainability research collaborations.<br>• Secure external funding to support sustainability-focused research.<br>• Increase dissemination of sustainability research to practitioner and policy audiences.<br>• Contribute research that informs organizational practices, public policy, or regional sustainability initiatives. |
| Engagement | Workforce Readiness & Economic Mobility | Strategic goal: Improve access to career pathways, entrepreneurial opportunities, and professional development, particularly for underserved populations.<br>• Increase internship and experiential learning participation to at least 80% of undergraduate learners.<br>• Expand access to career readiness programs for underserved populations.<br>• Strengthen employer and alumni mentoring networks.<br>• Support regional entrepreneurship and small business development.<br>• Improve graduate career outcomes and economic mobility over time. |

**Part B**

Outcomes Achieved

Describe focus area outcomes. Emphasize outcomes and impact over activities. Include qualitative and/or quantitative evidence.

## Curriculum: Digital Inclusion — Outcomes

Over the past six years, XYZ Business School has expanded its efforts to improve digital access, technological fluency, and inclusive learning opportunities for business students. The school redesigned its undergraduate core curriculum to embed digital literacy, data analytics, artificial intelligence awareness, and ethical technology use across multiple disciplines.

| 3,500+ | 28% → 74% | 61% → 82% |
|---|---|---|
| Students completed digital competency modules since 2021 | Technology-enabled experiential learning participation | Employer satisfaction with graduate digital preparedness (2020 vs 2025) |

To improve educational access, the school launched a laptop access initiative and partnered with regional organizations to provide broadband support for learners in rural communities. Assessment data indicates measurable gains in learner confidence and preparedness related to digital collaboration, data-informed decision-making, and responsible technology use. The school believes these efforts are contributing to broader educational access and improved workforce preparedness.

## Scholarship: Sustainable Business & Climate Resilience — Outcomes

Faculty scholarship has increasingly focused on sustainability, climate resilience, responsible supply chains, renewable energy transitions, and sustainable finance. The school established a Center for Sustainable Enterprise in 2022, which has facilitated partnerships with regional industries and international organizations focused on climate adaptation and sustainable development.

| 48 | 12 | $4.2M |
|---|---|---|
| Peer-reviewed sustainability articles (+57% vs prior cycle) | Faculty in interdisciplinary sustainability collaborations | External grant funding secured for sustainability research |

Faculty research informed policy discussions on sustainable agriculture, urban transportation planning, and corporate sustainability reporting standards. One faculty-developed sustainable supply chain framework has been adopted by three multinational companies operating in Southeast Asia and Latin America. Several faculty members translated research into practitioner-oriented outputs including policy briefs, executive workshops, and industry white papers.

## Engagement: Workforce Readiness & Economic Mobility — Outcomes

XYZ Business School has prioritized workforce readiness and economic mobility through partnerships designed to improve access to career pathways, entrepreneurial opportunities, and professional development. The school partnered with local employers, chambers of commerce, government workforce agencies, and nonprofit organizations to create internship pipelines and career readiness programs targeting underserved populations and first-generation learners.

| 2,100+ | 52% → 81% | 1,400+ | 900+ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students in employer-sponsored experiential learning | Undergraduate internship participation (target: 80%) | Learners served through micro-credential programs | Students supported by alumni mentors |

- 73% of participating students reported increased confidence in obtaining meaningful employment.
- Faculty and learners provided consulting assistance to more than 160 small businesses.
- Graduate employment outcomes improved over the six-year period, particularly among first-generation learners.

## Part C

### Plans for Continuing Societal Impact

Describe future plans, lessons learned, and how priorities, resources, and focus areas will be refined.

XYZ Business School plans to continue advancing its societal impact initiatives while refining metrics, strengthening partnerships, and increasing integration across curriculum, scholarship, and engagement activities.

| Curriculum | Scholarship | Engagement |
|---|---|---|
| • Expand access to AI-enabled learning tools.<br>• Strengthen digital ethics education.<br>• Increase global virtual collaboration opportunities.<br>• Continue investing in technological infrastructure and learner support. | • Expand interdisciplinary sustainability research partnerships.<br>• Increase dissemination to policymakers and industry leaders.<br>• Further support externally funded climate resilience research. | • Deepen employer, alumni, and community partnerships.<br>• Support workforce transitions and entrepreneurship in underserved communities.<br>• Expand micro-credential offerings.<br>• Strengthen employer collaboration on experiential learning. |

The school recognizes that societal impact develops over time and will continue refining its goals, KPIs, and evidence collection processes to better assess long-term outcomes and meaningful contributions to society.

# Appendices

# Appendix A

## Regional Application of Global Standards

**Guidance for Peer Review Teams**

Dashboard Available at https://www.aacsb.edu/tools/myaccreditation (Available to all AACSB member schools; requires AACSB login credentials)

A foundational principle of AACSB accreditation is that excellence in business education can be demonstrated in different ways across diverse institutional, cultural, economic, and regulatory environments. The Global Standards for Business Education establish a shared framework for quality, impact, and continuous improvement while recognizing that business schools operate within varied regional and national contexts.

Accordingly, the application of AACSB standards must be informed by an understanding of the environment in which a school operates. Differences in governmental regulation, higher education systems, labor markets, funding models, cultural expectations, institutional governance, and societal priorities may significantly influence how schools pursue their missions, allocate resources, structure programs, support faculty, and demonstrate alignment with the standards.

Peer review teams (PRTs) play an essential role in ensuring that AACSB accreditation remains globally relevant, principles-based, and mission-driven. Effective peer review requires more than technical knowledge of the standards; it also requires curiosity, cultural awareness, openness to differing models of excellence, and a commitment to understanding institutional context before making evaluative judgments.

PRTs should therefore approach each review with a collaborative, consultative, and context-sensitive mindset.

### General Guidance for Peer Review Teams Related to Regional Application of the Standards

PRTs are expected to:

- Develop a strong understanding of the institution's regional, national, and institutional context prior to the visit.
- Recognize that schools may appropriately demonstrate alignment with the standards in different ways.
- Avoid assumptions based solely on their own institutional experiences, governance models, or national systems.
- Apply the standards in a principles-based manner consistent with AACSB's philosophy of mission alignment and continuous improvement.
- Use pre-visit meetings, documentation reviews, and conversations with AACSB staff to identify contextual considerations early in the review process.
- Seek to understand the rationale for institutional practices before evaluating their effectiveness or appropriateness.

- Approach accreditation reviews as collegial peer engagements intended to support quality enhancement and strategic advancement.

## Areas Where Regional Context May Be Especially Important

While contextual understanding is important across all standards, the following areas may be particularly influenced by regional or national environments:

- Faculty policies and qualifications, including employment structures, collective bargaining agreements, government regulations, credentialing systems, teaching loads, and expectations related to research productivity.
- Governance and decision-making structures, including centralized university systems, ministry oversight, public-sector requirements, or differing levels of institutional autonomy.
- Resource allocation and funding models, including government-supported education systems, tuition restrictions, enrollment funding formulas, and regional economic conditions.
- Program structures and portfolio decisions, including regulatory requirements, workforce needs, market demand, and cultural expectations regarding degree pathways and delivery models.
- Assurance of learning and educational expectations, including differing national frameworks for competency development, assessment, and curriculum oversight.
- Societal impact and engagement priorities, including regional economic development goals, sustainability priorities, entrepreneurship initiatives, or workforce development needs.

## Key Takeaways for Peer Review Teams

PRTs should remember:

- Global standards should be applied with sensitivity to local context.
- Effective accreditation reviews require an understanding of regional realities, not assumptions about them.
- Excellence in business education may be demonstrated differently across regions and institutions.
- The goal of peer review is not institutional uniformity but alignment with AACSB standards within the context of the school's mission and environment.
- Contextual awareness strengthens the integrity, fairness, and global credibility of AACSB accreditation.

## AACSB Regional Context Resource for Peer Review Teams

To support context-informed peer review, AACSB maintains regional and country-specific resources for peer review teams conducting visits in unfamiliar environments. These resources are available in myAccreditation under the "Resources" section and are intended to help PRT members better understand local customs, regulatory environments, educational structures, and cultural considerations that may influence how schools operate and demonstrate alignment with AACSB standards.

For the following resource, schools are instructed not to include institution-specific or personally identifying information in their responses. The purpose of these questions is to build a broader repository of regional insight that supports fair, informed, and globally aware peer review processes.

Additional input for this resource is provided through AACSB advisory councils, regional leadership, accreditation volunteers, and others with deep knowledge of regional educational systems, cultural norms, and country-specific considerations relevant to accreditation review. As part of AACSB's ongoing efforts to strengthen this resource, schools preparing for their accreditation visit are invited to provide regional insight in their reports by responding to the following questions. These responses help AACSB and peer review teams better understand the diverse environments in which business schools operate around the world.

## Regional Insight Questionnaire

AACSB invites schools preparing for their accreditation visits to provide regional context to strengthen interpretive guidance for business education.

1

### Key Regional Characteristics

What distinctive factors shape business education in your region?

Examples may include:

- Regulatory environments
- Cultural expectations
- Economic conditions
- Geopolitical considerations
- Labor market dynamics
- Societal priorities

2

### Regional Priorities in Business Education

What themes or priorities are especially important in your region?

Examples may include:

- Sustainability
- Economic development
- Entrepreneurship
- Digital transformation
- Workforce development
- Industry collaboration

3

### Pre-Visit Regional Knowledge

What context would help a peer review team better understand how business schools operate in your region?

Examples may include:

- Governance structures
- Public policy influences
- Expectations regarding teaching and research
- Relationships with industry
- Accreditation or ministry requirements
- Cultural norms affecting institutional operations

4

### Most Context-Specific Standards

Which standards may require additional contextual understanding in your region, and why?
Your response:

# Appendix B

## How to Determine Disciplines for Table 3-1

**Guidance for Schools**

Standard 3 expects schools to present Table 3-1 by discipline. The guidance associated with the standard explains that disciplines are defined by the school in the context of its mission. Furthermore, the disciplines normally align with the degree programs and/or majors offered by the school.

The following examples illustrate different ways a school might define its discipline.

**Example 1**

University A offers the following degree programs in business:

- BS in Accounting
- BS in Management
- BS in Marketing
- BS in Finance
- BS in Entrepreneurship
- BS in Human Resource Management
- Master's in Data Analytics
- MBA, concentrations in accounting, finance, marketing, and data analytics

Based on the school's programs, majors, and concentrations, the school originally identified the following five disciplines:

- Accounting
- Management
- Marketing
- Finance
- Data Analytics

The following table reflects the faculty members at the school and the disciplines in which they will appear in Table 3-1.

| Name | Home Department (where individual is housed) | Degree Program (where individual teaches) | Course(s) Taught | Faculty Member's Discipline (where individual would appear) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Doe, Jane | Accounting | BS Accounting | Principles of Accounting | Accounting |
| Frank, Tom | Accounting | BS Accounting | Forensic Accounting | Accounting (part-time) |
| Smith, Robert | Accounting | BS Accounting | Intermediate Accounting | Accounting |
| Xi, Jason | Accounting | MBA (accounting) | Accounting for Managers | Accounting |
| Dong, Bei | Accounting | MBA (accounting) | Financial Statement Analysis | Accounting (part-time) |
| Scott, Christine | Finance | BS in Finance | Corporate Finance | Finance |
| Rogers, Daniel | Finance | A required course for all business majors | Business Law | Business law |
| Kline, Phillip | Finance | BS in Finance | Mergers & Acquisitions | Finance |
| Manuel, Lin | Finance | A required course for all business majors, and MBA (finance) | Economics<br><br>Financial Economics | Economics<br><br>Finance (Financial Economics could logically be in either finance or economics; however, we've placed him in finance because he supports the finance concentration within the MBA program. If he had supported, for example, an economics concentration within the MBA program, we would have put him in Economics.)<br><br>(This faculty member appears in two disciplines.) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lee, Brian | Marketing & Management | BS in Marketing | Principles of Marketing | Marketing |
| Johnson, Sandy | Marketing & Management | BS in Management | Human Resource Management | Management |
| Robinson, Justine | Marketing & Management | BS in Marketing | Logistics and Supply Chain | Marketing or Logistics and Supply Chain (this one can go multiple ways – school choice); we've chosen Marketing, but Logistics and Supply Chain would be fine too.<br><br>(part-time) |
| Jones, Lucas | Marketing & Management | MBA (marketing)<br><br>BS in Management | Social Media<br><br>Strategic Management | Marketing<br><br>Management<br><br>(This faculty member appears in two disciplines.) |
| Smith, Judy | Marketing & Management | BS in Management and MBA (core course in management, required course for all MBA learners) | Operations Management<br><br>Strategic Management | Management<br><br>Management (just show once in Table 3-1) |
| Perry, James | Marketing & Management | BS in Entrepreneurship | Startup Strategy | Management |
| Zhang, Yu | Marketing & Management | BS in Entrepreneurship | Global Social Entrepreneurship | Management |
| Adams, Cindy | Marketing & Management | BS in Human Resources | Employment and Labor Relations | Management |
| Bjorn, Robert | Marketing & Management | BS in Human Resources | Compensation, Benefits, and Retirement Planning | Management |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chen, Li | Decision Sciences | MS in Data Analytics | Data Visualization | Data Analytics |
| Mayo, Josh | Decision Sciences | MS in Data Analytics<br><br>MBA (data analytics) | Python | Data Analytics<br><br>Data Analytics (just show once in Table 3-1) |
| Zhao, Xuan | Decision Sciences | A required course for all business majors | Statistics for Business Majors | Statistics (This course is taught within the business school by our faculty; had this course been taught in the Math department by non-business school faculty, it would have been omitted from the table) |
| Murthy, Anol | Decision Sciences | BS in data analytics | Database Management | Data Analytics |

Based on the degrees offered and courses taught, School A has settled on the following seven disciplines for the organization of Table 3-1 (note that department is irrelevant for this determination):

**Accounting**
**Management**
**Marketing**
**Finance**
**Data Analytics**
**Economics**
**Business Law**
**Statistics**

School A's faculty qualifications appear in Table 3-1 as follows:

| **Discipline: Accounting** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☒**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☐** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Names** | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Doe, Jane | **100** | | | | |
| Frank, Tom | | **50** | | | |
| Smith, Robert | **100** | | | | |
| Xi, Jason | **100** | | | | |
| Dong, Bei | | | | **50** | |
| **Totals** | **300** | **50** | **0** | **50** | **0** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 300/400 = 75%<br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 400/400 = 100%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? Yes | | | | | |
| **Discipline: Finance** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☒**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☐** | | | | |
| **Names** | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Scott, Christine | **100** | | | | |
| Kline, Phillip | | | **100** | | |
| Manuel, Lin | | | | **50** | |
| **Totals** | **100** | **0** | **100** | **50** | **0** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 100/250 = 40%<br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 250/250 = 100%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? Yes | | | | | |

| **Discipline: Management** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☒**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☐** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Names** | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Johnson, Sandy | **100** | | | | |
| Jones, Lucas | **50** | | | | |
| Smith, Judy | | | | | **100** |
| Perry, James | | | | **100** | |
| Zhang, Yu | | | | **100** | |
| Adams, Cindy | | **100** | | | |
| Bjorn, Robert | | | | | **100** |
| **Totals** | **150** | **100** | **0** | **200** | **200** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 150/650 = 23%<br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 450/650 = 69%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? No | | | | | |
| **Discipline: Marketing** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☒**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☐** | | | | |
| **Names** | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Lee, Brian | | **100** | | | |
| Robinson, Justine | | | **50** | | |
| Jones, Lucas | **50** | | | | |
| **Totals** | **50** | **100** | **50** | **0** | **0** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 50/200 = 25%<br><br>SA+PA+SP+IP%= 200/200 = 100%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? No | | | | | |
| **Discipline: Data Analytics** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☒**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☐** | | | | |
| **Names** | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Chen, Li | **100** | | | | |
| Mayo, Josh | | | | **100** | |
| Murthy, Anol | | | | **100** | |
| **Totals** | **100** | **0** | **0** | **200** | **0** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 100/300 = 33% | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SA+PA+SP+IP% = 300/300 = 100%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? No | | | | | |
| **Discipline: Economics** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☐**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☒** | | | | |
| Names | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Manuel, Lin | | | | **50** | |
| **Totals** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **50** | **0** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 0%<br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 50/50 = 100%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? Yes | | | | | |
| **Discipline: Business Law** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☐**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☒** | | | | |
| Names | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Rogers, Daniel | | **100** | | | |
| **Totals** | **0** | **100** | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 0%<br><br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 100/100 = 100%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? Yes | | | | | |

| **Discipline: Statistics** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☐**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☒** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Names | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Zhao, Xuan | | | | | **100** |
| **Totals** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **100** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 0%<br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 0/100 = 0%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? No | | | | | |
| **Overall Ratios:** | | | | | |
| Calculation of Global Totals | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| **Totals across the entire accredited unit** | **700** | **350** | **150** | **550** | **300** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 700/2050 = 34.1%<br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 1750/2050 = 85.4%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? No | | | | | |

Additional notes:

Standard 3 alignment within a given discipline is ultimately decided by the peer review team. The standards provide language that allows a school to make its case that it has innovative programs, or has exceptional outcomes (placement, other metrics of success, assurance of learning outcomes, indirect measures).
Overall ratios are calculated across the accredited unit (including disciplines where degrees/majors are not offered).
SA ratios do not have to be met in disciplines where no degrees/majors are offered, but the 90-percent ratio still has to be met within each discipline to align with the standard (absent exceptional outcomes or innovative programs).
Note that the BS in Entrepreneurship and BS in Human Resource Management are considered by the school to be part of the discipline of Management.

**Example 2**

University B offers a single MBA degree with no concentration or track.

The school has faculty in the following disciplines who support the MBA curriculum, which is how they structure Table 3-1:

Accounting
Economics
Finance
Information Systems
Management
Marketing

The following table reflects the faculty members at the school and the discipline in which they will appear in Table 3-1.

| Name | Home Department | Degree Program Served | Course(s) Taught | Faculty Member's Discipline |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Belrose, Gianna | Accounting & Finance | MBA | Financial Statement Analysis | Accounting |
| Frank, Alan | Accounting & Finance | MBA | Financial Statement Analysis<br>Financial Accounting | Accounting<br>Accounting |
| Stirling, Noe | Accounting & Finance | MBA | Financial Accounting<br>Managerial Accounting | Accounting<br>Accounting |
| Hudgens, Gene | Economics | MBA | Economic Concepts for Managers | Economics |
| Martens, Peggy | Economics | MBA | Economic Concepts for Managers | Economics |
| Clark, Michael | Accounting & Finance | MBA | Corporate Finance | Finance |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Financial Policy | Finance |
| Jansson, Konstantin | Accounting & Finance | MBA | International Financial Management<br><br>Advanced Money and Capital Markets | Finance<br><br>Finance |
| Paredes, Jason | Accounting & Finance | MBA | Real Estate Decisions | Finance |
| Schumer, Rebecca | Accounting & Finance | MBA | Financial Options and Futures<br><br>Financial Modeling | Finance<br><br>Finance |
| Lam, Yun | Information Systems | MBA | Systems Analysis and Design | Information Systems |
| Spears, Paul | Information Systems | MBA | Data Analytics for Business | Information Systems |
| Van Laren, Nila | Information Systems | MBA | Data Analytics for Business | Information Systems |
| Asad, Mohammad | Management | MBA | Managing International Cultural Differences | Management |
| Berry, Debra | Management | MBA | Social, Ethical, and Legal Systems | Management |
| Hu, Hong | Management | MBA | Organizational Behavior<br><br>Decision-Making and | Management<br><br>Management |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Problem-Solving | |
| Takeuchi, Yohan | Management | MBA | Project Management | Management |
| Adebayo, Ovidia | Marketing | MBA | Marketing Management<br><br>Brand Management | Marketing<br><br>Marketing |
| Krummer, George | Marketing | MBA | Research for Marketing Managers | Marketing |
| Lowell, Jayden | Marketing | MBA | Marketing Strategy<br><br>Supply Chain Management | Marketing |

**School B's faculty qualifications appear in Table 3-1 as follows:**

| **Discipline: Accounting** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☐**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☒** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Names** | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Belrose, Gianna | **100** | | | | |
| Frank, Alan | | | | **50** | |
| Stirling, Noe | | **100** | | | |
| **Totals** | **100** | **100** | **0** | **50** | **0** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 100/250 = 40%<br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 250/250 = 100%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? Yes | | | | | |
| **Discipline: Economics** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☐**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☒** | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Names** | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Hudgens, Gene | | | | | **50** |
| Martens, Peggy | | | | **50** | |
| **Totals** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **50** | **50** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 0/100=0%<br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 50/100 = 50%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? No | | | | | |

| **Discipline: Finance** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☐**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☒** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Names** | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Clark, Michael | **100** | | | | |
| Jansson, Konstantin | **100** | | | | |
| Paredes, Jason | | | | **50** | |
| Schumer, Rebecca | | **100** | | | |
| **Totals** | **200** | **100** | **0** | **50** | **0** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 200/350 = 57%<br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 350/350 = 100%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? Yes | | | | | |
| **Discipline: Information Systems** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☐**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☒** | | | | |
| **Names** | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Lam, Yun | **100** | | | | |
| Spears, Paul | | | **50** | | |
| Van Laren, Nila | | | | **100** | |
| **Totals** | **100** | **0** | **50** | **100** | **0** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 100/250 = 40%<br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 250/250 = 100%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? Yes | | | | | |
| **Discipline: Management** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☐**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☒** | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Names** | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Asad, Mohammad | | **100** | | | |
| Berry, Debra | | | | **50** | |
| Hu, Hong | **100** | | | | |
| Takeuchi, Yohan | | | | **50** | |
| **Totals** | **100** | **100** | **0** | **100** | **0** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 100/300 = 33%<br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 300/300 = 100%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? Yes | | | | | |

| **Discipline: Marketing** | **Degrees or majors are offered in this discipline ☐**<br>**Degrees or majors are not offered in this discipline ☒** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Names** | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| Adebayo, Ovidia | **100** | | | | |
| Krummer, George | **100** | | | | |
| Lowell, Jayden | | | **100** | | |
| **Totals** | **200** | **0** | **100** | **0** | **0** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 200/300 = 67%<br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 300/300 = 100%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? Yes | | | | | |
| **Overall Ratios:** | | | | | |
| Calculation of Global Totals | **SA** | **PA** | **SP** | **IP** | **A** |
| **Totals across the entire accredited unit** | **700** | **300** | **150** | **350** | **50** |
| Ratios:<br>SA% = 700/1550 = 45%<br>SA+PA+SP+IP% = 1500/1550 = 96.8%<br><br>In alignment with Standard 3? Yes | | | | | |