



# Inspire

**Inspiring Schools to Flourish  
Through Accreditation**

**Chair & Team Handbook**

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## Inspiring Schools to Flourish Through Accreditation

### Chair & Team Handbook

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## Letter of Introduction

School improvement through [accreditation](#) is a significant commitment for a school, and it must be done well. The [self-study](#) process requires the involvement of all members of the [staff](#) and a considerable amount of time. However, it would be incomplete without the review, follow-up, and feedback from peers that you, the visiting team, will provide. **The contribution of the team will determine how well the visit goes and how effective it will be in providing lasting impact for the school.**

This handbook has been written to provide the team with the overall concepts, specific advice, and practical tools to accomplish your mission. In conjunction with the training provided by ACSI, this handbook will prepare you to come alongside the school and walk through the school improvement journey with its staff.

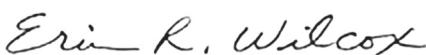
The information that follows and various support documents found on ACSI's website have been developed by many experienced educators as a result of their accreditation experiences over the years. Chairs and teams have served in both large and small schools and those in the United States and around the world. They have found, as you will, that not everything applies the same way in every situation. As you become more familiar with the **Inspire** protocol, you will gain an appreciation of the required elements, and you will also learn that some things, like schedules, are a little more flexible and may have to be adjusted based on the situation. Please feel free to reach out to your divisional accreditation director for advice or help when an unusual situation arises.

Crucial to the success of a good team is the spirit of its members. The chair sets the tone for the team members as they present themselves as peers or colleagues to the school. First, their job is to prepare well with the materials the school has provided so they can verify what the school has said about itself. That will put the team in a good position to validate that ACSI's [standards](#) are being met. With those things in mind, the team will be able to focus on the school's goals for improvement and collaborate with the school on how those goals could be developed into a plan.

While onsite, the team will need to demonstrate a humble listening posture and genuine teamwork. Your goal is to measure the school against its own [mission](#) and student outcomes rather than those the individual members may be more familiar with from their own schools. The team will take its cues from the chair when it comes to professionalism, confidentiality, and work ethic.

When you leave the school with commendations and [accreditation](#) action items, we hope that staff members will have heard words that both encourage them and *Inspire* them toward improvement. We also pray that you seek the Lord's wisdom during this process so that your words may be the very words the school needs to hear (James 1:5).

Your willing service will be a tremendous blessing to a sister school. Each team member will experience professional growth as he/she invests time and talent in the worthy work of [accreditation](#). This process invigorates and inspires a school and its people to move beyond compliance to increased effectiveness. Christian schools bear the Lord's name, excellent in all the earth (Psalm 8:9), and [accreditation](#) encourages them to be worthy of that name in all that they do. Thank you for serving the Lord and ACSI in this way!



**Erin Wilcox, Ed.D.**

Assistant Vice President, ACSI, Retired



**Stephen Deck, Ed.S.**

Executive Director, ACSI Global Commission  
on Accreditation

## Accreditation Overview

[Accreditation](#) is primarily focused on school improvement. Throughout the process, the school demonstrates the effectiveness with which it meets established educational [standards](#) of quality, determines goals for improvement, and creates a plan to fulfill those goals.

In Christian schools, these standards genuinely align with the school's [mission](#) and philosophy of education. Visiting team members bring an understanding of the accreditation standards and culturally competent insights to the school under review.

The culmination of the process is the status of being accredited. Your work as a chairperson or team member is critical in providing a report that is of such quality that the [commission](#) can make a well-informed decision about the granting of accreditation. In addition, the report becomes a tool for the school and its [stakeholders](#) to utilize in planning for its future. ACSI accreditation should mean the school is actively seeking to be a God-honoring educational institution in every aspect of its educational program and operations. Your work as a chairperson or visiting team member will assist the school in that pursuit.

The work of the team members, individually and corporately, is to thoroughly read the [self-study](#) from the school and validate both the process used to develop it and the insights and conclusions it reached. Your goal is to provide additional objective understandings for the

school, which are expressed in commendations and recommendations in the team report.

ACSI partners with many secular accreditation agencies to provide the recognition and credibility schools may need to serve their students as they move beyond school and into the next step of life. In many of these partnerships, the ACSI **Inspire** accreditation protocol is recognized for its quality and, therefore, serves as the lead protocol and basis for the school's accreditation by both groups. ACSI has similar processes to many of the other accreditation agencies.

ACSI differs from secular accreditation groups by ensuring that the Christian mission and ethos of the school are viewed and evaluated as integral to all aspects of accreditation. The school is to be as focused on its [discipleship](#), character, and faith development as it is on its academic rigor and achievement.

The team is expected to demonstrate a Christian testimony as well as integrity, collaboration, and humility. In addition, each team member must agree to an ethics statement to honor these qualities and ensure their agreement with professionalism, confidentiality, and the decision-making process.

The ACSI [Global Commission on Accreditation](#) takes seriously its responsibility to provide schools with a program of recognition that is consistent with our Christian faith, serves schools as responsible stewards, and gives honor to those who should be honored.

## Timeline for Chairs

The role of chairperson is highly significant in a school's successful completion of the accreditation process. The checklist below is a general guide for use in keeping track of each of the chairperson responsibilities. It is organized by timeline with the duties that typically fall within each of the noted periods. Situations with specific schools may cause the chair to make modifications, as needed.

### 1. When assigned as chairperson (usually 12–18 months prior to the [team visit](#):

- Once assigned as a chair, you will be granted access to the school's self-study in the digital platform.
- Verify with the divisional office if this is a joint accreditation and identify if ACSI is the lead agency.
- Once assigned as a chair, you will be granted access to the school's self-study in the digital platform.
- Make initial contact with the school administrator and begin to build rapport and communicate ACSI's desire to partner with the school in this process.
  - o Become familiar with the school's progress to date and organization of the school's [self-study](#).
- Review timeline and [team visit](#) dates with the school administrator/school coordinator.
  - o Back plan from team visit dates.
- Plan a pre-visit to the school. (On-site visits are at the school's expense.) If this is a renewal visit, a virtual pre-visit may be approved by the divisional office. The pre-visit would enable the chairperson to tour campus, build a relationship with the school coordinator and other [school leaders](#), provide an overview of the process and required elements of the [self-study](#), and review progress on previous visit recommendations (if applicable). Some schools appreciate if

the chairperson provides an orientation for [faculty](#) and/or the [steering committee](#) to help get the process started.

- If joint accreditation, identify which additional elements may be needed.
  - o Clarify if team member(s) from another association will be on the team.
- Establish a communication update schedule with the school. Most chairs establish a schedule of what documents they want to review at what dates and how often they will meet to assess progress.

### 2. Four to six months before the scheduled visit:

- Confirm the [team visit](#) dates and team members with the divisional office. The number of team members is dependent upon the total enrollment within the school, the number of campuses, and other accrediting agencies (if applicable), with additional considerations for EE and other programs at the school. Please contact your divisional accreditation office for the required team size for each visit.
- Develop a regular pattern of reviewing various aspects of the visit.
  - o Contact divisional accreditation office if there are any conflicts of interest with any team members.
  - o Discuss the status of any [indicator](#) issues as the school finalizes its ratings.
  - o Notify the divisional accreditation office if there are areas of concern.
  - o Review the status of self-study report and evidence periodically.
  - o Review team visit dates and the general schedule.
  - o Review the date for the self-study to be completed and submitted through the digital platform.

- o Review the online access to the self-study, evidence, and data.
- Send a welcome email and general information to team members.
  - o Establish reporting assignments with team members.
  - o Provide details of the visit when available.
- Contact team member(s) from the other association if required by the joint accrediting agency.
- o Finalized schedule.
- Communicate with the visiting team
  - o Confirm travel plans for each team member.
  - o Review team member assignments for the visiting team report.
  - o Provide samples of commendations and recommendations.
  - o Review ACSI travel expense policies with team members.

### 3. Eight weeks before the scheduled visit:

- Conduct the pre-visit/visit readiness check to the school. If you have not previously visited the campus, this should be an on-campus visit. Remember, all visit expenses are paid for by the school. (Any exceptions to an on-site visit would need to be approved by the divisional accreditation director.)
  - o Ensure that the [self-study](#), evidence, and data are substantially complete.
  - o Review the school’s progress in the self-study process and verify that the school is going to be ready for the visit.
  - o Complete the *Standard 11 Checklist*. Note items that will need to be reviewed by the visiting team.
- Confirm with the division office that the school is prepared for the visit. Determine if the visit is a “GO”.
- Finalize team logistics with the school including:
  - o Hotel, transportation, and meal arrangements.
  - o Campus layout, bell schedules, rosters, etc.
  - o Team workroom, including technology setup.

### 4. Four to six weeks before the scheduled visit:

- Ensure the [self-study](#), evidence, and data are complete.
  - o Six weeks prior to the visit, the self-study needs to be submitted by the school in the digital platform.
  - o Notify the division office after contacting the school if the documents are not ready.
  - o Discuss any last details of the visit with the school.
  - o Review the final team schedule with the school.
  - o Confirm any last-minute details for accommodations, travel, workroom, etc.
- Conduct a virtual team meeting when possible or provide all important details to team members through email.
  - o Ensure all team members have access to the digital platform.
  - o Review team member assignments with each team member, completing the following prior to the visit:
    - ◇ Review all evidence uploaded into the digital platform for all assigned domains.
    - ◇ Draft commendations and recommendations.

- ◇ Draft of any additional sections team members have been assigned

- o Review the final visit schedule.
- o Confirm final travel arrangements and other logistics.

**5. During the visit:**

- Approach the visit as the most prepared member of the team.
- Conduct a tour of the school as soon as possible and review the details of the schedule.
- Be sure that campus maps, rosters, and schedules are available before or during the organizational meeting and understood by the team members so they can plan observations.
- On the afternoon/evening of arrival, there is often a time for an organizational and orientation meeting. Take time to remind the team of the following:
  - o The culture of the visit matters. Visiting team members are peers, not inspectors. Our role is to verify the self-study and contribute to a collaborative, constructive report. The tone should be collegial, respectful, and focused on school improvement.
  - o The necessity of focusing on validating the school's [self-study](#), locating evidence for commendations and recommendations, and verifying data.
  - o Review the schedule and especially coordination of observations and interviews and the importance of being on time.
  - o Your purpose is to provide objective insights with clear, concise writing and cooperate with other team members in reaching a consensus.
  - o Review ethics, professionalism, and

demeanor for the team.

- Review the team report document:
  - o Approach the team report with a collaborative mindset.
  - o Set daily goals for the team.
  - o Provide extra support to team members as needed.
  - o Debrief with the [school leadership](#) daily (but do not provide the school with a current draft copy of the report). Especially for new team members, it is important for the chair/team to review the draft of new work before the school sees it
  - o Manage the team for effectiveness and efficiency.
  - o Review goal accomplishments, issues, and concerns daily.
- The ratings should result from a consensus-building process. Once a section is completed, the whole team should review the ratings, commendations, and recommendations to make sure they are in agreement. This team conversation will bring up questions and comments that might inform what should be added in the comment section of the domain in the final report.

**6. Collaborative Goals Meeting:**

- The collaborative goals meeting is a time for the visiting team chairperson and selected team members to meet with the head of school and other members of school leadership to collaborate on the prioritized goals from the school's self-study in conjunction with the general findings of the accreditation team. The team chair and the school leadership should be mindful of the size of the group for this meeting in order to optimize discussion—too large of a group may not be beneficial for focused collaboration. The discussion should center around the

school's prioritized goals, how the school arrived at those goals, and any additional items that the team believes may belong on the school's [Accreditation Action Plan](#).

This discussion will require the visiting team to consider the school's mission and other unique aspects of the school in order to collaborate with school leadership around items that may make the most impact for the school's improvement process over the duration of the accreditation term. The collaborative goals meeting will help the team finalize the Accreditation Action Items. The school will then use those Accreditation Action Items to create their [Accreditation Action Plan](#) for ongoing improvement.

### 7. Concluding activities of the visit:

- Engage the team in coming to a consensus on Major Commendations and Accreditation Action Items.
  - o Ensure that Accreditation Action Items are related to the [standards](#) and [indicators](#).
- Come to a consensus on the overall accreditation recommendation to the divisional commission. Complete the accreditation ballot in the digital platform. If an individual team member does not agree with the rest of the team, the dissenting team member has the option of writing an explanation of his or her point(s) of disagreement.
- Review and edit, as much as possible, all sections of the report. Assign team members to read sections for other team members as they finish their own.
- Complete supplementary documents needed by the partner organization.
- The chair and assistant chair should meet with the [head of school](#) and [school leadership](#) to review the team's final commendations and recommendations and provide any needed clarification and

discussion. A draft of the report should not be left with the school.

- Depending on what the school requests, the team should share an exit report using the PowerPoint template. The school can choose to limit the exit report to just [school leadership](#) or invite other [stakeholders](#) as desired.
  - o Briefly review major commendations and Accreditation Action Items.
  - o With team consensus, share the team's accreditation recommendation to the commission.
  - o Remind the school that the commission makes the final decision on accreditation.

### 8. Final team meeting:

- Remind the team that the [visiting team report](#) and recommendation are confidential. All documentation is considered the school's property and should not be used for personal use without permission from the school.
- Remind the team members that they will be asked to evaluate the chair electronically.
- Distribute reimbursement checks to them members if they are ready. Thank the team for their service.

### 9. Finalizing the team Report:

- The chair should review the report for thoroughness and a preliminary edit.
- Review for clarity, proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Review for consistency with ACSI guidelines.
- Finalize the [visiting team report](#) and notify the divisional office that you have completed the team's work in the review.

## Visiting Team Members

As a team member, you are one of a select group of educators representing ACSI with the responsibility to conduct a review of the school and make an accreditation recommendation to the appropriate ACSI Divisional Accreditation Commission. The visiting accreditation team’s goal is to leave the school poised to better achieve its [mission](#), [expected student outcomes](#), and plan for school improvement.

### 1. Purposes of a [Team Visit](#)

- To verify that the [self-study](#) accurately reflects the school’s program—its strengths as well as its areas for improvement
- To examine the school’s goals for addressing its identified areas for growth and collaborate with the school around those goals
- To commend the school in those areas in which it excels
- To make recommendations for improvement within the instructional, operational, and spiritual programs of the school and identify those areas that the school must address
- To make a recommendation to the divisional commission relative to the school being accredited
- To serve as an encouragement to fellow Christian educators

### 2. Expectations for an Accreditation Chairperson or Team Member

- A current or former Christian school educator
- Chairpersons are expected to be from an ACSI-accredited school or has previously served at an ACSI accredited school
- Has a servant’s heart with a [biblical worldview](#)
- Able to be away from work/school/home for three to four days, including evening

work sessions

- Able to make unbiased observations and conclusions based on evidence, documentation, observations, interviews, and other data
- Able to work intensively and cooperatively with other team members in meeting the team expectations
- Discerning about needs and expectations of the school based on the ACSI *Inspire* accreditation protocol and the mission of the school being visited
- Able to analyze the school’s [self-study](#) and prepare a visiting team report based on analysis
- Knows or is willing to learn the process of accreditation and invest in ACSI training if necessary
- Has excellent writing and communication skills, including the ability to use a computer for writing reports
- Has an active/current background check on file at his or her current school/organization
- No more than two people from the same school or organization may serve on the same visiting team no relative or spouse may serve on the same team. A team member may not be from the school, either past or present, being accredited.

### 3. Role of the Visiting Team Member

- Verify that the school effectively meets accreditation [standards](#).
- Validate that the [self-study](#) is accurate, complete, and reflects the “what is” of the school.
- Review data, documents, and evidence for each assigned [standard](#).
- Review the statements of strength considering the [indicators](#) for the [standards](#).

- Assess and provide insights to the school’s self-identified areas for improvement.
- Develop high-quality, insightful statements of commendation and recommendation for each assigned domain.
- Assist in developing major commendations and Accreditation Action Items.
- Participate in developing the exit report for the school.
- Evaluate the team chairperson.

While serving on the visiting team, you will be representing ACSI, your own institution, and the Lord. Therefore, it is important that you understand the expectations for the professional conduct of team members.

1. You are a guest of the school; respect the time, effort, and expertise the school has put into its [self-study](#).
2. It is your duty to identify if there are indicators not being met, but it is not your responsibility to recommend specific solutions.
3. Be gracious, considerate, respectful, and professional with the school and your fellow team members.
4. Questions should be open-ended and give the [stakeholders](#) the opportunity to share how they meet the standards and about their improvement plan. Listen more than talk (James 1:19).
5. Make insightful judgments without voicing personal bias or criticisms.
6. Remember, you are appraising the school and its goals in terms of its own [mission](#), beliefs, core values, and objectives and not your own ideals.
7. If you have a conflict of interest with the school, discuss this with your chair prior to the visit, if possible.

Your deliberations and those of your teammates on the visiting team are to be held in confidence during and following the visit. When you leave the host school, your role and your responsibilities as a validator come to an end, but your obligation to maintain professional confidentiality remains with you as you resume your duties at your school/work. The team’s report itself remains confidential among the team, the school, the divisional accreditation office, and the accreditation divisional commission.

#### **4. Expectations Prior to the On-site Visit**

Since the report will be drafted during the visit, it is essential to bring a laptop computer. It is expected that you will do some work before arriving on site.

#### **5. The Work of the Visiting Team**

Your visiting team chair will familiarize you with the protocol, the team’s schedule, the purposes and expected outcomes of the visit, and his/her expectations. This will usually be completed about a month prior to the visit, with a brief review completed at an organizational and training meeting when you first arrive on campus.

You will spend time during the visit interviewing representative groups of [stakeholders](#) from the faculty, students, school leaders, parents, etc. You will also spend time observing in classrooms. No more than one visit by a team member per classroom is necessary and time does not permit lengthy stays.

You will be asked to write a short reflection along with commendations and recommendations for specific sections of the report. The chair is responsible for preparing and submitting the final report with the team’s input. The team will do its work during the day and potentially in the evenings.

#### **6. Organizational and Logistical Functions**

Your lodging as well as your meals during the visit will be arranged and paid for by the host school. Team members are expected to follow ACSI Travel Expense Policies as outlined in Appendix D. Professional dress is expected for the visit. No honorariums are to be taken.

## **7. Arrangements with Your Own Institution**

It is vital that you contact the head of your school immediately upon receiving an invitation to gain approval to serve on an accreditation team and to make arrangements for your absence. Serving on an accreditation visiting team is voluntary. Therefore, you will not receive any financial compensation from either ACSI or the host school. If a substitute is required during your absence, cost will need to be covered by your school.

## **8. Changes to Your Availability to Serve on a Team**

If an emergency arises that makes it impossible for you to serve on this team, notify the chair of the team and/or the ACSI division office immediately.

## **9. Continuing Education**

By serving on a visiting team, you are not only contributing your professional experience to the school and to ACSI, but you are also sharing in a very valuable professional development experience. ACSI offers professional CEU credits for your service. CEUs will be uploaded into your VPP at the end of the visit season.

## **10. In Conclusion**

ACSI greatly appreciates your willingness to further the quality of education and the process of school growth and improvement by serving on the visiting accreditation team.

## Sample Team Visit Schedule

### Day One

- 2:00–3:00 PM**    **Check into hotel**  
Address
- 3:30 PM**        **Initial team meeting**
- 5:00 PM**        **Tour of campus with school leadership**  
Meet at main school entrance
- 6:30 PM**        **Dinner (team with governing body)**

### Day Two

- 6:15 AM**        **Meet in hotel lobby** (breakfast provided)
- 7:00 AM**        **Team sets up in workroom**  
Tech support meets the team
- 7:25–8:00 AM**    **Observe opening of school** (main entry)
- 8:30/9:30 AM**    **Parent groups** (meet separately)  
EE – Room  
ES – Room  
MS – Room  
HS – Room
- 9:45 AM**        **Begin classroom visits**
- 12:00 Noon**     **Meetings with students**  
ES – Room  
MS – Room  
HS – Room
- 12:30 PM**     **Working lunch for team**  
on campus, school provided—room
- 1:00 PM**        **Meet with steering committee**  
Select team members—room
- 2:00 PM**        **Continue with classroom visits**
- 4:00 PM**        **Meet with EE, ES, MS, and HS teachers**  
without school leaders
- 5:30 PM**        **Team dinner** (team only, may choose to have  
ordered into the hotel)
- Short team work session after dinner if needed.**

### Day Three

- 7:00 AM**        **Meet in hotel lobby**, leave for school
- 7:20 AM**        **Observe opening of school**,  
conduct interviews
- 8:30 AM**        **Final observations**  
artifact collection and review
- 9:00 AM**        **Meet with head of school**  
small group, head of school’s office
- 10:00 AM**      **Meet with principals/EE director**  
in small groups — respective offices
- 11:00 AM**      **Meet with support staff**  
or complete interviews as needed (Room TBD)
- 12:00 Noon**    **Working lunch for team, school provided**
- 1:00 PM**        **Collaborative goals meeting**  
Chairperson and designated team member(s)  
meet with HOS and designated school leaders  
to collaborate on the school’s prioritized goals  
along with the team’s general findings.
- 2:30 PM**        **Team meeting** in workroom
- 5:45 PM**        **Team dinner**  
(dinner out or brought to hotel)
- Short team work session after dinner if needed**

### Day Four

- 7:30 AM**        **Check out** of hotel, leave for school
- 8:00 AM**        **Team meets for report work**
- 11:30 AM**      **Working lunch for team, school provided**
- 12:00 Noon**    **Initial team report finalized**
- 12:30 PM**      **Team chair/ass’t chair review report**  
with the head of school, EE director, etc.
- 1:30 PM**        **Final revisions to team report**,  
team balloting for accreditation term, prepare  
exit report
- 3:30 PM**        **Exit Report - optional**  
Format decided ahead of time by chair/school
- 4:00 PM**        **Team departs** (airport and driving)

## The Visiting Team Report

The [visiting team report](#) is a succinct, insightful, and focused document designed to assist a school in its commitment to ongoing school improvement. It identifies and comments on how the school is fulfilling its required commitment to the [standards](#), as well as how it has implemented and will implement an improvement plan. Team members use the school’s [self-study](#) and supplied evidence to identify strengths and areas for improvement to inform their report writing. They will also use information gleaned during the on-site visit through interviews and observation. For each domain section of the report, the team will provide commendations and recommendations and indicate how effectively the school is addressing each [indicator](#).

### Guidance for Using AI in the Team Report

Teams may use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist with grammar, punctuation, and tone refinement for small portions of reports. The intended use of AI should be for improving school-created or team-created ideas and writing. Teams should avoid using AI for overall summary of large sections of the school’s report. Remove any proprietary, sensitive, personal, or identifying information before submitting text to an AI platform and always verify AI-generated or adjusted content for accuracy before using it.

#### 1. Outline of Team Report (specific prompts are supplied in the digital platform).

#### 2. Introduction to the [Visiting Team Report](#)

- Introduction/Profile - This section will be imported from the school report and contains the school’s basic information, demographics, history, and [mission](#); significant changes; response to previous recommendations; and survey information. There will be a place for the team to comment on the information provided by the school, specifically significant changes and the school’s response to major recommendations.

#### 3. Standards and Indicators Assessment

- [Indicator effectiveness](#) ratings are marked

on the digital platform.

- Each domain section has:

1. Commendations (identify strengths directly related to the indicators)
2. Recommendations (identify areas for improvement directly related to the indicators)
3. Reflection (which allows for comments).

#### 4. Major Commendations

These are based on the commendations written by the team throughout the report. The team will decide on commendations that are the most outstanding to highlight for the school.

#### 5. Accreditation Action Items

These are based on the school’s self-identified goals, team indicator ratings, and the resulting Collaborative Goals Meeting with [school leadership](#). The school will more fully develop these in its [Accreditation Action Plan](#) with the details of people responsible, resources needed timeline, and metrics for success. The *Accreditation Action Plan* is submitted with the school’s annual accreditation report.

#### 6. Conclusion – reflective summary which could include:

- Themes
- Overall distinctions
- General direction of the school
- Responses to the school’s reflective questions
- Indication of how the accreditation process helped the school to improve

The conclusion section could be written in paragraph form (not to exceed 2–3 paragraphs) or could be presented as bullet points of elements about the school, self-study, or visit the team would like to highlight. The conclusion should provide a sense of closure without necessarily being a repeat of all the information contained within the rest of the report.

## Classroom Visits and Interviews

### Classroom Visits:

The purpose of the visiting team observing classrooms is to gain an understanding of what the teaching and learning process is like at the school. The visiting team should observe a sampling of all grade levels and subject areas. Visit as many classrooms as possible, but explain to the school that the team may not be able to visit every classroom. It might be best to discuss with school leadership whether there are specific classes the team should be sure to see. Each classroom observation should last approximately 10–15 minutes.

Classroom visits should focus on the following areas:

1. Student engagement/instructional practice
2. [Instructional resources](#)/technology
3. Support for learning
4. Classroom management
5. Teacher/student relationships
6. [Biblical integration](#) and worldview development
7. [Assessment](#) strategies

It is the observer’s goal to enter and leave the classroom without affecting what is going on in the class. Remind the school coordinator to tell their faculty to provide a chair and a copy of what the teacher uses to guide his or her lessons for the day near the door.

1. Please refrain from asking questions to students or teachers unless a clarifying question is absolutely essential to understanding what is going on. However, the focus of an observation is to observe what is happening during a regular class period.
2. Feel free to walk around the room to observe students doing individual or small-group work if it is not disruptive.
3. Note any highlights or glaring deficiencies from any [indicator](#). These will give evidence

of strengths and weaknesses in subjects or grade levels if noted in multiple classrooms and may even lead to major commendations or Accreditation Action Items.

4. Remember that the team is not there to evaluate teachers; that is the role of the school. No teacher names should be in the report. Rather, the goal is to gain a general sense of the overall instructional program and the culture of the school.

### Interviews/Focus Groups:

Interviews are primarily used to confirm what has been noted in the [self-study](#) and supporting evidence and to fill in missing or unclear information to help answer questions raised by the information presented. Groups of 8–10 work well and everyone is able to contribute. In large schools, there may be multiple groups.

Interviews usually take place for the following groups:

1. [Faculty](#): EE, ES, MS, and HS; although it may be in a different configuration (school leaders should not be included)
2. Individuals: one-on-one or small groups as needed
3. Non-instructional/support staff: A group interview usually includes teacher aides, a nurse, the maintenance director, the finance director, the transportation director, administrative assistants, etc.
4. Parents: EE, ES, MS, HS
5. Students: ES, MS, HS
6. [Governing body](#): It is best if this meeting takes place early in the visit. If this meeting takes place at a dinner, often members of the team are interspersed with the board members. It is helpful for everyone to have the same set of questions. School leaders should not be not in attendance for the meeting.

Each time a person or interviewer starts to talk with an individual or group of people, it is

important to do the following:

1. Introduce yourself and provide a brief overview of the purpose of accreditation. Stress the school improvement aspect, not the “inspection” model.
2. Put the individual/group at ease by letting them know that there are no “right answers.” It is important for them to be honest about how things really are. Explain that it is the job of the team and the school together to identify areas of strength and areas in which the school most needs to grow.
3. Some good questions to include in interviews:
  - How long have you been involved at the school and in what capacities?
  - In general, what are some of the outstanding strengths of the school?
  - What would you consider areas most in need of improvement?
  - What are a few of the greatest challenges facing the school in the next year or two?
4. Assure [staff](#) members that comments will not be attributed to individuals. They may feel more free to contribute if they know they will not be quoted.
5. Do not give the impression that you are rushed. Listening to the teachers and staff is important. They need to know they can trust you with the information they are about to share.
6. If [staff](#) members ask questions that cannot be answered by the interviewer, remind them of the team’s purpose. Be careful not to be drawn into criticizing or prescribing what should be done at their school to fix some of their problems. Keep answers from the visiting team short as the focus of this time should be allowing school staff to answer questions.
7. As you ask your questions, REMEMBER:
  - The best questions are open-ended and non-threatening. It is best not to ask yes/No questions.
  - If the answer you get isn’t very informative, ask a follow-up question such as “Tell me more about how that works here,” “Could you give me an example of that in your classroom?” or “How often does that occur?”
  - Be sure to note the nonverbal responses as well as what is said. If you note confusion or some nonverbal cues going around the room (in a group), stop and ask another question to discover more about what isn’t being said.
  - Do not let two or three vocal people dominate a group conversation. Sometimes it is helpful to ask for a show of hands after you have asked a question. You may do that by saying, “How many of you do \_\_\_\_\_ on a regular basis?” Then choose someone who hasn’t responded and ask for more details or an example. It will help some participants begin talking.
  - It is always good to work with a partner so that one of you can ask the questions and listen actively while the other takes notes.
  - Be thoughtful about starting and ending on time.
8. You may need to arrange an interview with representatives from the committee that worked on the domain you are covering if there is missing or unclear information. When you prepare for those meetings, develop specific questions to address what you need to know.
9. If the group is large, it is often better to break into a few smaller groups. If your team decides to separate and interview smaller groups of parents or students, make sure that each interviewer has a copy of questions that all members are planning to ask.

10. Even young children can be interviewed. Be sure to brainstorm with the team members who work with those age groups as to how the questions should be worded. No matter how young the children are, it is still best to ask for descriptive words or “What do you like best about \_\_\_?” rather than yes/no questions.
11. It is important to note that some schools have a policy that anyone who spends time with their students must have a background check. Many schools are willing to accept a written statement from another ACSI school that an individual has a background check on file.

## Appendix A – Commendations and Recommendations

As the team visits classrooms, interviews the various [stakeholders](#), and reviews the [self-study](#) and the evidence provided, strengths and areas for improvement will become evident. Each member of the team will write commendations and recommendations from the domains to which he/she is assigned. Also, commendations and recommendations may be suggested by a team member about any aspect of the school. If the school’s [self-study](#) is an accurate reflection of the overall school program, there should be consistency between strengths and areas for improvement noted by the school and the commendations and recommendations prepared by the visiting team. The following explain how commendations and recommendations should be written. Examples for each are provided.

### Commendations:

1. Commendations should only be written if the activity or initiative is clearly above average and has a positive impact on something that is identified in the *Inspire standards* and [indicators](#). In other words, schools may have unique programs, but if they do not result in demonstrable gains or achievements in areas directly related to the accreditation indicators, the program should not be commended.
2. Commendations typically come from areas that either the school or team has rated as *Highly Effective*. However, there are exceptions. The rating for an area might be *Effective*, but the school may have an outstanding program within that area that still deserves a commendation. A commendation should rarely be written for an area that receives a rating of *Somewhat Effective* or below. An example might be that a school is doing an outstanding job with connecting to, involving, and surveying its alumni but the rest of its data collection for the school, home, and community does not meet expectations.
3. Major commendations can be general statements that are a compilation of more

than one area of strength. If so, they will reference more than one indicator.

4. The construction of a commendation is as follows:

#### Statement and Description:

Part 1 is a one- to two-sentence statement of fact that describes a program or initiative at the school and the result of that initiative in terms of the outcomes for students.

Part 2 is a brief description of what the team saw, explaining why this commendation was warranted. Evidence the team used to make the decision will be selected in the digital platform.

#### Example #1:

All students and faculty have access to an exceptional collection of media and information resources at the SCS campus, enhancing student research and instruction by faculty. (Indicators 17.1 and 17.2)

Students and faculty have access to a wide range of up-to-date materials and resources from the two on-site media centers as well as online resources, free and subscription-based, and from nearby colleges. Sufficient qualified personnel are available to provide the necessary training and assistance of materials and resources.

#### Example #2:

SCS has developed a robust system of assessing its expected student outcomes and using the information gained from those assessments to improve the overall school program, ensuring that individual students make annual gains on the attainment of those outcomes. (Indicator 1.4)

The faculty of SCS has developed and tracked progress of its students on the expected student outcomes by linking key assessments to its curriculum. Data from these assessments regularly influences program improvements.

**Recommendations:**

1. **Recommendations must be directly related to an indicator.** It should be clear that if the school deals positively with the recommendation, then they would be likely to improve their rating for that indicator. This should reduce the recommendations that would simply reflect improvements that would be “nice to have” or something that a team member would like.
2. Recommendations typically come from areas that either the school or team has rated as Somewhat Effective or Ineffective. However, just like the commendations, that isn’t always the case. The overall rating for an area might be Effective, but the school may have a particular area for improvement or some aspect that is missing. An example might be that the school’s overall security plan is generally adequate, but it might not quite be meeting state guidelines for frequency of performing fire drills. Recommendations generally do not come from indicators that are marked Highly Effective. If an indicator warrants a recommendation of any kind, the school is likely not Highly Effective in that area.
3. Recommendations are to be written using active verbs (ACSI has a recommended [Action-Verb List](#)). They are not to start with “continue to” or “consider.” If it is clear that some action needs to be taken but it is not clear what action that is, a suitable verb may be “review” or “research” followed by something like “develop a strategy” to address the situation. Using two verbs is acceptable when one logically follows the other such as “research possible strategies and implement a plan to address the needs of the struggling students . . .” (This would be appropriate if the school, students, and team identified that this population was not being served by the current instructional strategies.)
4. Teams should be careful not to specify solutions to the problems they have identified. They should not say how the school should solve a particular problem by prescribing certain programs, an increase in

staff, or other particular initiatives. The focus should be on the standards and indicators and what in particular is keeping that from being marked as *Effective*.

Here is an example of a recommendation that is too prescriptive:

Develop more regular communication procedures regarding assessment and student achievement with online programs such as FACTS and ACSI’s DataOnline as well as weekly electronic progress checks in the elementary school. (Indicator 9.1)

Parents have indicated that they are unhappy with the out-of-date online grading program the school is currently using. The leadership has indicated that it is open to considering other options, but it has not budgeted for an upgrade at this time.

5. **Accreditation Action Items** may be generated from (a) major recommendations/ Accreditation Action Items that were not resolved from previous accreditation visits, (b) non-compliance of governmental requirements such as safety violations, or (c) issues comprehensive enough to affect the mission/future viability of the school.
6. Typically, schools received no more than three to four Accreditation Action Items. Exceptions are made if the school (a) did not address all the previous major recommendations/Accreditation Action Items from the last visit or (b) receives less than a full term for accreditation.
7. The construction of a recommendation is as follows:

**Statement and Description:**

Part 1 is a one- to two-sentence statement that starts with an active verb ([Action-Verb List](#)) specifying what the school is supposed to do to more fully meet the standard or indicator. This may include a second verb if those two are related sequentially or the second more fully describes the first.

Part 2 is a brief description of what the team saw, explaining why this recommendation was warranted. Evidence the team used to

make the decision will be selected in the digital platform.

**Example #1:**

Create a curriculum review process that details what possible factors, changes, and revisions will be considered throughout the process and outlines a regular schedule for evaluating each subject area. (Indicator 8.3)

SCS changes its curriculum in response to course evaluation comments and teacher input from time to time. However, there does not seem to be a documented review process, consistent between campuses, with a curriculum review cycle in place.

**Example #2:**

Develop a formal teacher evaluation process with which to conduct annual reviews to promote improved teacher effectiveness in the classroom. (Indicator 10.3)

A system of teacher evaluation exists but it is not apparent how the current system connects to best practices or increased student achievement.

The following apply to both commendations and recommendations:

1. The focus of the commendation or recommendation should be identified as an action of the school and not as that of an individual or group. Even if the action identifies a department or one person, it should still target the program or initiative, not specific people.
2. Very rarely should a recommendation and a commendation cover the same area. If a need for that becomes apparent, be sure to explain why one is a strength and the other a weakness. For example, data assessment and analysis may be strong at one level and very weak at another level because of the leadership at each level. In that case, it would be important to note the specific deficiency that caused that discrepancy.
3. It should also be rare for the school and the visiting team to find themselves with opposite ratings, with one commending an aspect of

the program and the other recommending improvement in that same area. If that seems appropriate, the description should explain why that has occurred and what specifically is missing, listing specific evidence that justifies the difference. This would be an example in which an explanation would be necessary in the domain textbox.

## Appendix B – Writing the Response to the Domain

One member of the visiting team is usually assigned as the leader for each domain and is responsible for completing the domain reflection section of the report. First, the ratings for each indicator should be completed. Team members should also write commendations and recommendations as appropriate for their assigned domains. At the end of each domain, there will be a textbox in the digital platform allowing for reflective comments about the indicator ratings, commendations, and recommendations. There is no minimum amount of text required; however, some type of comments would be helpful for the school. *Note: certain dual accreditation visits may require reflective comments.*

The domain comment section is designed to be evaluative or reflective and not just a description of what has already been stated. These are some of the types of comments the team member may wish to include in that comment box to help the school or commission understand the ratings, commendations, and recommendations:

1. **Context:** Is there anything that the reader should know that would help him or her understand these ratings? For example, was the program new? Did the staff recently change? Has this area improved since the previous visit? If any indicator is rated as *Somewhat Effective* or *Ineffective*, an additional statement is necessary to provide context and specific areas for improvement.
2. **Details:** Are there any additional details that the reader would benefit from knowing? For example, “The student test scores from the previous year were an anomaly because (state the reason).” Or, even if an indicator rating is *Effective*, are there discrepancies between the various grade levels (such as elementary vs. secondary) in that area? If the school is *Highly Effective* in an area, additional details could be provided.
3. **Explanation:** Is any information needed to shed light on a particular recommendation or

even commendation? This might be helpful when the team’s score and the school’s score vary significantly.

A few other notes about the reflective comments section:

- If a school effectively meets an indicator, with no deficiencies or notable commendable items, there’s no need to address that indicator in the reflection.
- If a school effectively meets an indicator but the team was on the fence about either a recommendation or a commendation, then the reflection would be the place to indicate that.
- If the team writes a commendation about one specific element of an indicator but the school could improve other areas related to the indicator the school could improve, the reflection would be the place to indicate that.
- If the school has a unique program/process related to any of the indicators, the reflection could reference that.

## Appendix C – Determining Accreditation Action Items

Accreditation Action Items must be based on ACSI standards and indicators for accreditation. When creating Accreditation Action Items:

1. Consider the school’s self-identified goals
2. Review domain level recommendations that may need to be elevated.
3. Determine if a recommendation from the previous report was not completed. If it has been adequately addressed but is ongoing, the team may have flexibility as to whether it should be an ongoing Accreditation Action Item.
4. Identify if any issues are critical enough to be serious threats to the health and safety of the students and staff or the legal and financial viability of the school. For example, if the

school doesn’t have a child safety plan that is appropriate or realistic, that would need to be an Accreditation Action Item. Another example would be if the school is engaging in financial practices that are technically not illegal yet not financially ethical. Those types of issues that would be of such great concern they would need to be fixed immediately. When issues are serious and need attention prior to the next site visit, the visiting team may recommend that some actions be taken within the year or even a period of months.

Typically, schools receive no more than three to five Accreditation Action Items. The school will fully develop their response to Accreditation Action Items in their Accreditation Action Plan. The Accreditation Action Plan is a set template that will be created by the divisional office and provided to the school. The Accreditation Action Plan will be submitted with the school’s annual report.

## Appendix D – Travel and Expenditure Guidelines

Role responsibilities for travel and expenses

	Host School	Team Chair	Team Members
Lodging	Book single occupancy hotel rooms and arrange payment. No form of shared housing is acceptable.	Agree to the hotel and arrangements selected by the school.	
Food	Arrange and pay for meals and refreshments for the duration of the visit, considering team members' dietary needs.	Verify that any team member's, dietary needs are communicated to the school.	Communicate dietary needs to the chair and the school.
Flights		Communicate with the school regarding team members who need to fly.	Communicate with the chair if a flight is required. Wait for approval from the chair before booking any flights. If a flight is approved, follow the flight purchasing requirements.
Reimbursement	Prepare to reimburse team members before the end of the visit. Failure to reimburse team members promptly could result in divisional commission action. If a specific reimbursement form is required, provide it to team members at the beginning of the visit.	Verify all expenses and receipts before submission of expense reports.	Complete an appropriate reimbursement form and provide receipts.

### Visiting Team Expense Policy

**The ACSI Board of Directors has established the following practice regarding reimbursement of travel expenses.**

The school should prepare financially to cover the travel costs of team members. ACSI is expected to build the best team for the school's accreditation experience. If the school utilizes addendums requiring unique expertise, team members may come from various divisions.

**Self-driving:** The most common form of travel. Mileage will be reimbursed according to the current IRS mileage rate. Gasoline will not be refunded in addition to mileage.

**Rental Car:** A rental car may be used for travel. However, the school is only responsible for reimbursing the lowest cost between the rental car (plus fuel) and personal vehicle mileage.

**Flights:** Some visits require a team member to fly. Before booking, the team chair must approve all flights. If a flight is approved, the following policies must be followed:

- Purchased flights should be the most reasonably priced option for the appropriate times.
- Flights should be purchased approximately 2–3 months ahead of time.
- Only standard/coach tickets will be reimbursed. Individuals must pay for any seat or category upgrades.
- Flight insurance is encouraged.
- Flight changes due to the individual's errors in booking or personal travel schedule are the responsibility of the person booking the travel.

## General Expense Policies

- Original receipts are required unless digital receipts are approved.
- If an individual requires additional travel arrangements, such as a flight, rental car, or other transportation service, ACSI will work with the individual to ensure that the cost is reasonable and within ACSI's travel guidelines.
- Expenses that will not be reimbursed include items unrelated to ACSI business, such as telephone calls, meals for family members and guests, entertainment, etc. Individuals should ask the hotel to separate those expenses from the final bill, and the individuals are personally responsible for these unrelated expenses.

## Appendix E – Glossary

**Academic Counseling:** Service to parents and students who are in need of advice or assistance with course selection, graduation requirements, college entrance examinations, college acceptance requirements, and general readiness for the next academic level.

**Accountability:** Any number of ways the school ensures continued fulfillment of its own mission and other stated objectives. Through open communication and transparency, regular feedback from stakeholders can help the school identify ways to improve in meeting its own mission, policies, goals, and/or objectives.

**Accreditation:** The status granted to a school after standards have been met, a self-study has been written, a team has completed a peer-review process, and the commission has approved the school for accreditation. Accreditation is granted for six years or a period commensurate with that of another agency in a joint accreditation.

**Accreditation Action Plan (AAP):** A school's annualized plan for improvement created as a result of the areas for improvement identified through the accreditation self-study and visit process. Creation of the AAP is a multi-step process: the school establishes goals as part of the self-study, the school and the visiting team collaborate on those goals and the team's findings, and the school formalizes the written plan after the conclusion of the visit. The completed plan includes instructional, operational, and/or programmatic goals; strategies and timelines for reaching these goals; and assessment, personnel, resources, analysis, and reporting procedures to determine whether the goals have been achieved.

**Administration:** See School Leadership.

**Advisory Board:** In church-sponsored schools that are governed by a church board, or in proprietary schools that may be led by an individual or team of founders/owners, an advisory board would function as an expert team of outside voices that lend experience and qualified input into various governance-related issues at the school. Though perhaps non-voting members of the governance structure, this group would serve as a sounding board for school leadership and as a liaison between school leadership and the church governing body or founder/owner of the institution.

**Annual Report:** A report submitted by the school to the appropriate divisional or global office wherein the school provides an update on demographics, gives notice of any substantive changes, and affirms ongoing progress on the Accreditation Action Plan.

**Assessment (elementary/secondary):** Methods of evaluating student performance and achievement – the process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs. Schools should implement assessment *of* learning, as well as assessment *for* learning (formative, summative, objective, subjective, formal, informal, etc.).

- **Authentic Assessment:** A form of assessment that requires students to complete projects or perform skills which are tied to real-world tasks. Typically, students are graded with rubrics for the evaluation of these tasks rather than pencil-and-paper assessments.
- **Range of Assessments (also Varied Assessments):** Used to indicate that schools should implement several different forms and methods of assessment. Assessments utilized to meet the requirements could include standardized (multiple types), authentic, teacher-created, objective, subjective, formal, informal, summative, formative, and/or measures that utilize a combination of any of the above, as well as differentiated assessments based on learners' needs and interests.

**Biblical Integration (or Biblical Worldview Integration):** Intentional planning to target and uncover specific biblical truths undergirding subject content, identify conflicting worldviews, and rebuild with biblical truth (what we learn about God, humanity, ourselves, and creation).

**Biblical Worldview:** Recognizing the authority of Scripture as the source of truth and using it as the lens through which we attempt to understand and respond to our world.

**Board:** See Governing Body.

**Candidate Status:** The status of a school when it is deemed able to complete the accreditation process in a three-year maximum time frame. Candidate status requires an application, candidacy visit, and approval. Candidate status is effective up to three full school years.

**Certification:** The status granted to teachers and administrators who meet specified academic requirements for an ACSI teacher/administrator credential.

**Code of Ethics:** An identified set of guidelines that each individual commits to upholding in his/her role. This may be a formal document or a less formal list of expectations.

**Continuous Improvement:** A consistent effort to improve the school's processes, procedures, and practices that focus on teaching, learning, and student achievement. Ongoing efforts may also be warranted in other areas that contribute to the overall student experience.

**Curriculum:** The planned instructional program to be delivered to the students. Though a school's choice in textbooks and resources for any given grade level and subject area is an important consideration, the school's curriculum is much broader than a textbook series.

**Curriculum Documentation:** A written description of what is taught throughout the school that 1) describes the school's instructional program, 2) helps ensure continuity between grade levels and subject areas, and 3) provides a basis for evaluation of the school's instructional program.

**Curriculum Guides/Maps:** See Curriculum Documentation.

**Discipleship:** To train another, through instruction and modeling, to follow Christ and practice spiritual disciplines such as Bible reading, prayer, and faithful living.

**Digital Citizenship:** Using technology in safe, effective, discerning, and responsible ways that affect student learning and the community at large.

**Divisional Accreditation Commission:** The commission made up of representatives from ACSI-accredited schools in each division or subset of the division. The commission meets, usually twice a year, to review and monitor accreditation activity in the division and to make decisions on school accreditation.

**Early Education (EE):** The care and education of children before kindergarten. Kindergarten may be included if the program is a standalone early education program.

**Equitable Compensation:** Impartially determined salary ranges based on objective criteria such as years of service, credentials, experience, and/or performance. Compensation information should be available to employees for review.

**Expected Student Outcomes:** What the school intentionally targets for all students to know, believe, understand, and/or be able to do in academic and non-academic areas after their tenure in the school. Outcomes are based on the mission and philosophy of the school.

**Executive Leadership:** See School Leadership.

**Facilities:** All buildings and grounds on school property or utilized by the school.

**Faculty:** Generally referring to the instructional staff of the school, especially in instances where it is pertinent to make a distinction between instructional staff and non-instructional staff.

**Fidelity:** The manner in which assessments are conducted in accordance with their original intent and with the same degree of accuracy every time.

**Global Commission on Accreditation:** The commission established by the ACSI Board of Directors to establish policy, create structure, and provide oversight for all accreditation activities of the association.

**Governing Body:** A group of elected or appointed individuals who come together to act as one for the purpose of establishing policies that will enable the school to achieve its established desirable ends and to avoid results it considers unacceptable. These individuals are “trustees” who have authority when sitting as members of the governing body.

**Head of School:** The chief administrator/officer of the school. Titles for this role vary significantly from school to school (e.g., principal, administrator, headmaster, head of school, director, president, superintendent).

**Indicators:** Descriptions of essential practices, processes, and procedures that elaborate and explain how schools can effectively meet the standards of accreditation.

**Instructional Methods:** The techniques that a teacher uses (e.g., hands-on activities, peer tutoring, discussion, experimentation, learning centers, debates, role-play, drill, and practice) and adapts to the learning styles of the students.

**Instructional Objectives:** Statements that describe the skills or concepts the student will have attained when instruction in a particular subject, grade, unit, or lesson is completed.

**Instructional Resources:** The physical and digital resources that are available to support the instructional program. Instructional resources could also include supplemental materials that are used in the instructional program and are identified in the curriculum documentation.

**Leadership:** See School Leadership.

**Mentoring:** To intentionally train another through relationship, instruction, and modeling.

**Mid-term Report:** A report provided by the school to the appropriate divisional or global office at or near the midpoint of a school’s accreditation term, wherein the school provides more detailed updates on the AAP, faculty qualifications, and other applicable accreditation expectations. The divisional or global office will notify the school if a mid-term visit is required.

**Mission:** A brief statement of why the school exists and what it seeks to accomplish.

**Outreach:** The action or activity of seeking to serve or otherwise connect with individuals or organizations outside of one’s own school in order to provide opportunities for students to develop Christian character.

**Philosophy of Education:** The philosophy that articulates the program’s beliefs about how children learn and how they should be instructed and assessed. The statement guides the instructional methods and classroom practices deemed appropriate considering the program’s view of the nature and needs of children. A Christian school’s philosophy of education would also articulate the place

of faith in Christian education, as well as how to integrate biblical truth into the overall curriculum planning and daily instruction.

**Referral:** A procedure by which a teacher, counselor, or other school personnel suggests school or community resources to assist a student who has learning, emotional, physical, or other needs.

**School Leadership:** The on-site, day-to-day leader(s) of the school, often referring to the administrative or leadership team that may include directors, principals, assistant principals, curriculum directors, deans, non-instructional leaders, etc. Leadership may include department heads or lead teachers.

**Scope and Sequence:** Included as part of the curriculum documentation, a scope and sequence indicates the breadth of the content and the order in which it will be taught within and across grades.

**Self-Study:** The document produced by the steering committee and the various subcommittees of the school as they respond to the standards, indicators, and other prompts of the accreditation protocol. This document is a collaborative effort of school groups and must represent the combined input, analysis, and consensus of all those involved, with sufficient evidence to demonstrate the school's effectiveness regarding standards and indicators.

**Spiritual Formation:** The Holy Spirit's ongoing work of shaping individuals in the image of Christ for the glory of God and for the sake of others.

**Staff:** All personnel employed by the school unless otherwise designated (e.g., "instructional staff," "non-instructional staff," etc.).

**Stakeholder(s):** A person or group with direct interest, involvement, or investment in the realization of the mission of the school (e.g., staff, students, parents, governing body, community, and donors).

**Standards:** The 20 established qualitative criteria for school accreditation.

**Steering Committee:** A group of individuals at the school that is responsible for the development and completion of the self-study. The steering committee works with each of the subcommittees to train, advise, and hold them accountable for completing tasks.

**Subcommittee:** A group of stakeholders at the school that is responsible for a section of the self-study. Subcommittees report to the steering committee.

**Team Visit:** A visit to the school by peer educators wherein they validate the accuracy and thoroughness of the self-study. The team engages in observations and interviews, collaborates with the school around future goals, and constructs a team report. This visit is generally three to four days long.

**Universal Rubric:** The chart that defines or describes four levels of effectiveness as applied to all indicators in the *Inspire* protocol. Schools and visiting teams should use the universal rubric with the overall standard in mind as they review each indicator and provide evidence.

**Visiting Team Report:** A report written by the visiting team, in accordance with ACSI accreditation standards and policies, wherein the visiting team articulates its findings in the form of indicator ratings, commendations, recommendations, accreditation action items, and overall analyses.



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