MAINTENANCE OF ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

AACSB International
Maintenance of Accreditation Handbook

PREFACE

To document and facilitate the accreditation process, AACSB International developed a series of three handbooks. The following *Maintenance of Accreditation Handbook* should be read in conjunction with the other two handbooks: the *PreAccreditation Handbook* and the *Initial Accreditation Handbook*.

The *Maintenance of Accreditation Handbook* is designed to provide assistance and essential information to applicant institutions and Peer Review Teams. It describes the philosophy, procedures, and guidelines for the maintenance of accreditation process, as well as the duties and responsibilities of Peer Review Team members in conducting a thorough and complete maintenance of accreditation review.

Where possible, applicants and Peer Review Team reviewers should follow the instructions prescribed by the handbook. At the same time, some degree of reviewer flexibility may be necessary to ensure that the process (1) brings value to the applicant, (2) maintains the integrity of AACSB International accreditation, and (3) provides the type and level of learning experiences that mark effective accreditation processes. In situations where applicants or reviewers must improvise to accomplish the purposes of the review, documentation of reasons and results of deviations must be provided to the appropriate accreditation committee by the Peer Review Team.

The appendices to this handbook provide further detail on policies, processes, and procedures.

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INTRODUCTION

The AACSB International Board of Directors adopted the maintenance of accreditation procedures described in this handbook in January 2003. **The maintenance of accreditation process pertains only to institutions already accredited**; all initial accreditation reviews follow the standard-by-standard review process.

This document provides guidance for the maintenance of accreditation applicant and for Peer Review Team reviewers. It describes the process, and it states the expectations for these reviews. Where possible, the applicant and reviewers should follow these directions. However, reviewers should remain somewhat flexible in conducting reviews to achieve the conceptual aims that (1) bring value to the applicant and (2) maintain the integrity of AACSB International accreditation. **Where the applicant or the reviewers find they must improvise to accomplish the purposes of the review, documentation of any deviations must be provided.**

The maintenance of accreditation process minimizes the reporting burden on accredited institutions and adds value through the accreditation process. The approach emphasizes continuous improvement. The process creates an ongoing "maintenance of accreditation" signaling that once an institution has achieved accreditation, a process of continuous improvement maintains the accreditation status.

Maintenance of accreditation is not a standard-by-standard review. However, that does not mean that reviewers will be insensitive to issues of educational quality. By focusing the review on educational improvement, strategic management, and fulfillment of mission, the members of Peer Review Teams will be particularly attuned to educational quality issues and problems that may be revealed in the process.

The applicant and the reviewers provide evaluations of the process. Changes in the procedures are made each year to incorporate opportunities for continuous improvement learned from the participants in the previous year.

MAINTENANCE REVIEW APPLICATION

What is Required

The applicant submits each of the following items for business and a separate set for accounting, when applicable:

- Maintenance Review Application – The eligibility application requests details of the characteristics that determine institutional eligibility for accreditation such as scope, diversity, and ethical behavior.

- List of Degree Programs Offered
    - Catalogs (One hard copy should be sent to the appropriate chair at the AACSB International headquarters address. Web links to electronic copies of course catalogs may also be included within the application.)

- Request for Exclusion of Program(s) - The process for requesting exclusions is described in the *Eligibility Procedures and Standards for Business Accreditation*.

- List of Comparison Groups
    - Designate Comparable Peers (for consideration to serve on the Peer Review Team)
    - Designate Competitive Group (excluded from serving on the Peer Review Team)
    - Designate Aspirant Group (for consideration to serve on the Peer Review Team)

    Note that a school may be listed in one or all of the groups above.

- A cover letter, signed by the President/Chancellor, Provost, Dean, and Accounting Administrator (when applicable), must accompany these items. The letter, addressed to the appropriate accreditation committee chair, should include a statement requesting the maintenance of accreditation review and preferred visit dates. A template for the cover letter is available on the AACSB website.

AACSB International will make every effort to accommodate the requested review timeframe. However, AACSB reserves the right to schedule the review in a different season of the originally scheduled year if necessary to evenly distribute the reviews among available timeframes.

When to Submit

The accreditation committee chair(s) will request the application items listed above. These items are due by July 1 two years prior to the scheduled year of visit; i.e., if the visit is a 2010-11 visit, the items are due by July 1, 2008. **The applicant requests exclusion of program(s) no later than TWO years prior to the scheduled visit.** The process for requesting exclusions is described in the *Eligibility Procedures and Standards for Business Accreditation*.

How to Submit

The applicant submits the cover letter along with the required maintenance review application items, listed above, electronically to the appropriate accreditation committee chair (mac@aacsb.edu for business and aac@aacsb.edu for accounting). The electronic file(s) should be in Adobe PDF format or Microsoft Word DOC format.

What Happens Next

The chair of the appropriate accreditation committee will submit to the Accreditation Coordinating Committee (ACC) the applicant's maintenance review application and the list of programs in conjunction with catalogs, Web sites, or other material describing the institution's offerings. Any requests for program exclusions will also be included. The ACC will review and inform the applicant of the degree programs that will be included in the review. The process for identifying the accreditation scope must be completed prior to scheduling the on-site review and normally no later than one year in advance of the Peer Review Team visit.

REQUEST FOR EXCLUSION OF PROGRAMS

What is Required

The applicant submits the following items for business and a separate set for accounting, when applicable:

- Inclusive list of all business (and accounting) degree programs (those programs not listed and found by the Peer Review Team must be reviewed for inclusion by the Accreditation Coordinating Committee and can, in turn, delay the accreditation decision)

- List of degree programs requested for exclusion, including justification for the requested exclusion

- Statement from the chief academic officer verifying the above two lists

When to Submit

The applicant may request exclusion for programs NO LATER THAN TWO YEARS prior to the scheduled visit date.

How to Submit

The required items should be submitted electronically to the appropriate accreditation committee chair (mac@aacsb.edu for business and aac@aacsb.edu for accounting). The electronic files should be in Adobe PDF format or Microsoft Word DOC format.

What Happens Next

The Accreditation Coordinating Committee will review the applicant's request for exclusion of programs. The ACC chair will inform the applicant of whether the request is granted or denied. The process for identifying the accreditation scope must be completed prior to scheduling the on-site review and normally, no later than one year in advance of the Peer Review Team visit.

COMPARISON GROUPS

Processes to support the accreditation review include the selection of comparison groups to form a relevant context for judgments, inform strategic planning activities, and assist in the selection of Peer Review Team members. Reviewers from comparable institutions are better prepared to make evaluative judgments about the applicant, to understand the applicant and its aspirations, and to offer suggestions for the applicant's improvement.

What is Required

The applicant submits three comparison groups selected from members of the Accreditation Council. The applicant may select comparison groups on the basis of institutional or program comparisons. It is important to note that a school may be chosen in all three groups, as a peer, competitor, and aspirant based upon particulars of the school or programs it offers. Accounting programs may have a different set of comparison groups than the business programs and must be selected from those members of the Accreditation Council with accounting accreditation. Doctoral programs may have another set.

- *Comparable Peers:* A list of schools considered similar in mission and assumed appropriate for performance comparison. A minimum of six comparable schools must be provided. The schools should be chosen carefully to match key characteristics of the applicant. In addition to mission, some features that might be salient when choosing comparison schools include student populations served, size, degree levels, and primary funding source.

- *Competitive Group:* A list of schools so directly competitive that conflict of interest considerations exclude their personnel from the review process. The competitive school list may be of any number. Only those schools should be included where the direct competition for students, faculty, or resources is so compelling that the appearance of a conflict of interest is present.

- *Aspirant Group:* A list of schools that provides a developmental goal for the applicant, represents management education programs or features that the applicant hopes to emulate, and places the vision and strategy of the applicant in context. The list of aspirant schools may be of any number, though a minimum of three schools is required to compile the statistical data reports used during the accreditation review.

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

Although comparison groups include only AACSB International accredited schools of business or those with accounting accreditation when applicable, applicants are encouraged to look beyond academe for examples of best practices and potential Peer Review Team members. Processes for selecting Peer Review Team members will continue to value and support involvement from corporations and other appropriate persons.

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

AACSB International will develop an on-line system to assist the applicant to identify potential comparison schools, officially select schools for each comparison group, and continuously maintain comparison group listings in an AACSB International database. Some information is currently available. The on-line service, www.aacsb.edu/knowledgeservices, offers advanced search functions that produce institution lists based on optionally selected criteria.

What Happens Next

- *Peer Review Team*: The appropriate accreditation committee chair selects, and proposes to the applicant for acceptance, Peer Review Team members from the Comparable Peers and Aspirant Group. The proposed members are likely to be most well-prepared to make evaluative judgments about the applicant, to understand the applicant and its aspirations, and to offer suggestions for the applicant's improvement. Sometimes for scheduling or other reasons, reviewers who are not on the Comparison Group list may be proposed. When mutual agreement between the applicant and accreditation committee chair is reached, AACSB International invites the individuals to serve on the team.

- *Accreditation Statistical Reports*: Statistical reports will include data from the Comparison Groups who respond to the accreditation data questions in the annual *Business School Questionnair*e. AACSB International will distribute the reports to the applicant and Peer Review Team members. These reports will help form the context for judgment and consultative elements of the review. The two reports will be the Comparable Peer Report and the Aspirant Group Report.
  - o Comparable Peer Report (includes data on the applicant and its comparable peers)
  - o Aspirant Group Report (does not include data on the applicant, competitive group, and its peers)

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

MATERIALS FOR THE TEAM

What is Required

AACSB International will provide the following materials to the applicant and the Peer Review Team members at least 60 days prior to the team visit:

- Accreditation Statistical Reports – (Only those members responding to the accreditation questions in the *Business School Questionnaire* will be included in the statistical reports.)
  - Comparable Peers (applicant data is included)
  - Aspirant Group (applicant data is not included)

- List of included and excluded programs as approved by the Accreditation Coordinating Committee (ACC) at least one year prior to the visit. Please note that any new degree programs started after the accreditation decision will be considered accredited until the next review. New degree programs will be reviewed during the next maintenance of accreditation review.

The Applicant will provide the following to each team member and to the applicable accreditation committee chair at least 60 days prior to the team visit:

- Fifth Year Maintenance Report

- Annual Maintenance Reports

- Policies for Faculty Management, including Non-Tenure Track Faculty - processes for recruitment, retention, and development for all faculty

- Executive Summary (up to five pages in length)
  - Background Information
  - Effective Practices that demonstrate leadership and high quality continuous improvement in management or accounting education

The Peer Review Team will provide the following to the applicant and the applicable accreditation committee chair within ten days of the visit:

- Maintenance Review Visit Report

- Best Practices Report

- Consultative Report

When to Submit

The applicant maintains the collection of Annual Maintenance Reports between visit reviews, along with the Fifth Year Maintenance Report and any updates. The most recent five-year collection, including all items listed above, should be distributed to reviewers at least 60 days prior to the team visit.

<u>**How to Submit**</u>

The applicant should submit the required items electronically and in paper format to the Peer Review Team members and to the appropriate accreditation committee chair (mac@aacsb.edu for business and aac@aacsb.edu for accounting). The electronic files should be in Adobe PDF format or Microsoft Word format.

Accreditation Statistical Reports

All accreditation council members are required to complete both the Key Data and Accreditation Data sections of the annual *Business School Questionnaire* distributed by AACSB International Knowledge Services. The statistical information collected is used for the *Accreditation Statistical Reports* which will be distributed to the applicant and to the Peer Review Team Members at least 60 days prior to the team visit. These reports will help form the context for judgment and consultative elements of the review. The information is used for **background information only and not for making accreditation decisions**.

Fifth Year Maintenance Report

There is no prescribed format for the Fifth Year Maintenance Report documentation. The applicant should provide its strategic management information in the format developed and utilized for its operations. A separate report for accounting programs is required when applying for accounting maintenance of accreditation. The documentation for the Fifth Year Maintenance Report (business and accounting) should include the following essential elements:

1. **Situational Analysis** (no more than five pages): A brief analysis that enables the Peer Review Team to understand the context within which the applicant operates. It should answer the following types of questions:

   - What historical, national, local, and other factors shape the applicant's mission and operations?
   - What are the applicant's relative advantages and disadvantages in reputation, resources, sponsors, and supporters?
   - What internal, environmental, or competitive forces challenge the applicant's future?
   - What opportunities exist for enhancing the applicant's degree offerings?
   - What degree programs are included in the accreditation review, and what is the number of graduates in the previous year for each program?

2. **Mission Statement:** A statement that includes all degree programs defined in the scope of accreditation.

3. **Strategic Management Planning Process** (no more than two pages): A description of the strategic management planning process of the applicant. Who is involved, and how do the various stakeholders influence the strategic management plan? How are resources strategically managed?

4. **Assessment Tools and Procedures**: A brief statement of learning goals for each degree program, along with a list of the assessment tools, procedures, and results used to demonstrate progress toward an achievement of the mission. What are the most recent outcomes from the assessments, and what is the impact on the program offerings relative to Assurance of Learning?

5. **Financial Strategies**: Description of the school's action items and financial plans to achieve the school's action items. This should include anticipated sources and timing of funding (see Standards 4 and 5 for definition and interpretation).

6. **New Degree Programs**: A list of degree programs introduced since the previous accreditation review. The following information is required for each new degree program:

    - A brief description of the employer or employment needs to be served by the program
    - A brief description of the intended student market
    - A description of the source(s) of faculty, technology, and facility support
    - A description of the learning goals, how the goals are measured, and results that demonstrate achievement.

    Please note that any new degree programs started after the accreditation decision will be considered accredited until the next review. New degree programs will be reviewed during the next maintenance of accreditation review.

7. **Tables**: Include completed tables on faculty sufficiency and faculty qualifications (Tables 9-1, 10-1, and 10-2) or an appropriate alternative to these tables.

To facilitate the maintenance of accreditation visit, additional materials or documentation may be requested by the Peer Review Team. If the purpose of the request is for a standard-by-standard review (audit) it is probably an inappropriate request. Please keep in mind the spirit of the review.

ANNUAL MAINTENANCE REPORTS

Annual Maintenance Reports are updates to the strategic management plan and provide information on the management of the planning process. The annual report consists of the following elements:

1. **Progress Update** (no more than five pages): A description of progress over the previous year on existing action items.

2. **Priority Update**: A description of updated action items for the immediate future. The relevance of these action items to the mission should be either obvious or explained.

THE VISIT

Maintenance of Accreditation focuses on strategic management. The Peer Review Team contributes an external perspective on the applicant's action items, accomplishments, and progress toward achieving its mission. The applicant should be prepared to respond to questions, such as:

- Are the objectives in the vision and mission statements realistic for the applicant?
- Does the applicant have a realistic vision and mission relative to its financial, intellectual capital, human capital, and physical capital resources?
- What has the applicant accomplished relevant to its plan?
- What are the next action items in the pursuit of the mission?
- Is the applicant taking the necessary steps to see that its programs remain current and relevant?
- Does the applicant have processes to ensure continuous improvement?
- Do the applicant's accomplishments demonstrate effectiveness of its planning and implementation of its action items?

For institutions with both business and accounting accreditation, a single Peer Review Team is appointed with representatives having both general review responsibility and an assigned emphasis in either business or accounting. The visit is coordinated so that representatives of both business and accounting accreditation are part of the same visit. During the visit, it is anticipated that some of the discussions will include leaders of the business program, leaders of the accounting program, reviewers of the business programs, and reviewers of the accounting program. Some parts of the visit may separate the business and accounting reviewers and leaders for discussions that emphasize specific concerns for the separate programs. Reviewers will prepare separate reports and recommendations for the appropriate accreditation committee.

VISIT SCHEDULE

The Peer Review Team Chair works with the administrative head of the business school to determine the schedule for the visit (*see sample schedule on AACSB website*). When accounting accreditation is included, the Accounting Review Chair works with the accounting administrator to schedule sessions specific to the accounting review.

The visit should include certain individuals and groups. Because of differences in administrative structures, the groups and titles may differ from the following:

- Administrative officers of the business school/accounting program, e.g., deans/chairs
- Strategic management committee
- Department chairs and academic program directors
- Promotion and tenure committee
- Senior faculty representatives, junior faculty representatives, clinical faculty representatives, part-time and adjunct faculty representatives
- Student service directors, e.g., graduate admissions, academic support and advising, career services and placement

- Chief executive and chief academic officers of the institution, e.g., president, chancellor, academic vice president, provost, etc.
- Student representatives

The meeting of the Peer Review Team with the chief executive and chief academic officers should be one of the final meetings of the visit. During this meeting the team should present the recommendation (Section I of the Maintenance Review Visit Report) and discuss any effective practices (Section IV) highlight during the review.

MAINTENANCE REVIEW VISIT REPORT

Within ten days following the visit, the Team provides the *Maintenance Review Visit Report* (*Template available on AACSB website*) to the applicant and copies the appropriate accreditation committee chair. The report should include the following three sections:

I. Team Recommendation

    A. *Accreditation Recommendation (one of the following two):*

- Extend accreditation for an additional six years with a maintenance of accreditation review visit to occur in year five
- Sixth Year Review visit to take place in the following year to examine the specific accreditation standards-related problems cited in the Maintenance Review Visit Report, along with the respective reporting expectation and the expectations for accomplishments.

    When the Peer Review Team encounters issues or practices that raise concerns about educational quality, they must determine whether the issue relates directly to an AACSB International accreditation standard. An institution's accreditation can only be questioned on the basis of issues relative to the standards. The report should cite such problems with specific reference to the appropriate AACSB International accreditation standards. These issues will form the focus of a visit in the following year. During the sixth year review, the accredited status of the applicant does not change until the review and decision process has been completed.

    B. *Team Recommendation Review Schedule:* Date that the appropriate accreditation committee will meet to review the team recommendation

II. Identification of Areas That Must Be Addressed Prior to Next Maintenance Review *or* Identification of Areas That Must Be Addressed During Sixth Year Review

III. Relevant Facts and Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses in Support of the Team Accreditation Recommendation

        A. Educational Improvement
        B. Strategic Management
        C. Fulfillment of Mission

IV. Commendations of Strengths, Innovations, and Unique Features

V. Opportunities for Continuous Improvement Relevant to the Accreditation Standards

VI. Visit Summary

   A. *Descriptive Information:* Brief description of the school or accounting unit including its size and institutional setting (no more than one-half page)

   B. *Degree Programs:* List of all degree programs included in the accreditation review and the number of graduates in the previous year for each program

   C. *Comparison Groups*: Comparable peers, competitive group, and aspirant group

   D. *Visit Team Members:* On-site review dates and names of the full team

   E. *Maintenance Review Visit Schedule*: List of persons and activities followed during the visit

   F. *Materials Reviewed:* List of all the materials provided by the applicant and reviewed by the Peer Review Team to make its accreditation recommendation

CONSULTATIVE REPORT

This report is to be completed by the Peer Review Team and included in the Maintenance Review Visit Report (*template available on AACSB website*). The report consists of consultative advice that is **not** relevant to the maintenance of accreditation. That is, any issues raised should be unrelated to standards, or problems related to standards should not be sufficiently material to threaten accreditation. The consultative report will be shared with the applicant and the appropriate accreditation committee.

BEST PRACTICES REPORT

This report is to be completed by the Peer Review Team and included in the Maintenance Review Visit Report (*template available on AACSB website*). The report identifies items noted by the team as examples of exceptionally effective practices that demonstrate leadership and high quality continuous improvement in management education. They are highlighted in this report as "best practices" that may be of interest to other management educators

SIXTH YEAR REVIEW

If, during the maintenance of accreditation review, the Peer Review Team finds standards-related quality items that require additional investigation, a focused review will occur in the following year. The Peer Review Team identifies the weakness or threat to educational quality in Section II of the Maintenance Review Visit Report and states the expectations for the sixth year review. The

applicant distributes to the Sixth Year Review Team and appropriate accreditation committee its response to the specific concerns cited by the Peer Review Team.

What Happens Next:
The relevant accreditation committee selects, and proposes to the applicant for approval, the Sixth Year Review Team that normally includes one member from the Peer Review Team and one from (or appointed by) the accreditation committee. The Sixth Year Review Team reviews the response from the applicant and prepares a Sixth Year Review Team Report (*template available on AACSB website*). An on-site review may or may not be required.

Successful completion of the review in the sixth year earns the institution a six-year extension of its accreditation with the original review year as the start year and the next scheduled maintenance review to take place in year five; i.e., the five-year review cycle remains constant. For example, if the applicant is reviewed in year 2005-06, the next review will be in year 2010-11 irrespective of whether a sixth year review is required. If successful completion is not achieved in the sixth year, the Sixth Year Review Team will recommend continuing review of maintenance of accreditation for up to two additional years.

CONTINUING REVIEW

During the continuing review period, the applicant must rectify the standards-related quality items from the Sixth Year Review Team Report before maintenance of accreditation can be extended. The applicant responds annually on the progress being made or achievements that satisfactorily address the specific concerns and expectations. Each of these reports is submitted to the Continuing Review Team and the appropriate accreditation committee.

What Happens Next:
The relevant accreditation committee selects, and proposes to the applicant, the Continuing Review Team that normally includes one member from the Sixth Year or Peer Review Team and one from (or appointed by) the accreditation committee. The Continuing Review Team reviews the annual Continuing Review Report submitted by the applicant and confers with the appropriate accreditation committee to determine (1) if the concerns have been satisfactorily addressed, (2) how the Continuing Review Team and Committee can further assist the applicant, and (3) if an on-site review is needed. The Sixth Year Review Team may be asked to continue to serve as the Continuing Review Team. The team prepares a Continuing Review Team Report (*template available on AACSB website*).

Successful completion of the continuing review earns the institution a six-year extension of its accreditation with the original review year as the start year and the next scheduled maintenance review to take place in year five; i.e., the five-year review cycle remains constant. For example, if the applicant is reviewed in year 2005-06, the next review will be in year 2010-11 irrespective of whether a sixth year review and continuing review period are required. The continuing review period can be up to two years in duration. If successful completion is not achieved by the end of the continuing review period, the Continuing Review Team will recommend suspension of accreditation.

REVIEW OF TEAM RECOMMENDATION

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

The role of the accreditation committee is to ensure consistent application of AACSB International accreditation standards and processes across Peer Review Teams. Within 10 days following the visit, the Peer Review Team forwards a copy of the team visit report and its recommendation to the appropriate accreditation committee: the Maintenance of Accreditation Committee (MAC) or the Accounting Accreditation Committee (AAC).

Two members of the committee will serve as a liaison and a reader between the visit team and the committee. The liaison's role is to lead discussions concerning the institution at accreditation meetings. Prior to the committee meetings, the liaison and reader thoroughly review the reports, recommendation and any responses from the institution. The liaison maintains contact with the team chair during the visit process. The reader serves as a back-up should the liaison not be available for the committee meetings. The liaison and reader may determine situations that require additional information exchange.

The appropriate accreditation committee, either MAC or AAC, will normally review the team visit report and any response from the applicant at its next scheduled meeting. The following are recommendations the committee will review:

Peer Review Team Recommendation
- Concur with the team recommendation
- Remand the team's recommendation
  - o The committee may remand the recommendation to the team for information, clarification, or similar reconsideration when an apparent inconsistency is noted
  - o A conference call is convened with the committee chair, liaison, reader, Peer Review Team members, and AACSB International staff
  - o The members of the conference call clarify information and agreement is reached on the recommendation
  - o The committee concurs with the recommendation or refers the case to a panel
    1. Panel consists of two members from the accreditation committee and two members from the Peer Review Team
    2. Panel must reach agreement on recommendation
       - ◆ Panel decision to extend accreditation or suspend accreditation is forwarded to the Board of Directors for ratification consideration
       - ◆ Panel decision for a sixth year review (when the panel consideration is between extending accreditation and a sixth year review) or continuing review (when the panel consideration is between extending accreditation and continuing review) becomes the decision

Sixth Year Review Team Recommendation
- Process is the same as noted above for Peer Review Team Recommendation
- Successful completion of the review in the sixth year earns the institution a six-year extension of its accreditation with the original review year as the start year and the next scheduled maintenance review to take place in year five; i.e., the five year review cycle

remains constant. For example, if the applicant is reviewed in year 2005-06, the next review will be in year 2010-11 irrespective of whether a sixth year review is required.

- If successful completion is not achieved in the sixth year, the Sixth Year Review Team will recommend continuing review of maintenance of accreditation for up to two additional years.

Continuing Review Team Recommendation

- Process is the same as noted above for Peer Review Team Recommendation
- Successful completion of the continuing review earns the institution a six-year extension of its accreditation with the original review year as the start year and the next scheduled maintenance review to take place in year five; i.e., the five-year review cycle remains constant. For example, if the applicant is reviewed in year 2005-06, the next review will be in year 2010-11 irrespective of whether a sixth year review and continuing review is required.
- If successful completion is not achieved in the second year of continuing review, the Continuing Review Team will recommend suspension of accreditation.
  - o Recommendation for suspension will initiate an invitation to the applicant to present its case for extension of accreditation at the next accreditation committee meeting.
  - o When the institution is suspended, the member is removed from the Accreditation Council and the listing of accredited institutions.
  - o Suspension requires Board of Directors ratification.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Ratifies recommendation for extension or suspension of accreditation.
- Remands the recommendation to the appropriate accreditation committee with specific conditions.

APPLICANT

- The institution may withdraw its application for maintenance of accreditation any time prior to consideration by the Board of Directors. In the case of an accredited school in the maintenance of accreditation process, withdrawal from the process is also a withdrawal from the Accreditation Council.
- As to a suspension decision, the institution may submit an appeal to the Chair of the Board of AACSB International. An Appeal Panel will be formed to hear the appeal and make a judgment. The decision of the Appeal Panel is final.
- When the institution is suspended, the member is removed from the Accreditation Council and the listing of accredited institutions.

THE MAINTENANCE OF ACCREDITATION TIMELINE

The Maintenance of Accreditation Process is displayed below as a timeline. This five-year review cycle remains constant throughout the cycle of consecutive reviews for a school, irrespective of whether a sixth year review or continuing review is required. Therefore, Year 1 represents the academic year immediately following an on-site review, regardless of whether or not an accreditation decision has been made. The next visit will occur in Year 5. The Maintenance of Accreditation Committee (MAC) is responsible for oversight of the maintenance of accreditation process for business reviews. The Accounting Accreditation Committee (AAC) is responsible for oversight of the maintenance of accreditation process for accounting reviews. Schools with both business and accounting accreditation should fulfill the timeline independently for each type of accreditation.

MAINTENANCE OF ACCREDITATION TIMELINE

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
• Review and Refine Strategic Management Plan	• Review and Refine Strategic Management Plan	• Review and Refine Strategic Management Plan	• Review and Refine Strategic Management Plan	• Review and Refine Strategic Management Plan
• Prepare Annual Maintenance Report for prior academic year	• Prepare Annual Maintenance Report for prior academic year	• Prepare Annual Maintenance Report for prior academic year	• Prepare Annual Maintenance Report for prior academic year	• Prepare Annual Maintenance Report for prior academic year
• Complete Key Data and Accreditation Data Sections of the *Business School Questionnaire* for prior academic year	• Complete Key Data and Accreditation Data Sections of the *Business School Questionnaire* for prior academic year	• Complete Key Data and Accreditation Data Sections of the *Business School Questionnaire* for prior academic year	• Complete Key Data and Accreditation Data Sections of the *Business School Questionnaire* for prior academic year	• Complete Key Data and Accreditation Data Sections of the *Business School Questionnaire* for prior academic year
		• Submit Maintenance Review Application with signed cover letter requesting maintenance review and preferred visit dates.	• Accreditation Coordinating Committee rules on exclusions and the scope of the accreditation visit	• Submit Fifth Year Maintenance Report and the five year collection of Annual Maintenance Reports
		• Submit List of Degree Programs including Catalogs	• Work with AACSB to select Peer Review Team from peer and aspirant groups	• Submit Polices for Faculty Management, including Non-Tenure Track Faculty
		• Submit request for exclusion of degree programs including justification for the request	• Work with AACSB to set the visit date	• Submit Executive Summary including effective practices
		• Submit List of Comparison Groups (Peer, Competitive, and Aspirant) *Previous four items to be submitted together.*		• Accreditation Statistical Reports will be distributed to applicant and team members by AACSB International
				• Work with Peer Review Team to prepare the Visit Schedule
				• Peer Review Team Visit

Appendix A

The following documents referenced within this Handbook may be downloaded from the AACSB International website at http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/process/process-toc.asp *(see Section V: Maintenance of Accreditation Process Documents)*:

Accreditation Process Flowcharts & Timelines
> Maintenance of Accreditation Timeline

Application for Maintenance of Accreditation Review
> Cover Letter Template
> Accreditation Maintenance Review Application (Business)
> Accreditation Maintenance Review Application (Accounting)

Fifth Year Maintenance Reports
> Fifth Year Maintenance Report Outline
> Table 9-1 - Summary of Faculty Sufficiency
> Table 10-1 - Summary of Faculty Intellectual Contributions and Qualifications
> Table 10-2 - Calculations Relative to Deployment of Qualified Faculty

Peer Review Team Visits
> PreAccreditation Roles and Responsibilities
> Example Visit Schedule

Peer Review Team Reports

Maintenance of Accreditation Reviews:

> Maintenance Visit Report Template (Business)
> Maintenance Visit Report Template (Accounting)
> Consultative Report Template (Business and Accounting)
> Best Practices Report Template (Business and Accounting)

Sixth Year Reviews:

> Sixth Year Review Team Report Template (Business)
> Sixth Year Review Team Report Template (Accounting)

Continuing Reviews:

> Continuing Review Year 1 Team Report Template (Business)
> Continuing Review Year 1 Team Report Template (Accounting)
> Continuing Review Year 2 Team Report Template (Business)
> Continuing Review Year 2 Team Report Template (Accounting)

APPENDIX B: ACCREDITATION TERMINOLOGY

Accounting Accreditation Committee (AAC)
Appoints Peer Review Teams to assist the applicants in the Initial and Maintenance of Accreditation Processes, and reviews initial accounting accreditation and accounting maintenance of accreditation recommendations.

Accounting Accreditation Committee Liaison
A member of the AAC that serves as the principal point of contact and communication between the AAC, PAC and the Mentor.

Accreditation
Recognition by AACSB International that an institution commits to fulfill its mission, and continues to sustain and improve educational quality of its undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degree programs according to the standards of AACSB International as interpreted by its Peer Review Team(s), accreditation committees, and the Board of Directors.

Accreditation Coordinating Committee (ACC)
Makes decisions on all requirements as described in the eligibility procedures A-F in the accreditation standards.

Accreditation Council
Members who have achieved AACSB International accreditation.

Accreditation Plan (AP)
A plan that establishes the agenda for meeting the AACSB standards for accreditation and achieving the mission and objectives of the applicant seeking accreditation.

Accreditation Plan Recommendation (PreAccreditation)
Mentor recommendation to the PreAccreditation Committee (PAC). The Mentor can recommend acceptance or non-acceptance of the Accreditation Plan by the PreAccreditation and Initial (or Accounting) Accreditation Committees. The Mentor recommendation consists of a written report in the form of the AP Review Template.

Accreditation Quality Committee (AQC)
Reviews the accreditation standards and processes for continuous improvement changes.

Accreditation Recommendation-Maintenance
Peer Review Team recommendation can be extension of accreditation or sixth year review. Sixth Year Review Team recommendation can be extension of accreditation or continuing review. Continuing Review Team recommendation can be extension of accreditation or suspension. The appropriate accreditation committee must review all team recommendations for concurrence. Immediate suspension of accreditation can result for cause at any time. Recommendations and concurrence for extension of accreditation and suspension of accreditation must be considered for ratification by the Board of Directors.

Accreditation Statistical Reports	Reports provided to the applicant and Peer Review Team members for use as background information in the accreditation review.
Annual Maintenance Reports	The set of progress reports specifying action items identified in the strategic management plan along with an explanation of new programs or objectives and supporting resources.
Annual Mentor Recommendations	The mentor's recommendations to the IAC (or AAC) based on the annual progress report submitted by the applicant.
Annual Progress Reports (PreAccreditation)	Annual report to the Initial Accreditation Committee (IAC) or Accounting Accreditation Committee (AAC) on the progress the applicant has made on its Accreditation Plan.
Applicant	The department, school, or program unit that is responsible for the degree programs under review. AACSB International accreditation is achieved and awarded to the member institution for all degree programs in business or accounting that it offers (except specifically excluded programs).
Aspirant Group	A list of schools that provides developmental goals for the applicant, represents management education programs or features that the applicant hopes to emulate, and places the vision and strategy of the applicant in context. The list may be of any number.
Business School Questionnaire (BSQ)	Request for annual data from AACSB International to all accreditation council members. Some of these data are included in the accreditation statistical reports.
Comparable Peers	A list of schools considered similar in mission and assumed to be appropriate for performance comparison. A minimum of six comparable schools must be provided.
Comparison Groups	Schools considered by the applicant to be similar in mission and appropriate for performance comparison as either peers, aspirants, or competitors.
Competitive Groups	A list of schools so directly competitive that conflict of interest considerations exclude their personnel from the review process of the applicant. The list may be of any number. Only those schools should be included where the direct competition for students, faculty, or resources is so compelling that the appearance of a conflict of interest is present.

Consultative Feedback (PreAccreditation)	Mentors are encouraged to provide consultative advice relevant to the expectation of continuous improvement. This advice is separate from the accreditation plan recommendation.
Consultative Feedback (Initial and Maintenance of Accreditation)	Peer review teams are encouraged to provide consultative advice relevant to the expectation of continuous improvement. This advice is separate from the accreditation recommendation.
Consultative Report	Report included in the Peer Review Team Visit Report. The report consists of consultative advice that is not relevant to the accreditation recommendation.
Continuing Review	Additional review for up to two years beyond the sixth year review.
Continuing Review Team	Mutually agreed upon team consisting of one member from the Sixth Year or Peer Review Team and one from (or appointed by) the relevant accreditation committee. The Continuing Review Team evaluates progress and resolution of specific standards-related quality items identified by the Sixth Year Review Visit Report.
Degree Programs	Undergraduate, master's, doctoral, and other comparable degrees awarded by an institution.
Diversity	In its mission, a school should define the populations it serves, consider its role in creating opportunities for under-served groups, and show how it endeavors to make sure that a variety of perspectives are included in all educational activities.
Effective Practices	Exceptional practices that demonstrate leadership and high quality continuous improvement in management or accounting education, noted by the Mentor in his/her summary report and/or the Peer Review Team in its Visit Report.
Eligibility Application	Application submitted to the PreAccreditation Committee to establish whether an institution meet the criteria to be eligible for accreditation by AACSB International.
Exclusion of Program(s)	Programs excluded from the accreditation review as described in the eligibility section of the accreditation standards.
Executive Summary	Background information provided by the applicant, which can be up to five pages in length, including a list of self-proposed effective practices.

Fifth Year Maintenance Report-	Report includes materials to inform the Peer Review Team before and during the fifth year maintenance review.
Gap Analysis	A systematic analysis of the applicant's strengths and weaknesses relative to each of the AACSB standards for accreditation and relative to the applicant's unique mission and strategic management objectives.
Initial Accreditation	Accreditation granted for a six-year period with a review in the fifth year.
Initial Accreditation Committee (IAC)	Appoints a Peer Review Team to assist the applicant in the Initial Accreditation Process, and reviews the initial accreditation recommendation.
Initial Accreditation Committee Liaison	A member of the IAC that serves as the principal point of contact and communication between the Initial Accreditation Committee and the PreAccreditation Committee, Mentor, and/or Peer Review Team.
Institution	The member organization of AACSB International. Usually a larger academic organization than the business school or accounting unit being reviewed.
Maintenance of Accreditation	The process or set of activities and results required to maintain accreditation. This process is not a standard-by-standard review. It is an ongoing review which emphasizes continuous improvement to maintain the accreditation status. Accreditation is extended for six years with a review in the fifth year.
Maintenance of Accreditation Committee (MAC)	Appoints a Peer Review Team to assist the applicant in the maintenance of accreditation process, and reviews the maintenance of accreditation recommendation.
Maintenance Review Application (MRA)	The set of documents required for participation in the maintenance of accreditation process.
Maintenance Review Visit Report	The report written by the Peer Review Team for the applicant and for review by the appropriate accreditation committee.
Mentor	Individual assigned to assist an applicant during the PreAccreditation Process. The Mentor reviews the Eligibility Application and facilitates development of the Accreditation Plan and provides comments and recommendations to PAC. During implementation of the Accreditation Plan, the Mentor provides comments to the IAC (or AAC).

Mentor Summary Report	A summary report drafted by the Mentor subsequent to the on-site visit to the applicant institution. The report consists of three distinct sections: the standard-by-standard summary report, the eligibility criteria recommendation report and the Mentor visit schedule.
Peer Review Team (PRT)	Mutually agreed upon team, normally chosen from the submitted Comparable Peer or Aspirant Groups. The PRT performs the accreditation review and makes a recommendation to the appropriate accreditation committee.
Peer Review Team Chair (Initial Accreditation)	Chosen from the applicant's submitted Comparable Peer or Aspirant Groups two years in advance of the on-site review. The Chair assumes responsibility for the Mentor in monitoring the applicant's progress through the final two years of AP implementation.
PreAccreditation Committee (PAC)	Reviews the Eligibility Applications for both business and accounting and assigns a Mentor to assist the applicant in the PreAccreditation Process.
PreAccreditation Committee Liaison	A member of the PAC that serves as the principal point of contact and communication between the IAC (or AAC), PAC and Mentor.
Previsit Letter	Letter written by the PRT to the applicant based on the Self-Evaluation Report recommending whether or not a visit should take place. The letter typically includes requests for information to be submitted before a visit takes place as well as information that should be available during the visit. The previsit letter typically includes a standard-by-standard analysis of the Self-Evaluation Report.
Scope of Accreditation	The degree programs that are included in the accreditation review.
Self-Assessment	A systematic analysis of the business academic unit's mission, faculty, students, curriculum, instructional resources, operations, intellectual contributions, and processes, which provides the basis upon which a realistic and comprehensive Accreditation Plan can be developed.
Self-Evaluation Report (SER)	Report submitted to the PRT detailing how the applicant meets the standards for accreditation by AACSB International.
Sixth Year Review	Additional review conducted in the sixth year on those standards-related issues specifically identified as problematic in the maintenance of accreditation review.

Sixth Year Review Team	Mutually agreed upon team consisting of one member from the Peer Review Team and one from (or appointed by) the appropriate accreditation committee. The team evaluates resolution of specific standards-related quality issues.
Strategic Management Plan	The systematic planning and implementation for the prioritized use of resources to accomplish the stated mission.
Suspension of Accreditation	Loss of membership in the Accreditation Council.
Withdrawal of Application by Applicant	Action available to applicant any time prior to consideration by the Board of Directors. In the case of an accredited school in the maintenance of accreditation process, withdrawal from the process is also withdrawal from the Accreditation Council.

APPENDIX C: ACCREDITATION VOLUNTEER TRAVEL POLICY

PreAccreditation Mentor

Normally, the PreAccreditation Mentor will visit the applicant institution at the beginning of the PreAccreditation process. Subsequent visits will be made as needed and as agreed upon by both the Mentor and the applicant.
AACSB International requires the PreAccreditation applicant to work directly with the Mentor to arrange the travel logistics. The PreAccreditation applicant will be responsible for the direct payment or reimbursement of all Mentor travel expenses (see "Reimbursable Expenses" below).

Peer Review Team Chair/Advisor Visit Prior to the Accreditation Review

If agreed upon and deemed necessary by the host institution and the Peer Review Team Chair/Advisor, the Chair/Advisor may conduct an on-site advising visit to assist the host institution in the development of a Self Evaluation Report (for initial accreditation reviews) or the Fifth Year Maintenance Report (for maintenance of accreditation reviews).
AACSB International requires the host institution to work directly with the Chair/Advisor to arrange the travel logistics. The host institution will be responsible for the direct payment or reimbursement of all Chair/Advisor visit expenses (see "Reimbursable Expenses" below).

Peer Review Teams Conducting Accreditation Reviews

Upon the establishment of the visit dates, AACSB International requires the host institution to work directly with the Peer Review Team members to arrange the travel logistics. The host institution will be responsible for the direct payment or reimbursement of all Peer Review Team visit expenses (see "Reimbursable Expenses" below).

Reasonable promptness in the submission of expense reports, including all original receipts, and the subsequent reimbursement of travel expenses is expected and appreciated in all instances. Volunteers failing to receive prompt reimbursement are asked to contact AACSB.

Reimbursable Expenses

AACSB International considers the following to be reimbursable expenses related to mentor and peer review team travel:
- Transportation (including airfare, taxi fare or personal automobile mileage, parking charges, tolls, etc.).*
- Lodging
- Meals
- Other expenses as agreed upon by the host school and mentor or peer team member.

* It is the policy of AACSB International that air travel will be at economy fares, except for intercontinental travel of 10 hours or longer one-way. The measurement of travel time is based on the scheduled departure time from the origin city until the scheduled arrival time in the final destination city ("gate to gate"). Waiting time during layovers is included in the measurement. Mentor or Peer Review Team airfare may be in business or first class if offered by the school and agreed to by the mentor/peer review team member.
When travel by private car is not the most efficient method of transportation and an individual still elects to travel by private car, reimbursement should be made on the basis of whichever is the lesser cost of coach air service or the personal auto mileage allowance. Normally, no reimbursement is expected for meals or accommodations necessitated by additional time en route.

APPENDIX D: CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES & CODE OF CONDUCT

Conflict of Interest Guidelines

Persons should not serve as site visitors nor participate in deliberations and votes for a program if:

- They are employed in the competitive proximity of the reviewed institution.

- They have been appointees of, employees of, or paid consultants to the reviewed institution within the past ten years.

- They earned their last or highest degree at the reviewed institution.

- They are engaged with the reviewed institution in a relationship that creates the appearance of a conflict of interest.

- They are philosophically opposed to, or are on record as having made generic criticism about a specific type of school or program allowable under the standards.

- They are employed by an institution that has a cooperation agreement with the institution to be reviewed

- The reviewed institution has asked for their exclusion from the process.

The above list is not all-inclusive and professional judgment should be adhered to; questions may be directed to the Chair of the overseeing accreditation committee

The forgoing notwithstanding, for review within an educational environment where there is limited membership expertise, normally one member of the Peer Review Team will be chosen to provide appropriate knowledge of the particular higher education environment.

Code of Conduct

Mutual respect is expected in all dealings between the mentor, peer review team members and representatives of the institution being reviewed. If the mentor, team members or representatives of the institution, collectively or individually, encounter situations that might constitute unethical or compromising behavior, the incident should be reported to a member of the AACSB International accreditation staff.

Acceptance of participation as a preaccreditation mentor or in an accreditation review assignment implies agreement to conduct one's self throughout the term of assignment, according to the highest standards of professional and moral integrity. The appearance of conflict of interest should be avoided in all circumstances.

APPENDIX E: RESPONSIBILITIES OF INSTITUTIONS WITH AACSB INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

1. Maintain educational achievements appropriate to AACSB International accreditation standards and to the member's strategic mission.
   - Prepare annual reports (1)
   - Provide annual accreditation-related data (1)
   - Provide appropriate reports for five-year reviews (1)
   - Ensure that program quality is maintained and that all programs have continuous improvement efforts (1)
   - Ensure that programs promote and operate with integrity (3)

2. Represent AACSB International accreditation [accurately].
   - Maintain accurate institutional publicity regarding accreditation (2)
   - Make accurate representations regarding accreditation to students and prospective students (2)
   - Promote AACSB International accreditation in catalogs, web sites, and promotional materials (3)

3. Participate in the AACSB International accreditation review process.
   - Provide representatives to participate in peer review of other institutions (3)
   - Assist in the continuous improvement of AACSB International accreditation (3)

4. Represent degree and non-degree programs accurately, realistically and with integrity in all communications.
   - Identify educational learning goals realistically (1)
   - Describe the success of graduates accurately (3)
   - Develop and follow consistent practices that ensure integrity in the representation of information about programs and the institution (2)
   - Report program data and information accurately to external parties (3)

(1) This expectation is monitored through the accreditation review process.
(2) This expectation is a condition of membership.
(3) This expectation is presented for guidance.

APPENDIX F: DISCLOSURE OF ACCREDITATION GUIDELINES

In response to inquiries from the public, AACSB International will disclose only whether a member is accredited or not accredited. Information regarding a member's progress in the initial accreditation process, or issues of concern for an accredited member on review is not made public by AACSB International.

Accredited institutions are encouraged to make their accreditation known in accordance with the practices shown at http://www.aacsb.edu/members/nameref.asp. An institution may make public information about its accredited status or any portion of a visit team's report. If only a portion of the team report or notice from AACSB International is made public, the member must indicate that the full report is available. If the portion made public presents a biased or distorted impression, AACSB International may disclose information to correct the distortion or inaccuracy.

Misrepresentation

The AACSB International bylaws include the following statement: "A condition to membership by educational institutions in the corporation shall be the use of accurate descriptions of programs or degrees offered. In addition, members are responsible for the accuracy of any data and information requested by the corporation. Any reference to membership or accreditation, institutional or otherwise, which implies AACSB International accreditation in business administration or accounting by institutions which have not achieved accreditation for those programs or levels is prohibited."

Members should only state the status of their school regarding accreditation. Members that are not accredited may state that they are working to achieve accreditation if they are officially engaged in the accreditation process. They must have an accreditation plan that has been approved by the Initial Accreditation Committee or the Accounting Accreditation Committee. They may not state or imply that they will achieve accreditation within a designated time period. Members that are not accredited should not state that their curriculum or other features conform to AACSB International accreditation standards.

A member school that is not accredited by AACSB International should not state its membership affiliation in proximity or in conjunction with statements of other accreditations. For example, a member should not state: "University "X" is accredited by the ABC association and is a member of AACSB International."

APPENDIX G: COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

AACSB International is concerned with sustained quality and continual improvement of collegiate education for business administration and accounting. AACSB International will receive and review allegations filed by third parties (e.g., students, faculty members) who claim conduct by the member school contrary to AACSB International accreditation standards. Complaints should be submitted by email to AACSB International in care of the appropriate committee:

- For Initial Accreditation: iac@aacsb.edu
- For Maintenance of Accreditation: mac@aacsb.edu
- For Accounting Accreditation: aac@aacsb.edu

All complaints should (1) identify the specific accreditation standard(s) relevant to the complaint, (2) provide documentation that supports the complaint, and (3) identify the relationship of the complainant to the member school.

The Chief Accreditation Officer of AACSB International will ascertain whether the complaint satisfies these three requirements. When the requirements are met, s/he will forward the complaint to the Initial Accreditation Committee (IAC), Maintenance of Accreditation Committee (MAC), or the Accounting Accreditation Committee (AAC) as appropriate. The Chief Accreditation Officer will also forward a copy of the complaint and supporting materials to the member school.

For schools engaged in the initial accreditation process, special emphasis will be focused on the standards that the complaint alleges are not met. The member school will be asked to report on those standards in light of the allegations of the complaint. The Peer Review Team will pay particular attention to those standards in the context of the evidence presented in the complaint, in the school's Self-Evaluation Report, and in the school's response to the complaint. The Peer Review Team will report on its findings regarding the complaint and the involved standards as a part of the Visit Report.

For accredited schools, at the next scheduled maintenance review, special emphasis will be focused on the standards that the complaint alleges are not met. The member school will be asked to report on those standards in light of the allegations of the complaint. The Peer Review Team will pay particular attention to those standards in the context of the evidence presented in the complaint and the school's response, and the team will make a report on its findings regarding the complaint and the involved standards.

If, on receipt of the complaint, the Chief Accreditation Officer and the chair of the relevant committee believe the issue significantly jeopardizes students' educational experiences at an accredited institution the relevant committee will proceed with an immediate investigation, rather than awaiting the next scheduled maintenance review.

APPENDIX H: APPEAL PROCEDURE

An institution may appeal the following negative decisions only: (1) denial of initial accreditation, or (2) suspension of accredited status. The status of the institution will remain unchanged pending the outcome of the appeal.

The procedures for an appeal are:

1. An institution's request for an appeal hearing must be submitted to the AACSB International president within thirty (30) days of notification of the negative decision. The basis of appeal must be clearly stated and relate directly to AACSB accreditation standards or process.

2. Upon receipt of the request for appeal, and within thirty (30) days of receipt of the appeal request, the AACSB president (or designee) shall promptly provide the appellant institution with the names of three Accreditation Council member representatives willing to serve on an appeal panel, from which the appellant promptly shall remove two names.

3. The appellant institution shall concurrently provide AACSB with three names of Accreditation Council member representatives willing to serve on the appeal panel within thirty (30) days of delivery of the appeal request, from which two names shall be promptly removed by AACSB.

4. Within twenty-one (21) days of confirmation of their joint appointment, the two members thus chosen shall select a third member willing to serve on the appeal panel from the Accreditation Council or a non-educational AACSB member representative.

5. For accounting accreditation appeals, Accreditation Council representatives shall include accounting program directors or faculty members from schools possessing accounting accreditation.

6. The appeal panel shall not include any members of the peer review team, accreditation committees, or Board of Directors who participated in the process leading to the decision under appeal. Appeal panel members should possess knowledge of the respective accounting or business accreditation process which is subject to the appeal.

7. The three appeal panel members shall choose one of its members to serve as chair. The appeal panel chair shall determine the date of the hearing and shall notify all parties at least thirty (30) days in advance of the hearing. The hearing shall be an open proceeding unless the appellant institution requests that it be closed. The hearing date shall be within six (6) months of notification of the negative decision and will take place at the AACSB International Headquarters location.

8. AACSB shall provide each panel member and all participating parties with copies of all correspondence, reports, and other materials relating to the decision being appealed, along with a copy of the request for appeal.

9. All costs and expenses incurred by AACSB in providing for the hearing, expenses of the hearing panel, and all other expenses (exclusive of legal fees, if any) in connection with the appeal shall be borne by the appellant institution. This includes the meeting costs and travel costs of the appeal panel and AACSB's and the host institution's staff and representatives at the hearing. A deposit for estimated expenses is required to be submitted by the appellant

institution within thirty (30) days of receipt of the appeal request. Additional expenses or refunds of deposits will be reimbursed immediately following the hearing.

10. Either party or the hearing panel may request a transcript of the hearing. The request for a transcript must be sent to the panel chair at least twenty (20) days before the date of the hearing. Costs of the transcript will be shared equally by the appellant institution and AACSB. Any legal fees incurred by AACSB shall be paid by the corporation.

11. The hearing shall be conducted in an informal manner with procedures determined by the panel. The appellant institution and AACSB shall have the right to appear before the panel, to present evidence, to cross-examine witnesses, to be represented by counsel, and to present oral argument, all within the limitations prescribed by the panel chair. The hearing shall normally proceed in the following order (clarifying questions may be raised at any stage):

> Appellant institution presents its case
> AACSB presents rebuttal
> Rebuttal by appellant, if desired
> Summation by AACSB
> Summation by appellant institution

12. In reviewing the decision, the hearing panel shall focus primarily on the conditions that existed at the appellant institution prior to and at the time of the decision, not on changes in conditions since the decision or the appellant institution's plans for change. The decision shall be sustained by the hearing panel unless the appellant institution shows by clear and convincing evidence that the decision being appealed is erroneous or unreasonable. For a procedural or process error by AACSB to constitute grounds for reversal, the appellant institution must show that it has been substantially prejudiced by such error.

13. The appeal panel must either reverse or sustain the decision being appealed. If the appeal panel fails to reverse the decision by a majority vote, the decision is sustained.

14. The appeal panel decision shall be in writing and shall include a brief statement of the grounds for the decision. The decision shall be promptly submitted to the appellant institution and AACSB within thirty (30) days of the hearing.

15. The decision of the appeal panel shall be final.

16. All parties to the appeal process (including members of the hearing panel) are expected to adhere to the time schedule stated in the steps of the Appeal Procedure. All parties should be notified immediately if the time schedule will be violated, and the reason for failure to keep the schedule should be made clear. Delinquency of more than fifteen (15) days on the part of the institution shall be grounds for the panel to declare the appeal withdrawn. Delinquency of more than fifteen (15) days on the part of AACSB shall be grounds for the panel to declare the appeal upheld.

(Adopted by the Accreditation Quality Committee December 12, 2003)