STEERING COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

Consult the *Membership and Accreditation Guide, 19th edition* for detailed information about these areas.

YEAR ONE: Prepare for Self-Study

- Select Steering Committee Chair(s)
- Confirm that the school has considered, revised (if desired), and affirmed the school's mission statement at some point during the year, reflected in governing body minutes
- Confirm that the school has assessed the status of its strategic planning
- Confirm that the school's governing body has reviewed school bylaws and updated them, if necessary, within the past seven years
- Review and update the school's curriculum
  - Check for adherence to school mission, vertical/horizontal consistency across disciplines and skills
  - Assemble documentation and make accessible for the visiting team, using a method appropriate for your school: digital or hard copy
- Conduct the ISACS School Community Survey, or similar instrument, and evaluate the results
- Collect data about school alumni to use when writing the Alumni Body self-study report. Include the following areas:
  - Success of the school in preparing alumni for the next phase of their lives
  - Success of alumni during the next chapter(s) of their lives
  - Impact of their experience at the school and its mission on alumni lives
  - Assessment of alumni loyalty to school

YEAR ONE/TWO: Select **Steering Committee members** and become familiar with the requirements of the self-study year and preparation for visiting team:

- Determine number of self-study subcommittees – Subcommittees are responsible for writing self-study report chapters. Include required subcommittees and any optional ones to address areas unique to the school, e.g., strategic planning or schoolwide themes, school mission or other guiding principles
- Assign chairs(s) for each subcommittee
- Select members of each subcommittee – the entire school community should be represented on the subcommittees
- Review **Appendices G** (Checklist of Items to Make Available During ISACS Visit) and **H** (Checklist for Self-Study Steering Committee and Committee Chair)
- Create self-study meeting schedule by determining the projected season (fall or winter/spring) of the accreditation team visit and working backwards to the beginning of the self-study. Having each subcommittee meet 3 or 4 times is ideal. Consider dividing the overall time period into sessions, e.g., write half of the reports during the first session, half during the second session
- Schedule a kick-off visit from the Director of Accreditation for end of Year 1 or beginning of Year 2

SELF-STUDY: REPORT AREAS AND SUGGESTED COMPOSITION OF SUBCOMMITTEES

Critical to a useful self-study is the involvement of all members of the school community. This includes administrators, faculty, staff, and board members. In addition, some sections of the self-study relate to parents, students and alumni, thereby making their participation vital. The following suggestions may be useful in creating committees for the required reports of the self-study.

Report Area	Subcommittee Membership
Introduction	Head, Self-Study steering committee chair, two administrators
Purpose, Goals, and Philosophy	Head, Administrator, governing body member, Faculty member(s)

School Community

• Admissions	Admission director, Marketing/communications staff member, Faculty member(s)
• Local Community	School administrator, Faculty member(s), Student(s), governing body member
• Student Body	School administrator, Faculty member(s), Student(s)
• Alumni Body	School administrator, Faculty member(s), Alumni/ae
• Parent Body	School administrator, Faculty member(s), Parent(s)
• School Advancement	School administrator(s), Faculty member(s)
• Equity and Justice	School administrator, Faculty member(s), Student(s)
• School Climate	School administrator, Faculty member(s), Student(s)

Leadership and Operations

• Governance	At least two members of the school's governing body, including the Chair, Head of School, Business officer
• Administration	Administrator(s), Faculty member(s)
• Personnel	School administrator, Business officer, Division head(s), governing body member, Faculty member(s), Staff member(s)
• Business Management and Operations	Governing body finance chairperson, Business officer, Administrator(s)
• School Plant and Facilities	Business officer, governing body member, Facilities manager, Faculty member(s)

School Program

• Curricular Summary Statement	Self-Study Steering Committee or designated individual(s)
• Curriculum – each area analyzed using one of these methods:	Administrator(s), Faculty member(s)

- o By School Structure, e.g., Lower School, Middle School, etc.
- o By Disciplines and Programs
- o By Developmental Stages
- o By Thematic Construct

• Student Services	Administrator(s), Counselor(s), Nurse, Business officer, Faculty members

Reports in this section may be consolidated or omitted, as appropriate for the school's structure

- o College Counseling
- o Counseling
- o Guidance
- o Health Care and Records
- o Student Records: Policies and Procedures
- o Information Services: Library/Media/Educational Technology
- o Learning Support Services
- o English Language Learners (ELL)

• School Life	Administrator(s), Coaches, Faculty members

Reports in this section may be consolidated or omitted, as appropriate for the school's structure

- o Advisory Programs
- o Co-Curricular/Extracurricular Programs
- o Honor and Discipline Systems
- o Military Programs
- o Religious Life
- o Residential Life
- o Athletics
- o Specialty Areas: Extended Day, Summer Programs, etc.

Conclusion	Self-Study Steering Committee

YEAR TWO: Full-opinion audit and self-study

*The school must conduct a professional, full-opinion audit of the current fiscal year.

Establish the Timeline to Complete the Self-Study Report:
- Publish subcommittee assignments and self-study meeting schedule
- Stagger due dates for incoming report drafts to accommodate Steering Committee work load
  - One option is to divide subcommittees into manageable groups with each group having a unique deadline for subcommittee report submission
- Set aside extra time as a cushion for unexpected events
- Check with business office to confirm schedule for full-opinion audit of Year 2, including independent auditor's report, due in ISACS Office, Chicago, and available for Visiting Team by the **start** of its visit

Conduct the Self-Study Process:

- Provide *structure, resources, and moral support* for the subcommittees
- Represent the Steering Committee on subcommittees: Steering Committee members may participate on subcommittees and support a specific set of subcommittees
- Provide instructions and assemble resources for each Subcommittee Chair outlining the report to be written
  - Style sheet instructions and/or standard template for uniform formatting of reports
  - Timeline for completion
  - Instructions for composing report sections: Overview, Strengths, Challenges, Plans and Priorities, List of Subcommittee Members, Addenda
  - Suggestions for how to conduct meetings
  - Relevant sections from the *Membership and Accreditation Guide, 19th Edition*, including ISACS Standards for Membership for that subcommittee report, Related Questions to Address
  - Pertinent information from the School Community Survey
  - Report from the previous self-study, if relevant

Edit the Self-Study Report:
- Review every subcommittee report
- Ensure that required reports from *ISACS Accreditation Guide*, 19th edition, are included in the Self-Study Report, along with any additional reports
- Assemble the final report with the reading audience in mind – make it user friendly
- Ensure the presence of adequate, meaningful references to School Community Survey, school mission
- Check the report format for consistency, following the school's guidelines
- Confirm that addenda are available for each subcommittee's report included

Confirm ISACS Standards for Membership:

- Ensure that each subcommittee has confirmed standards for membership relevant to that area
- Complete the Standards for Membership Checklist from *Membership and Accreditation Guide, 19th Edition (Appendix Q)*
- Assemble documentation that confirms the school's compliance with each standard for membership. If the school is justifiably non-compliant with a standard, be sure to include the explanation along with the checklist
- Include links to, or notation of, the documentation for each standard on the checklist
- Organize documentation so that it is easily accessible to the visiting team

Publish the Self-Study:

The self-study report may be provided to the school community and the visiting team in hard copy or as a digital document. Either way, be sure to include:

- Table of contents
- Clear demarcation of major sections
- Page numbering
- Consistent formatting, including new pages for the start of each report

Digital version:
- Format the document as a formal publication that represents the school
- Provide the document in a standard format readable on all types of devices, e.g., PDF
- Check accuracy of links to supporting documents or other resources, if included
- Provide Addenda in a shared folder, on a flash drive, or combination of digital and print resources

Printed version:
- Print **DOUBLE-SIDED**
- Include section dividers, and include a Table of Contents for each section on the divider page
- Spiral binding is sufficient

ADDENDA – see *Membership and Accreditation Guide, 19th ed.*, for suggestions
- Provide addenda on flash/cloud drives and/or hanging files for visiting team
- Organize the addenda according to the self-study structure for the visiting team
- Create **TWO** sets of printed addenda – one for visiting team's school meeting location, one for hotel meeting room
- Be sure to include the Year 2 Audit and curriculum documentation as part of the Addenda

YEAR THREE: VISITING TEAM: Before and during visit, consult the *Membership and Accreditation Guide, 19th edition*, including task checklists

- COMMUNICATION: Four weeks prior to the arrival date of the Visiting Team - Send digital or hard copy information to visiting team leader and members including: welcome letter to visiting team, Self-Study Report, marketing materials from school and local geographic area, and any additional school or community information that might be helpful for the visiting team as an introduction to the school and its community
- Assign one person to be the school contact for visiting team members
- Make hotel arrangements well in advance
- Confirm ALL travel to and from airports and hotel, dietary restrictions, other special needs
- Welcome the team members with snacks, welcome note (from a student), something that represents the school
- Provide a name tag to hang around neck – perhaps use keychain lanyard with school's name on it
- Make sure that team members have the technology they need
- Double-check signage throughout the school so that team members can easily find their way; provide team members with a map of the school

SUNDAY – WEDNESDAY: Typical Schedule

- Sunday tour and reception – it's ideal if students can participate as tour guides
- Confirm arrival arrangements for visiting team members
- Confirm transportation to and from school
- Monday/Tuesday – school visits
  - Talk to faculty about visit: short time of classroom visits; be open and honest; it's OK to clean the house for guests
  - Schedule one all-school drill for visiting team to observe
- Arrange to have reimbursement checks for each team member available by departure time, if possible
- Confirm Wednesday departure arrangements

VISITING TEAM'S MEETING ROOMS AT SCHOOL AND HOTEL

- Maintain confidentiality
- Set up rooms in comfortable, conversation style, e.g., horseshoe
- Make tent name tags available for tables for visiting team members - they do not know each other
- Have complete set of Addenda, faculty/staff list, and technology available: printer, projector, power strips, wireless network access, etc.
- Have extra tools available: pencils, pens, paper, paper clips, etc.
- Have snacks available and refreshed each day
- Have room cleaned each night