



AACSB BUSINESS ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: UPDATES 2022

AACSB significantly updated its Business Accreditation Standards in 2020. Since then it issues annual amendments and updates – usually on 1 July. The following is an overview of the updates made as part of the 2022 publication, together with an assessment of the significance of the change. Many of the updates reflect clarification and additional explanation. However, there are a small number of changes which could potentially impact schools (particularly those schools that are pre-eligibility).

As always, QED recommends that all schools within an AACSB accreditation process (whether initial or renewal) should review and ensure they have understood the changes and clarifications.

NB: This document represents QED's interpretation of AACSB Updates. We recommend that you view the updated standards directly – which are available from AACSB's website in the following formats:

- [Updated 2020 AACSB Business Accreditation Standards \(clean copy\)](#)
- [Updated 2020 AACSB Business Accreditation Standards \(with tracked changes\)](#)
- [Updated 2020 Interpretive Guidance for AACSB Business Accreditation Standards \(clean copy\)](#)
- [Updated 2020 Interpretive Guidance for AACSB Business Accreditation Standards \(with tracked changes\)](#)
- [AACSB Summary Table of Key Changes](#)

QED's summary of the changes is provided below, plus a quick review of the changes on a standard by standard basis.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Level of Change	Preamble and other introductory areas	Eligibility Criteria & Guiding Principles	Standards
<i>No material changes made (or no changes made)</i>	All other areas not noted below	All other areas not noted below	All other areas not noted below
<i>Some changes, but unlikely to be substantial (may include clarifications or advice)</i>	Introduction	Accreditation Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.3 • 3.1, 3.2 • 4.4 • 7.3 • 8.1, 8.2
<i>Some changes: possible administrative impact</i>	The Accredited Entity	---	---
<i>Some Changes: possible substantial impact (depending on school)</i>	---	---	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1 (faculty members to be excluded)
<i>Substantial Change</i>	---	---	---

GENERAL CHANGES

- All changes listed are effective immediately, as they represent clarifications and minor updates.
- Only changes which suggest a material clarification or change in interpretation have been captured.

PREAMBLE

- The paragraph relating to eligibility requirements for AACSB has been deleted and moved to a new formal eligibility requirements section later in the document (See *Accreditation Eligibility Criteria* section below)

PHILOSOPHY OF AACSB ACCREDITATION

- The introductory section includes learning modalities and institutional partnerships as additional elements of a business school's activities that are subject to economic pressures.

THE ACCREDITED ENTITY

- Text has been updated to clarify that both accredited and unaccredited schools can apply for single business unit (SBU) accreditation. AACSB reconfirms the principle that for schools availing of SBU status, AACSB accreditation only applies to degrees within the SBU (and Schools must ensure that the market can clearly distinguish between AACSB accredited degree provision and other degrees, i.e. from outside of the SBU).

(Minor change and clarification)

ACCREDITATION ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

This is a new section of the document and marks a change to formal eligibility criteria. It combines previous general criteria (such as needing to offer a baccalaureate degree) with additional defined eligibility criteria. The key criteria are summarised below and expected to be recorded as part of AACSB Eligibility.

1. The number of full time faculty should be sufficient to support the mission, strategies, and expected outcomes of the school. Normally, the school should have at least 16 full time faculty at the time the school is invited to an initial accreditation visit. For a school entering the initial process who has less than 16 full time faculty, the initial accreditation committee may allow a school to proceed into the initial accreditation process if they believe the school can reasonably achieve the goal of a minimum of 16 full time faculty at the time of the initial accreditation visit. If the school is not able to reach this goal, this deficiency may cause the initial accreditation committee to decline inviting the school to an initial accreditation visit. **NB: Accredited Schools that do not meet Criterion #1 are exempted from this criterion**
2. The school should be in good standing with its governing body (e.g., Ministry of Education, regional accreditor, etc.). "Good standing" means the school is not on probation or under an investigation related to a significant legal or ethical breach, or a breach of the governing bodies' rules and processes.
3. The school offers at least one baccalaureate and/or graduate degree program (or equivalent) in business administration, management, or accounting independently through their institution, and not in partnership with another institution(s).
4. At the time of initial accreditation, a majority of in scope degree programs have produced graduates during at least two consecutive years.
5. The school agrees to complete AACSB's Business School Questionnaire modules annually.
6. The application for accreditation must be supported by the chief executive officer and the chief academic officer of the school, regardless of the entity seeking AACSB accreditation.
7. The school agrees to abide by the Guiding Principles contained in the AACSB accreditation standards.

(Not expected to be a significant change for most members. Provides additional guidance for Schools that are considering entering the initial AACSB accreditation process.)



Mission: 'Through proven expertise and success, we are trusted advisors to our international higher education clients, supporting them to make distinctive, lasting and substantial improvements based on recognised, global best practice.'

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Introductory language is updated to reflect the addition of formal accreditation eligibility criteria.

(Clarification only)

STANDARDS 1 - 3: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION

STANDARD 2: PHYSICAL, VIRTUAL, AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- Under **"Basis for Judgment/ 2.3 Financial Resources"** (Standards Document) the wording is updated to reflect the requirement for financial plans to include consideration of both the sufficiency and management of staffing resources.

(Clarification only: no change in interpretation)

STANDARD 3: FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF RESOURCES

FACULTY QUALIFICATION

- The definition (**"Definitions"** in Standards Document) for Scholarly Academic (SA) has been updated to reflect the expectation that SA faculty scholarship portfolios will include some peer-reviewed or editorially reviewed publications closely related to their field of teaching (in addition to any other mission-relevant outputs that might be considered valid).
 - This emphasis on activities related to the faculty member's field of teaching is carried throughout the standards for all faculty qualification categories: SA, PA, SP and IP.
 - Additional guidance is provided in the **Interpretive Guidance** document, including additional examples of activities that might support a scholarly profile.

(Clarification only: no change in interpretation)

DISCIPLINES

AACSB has further clarified some common questions relating to disciplines.

- Under **"Basis for Judgment/ 3.2 Faculty Qualifications"**, AACSB clarifies that *"Where a school maintains generalist degrees (e.g., BBA, General Business, MBA, etc.) with associated concentrations/areas of focus, then areas of concentration/areas of focus should normally be treated like disciplines with respect to meeting ratios"*. A footnote has been added to Sample Table 3.1 to confirm this.
- Within the **Interpretive Guidance** document, AACSB has clarified:
 - Disciplines are expected to be high-level (Management, Accounting, Finance etc) and that the management discipline is often the largest within schools because of the number of potential sub-disciplines (e.g. strategy, risk management etc).

(Clarification only: no change in interpretation)

TABLE 3.1

- The **Interpretive Guidance** document has clarified its list of faculty members to be EXCLUDED from Table 3.1. This guidance continues to exclude
 - faculty teaching on courses that are serviced from outside of the School, but only on the basis that these "are taught from the perspective of a non-business discipline".
 - Teaching assistants and tutors providing that they do not function as the primary instructor of the relevant course.

(Clarification only, though the change could (in theory) impact any school that may have previously taken a more liberal view of exclusions. If in doubt, QED recommends that Schools discuss their interpretation with their mentor or AACSB Staff Liaison.)



STANDARDS 4 - 7: LEARNER SUCCESS

STANDARD 4: CURRICULUM

- In the **Interpretive Guidance**, the section on 'Engagement' has been updated to provide additional examples of typical learner-to-faculty engagement activities (lectures, office hours, personalised feedback etc). and learner-to-learner engagement activities.

(Clarification only)

STANDARD 6: LEARNER PROGRESSION

- **Heading 6.2** in "**Suggested Documentation**" has been corrected to read "*Academic Program Quality and Post-Graduation Success*"

(Minor correction only)

STANDARD 7: TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT

- Under "**Basis for Judgment / 7.3 Faculty Preparedness**" and "**Suggested Documentation / 7.3 Faculty Preparedness**", a faculty member's responsibility to maintain currency in her/his field of expertise has been explicitly extended to include her/his areas of teaching. This is in alignment with the clarifications made to Standard 3 (Faculty Qualification). Schools are now required to describe HOW faculty maintain currency etc in their area of teaching.

(Minor Change: Possible administrative impact, depending on the detail currently retained by schools in relation to faculty development in their specific areas of teaching.)

STANDARDS 8 - 9: THOUGHT LEADERSHIP, ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIETAL IMPACT

STANDARD 8: IMPACT OF SCHOLARSHIP

- A bullet point from each of "**Basis for Judgement / 8.2**" and "**Suggested Documentation / 8.2**" have been moved to the relevant sections of 8.1. Both bullet points are linked to IC outputs, so more appropriate in Section 8.1.
- Under "**Basis for Judgement / 8.2**" (Standards Document), confirmed that any collaborations with stakeholders should contribute to the School's thought leadership reputation.
- An example of the calculation of *percentage of faculty producing ICs* (as required for Table 8.1) has been provided within the **Interpretive Guidance** document.

(Correction and clarification only)

STANDARD 9: ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIETAL IMPACT

- The example of **Optional Table 9.1** in the **Interpretive Guidance** document includes minor updates.
- If a table is used, AACSB suggests that it is used to outline OUTCOMES and IMPACT (not a description of initiatives etc).

(Additional clarification only)

For advice and further details on any of the above, please contact the QED Accreditation Team at info@QEDaccreditation.com.

