



AACSB BUSINESS ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: UPDATES 2023

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 2023 publication, together with an assessment of the significance of the change. The updates reflect clarification and additional explanation. These should not provide any significant change for schools.

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 – particularly to ensure the updates do not highlight any potential internal misunderstanding of AACSB principles and standards.

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</i>	---	---	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1 • 4.3 • 8.1 • 9.1
<i>Some changes: possible administrative impact</i>	---	---	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7.1
<i>Some Changes: possible substantial impact (depending on school)</i>	---	---	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.1
<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.

STANDARDS 1 - 3: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION

STANDARD 3: FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF RESOURCES

- **Clarifying Guidance** (within the Interpretive Guidance Document) for **Discipline and Speciality Field** adds additional clarification to include:
 - For interdisciplinary degrees, the disciplines can be combined for the purposes of AACSB reporting providing that the school doesn't also offer individual programmes in these areas
 - The approach to discipline reporting should be discussed with AACSB accreditation staff and the peer review team.

(Additional clarification only)

STANDARDS 4 - 7: LEARNER SUCCESS

STANDARD 4: CURRICULUM

- **Clarifying Guidance** (within the Interpretive Guidance Document) for **Innovation, Experiential Learning, Lifelong Learning, and Societal Impact** removes the example of overcoming unconscious bias from examples of innovation in pedagogy.

(Additional clarification only)

STANDARD 5: ASSURANCE OF LEARNING

- Within **Heading 5.1 Assurance of Learning Process** in **Basis for Judgement**, additional clarification is provided to re-confirm that schools are required to:
 - include both direct and indirect measures across the overall portfolio of programmes.
 - provide the rationale for choosing direct and/or indirect measures within each programme.

This expectation is reinforced in the **Clarifying Guidance** within the Interpretive Guidance Document
(Additional clarification only: There may be impact for any school that has not fully understood the expectations around direct/indirect measures)

STANDARD 7: TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT

- Under "**Basis for Judgment / 7.1 Teaching Effectiveness**" additional clarification is provided to confirm that "*multiple methods of evaluating teaching*" are expected. i.e. AACSB expects that Schools use a variety of different mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching, rather than relying on a single method.

(Clarification only: However, possible impact for Schools that over-rely on a single measurement of teaching impact across all activities).

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

STANDARD 8: IMPACT OF SCHOLARSHIP



- **Clarifying Guidance** (within the Interpretive Guidance Document) for **Completion of Table 8.1** removes the initial paragraph which set out the intention of Table 8.1 as this unintentionally included examples of initiatives that do not meet the definition of ICs at a faculty level (e.g. “where a department in the school runs regional, national, or international academic conferences or industry/academic colloquiums.”). However, such examples are added to the **Clarifying Guidance** for **Thought Leadership** as they can provide good examples of collective thought leadership activities within a School.

(Correction and clarification only)

STANDARD 9: ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIETAL IMPACT

- **Suggested Documentation for Heading 9.1: Positive Societal Impact:**
 - clarifies that schools are expected to provide an assessment of how effective they've been towards achieving the desired positive societal impact. This requirement continues to recognise that true impact can be a long term initiative, but that Schools must assess and explain/evidence how they're 'on track' to achieve this effectiveness, in line with the School's own strategy and objectives.
 - re-confirms that the use of the UN Societal Development Goals (UN SDGs) as a guiding framework is optional and that the over-riding principle is that Schools identify key areas of focus for societal impact.
- **Optional Table 9.1** has been updated to align with the re-clarification provided. The first column is now headed “Focus Area(s) Chosen by the School” and reference to the UN SDGs (as an example) have been removed. In addition, a row has been added at the base of the table to capture the School's “Assessment of Overall Impact and Discussion of Future Plans”.
- All of these points are re-emphasised in the updated **Clarifying Guidance** (within the Interpretive Guidance Document) for **Sample Tables**. An updated Example Table 9.1 is also provided (in line with the new Table 9.1 format)
- **Clarifying Guidance** (within the Interpretive Guidance Document) for **Progress over Time** includes explicit reference to the additional guidance available in the [AACSB and Societal Impact white paper](#).

(Additional clarification. Minor administrative impact with the changes in the table format)

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