



AACSB BUSINESS ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: UPDATES 2024

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 2024 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](#)
- [Updated 2020 Interpretive Guidance for AACSB Business Accreditation Standards](#)
- [AACSB Summary Table of Key Changes](#)

(Links provided are valid as at 1 July 2024)

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 / changes only linked to transition to a six year accreditation cycle)</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"> • Eligibility Criteria 1 and 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.4 • 3.2 • 8.1
<i>Some changes: possible administrative impact</i>	---	---	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.1 • 5.1
<i>Some Changes: possible substantial impact (depending on school)</i>	---	---	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<i>Substantial Change</i>	---	---	---

GENERAL CHANGES

- In alignment with previous announcement from AACSB, the standards and guidance have been updated to reflect the new six-year cycle (not five year). All references to a five-year accreditation cycle have been updated to six years.
- All changes listed are effective immediately, as they represent clarifications and minor updates.

ACCREDITATION ELIGIBILITY AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- **Criteria 1:** The minimum number of 16 full-time faculty is clarified to exclude visiting faculty. It has also been clarified that not meeting the minimum faculty number can result in a School not being invited to initial accreditation or being recommended for initial accreditation (to the Board of Directors).
- **Criteria 3:** Clarified that the majority of degrees awarded by a school should be at bachelor's level or higher.

(Additional clarification only)

STANDARDS 1 - 3: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND INNOVATION

STANDARD 1: STRATEGIC PLANNING

- **Standard 1.4 Basis for Judgement** now clarifies that the strategic plan must clearly identify "*the school's chosen focus areas(s) for societal impact*" (and not just the strategies).
- The sample *Risk Analysis* (linked to Standard 1.2) in the **Interpretive Guidance** has been updated.

(Additional clarification only)

STANDARD 3: FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF RESOURCES

- It is clarified, within **Definitions**, that SA faculty are normally expected to produce some peer-reviewed publications (previously stated '*peer- or editorial-reviewed*') and that these should be aligned with their faculty duties and the School's mission (in addition to being aligned with their teaching).
- Clarifications have been added to **Definitions** for SP faculty, to confirm that SP faculty are expected to produce '*practice, applied or pedagogical publications*' that link to their field of teaching. Similar to SA guidance, they may also produce publications that link to the wider mission of the School and their faculty role.
 - This is further emphasized in the **Interpretive Guidance** (*Section on Faculty Qualifications / (3) Scholarly Practitioner (SP)*) replacing the previous general bullet point referring to scholarship outcomes in alignment with Standard 8.
- In **Basis for Judgement** for Standard 3.2, the criteria for SA and PA Status confirms that faculty members can be considered SA or PA for six years (rather than five years) – based on the date of conferral of the terminal degree.
- In **Basis for Judgement** for Standard 3.2, the *Discipline and Global Ratio Minimums* guidance has been updated with the addition of 'Special Notes'. These include clarification that:
 - Schools in a re-accreditation cycle are normally expected to meet the 40% ratio for SA, both globally and for all disciplines where a degree (or concentration etc) is offered. However, these schools also have the option to provide alternative evidence for high quality outcomes where the 40% ratio is not attained (such as when a school is driving new, innovative, or interdisciplinary initiatives).



- Schools in initial accreditation are expected to fully meet the 40% SA ratio for all disciplines; both globally and where a degree (or concentration etc) is offered. They will usually be considered out of alignment if they do not meet the 40% ratio for these disciplines (even with additional evidence of high-quality outcomes)
- In **Basis for Judgement** for Standard 3.2, the *Faculty Deployment (Table 3-2)* guidance has been updated to confirm that the requirement to meet the 90% ratio across degree programmes in Table 3.2 is particularly critical for schools in initial accreditation – to demonstrate the appropriate deployment of suitably qualified faculty across degree levels.
- The **Interpretive Guidance Section on Faculty Qualifications / (2) Practice Academic (PA)** includes a cautionary note to say that faculty members holding an administrative role cannot rely on the responsibilities attached to that role for the purposes of maintaining currency: there must be some professional engagement activity.
- The **Interpretive Guidance Section on Faculty Qualifications / (4) Instructional Practitioner (IP)** has been extended to more explicitly include guidance that was previously summarised within the SP section.

(Additional clarification only: There may be impact for any school that has not fully understood the expectations around the definitions and ratios linked to faculty qualification categories)

STANDARDS 4 - 7: LEARNER SUCCESS

STANDARD 4: CURRICULUM

- **Clarifying Guidance** (within the **Interpretive Guidance Document**) notes the need for policies on the responsible use of technology (including policies linked to the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence).

(Additional clarification plus possible administrative impact for Schools that haven't updated their policies)

STANDARD 5: ASSURANCE OF LEARNING

- Additional clarifications and examples have been added to **Definitions** for *Indirect Measures* – including emphasis on the fact that indirect measurements are not based on direct observation of individual performance etc. It is noted that group projects may be considered as indirect measures where performance is measured at the group level – but should be considered as a direct measure where the competency can be assessed at the individual level.
 - This clarification has been continued within the **Interpretive Guidance**, with additional examples of indirect measures provided. This includes clarifying that indirect measures which are not tied to specific competency goals are NOT relevant for the purposes of closing the loop for AoL (with an example provided).
- In **Basis for Judgement** for Standard 5.1, there is an additional bullet point confirming the requirements for schools in the initial accreditation cycle. The key requirements are:
 - A 'robust' assurance of learning system that demonstrates achievement of learning outcomes across the degree portfolio;
 - A well documented system, that includes both direct and indirect measures;
 - Evidence of CURRICULAR improvements arising from the process.
- **Table 5.1** has been updated to include Curricular Improvements only. (Key process improvements should now be discussed within the accreditation report as relevant)
 - The **Interpretive Guidance** has also removed reference to including Process Improvements within Table 5.1 and the sample Table 5.1 has been updated accordingly.
- **Sample Table 5.1** in the **Interpretive Guidance** now includes some additional descriptive detail.

(Additional clarification plus possible administrative impact for Table 5.1 changes. There may be additional impact for any school that has not fully understood the expectations around direct/indirect measures)



STANDARD 7: TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT

- Under **Suggested Documentation 7.2 Support for Teaching Effectiveness**, faculty participation in teaching enhancement initiatives must now be documented for the most recent six year period (i.e. in alignment with the change from a five to six year accreditation cycle).

(Clarification only – in alignment with previously announced change to a six year accreditation cycle).

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

STANDARD 8: IMPACT OF SCHOLARSHIP

- The **Standard** and the **Interpretive Guidance** have been updated to reflect a six-year accreditation cycle (updating references to a six-year portfolio of intellectual contributions).
- **Clarifying Guidance** (within the **Interpretive Guidance Document**) for *Types of Intellectual Contributions* emphasises that all intellectual contributions must be within (or closely related to) the faculty member's discipline or aligned with the School's mission etc. The list of sample intellectual contributions has been updated and condenses, but there is no significant change in meaning.
- **Clarifying Guidance** (within the **Interpretive Guidance Document**) for *Quality of Intellectual Contributions* has a minor update to include number of citations in outlets such as high-quality newspapers or social media.

(Clarification only – including alignment with previously announced change to a six-year accreditation cycle)

STANDARD 9: ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIETAL IMPACT

- The **Basis for Judgement** has been updated to reflect a six-year accreditation cycle (updating references to a six-year portfolio of intellectual contributions).

(Clarification only – including alignment with previously announced change to a six-year accreditation cycle)

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