

## Accreditation: 2010 Update to AACSB Business Accreditation Standards and Processes

On behalf of AACSB International's Accreditation Coordinating Committee (ACC) and the Accreditation Quality Committee (AQC), below is an overview of the changes in AACSB accreditation processes and standards' documents approved by these two committees, respectively. **The changes in the interpretive materials supporting the standards and processes became effective January 31, 2010. However, for schools that are preparing maintenance reports to be filed prior to July 1, 2010, the previous 5th-year maintenance report outline may be used.**

The changes result from ACC and AQC's review of feedback from the peer review teams, accreditation committees, AACSB staff, legal counsel, individual deans, and other representatives from the management education community. They reflect AACSB's commitment to continuous improvement in support of AACSB business and accounting accreditation. The appropriate documents that reflect these changes are available at: [www.aacsb.edu/accreditation](http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation).

### Process Changes:

**1. Elimination of Annual Maintenance Reports:** ACC approved the elimination of the requirement that five annual maintenance reports be submitted in support of maintenance reviews for business and accounting. The *Maintenance of Accreditation Handbook* has been updated to reflect this change.

**2. Revisions to Maintenance Application:** ACC approved changes in the application for business and accounting maintenance reviews adding a requirement that schools/accounting programs provide an update on concerns stated in their last AACSB review and major changes in financial resources, facilities, infrastructures, and deployment of participating/supporting and AQ/PQ faculty; including an assessment of the impact on alignment with AACSB standards.

**3. Revisions to 5th-Year Maintenance Report Outline:** ACC approved revisions to the fifth-year maintenance report outline. The revised outline should be used for business and accounting reviews occurring after July 1, 2010, but earlier adoption is appropriate. The revised outline is included in the updated *Maintenance of Accreditation Handbook*. The 50-page limit exclusive of appendices was retained.

**4. Host School and Peer Review Team Engagement:** ACC directed staff to emphasize in training, seminars, etc. the importance of early, active communications and engagement between peer-review teams and host schools/accounting programs. Early engagement reduces uncertainty, eliminates surprises, and supports a more effective and consultative review and campus visit.

**5. Policy Revisions:** The AACSB Board of Directors approved revisions to AACSB policies on “Conflicts of Interests,” “Appeal Procedures,” and “Complaint Procedures.”

#### **Standards’ Interpretive Material Changes:**

The AQC approved the following changes to interpretive materials supporting selected standards as noted:

**1. Standard 1:** Under “Basis for Judgment,” a new bullet was added under “Guidance for Documentation,” and a new paragraph was added to narrative materials emphasizing the importance for systematic review and documentation of mission fulfillment and appropriateness.

**2. Standard 6:** A new bullet was added to “Basis for Judgment” stating expectations that admission criteria for graduate business programs should normally include, among other requirements, that applicants have or will earn a baccalaureate degree prior to admission to such programs. If exceptions occur, basis for quality must be justified. Bullet 3 under “Guidance for Documentation” was revised to clarify expectations for documentation that student admission criteria are followed.

**3. Standard 9:** Bullet 5 was revised under “Guidance for Documentation” clarifying that Table 9-1 is to be completed for the “most recently completed, normal academic year.” Schools should define their normal academic year format/schedule. Peer-review teams may request additional years, individual terms, as well as by program, location, and/or disciplines. Notes to the tables were revised to reflect this change as well.

**4. Standard 10:** Bullet 4 was revised under “Guidance for Documentation” clarifying that Tables 10-1 and 10-2 are to be completed for the “most recently completed, normal academic year.” Schools should define their normal academic year format/schedule. Peer-review teams may request additional years, individual terms, as well as by program, location, and/or disciplines. Notes to the tables were revised noting this change as well. AQC reaffirmed that the metric “percent of time devoted to mission” is to be used for Tables 10-1 and 10-2 and that the tables should not be prepared based on a metric that only measures teaching activity.

**5. Standard 10:** A paragraph was added to the section entitled “Expectations of the Standard Regarding Maintaining Qualifications,” detailing a non-exhaustive list of possible faculty development/professional activities that may support maintenance of AQ/PQ status. It is noted that schools may have criteria for maintaining AQ/PQ status that are broadly or narrowly defined. The list added to the standard provides only examples of various activities that may be included.

**6. Standard 17 (undergraduate) and 20 (masters programs):** A new bullet under “Basis for Judgment” was added to address expectations for alignment with these respective standards in the case of joint and/or partnership degree programs. For such programs, effective, functioning agreements, replace the expectation that “the majority of business subjects earned toward degree fulfillment is earned at the institution awarding the degree,” but quality and continuous improvement and alignment with AACSB standards across all parts of such programs is expected.

**Summary:**

Your feedback, comments, questions, etc. are most welcomed as AACSB strives to support the most effective, global-accreditation process focused on high quality and continuous improvement. Please send your feedback to [accreditation@aacsb.edu](mailto:accreditation@aacsb.edu). Finally, AACSB sincerely appreciates the outstanding support of the AACSB volunteer network.