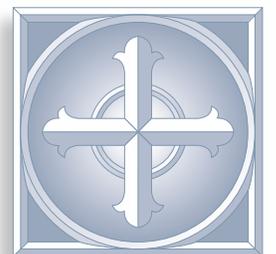
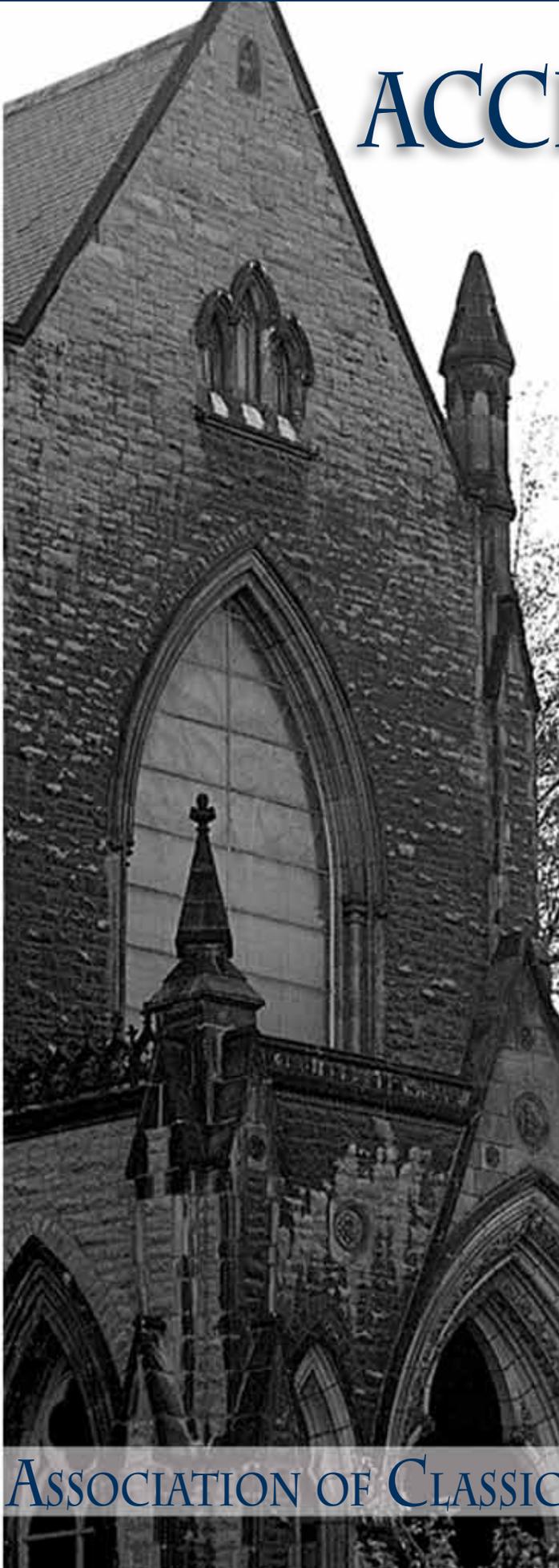


ACCREDITATION STANDARDS



ASSOCIATION OF CLASSICAL & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

SINE DOCTRINA VITA EST QUASI MORTIS IMAGO

ACCS School Accreditation Program

I. Goals and Means of a School Accreditation Program

- A. The goal of the ACCS school accreditation program is to provide objective and recognized standards of quality for those schools desiring to serve Christ through an explicitly classical and Protestant Christian approach to undergraduate education.
- B. To this end, ACCS will establish policies and procedures that safeguard the integrity of the accreditation process.
- C. To this end, ACCS will establish criteria for accreditation that ensure that its accredited schools achieve the following:
 1. have a well-conceived program committed to a classical approach to education in light of a Christian worldview grounded in the Old and New Testament Scriptures;
 2. have sufficient, qualified administrative, teacher, and support staff to achieve its goals;
 3. have sufficient instructional and other facility resources to achieve its goals.

II. Accreditation Components

- A. *Standards.* ACCS has established and implemented these accreditation standards which are consistent with the classical Christian educational mission and philosophy promoted by the Association. These standards are not arbitrary, but are based on valid and reliable indicators of educational excellence. These standards, as well as the entire accreditation process, are intended to be educative for schools seeking accreditation as well as evaluative of their accomplishment, directing schools in a process of development and attainment.

ACCS makes its accreditation standards and procedures available to member schools at no cost, as a benefit of membership. Non-members may purchase a copy of the ACCS accreditation standards. ACCS will make these standards available at no cost to any private accreditation organization in which ACCS seeks membership. ACCS will promptly address any misrepresentation of accredited status by any school whether a member of the Association or not, providing disciplinary or corrective measures as necessary.
- B. *Self-Study.* Each applying school is required to perform a self-study prior to the on-site visit. This study will include input from all members of the school administration and staff. During the self-study, schools will study all standards and requirements, conduct self-evaluations, train personnel, and make necessary changes and adjustments seeking to meet all of the ACCS Conditions of Eligibility and Criteria for Accreditation. Recognition of Accredited Status within ACCS will be deferred until completion of the on-site visit by an Accreditation Committee that will provide a written recommendation to the ACCS Board of Directors. Upon review of the committee's recommendation, the ACCS Board will make a final determination as to whether the school has met all ACCS accreditation requirements. ACCS provides assistance to schools via its consultation program.
- C. *Site Visit.* Although much may be gleaned about a school from the self-evaluation documentation package, an on-site visit is required to affirming all aspects of the school's operation, including, but not limited to, classroom pedagogy, student participation and development, staff relations, parent-teacher relations, financial policies and procedures, board oversight, and community support. ACCS will appoint an Accreditation Committee to make the visit.
- D. *Re-evaluation.* All schools accredited by ACCS must undergo regular accreditation renewals in order to retain their accredited status. Schools that were successfully accredited but fall short of the requirements on subsequent renewal visits may be initially placed in a Probationary Status for a fixed amount of time to allow them to correct discrepancies. ACCS will require annual feedback

from each accredited school that it has reviewed and is still in compliance with the ACCS accreditation standards.

III. Candidate for Accreditation

When an ACCS member school seeks accreditation by ACCS, the Director of Accreditation will review the application and accompanying documentation for completeness. Upon completion of a successful review, the school will be designated as a Candidate for Accreditation, which is a pre-accredited designation assigned to those schools which meet the initial Conditions of Eligibility (see below) and have been accepted for ongoing review toward ACCS school accreditation. Candidates still need to complete a self-study, site visit and be approved by the ACCS Board of Directors to receive an accredited status.

IV. Conditions of Eligibility to become a Candidate for Accreditation

To be considered a Candidate for accreditation, the prospective school must provide the ACCS Executive Director with documentation of the following:

- A. formal action in writing from its board of control indicating its decision to pursue accreditation with ACCS,
- B. a completed ACCS School Accreditation application form plus half of the fee,
- C. an official statement in writing from the school's board reflecting its decision to adhere to the ACCS confession of faith,
- D. a statement, such as a catalogue, which provides a public description of the mission, policies, courses, and requirements of the school,
- E. the school has completed at least four full academic years with enrolled students prior to application for Candidate Status (five completed years will be required for initial accreditation),
- F. the school is governed by a board of at least three members (a husband and a wife serving on the board counting as one member), each of whom holds membership in an evangelical church,
- G. all faculty members meet the school's written requirements for the position they hold, and the school is committed to having them certified by ACCS.
- H. the school must meet the minimum requirements for Christian theology/worldview requirements specified under the Criteria for Accreditation,
- I. the school must have in place grades 1-12 (a school may apply and initiate the process with grades 1-10 in place, but can only receive Accredited Status after it has graduated its first senior class),
- J. and the school must meet the minimum requirements for classical education specified under the Criteria for Accreditation.
- K. the school must provide evidence of its nondiscrimination policy, that is, that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin with regard to student enrollment or staff hiring.

V. Approval as Candidate for Accreditation

- A. When a school applies to become a Candidate for Accreditation, the Director of Accreditation will review all submitted documentation for completeness.
- B. After a successful review of the application and documentation, the Director of Accreditation will vet the school's name to the board requesting that any board member with personal concerns about that school share those concerns in writing with the Director of Accreditation. The written statement should include the reasons for those concerns and which ACCS accreditation standard(s) apply. The information provided must be first-hand knowledge including the date(s) for when the information was applicable, and must be provided to the Director of Accreditation within two weeks of his notice to the board.

- C. As part of the candidacy approval letter, the Director of Accreditation will notify the school of these areas of concern. The information will be made available to the ACCS board and also to the visit committee. The ACCS board should meet within a month, as necessary, to discuss the concerns. The school will be told that the visit committee will investigate the area(s) of concern during their document review and school visit. Comments addressing this area of concern should be expected in the visit committee's draft report to the school and the ACCS board.
- D. The notification to the school is intended to provide the school with the opportunity to provide information relating to the area(s) of concern. As always, the school may provide further information regarding this matter in their written statement provided in response to the visit committee report.

VI. Criteria for Accreditation

Upon being approved as a Candidate for Accreditation by ACCS, a school must meet the criteria for accreditation outlined below before being granted accreditation. A school currently with grades 1-10 applying for accreditation may only be granted a provisional accreditation contingent on a follow-up visit in two years (when it has become a school with grades 1-12).

To be granted ACCS accreditation subsequent to meeting the requirements for approval as a Candidate for Accreditation, a school must demonstrate that it has successfully met the following Criteria for Accreditation and that it can be reasonably expected to continue to achieve such.

- A. *School Goals and Objectives* - The school must show evidence that it is and has been meeting its published school mission and goals, serving the cause of Christ in a way consonant with the distinctives of ACCS.
 - 1. The school must be able to document that it is maintaining its published mission and continues to serve in accord with the ACCS statement of faith.
 - 2. The school must be able to document that its program is meeting its published goals for student achievement and advancement.
 - 3. The school must be able to document general stability with respect to enrollment, financial resources, continuing constituent support for the school mission, administration attrition, and teacher retention.
 - a) The school must disclose data for the past five years in these areas along with an explanation of the trends and what they mean for the school: student enrollment; retention of school administrators; teacher retention rate (year by year).
 - b) The school's financial support must not create an environment where a single donor has the authority to threaten the future operation of the school by withdrawing support. The school must disclose financial support and/or in-kind gifts from its constituency (which may include products and/or services) to the school, as well as all situations where any individual contributes a significant portion of the budgeted school income per year. The school must also accompany these disclosures with an explanation of these financial arrangements and what they mean to the school.
 - 4. The school must have been free of public ethical scandal or have taken appropriate action in resolving the same.
 - 5. The school must provide a financial accountability report verified by an independent accounting source. (NOTE: ACCS does not require an audit. ACCS does require responses to the questions in the Financial Integrity Requirements provided separately.)
 - 6. The school seeks as much as possible to avoid any entanglements with the state (e.g., state funding and accreditation). The school will not be accredited if it accepts voucher funding as defined in policy 7.9.

B. *Academics* - The school must provide adequate classical and Christian curriculum requirements to achieve its mission. The content and goals of the entire curriculum should be challenging and of high quality.

1. The complete school program inclusive of graduation requirements must be well-organized, realistic, and publicized in its entirety.
2. The entire curriculum must be documented in a clear and specific manner within the school's curriculum guide(s).
3. The academic program must require the following for all students:
 - a) for all schools in their elementary academic program, instruction in reading through use of phonics,
 - b) at least four years of Latin or Greek instruction, with at least two years in the dialectic or rhetoric stages,
 - c) for all schools in their secondary education, at least one year each of formal logic and formal rhetoric,
 - d) training in classical and modern Western history and literature,
 - e) training in writing (both prose and poetry), grammar, spelling, and composition,
 - f) training in the Scriptures, to include a well-integrated scriptural understanding of all subjects,
 - g) training in mathematics, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry as a minimum,
 - h) training in general science, biology, chemistry, and an opportunity to take physics,
 - i) an opportunity to take apologetics,
 - j) general instruction and training in the arts and music throughout the Trivium.
4. The academic program will be regularly evaluated by documented, annual administration of an appropriate, nationally recognized, standardized exam.

C. *Governance and Administration* - The school must have established adequate structures and procedures for governance and administration to achieve its mission.

1. The school must have a written constitution and/or bylaws that clearly and comprehensively provide a basis for school administration and governance; lines of authority and areas of responsibility must be explicit.
2. The school must have a board of control that determines policy in the areas of administration, business management, academic affairs, and student life, as evidenced by a single, comprehensive policy manual. The Board shall ensure that it manages conflict of interest issues in its own composition and its oversight of the school.
3. The school must have complete, accurate, legible, and securely maintained records. These are to include board minutes, school personnel files, student files, and administrative reports.
4. The school must have a school board approved policy that provides for the permanent maintenance of all student records in the event that the school must close.
5. The school must have constructed and promulgated biblical and public policies for resolving school conflicts concerning policies, administrators, faculty, and students.
6. The school's head administrator must have a clear job description, obviously act as the liaison between the board and staff, and be sufficiently available to the teachers for support and guidance.
7. The school has and adheres to adequate overall discipline and behavioral standards.
8. The school board has a minimum of a five-year long range plan for the overall improvement of the school.

D. *Faculty and Instructional Resources* - The school must have sufficient faculty, instructional, and facility resources to achieve its mission.

1. The school must demonstrate that each of its faculty meet the school's written requirements for the position(s) that they hold.
2. Teaching methods are to be largely consistent with and clearly applying the *Seven Laws of Teaching* (as described in the book by John Milton Gregory).
3. Instructional methods should evidence an understanding and application of the applicable "tools of learning." That is, grammatical methods should be clearly applied at all levels of the grammar stage, dialectic techniques should be used throughout that level, and rhetoric practically observed in the upper grades.
4. The school must show that its program for assigning teaching responsibilities and student-faculty ratio is consonant with its stated goals.
5. An obvious love and respect for reading and books should be evident throughout the entire school's program. For example, there should be a wide variety of literature available to the students in classroom and/or school libraries.
6. The school must have an established, on-going teacher development program, which is consistent with the ACCS vision, and should include taking advantage of ACCS approved conferences, training, audio/video recordings, and/or materials.
7. The school must meet local health and safety requirements.
8. RENEWAL ONLY–The school must provide a record of the implementation of the school's teacher certification plan and the status of each teacher in that plan.

E. *State Guidelines*

TENNESSEE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION ADDENDUM

Dates: Approved 1/25/14

Objective: To establish an addendum of specific criteria for accreditation of an ACCS member school located in the state of Tennessee to comply with that state's category II school status.

Scope: This policy applies to all ACCS member schools located in the state of Tennessee which are applying for accreditation and wish to be in compliance with that state's minimum requirements to be classified as a category II school.

Guidelines: The following criteria are to be used as minimum acceptable requirements to approve an ACCS school for accreditation under this Tennessee Addendum in addition to the requirements of Policy 5.3.1, the ACCS Accreditation Policy.

1. When schools apply for ACCS accreditation, they must affirm that they are not in violation of any state laws. This statement will include the following:
 - a) Each school shall have a minimum of five days for in-service education per school year.
 - b) Each school shall maintain an operating schedule that includes the minimum number of instructional days and hours required of public schools.
 - c) Each school which provides services to students certified as eligible students with disabilities shall meet all standards of the State Board of Education.
 - d) Each school shall develop and implement a written policy on promotion and retention. The written policy shall be communicated to students and parents.
 - e) Each principal or headmaster shall comply with the requirements regarding reporting the names, ages, and addresses of all pupils in attendance to the superintendent of the public school system in which the student resides.

- f) Each principal or headmaster shall comply with the requirement that each child enrolled in school be vaccinated against disease.
 - g) The maximum enrollments for an individual class shall be specified, shall not be subject to waiver, and shall not exceed the following:
 - Kindergarten through grade 3: 25 students
 - Grade 4: 28 students
 - Grades 5 through 6: 30 students
 - Grades 7 through 12: 35 students
 - h) At least once every school year, each school shall give a nationally standardized achievement test covering the areas of reading, language arts, spelling, math, science, and social science to each pupil in grades 2 through 8 and grade 10; the results must be communicated to teachers and parents and kept on file at the school for one calendar year.
 - i) Each school shall comply with minimum kindergarten age policy.
2. Schools must teach the following courses for the indicated credits:
- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Economics/Government | 1.0 |
| Wellness | 1.0 |
| Physical Education | 0.5 |
| Personal Finance | 0.5 |

TEXAS STATE SCHOOL ACCREDITATION ADDENDUM

Dates: Approved 3/11/04

Objective: To establish additional specific criteria for accreditation of an ACCS member school located in the State of Texas.

Scope: This policy applies to all school members of ACCS in the state of Texas applying for accreditation by the association, and the guidelines are the minimum that a school must attain to be accredited.

Guidelines: The following criteria are to be used as the minimum acceptable requirements to approve an ACCS school for accreditation in the state of Texas in addition to the requirements of Policy 5.3.1.

1. School Involvement. The school seeking accredited status must document that the entire school participated in preparation for the accreditation visit. It is recognized that not everyone will participate to the same degree, but everyone on the school staff must participate.
2. Make-up of an Accreditation Committee. All assigned accreditation committee members must either be a member of the ACCS Board of Directors, the ACCS Executive Director, the Head of School of an ACCS accredited school, or a Head of School from a prospective candidate school for ACCS accreditation. The assigned committee will consist of at least two experienced members and at least one inexperienced member who will be using the visit as a training experience. In addition, at least one party must be a non-policy making member.
3. Training of Accreditation Committee Members.
 - a) All accreditation committee members are required to have read the most current version of the ACCS Accreditation Procedures which will be forwarded to them at least two months prior to the scheduled school visit.
 - b) One of the experienced team members will be assigned responsibility of overseeing the inexperienced committee member and helping instruct him in how and what to look for.

4. Appeals Process.

- a) There will be no change in the current accreditation status of a school pending disposition of appeal.
 - b) The appealing school has the right to a hearing before the appeal body, either the ACCS Board of Directors, or an Executive Committee of the Board assigned for that purpose.
 - c) The ACCS Board of Directors is the final arbiter in assigning ACCS accredited status to ACCS member schools. If a school is being recommended for anything other than accredited status, they may appeal the report and recommendation from the accreditation committee to the ACCS Board of Directors. The school will have 30 days to make their appeal in writing and provide sufficient documentation to substantiate their appeal. This appeal will be forwarded to the ACCS Board via the Executive Director.
 - d) The ACCS Director will review and forward the appeal and supporting materials to the ACCS Board of Directors, with his recommendation.
 - e) The ACCS Board of Directors shall review the appeal and supporting documentation and make a determination on the appeal.
 - f) The ACCS Executive Director shall respond in writing on behalf of the Board of Directors to the Head of the appealing school with the board's final determination. A copy of the final disposition shall be sent to TEPSAC along with a copy of the appeal and the school's supporting documentation.
5. Major Discrepancy. A major discrepancy is defined as the failure of a school to sufficiently meet one or more of the criteria listed in Section E, Criteria for Accreditation.
 6. Participation in TEPSAC. ACCS will actively participate in the governance of TEPSAC, and may do so through designation of a proxy to act on its behalf. The designated proxy does not have the authority to commit either the resources of ACCS or to make any policy binding ACCS and its association members.

VII. Accreditation Procedures

The means of conducting the on-going review of those schools which have formally applied to ACCS for accreditation and have been approved as a Candidate for Accreditation will be in accordance with the following guidelines:

- A. *Self-Study Documentation.* The school applying for accreditation must submit a self-study that specifically documents each of the Criteria for Accreditation listed in Section VI above. This documentation package must be postmarked **no later than one year** from the date of the school's notification of having been approved as a Candidate for Accreditation, and sent to the ACCS Director of Accreditation for initial review and feedback. Failure to do so will result in termination of the school's approval as a Candidate for Accreditation. The documentation package is the school's means to substantiate that it meets all of the **Criteria for Accreditation**. This package must include, in addition to the documentation of the Section VI items required above, a current approved copy of both the school's bylaws and its policy manual. In addition, the documentation package must include examples of student work from each grade, such as routine homework assignments, quizzes and/or exams.
 1. Once any deficiencies noted in the Director of Accreditation's review have been addressed, the school will be directed to send a copy of the documentation package to each member of an Accreditation Committee appointed by the Director of Accreditation. The following time-line and guidance applies:
 2. The Director of Accreditation will request dates for the visit at least four months out to allow

time for identifying the accreditation committee and time for them to review the school's documentation package.

3. Schools must provide all required/requested documentation directly to the visiting committee members at least three months prior to a desired visit. The Director of Accreditation will also provide any comments from his review to the assigned committee.
4. The Committee shall be given one month to read through all material prior to any firm dates or flights being arranged. This will allow time for the committee to evaluate the suitability of a visit to the school based on the documentation review.
5. The committee members shall be required to submit their (individual) comments and recommendations to the Director of Accreditation after reviewing the materials as to whether a visit is warranted or not. If not, then the Director of Accreditation will notify the school with the stated reasons, and allow the school up to six months to address the indicated problems. If a school fails to address the problems, by default, the school must begin the process anew.
6. Once the committee agrees that the school merits a visit, the Director of Accreditation will notify the school to make local arrangements for the visit and have the committee members make their travel arrangements.

B. Accreditation Committee

1. An Accreditation Committee will be appointed by the Director of Accreditation for each school applying for accreditation. The Committee will be composed of three people from among the ACCS Board of Directors (including former ACCS directors who have had experience on an ACCS accreditation committee), the Director of Accreditation, or the Superintendent (or equivalent) of an accredited ACCS school of equivalent or greater enrollment than the school being evaluated. Committee members may not be drawn from personnel attached to the school undergoing the accreditation.
2. When feasible, ACCS may also assign a member from non-accredited school that has been approved as a Candidate for Accreditation. The purpose of this assignment would be to provide training in preparation for the candidate school's subsequent on-site visit. This member must pay for his own expenses, and his participation is strictly observational.
3. All accreditation committee members are required to have read the most current version of the ACCS Accreditation Handbook which will be forwarded to them at least two months prior to the scheduled school visit.
4. One of the experienced team members will be assigned responsibility of overseeing the inexperienced committee members and helping instruct them in how and what to look for.
5. On-site visits by an Accreditation Committee are required for accreditation.
6. The Accreditation Committee is authorized to request additional information from the applying school if that information is essential to the accreditation process. No individual Accreditation Committee member is authorized to request information on his own; only the Accreditation Committee may request such information through the Committee Chair. The Committee Chair is appointed by the Director of Accreditation and will typically be the person on the committee with the most experience with ACCS accreditations.
7. The Accreditation Committee may call on the expertise of qualified persons who are not assigned to the committee to assist them on specific questions relating to the school accreditation if needed. Such persons will be listed in the report and the specific area(s) in which they provided assistance.

C. *Written Report.* The Accreditation Committee will provide a written report and make a recommendation on accreditation to the ACCS Board. A majority decision by the ACCS Board is required for a school to be accredited. The following guidelines will govern the process of accreditation/accreditation renewal by the ACCS Board upon completion of the accreditation/accreditation renewal visit:

1. The Accreditation Committee Chair will meet with the head of school or equivalent to verbally communicate general impressions that will be included in the written report that should be received within three weeks following the visit.
2. The Accreditation Committee will complete a written report within three weeks and send it to the Director of Accreditation for review. Any comments, either commendations or discrepancies, must be documented. The committee must substantiate, by example or illustration, all comments included in the report.
3. The Director of Accreditation will review the written report for compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation.
4. Within one month of the site visit, the Director of Accreditation will send the written report to the school. The school may submit a written response within 30 days that will be attached to the report.
5. The Director of Accreditation will send a copy of the report and the school's written response (if one is sent by the school) to the ACCS Board of Directors.
6. The ACCS Board of Directors will review the written report from the Accreditation Committee and any written response from the school, and will make the determination within 30 days of receipt of the report whether the school will be accredited or not. The ACCS Board may request additional input from the Accreditation Committee, either in writing or verbally. The board determination will be made by a majority vote either in person or via email or phone by individual board members to the Director of Accreditation. Such a decision will be subsequently ratified at the next scheduled board meeting, and entered in the minutes. Any negative vote will require a special board meeting. For administrative purposes, the on-site visit date will constitute the date of accreditation. Extenuating circumstances such as schedules and analysis may delay the process. Administrative delays may not be argued as a reason to overturn a decision not to accredit a school.
7. The Director of Accreditation will report the board's determination to the school along with any germane comments.

D. *General Philosophy.*

1. Notwithstanding all the previously listed items that must be complied with, it is important to realize that not all circumstances and situations can be adequately addressed in specifics in this accreditation policy. Scripture doesn't teach and life is not best lived by a simple set of check-boxes. Wisdom is always the God-given key.
2. It has always been the intent of ACCS to accredit schools in the most meaningful way.
3. It is for this reason that schools seeking accreditation must realize and permit the ACCS accreditors to delve into any matters that seem relevant to them that might not have been specifically listed above. Furthermore, it must be understood that a school seeking accreditation with ACCS may be turned down even though it has met all the criteria at a "technical" level. The failure would be because they did not meet the essence of what is intended by the specific written guidelines. Such a decision would automatically be appealed to the entire ACCS board by the Director of Accreditation and the affected school.

- E. *Accreditation Fees and Expenses.* The fee for the initial accreditation is \$2,000, \$1,000 of which is required with submission of the application for accreditation, and is **non-refundable**. The second half (\$1,000) is due on completion of the accreditation. The fee for school accreditation is separate from the expenses for travel, room and board for the accreditation committee on-site visit which are to be borne by the applying school.
- F. *Denial and Termination.* Adverse decisions regarding the termination or denial of accreditation will be for appropriate and verifiable reasons consistent with the letter and spirit of these standards.
- G. *Appeals Process.*
1. There will be no change in the current accreditation status of a school pending disposition of an appeal.
 2. The appealing school has the right to a hearing before the appeal body, either the ACCS Board of Directors, or an Executive Committee of the Board assigned for that purpose.
 3. The ACCS Board of Directors is the final arbiter in assigning ACCS accredited status to ACCS member schools. If a school is being recommended for anything other than accredited status, they may appeal the report and recommendation from the accreditation committee to the ACCS Board of Directors. The school will have 30 days to make their appeal in writing and provide sufficient documentation to substantiate their appeal. This appeal will be forwarded to the ACCS Board via the Director of Accreditation.
 4. The ACCS Director of Accreditation will review and forward the appeal and supporting materials to the ACCS Board of Directors, with his recommendation.
 5. The ACCS Board of Directors shall review the appeal and supporting documentation and make a determination on the appeal within 30 days or receipt.
 6. The ACCS Director of Accreditation shall respond in writing on behalf of the Board of Directors to the Head of the appealing school with the board's final determination. A copy of the final disposition shall be sent (as required) to the applicable accreditation oversight organization(s) of which ACCS is a member along with a copy of the appeal and the school's supporting documentation.
 7. Any expenses that may arise as a result of the appeal will be borne by the appealing school.
 8. Appeals will not be permitted to schools that fail to undergo a renewal visit at the end of their probation period.
- H. *Accreditation Renewal.* All of the requirements in Sections IV and VI apply for accreditation renewal except as modified by the amplifying guidelines below:
1. Reapplication. Schools holding accredited status **must** reapply within two years following their initial accreditation to maintain this status. Schools may receive renewal accreditation for a period of from two to five years, based on the evaluation of the school by the assigned committee and the decision of the ACCS Board of Directors. At the end of this time, they must re-apply for renewal accreditation again in order to maintain their accredited status. (See section VII.I.6.a below for information on probation.)
 2. Committee size. On-site visits for accreditation renewal following a successful accreditation will consist of at least three members for small schools (one class each grade level) and more for large schools (more than one class at some grade levels). For accreditation renewal visits, it is preferable, if possible, to select committee members who have participated in the initial on-site visit.
 3. Documentation. At least six months prior to an accreditation renewal on-site visit, an accredited school must submit an application for school accreditation renewal as well as its self-study documentation in the same format as its original self-study, following the guidelines in VII.A. *Self-Study Documentation.* (Further detailed guidance is provided in paragraph H. of the

Accreditation Visit Committee Handbook.) A school assigned less than a 4-year accredited status may submit its prior self-study including the appropriate updates since the last visit.

4. Fees. For accreditation renewals, the fee is \$2,000, half (\$1,000) to be paid with the renewal application, and the remainder to be paid following the visit. **The first half is non-refundable** should the school fail to meet its obligation to undergo an on-site visit. The fee for school accreditation renewal is separate from the expenses for transportation, room and board for the accreditation committee on-site visit, which are to be borne by the applying school.
 5. Process. All of the other timelines and procedures listed above in Section VII (**Accreditation Procedures**) relating to the initial accreditation process will also apply to accreditation renewal.
 6. Extensions/probation. ACCS does not grant extensions. If an accredited school is unable to undergo a scheduled renewal visit within a reasonable time frame (no more than a couple of months of its scheduled due date) because of issues at the school, it must notify ACCS in writing and the school will be placed on probation. Possible reasons that might cause an accredited school to delay its accreditation and therefore be placed on probation may include, but are not limited to, the recent loss of the school's head administrator, or the un-replaced loss of an instructor (e.g., the school's Latin teacher). The inability of ACCS to provide a timely visit for any reason will not be held against the school.
 - a) Probation Status automatically places a school on a two year period to correct the existing discrepancy(ies) prior to the renewal visit. If at the end of the probation period, the school does not undergo an on-site accreditation visit, its accredited status will be dropped with no appeal permitted. If a school does have the on-site visit as scheduled at the end of its probationary period, it may have access to an appeal (see paragraph VII.C for information on appeals). Subsequent application for accreditation (following the failure of the school to undergo an on-site visit) will be considered as an initial event, and must be accompanied with a letter documenting the correction of all outstanding discrepancies from the last conducted on-site visit.
 - b) Schools placed on Probation Status as a result of an on-site renewal visit, but with discrepancies that may be corrected without a subsequent on-site visit (e.g., failure of an administrative requirement), may have their status up-graded to "accredited" by the ACCS Director of Accreditation provided the school adequately documents in writing that the discrepancies have been corrected. This upgrading will only be permitted if it is assigned as a part of the school's most recent accreditation renewal report approved by the ACCS Board of Directors. Such upgrades are permissible at any time within the two-year window.
 7. Accreditation Renewal Status. As with accreditation, the ACCS Board will ultimately determine the accreditation renewal status of a school based on the report from the assigned accreditation renewal committee and any documentation submitted by the school in response to the committee's report.
- I. Daycare Certification. ACCS does not certify the daycare operations of member schools undergoing ACCS accreditation. Should a school provide daycare operations, ACCS already has a requirement that a school must be operating in accordance with state laws to become a candidate for ACCS accreditation.

VIII. Accreditation Categories and Determination

After a school has gone through the accreditation visit, it will be assigned an accreditation status by the ACCS Board of Directors. The three categories of accredited status are listed and explained below.

- A. *Provisionally Accredited Status* is an accredited status granted to those schools that have completed their initial self-study and on-site visit but have yet to graduate their first senior class or have discrepancies that must be corrected before they can be granted Accredited Status. Schools assigned Provisionally Accredited status may be granted up to two years (depending upon the nature and difficulty of the discrepancy) to correct all reported discrepancies and may require a subsequent accreditation visit depending on the nature of the discrepancies.
- B. *Accredited Status* is granted to those schools which meet both the initial conditions for eligibility and the criteria for accreditation as determined by the ACCS Board of Directors.
- C. *Probationary Status*. Schools that had been successfully accredited in the past, but on a subsequent accreditation renewal have failed to meet the ACCS accreditation standards will be placed on probationary status for no less than two years and be provided a specific list of discrepancies. If after the minimum two year probationary period the school still fails to meet each of the ACCS accreditation guidelines, the school will have its accreditation status removed by ACCS. The school may reapply for accreditation when it can substantially document that it has corrected all of the outstanding discrepancies, and submits an application for accreditation. The subsequent accreditation process will be considered as though it was a first-time accreditation which would include all fees, expenses and documentation. The above notwithstanding, a school placed on Probationary Status may appeal to the ACCS Board at any time with proof that the issues which resulted in Probationary Status have been corrected.

Accreditation Results	Implications	Accreditation Status	Consequence/Assignment
Major Discrepancy ¹	Will seriously impair the quality of education	Initial Accreditation	Failure or Provisional Accreditation. If Provisional, the school must correct all identified discrepancies within the specified time frame; will likely require another site visit. Candidate for Accreditation status will be retained by a school that has failed accreditation as a result of excessive discrepancies as determined by the ACCS Board. This status will last for up to two years to correct all discrepancies and reschedule another site visit.
Minor Discrepancies ²	Will mildly impair the quality of education	Initial Accreditation	Provisional Accreditation. Must correct all identified discrepancies within specified time frame; may possibly require another site visit
No committee identified discrepancies, but ACCS board identified discrepancy(ies)	May have long-term detrimental impact on the sustained operation of the school.	Initial Accreditation	Provisional Accreditation. Must correct all identified discrepancies within the specified time frame: may possibly require another site visit.
No Discrepancies	None	Initial Accreditation	Assigned accredited status for two years until first renewal visit
Recommendations ³	May help the school's long-term performance	All categories	None

¹ **Major Discrepancy.** A major discrepancy is defined as the failure of a school to meet one of the criteria listed in Section E, **Criteria for Accreditation**.

² **Minor Discrepancy.** A minor discrepancy is defined as the school not adequately meeting one of the criteria listed in Section E, **Criteria for Accreditation**. Should the Accreditation Committee or the Board of Directors determine that the accumulation of minor discrepancies is so numerous that their aggregate seriously impairs the quality of education, the sum total may be designated as a major discrepancy.

³ **Recommendations.** These are suggested changes or improvements that all committee members agree on and that are based on experience and directly related to the ACCS Criteria for Accreditation. Individual committee members may make additional suggestions, but they will not be included as a part of the accreditation report.