

Association of African
Business Schools



THE AABS ACCREDITATION

HANDBOOK AND PROCESS GUIDELINES

www.aabschools.com

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Glossary of Terms

AABS	African Association of Business Schools
AccreSys	AABS Accreditation System
ART	AABS Review Team
EOI	Expression of Interest
SRR	Self-review Report

Introduction

This handbook details the Association of African Business Schools (AABS) accreditation process, procedures and guidelines from the expression of interest through the accreditation process to the post accreditation and re-accreditation phases.

The *AABS Accreditation Handbook and Process Guidelines* should be used in conjunction with the *AABS Accreditation Standards and Criteria Guidelines*, the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines*, information from the AABS website at www.aabschools.com and in liaison with the AABS Accreditation Office at accreditation@aabschools.com.

African business schools operate in diverse contexts and have equally diverse offerings. Therefore, these guidelines are provided to ensure that the AABS accreditation process is a consistent, effective and credible quality assurance process across the diverse African business and management education landscape. It aims to enhance the quality of business and management education provided therein.

AABS Accreditation Overview

The Association of African Business Schools (AABS) was established in 2005 and registered as a non-profit organisation in 2007. The association's aim is to help African business schools improve business and management education in the African continent. It also aims to enhance the relevance and contribution of African business schools to African development through collaboration, capacity building and quality improvement.

The AABS accreditation is aimed at further enhancing this mission by ensuring that African business schools have quality benchmarks, and that they also play effective roles in contributing to inclusive social economic growth in Africa. This is seen through the accreditation's criteria focusing on how the relevance and quality of schools' input into students' learning experiences, result in outcomes that impact on the education sector, the business environment and the broader economic arena.

The AABS accreditation process involves formation of on-going, solid, constructive, and value-adding partnerships between AABS and the accredited schools, as well as those schools working towards accreditation. This requires, from all parties involved, a commitment to a professional and rigorous quality assurance process that promotes high standards of business and management education through continuous improvement and enhancement of quality.

The terms *Institution* or *School* are used interchangeably in these guidelines to refer to the entity applying for the accreditation. This may be a free-standing university, or a business school, or faculty affiliated to a larger university, or any other higher education entity (public or private) that complies with the criteria for AABS membership.

Management of the AABS Accreditation

The Association of African Business Schools (AABS) is the initiator of the AABS accreditation and will manage all its operations.

AABS Board

The AABS Governing Board is the supreme authority of the AABS accreditation. The Board's responsibilities regarding the accreditation include:

- Approve the *AABS Accreditation Handbook and Process Guidelines*, the *AABS Accreditation Standards and Criteria Guidelines*, the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines* and all other documents relating to the AABS accreditation.
- Appoint the AABS Accreditation Committee members and AABS Director of Accreditation.
- Determine the accreditation award decisions and recommendations after reviewing the AABS Review Team's report. This will be done during the regular scheduled board meetings held a minimum of twice a year.
- Handle any appeals related to accreditation decisions, as well as any disputes relating to the accreditation process.
- Ensure that the AABS accreditation remains a relevant and reputable quality assurance process.

AABS Accreditation Committee

The AABS Accreditation Committee is primarily responsible for determining the readiness of a school to subscribe to the AABS accreditation process, and eventually its preparedness for the AABS Review Team's visit.

The AABS Accreditation Committee members, professionals (academic or corporate) with knowledge of different disciplines of business and management education, will be appointed by the Board. They will be sourced from AABS member schools and other institutions affiliated with AABS. Experience in institutional leadership and/or administration will be a key consideration. All committee members will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

The AABS Accreditation Committee's responsibilities include:

- Review the schools' applications for accreditation, and thereafter making recommendations.
- Make constructive recommendations to schools on how to achieve continuous improvement and quality enhancement.
- Review the mid-term accreditation reports submitted by accredited schools.
- Serve in Review Teams for accreditation and re-accreditation visits and select its members accordingly.

AABS Accreditation Office

The AABS Accreditation Office will be managed by a director who will be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the AABS accreditation, in consultation with the AABS Board and the AABS Accreditation Committee. The full details of the responsibilities of the AABS Director of Accreditation are contained in the terms of service contract.

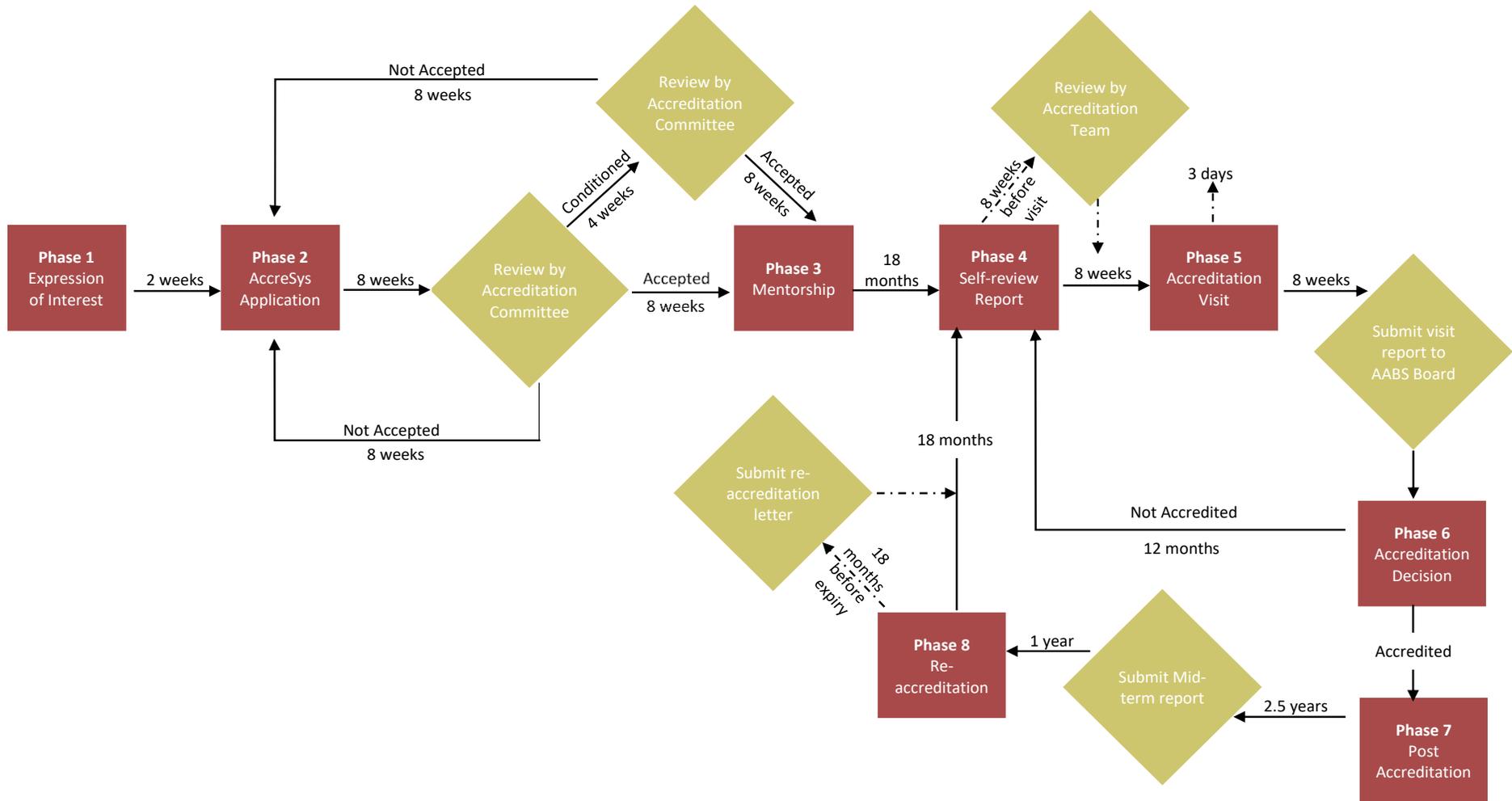
Overview of Process and Timeline

The AABS accreditation process is a voluntary one in which an institution self-evaluates to establish continuous improvement measures. It also allows its programmes and credentials to be evaluated by external parties to affirm that standards of quality are met.

The process begins with the school's consciousness of the quality of its offerings that drives an expression of interest followed by an entry to the process through an application. The consequent self-review with the support of a mentor is a process that takes the school through a critical internal review of its context, leadership, operations and impact on the society. This should highlight its strength and challenges, as well as the interdependence of various units for overall organisational effectiveness.

The AABS Review Team's visit is aimed at confirming internal perceptions of quality through an external review. The review offers an external perspective, and advises on continuous improvements with the aim of raising the standards of business education in Africa.

Accreditation is an affirmation of the holistic institutional standards of excellence, continuous improvement, and meaningful impact on the society in which the school operates. It continues into the post accreditation and re-accreditation phases. In summary, the AABS accreditation process progresses through eight phases as shown in the process flow below. Each phase is explained in details in the following sections.



AABS Accreditation Process and Timeline

Phase 1: Expression of Interest

The accreditation process begins with a basic expression of interest (EOI) about the AABS accreditation. The enquiry is made by filling out the AABS Accreditation Letter of Interest at any time of the year. The form should be submitted to the Accreditation Office at accreditation@aabschools.com. The Accreditation Office will acknowledge the enquiry and offer advice as required within two weeks of receiving it.

Initial Principles

Interested institutions must satisfy the following AABS initial principles:

1. Membership

The institution must be a member of the Association of African Business schools (AABS) and must remain a member throughout the process and thereafter to retain the accreditation status.

2. Legal status

The institution must be duly approved and licensed by the relevant national regulatory body and present documentary evidence thereof.

3. Core activities

The institution must be engaged in the provision of business and management education (a minimum of one academic program is required) and must have at least three cohorts for one program graduated by the submission date of the AccreSys Application.

The following instructions provide further assistance in completing and submitting the Letter of Interest:

- Complete the Letter of Interest template available on the AABS website at www.aabschools.com by replacing the instruction boxes with information that pertains to the institution.
- Documentation of legal status is required and has to be attached to the form.
- The Letter of Interest must be signed by the head of the institution and must be officially stamped.
- Signed and stamped letter along with attachment(s) should be sent via email to accreditation@aabschools.com.

Phase 2: Application

Core Principles

Schools who pass the initial stage and would like to formally apply to the AABS accreditation must satisfy the following core principles:

1. Autonomy

The institution has a practical authority over its portfolio (including programmes and research) with a reasonable financial independence in relation to the parent institution, if any.

2. Sustainability

The institution's operations are sustainable through a rooted vision, mission, and strategy. It has a clear key decision-making body and a clear governance structure which guarantees reasonable chances to achieve its short and long-term goals. The institution enjoys a reasonable level of financial sustainability.

3. Facilities

The institution has proper educational facilities through its main campus with up-to-date learning tools and classroom technologies.

4. Recognitions and Influence

The institution has a distinctive national standing within its own context with viable formal links/partnerships with employers and other external stakeholders. Regional and/or International recognitions and/or accreditations are an asset.

5. Relevance to the African Context and its Impact

The institutions' offerings and overall approach to management education must be relevant to the African context and have an impact on the institution's local, regional, and/or continental context through different areas.

A school will assess itself against the core principles, acquire information about the AABS accreditation process and determine its readiness to subscribe to the process by reading the *AABS Accreditation Standards and Criteria Guidelines*. If ready, the school will submit a formal application in electronic form to the AABS Accreditation Office at accreditation@aabschools.com. The application form is available on the AABS website at www.aabschools.com. Schools may either apply using the word document or via the automated application available online.

The application form as well as supporting documents should be in English or have an accompanying set translated in English. The application form must be submitted within eight weeks from officially being invited to enter the accreditation process. The official application submission must also be accompanied by proof of payment of the accreditation application fees. Instructions on paying the fees will be sent to schools through the Accreditation Office.

The AABS Accreditation Committee will, within eight weeks of receiving the application, assess if the school meets the core principles, review the application and determine if the school qualifies to start the formal AABS accreditation process. The Accreditation Office will then communicate to the school in an official letter.

Decision Types

- **Accepted:** Institutions who meet all of the five application core principles are accepted to enter the AABS accreditation process.
- **Conditioned:** Institutions who meet four out of the five application core principles are initially accepted pending they provide more evidence of the principle which they do not meet within four weeks of decision notice.
- **Not Accepted:** Institutions who do not meet at least two out of the five application core principles are provided with recommendations to meet the principles and are given another chance to reapply, free of charge.

Should the final outcome be “not accepted,” the rationale supporting the decision must be included in the letter. A school may appeal against the decision within one month of receiving the letter by referring to *Annexure 1: Appeal and Dispute Resolution Policy* in the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines*, or otherwise it may submit a fresh application not earlier than two months since receiving the letter. A favourable application decision outcome must not be interpreted as a prediction of a favourable accreditation process outcome.

The school must continue to meet the core principles throughout the accreditation process and post accreditation period. Should there be a change in the status after the application decision, the school is obliged to inform the AABS Accreditation Office immediately. The following instructions provide further assistance in completing and submitting the application form:

- The application form should not exceed 15 pages. Schools should use font Times New Roman size 11, non-italic and non-bold, when completing the application.
- The application form is available on the AABS website at www.aabschools.com.
- The application form must be signed by the head of the institution and must be officially stamped.; if using the automated application, no need for this step.
- Signed and stamped application along with required attachments should be sent via email to accreditation@aabschools.com.

Phase 3: Mentorship

Institutions who have passed the application stage are assigned a mentor until the submission of their self-review report. The mentor will be appointed by the Accreditation Office in consultation with the school to be mentored. Such a mentor will be a dean/director/associate dean or equivalent from another school/institution with a similar mission or offers similar programmes with the school being accredited. The mentor may also be a senior person with extensive experience in the education sector. The school may suggest a list of suitable mentors but it must refer to *Annexure 2: Conflicts of Interest Policy* in the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines*. The process of appointing a mentor may take up to eight weeks.

Once a mentor has been appointed, the AABS Accreditation Office will confirm the agreement in writing to both the mentor and the school. The signed agreement contract will be submitted to and kept at the Accreditation Office.

The school should adopt the mentor as a guide and source of advice, be sensitive and considerate of their time and therefore schedule and adequately prepare for visits. The mentor must be conversant with the *AABS Accreditation Handbook and Process Guidelines* and the *AABS Accreditation Standards and Criteria Guidelines* in order to guide the school. The mentoring will be developmental, that is, geared towards stimulating continuous improvement and constructive gap closure to enhance quality.

The mentor will work with the school during the self-review period. The agreed upon mentorship will conclude with the official submission of the self-review report. The duration of the mentorship shall not exceed 18 months. No compensation is offered to the mentor either by AABS or by the school, but the school shall cover costs associated with the mentor's visit(s), and any reimbursements should be processed no later than four weeks after a visit. Refer to *Annexure 3: Expenses and Travel Policy* for further information located in the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines*.

Once a mentor has been appointed, institutions are expected to:

- Adopt the mentor as a guide and source of advice, be sensitive and considerate of their time.
- Make contact and schedule at least one visit of the mentor to the applying institution. It is strongly recommended to have a first visit of the mentor to the mentored institution as soon as the mentoring phase starts.
- Make realistic assessments of the progress in meeting the AABS accreditation standards before communicating with the mentor.

Accordingly, institutions assigned a mentor are responsible for:

- Report on progress of the self-review report to the mentor on a regular basis.
- Give written feedback to the AABS Accreditation Office regarding the commitment of the appointed mentor and the value they gained from the mentoring process when submitting the self-review report.
- Cover costs associated with the mentor's visit(s) and any reimbursements should be processed not later than one month after a visit.

Institutions who do not wish to be assigned a mentor should inform the AABS Accreditation Office in writing within one week from receipt of the official application decision letter. The Accreditation Office will send institutions opting out helpful information to aid them in their self-evaluation process.

Phase 4: Self-review Report (SRR)

As soon as a mentor is appointed, schools are required to use the *AABS Accreditation Standards and Criteria Guidelines* to enable them to draw and initiate a self-evaluation schedule on the basis of which the self-review report will be written.

AABS recommends that the school appoints an accreditation project leader if it hasn't already done so. The appointed person will be responsible for coordinating the self-evaluation process, the self-review report writing, and the AABS Review Team's visit. The person is also the point of contact through whom AABS may direct questions relating to the self-evaluation process and report. The appointed leader will, within two months of the application acceptance decision, advise the mentor (or the Accreditation Office for institution opting out from having an assigned mentor) of the school's schedule of its self-evaluation process.

Self-evaluation involves a rigorous, thorough, institution-wide self-assessment, which is initiated and carried out based on the provided *AABS Accreditation Standards and Criteria Guidelines*. This is the most critical and value-adding stage of the accreditation process. It will enable the school to critically evaluate itself, thus highlighting its strengths, capabilities, challenges and opportunities for improvement.

In order to add value and gain ownership, the self-evaluation process should involve as many people as possible, and certainly all the key players in the school. The school should expect some aspects of the process to reveal challenging shortcomings or require changes that may provoke resistance. Wide involvement will also ensure that the process becomes a learning tool through which searching questions will be asked, a holistic view of the school will be gained and the interdependence of the school's activities will be understood.

The practice of continuous self-evaluation will help the school, use feedback to set and realise its improvement measures more quickly, to remain relevant.

The self-evaluation process and report preparation must be completed within 18-months of a mentor being appointed. The SRR should be carefully compiled at the end of the exercise. Omission of vital information may result in the rejection of the report and will jeopardise a school's chance of accreditation.

The SRR should be submitted via email as PDF and word files, along with proof of payment of the Accreditation fees (as detailed in the *AABS Accreditation Fees Structure* available on the AABS website at www.aabschools.com) to the Review Team cc'ing the AABS Accreditation Office eight weeks prior to the scheduled accreditation visit. If the SRR is not received eight weeks prior to scheduled review date, AABS reserves the right to cancel and reschedule the accreditation visit at the expense of the applying institution.

Hard copies of the report and supporting documents should be received by the Review Team and AABS Accreditation Office seven weeks prior to the scheduled accreditation visit. Institutions are responsible for ensuring that the reports reach every member of the Review Team and the AABS Accreditation Office. All associated costs are to be covered by the institutions.

The report should be in English, must be clear and concise, and must follow the outline as provided in *Annexure 4: Self-review Report Outline* available in the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines*.

In addition, the following requirements should be adhered to when producing the self-review report:

- The report should not exceed 100 to 150 pages maximum; excluding annexes.
- Schools should use font Times New Roman size 11, non-italic and non-bold, single spaced paragraphs.
- Margins should not be less than 1” each.
- All pages should include bottom right page numbers.
- Report and supporting documents must be written and provided in English.

Institutions should also note that:

- Sincere commitment to quality enhancement and continuous improvement are required in the accreditation process. The school must therefore be comfortable with embracing a constructively critical and professional quality assurance process that requires commitment of resources and likely change in the institution.
- The process requires honesty in providing accurate data and information in the self-review report, as well as identifying areas requiring improvement and even acknowledging those areas missing entirely.
- The commitment means taking responsibility for the self-evaluation process including report writing and submission within the required time frame.
- Advice may be sought from the AABS Accreditation Office at any time during the self-evaluation process.
- Deliberate misrepresentation of information provides adequate grounds for considering the school ineligible for accreditation.

If the mentor or the institution identify gaps that need closure, either entity will advise the AABS Accreditation Office of how much additional time will be required to close such gaps and complete the self-evaluation, in order to have a reasonable chance of getting accredited. The extended period should not exceed 12 months. If the SRR is not completed by 30 months, institutions will need to reapply to the AccreSys by resubmitting a new application.

Phase 5: Accreditation Visit

AABS Review Team

The selection of the AABS Review Team (ART) commences at least seven months before anticipated scheduled visit. As per *Annexure 5: Accreditation Visit Plan Timeline*, available in the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines*, and prior to identifying the ART members, institutions are required to propose three dates for the accreditation visit by communicating them to the AABS Accreditation Office. The duration of the visit is three days with a maximum of five days/four nights stay per each review team member given they attend all meetings as required (more on the requirements of the visit agenda to be discussed in the following section). It is essential that the AABS Review Team interacts with some faculty, students and other stakeholders to validate the contents of the reports. This implies that the visit must be planned for a period the school is in full academic session. It is also mandatory that all visits start on the second day of the week; usually a Tuesday.

As soon as a date has been confirmed, the process of selecting the ART members begins which may take up to eight weeks. The Accreditation Committee will work with the Accreditation Office to eliminate candidates who might pose a conflict of interest as per *Annexure 2: Conflicts of Interest Policy* available in the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines*. ART will be composed of three members as follows:

- Chair: current dean or previous dean. The team leader is responsible for managing the whole team and assigning tasks as appropriate. Accreditation Committee members may serve as chairs.
- Academic representative: senior faculty with intensive experience in administration.
- Corporate representative: a member of the corporate community with intensive experience in academic settings.

The selected team will declare any conflict of interest with the school to be visited to ensure that there is no bias in the evaluation.

The ART will carefully study and evaluate the school's SRR in order to address key issues in the evaluation. Some of these key issues include:

- If the report covers adequately all aspects of the *AABS Accreditation Standards and Criteria Guidelines*.
- If further information is required.
- If the report is sufficiently self-critical and analytical.
- The main issues to be addressed during the ART's visit.
- The need for additional, more specific documents to be present at the workstation.

The role of the ART involves a commitment to providing objective feedback and recommendations to the school. The team, therefore, should have clear objectives of the accreditation visit, among which should include:

- To validate the information in the self-review report, supporting documents, and documents presented in the workstation to assess if the school meets the AABS standards and criteria for accreditation.
- To offer suggestions regarding possible continuous improvement and enhancement of quality to close the identified gaps.
- To gather information to report on the experience and evaluation of the accreditation process.

Evaluation of the school will be based on:

- The submitted self-review report.
- Evaluation of supporting documents presented during the visit.
- Interviews and observations made during the visit.
- Documents made available in the workstation.

The AABS Review Team will assess the school's activities and overall quality of education offered in line with the AABS accreditation standards through the interactions, interviews and observation.

Should the school have multiple campuses, on-site evaluations on all campuses may be carried out, randomly, to verify that the same level of quality is offered at each site.

In the event that some of the documents to be validated are written in a language other than English, or that communication is required with stakeholders in a language other than English, the school shall provide interpreters to work with the AABS Review Team.

The school should be ready to justify the representations made in the SRR to the AABS Review Team, clarify any issues of concern and be as honest and open as possible. The AABS Review Team may make suggestions on how to deal with specific issues, but will as much as possible allow the school's representatives identify the solutions. The Team may, however, provide advice where necessary for the appropriate measures towards quality improvement.

The AABS Review Team will share its views and concerns to the host director/dean/or equivalent at the conclusion of the visit. This last meeting should provide the AABS Review Team with an opportunity to encourage the school, provide constructive feedback and create a positive climate so that even negative feedback is well received. The school may provide clarifications or appropriate responses to the views shared by the AABS Review Team.

Visit Logistics

Travel Arrangements

All travel, accommodation and logistics will be organised by the school. When arranging for the ART's visit, institutions should refer to *Annexure 3: Expenses and Travel Policy* available in the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines*. The accommodation should be of a reasonable standard and located in close proximity to the school. The Accreditation Office will ensure that a clear itinerary is set and agreed with the school's appointed liaison prior to the visit. This should enable the school make the necessary arrangements, including setting up a workstation for the AABS Review Team, and making appointments with all required representatives of the school's units.

Setting up the Agenda

Accreditation visit agendas must adhere to the following:

- Must clearly indicate the time of each meeting, names and titles of all participants, and subject of meeting.
- Institutions to select participants who are responsible for each corresponding standard
- Each participant is expected to attend no more than two meetings during the whole visit (excluding dinners and the concluding meeting) unless otherwise noted. Institutions to provide justification pending approval.
- The ART is by default included in all meetings and activities mentioned below unless otherwise noted. No need to re-write their names unless noted.

A detailed template and more on the requirements are available in *Annexure 6: Accreditation Visit Agenda Template* in the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines*. Final accreditation visit agenda must be sent to ART and Accreditation Office one week before scheduled visit.

Workstation

The school is expected to set up a workstation where the ART will be based during the accreditation visit within a reasonable distance from where scheduled meetings are to be held. Institutional documents and materials presented in support of the self-review report will be examined in this workstation. A detailed list of supporting documents is available in *Annexure 7: Supporting Documents Checklist* in the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines*. Some interviews with selected participants may also be conducted here as declared necessary by the ART.

The workstation should be sufficiently spacious and be equipped with the necessary stationary and furniture to layout and examine a wide variety of documents, and to hold interviews. The room should also be equipped with a computer, a printer, and internet access (Wi-Fi). The workstation should be kept free from disturbance for the duration of the ART's visit.

Phase 6: Accreditation Decision

Once an accreditation visit is concluded, the AABS Review Team will then compile a report within three weeks of the visit. The report should be comprehensive enough to provide a holistic evaluation of the school, a basis on which the final recommendation for accreditation will be made, and also provide guidance to the school on potential areas for improvement. The report must therefore be written with careful thought and critical comments worded appropriately, so as to give constructive feedback. The AABS Review Team's report will also give an indication of:

- How well the self-review report fairly represented the reality in the school.
- The commitment, witnessed by the ART, to continuous improvement and delivery of quality education.

The AABS Accreditation Office will send a copy of the ART's report to the school to check for factual errors. The school may not amend or alter any recommendations or proposals put forward by the ART. The school will have approximately two weeks to respond back with any changes, if necessary.

The Accreditation Office will make note of all changes and finalise the report. Once finalised, the Accreditation Office will forward the final report to the AABS Board for the accreditation award decision. A copy of the final report will also be sent to the school. In all cases, the report is confidential and is to be used by the school internally for purposes of continuous improvement. Therefore, the contents must not be shared with external parties or publicly.

The AABS Board is responsible for the accreditation decision. The Board will review the final accreditation report and decide on the accreditation decision based on their assessment of the report. Particular attention will be paid to the school's commitment to continuous improvement and overall quality, in line with the AABS accreditation standards and criteria. The decision will be taken during the regular scheduled board meetings of which there are at least two in a year.

Accreditation will be awarded for five years.

The AABS Board's decision will be one of the following:

- Award of the AABS accreditation after approval of the AABS Review Team's report, and due satisfaction with the quality of education offered, in line with the AABS accreditation standards and criteria. Accredited institutions are required to immediately report on changes in governance, structures, programmes, and any strategic changes that alters the scope of the institution. Failing to report to the AABS Accreditation Office will result in withdrawing the accreditation award consequently.
- Non-award of the AABS Accreditation due to:
 - An "unsatisfactory report" from the AABS Review Team, stating lack of evidence to support the SRR that the school meets the AABS accreditation standards, with serious gaps having been identified.
 - Low commitment of the school to meet the AABS accreditation standards and strive towards continuous improvement. Specific issues of concern will be outlined in the communication of this decision.

The AABS Board will communicate the accreditation decision taken along with recommendations to address areas of concern to the school in writing.

Should the AABS accreditation be awarded, it will be officially announced at the next annual AABS Connect conference, and an official certificate presented to the school's representative. Communication of successful accreditation will duly authorise the school to use the AABS accreditation logo on the school's stationery, website and for other promotional purposes.

Due recognition will be given to accredited schools through a circular from the AABS Board, to all AABS members and affiliate institutions. Schools will also be encouraged to issue press releases to the media in their regions. The school will be added to the list of AABS accredited schools on the AABS website.

A school that was not awarded the AABS accreditation may reapply for accreditation, as soon as it meets the recommendations made by the Board and the AABS Review Team. The school will also need to submit a revised SRR. This may, however, only be done after at least 12 months from when the accreditation decision was taken.

An appeal contending a "non-award" decision must be communicated in writing to the AABS Board, within two months of receiving the accreditation decision following the policy in *Annexure 1: Appeal and Dispute Resolution Policy* in the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines*.

Accreditation fees and other costs incurred by a school towards accreditation are non-refundable, regardless of the accreditation decision taken.

Phase 7: Post Accreditation

In attaining the AABS accreditation, a school commits to maintaining and continuously improving its standards to align with those of the AABS accreditation standards and criteria. A review of the progress in continuous improvement efforts is therefore imperative.

An AABS accredited school will, therefore, set up new continuous improvement goals and measures for the five-year accreditation period according to the recommendations. Progress in meeting these goals will be among the subjects of the school's mid-term report, to be submitted two years six months after the accreditation award.

Mid-term Report

The mid-term report is aimed at advising the AABS Accreditation Committee and Accreditation Office of the progress made in further developing the business school, in line with the continuous improvement measures, set during the AABS Review Team's visit, and officially re-affirmed by the AABS Board in the accreditation award letter. The report should follow the format in *Annexure 8: Mid-term Report Outline*, available in the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines*, and should among other things:

- Mention any critical changes in the school's internal and external operating context that may impact the school's activities and contents of the SRR.
- Detail the progress made in attaining the set continuous improvement and enhancement of quality measures since the accreditation award. Outcomes achieved should be outlined, and where the set objectives have not been met, details should be given including obstacles encountered and the revised plans going forward.
- Report any new emergent opportunities for improvement that were not previously identified.
- Report any changes which have taken place in the school as a result of the AABS accreditation process including changes in the processes of delivering quality education, learning inputs, setting of objectives, output, impact and any other notable change.

The report should be submitted to the Accreditation Office exactly two years six months post the formal accreditation decision announcement. Failure to submit the mid-term report is an indication of the school's lack of commitment to continuous improvement, in line with the spirit and intent of the AABS accreditation standards. This may, therefore, at the discretion of the AABS Board, lead to revocation of the AABS Accreditation, and will certainly jeopardise any future AABS Accreditation.

Phase 8: Re-Accreditation

The AABS Accreditation will be awarded for five years, after which the accreditation will expire. A school may apply for re-accreditation.

A school that wishes to be re-accredited must submit the re-accreditation letter in electronic format, at least 18 months before expiry of the current accreditation. The letter must be accompanied by proof of payment of re-accreditation letter fees. Schools should refer to *Annexure 9: Re-accreditation Letter Template*, available in the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines* for the letter template. The re-accreditation process will then follow the stages of the initial accreditation from Phase 4.

The following instructions provide further assistance in completing and submitting the Re-accreditation letter:

- Complete the re-accreditation letter template available in the *AABS Accreditation Policies and Outlines* by replacing the instruction boxes with information that pertains to the institution.
- The re-accreditation letter must be signed by the head of the institution and must be officially stamped.
- Signed and stamped letter should be sent via email to accreditation@aabschools.com.

The Accreditation Office will acknowledge the letter and offer advice as required within two weeks of receiving it.

Loss of Accreditation

If a school fails to apply for re-accreditation, the AABS accreditation status will automatically cease on expiry of the four-year award period. A school will also lose the AABS accreditation status in the event of its:

- Ceasing to meet the AABS initial and core principles.
- Ceasing to be an AABS member.
- Decommissioning or deregistration by the relevant national regulatory authorities.
- Failure to submit the mid-term report.

The Chair of the AABS Board will advise the school of the loss of accreditation in writing. The letter should state that AABS no longer guarantees the school's continuous adherence to the AABS accreditation standards. Therefore, the school is not allowed to use or display the AABS accreditation logo in any form.