**Prior to the Visit**

In order to maximize the time spent during the first mentor visit, many mentors find it helpful for the school to prepare certain materials in advance. In particular, the mentor may request that the school prepare a gap analysis relative to their alignment with each of the nine standards. To do this the school will need to have engaged with the standards and interpretive guidance before the visit. It is a good idea for the school to send the gap analysis to the mentor a few weeks in advance of the visit.

**The Visit**

*Structure:*

During the first mentor visit, key groups of people will work with the mentor to go through the gap analysis. The agenda may be organized based on several key areas of the standards and process:

* guiding principles, scope;
* strategic management and innovation;
* learner success;
* thought leadership, engagement and societal impact;
* feedback on gaps overall and by standard;
* writing the initial self-evaluation report (iSER) and next steps.

At each session, the mentor should clarify the intent of each standard and examples of evidence to provide in the iSER. Adequate time should be built in for Q&A between the school and mentor.

*Session participation:*

Each session will include the relevant group of people from the school and should involve individuals beyond the core accreditation team. Generally, each meeting should involve no more than six-eight individuals to preserve the effectiveness of the visit. A meeting with the president and chief academic officer of the institution (e.g. President, Provost, Vice Chancellor, etc.) should be arranged at some point during the visit

*Outcome:*

The goal of the visit is for the school to have an understanding of the standards and know what steps are required to make progress on the iSER. The mentor will keep notes on what s/he will provide as feedback at the end of the visit. This feedback will include what the school needs to work on overall and for each standard. The mentor will also advise the school of accreditation resources and learning, and development opportunities based on his/her observations about the breadth and depth of knowledge of the standards and accreditation process at the school. The mentor will complete the mentor visit report template and share this with the school and AACSB staff after the visit.

**Sample Schedule:**

Day 1

*Arrive and settle in*

*Dinner*

Focus on:

* Getting to know the senior team at the school and key leaders of the accreditation effort
* Getting clarity on the structure of the university and school
* Provide an overview of AACSB, its history, relevance, accreditation, etc
* Outline the role of mentor, how mentor and school will work together, what they should expect of the mentor and what the mentor will expect of them

Day 2

*Facilities (45 min)*

* Tour of school and university
* Tour key teaching and faculty spaces

*Guiding Principles and Scope (90 min)*

* Overview of the school – history, programs, faculty composition, etc
* Checking alignment with guiding principles, unit and scope issues and partnership programs
* Provide clarity on accreditation steps, role of IAC, peer review process, etc

*Strategic Management and Innovation (90 min)*

* S1: Strategy/mission
* S2: Resources
* S3: Faculty and Staff

*Learner Success (90 min)*

* S4: Curriculum
* S5: Assurance of Learning (AoL)

*Dinner*

* Opportunity to recap and discuss what happened in the day
* Outline issues/questions where more information is needed for day 3
* Potential opportunity to meet some of the university leadership and/or alumni and key external stakeholders.

Day 3

*Learner Success - continued (60 min)*

* S6: Learner progression
* S7: Teaching effectiveness

*Thought leadership, Engagement and Innovation (60 mins)*

* S8: Impact of scholarship
* S9: Engagement and societal impact

*Working time (60 mins)*

* Time for the mentor to review notes and prepare for feedback session

*Feedback (30 min)*

* Overview and detail on areas covered
* Standard by standard feedback on gaps, further work and issues to explore further

*iSER and next steps (60 min)*

* Overview of iSER
  + Explanation on how to prepare and write the report, picking up from feedback areas where further work is required before writing the iSER. This may involve the school sending the mentor another gap analysis based on the discussion in the previous two days and mentor feedback before starting the iSER
* Agree on process for providing feedback as iSER is developed
* Agree on timelines
* Additional time for Q&A

*Depart for the airport*

Important guidelines:

Schools are required to host an onsite visit by the mentor. However, in limited cases, for contextual reasons, a school is unable to host the onsite visit (for example, due to travel restrictions placed on the region). The school should inform the mentor and the AACSB accreditation staff liaison as early as possible. With AACSB’s acknowledgment, the mentor and school may plan for a virtual visit instead. There are two options available for a visit that is conducted virtually:

1. Complete virtual visit, ideally within the first year (*sample virtual visit schedule found under Mentor Resources/Mentor Visit Documentation* [*here*](https://www.aacsb.edu/about-us/volunteer/mentors)). The mentor has to submit the mentor visit report after the visit and within the first year;

or

1. Conduct a series of virtual meetings over time. In this case, the virtual meetings should be aligned with sessions covered in a typical visit schedule. Ideally, the school and mentor should cover these critical aspects of a visit within the first eight months of the mentor assignment: gap analysis of 2020 Standards, review if the school adheres to the Guiding Principles, review the school’s scope of accreditation, and mentor guidance on the iSER*.*

Completing the mentor visit in the first year of a school’s initial accreditation process is recommended in order to allow the school sufficient time to work on and complete the iSER. While schools have up to two years to submit the iSER, aiming to submit the iSER earlier in the first year is a recommended approach.