



NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
Commission on International Education

Policies and Procedures

Approved September 2023

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
Commission on International Education

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Activity of the Commission

The **NEASC Commission on International Education**, on behalf of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, shall have overall responsibility for matters which relate to accreditation of institutions served by our mission.

The Commission's scope of responsibility extends to the following actions:

- Award of Candidacy for Accreditation
- Denial, deferral, or termination of Candidacy for Accreditation
- Award of Initial Accreditation
- Deferral of Initial Accreditation
- Denial of Initial Accreditation
- Granting of Continued Accreditation
- Deferral of Continued Accreditation
- Placement of school on Probation or Warning
- Termination of Accreditation

Additionally, in consultation with the Director, Commission Members will:

- hear and discuss reports provided by the Director and/or other NEASC staff members
- review reports submitted on behalf of NEASC by visitors and visiting teams
- make decisions with respect to a school's accredited status
- develop, review and revise Commission Policies
- participate in discussions about the Commission's strategic direction
- participate in training and development workshops
- participate in and/or lead at least one Accreditation visit per school year

Commission Members

The membership of each Commission shall be drawn from and be representative of the following groups:

- A. Administrators from Members Schools
- B. Teaching personnel from Members Schools
- C. Other individuals approved by the Board of Trustees

No fewer than 12 and no more 20 Members shall serve on the Commission. Commission Members shall represent, through past or current expertise and experience, the American and international schools accredited by NEASC. Each Commission shall have Members from several of six New England states as well as diverse representation from the regions served by the Commission. In addition, each Commission shall

have at least one public member who has not been an active full-time educator for the previous one year and who is not currently employed full time with a Member School.

Commission Members may be proposed by the Chair of the Commission, the Director of the Commission, the NEASC President/CEO, or by other Commission Members. The appointment of Commission Members requires the joint consent of the Chair of the Commission, the Director of the Commission, the NEASC President/CEO, and the Board of Trustees.

Commission Members are appointed for a term of three years. They may serve no more than two consecutive terms but may be re-appointed after the expiration of at least one year. No person may serve more than six consecutive years as a Commission member. This restriction may be waived for up to a maximum of four years for a Commissioner Member serving as chair or vice chair of a Commission.

In any year in which more than 40% of a Commission membership has terms expiring the Commission shall create varying terms in such a way as to restore a rotation system in which no more than 40% of the terms expire in one year.

A Commission Member who is absent for more than two Commission meetings in one year may be removed from serving the rest of the Member's term.

Vacancies

A vacancy on a Commission may be filled by the Commission concerned, subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees. A successor filling such vacancy shall begin a three-year term.

Commission Officers

Each Commission shall elect its own Chair and may elect a Chair-Elect/Immediate Past Chair from among its Commission members, subject to the term limitations in the section above.

Duties of the Chair of the Commission

The Chair shall be elected for a two-year term by the members of the Commission. Election of the Chair is subject to confirmation by the NEASC Board of Trustees. The Chair shall automatically serve as a Commission Member for at least one year (as defined in the NEASC Bylaws) immediately following the expiration of the two-year term.

The Chair's duties are to:

- prepare with the commission staff the agenda for commission meetings
- preside over commission meetings
- present the Chair's report at commission meetings
- represent the commission, together with the Director of the Commission, at meetings of the NEASC Board of Trustees

Duties of the Chair-Elect/Immediate Past Chair of the Commission

A Chair-Elect shall be elected to serve a one-year term coterminous with the second year of the Chair's two-year term. The Chair-Elect will serve as the Immediate Past Chair for one year at the end of their two-year term as Chair. The Chair-Elect or the Immediate Past Chair shall succeed to the office of Chair in the event of a vacancy or act as Chair in the event of an absence.

Removal

Any Commission Member may be removed from office by the Board of Trustees at any time, with or without cause, by a vote of a majority of the Trustees. In the event that a Commission Member is removed, the Commission may not re-elect the removed Member. Any Commission Member may be suspended by the Board's Executive Committee at any time, with or without cause, by a majority vote of such committee. Such removal/suspension shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the person so removed/suspended. Appointment as an officer or agent shall not of itself create contract rights.

Commission Meetings

The Commission shall hold meetings at least three times a year. Such meetings are attended by Commission Members, Association officers and staff, and invited guests.

Quorum

At any meeting of the Commission in which official actions are taken, the presence of a majority of Commission Members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Manner of Acting

The act of the majority of the Commission Members presents at a meeting at which a quorum is present when the vote is taken shall be the act of the Commission, unless the Act or the NEASC Bylaws requires a greater percentage. Should a quorum not be present, a lesser number may adjourn the meeting to reconvene at another time.

Virtual Conference Meeting

Commission Members may participate in a regular or special meeting by, or conduct the meeting using, any means of communication by which all Commission Members participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. A Commission Member participating in a meeting by this means is deemed to be present in person at the meeting.

Conflict of Interest

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges expects that Members of its Commissions will perform their duties in good faith and in the best interests of the Association. Similarly, it is expected that Commission Members will exercise good judgment in their private activities that may in any way reflect upon or affect the Association. Commission Members have an obligation to avoid activities, agreements, business investments or interests, or other situations that could be construed as either in conflict with the interests of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges or as an interference with their duty to serve the Association to the best of their ability.

Commission Members hold a unique responsibility within NEASC as they uphold NEASC Standards of Accreditation with our membership. Commission members must be mindful of personal and professional relationships with schools that might impair or appear to impair objectivity. At any Commission meeting if a Member believes he or she may have a potential conflict on a given matter, the Member should cite the agenda item and recuse himself or herself prior to any consideration by the Commission on the matter.

The NEASC Conflict of Interest policies applies to all Commission Members. An annual disclosure form will be required of all Commission Members and new Members will complete their first disclosure form within two months of their appointment.

Policies and Procedures for Schools

Ethical Practices

Schools accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges are expected to operate in the public interest and in accordance with ethical practices with respect to the rights, responsibilities, health, and safety of all students, faculty, administrators, board members, and all others associated with the school.

School Membership

School seeking membership in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges agree to the following before beginning the accreditation process:

- commit to meeting established standards
- commit to a process of self-evaluation, peer review, and on-going systematic improvement, utilizing NEASC Standards
- be willing to host a preliminary visit to assess the school's readiness for the self-study process leading to accreditation
- be able to host a visiting team appointed by NEASC so as to ensure peer review
- have basic guiding documents (faculty handbook, student handbook, written curriculum, employment contracts, staff evaluation procedures, governing board policies, and job descriptions)
- upon application, and later upon request, submit an independent audit, current budget, and most recent management letter in English
- commit to acting within the spirits of the ideals and principles enunciated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- be willing to release faculty members and other personnel to serve on visiting teams for accreditation visits to other similar schools

For further information on pursuing or maintaining NEASC Accreditation (i.e., Membership) through the Commission on International Education, please contact cie@neasc.org.

The Accreditation Journey

The journey to accreditation for first-time schools entails several phases. For details, please see our Overview of Pathways.

Please note that, while NEASC enjoys collaborative relationships with other agencies with whom we conduct accreditation visits and share protocols, NEASC reserves the right to make all accreditation-related decisions independently and to communicate these decisions independently to schools in accordance with NEASC Policies and Procedures.

The Application Phase

To apply, schools must request an application from NEASC, after which NEASC may conduct an initial interview before allowing the school to apply. Schools interested in accreditation by NEASC must:

- commit to a process of self-evaluation, peer review, and ongoing systematic improvement, utilizing NEASC's Accreditation Standards
- use English as a primary language of instruction and communication throughout the school
- demonstrate their commitment to internationalism
- provide a curriculum which in content, design, implementation, and assessment reflects best practices in international education
- prepare students to be able to transfer to similar schools worldwide or, upon graduation, to enter colleges, universities, or other institutions of higher learning where English is a primary language of instruction
- demonstrate a commitment to meeting the Foundation Standards and have sufficient supporting documentation
- demonstrate financial stability, transparency, and good business practice, and submit an independent audit report and current budget
- have at least two years of successful operating history
- be willing to release faculty members and other personnel to serve on visiting teams for accreditation visits to other similar school
- promptly pay required dues and fees, including the cost of travel, lodging and meals for visiting teams or individual visitors, in accordance with the schedule established by NEASC

The cost of travel, lodging and meals for visiting teams or individual visitors shall be borne by the evaluated school.

After NEASC has reviewed a completed application, the school will be informed that, either:

- the application is accepted, in which case the school can proceed to the Foundation Standards Phase
- **or** the application is deferred, pending submission of additional clarification and/or documentation
- **or** the application is rejected

Please note that in some cases, the application process may require additional steps (such as an Exploratory Phase) for schools in certain regional contexts and countries.

The Foundation Standards Phase

Once an application is approved, the school will be asked to complete a Foundation Standards Report and then to host a Foundation Standards Visit. If the Visit is successful, an applicant school will be considered “eligible” for NEASC Accreditation. Following a successful Visit and through consultation with the school, NEASC will determine the school’s pathway to NEASC Accreditation.

The Preparatory Phase

After a successful Foundation Standards phase, an applicant school achieves Eligibility, and typically enters the Candidacy phase, requiring the school to complete a Preparatory Report and to host a Preparatory Visit by NEASC peer reviewers that will launch the 12+ month Internal Reflection. A successful Preparatory Visit leads to the status of NEASC Candidate. The school will receive a NEASC Candidate logo for display and will begin paying Annual Dues. (Prior to receiving the NEASC Candidate logo, no school may display any NEASC logo or other representations of being a NEASC Candidate or Member school.)

Candidate status may lapse if a school fails to submit their Internal Reflection report within 2 ½ years of having attained Candidate status.

Candidacy status means that an institution:

- may continue on a pathway towards initial accreditation
- must submit the Annual Update
- is assessed regular annual dues
- may attend NEASC events, subject to registration fees
- benefits from NEASC services at membership rates
- may display the NEASC Candidate logo
- will be listed on the NEASC website as a Candidate school

Schools already accredited by NEASC enter the Preparatory Phase about four years after their last External Review Visit. For such schools, the Preparatory Phase requires submission of both a Preparatory Report and a Foundation Standards Report. The Preparatory Visit for such schools entails review and assessment of both the Foundation Standards Report and the Preparatory Report. Assuming a successful Preparatory Visit, a NEASC-accredited school maintains its accredited status until the status decision that follows the External Review Visit.

The Internal Reflection / External Review Phase

Following a 12+ month Internal Reflection, schools host the External Review Visit by a team of peer reviewers whose report is submitted to NEASC. While the Report by peer reviewers will include a confidential recommendation on the school’s accreditation status, the Commission alone determines the visit outcome

from among the following options:

A. Award of Accreditation or Re-Accreditation (i.e., Membership)

B. Award of Accreditation or Re-Accreditation with Qualifications

In cases where the Team feels that certain elements of the 4 Cs or the Learning Principles or Major Learning Plans must be addressed immediately or within a given period. A Follow-Up Visit by one or two NEASC representatives may be recommended under such circumstances. Likewise, if there are shortcomings in the Foundation Standards and these shortcomings require more immediate attention by the school.

C. Defer/Postpone Accreditation or Re-Accreditation

In cases where the school falls seriously short in certain specific areas – whether related to Foundation Standards, Learning Principles, the 4 C's, or Major Learning Plans – and which the Team feels could be satisfactorily addressed within a specified time. A Follow-Up Visit will take place in such a case.

D. Withhold/Deny Accreditation or Re-Accreditation

In cases when the school falls significantly short of alignment with the Foundation Standards, Learning Principles, 4 Cs, and/or Major Learning Plans, and has shortcomings of a serious nature.

Membership means that an institution:

- is assessed regular annual dues
- must submit an Annual Update
- may attend NEASC events, subject to registration fees
- benefits from NEASC services at membership rates
- may display the NEASC logo as an accredited school
- will be listed on the NEASC website as an accredited school

Accreditation shall be and shall continue only until the Commission's consideration of the school's next report.

A school's initial accreditation shall become effective on the day the Commission votes to approve the award of accreditation. A school's accreditation (Member) status is awarded to the school for a finite period of time. Schools are awarded continuing accreditation each time the Commission considers the school's next report, or sooner if conditions warrant. A school requesting an extension of their Accreditation and/or a delay of a required report or visit must submit the request, in writing, to the Commission Director.

The Transfer/Add Process (previously Policy 1.6)

Schools accredited by another NEASC recognized regional or international accrediting association and wishing to seek accreditation with NEASC may achieve NEASC Accreditation through an expedited process. After requesting such consideration, the school must:

- submit a complete application as a new NEASC school
- provide written confirmation that the school is in good standing and is not on probation or similar status, or provide contrary justification for the adverse action

- provide NEASC with the most recent external assessment report
- agree to host a Foundation Standards Visit that will lead to a recommendation to the Commission regarding the school's request
- agree not to maintain or seek accreditation with any other US accreditor while accredited by NEASC

If accreditation is recommended and granted, the school remains in NEASC Accredited status for the duration of the previous association's accrediting cycle, or until NEASC determines that a visit is warranted. The next visit after achieving NEASC Accreditation via the Transfer Phase (Policy 1.6) is the Preparatory Visit.

Withdrawal / Termination

If a school chooses to withdraw from NEASC Accreditation or if its accreditation is terminated by NEASC, membership in NEASC automatically ceases. Schools that have withdrawn or who's accredited, or candidate status has been terminated must immediately remove any reference to NEASC membership or accreditation status from their website and publications and may not use the NEASC logo in any printed or digital materials.

Reports

The prime concern of a visiting team is to assess the quality and impact of the school's educational program in support of the school's philosophy and in alignment with NEASC Standards and Principles. Neither the visit report nor any of its subsections are to be interpreted as an evaluation of any individual's performance, but rather as a professional appraisal of the school as it appeared to the visitors.

All evaluation reports shall remain the property of NEASC.

Special reports and/or special visits by NEASC representatives, prompted by serious concerns related to accreditation or substantive changes within the school, may be requested of member schools at any time deemed necessary.

Distribution, Use, and Scope of Evaluation Reports

Visitors and teams must not share draft versions of the report which they prepare for NEASC consideration with the school.

Once reviewed by the Commission and sent to the head of school, the distribution of the report to the school community is the responsibility of the head of school.

Annual Update

Candidate and Member schools are required to submit an Annual Update noting school enrollment; various demographic information; updates to Foundation Standards, including any substantive changes not previously reported; progress on Plans as presented in the most recent team visit; as well as information relative to any Special Issues that may be pending. Failure to submit a required report or other documents may be cause for NEASC to recommend an adverse action.

New Element

NEASC recognizes that international schools may undergo major, sometimes significant, structural changes. Accredited member schools may thus decide to add a "New Element". Typical examples include a new offering (e.g., Early Childhood, IB Diploma Program) or new grade levels/year groups on an existing campus, a new campus at another location, an online/blended program added to an existing brick-and-mortar school or the addition of a High School Diploma option which a school may seek to have specifically included within their accreditation status.

Schools wishing to add a New Element must complete a New Element Report to assess the impact on learning and alignment with Foundation Standards. A special visit may be required before the New Element is considered part of the school's accredited status.

Adverse Actions

Probation and Warning

If NEASC determines that a member or candidate school does not meet NEASC Standards and expectations, it may place the school on warning or on probation depending on the extent of the concerns as judged by the Commission, stipulating that it address its recommendations, refrain from certain activities, or initiate corrective actions within a specified period of time.

During a probationary period, the school retains its candidate or accredited status. If, at the end of the probationary period (generally no longer than one year at the most), the school has not made reasonable progress to resolve the cause of its probation, NEASC may choose to terminate the school's candidacy or accreditation. A school on Probation will have an asterisk on their school listing on the NEASC website.

Public Disclosure

NEASC shall publish the following information on its website and in other publications of the Association:

- name and location of accredited and candidate schools
- date of initial accreditation or attainment of candidate status
- grades in school
- head of school
- probationary status (noted with an asterisk, if appropriate)

Denial of Initial Accreditation or Termination of Continued Accreditation Status

A school's journey towards accreditation or a school's ongoing accreditation status may be adversely affected (including termination) for failure to meet any of the following conditions:

- comply with the Commission expectations and policies
- meet candidacy and/or membership criteria
- comply with the established accreditation process and cycle
- submit a required report, including the Annual Update
- adequately address or resolve in a timely fashion special issues identified by NEASC
- undertake and submit an institutional Internal Reflection within 24 months of a successful Preparatory Visit
- submit an additional element or substantive change form (if required)
- pay established dues or fees in a timely fashion

Please note that other acts or omissions deemed in violation of the spirit of NEASC Accreditation may also subject a school to adverse actions.

A school whose accreditation or candidacy has been denied or terminated may apply for reconsideration after no less than one year, after which the Commission will determine if, and on what conditions, the school may restart the accreditation process.

The above does not preempt a school's right to appeal a decision to deny initial or continuing accreditation.

Termination / Withdrawal

If a school chooses to withdraw from NEASC Accreditation or if its accreditation or candidacy is denied or terminated by NEASC, affiliation with NEASC immediately ceases, unless otherwise specified in writing by NEASC.

Schools that have withdrawn or whose accreditation journey has been terminated by NEASC:

- must immediately remove any reference to NEASC membership or status from their website and publications
- may not use the NEASC logo in any printed or digital materials

For information on Appeal of Adverse Actions, please visit the NEASC website at neasc.org/policies.

NEASC Policies and Bylaws

You may view the following documents on the NEASC website at www.neasc.org/policies:

- Appeal of Adverse Action
- Bylaws of the Association
- Child Protection Requirements for Schools
- GDPR Privacy Statement
- NEASC affiliated institutions: feedback, concerns, complaints
- Privacy Statement
- Release of Information by NEASC
- Release of Information by Schools
- Volunteer Policy
- Website Terms and Conditions

NEASC Membership

There shall be three classes of Membership: accredited schools, programs, and other legal entities approved by the Board. Entities and programs eligible for membership in the association shall be those entities and programs approved by the respective Commission or the Board as the case may be. The Board shall announce the names of newly approved Members at the next regular or special meeting of the Association.

About us

NEASC Mission Statement

NEASC partners with schools to assess, support, and promote high quality education for all students through accreditation, professional assistance, and pursuit of best practices.

Commission on International Education Statement

The NEASC Commission on International Education evaluates, accredits, and supports international educational institutions and programs from early childhood through secondary school in accordance with standards of best educational practice. The Commission leads educational discourse and action, is a catalyst for innovation, and advocates for ethical conduct in education.

We support our mission by:

- developing Standards, Principles, and Indicators that are aligned with best educational practice and validated by research
- supporting member institutions committed to self-reflection, critical review, and continuous improvement
- promoting transformative approaches to education
- modeling our Mission by inviting peer review and externally moderated evaluation
- initiates and participates in future-oriented educational forums and discussions
- developing joint projects, accreditation protocols, and services in collaboration with other NEASC Commissions as well as other international organizations whose missions and programs align with our values and goals

Resources

Accreditation resources are available on our website at www.neasc.org/international

Contact us

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