



NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.
COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION



LEARNING
INTRODUCTION

CONTENTS

ACE - Transformative Accreditation	1 - 2
ACE - The Conceptual Model	3
ACE - The Learning Eco-System	4
ACE - Foundation Standards	5
ACE - Learning Principles	6
ACE - The Design Principles	7
ACE - The Phases	8 - 17
ACE - Significant Additional Features; Contacts	18
APPENDICES	
1 - Sample Foundation Standard Template	19
2 - Sample Learning Principle Template	20 - 21
3 - ACE (Internal Reflection) Portal	22
4 - Sample Annual Foundation Standards Report	23 - 24
5 - ACE Accreditation Timelines	25
6 - Brief Glossary of Key ACE Terms	26 - 27

ACE — Transformative Accreditation

ACE introduces a fundamentally different approach to accreditation.

Why? Our concept of ‘learning’ – what ‘it looks like’, how it is nurtured or hindered, where and how it occurs, and what it means to be a learning-focused organization – has significantly changed thanks to social, economic, and technological shifts and dramatic new insights and understandings provided by brain research.

Yet, despite many efforts at reforming and reinventing the place we call ‘school’, education has made little progress in liberating itself from a 19th century factory model designed to produce mass literacy – and a compliant work force. For the most part ‘school’ continues to be a place where learning is equated with purely academic outcomes, content mastery, and uniformity of process and practice. ‘Learning’ remains largely de-personalized, is often confused with high stakes test results, and does not equip our children with the understandings, aptitudes, dispositions, values, and competencies needed to address the pressing challenges of our times.

Therefore, ACE aims to transform rather than ‘improve’ schools by reshaping accreditation into an instrument that facilitates systemic change. ACE challenges the familiar language and ‘grammar’ of schooling and encourages ‘schools’ to become learning communities guided by a razor-sharp vision of learning.

ACE asks learning communities to focus on learner impacts rather than outputs and to identify the evidence required to validate desired Impacts. ACE aims to change the place called ‘school’ into an “interactive museum of learning opportunities” (Yong Zhao), envisioned and sustained by a community that shares and acts upon a common, explicit understanding of learning.

ACE meets schools where they are: ACE serves, recognizes, and supports schools no matter whether they are just beginning their journey towards transformation or are already well advanced in their understanding of what a true learning community should look like.

ACE aims to transform rather than ‘improve’ schools by reshaping accreditation into an instrument that facilitates systemic change.

Learning Observation

While documentation (curriculum, policies, plans, procedures) serves basic operational necessities, ACE prioritizes observation of learning and teaching over voluminous documentation that may or may not reflect what actually happens in practice. With ACE, the learning community concentrates its energy on understanding and embedding effective principles of learning in all aspects of its operations.

Learning Impacts

ACE’s conceptual shift moves accreditation from an input/output-oriented model to a learning eco-system, which looks for Impact of learning on the learner. Impact is not synonymous with results or examination scores. Impact does not mistake teacher ‘behaviors’ for evidence of Impact on the learner, and “programs” are not evidence of Impact (they are, in fact, “outputs”). Impact measures the extent to which a learning community has achieved aspirations and goals articulated in its Mission and its conceptual understanding of learning.

Adaptive Evaluation

ACE Accreditation mirrors what we know about effective learner assessment: one size does not fit all. With ACE, accreditation cycles with identical requirements at identical “checkpoints” are a thing of the past. ACE Learning adapts to and takes into account the specific needs of a learning community. A closer, more supportive relationship between the accrediting body and the Learning Community, based on synchronous as well as asynchronous interactions, is forged as a result.

Professional Assessment

The ACE model also extends to the composition of External Review Teams. Smaller, learning-focused External Review Visits require a cadre of highly qualified and well-trained professionals and peers who can be held accountable for their work. Thus, ACE Accreditation requires a new set of skills on the part of the team members: they become “ethnographers”, “anthropologists” and qualitative researchers as they seek to understand, interpret, and assess a community’s learning eco-system and culture.



ACE — The Conceptual Model

The ACE acronym represents the three domains of its interdependent and inter-related ‘Learning Eco-System’: Learning **Architecture**, Learning **Culture**, and Learning **Ecology**. The underlying metaphor is that of a house: designed by thoughtful architecture, enlivened by the vibrant culture of its inhabitants, and its identity also defined by its placement in space and time.

ACE is formative in design, firmly focused on school transformation in all areas and guided by an enlightened and communally shared understanding of learning. The ACE process supports schools on a journey of evolving from a traditional ‘school’ with a safe, secure, predictable and sustainable environment into a thriving learning community in which learners have voice and choice and in which evidence of Impact is gathered systematically and thoughtfully. In a true learning community all stakeholders – students, teachers, parents, leaders, Board members – are ‘learners’.

The ACE Accreditation protocol encompasses two distinct parts: **five Foundation Standards** and **ten Learning Principles**. As the term implies, the ACE Foundation Standards constitute the basic building blocks necessary for a school to function and ensure that fundamental operational requirements are satisfied. While the Learning Principles embrace a *transformative* approach designed to change ‘schools’ into reflective learning communities, the Foundation Standards represent the *transactional* relationships, structures, policies and systems without which a learning community cannot exist. As ‘schools’ chart their progress from transactional structures and organizations to communities focused on what research tells us about effective learning, they transform from ‘schools’ (i.e., ‘places’) into ‘learning communities’ (i.e., learning eco-systems) shaped by overarching learning design principles.

ACE Phases

The ACE Accreditation process consists of three phases:

Phase 1: Application	Application (1a) Foundations Review (1b – visit)
Phase 2: Candidacy	Learning Principles Review (2a – visit) Internal Reflection (2b)
Phase 3: Evaluation	External Review (3 – visit)

Once a learning community has been accredited through ACE, subsequent accreditation cycles encompass Phases 2 and 3 only; however, all NEASC/CIE-accredited institutions must submit annual reports, validating that they continue to be aligned with ACE Foundation Standards. ACE is based on a 5-Year Cycle (for timelines see Appendix 5. Except for the initial Application, school and Visitor reports are prepared and submitted on the web-based ACE Portal to which schools receive access after their Application has been accepted.

ACE — The Learning Eco-System

Architecture of Learning

defines what learners learn, why they learn it, how they learn it, how learning is assessed and communicated, to what extent learners are able to choose their own learning, and how the learning community knows that it has achieved the desired impact on the learner. In an environment characterized by a shared understanding and language of learning, learners demonstrate qualities of mind and heart that allow them to become responsible and successful citizens. An effective learning community fosters creative and critical thinking, performance, action, and entrepreneurship. In such a community learning and creating, thinking, doing, and ‘making’ are valued equally.

Learning Principles Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 focus on a community's Learning Architecture

Culture of Learning

defines the learning community’s beliefs about the conditions that underpin effective learning, the norms and core values to which it adheres, and the impact leadership, governance, and staff have on the learning community’s sustainability and evolution. Learning culture represents the statutory as well as unspoken agreements woven into a fabric that creates community, sustains purpose and defines direction. Transformational learning communities have designed mechanisms that support intentional and systemic reflection, research, and future-oriented thinking.

Learning Principles Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 focus on a community's Learning Culture

Ecology of Learning

defines the physical and social/emotional ‘space’ in which learning occurs. It encompasses the nature of relationships, interactions, and communication within the learning community that sustain its values and norms. An effective learning ecology supports and is aligned with the architecture and culture of learning. Its principles are indispensable to the achievement of the purpose for which the learning community exists. Such communities also recognize that effective learning is not necessarily a function of fixed spaces, times, or forms.

Learning Principles Nos. 9 and 10 focus on a community's Learning Ecology

ACE — Foundation Standards

ACE Foundation Standards are the “non-negotiables” schools wishing to obtain NEASC/CIE Accreditation must meet. At the *Application-Foundation Review* stage of the ACE process at least three of the five Standards must be substantially met and implemented, with reasonable and achievable plans in place to meet the remaining two in order to qualify for *Eligibility*. Unless a school meets these minimum requirements, the accreditation process will not proceed until deficiencies have been remedied and another visit has been conducted to verify improvements. Thus, the Foundation Standards serve as *gatekeepers of Eligibility* for Accreditation.

NEASC/CIE reserves the right to schedule Special Visits and/or require a school to submit a Special Report if it deems that circumstances warrant it. Failure to meet Foundation Standards may lead to withdrawal of accreditation.

LEARNING STRUCTURE	The school has in place clear statements that express a definition of learning and a set of learning principles and objectives that shape and drive its programs and practices. A curriculum articulating learning outcomes, expected teaching practices, and principles of assessment exists.
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	The school has in place a clear governance and leadership structure with defined roles and responsibilities, and a faculty and staff qualified for the roles to which they are assigned. Expectations defined in policy are carried out and observed in practice. Mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness and functionality of the school’s organizational structures have been developed.
HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY	The learning environment is healthy, safe, and secure for all members of the school community. Effective and well-established policies and procedures exist and are acted upon to protect children and adults alike.
FINANCE, FACILITIES AND RESOURCES	The school has in place policies, practices, and procedures that ensure financial health and economic sustainability. The principles governing financial management are designed to provide the resources (in personnel, equipment, and facilities) required to support the school’s learning concept and objectives. The school facilities are fit for purpose.
ETHICAL PRACTICE	The school has well-established, transparent policies and practices in place to ensure that employees, learners, and parents are treated fairly, equitably, and ethically.

ACE —Learning Principles

1. LEARNING GOALS	<p>Learners demonstrate understandings, competencies, knowledge, dispositions, and values that will allow them to become responsible and successful citizens.</p>
2. DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING	<p>Learning encompasses creative, moral, social, experiential and entrepreneurial dimensions.</p>
3. ASSESSMENT FOR, OF, AND AS LEARNING	<p>Assessment measures the effect of learning on the learner. Assessment for, of and as learning includes qualitative as well as quantitative criteria.</p>
4. LEARNING PERSPECTIVES	<p>Meaningful learning is extended when learners explore the unfamiliar, consider a range of perspectives, and take informed risks. Mistakes are seen as opportunities for learning.</p>
5. LEARNER ENGAGEMENT AND AUTONOMY	<p>Learners are engaged with and inspired by their learning. They have autonomy over their learning and make informed choices, supported by teachers acting as coaches and mentors.</p>
6. RESEARCH AND REFLECTION ON LEARNING	<p>Research, reflection, and future design-oriented thinking are valued and acted upon by the community of learners.</p>
7. INCLUSIVENESS OF LEARNING	<p>The learning community embraces a culture of inclusiveness.</p>
8. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING	<p>Governance, leadership, and management support, embody, and promote the organization’s intended Learning Impacts, norms and values.</p>
9. LEARNING SPACE AND TIME	<p>The design of learning spaces and the structuring of learning time are driven and shaped by the learning community’s intended Learning Impacts.</p>
10. LEARNING COMMUNITY	<p>Respectful, healthy, ethical relationships and interactions create a true sense of community. Communication is honest and transparent. Community values are clearly stated, actively lived, and define a distinct, sustained identity.</p>

1 – 4 Learning Architecture; 5 – 8 Learning Culture; 9 – 10 Learning Ecology

ACE — The Design Principles

ACE directs a learning community's attention to essential principles of effective, appropriate, and personalized learning.

ACE...

- Adopts a **5-Year Cycle**, consisting of both adaptive and fixed Phases.
- Contains **10 Learning Principles** and **5 Foundation Standards**.
- Defines **Learning Impacts** for each of the Learning Principles (with an option for learning communities to propose additional Impacts).
- Poses **Guiding Questions** to help direct thoughtful reflection. The Guiding Questions are intended to serve as 'conversation starters'.
- Introduces a **Transformational Learning Continuum** with rubrics describing what each Learning Principle 'looks like' at the 'thinking about it', 'working on it' and 'living it' stage, and inviting learning communities to ask 'What if?' as they embark on embracing truly transformative and innovative practices.
- Incorporates a **Bank of Representative Practices** at each continuum stage to create an interconnected global network of professional learning communities.
- Asks a learning community to reflect on **Future Design** (*Where do we want to be?*) and **Current Reality** (*Where are we now?*).
- Culminates in insights gained through the **Internal Reflection** process and distilled into a few major initiatives that are expected to make the greatest difference to how learners experience learning in their community.
- Assesses a learning community in terms of its **Conceptual Understanding** of effective learning, its **Commitment** to the process, its **Competency** to close the gap between current reality and future aspiration, and its **Capacity** to implement identified major learning plans.

The Transformational Learning Continuum



Phase 1: Application & Foundation Standards Review

Guiding Question

Is ACE a good fit for our school?

Our Thinking

It is important to ascertain whether or not it will be mutually beneficial to proceed to the more formal stages of the ACE process. Schools may engage with ACE at any stage of their own development, provided they meet the Foundation Standards.

Phase 1 applies only to first-time NEASC applicant schools.



Our Process: Application

Purpose: Confirm fit between the school and ACE

Process: Application, including
Founding purpose; legal structure; location
Finances, facilities, and services
Brief responses to the Foundation Standards

Product: NEASC decision to proceed to Foundation Standards Review.

Guiding Questions

Does the school meet ACE Foundation Standards?
Is the school “thinking about” the Learning Principles?



Our Thinking

It is the basic responsibility of both the school and NEASC to ensure that the school offers a safe, secure, ethical, and sustainable education to its community. The ACE Foundation Standards are designed to confirm that the school is indeed aligned with these expectations. At this stage NEASC also seeks to establish that the school is at least in the early stages of considering the implications of the Learning Principles.



Our Process: Foundation Standards Review

Purpose: Confirm sufficient alignment with the Foundation Standards; Explain full ACE Accreditation process.

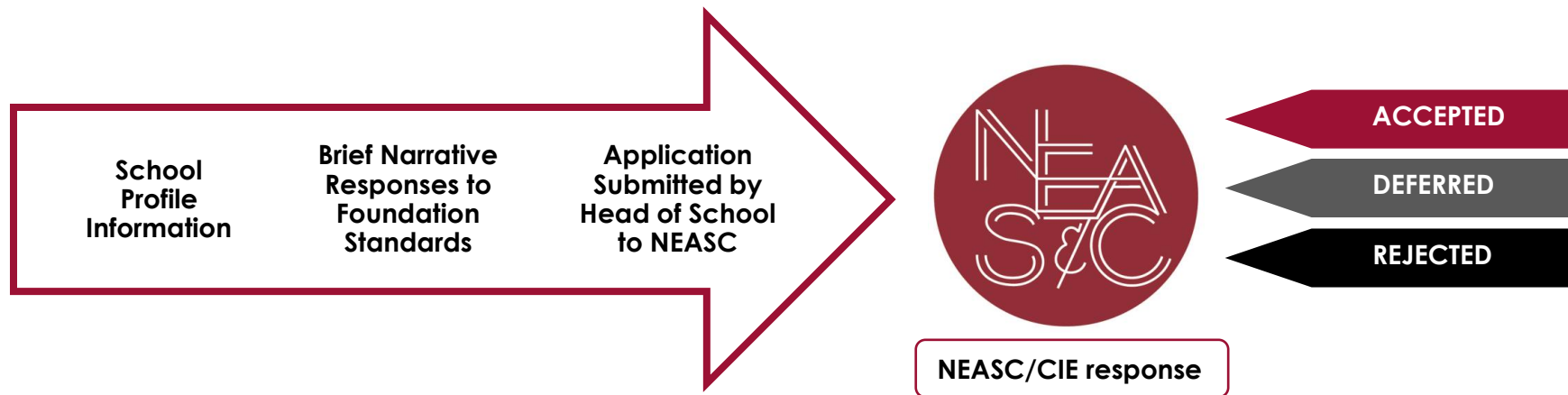
Process: School submits comprehensive Foundation Standards Report.
School hosts 2-day Visit by one NEASC Representative.

Product: Report and Eligibility Award decision

The Application

The Head of School submits the application, with input from other members of the school's Leadership group. Brief narrative responses are required to each of the five Foundation Standards, but, at this point, extensive evidence is not required. The application will be reviewed by NEASC/CIE and a response is sent to the school normally within two weeks. NEASC/CIE's response may communicate one of three possible decisions:

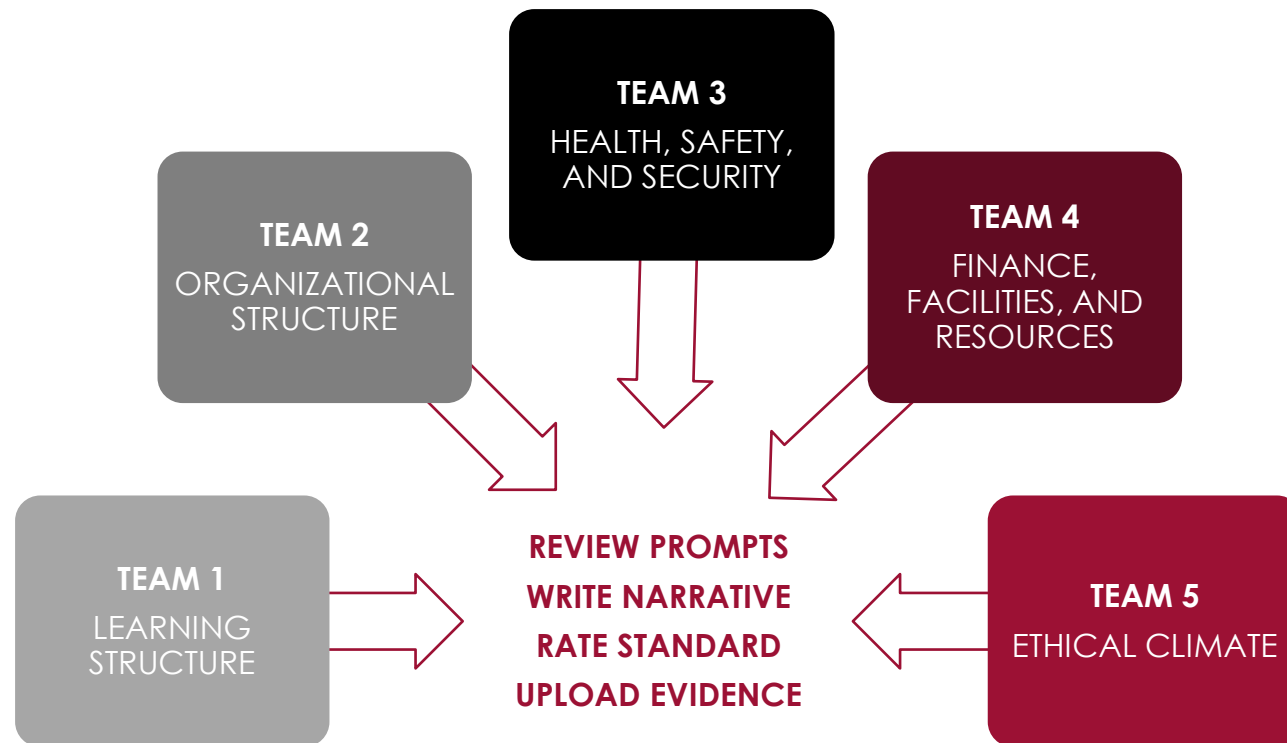
- The application is accepted, a date for the Foundations Review Visit is scheduled (within 1-2 months), and the school receives access to the web-based ACE Portal.
- The application is deferred, pending the clarification of aspects specified in the notification letter.
- The application is rejected for reasons stated in the notification letter.



The Foundations Standards Review

In preparation for the ACE Foundations Review visit, the School should form five Foundation Teams, whose responsibility it will be to

- Consider the prompts for each Foundation Standard
- Write a narrative describing the extent to which the School is (or is not) aligned with the Standard
- Rate the School's alignment with the Standard
- Upload documentary evidence to the School's ACE Space.



Phase 2: Candidacy & Internal Reflection

Guiding Questions

Where is the school currently in its progress towards becoming a true learning community?
Does the school demonstrate the Conceptual Understanding, Commitment, Competency, and Capacity to achieve accreditation?

Our Thinking

We often think of 'school' as a place that has a transactional relationship with its community (e.g., defined roles/responsibilities; procedures and policies structure interactions). ACE, on the other hand, looks at 'Learning Communities' as entities cultivating transformational relationships with their members and developing the learning capacity of all stakeholders. Engagement with the ACE Learning Principles supports the transactional school in its evolution into a transformational Learning Community.



Our Process: Learning Principles Review

Purpose: Assess whether the school has the Conceptual Understanding, Commitment, Capacity, and Competence to implement the ACE Learning Principles.

Process: School prepares the Learning Principles Report. School hosts 3-day Visit by two NEASC Representatives. Visitors conduct a workshop on the Internal Reflection process/structure.

Product: Report and Candidacy Award decision



Guiding Questions

Where do we, as an evolving Learning Community, stand with respect to the ACE Learning Principles?
What evidence do we have to substantiate our findings? What are our Impact-focused plans for transformation?

Our Thinking

The Internal Reflection is a structured, collective review that involves all stakeholders in a process to understand (and re-define) the learning community's aspirations, current reality, action plans, and identify evidence to show learning Impact. ACE provides narrative rubrics to help a learning community map its progress. The community's major Learning Plans eliminate the need for additional resource-consuming 'strategic planning' processes.



Our Process: Internal Reflection

Purpose: Achieve optimal learning Impact through rigorous review, discussion, workshops over one year.

Process: A, C, and E Teams engage in structured reflection, focused on ACE Learning Principles, supported by rubrics, coordinated by internal ACE Design Team. ACE Surveys are administered.

Product: Comprehensive Internal Reflection Report, including prioritized Learning Plans.

Learning Principles Review

The Learning Principles Visit

In preparation for the Learning Principles Visit, the learning community submits an Learning Principles Review Report, briefly addressing the following *questions*:

- Where, on the Transformational Learning Continuum does the learning community believe it currently stands with respect to the ten Learning Principles?
- Where does the learning community want to be in the future?
- What are the drivers for change and potential challenges faced by the learning community in implementing change? How will the learning community demonstrate the "4 C's" — Conceptual Understanding, Commitment, Capacity and Competency?
- What aspects of its Learning Architecture, Culture and Ecology does the learning community invite the Visitors to focus on?

The *purpose* of the three-day Learning Principles Visit is:

- To sign off on the Foundation Standards and verify that identified deficiencies have been remedied/addressed.
- To observe learning.
- To understand where the school currently is in its progress towards becoming a true learning community.
- To assess the learning community's conceptual understanding of and commitment to the ACE Learning Eco-System as well as the community's capacity and competency for implementing change.
- To explain the Internal Reflection process and agree on a timeline for submitting the Internal Reflection Report and hosting the External Review Team.

The *Visitors' Report* will consist of:

- A standard *Preamble* explaining the purpose of the Visit.
- Brief comments on the *School Context*.
- Summative comments on the "4 C's" (Conceptual Understanding, Commitment, Capacity, Competency).
- The Learning Principles Report, with succinct *Observations* for each of the three ACE pillars – Architecture, Culture, and Ecology. The Report will provide the school with an overall sense of the priorities that, in the Visitors' opinion, should shape the school's Internal Reflection.
- The Visitors' *Summary Recommendation* with respect to Candidacy status.



Internal Reflection

If the Learning Principles Visit concludes that the learning community has the basic capacity, commitment, conceptual understanding, and competence to engage with the ACE Learning Principles, the year-long Internal Reflection is initiated. Although each learning community may conduct the Internal Reflection process as it sees fit and as works best in the local context, NEASC proposes a structure intended to ensure

- Ownership by, participation from, and representation of all stakeholders.
- A manageable, un-bureaucratic, effective process.
- Effective utilization of individual preferences, competencies, and expertise.

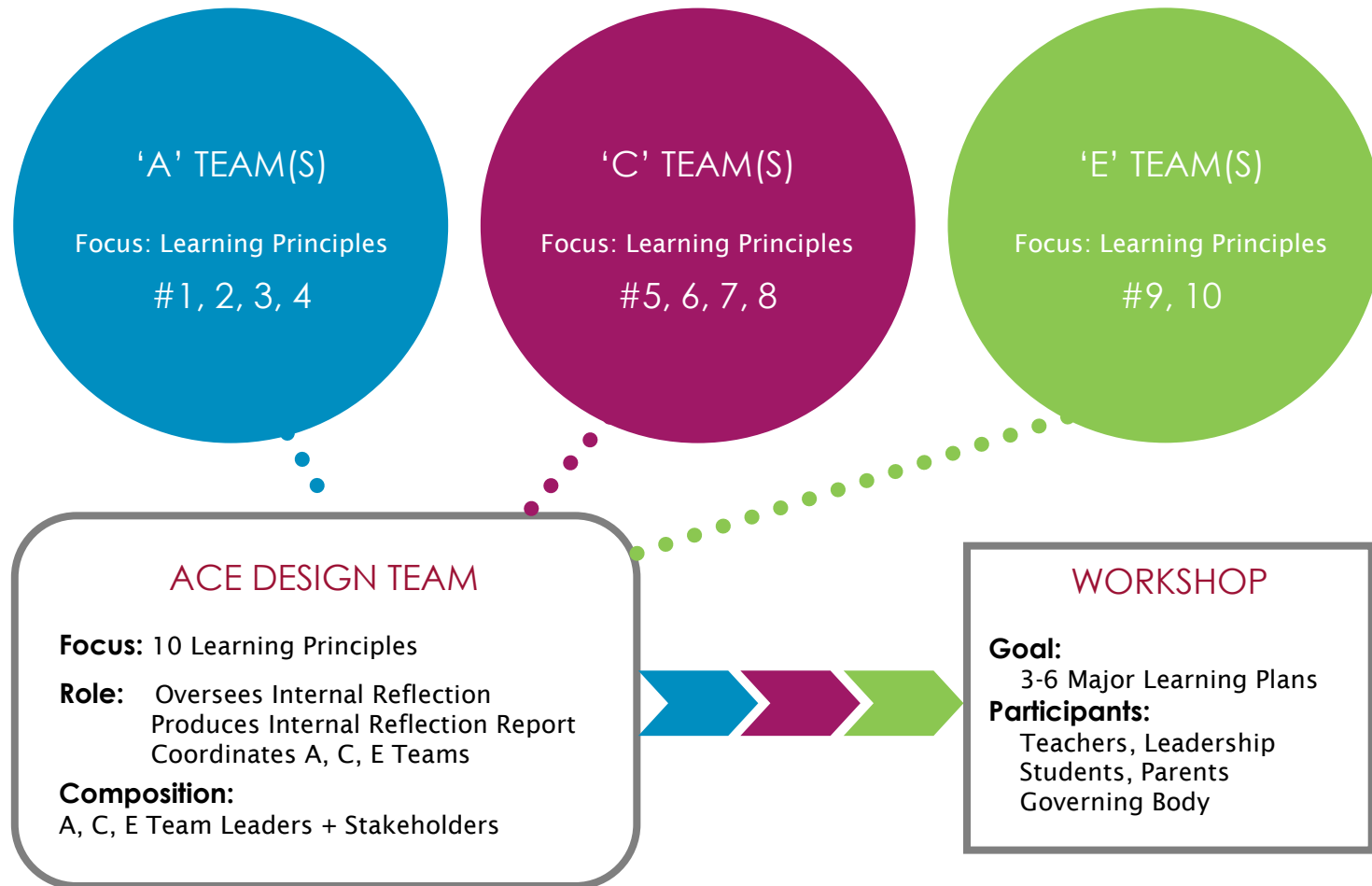
NEASC suggests, therefore, that the learning community:

- Establishes one or several (depending on size of Learning Community) A - Architecture, C - Culture, and E - Ecology Team(s). Each of these Teams conduct research, builds capacity, develops the Team reflection process, collects evidence, and complete draft templates for the Learning Principles assigned to it. The Guiding Questions for each Learning Principle launch the learning conversations. In order to work effectively Teams should not have more than ten members each.
- Creates an overall **ACE Design Team**, composed of the leaders of the A, C, and E Teams as well as other appointed or elected representatives from all stakeholder groups. The ACE Design Team oversees and manages the Internal Reflection and is responsible for the final report uploaded to the ACE Portal and submitted to NEASC (see also illustration on next page).

Once the A, C, and E Design Teams have agreed on their initial findings and conclusions, these are brought to a workshop, which ideally includes all teachers and administrators as well as student, parent, and governing body representatives. A trained ACE moderator should facilitate this workshop. The purpose of the workshop is to

- Reach consensus on the learning community's overall reflections on the ten Learning Principles
- Agree on a limited number of major Learning Plans which the learning community believes will achieve intended Impacts, create an optimal learning environment aligned with the Learning Principles, and enjoy broad support from all stakeholders.
- Conclude whether the learning community has the capacity and competence to enact the major Learning Plans and/or whether external support and advice may be needed.

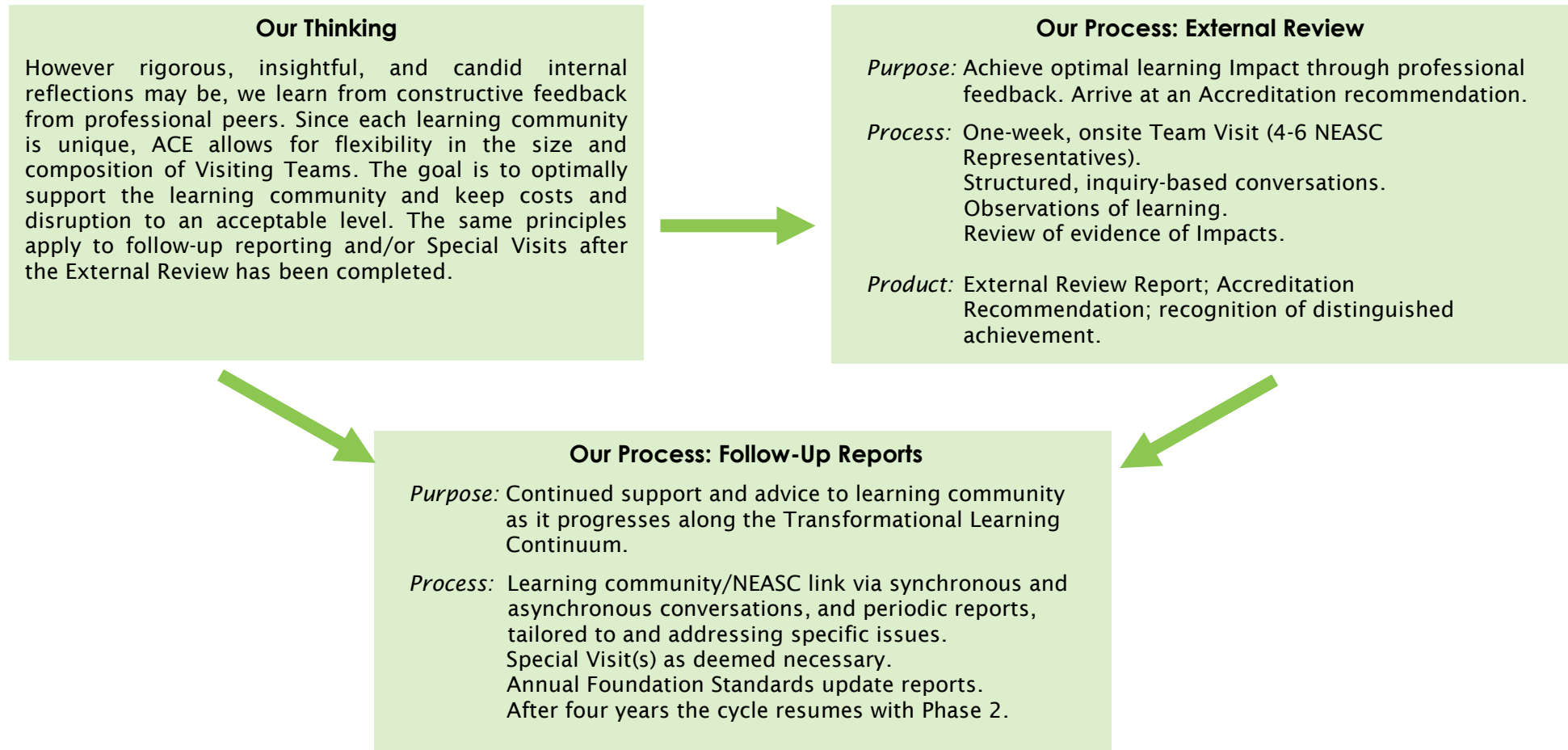
Internal Reflection Structure



Phase 3: External Review

Guiding Question

How does NEASC respond to the Internal Reflection Report and view the school's evolution into a Learning Community?



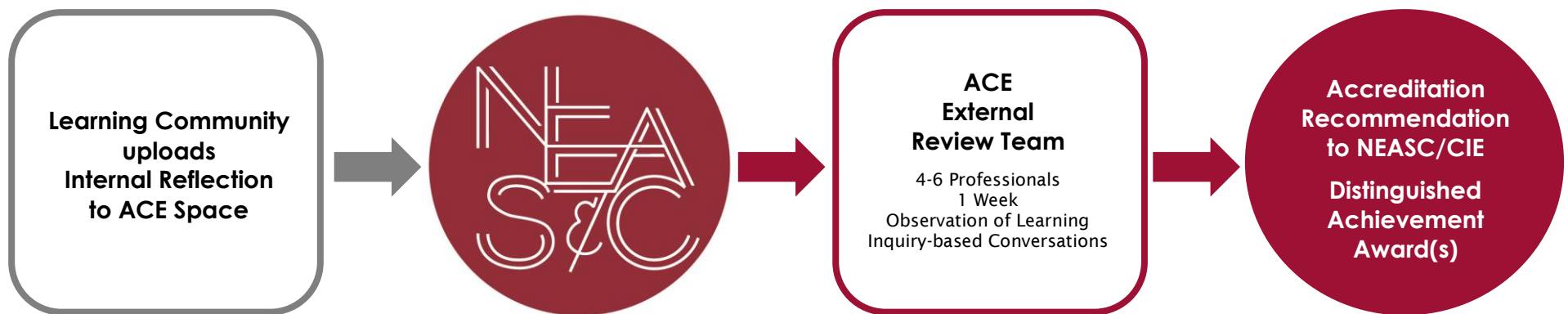
External Review

The External Review will occur within 2-3 months after the learning community submits its Internal Reflection. It will align closely with ACE's overarching purpose, design, and orientation:

- No more than 4-6 ACE-trained professional peers will visit the learning community for one week.
- Observations of learning as well as structured, inquiry-based conversations about the ACE Learning Principles with all stakeholders will be the chief focus of the visit. The External Review Team will also meet with the 'A', 'C', 'E' Teams and with the learning community's ACE Design Team.
- The External Review Team will spend little time reviewing documentation (this will already have occurred at the time of the Foundation Standards Review), except to note updates, changes, or improvements that may have been made.
- The External Review Team will conduct an emergency evacuation drill in order to validate that the community meet safety and health expectations.
- The External Review Team will hold a plenary meeting at the end of the visit to highlight perceptions gained and conclusions arrived at with respect to the learning community's developmental stage vis-à-vis the Learning Principles. However, the Team may not share its recommendation to NEASC/CIE with respect to the learning community's accreditation status.

The ACE External Review Team will submit its report and recommendation to NEASC/CIE within 10 days of the visit. The ACE External Review Report will consist of:

- The Team's observations with respect to the 10 ACE Learning Principles
- The Team's assessment of the "Four C's" (see next page)
- The Team's recommendation with respect to any area(s) of Distinguished Achievement by the Learning Community
- The Team's recommendation with respect to follow-up action and subsequent reviews or visits
- The Team's recommendation with respect to the Learning Community's accreditation status (separate document).



External Review – Assessment

The decision whether to award accreditation is derived from the Team’s assessment of the learning community’s

- **Conceptual Understanding** of effective learning and its Impact on the learner.
- **Commitment** to implementing achievable and realistic Learning Plans.
- **Competence** in designing plans that achieve the desired Impacts on learning and on learners.
- **Capacity** to implement the Learning Plans and embed them in the institutional fabric.

The assessment is not reducible to a mathematical algorithm; it represents a thoughtful, balanced, and professional analysis of all aspects of a community’s focus on learning and the evidence it has produced to demonstrate learner Impact.

In its recommendation to NEASC/CIE the External Review Team may also propose that the learning community be recognized for distinguished achievement in particular Learning Principle areas and/or that noteworthy approaches be added to the ACE Bank of Representative Practices.

Over time ACE charts a learning community’s progress on the Transformational Learning Continuum and provides a *Learning Dashboard* to show the “road traveled” by the learning community.

Sample Learning Dashboard

Learning Principles ↓	Continuum →					
	Not Evident...	Thinking about it	Working on it	Living it	What if...?	
Learning Goals						
Dimensions of Learning						
Assessment for, of, and as Learning						
Learning Perspectives						
Learner Engagement and Autonomy						
Research and Reflection on Learning						
Inclusiveness of Learning						
Governance and Leadership for Learning						
Learning Space and Time						
Learning Community						

Significant Additional Features

- ✚ Since ACE is a growth- rather than deficit-oriented accreditation model, learning communities may enter the process at any stage of development. ACE accommodates both young and ‘mature’ learning communities provided they are aligned with Foundation Standards.
- ✚ ACE does not require a learning community to design a “strategic plan” separate from and in addition to its Internal Reflection. Indeed, the learning community’s conclusions, insights, and Learning Plans derived from its Internal Reflection *become* its Design for the Future.
- ✚ NEASC intends to provide schools/learning communities with a permanent site on the ACE Portal to which all documentation, reflections, and visit reports are uploaded and where interactions with NEASC occur. Learning communities will have access to their ‘ACE SpACE’ and may replace or add documents and/or evidence and artifacts as they see fit.
- ✚ ACE External Review Teams are much smaller (4-6 members) than previous Visiting Teams, with team members having participated in a rigorous training and selection process.
- ✚ Since all ACE visits to a learning community will be conducted as carefully structured conversations, and since training and implementation videos will be available to Visitors and learning communities alike, ACE significantly improves consistency of training, preparation, review, and judgment.
- ✚ ACE adapts the accreditation cycle to each learning community’s developmental stage and particular needs. Processes following External Reviews are designed to respond effectively to a learning community’s expectations, Learning Plans, and identified support needs.
- ✚ The Bank of Representative Practices, to which learning communities have access, will expand, over time, into a dynamic and evolving resource center that connects NEASC-accredited members to the ACE Global Learning Community.

Contacts

If you wish to learn more about ACE and NEASC/CIE Accreditation, please write to any of the following:

NEASC/CIE	cie@neasc.org
Jeffrey C. Bradley, Director	jbradley@neasc.org
Donna Coveney, Executive Assistant	dcoveney@neasc.org
Nouhad Eskanian, Administrative Assistant	neskanian@neasc.org
Phyllis Tumsaroch, Administrative Assistant	ptumsaroch@neasc.org
Lori Medeiros, Administrative Assistant	lmedeiros@neasc.org

APPENDIX 1

SAMPLE FOUNDATION STANDARD TEMPLATE

STANDARD 1: LEARNING STRUCTURE	
<i>The school has in place clear statements that express a definition of learning and a set of learning principles and objectives that shape and drive its programs and practices. A curriculum articulating learning outcomes, expected teaching practices and principles of assessment exists.</i>	
PROMPTS	
Consider the prompts below as you develop your narrative response.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does your school define 'Learning'? What should learners learn? 2. How did your school arrive at this definition? How frequently is it reviewed? 3. To what extent does your definition of 'Learning' shape and drive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the curriculum chosen – assessments practiced – pedagogy/instructional methodology – recruitment of teachers – learner admissions? 4. Is there a written curriculum, articulated vertically and horizontally? 	
NARRATIVE	EVIDENCE
Describe the extent to which your school is aligned with this Standard, using the prompts above to guide your response.	List (and attach) documentary evidence in support of your narrative.
Self-Assessment	
Based on the narrative above and the evidence provided, rate your school's alignment with the Standard	
<input type="checkbox"/> School does not meet the Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning is in place to meet the Standard
<input type="checkbox"/> Standard is partially met and implemented	<input type="checkbox"/> Standard is fully met and implemented
IMPROVEMENT PLANS	
Describe plans that are in place to address areas of non-alignment with the Standard or to improve/change existing practices and processes.	

APPENDIX 2

SAMPLE LEARNING PRINCIPLE TEMPLATE

In its Internal Reflection the learning community must provide responses to each of the 10 Learning Principles. Although the format on the ACE Web-Portal will look different, the sample template below illustrates the information sought during the Internal Reflection.

Learning Principle 5		Learner Engagement and Autonomy
Learners are engaged with and inspired by their learning. They have autonomy over their learning and make informed choices, supported by teachers acting as coaches and mentors.		
What It Looks Like When... (School will be able to click on the rubric which best represents its current status)		
<i>It is not yet evident...</i>	The learning community has not yet begun to reflect on this Core Principle. The institution maintains traditional programs, structures, practices, and conceptual understandings. It is committed to improving “what is”, and may claim to embrace 21 st century learning and teaching principles, but has not yet recognized or articulated the implications of this claim on all aspects of its operations. Systems and programs are not intentionally aligned to support learning Impact; when they do lead to intended learning Impacts it is by chance rather than by design.	
<i>Learning Communities are Thinking about it...</i> (Exploring; establishing the ‘why’ and ‘what’)	The learning community recognizes the importance of developing self-directed learners for the future. The learning community has initiated discussions to clarify what self-directed learning (SDL) means and works to arrive at a shared understanding of SDL. The learning community focuses on what it should mean for learners to direct their learning journey. On the basis of such shared definitions and understandings the learning community is able to identify areas in need of further development.	
<i>Learning Communities are Working on it...</i> (Building; establishing the ‘how’)	The learning community has created effective plans and structures to support learner self-improvement and self-direction. These plans include developing a clear set of goals and principles for SDL, defining indicators of learner performance and reviewing implications for curriculum, assessment, learning spaces and schedules. Revising goal setting processes and creating personal learning plans is also under consideration. Staff is being supported in developing an understanding of this initiative and in shifting practice to support greater learner autonomy. The plans to promote this goal are being communicated to all stakeholders.	
<i>Learning Communities are Living it...</i> (Implementing; defining ‘metrics’ of success)	The plans for meeting the goals of SDL are being implemented. Structural shifts to enable greater SDL have occurred. Supporting processes (e.g. goal setting, levels of learner choice, learner-led conferences, on-going portfolios, personalized learning plans, etc.) are in place, and the impact of SDL on curriculum design and assessment of learner performance is becoming evident. Systems to evaluate the success in meeting desired learner Impacts exist, and there is evidence that the learner experience has been markedly and demonstrably enhanced.	
<i>Learning Communities are Innovating and asking “What if...?”</i> (Transforming; shifting the paradigm)	Having come this far, what if we...? These practices are innovative, unique, and constitute a shift in defining the purpose, practice, and Impact of education. Learning communities with this level of understanding, clarity of purpose, ability to redefine their aspirations and determination to reinvent themselves, produce learners and leaders who are well prepared to shape the future and ‘see things that are not yet on the page’.	

Learner Community Reflection – Future Design

<i>Where do we want to be? What impacts, outputs and inputs will demonstrate that your learning community has advanced on the Continuum? What will you have in place?</i>	Desired Evidence of Impact(s) on Learning and Learners	
	<i>What will we be looking for? What Learners will be doing...</i>	<i>What will we be looking at? What types and sources of evidence?</i>

Learner Community Reflection – The Current Reality


<i>Where are we now? We currently have in place....</i>	Evidence of Impact(s) on Learning and Learners


Learner Community Reflection – The Learning Plans

How will we close the gap? What will be our <u>major</u> actions?




APPENDIX 3

ACE (INTERNAL REFLECTION) PORTAL



Manage My Accreditation

Control

Panel

Example School City, Country
Print Overview & ACE Report

 HTML
 PDF
 Word

Visit Start: 09/01/2016
Visit End: 09/09/2016

[Email Everyone Below](#) 

My Report

Use the button to submit your full report. Note that this will lock your report from edits and the report can only be unlocked by your accrediting agency.

Submit Report

School ACE Report


Please complete the School ACE Report by clicking on the relevant sections below. Detailed instructions are available in the item titled "Instructions."

Edit	Item	Last Edit	Status
Open	Instructions	--	
Open	School Overview	--	
Open	CIS Self-Study	--	
Open	ACE Learning Surveys	--	
Open	Learning Principle 1: Learning Goals	01-19-2017 9:48am	Mark Complete
Open	Learning Principle 2: Dimensions of Learning	10-31-2016 10:38am	Mark Complete
Open	Learning Principle 3: Assessment for, of and as Learning	10-31-2016 10:45am	Mark Complete
Open	Learning Principle 4: Learning Perspectives	10-31-2016 10:50am	Mark Complete
Open	Learning Principle 5: Learner Engagement and Autonomy	10-31-2016 10:54am	Mark Complete
Open	Learning Principle 6: Research & Reflection on Learning	10-31-2016 10:58am	Mark Complete
Open	Learning Principle 7: Inclusiveness of Learning	10-31-2016 11:07am	Mark Complete
Open	Learning Principle 8: Governance and Leadership for Learning	10-31-2016 11:40am	Mark Complete
Open	Learning Principle 9: Learning Space & Time	10-31-2016 11:28am	Mark Complete
Open	Learning Principle 10: Learning Community	10-31-2016 11:35am	Mark Complete

Head of School

Example User [SR]
Example User
example@school.org

Accreditation Coordinator(s)
(no Accreditation Coordinator currently selected)

[Email Team](#) 

Team Chair(s)

Example User [SR]
Chair
Example User
example@school.org

Team Members

Example User [SR]
Example User
example@school.org

APPENDIX 4

SAMPLE ANNUAL FOUNDATION STANDARDS REPORT

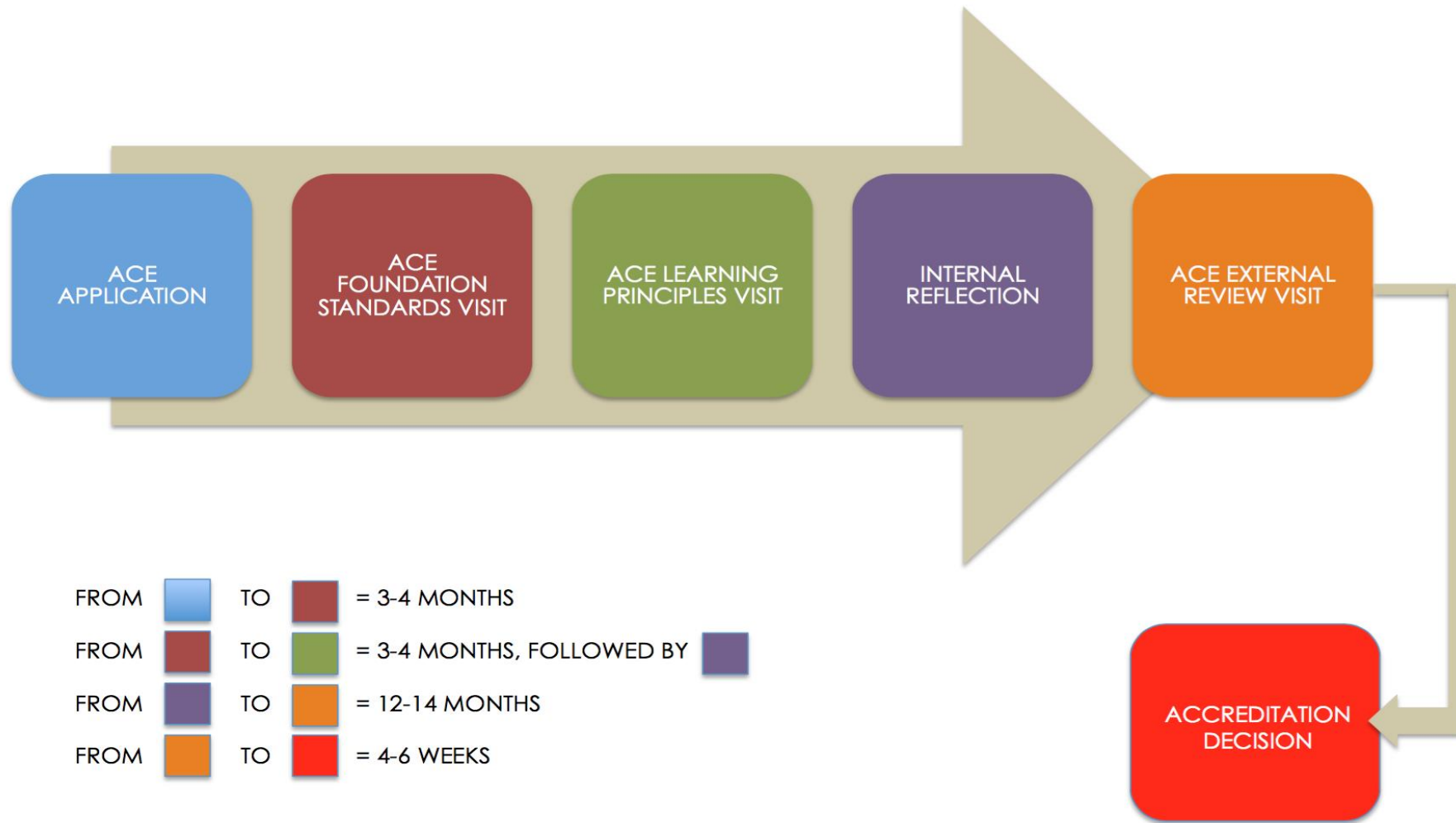
Both the Head/Principal/Director and the Chair of the Governing Body must complete the ACE Annual Report.

PROFILE INFORMATION		
Enrollment	Current Year:	Previous Year:
Head	Current Year:	Previous Year:
Board Chair	Current Year:	Previous Year:
PROVIDE A BRIEF SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES/DEVELOPMENTS SINCE LAST REPORT		

Foundation Standard 1: Learning Structure	
<i>The school has in place clear statements that express a definition and a set of learning principles and objectives that shape and drive its programs and practices. A curriculum articulating learning outcomes, expected teaching practices and principles of assessment exists.</i>	
Rate your current alignment with Standard 1	<input type="checkbox"/> School does not meet the Standard <input type="checkbox"/> Planning is in place to meet the Standard <input type="checkbox"/> Standard is partially met and implemented <input type="checkbox"/> Standard is fully met and implemented
If the rating differs from the previous year's report, explain the reasons. If the Standard is not fully met and implemented, indicate what actions are underway or planned to achieve full compliance.	

What (if any) changes have been made that pertain to Standard 1?	
List evidence and upload it to your school's ACE Portal that illustrates and/or substantiates the changes made?	
Have you faced (or do you anticipate facing) any particular challenges in meeting this Standard?	

APPENDIX 5 ACE ACCREDITATION TIMELINES



APPENDIX 6

BRIEF GLOSSARY OF KEY ACE TERMS

NB: The definitions provided are not intended to be comprehensive or 'final'; they are offered to stimulate further discussion and conversations about the nature of learning.

Entrepreneurial Learning

Yong Zhao defines entrepreneurial learning as “an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action”. Entrepreneurial learning promotes creativity, innovative thinking and problem solving. The Aspen Youth Entrepreneurship Strategic Group defines an entrepreneurial mindset as “a critical mix of success-oriented attitudes of initiative, intelligent risk-taking, collaboration, and opportunity recognition.” In other words, entrepreneurial learning should not be confused with ‘business studies.’

Future Design vs Strategic Planning

Traditional Strategic Planning often begins with an analysis of the learning community’s current situation, proposes goals intended to improve upon the present, and leads to the development of a set of actions over a period of 3-5 years. On the other hand, Future Design begins by examining the drivers of change, then imagines a preferred future and articulates goals aligned with the learning community’s *raison d’être* – learning. Future Design eschews long-range action planning in favor of more agile, nimbler strategies that are refined and adapted regularly based on evidence of success and desired modifications of the organization’s preferred future.

Impact vs Input/Output

An Impact is a long-term transformational goal for learning that spans across traditional subjects areas and the success of which originates in the processes and products of learning. Input describes the resources that go into achieving the goals of the learning community. Output refers to the structures (e.g., programs, curriculum, learning spaces) that organizational inputs create in order to achieve Impacts. Outputs include summative assessments, standardized test scores and similar examples of ‘academic achievement’. Outputs are often confused with Impacts; it is important to realize that the existence of outputs does not constitute evidence of Impact.

Inclusiveness

An inclusive school is one that successfully educates a managed number of students with mild, moderate and intensive learning disabilities and/or with exceptional ability. However, the ACE concept of ‘inclusiveness’ extends well beyond this traditional definition. It challenges learning communities to review the ways and means in which all stakeholders feel ‘included’ in shaping the culture and direction of the community.

Self-Directed/Personal(ized) Learning

Personal(ized) Learning places the learner at the center of the learning process. Learners have choice in what they want to learn, how they want to learn it, and the ways in which they want to demonstrate their learning. The resources of the learning community are dedicated to supporting learners in achieving their goals, following their passions, and developing their knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Personal(ized) learning as conceived by ACE has little in common with differentiation and accommodating diverse learning styles.

Transactional and Transformational Learning

Transactional learning is often defined as the formal relationship between the teacher and learner, between learning content and learner, between learning environment and learner. It focuses on achieving specific, common learning goals defined by the school.

Transformational learning focuses on nurturing holistic learning, expanding the learner's potential and promoting a deeper engagement with making meaning. As such, transformational learning changes lives. Transactional learning produces transcripts.

Transdisciplinary Skills

These are skills that are important to success across disciplines and learning areas. Examples include 21st century skills (e.g., creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, resilience, etc.) and are often referenced as a learning community's desired Impacts for Learning.