



## Steps to AdvancED School Accreditation

Thank you for your interest in pursuing AdvancED® School Accreditation. AdvancED Accreditation provides a national protocol for schools committed to systemic, systematic, and sustainable continuous improvement. This document outlines the steps of the AdvancED Accreditation Process. As you progress through this process, contact the AdvancED Illinois state office if you need assistance at 866.292.1781 or [bstoll@advanc-ed.org](mailto:bstoll@advanc-ed.org).

### Applicant Status

#### Step 1: Submit Application.

- The school completes and submits an [Application](#) and application fee to AdvancED; 9115 Westside Parkway; Alpharetta, GA 30009.
- The AdvancED Illinois state office is notified of the application and sends the administrative head of the school a Readiness Letter describing the expectations for the Readiness Visit, along with a Self-Assessment of Readiness for Accreditation tool.
- The AdvancED Illinois state office assigns a contact person to provide support and assistance to the school as needed.

#### Step 2: Host a Readiness Visit.

- The state office works with the school to coordinate the Readiness Visit. The purpose of the visit is to determine the school's capacity to pursue accreditation.
- The school completes the Self-Assessment of Readiness for Accreditation prior to the Readiness Visit. The self-assessment is shared with the Readiness Visit team members and provides the basis for the Readiness Visit.
- The school hosts the Readiness Visit.
- The state office communicates the findings of the visit to the school.

#### Step 3: Receive Notification of Candidacy.

- Based upon the findings of the Readiness Visit, the state office sends a Candidacy Letter to the administrative head of the school. The letter places the school in candidacy status.

**Step 4: Schedule, prepare for, and host the Quality Assurance Review (QAR).**

- **Schedule the visit.**
  - At least six months prior to the desired timeframe for the visit, the school identifies and sends to the state office up to three dates (in preferred order) for hosting the Quality Assurance Review (QAR). The visit should be conducted within 18 months of entering candidacy.
  - Upon receipt the letter requesting to schedule the visit, the state office selects and communicates the dates for the visit to the school.
- **Work with the QAR Chair.**
  - The state office appoints a Chair for the visit approximately 90 days prior to the visit. Team members are also appointed. The state office provides the school with the names and contact information for all team members.
  - The QAR Chair works with the school to ensure that the school is prepared to receive the QAR team.
- **Prepare for the visit.**
  - The school prepares for the visit by: notifying the school's community; making available evidence to share with the team to demonstrate adherence to the standards; coordinating individuals to be interviewed by the team; making appropriate logistical arrangements for the team members; coordinating the visit schedule with the QAR Chair; and ensuring that the administrative head is accessible for the visit.
- **Complete the Self Assessment and Executive Summary Reports.**
  - The school completes the Self Assessment and Executive Summary reports involving all stakeholders in the school. The Self Assessment engages the school in a comprehensive review of each of the seven AdvancED standards. It serves to prepare the school for the Quality Assurance Review and becomes the basis of the review team's work. The school may share and receive feedback from the state office contact person.
  - The school submits the Self Assessment and Executive Summary online to the state office via the AdvancED website approximately four weeks prior to the scheduled Quality Assurance Review visit.
- **Host the QAR team and receive the team report.**
  - The school hosts the visit and receives the oral exit report. It is expected that the oral exit report will be delivered to the school's stakeholders.
  - The QAR Chair prepares the written report of the visit and submits it to AdvancED for review by an AdvancED Reader who reviews the report to ensure quality.
  - The final report is submitted to the school, State Office, and QAR chair.
  - The QAR team's recommended accreditation status is submitted to the State Office for state and national review and action.



**Step 5: Communicate the QAR team's findings to the community.**

- Upon receipt of the written report, the school communicates the QAR team's findings to the school and community.
- When the school's accreditation status is reviewed and acted upon at the national level, the school communicates its final accreditation status to the community.

**Accredited (Ongoing Steps)**

**Step 6: Act on the findings.**

- The school acts on the report required actions as part of its continuous improvement efforts.

**Step 7: Adhere to the AdvancED standards and engage in continuous quality improvement.**

- The school maintains adherence to the AdvancED standards and regularly self-assesses against the standards.
- The school engages in continuous improvement.
- The school provides AdvancED with accurate and up-to-date contact information and demographics.
- The state office provides support and professional development opportunities to assist the school in its continuous improvement efforts.

**Step 8: Complete the Accreditation Progress Report.**

- Within two years following the QAR visit, the state office sends a letter to the administrative head of the school requesting an Accreditation Progress Report detailing the school's progress in addressing the required actions from the QAR team report.
- The school completes the report and submits it via the AdvancED website to the state office for review and action at the state level.
- The changes made to the accreditation status are transmitted to the school and state office.
- The school shares its accreditation status with the school's stakeholders.
- The school continues to meet the AdvancED standards, engage in continuous improvement, and hosts quality assurance reviews once every five years.