

# SAIS Accreditation Visit Report Writing Guide

## For use with the SAIS Accreditation Portal

### NOTES:

- The portal is located at <http://portal.sais.org>.
- Contact [joanne@sais.org](mailto:joanne@sais.org) for assistance.
- If you copy and paste into the Portal (rather than writing directly into the entry screens), note that the program will strip out a lot of formatted material. Please review the text as it appears in the Portal window.
- Write complete sentences based on the prompts.
  - When writing commendations – The visiting team commends the school for . . .
  - When writing recommendations – The visiting team recommends the school consider . . .
- It is customary to use bullets in the commendations and recommendations.
- The Portal does not function like a google doc. You must save your work often. The most recent version of a section will overwrite previous versions, but you can use the archive to look at past versions. The archive runs on a set schedule, not every time you save.

## Overview of Report Format

The SAIS Accreditation Portal was created to make report writing easier and allow the team to focus on the school and the commendations and recommendations rather than struggling with formatting the report. As a result of work done by the SAIS Accreditation Summit volunteers, SAIS has launched a revised format for visit reports, which is intended to serve the needs of the school in receiving high-level commendations and recommendations that align with the vision of the school and its current strategic initiatives.

The sections of the visit report previously called *profile, vision, plan, results, additional, and conclusion* have been replaced with **Introduction, Goal Area Title, Description, Commendations, Recommendations, Additional, and Summary & Conclusion**.

The final visit report consists of the following sections:

- Cover page, History, Review, Policies, Roster (*all dynamically generated*)
- School Snapshot: written by the school as part of their snapshot and standards response
- Introduction and Overview of the Visit
- Goal Area 1
  - Goal Title
  - Description
  - Commendations
  - Recommendations
- Goal Area 2
  - Goal Title
  - Description
  - Commendations
  - Recommendations
- Goal Area 3, 4, 5, 6 (repeated format – leave blank if needed)
- Additional Commendations and Recommendations (leave blank if needed)
- Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendation

**All text is to be entered into the portal.  
Visit reports are due 10 days after the visit concludes.**

On the following pages,  
**text in RED** is already part of the report and should not be repeated.  
Comments *in italics* are guides.

Use the “Print Visiting Team Report” in the top right corner  
to see what the final compiled version of the report will look like.

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE VISIT

*The introduction is a narrative description of the visit and the type of community you found; you may wish to include (briefly) a listing or description of the stakeholder groups you encountered, various highlights of the visit, and major themes that emerged as a result of the visiting team's interactions with the school's strategic vision (as written in the school report) and with the people of the school.*

*Make sure to read through the school snapshot that the school wrote (which is automatically included as part of the final visit report) and don't repeat comments made there.*

### **Introduction and Overview of the Visit**

## GOAL AREA RESPONSES

*Teams in the past struggled with matching commendations and recommendations to the SAIS four critical questions components of the visit report. While the four critical questions still guide the structure of the school's school report, the major themes that the school has been working on provide a framework for the commendations and recommendations and the major themes are used by SAIS to build the visiting team. Chairs may wish to make assignments based on the capacities of the team as they align with the school's goals (rather than on standards).*

**Goal Title:** *The title should be evident from the school's snapshot section. Use the school's terms for their strategic initiative (for example, if they call it "Technology Integration" then use that term).*

**Description:** *Provide a description of how the school approached the specific goal and what challenges or victories they might have had as they studied themselves.*

### **Commendations:**

- *State each commendation only once.*
- *Make the commendation grammatically correct to match the prompt*
- *Use consistent formatting – SAIS protocol is to provide a bulleted list*

### **Recommendations:**

- *State each recommendation only once.*
- *Note that the school is required to address each of the recommendations as part of its interim report.*
- *General guidelines for recommendations:*
  - *Have you been clear in what the school should consider?*
  - *Have you left enough space for the school to address the recommendation in their own way and according to their own beliefs and mission?*
  - *Does the recommendation impact many if not all constituents?*

[Click here for a list of commonly used words](#)

*Repeat the format above for each of the goal areas the school has expressed for itself. SAIS has provided up to six goal areas; most schools have expressed two or three – leave extra sections blank and they will not generate into the final report.*

### **Additional Commendations and Recommendations**

*Most if not all commendations and recommendations will be in response to the school's strategic goal areas. If, however, there are additional commendations and/or recommendations, then use this section and follow the same guidelines as above. NOTE that this section should be left blank if there are no additions.*

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **SUMMARY**

*A few ideas for what to include in this section. You are by no means limited to these things:*

- *Were expectations set and on target?*
- *Consider a note about the school's position and future, and the big questions, opportunities, or challenges facing the school.*
- *Some teams will write a very brief appreciation of the hospitality of the school, the head, and/or the accreditation coordinator. You are welcome to do so here or in the conclusion section (or omit).*

### **CONCLUSION**

*There is no need to enter additional comments in this section, but some teams use this space to thank the accreditation coordinator and head of school and describe the community. You are welcome to do so, or include in the previous section, or omit.*

### **COMPLIANCE AND RECOMMENDATION**

*There are three radio buttons to select indicating the school's compliance with standards, the quality of the self-study, and the team's recommendation to accredit.*