ACSI International Student Program Accreditation Endorsement

A Commitment to Best Practices

ACSI believes that international students studying in our accredited schools should receive a world class education while also experiencing the love of Jesus Christ through those who know him personally. At the same time, students from the North American school will be enriched by learning to live and study with others from around the world, knowing that they are part of a much bigger body of Christ than they might realize. The opportunity to learn together enhances the education of all our students but to do it well, schools must be intentional about following best practices for teaching international students.

The following standards have been developed in consultation with experienced practitioners and material from the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET). This document is intended to be used in conjunction with the ACSI REACH accreditation protocol for schools that have a significant population of international students. It is designed to be used as an endorsement for schools in addition to the basic accreditation instrument indicating that a school has evaluated its international student program (ISP) and is working through a continuous improvement process specifically related to the needs of this unique population.

Each standard is followed by indicators which break the standard down into its component parts. Indicators are specific commitments, activities, policies, and practices of schools that, when taken as a whole, constitute compliance with best practice. Following the indicators are examples of evidence that the school would examine to see if the indicators are being met. Just having the items is not evidence that the indicators are in compliance. Members of the school's committee must look at each artifact and see if the specific indicator is truly exemplified in the piece of evidence. A generic rubric is provided to help evaluate the indicators. In some cases, the indicator may be met in other items that are not listed in the suggested evidence. In that case, those items should be collected, examined, and included in the evidence supplied.

Some indicators are considered critical, and must be in compliance before ACSI will consider adding the ISP endorsement to a school. These Indicators are shown in bold font. A school might expect to receive the ISP endorsement if the vast majority of the indicators are compliant (80%). If a school does not meet that level at the end of a visit, the visiting team's report will indicate what needs to be accomplished in order to meet that level. If there are serious concerns or some non-compliant items especially among those marked as critical, a visiting team may choose to include a recommendation into a regular accreditation report.

If the school is in compliance, they will be able to highlight the endorsement on their website and in their marketing materials as a "gold seal of approval." It will let families know that they have met the standards and undergone a peer review, with commendations and a positive result. ACSI will list the schools with the ISP endorsement on its website.

ACSI's Academic Services Office seeks to support schools with international students by identifying appropriate standards, providing resources, and by challenging schools to excel in providing:
1. High quality Christ-centered academic programs
2. Developmentally appropriate English programs
3. Counseling (academic and social/emotional as needed)
4. Appropriate social and cultural experiences
5. A holistic approach to spiritual development that enables students to know and grow in Christ Jesus;
6. Direct provision or oversight of homestays programs that nurture students in ways that are safe and healthy for the whole child (physical, spiritual, emotional, and academic)

In order to help schools with these goals, ACSI provides training, resources, and tools such as this accreditation endorsement. Providing standards for schools to work toward helps schools which are in the early stages of developing an ISP program as well as those with more mature programs.

There are no rubrics for specific indicators. Use the general rubric below for rating each indicator. Choose the level which comes closest to describing the indicator for the program.

Indicator Number/Letter	1 *Noncompliance*	2 *Partial Compliance*	3 *Compliance*	4 *Exceeds Compliance*
	The trait either doesn't exist or is rarely ever observed. If it does exist, there may be some significant problems in this area. Definitely in need of improvement to meet the standard.	The trait is sometimes observed but not consistently, or by only some faculty/staff. There are no glaring deficiencies, but this area needs some improvement to be at the desired level. Policies may be in practice but not in writing. Training is inconsistent or rarely evident.	The trait is observed fairly consistently. Policies are generally found in writing and are reviewed occasionally. Practices comply with the indicator in quality. Training for ongoing development is evident. A review process has been developed but may not be systematic or systemic.	Trait is VERY consistent across levels and faculty. Staff go above and beyond requirements...a real strength of the school. Results are documented, evaluated, and used for continuous improvement. Related policies are regularly reviewed, carefully implemented, and updated as needed. Training for development is ongoing.

The ISP Endorsement is an Add-On report. As such, the report can be created as a Word document and submitted as an addendum to REACH.

The school's report (self-study) should be completed with evidence attached **6 weeks** prior to the visit.

1. Introduction:
   In the introduction, write a short description (1-2 pages) of how this Add-On report was completed. Include who was on the committee, how it was organized, history of the ISP program, number of students, what countries are they from, specialized curriculum, and what staff you have.

2. Standards: For each of the five standards, the school should rate itself on each indicator (NC, PC, C or EC) A spreadsheet is available to use. The results can be included in the Word document.

   After the ratings for each standard, three narratives will be included:
   1) Brief narrative, stating what your committee learned by examining that standard.
   2) Two to three strengths in this standard. Be sure to point out the major evidence that pointed this out to the committee.
   3) Two to three areas to improve on in this standard. Again, be sure to note the evidence that was most helpful in bringing the committee to this conclusion.

3. Conclusion:
   Write one final section that prioritizes what your committee feels are the 2-3 major strengths of your program, the 2-3 major areas for improvement, and any other themes or

conclusions you wish to draw from your analysis.

Included with these goals, list action steps that could be included in your school's improvement plan with specific information at to timelines, resources needed, personnel, and evidence of accomplishment.

4. Evidence:

In an electronic depository such as Google Docs, DropBox, etc. post 5-7 pieces of evidence from each standard, from which you drew your conclusions. Though you may have examined more than that, please limit yourself to that number. It will help the visiting team review this endorsement efficiently. However, be sure to post all the items referred to in the narratives, strengths, and weaknesses from the five sections. Also, please note that there are a few items that are marked with an asterisk. Those are required pieces of evidence.

ISP STANDARDS AND INDICATORS

Standard # 1

ISP Program Philosophy and Foundational Documents

The school shall develop written statements of philosophy, purpose, and Christian distinctives for the International Student Program. These statements must be well defined, systematically reviewed, and well-integrated into the school's overall program. The ISP program shall be managed with integrity and promotional materials accurately communicate program details to potential candidates.

1.1 The school has developed written statements of philosophy, purpose, and Christian distinctives for the ISP. These must align with the school's overall program.

1.2 The ISP is well-structured and functions as a cohesive and reliable program by exhibiting a pattern of focused engagement, care, accountability, and professionalism in all aspects of the program.

1.3 The ISP is currently SEVIS approved. (Student and Exchange Visitor Program)

1.4 The ISP exhibits integrity and is well-balanced in its use of its income to support the provision of excellent education, spiritual formation, social development, development of English skills, and support for the overall program (including appropriate administration, staffing, and ongoing professional development).

1.5 The ISP provides transparency for tuition, fees, room, and board for sending parents. While the price for the family may be all inclusive, parents are able to find out the individual costs of the school program, if desired.

1.6 The foundational statements outline the ISP program's scope of service, measures of program effectiveness, and plan to use resulting data for program improvement.

1.7 The foundational statements are regularly reviewed by appropriate stakeholders.

1.8 Program details and promotional materials shall be communicated to potential candidates in a manner that professionally and accurately reflects the school.

Evidence

a. *Written philosophy, distinctives, and purpose statements for the school's ISP from handbooks, on the website, and on promotional materials *

b. *Measures of effectiveness and evidence they are examined and analyzed to assist in program improvement.*

c. *Documentation to demonstrate that these statements are regularly reviewed.*

d. *ISP budget included in the school's financial review*

e. *Promotional materials that reflect the school, its mission, its leadership, demographic data, accreditation, college acceptances, student performance metrics, policies on number/percentages of international students, English requirements, and support*

provided. Promotional materials that state that participation in athletics is not guaranteed

f. *Images that accurately represent school facilities, people, and the local area.*
g. *International student handbook, application, or other application documents that include information on tuition/fees, billing practices, refunds, student travel, driving, discipline, homestays, eligibility for athletics, and any other policies that students and sending parents want to see prior to acceptance. ***
h. *Publicity for students needing homestays, demonstrating compliance with the CSIET guidelines (see page 2, standard 4 B)*
i. *Enrollment contracts for families detailing expenses and conditions (what is refundable, non-refundable, deadlines, etc.)*

Standard # 2
<u>Instructional Program</u>
The ISP program shall admit only adequately prepared international students and provide an academic program consistent with the quality provided for the domestic students in the school. The school shall implement best practices in teaching strategies for international students and support their unique learning needs with testing, academic tutoring, and specialized English classes.

2.1 The school provides an academic program for international students that is consistent with what was advertised to applicants and consistent with what domestic students are receiving.

2.2 The school only admits international students it has the capacity to serve, especially as it relates to English language levels.

2.3 The school implements teaching strategies and pursues learning objectives that accommodate international students.

2.4 Academic support services including tutoring and ELL services are provided in accordance with best practices in TESOL. (Teachers providing these services should be part of the staff of the school and as such, meet the spiritual and academic qualifications for all faculty.) Policies regarding expectations for tutoring and extra English classes for students are communicated clearly during the application process.

2.5 Regular training is provided in best practices for teachers with international students in their classrooms.

2.6 Upon arrival and prior to attending classes, students are tested in English and other subjects, ensuring that class placement is most appropriate. (In some cases these are re-tests.)

2.7 Disaggregation of student achievement data includes an analysis of the academic performance of international students and analysis of the implications of those data.

Evidence
a. *International student handbook ***
b. *International student admissions policies, and related documents such as application process, including what occurs for interviews, whether in person or via the internet. ***
c. *Instructional Strategies list/materials/inservice notes – from inservice or other similar information provided for teachers of international students ***
d. *Student English and subject placement test scores*
e. *Staffing lists, demonstrating consideration of the unique needs and academic support necessary for an ISP, and ESL/ELL teachers' training and qualifications*
f. *Evidence of disaggregated student achievement data and analysis*

Standard # 3
<u>Spiritual Formation</u>
The school shall provide a holistic approach to spiritual development that enables international students to learn about God in a non-coercive environment. The goal is to allow students to

experience Christ in a loving community of faith through classes and outside of school experiences.

    3.1 The school will primarily seek to welcome, love, and educate the international student without coercively making them feel that they must convert to Christianity.

    3.2 The school will clearly communicate to international students the expectations regarding spiritual engagement within the academic/co-curricular community prior to acceptance.

    3.3 Bible classes will accommodate international students that are not Christians (either special classes or special strategies for non-Christians in regular Bible classes).

    3.4 The school implements teaching strategies and pursues learning objectives in non-Bible courses that accommodate international students who are not believers (specifically in biblical integration assignments).

    3.5 Significant and culturally sensitive adults will be trained and available to help mentor students as they begin to question, accept, or grow in the Christian faith.

    3.6 Service and ministry opportunities will be available to international students in a way that is not threatening to them throughout their connection with the school.

Evidence
a. *The application's statement to be signed by the student and parents explaining what spiritual life requirements will be required. (For example, expectations to take Bible classes every year, attend chapel, live with Christian families, and attend church) ***
b. *Available Bible classes appropriate for non-believers or any accommodations in regular Bible classes for non-believers or for those with language differences. ***
c. *Any accommodations in non-Bible courses for biblical integration assignments/assessments (without negative grade consequences)*
d. *Available spiritual counselors or mentors in the school/community.*
e. *Service and ministry learning opportunities that welcome and enable international student involvement.*

Standard # 4
<u>Homestay/Boarding</u>
The school shall provide a homestay environment that is safe, healthy, and conducive to learning for international students. Positive relationships between homestay parents, students, and sending parents will be encouraged in order to provide as much support as possible to the international student and their family.

    4.1 The school monitors monthly the living situation of all international students (not living with relatives), and accepts responsibility to oversee homestay, boarding, and school/student/family relationships.

    4.2 A Homestay Coordinator (or similar position) oversees the homestay arrangements for students. He/she monitors and troubleshoots any situations that need attention and works with the agents or sending parents as needed (depending on the agent agreement).

    4.3 The school ensures that all involved in the homestay program have been thoroughly oriented and held accountable for the care and protection of international students.

    4.4 Policies regarding homestays are written, disseminated to all parties, and consistently enforced (includes required items such as insurance, discipline, travel, etc.).

    4.5 Financial arrangements for homestay parents are regularly paid, scheduled ahead of time, and do not depend on students choosing to pay the bill each month (as outlined in the agent agreements).

    4.6 The school follows well-defined procedures for recruiting and selecting of host families to include application process, background checks, interview process, and home visit.

4.7 The Homestay Coordinator ensures that homestay parents and sending parents communicate regularly. He/she also makes sure that the homestay parents receive feedback on how students are responding to the homestay environment.

4.8 Pastoral recommendations, personal testimonies, and a willingness to engage students spiritually should be included as criteria for selection as homestay or boarding parents. (Required for dormitory style living and highly recommended for other homestay arrangements.)

Evidence
a. *A written homestay policy manual provided to sending parents, host families, school leaders, and international students…may have sections on payments, selection and placement of students, discipline expectations and procedures, changing host families, compensation, agency relations, student driving, student travel, and church attendance expectations. (Some of these issues are agency dependent and many not be covered in a general homestay manual.) **
b. *Monthly monitoring reports (logs/notes) may include information such as student adjustments, grades or academic issues, activities, relationship development, school communication, parent communication, medical issues, changes in homestay, and general concerns.*
c. *Verification of health/accident insurance on file and considered necessary for attendance of classes. Specific "international student" plan to include evacuation to country of origin, if needed. Compensated staff are not to derive income from the sale of any such policies.*
d. *A Homestay Coordinator (or key contact person) job description (oversees homestay arrangements).*
e. *Documentation for financial arrangements for homestay parents*
f. *Communication to overseas family of origin include regular reports from the homestay parents and the coordinator.*
g. *Well-defined criteria/application process for selection of host families including background checks required of all family members 18 and older, interview, and home visit process **
h. *Description of minimal space which must be provided for international students, such as: private bedroom with desk, bed and bedding, closet, dresser/chest of drawers, and adequate lighting for desk and room, desk chair, laundry hamper, and internet access somewhere in the house.*
i. *Curriculum for orientation and training for homestay parents*
j. *Surveys, report forms, logs, or other written feedback from sending parents and students, and the Homestay Coordinator to homestay parents*

Standard #5
Student Support Services
The school shall provide physical, spiritual, emotional, and academic support in order to help the international student succeed in school and all other areas of his/her life. Administrators, counselors, specialized staff, faculty, and homestay personnel will work together to ensure that the international student is well-prepared, has the skills he/she needs, and is supported through his/her time at the school.

5.1 New student orientation takes place prior to the school year.
5.2 The school has a well-developed plan (either through an agency or with legal advice in the state) for acting on behalf of the student in emergencies. Student receives crucial contact and emergency information during orientation. (See c. in Evidence.)
5.3 The school/homestay program has a defined system of how to handle complaints for abuse/neglect and any other concerns students may bring to them.
5.4 A wide range of strategies are used to incorporate involvement for international students with domestic students. Some of these are training for cultural sensitivity,

social activities, service/ministry, clubs, sports, and various strategies to encourage friendships in and out of the classroom.

5.5 Specialized services include personal, spiritual, and academic guidance, as needed (for students and sending parents). A special emergency plan exists for any student that may have high risk factors (medical, mental health).

5.6 Students and sending parents receive a post-experience evaluation of both homestay and academic program.

Evidence
a. *New student orientation curriculum covering items such as use of library, calculators, research papers, support services, plagiarism, extra-curricular activities, how to report abuse/neglect, etc. ***
b. *ID/emergency cards for students*
c. *To allow school or host family personnel to aid the student in emergencies, the most often recommended forms are Limited Power of Attorney or a Medical Release Form and not guardianship. Each school must check the laws in their state.*
d. *Cultural sensitivity training or activities which help students of different cultures get to know each other better*
e. *Schedule of specific international student events or support for international students during regular events. (An example might be a specific college tour for international students or special session to explain college requirements.)*
f. *Academic or college counseling events or instructions for international students*
g. *Information for parents overseas on access to online grade reporting, if available.*
h. *Survey forms or results from previous surveys (post-experience)*
i. *List of ideas for developing relationships or inservice training on the topic (for homestay parents/teachers)*
j. *Specialized services or plans needed on a case-by-case basis*

Required evidence