NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Accreditation Pathways for International Schools

OVERVIEW OF NEASC ACCREDITATION PATHWAYS FOR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

One size does not fit all

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on International Education (NEASC-CIE) offers schools several pathways to internationally recognized accreditation and school development to help schools move toward a more learner-focused approach to education.

NEASC understands that schools are at various places in their development, and they have needs that require a personalized approach. We believe that "one size does not fit all" when it comes to school accreditation and therefore offer several pathways to NEASC Accreditation.

About NEASC

NEASC is the oldest authorized accreditation agency in the United States, established in 1885 under the leadership of Harvard President Charles Eliot, and building on the best of American educational research and experience. For more than four decades and with the recognition and support of the US State Department Office of Overseas Schools, NEASC-CIE has served diverse PK-12 schools around the world – including those who offer any combination of American, British, IB, or other international curricula. All types of international schools can benefit from our uniquely effective process leading to accreditation. Many schools offering a High School Diploma appreciate that the designation of NEASC Accreditation is recognized by various Ministries of Education as well as by universities in New England, throughout North America, and around the world.

NEASC Accreditation Cycle
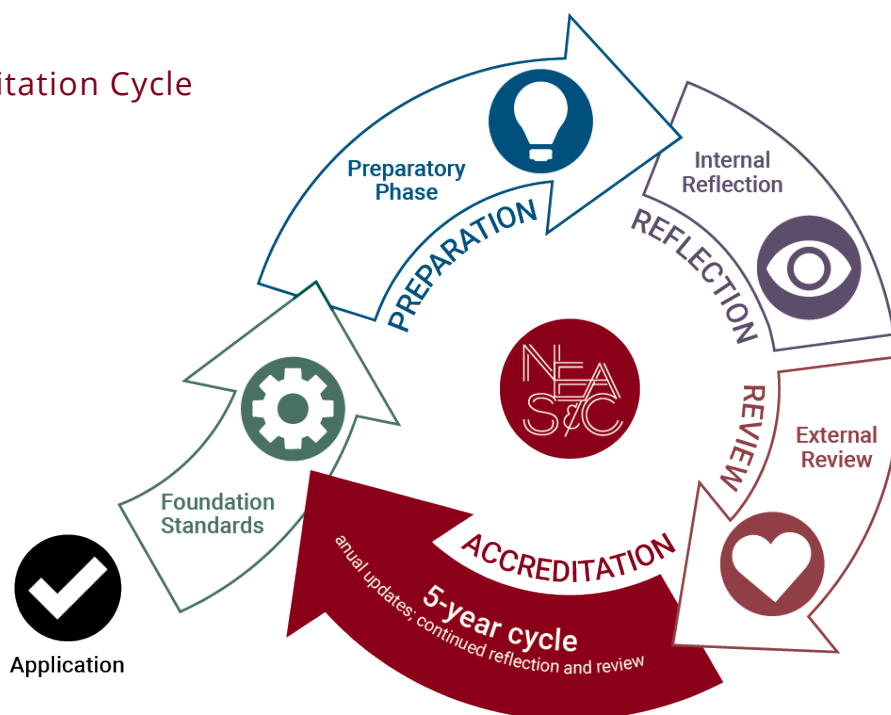
NEASC ACCREDITATION CYCLE

Application ✔

School completes application with required documentation.

NEASC APPROVAL initiates accreditation journey.

Foundation Standards ⚙

School submits a Foundation Standards Report and then hosts
1-2 Foundation Standards Visitors (2-3 days).

Pathway agreed between school and NEASC.

CANDIDACY AWARDED

Preparatory Phase 💡

Schools submits Preparatory ("Prep") Report and hosts a Prep Visit
that leads into a year-long Reflection period.

Internal Reflection 👁

School conducts a 12+ month Internal Reflection following guidance
offered in the Preparatory Phase, beginning with a **Learning Community
Survey** to gather input from stakeholders.

External Review ♥

Schools hosts a visiting team for 5+ days to review school's Reflection and to
prepare a detailed report with recommendations and guidance.
Team reports are reviewed by relevant agencies and then sent to the
school, with outcome decisions and next steps.

ACCREDITATION AWARDED

Accreditation

School enters ongoing 5-year cycle

All schools who have been granted NEASC accreditation and entered the
ongoing review cycle will submit an Annual Update to NEASC in years 3-5 to
report on Foundation Standards and other relevant data.

PATHWAYS TO NEASC ACCREDITATION

ACE Learning Pathway

Launched in 2016, ACE Learning gives schools the opportunity to earn NEASC Accreditation while focusing heavily on effective learning and teaching in a modern world. Schools address the Foundation Standards early in the process so that the Internal Reflection process can focus primarily on creating a highly effective learning-focused community based on Learning Impacts. NEASC's ten ACE Learning Principles give schools a framework for deep conversations about effective learning.

Standard Pathway

NEASC Accreditation on the Standard Pathway is for schools on a longer developmental continuum that allows a focus on building strong foundations that support a safe, sustainable, and effective learning community. A school accredited on the Standard Pathway is expected to pursue the ACE Pathway during subsequent accreditation cycles.

Collaborative Learning Protocol (CLP)
with the International Baccalaureate Organization

The International Baccalaureate (IB) and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges have designed the Collaborative Learning Protocol (CLP) to provide schools with a consolidated IB program evaluation and NEASC accreditation experience and reporting process. The CLP leverages the alignment in approach between the two organizations and benefits schools by reducing the burden and duplication of effort. Schools using the CLP receive ongoing support from both the IB and NEASC, host one collaborative visiting team of highly trained IB and NEASC team members, and receive one report after the Peer Evaluation Visit. To qualify, schools must either have only one section (primary, middle, or senior) and authorized to deliver the relevant IB programme for that section or is authorized to deliver two or more IB programmes (e.g., PYP and DP). Schools must also align the timing of the two agencies' five-year cycles.

The CLP provides schools with the opportunity to engage with peers and self-evaluation leading to:

- continued authorization to implement IB programmes
- initial or continued NEASC Accreditation for qualifying schools on the ACE Learning Pathway
- ongoing growth and transformation of learning

Pathways to NEASC Accreditation

ACE Learning Pathway

School leadership prepares the ACE Learning Principles Preparatory Report to gain familiarity with the ACE Protocol. Prior accredited schools also complete a Foundation Standards Report (abbreviated) in the Preparatory Phase.

School hosts the **Preparatory Visit** – typically **two visitors for three or four days.** Following a successful Preparatory Visit, the school begins the ACE Internal Reflection and hosts the External Review Visit about a year later.

Standard Pathway

School leadership prepares a Standard Preparatory Report which includes an Action Plan based on the Foundation Standards recommendations and responds to several questions on Learning and Teaching, Wellness and Inclusion, and Community.

School hosts **Preparatory Visit** – typically **two visitors for three days.** Following a successful Preparatory Visit, the school begins the Standard Pathway Internal Reflection and hosts the External Review Visit about a year later.

CLP Pathway with IB

School leadership prepares the NEASC Preparatory Report to gain familiarity with the ACE Learning Protocol, which includes additional IB-specific questions. Prior accredited schools also complete a Foundation Standards Report (abbreviated) in the Preparatory Phase.

School hosts the **Preparatory Visit** – typically **two visitors for three or four days.** Following a successful visit, the school begins the CLP Learning Community Reflection. During this time, the school submits to the IB required documentation for the IB Preliminary Review. The CLP Peer Evaluation Visit follows about a year after the Prep Visit.

Other

NEASC Joint Accreditation with Council of International Schools (CIS)

Another common Pathway is the Joint NEASC-CIS Accreditation Pathway, facilitated in partnership with the Council on International Schools (CIS) in Europe. Schools on this Pathway follow the CIS international accreditation protocol, with both NEASC and CIS providing equal numbers of visitors and co-leaders for visits at the Preparatory and External Review phases. School support and evaluation is done in close cooperation with CIS, but NEASC will independently review all reports and make accreditation judgments independent from CIS.

Given the two agencies' similar five-year accreditation cycles, schools accredited by only CIS may add NEASC to their current process relatively easily.

Policy 1.6

Schools currently accredited and in good standing with another recognized accreditation agency and who wish to switch to NEASC Accreditation may apply under NEASC's Policy 1.6 which leads to an important two-day Foundation Standards Visit. If the visit is successful, then a school switching accreditation agencies will be awarded NEASC Accreditation with no gap in accredited status.

For more information on any of NEASC's approaches to accreditation and school development, please contact us at cie@neasc.org.

⚙ NEASC FOUNDATION STANDARDS

All NEASC schools must evidence strong foundations at the start of their accreditation journey and provide Annual Updates. A thorough review, supported by documentation and a visit, is conducted every four to five years. The Foundation Standards template contains indicators to rate alignment with each of the six **Foundation Standards**.

See Document #109 for the detailed requirements.

Learning Structure	The school has in place clear statements that express a shared understanding of learning and objectives that shape and drive its programs and practices. A curriculum articulating learning outcomes, expected teaching practices, and principles of assessment exist.
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, adults, and visitors 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 program 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.
Boarding/Residential	The boarding/residential program, if offered, effectively supports the wellbeing and enhances the learning experiences of all boarding students and staff.

ACE LEARNING PRINCIPLES

1 Learning Purposes	Learning builds understandings, competencies, knowledge, and dispositions that can be applied across different situations. Learners become responsible and successful global citizens by actively engaging with complex real-world issues.
2 Dimensions of Learning	Learners grow through regular engagement in creative, ethical, interpersonal, technological, environmental, physical, and entrepreneurial experiences. Learners explore ideas and develop solutions that may have impact beyond themselves.
3 Evidence of Learning	Learners engage with feedback that promotes self-awareness, improvement, and mastery. Learners demonstrate growth and development in a variety of forms.
4 Learning Perspectives	Learners face complex problems, challenges, and issues that promote deep learning. Learners consider multiple perspectives and take informed risks in the pursuit of knowledge.
5 Learner Autonomy and Engagement	Learners have age-appropriate, goal-oriented autonomy over their learning and make informed choices supported by guidance within and beyond the classroom.
6 Research, Reflection, and Action	The learning community applies current research, connects with other learning communities, and uses future-oriented thinking to improve learning for all. The learning community evaluates the results of its actions and pursues questions about future innovations that prepare learners to shape their present and future. Likewise, learners analyze the results of their efforts and collaborate with peers to improve and extend their learning.
7 Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Belonging	The learning community exhibits a culture of inclusiveness that enables the diverse needs, identities, and interests of all learners and community members to be acknowledged, actively celebrated, and proactively addressed. Differing viewpoints and opinions are invited in pursuit of an informed and welcoming community.
8 Governance and Leadership for Learning	The roles of leadership and governance are aligned with the school's learning goals, unified through a common mission, and organized through well-aligned structures that allow informed analysis, communication, and decision-making in support of learners.
9 Learning Space and Time	The learning community optimizes physical environments, virtual opportunities, and time to support learning and wellbeing for all.
10 Learning Community Wellbeing	The learning community is a healthy environment where all members thrive. Respectful, healthy, ethical, and honest relationships create a true sense of community. Community values are clearly stated, actively lived, and define a distinct, sustained identity.

STANDARD PATHWAY

The Standard Pathway to NEASC Accreditation is for schools on a longer developmental continuum that allows a focus on building strong foundations that support a safe, sustainable, and effective learning community. A school accredited on the Standard Pathway is expected to pursue the ACE Pathway during subsequent accreditation cycles.

Foundation Standards ⚙

Learning Structure | Organizational Structure | Health, Safety, and Security
Finance, Facilities, and Resources | Ethical Practice

Learning and Teaching

- The school is driven by clear Guiding Statements that influence decision making.
- Written curriculum is aligned with the Vision, Mission, and Guiding Statements and guides daily practice.
- Learning experiences are balanced between content, skills, and dispositions.
- Assessment methods provide valuable feedback to students, parents, and teachers to enhance learning.
- Students are engaged in their own learning.
- Co-curricular activities provide additional opportunities for learning outside of the school day.
- The school uses space and time structures in ways that contribute to student learning.
- Technology and other learning resources are used to promote learning and to prepare students for an interconnected world.
- Professional development opportunities support the learning and growth of all teaching and nonteaching staff.

Community

- The learning community intentionally encourages a culture of collaboration among all stakeholders.
- Communication internally and externally contributes to a healthy learning community.
- External partnerships serve to expand the capacity of the learning community.
- The school ensures that leadership is effective at improving and sustaining learning.
- The school fosters a positive environment with an open climate and high morale.

Wellness and Inclusion

- All learning community members enjoy opportunities to engage with creative, physical, and social aspects of the school community.
- Individuals and groups in the school are respected for their unique perspectives and contributions.
- Students are supported in their social-emotional wellbeing and in planning for their futures.
- SEN and EAL students are well served so they may effectively learn.
- Students are effectively supported and prepared for all transitions.