An introductory guide to AACSB AoL (Assurance of Learning) at SDA Bocconi

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SDA Bocconi AACSB Accreditation Process

- Submission of the Eligibility Application
- The Pre-Accreditation Committee assigns a mentor who visits SDA Bocconi
- Submission of SDA Bocconi Accreditation Plan
- The Initial Accreditation Committee approves the Accreditation Plan
- Submission of the Annual Report under the mentor supervision
- Update of AoL Reports
- The Initial Accreditation phase starts
- Submission of SDA Bocconi Letter of application for initial accreditation with the date proposal for the site visit
- The IAC appoints the PRT Chair who works with the School to prepare the Self-Evaluation Report
- The PRT Chair visits SDA Bocconi
- Submission of the SER Self Evaluation Report
- Peer Review Team site visit
- The AACSB International Board of Directors ratifies the AACSB Initial Accreditation of SDA Bocconi School of Management
Mission (revised in 2010)

The SDA Bocconi Mission is:

*To contribute to the development of individuals and organizations by creating and disseminating innovative managerial knowledge*

*“Empowering lives through knowledge and imagination”*
AACSB Business Accreditations Standards

- **Strategic Management Standards (1-5)**
  A school articulates its mission and action items as a guide to its view of the future, planned evolution, infrastructure, and use of resources. The AACSB Accreditation review process is linked to a school’s mission. The strategic management standards verify that a school focuses its resources and efforts toward a defined mission as embodied in a mission statement.

- **Participants Standards (6-14)**
  A direct link exists between a school’s mission, the characteristics of students served by the educational programs, the composition and qualifications of the faculty members providing the programs, and the overall quality of the school. Therefore, these standards focus on maintaining a mix of both student and faculty participants that achieve high quality in the activities that support the school’s mission.

- **Assurance of learning Standards (15-21)**
  Student learning is the central activity of higher education. Definition of learning expectations and assurance that graduates achieve learning expectations are key features of any academic program. The learning expectations derive from a balance of internal and external contributions to the definition of educational goals. Members of the business community, students, and faculty members each contribute valuable perspectives on the needs of graduates. Learning goals should be set and revised at a level that encourages continuous improvement in educational programs.

Assurance of Learning – AoL Process

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Assurance of Learning - AoL Process

Step 1
Establish learning goals and objectives

Step 2
Alignment of curricula with adopted goals

Step 3
Identification of assessment instruments and measures

Step 4
Collection, analyzing, and dissemination of assessment information

Step 5
Using assessment information for continuous improvement including documentation that the process is being carried out on an ongoing, systematic basis

What is Assurance of Learning?

Assurance of learning is a regular, systematic, and sustainable mechanism that assures that predetermined learning goals and learning experiences are occurring.

Why is Assurance of Learning Important?

Helps to determine whether the School’s mission has been accomplished.

Provides a rationale for modifying existing curriculum and instructional methods.

Enables the School to examine student growth and satisfaction.
Learning Goals and Learning Objectives

Goals express what the School wants its students to be

Objectives describe what the School wants its students to do

The definition of learning goals is a key element in how the school defines itself. This implies that

the learning goals are closely related and connected to the School and the program’s mission

Assessment vs. Evaluation

Grades, when used alone, are no longer regarded as adequate indicators of student learning

Assessment focuses on the student and the learning environment

Evaluation focuses on the professor and the teaching performance

Course grades are not program assessment measures
What is Program-Level Assessment as specified by AACSB

Deep learning is a curriculum function. It is not a course function.

AACSB states that the School must specify and assess learning goals for each degree program.

Some Assessment Ways and Means

DIRECT ASSESSMENT
acquires evidence about student learning and the learning environment

- Course embedded measurement
- Case studies
- Classroom assignments
- Oral presentations
- Simulations
- Business Plan

- Stand-alone measurement
- Thesis or final project
- Stand-alone examinations at the end of the program
- Final assignments

INDIRECT ASSESSMENT
acquires evidence about how students feel about learning and their learning environment

- Employers, Alumni, Students
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Questionnaires
- Focus Group

*may be part of an assessment program, but alone are not sufficient*
Grading and Assessing: Critical Thinking in a Speaking Environment

Traits:

3 2 1

Critical Thinking

1. Identifying
   -X-

2. Exploring
   

3. Prioritizing
   

4. Revisioning
   

Speaking

5. Voice and pace
   

6. Body language, mannerisms
   

7. Professionalism, audience awareness
   

8. Use of media
   

9. Handling of questions
   

Score = 19

Scoring:

27-23 Exceeds expectations
22-16 Meets expectations
15-9 Does not meet expectations

[Mean score = 19.2 or 2.1 / 3 ≈ 2.8 / 4]

QUESTION: What part(s) of the curriculum deserves special attention?
The three dimensions and the related Learning Goals are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Learning Goal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>1. Management Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduates will be competent in the core functional areas and understand how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>these areas are integrated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENVIRONMENT</td>
<td>2. Entrepreneurial mindset and creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduates will acquire an entrepreneurial and creative mindset.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Diversity and global business issues</td>
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<td>Graduates will understand the impact of diversity on organizations, and will</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>have an understanding of the main global issues affecting companies, public/</td>
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<td></td>
<td>non-profit organizations, banks and financial institutions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Ethics &amp; Integrity</td>
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<td>Graduates will be conscious of the needs to comply with rules, regulations,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>social norms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MANAGEMENT SKILLS</td>
<td>5. Strategic Thinking &amp; Problem Solving Skills</td>
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<td>Graduates will formulate effective strategies and make decisions, using</td>
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<td></td>
<td>problem solving techniques.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Teamwork &amp; Leadership Skills</td>
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<td>Graduates will work effectively in teams, using interpersonal, communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and leadership skills.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Project Management Skills</td>
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<td>Graduates will be able to effectively plan and implement projects and activities</td>
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<tr>
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<td>and to coordinate tasks and monitor their progress.</td>
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</table>
### SDA Bocconi AoL CYCLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Master Division Director</th>
<th>Program Director</th>
<th>Program Faculty</th>
<th>AoL Team</th>
<th>Instructions and templates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>September</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Submits the annual assessment plan to the Master Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Program Director fills in a matrix that highlights the impact of courses on various LGs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Before the start of Programs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program Director and Faculty meet to share the assessment plan and measurements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Each Program Director fills in a matrix that shows which LGs will be measured, where and when in accordance with the program calendar. The templates are pre-printed with LGs/Objectives for each Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>According to the annual assessment plan</strong></td>
<td>Collects measurements and documents (tests, exams, assignments, etc.)</td>
<td>Carry out the planned measurements</td>
<td>Supervises the measurements collection and the implementation of assessment results</td>
<td>Template to be filled in by the Program Faculty for the LGs/Objectives measurements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>According to the Program calendar and the annual assessment plan</strong></td>
<td>Program Director and Faculty meet to share and discuss assessment results and actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Program Director fills in the template</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>June/July</strong></td>
<td>Submits the AoL cycle results to the Management Board Strategic Meeting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Quality, Accreditation and Benchmarking Office and the Program Directors prepare the annual report</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>July</strong></td>
<td>Submits the Program Director Annual Report to the Master Committee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Program Directors Annual Report Scheme</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SDA Bocconi’s steps to follow

Assess and check
the LGs through assignments, exams, business games, cases, etc.
Write a short report concerning student performance.

Maintain examples
of student works, grading rubrics or other examples demonstrating
student achievement of course objectives.

Collect data and share them
in a meeting with the Program Faculty talking about continuously
improving student learning over time.

Close the loop
Report data, feedback and curricula intervention (if required) in the
Program Directors Annual Report and discuss them in the July Meeting
of the Master Division. Report the data to the Accreditation Officer.

Who does what
What should Faculty do?

Agree on the products students should produce and the behaviors they should exhibit and agree on specific objectives for the course.

Make sure that course objectives are relevant to Program-level Learning Goals.

Agree on how best to measure Student Performance on each objective contributing to program-level Learning Goals.

Depending on the method used to assess a course objective, develop a rubric or a method of measurement.

Evaluate student performance on the specific objective on three levels: **Level 1: FAIR** (Did not meet expectations - Limited Accomplishment); **Level 2: GOOD** (Meet expectations - Some problems need improvement); **Level 3: EXEMPLARY** (Meet expectations - Considerable expertise shown with Project).

Report findings to Program Faculty.

Discuss the results and determine any actions to take (if necessary).

What should Program Directors, Course Coordinator and Faculty do?

Develop course learning objectives that lead to fulfillment of learning goals.

Collect data from faculty to support or measure student learning (including a representative sample of measurements devices/techniques/assignments to be maintained in the office of the course coordinator).

Report results to the Master Division Committee.

Discuss and act on results obtained.
What documentation must be retained by the Course Coordinators or Program Directors?

Retain copies of instruments used for direct assessment of student learning (assignments, written products, test questions, rubrics, scoring grids, etc.).

Retain sample products relating to the instruments used. Aggregate results should be retained by semester or by year.

Retain a record of course or pedagogical changes with special emphasis given to items concerning improving in course content or delivering.

Must all students be assessed?

Sampling may be utilized as long as it is representative. Faculty assessing learning outcomes have the responsibility for determining appropriate representative sample sizes.

Should Program Directors, course coordinators and faculty gather data and submit results every year?

Since assessment is a continuous process, Program Directors, Course Coordinator and Faculty are encouraged to gather data each year.

At least 3 Program LGs are reviewed every year (one Learning Goal for each of the three Dimensions)

Each LG must be measured at least two times every 5 years.
How many students must meet or exceed the performance standard?

The focus of AACSB-International will be how these data are used for continuous improvement purposes. A poor showing of student mastery would only be a concern if course content, delivery or the curriculum were not modified to improve performance.

AACSB also expects that assessment processes will improve over time. Although faculty must establish their own expectations SDA Bocconi decided that:

A satisfactory level of achievement would be having **not more than 30% of students in Level 1** (Fair).

Revise thresholds linked to student progression and talent empowerment
**Keep it simple**

- Look for (and adopt) common LGs
- One Issue → One LG
- Same LGs → same objectives → same measures
- Differences must be explained/justified

Clarify and simplify the wording

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**Make it clear**

- Do not assume if it is clear for you it must be clear for everyone (Students too)
- Link actions to outcomes

Link outcomes to mission
Measurement tips

- Explain the way you measure (tools and rubrics)
- Define common thresholds (30% Fair as a limit for taking actions)
- Adopt also some external evaluation
- Consider improvements also with acceptable results

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