

Preparing for

The External Review Visit

INTERNATIONAL
CHRISTIAN ACCREDITING
ASSOCIATION



2025-2026

EXTERNAL REVIEW VISIT TEAM

The number of members on the ERV team must be sufficient to evaluate the school within the timeframe of the site visit. If the school includes an Early Learning program (below K5) in its accreditation, an additional team member may be added with the responsibility for review of that program.

While compiling ERV teams, the ICAA office will consider both the makeup of the team and the financial cost to the school. We trust the Holy Spirit to put together the team that your school needs.

Generally, the size of the External Review Visit Team will be:

Enrollment	Lead Evaluator	Team Members
<100	1	2-3
100-250	1	3-4
251-500	1	4-5
500+	1	5-6



Exchange cell phone numbers among the Head of School, Principal(s), Accreditation Specialist, Lead Evaluator, and Team Members so you can easily communicate during travel or when off-site.

COST

The host school is required to pay or reimburse the Lead Evaluator's and Team Members' expenses for travel, meals, lodging, and other ERV-related expenses. These may include, but are not limited to, flights, car rentals, mileage to/from the airport and ERV location, meals during travel, and travel insurance. Mileage is reimbursed at the U.S. IRS mileage rate current at the time of the visit.

Travel insurance is always recommended when purchasing flights and reserving vehicles. On occasion, External Review Visit team members are delayed during travel due to issues outside their control (airline changes, weather conditions, etc).

If a team member incurs expenses due to these delays, the host school is responsible for reimbursing those reasonable expenses, even if the team member is ultimately unable to arrive for the visit.

On the last day of the visit, the Lead Evaluator will submit the team's expense forms to the school. While most schools make reimbursements before the team departs, ICAA allows for payment up to 30 days after the visit.

The school is not responsible for costs unrelated to the site visit itself or for substitute personnel required by the ERV team member's school while serving on a site visit.



- Plan ahead and save for ERV costs over several budget cycles
- Give your finance officer a heads up about the reimbursement deadline

TRAVEL

The Lead Evaluator will discuss with the host school whether the school will arrange travel on behalf of the team or if each team member will arrange their own travel and be reimbursed. If the school arranges travel, team members should be sent travel arrangements as soon as possible.

The school will also be responsible for providing transportation to/from the airport, hotel, church, restaurants, etc. Schools often arrange for school personnel to chauffeur the team or for the team to use a school vehicle or rental vehicle. The host school should clearly communicate these arrangements to the Lead Evaluator at least two weeks prior to the visit.

For return travel, it is preferred that team members leave the school site on Tuesday after 12pm if flight schedules allow. The Lead Evaluator may request to stay an additional night in order to complete the Final Report for submission to the ICAA office.

If any External Review Visit team members will be traveling from out-of-country, the host school should provide visa information and assistance in a timely manner. Additionally, school personnel should meet the team members at the airport to provide safety, transportation, and any assistance needed upon arrival.



LODGING



Host schools are required to provide lodging for all team members for the duration of the site visit. Generally, this is three nights (Saturday, Sunday, Monday), although this may vary depending on the schedule and travel arrangements.

Guidelines:

- Lodging may not be in homes.
- Accommodations should be in a nice hotel that is safe, clean, and comfortable. Quality should range between Hampton Inn / Holiday Inn Express on the lower end to Hilton Garden Inn / Marriott Courtyard on the higher end.
- Each individual team member must have their separate room and full bathroom.
- Rooms should be well lit, with a desk or work area.
- Wi-Fi should be included in the hotel reservation for all team members.
- An adequate breakfast with a few options should be provided by the hotel.
- A welcome basket with snacks in each room is a nice touch but not required.
- Reserve a private meeting room for ERV team:
 - Not part of any team member's room or suite
 - Private and quiet
 - Large enough to comfortably accommodate the full team
 - Set up with tables and reasonably comfortable chairs for team members
 - Sufficient electrical outlets for each team member to plug in laptops or other equipment
 - Beverages and snacks are a welcome addition

FOOD

Host schools are required to provide meals for all team members for the duration of the site visit. Generally, this includes Saturday lunch through Tuesday lunch, although this may vary depending on your visit's schedule and team members' travel arrangements.

Prior to the visit, check with each team member for allergies and favorite snacks/drinks. When providing beverages, please do not provide alcohol, even if it is the cultural norm in your city or country.

BREAKFAST

If an adequate breakfast is not provided by the hotel, arrangements will need to be made for the ERV team to eat breakfast before their daily tasks begin.

LUNCH

<i>Saturday</i>	If the team arrives prior to lunchtime, plan for lunch. They may have been travelling since early that morning and be hungry as soon as they land.
<i>Sunday</i>	If the school is church-sponsored, this may be a good time for the team to meet with the pastor(s). Lunch on-site at the church or school is best for this meeting.
<i>Monday</i>	Lunch should be on-site at the school. Food may be brought in from a restaurant or provided by the school cafeteria.
<i>Tuesday</i>	Depending on travel schedules, the school should provide a stipend for lunch, bring in food from a restaurant, provide lunch through the school cafeteria, or take the team to an off-site restaurant.

FOOD (CONT)

DINNER

Saturday

If the team arrives prior to dinner, plan to provide this meal. This is often a good time for school board interviews.

*Sunday
&
Monday*

The ERV team will be working in their hotel meeting room on Sunday and Monday evenings. Dinner should be delivered to the team for their working meetings.

SNACKS

It is a good idea to provide the ERV team's favorite snacks to their workroom at the school and their hotel meeting room.

GIFT BAGS

Gift bags and favorite snacks of the team members are welcome, as long as items can be consumed during the visit or are small, inexpensive, and can easily be traveled with.



WORKROOM AT SCHOOL



The school must provide the ERV team a work room on-site at the school.

- Private and quiet
- Well lit and at a comfortable temperature
- Able to be locked when not in use by the team
- Wi-Fi
- Set up with tables and reasonably comfortable chairs for team members
- Large enough to comfortably accommodate the full team and their laptops, documents, etc
- Sufficient electrical outlets for each team member to plug in laptops or other equipment
- Ability to print from laptops
- Access to a copier
- Basic office supplies (notepads, pens, sticky notes, stapler, paper clips, etc)
- Beverages and snacks are a welcome addition

BINDER

Upon arrival, ERV team members should each be provided a binder containing:

- Visit schedule
- List of school personnel
 - Names
 - Roles
 - Classroom or office location
- Map of school facilities
- Daily class schedule for each faculty member
- After-hours contact information for Head of School and/or other official school contact person

NAMETAGS

As a safety measure and to help your stakeholders feel more comfortable addressing the ERV team members, please provide nametags to the ERV team for the duration of the visit. It is also recommended that school personnel and stakeholders who participate in interviews be provided name tags to help the ERV team communicate with them on a more personal level.



SCHEDULE

The Lead Evaluator and the school's Head of School or Accreditation Specialist will collaborate on the school's External Review Visit schedule.

DEADLINE: Two weeks before visit

It may be helpful to finalize the schedule earlier so stakeholders can make plans to be at the interviews.



The schedule must include:

- Scheduled time each evening for the ERV team to meet and work
- Facilities tour
- Church service, if school is church sponsored
- Interviews with the school board, administrators, faculty/staff, selected students, and selected parents
- Class observations
- Drop-off and pick-up observations
- Exit meeting with administrators and their invited participants

The Lead Evaluator will provide a sample schedule as a starting point in the scheduling process.



Communicate early and often with the school board, pastor(s), faculty/staff about time commitments required. Start with general information and add specific dates and times as those are finalized.

AVAILABILITY

The Head of School, Principal(s), and Accreditation Specialist should be available to the ERV team during the full visit, including after hours. If these administrators have teaching duties, please obtain a substitute for the days of the site visit unless the Lead Evaluator requests them to teach classes for the purpose of class observations.



SUNDAY MORNING CHURCH

For schools that are church sponsored, the External Review Visit schedule will include Sunday morning attendance at the sponsoring church.



Two weeks prior to the visit, communicate to the ERV team what people normally wear to your Sunday morning services.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

A major component of the ICAA accreditation process is stakeholder feedback. In addition to reviewing evidence of surveys as provided on the Self-Assessment, the ERV team will obtain feedback from key school stakeholders by interviewing various stakeholder groups.

Interviews should be limited to 30 minutes per group.

SCHOOL BOARD

The school board will be interviewed as a group. All school board members should be present. The Head of School should also be present at this meeting. Often this meeting is held over dinner at a restaurant that is well-suited for conversations.

PASTOR(S)

If the school is church sponsored, an interview with pastors may be included on the visit schedule. Often this meeting is held over Sunday lunch after church.

ADMINISTRATORS

The school's administrator(s) will be interviewed as a group. All administrators should be present.

FACULTY/STAFF

Depending on the size of the faculty/staff, they may be interviewed as one group or broken into multiple smaller groups (ex: elementary, middle/high, auxiliary staff). No school administrators, board members, or other employees with supervisory authority over personnel should attend any faculty/staff interviews.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS (CONT)

STUDENTS

A representative sampling of the student body will be interviewed in a group setting. Students should be selected randomly by the school, with representatives from all grades levels. Elementary students should be interviewed separately from middle/high school students. Depending on student enrollment, middle school students may be interviewed separately from high school students. No school personnel should attend any student interviews.

PARENTS

A representative sampling of parents will be interviewed in a group setting. Parents should be selected randomly by the school, with representatives from all grade levels. It is helpful to have representatives from various segments of families such as: new to the school; have been in the school for many years; members of the sponsoring church; not members of the sponsoring church; have one student in the school; have multiple students in the school; etc. No school personnel should attend any parent interviews.



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS (CONT)



- Obtain parent permission for student interviews. Communicate that student interviews are an integral part of the visit and that their child will be representing the student body. Make sure they know the day and general time (morning or afternoon), as well as dress code and what types of things the students may be asked. Let them know the interviews will be in a group setting and no student will be interviewed individually.
- When inviting your selected parents to participate in interviews, communicate that these interviews are an integral part of the External Review Visit process. Let them know the interviews will be in a group setting and no parent will be interviewed individually.
- Have a practice run with student interviewees the week before the visit. Release them from class in the same way, meet in the actual interview room, return them to class the same way, etc. Thank them for representing their classmates and help them understand what they are being asked to do. Give a brief overview of what the actual interviews will be like, how many people to expect, etc. Give them an opportunity to ask questions, then pray for them and have them return to class in the same way they will after the interviews.
- Reassure all interviewees that they should give honest feedback to the team.

CLASS OBSERVATIONS

Class observations are an important component of the External Review Visit. Class observations should not be viewed as an evaluation of the teacher's ability. Rather, class observations are an opportunity for the team to inform their review of the school's instructional process, especially with regard to student engagement.

The ERV team's goal is to observe every teacher engaged in the instructional process in the classroom. In schools with a small faculty, classrooms may be observed multiple times throughout the day. Should the size of the faculty be too large or limited time hinders the observation of every classroom, the ERV team will work to observe as many classrooms as possible across grades and content areas.

Class observations will last 20 minutes, with no pre-determined schedule. Faculty should be prepared for an observation at any point during their day. It is recommended that faculty not administer exams on the day of observations but should otherwise have a normal day. The ERV team wants to observe normal routines and interactions in classrooms.



ERV team members will use the eleot® during class observations. The eleot® evaluates student engagement across seven learning environments. It is not expected that every environment will be observed in every classroom during a single observation. The purpose of class observations is to evaluate the school, not individual classrooms. The eleot® scores for individual classroom observations will not be kept or become part of the ERV report. All scores will be compiled to reflect the school's classroom engagement as a collective.

In addition to the eleot®, team members will observe the biblical integration component of the classroom.

CLASS OBSERVATIONS (CONT)



- Communicate the purpose and process for class observations clearly to faculty. This is not a teacher evaluation – it is a class observation to see how students engage in their own learning process and how biblical integration is utilized.
- Appropriately communicate with students ahead of time that guests may be in their classroom throughout the day. Encourage them to have a normal day.
- On the day of classroom observations, each teacher should place a chair by the door for the ERV team member. Place the class's schedule for the day on the chair, along with lesson plans, so the team member can have a reference of what is being observed.
- Remember that the ERV team members are educators, too – they understand the quirks of kids in classrooms.



REPORTS



At the end of the visit, the Lead Evaluator will present an Exit Report to the Head of School and any others the Head of School invites to the meeting. In this 20-minute meeting the Lead Evaluator will briefly summarize the conclusions reached by the ERV team. At the end, the Lead Evaluator will indicate what status the ERV team will recommend to the ICAA Commission.

IMPORTANT: The ERV team's recommended status is only a recommendation. The official status will be voted on by the ICAA Commission for Accreditation at a later date. Schools should not announce or publicize the ERV team's recommendation as official.

After the visit, the Lead Evaluator will write a full report of the visit, to include scores from each domain, Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, Improvement Priorities, and a status recommendation. The Lead Evaluator will submit the report to the ICAA office, where it will be reviewed and finalized. After it has been finalized by the ICAA office, a copy of the report will be sent to the school.

In June, the Final Report will be reviewed by an Accreditation Review Committee and the ICAA Commission for Accreditation. the Commission will vote to determine the school's official accreditation status. After the ICAA Commission's vote, the school is encouraged to announce its official status.

On its next Annual Report, the school must submit a *Progress on Improvement* form for each Improvement Priority noted in the Final Report.

TIMELINE

Each school should plan well in advance for their ERV. While each school will plan and prepare according to their needs and schedule, the timeline below is a good starting place.

Time Before ERV	Tasks
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Pre-Visit Information Form (emailed to you by ICAA office)
September – December <i>(Spring Visit)</i> February – May <i>(Fall Visit)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Self-Assessment Create Online Structure for Evidence Collect & Upload All Evidence Communicate with Stakeholders
6–8 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit Self-Assessment and Evidence to Lead Evaluator Reserve Hotel
6 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create Visit Schedule for ERV Team Create Detailed Schedule for School Personnel Select & Invite Interview Groups Purchase Travel and Insurance Finalize Facilities Projects, as Needed
4 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan Meals & Transportation Submit Additional Evidence, as Requested by ERV Team
2 Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase Snacks & Supplies Submit Additional Evidence, as Requested by ERV Team
1 Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm Travel, Food, Lodging, Interview Groups, Etc.
Week of ERV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish Cleaning, as Needed Set up Work Rooms

OUR VISIT INFORMATION

DATES OF VISIT:

DEADLINE FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT & EVIDENCE:

LEAD EVALUATOR:

LEAD EVALUATOR EMAIL:

LEAD EVALUATOR PHONE:

TEAM MEMBERS:

NOTES

CONTACT US

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