

**Survey Report and**

**Team Findings Guide**

**Instructions for**

**Full, Provisional, Preliminary, and Limited**

**Accreditation Surveys**

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LCME*Survey Report and Team Findings Guide, Instructions for Full, Provisional, Preliminary, and Limited Accreditation Surveys*

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## Overview

This document contains the instructions for survey teams to use when preparing LCME survey reports and survey team findings for full, provisional, preliminary, and limited accreditation surveys. This document is the companion to the specific *Survey Report Template* for each type of visit, which provides the framework for the survey report. For information about the roles of team members, the survey visit, and the logistics of planning for and conducting the visit, review the *Guidelines for the Planning and Conduct of Accreditation Survey Visits* on the LCME website ([lcme.org/publications](http://lcme.org/publications/)).

* For **full** survey visits, survey teams are responsible for reviewing the survey package and making a determination of the program’s performance in each of the 93 elements (91 elements for schools without regional campuses).
* For **provisional** survey visits, survey teams are responsible for reviewing the survey package and making a determination of the program’s performance in 49 elements.
* For **preliminary** survey visits, survey teams are responsible for reviewing the survey package and making a determination of the program’s performance for each of the 86 elements, defined as meeting the expectations for a school at this stage of its development.
* For **limited** survey visits, survey teams are responsible for reviewing the briefing book and making a determination of the program’s performance for each element previously cited as satisfactory with a need for monitoring or unsatisfactory in the last review.

Survey teams do not review or make judgments about compliance with the 12 accreditation standards. That judgment is the responsibility of the LCME after its review of the survey report and survey team findings.

**Definitions for Judging a Program’s Performance in Accreditation Elements**

For **full and provisional** survey visits, a **finding** results when the program’s performance in an element is determined to be *satisfactory with a need for monitoring* or *unsatisfactory*.

For **limited** survey visits, a **finding** results when the program’s performance in an element is determined to be *satisfactory*, *satisfactory with a need for monitoring*, or *unsatisfactory*.

The following definitions are to be used in judging a program’s performance in accreditation elements for **full, provisional, and limited survey** visits:

***Satisfactory***

The policy, process, resource, or system required by the element is in place and, if required, there is sufficient evidence that it is effective.

***Satisfactory with a Need for Monitoring***

1. The policy, process, resource, or system required by the element exists but there is insufficient evidence of effectiveness; OR
2. The requirements of the element currently are met but anticipated circumstances could negatively impact performance.

***Unsatisfactory***

One or more requirements of the element is/are not met. Required policy, process, resource, system not in place or ineffective. Formal evidence of effectiveness/sustainability is absent.

For **preliminary** survey visits, a **finding** results when the program’s performance in an element is determined to be *unsatisfactory*. There is no *satisfactory with a need for monitoring* option for preliminary surveys.

The following definitions are to be used when judging a program’s performance in accreditation elements for **preliminary survey visits**.

***Satisfactory***

The policy, process, resource, or system required by the element is in place or sufficiently developed at this stage of the program’s development. If required by the element, there are plans to complete implementation in a timely manner and to collect evidence of effectiveness.

***Unsatisfactory***

The medical education program has not met one or more of the requirements of the element based on what should be in place at this stage of the program’s development. These findings represent the team’s best judgment that current planning and/or program implementation do not represent sufficient progress toward satisfactory performance.

## Steps in the Preparation and Review of the Survey Report and Survey Team Findings

The following steps describe the process for the development of the survey report and survey team findings for a full, provisional, preliminary, or limited survey visit. There are some differences in the process for limited visits which are noted. The templates for the survey report, survey team findings, and exit report for each visit type are available on the LCME website ([lcme.org/publications](http://lcme.org/publications/)). Choose the appropriate documents for the academic year of the survey visit, unless the website listing indicates that that the document is not specific to an academic year.

### Survey Team Members Receive the Survey Package or Briefing Book

Before the survey visit, each survey team member will receive an email from LCME Secretariat staff with instructions for accessing the survey package or briefing book submitted by the school and additional information provided by the LCME Secretariat (if relevant).

* For **full** visits, the survey package consists of a completed Data Collection Instrument (DCI), an appendix of supporting documents for each DCI section, an institutional self-study summary report, the independent student analysis (ISA), and an AAMC Graduation Questionnaire (AAMC GQ) Individual School Report.
* For **provisional** visits, the survey package consists of a completed DCI, an appendix of supporting documents for each DCI section, and the independent student analysis (ISA).
* For **preliminary** visits, the survey package consists of a completed DCI, an appendix of supporting documents for each DCI section, and the planning self-study summary report.
* For **limited** visits, the school’s submission consists of a completed briefing book and appendix of supporting documents.

The communication from the Secretariat will also direct survey team members to informational documents on the LCME website for the relevant type of visit and academic year, which team members should read and download for reference.

It is the responsibility of each survey team member to download all of the above information, including the survey package or briefing book, to have the information available prior to and during the survey visit. All survey team members should handle and store all documents containing information about the school with attention to confidentiality.

### Survey Team Secretary Makes Survey Team Member Assignments

Shortly after the survey team members receive the school’s survey package or briefing book, the survey team secretary assigns the survey team members standards/elements as their specific areas of responsibility. Each survey team member will be responsible for leading the discussion of the assigned areas during the survey visit and drafting those sections of the survey report. The survey report must be prepared using the *Survey Report Template* for the appropriate visit type.

Once survey team members have received specific assignments from the team secretary, they will review their sections of the survey package or briefing book to determine if there are gaps in information. In their review of the survey package or briefing book, survey team members should consider if the information might lead to specific survey team findings in one or more elements. This could result in requests for additional information to clarify potential problem areas or inconsistencies among information sources. The survey team secretary will set and communicate a timeline for survey team members to send a list of potential findings. The potential findings will be used in finalizing the visit schedule and identifying areas for follow-up or requests for additional information, which will be discussed during the team’s initial meeting before the visit, which will be scheduled by the team secretary.

### Survey Team Members Receive Data/Information Updates from the School

All requests for information from the survey team are communicated to the FAL by the survey team secretary. Updates from the school are provided to the members of the survey team electronically by the FAL. It is recommended that survey team members save updates on a USB drive or the computer to which they have downloaded the survey package/briefing book, so that all information is stored in one location.

At the conclusion of the visit, the FAL will provide survey team members with a USB drive that contains all updates that were provided before and during the visit with the date that the information was provided and a table of contents with a list of the files that are included. Survey team members should be careful to use the most updated data/documents/information as they develop their sections of the survey report.

The survey team will not accept additional information after the visit concludes, even if the information (e.g., the policy) existed but was not provided at the time of the survey visit.

**LCME Secretariat Staff-Requested Updates for Full Visit Survey Packages**

Approximately 10 weeks prior to the survey visit, LCME Secretariat staff conduct a brief review of the full survey visit school’s submitted survey package to identify items that are missing or incomplete. LCME Secretariat staff will then contact the FAL with instructions for submitting any such items. Typically, the instructions are to email the material to the LCME staff and to the members of the survey team. This requested information should be sent as soon as possible, but not less than 30 days before the survey visit. Survey team members should incorporate updated/corrected information as appropriate into the survey team report.

**Updates for Full, Provisional, and Preliminary Visit Survey Packages**

**School-initiated Updates**

School-initiated updates or corrections to the DCI and appendix after submitting the survey package should be bundled and sent to the survey team. One bundled update may be provided no later than 30 calendar days before the visit. The timing, format, and process for providing this school-initiated update to the survey team should be coordinated with the survey team secretary.

Unrequested (unsolicited) updates may not be provided later than 30 calendar days before the start of the survey visit. It is becoming more common for schools to do one or more follow-up surveys to the ISA. These may cover selected items or be a repeat of the ISA. While some schools provide the results of the follow-up survey(s) in the survey package submitted three months prior to the survey visit, others submit these surveys at the 30-day prior to the visit deadline (or even later). The following guidelines for standardizing the expectations for follow-up surveys were developed by the Secretariat and approved by the LCME at its June 2024 meeting and will formally go into effect in academic year 2025-26.

A follow-up survey to the ISA, whether created and administered by the school or the student body, will only be considered by the survey team and the LCME if the follow-up survey:

* Uses the same response options as the ISA
* Targets areas identified in the ISA which raise performance concerns for accreditation elements for the program as a whole, for individual classes, or for regional campuses
* Is designed to determine the effects of specific (described) actions taken by the school to address the areas of concern identified in the ISA
* Includes a 70% or higher response rate for each item in each relevant student cohort, with the percent response rate per item calculated using the total number of students in the cohort as the denominator
* Is submitted with accompanying narrative no later than 30 days prior to the beginning of the survey visit (i.e., the deadline date for the single unsolicited submission to the survey team).

**Team Requested Updates**

The survey team secretary or LCME Secretariat staff may also request additional supplemental material. The school may provide such material until the close of the visit.

**Updates for Limited Visit Survey Packages**

Only team-requested updates to the briefing book will be accepted. Note that school-initiated updates will not be accepted at any time. The school will send updates requested by the survey team secretary to the team by email before the visit.

### Survey Team Develops a Set of Findings

As the survey team reviews the survey package prior to the survey visit, team members might identify areas that will become findings. During the initial team meeting, the list of potential findings is discussed and additional information that might support or clarify each finding is identified. Team members with responsibility for these areas should develop relevant questions for their discussions with school representatives during the visit to clarify or collect the needed information.

During the survey visit, survey team members work to finalize a set of findings. The findings should be concise, sufficiently clear and detailed so that the reader understands the scope of the issue being cited. There must be sufficient information available to include in the survey report to justify each finding. Relevant description and data should be included in the finding. For example:

INSUFFICIENT DETAIL: Many medical students do not receive their grades on time.

APPROPRIATE DETAIL: In the internal medicine, obstetrics-gynecology, and surgery clerkships, at least 25% of students did not receive their final grades within six weeks during each of the previous two academic years.

INSUFFICIENT DETAIL: There are insufficient faculty to teach some pre-clerkship courses.

APPROPRIATE DETAIL: In total, there are eight faculty in basic science disciplines, with no representation of faculty in physiology, pathology, pharmacology, and genetics. Some of the first-year courses are not fully staffed and plans for faculty recruitment to fill existing gaps have not been finalized. A recruitment timetable does not exist.

### Survey Team Chair Reports the Survey Team Initial Findings to the Dean

The purpose of the exit report is for the survey team to provide its findings to the medical school dean. The dean is provided with a copy of the exit report within one week of the conclusion of the visit. The survey team will use the *Exit Report Template for Full, Provisional, and Preliminary Accreditation Surveys* or the *Exit Report Template for Limited Accreditation Surveys*. The exit report template allows the survey team to organize its findings, the final version of which will be transferred to the *Survey Team Findings Template*.

The exit report is a one-way transmission of information. Since the LCME may modify the team’s findings when it reviews the survey report, the initial team findings in the exit report should not be disseminated by the school.

### Survey Team Members Complete Their Sections of the Draft Survey Report

During and after the survey visit, the members of the survey team complete their specific writing assignments within the *Survey Report Template* for the appropriate visit type. Prior to the survey visit, survey team members develop draft writeups for their respective areas of responsibility. Doing so allows the team member to identify any gaps or areas needing clarification in the survey report. Survey team members will send their written sections of the survey report to the survey team secretary by email. Other requirements for survey report development include:

* Do not delete the survey report questions/narrative requests. Provide your narrative under each numbered information request.
* Consult the survey team findings to ensure that the reasons for citations of elements are clearly explained and evidenced by appropriate data/descriptions in the survey report narrative and, as relevant, the accompanying appendix documents.
* Complete the tables requested in the survey report template, many of which can be copied from the DCI or briefing book. If the survey team has received updated data/edits for any of the tables, revise the table to ensure that information is as current as possible.
* For narrative and tables from the DCI or briefing book that are included in the survey report, **be sure to change the perspective so it’s written in the survey team’s voice and not the school’s** (for example, DCI’s will often use “our process…” and in the survey report, this should be phrased as “the school’s process” or “the college’s process”).
* Summarize detailed narrative from the DCI or briefing book rather than inserting the DCI or briefing book text verbatim unless the detail is necessary to justify a finding.
* Follow the instructions in the [Style Guide for Survey Report Preparation](#_Style_Guide_for) at the end of this document. For example, DO NOT capitalize administrative titles unless followed by a person’s name.

### Survey Team Secretary Assembles the Draft Survey Report and Prepares the Survey Team Findings

**Draft Survey Report**

The survey team secretary will assemble the complete survey team report by inserting and editing, where appropriate, each survey team member’s contribution into a single survey report using the report template. Where applicable, the survey team secretary will also review and complete other required sections of the survey report.

The survey team secretary will review the complete draft survey report carefully to ensure that there are no gaps across sections, that all sections include sufficient detail, that there is sufficient narrative and evidence to support all findings, that the report narrative is consistent with the related finding, and that all tables have been completed with the most recent information, as relevant. The team secretary is also responsible for collecting the documents for and finalizing the Appendix. The survey team secretary will also edit the entire survey report and survey team findings for clarity and consistency, for adhering to the style conventions outlined in the Style Guide, and for spelling, grammar, tense, and formatting.

**Survey Team Findings Template**

The survey team findings are prepared by the survey team secretary from the exit report using the survey team findings template*.* See the template available on the LCME website ([lcme.org/publications](http://lcme.org/publications/)) for further instructions.

### The Survey Report Appendix

For full, provisional, and preliminary visits, there is a set of required appendix documents that are organized by standard specified in the each of the survey report templates. The survey team may add relevant appendix documents under standards, as appropriate. For limited visits, survey team members and team secretary should select relevant documents to include in the report Appendix.

Appendix documents should be listed sequentially, and the final list of Appendix documents included in the Appendix table of contents. Be sure to include page numbers for the Appendix and number the pages of the Appendix documents sequentially following from the last page of the report narrative. When preparing the Appendix, do not include hyperlinks to documents. If a reference to a website is necessary, create an appendix document as PDFs of the webpages and/or screenshots.

### Review and Submission of the Survey Report and Survey Team Findings

**Secretariat Review**

* Team secretary sends the draft survey report and draft survey team findings to lcmesubmissions@aamc.org. Do not include the Appendix unless requested by the LCME Secretariat.
* The LCME Secretariat reviews the survey report to ensure the report is complete, sufficient information has been included related to each element, that the findings are clear and well-documented in the survey report, and that the findings reflect current LCME expectations about performance for elements. The Secretariat may find statements in the survey report that could indicate potential additional findings, identify gaps in information, or suggest a finding be deleted because evidence is insufficient for a citation. The Secretariat may also suggest editorial changes or note concerns about format.
* After Secretariat review, the draft survey report and draft survey team findings with suggested edits and comments are returned via email to the team secretary.

**Review of Secretariat Comments**

* Team secretary reviews Secretariat edits and comments.
* Team secretary discusses edits, comments, and suggestions from the Secretariat that result in significant changes to the survey report or survey team findings with the team chair and incorporates the agreed-upon edits into the draft survey report and draft survey team findings.
* Team secretary notifies the Secretariat via lcmesubmissions@aamc.org regarding the decisions about the Secretariat’s suggestions.

**Team Member Review**

* Team secretary emails the revised survey report and team findings to all survey team members with a summary of changes made based on Secretariat review and the reasons for changes.
* Team members have five (5) business days to review the survey report for editorial changes; to ensure it is clear, complete, and reflects the survey team’s consensus; and to email revisions to the team secretary.

**Dean Review**

* Team secretary emails the dean a clean copy of the revised survey report narrative, the report appendix, and survey team findings with instructions for the dean to respond via email within 10 business days to:
	+ identify errors of fact and provide factual and grammatical corrections to the survey report and to the data in the team findings only if supporting information was included in the survey package/briefing book, provided to the survey team secretary by one month prior to the visit in an unsolicited update, or provided to the team secretary if requested prior to or during the survey visit
	+ note concerns about the process of the survey visit

The dean may not comment on the team findings related to the performance category of an element.

**Team Secretary and Chair Review of Dean’s Response**

* Team secretary considers edits and comments from the dean, along with the evidence provided to support edits to the survey report.
* Team secretary discusses any of the dean’s requested edits that might lead to changes in the survey team findings with the team chair.
* Team secretary revises the survey report and/or survey team findings based on the comments from the dean and input from the team chair.

**Team Secretary Responds to Dean**

* Team secretary emails the dean with a summary of what changes requested by the dean based on identified errors of fact were made and what changes were not made in the survey report and/or the survey team findings. In that communication, the dean should be reminded that the communication by the dean and the team secretary response will be provided to the LCME when the report is considered.

**Final Submission**

* Team secretary uploads clean copies (no track changes) of the following materials to the LCME Secretariat via the web transfer client (WTC):
	+ Final survey report narrative
	+ Final survey report appendix
	+ Final survey team findings
	+ Copy of all communications to/from the dean regarding changes to the survey report and/or the survey team findings
* Team secretary emails lcmesubmissions@aamc.org to notify LCME Secretariat staff that the final material has been submitted.
* LCME Secretariat staff email the team secretary to confirm successful submission within one business day.

**Survey Team Members Destroys Survey Visit Files**

* Team secretary emails the survey team to confirm when the final materials were submitted to the LCME Secretariat staff and instructs team members to confidentially destroy any remaining materials from the survey visit (electronic or paper files and USB drive). The team secretary should retain all documents until after LCME action on the report/findings has been made (when the email correspondence noted in the section below is received). The LCME members assigned to review the report prior to the LCME meeting may have a factual question as they complete their review. In this case, the LCME Secretariat staff will arrange a conference call with the team secretary, the LCME reviewers, and a member of the Secretariat.

### Feedback to the Survey Team on the LCME’s Action

After the LCME has acted on the survey report and survey team findings, the survey team members will receive a letter via email from the LCME Secretariat on the changes, if any, to the team’s findings that were made. This step is meant to assist the survey team in understanding the LCME’s expectations related

to performance in elements. After this point, the team secretary may confidentially destroy any materials related to the survey visit.

## Style Guide for Survey Report Preparation

**All team members must adhere to the following style conventions:**

* Use Times New Roman, 11 pt. black font and single spacing for all responses to survey report questions and tables (note, this does not necessarily apply to template headings, footers, etc.). Do not send drafts to the survey team secretary in color or in a different font.
* Use a serial comma (Oxford comma) before the coordinating conjunction (usually “and” or “or”) in a series of three or more items.
* The words “ex officio”, “ad hoc”, and “via” (or other Latin phrases used colloquially) should not be italicized.
* No periods are used with degrees and other abbreviations, with the exception of “U.S.”
* Academic years should be listed as 20##-## (e.g., 2024-25).
* The first occurrence of an abbreviation of acronyms should be spelled out with the abbreviation/acronym in parentheses. Subsequent uses should list just the abbreviation/acronym. Consider adding a glossary for easy reference to the abbreviations.
* The word “data” is plural (e.g., data are available – not, data is available).
* Only one space should be used after periods in between sentences.
* Reference to the visit should describe it as a survey visit – not a site visit.
* The word “dean” is not capitalized except when it begins a sentence or is linked to an individual’s name, such as “Dean Robert Jones.” The same is true for vice president, provost, president, and chair.
* The words “medical school,” “college,” and “university” are not capitalized unless they begin sentences or are used as the school’s full name (e.g., Jones Medical School).
* The word “faculty” is not capitalized unless it begins a sentence.
* Discipline names (e.g., “Physiology,” “Biochemistry,” “Medicine”) are capitalized when they refer to departments. Note that “department” is not capitalized unless it is used with reference to a specific discipline, as in "Department of Medicine."
* Capitalize the names of formal school committees and subcommittees (e.g., Committee on Educational Policy), but do not capitalize the committee if the formal name is not used and the committee is referred to just by function (e.g., curriculum committee).

Ensure the appendix list in the table of contents matches the references in the body of the survey report. Refer to the specific appendix document in the narrative if its contents are being described.

The word “assess” is used for students’ performance and “evaluate” is used for programs.

In the narrative (not tables), numbers one through nine are spelled out, and numbers 10 and higher are listed as numbers.

If the table heading asked for percentages, do not include the % sign in the table body.

Any tables with symbols (such as \*) include the relevant note beneath the table with explanatory text.

Full-time and part-time should include a hyphen (not part time).

The word online contains no hyphen and is lowercase unless it starts a sentence. The word internet is lowercase unless it starts a sentence.

The word “bylaws” should be lowercase unless it starts a sentence.

If an item is not applicable, use “N/A” (not na).

The following abbreviations should always have periods and commas (i.e., e.g.,).

Use third person (no “our” or “we” should be included in the report) unless it is a verbatim quote from a school document (e.g., the school’s mission statement).

Consistent terminology is used in the narrative for large numbers (for example, $10 million or $ 10M, but not both).

No hyphen should be used with years (“fourth year” not “fourth-year”).

If degrees are used in the narrative, use correct case and apostrophe placement (master’s degree or Master of Science is correct; masters degree is not correct).

Other than when thanking individuals in the memo or when describing qualifications of the dean, names of people should not be included; use a position title instead of a name.

When talking about ISA data, the term “respondents” should be used instead of “students” unless there was a 100% response rate (for example, “92% of respondents were satisfied”). Narrative should also be past tense (“are satisfied” should be “were satisfied” etc.).

**Before submitting the draft survey report to the LCME Secretariat, the team secretary must:**

* Carefully proofread the survey report to correct spelling, typographical, grammatical, and punctuation errors.
* Ensure that all questions are answered and all appendices included in the table of contents.
* Ensure that all tables are complete and include the most current data.
* Ensure there is consistency between the survey team findings and the survey report.

**Before submitting the final survey report to the LCME Secretariat, the survey team secretary must insert their electronic signature on the cover memo**.