

## Being an AALS Reporter (January 2006)

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- I. Pre-visit Activity
  - A. Disclose all potential conflicts to AALS Deputy Director.
    1. Advance notice avoids last-minute team member reassignments.
    2. Merely knowing a faculty member at the school isn't a conflict.
  - B. Ascertain who is chairing the team and contact him/her immediately.
    1. AALS often selects reporter before ABA fully staffs team.
    2. This is your opportunity to request either the Faculty or Course of Study section; these contain the most data-intensive AALS information.
  - C. Adjust your own class schedules to take account of any days you'll have to miss.
  - D. Get in touch with the school being visited to get a contact person for pre-visit questions.
    1. Stress how important it is to receive the AALS checklist as early as possible.
    2. Ask school to include back-up data for checklist items (helps you determine how school is classifying scholarship and the allocation of credits between full-time and adjunct faculty).
    3. If you have special dietary requirements or allergies, give advance notice.
  - E. Get a faculty list early; don't wait for site documents or the AALS Directory.
    1. Input faculty data into spreadsheet that can also include information you'll be reporting on.
    2. This allows you to manipulate and calculate data, such as average credit and contact hours; years of teaching/practice; race/ethnicity/gender. See attachment.
    3. You can also use a spreadsheet to associate teaching times during the visit with faculty; this is useful for assigning visitations on-site.
  - F. Read the AALS Handbook, particularly the Bylaws and Executive Committee Regulations covering membership requirements, the ABA Standards and Interpretations, and both entities' memos regarding conducting the visit and writing the report.
    1. Pay particular attention to differences between AALS and ABA reporting requirements.
    2. If you haven't done an inspection for a few years, don't be surprised that the format and the rules have changed.
    3. Prepare a list of items you hope other team members can get for you.
  - G. Make travel arrangements as early as possible to reduce cost to school. If you are traveling from a distance or from a city with limited transportation options, consider arriving a day early.

H. Read the school's self-study and those sections of its materials that you'll be covering for ABA or AALS; at least skim the remaining items.

I. Start writing your report.

1. You can edit on-site based on what you and fellow team members ascertain.
2. The earlier you begin, the easier it will be to meet the reporting deadline.

J. Review the schedule set out by the chair:

1. On-site events
2. Timetable for completing report

K. Photocopy sufficient copies of the class visitation form to cover classes taught during visit. Do likewise for office visitation forms.

1. If you use pastel paper, instead of white, the forms will be easy to find.
2. If you are as compulsive as I am, you can use spreadsheets to prepare forms for each class visit (see Attachments from NSU visit). (The ABA classroom evaluation and office visit forms are available on the ABA site as Appendices 4 and 5 to the Conduct of a Site Visit PDF, at <http://www.abanet.org/legaled/accreditation/conductmemo2005.pdf>.) You can copy it into Word or WordPerfect or ask them to send you the Word version.
3. Making a faculty face book (or adding faculty pictures to the office visitation forms) is useful if you have trouble with name/face recognition.

L. Get plenty of sleep just before the visit, particularly if you teach at a day-only school and will be visiting a dual-division school.

## II. On-site Activity

A. Attend assigned classes.

B. Do office visits.

C. Read some faculty scholarship (if pressed for time, read after returning home).

D. Review (or make sure someone is reviewing) items such as faculty evaluations (student, peer, post-tenure if any), examinations, and syllabi.

E. Have an open mind and a discreet mouth.

1. Don't become an unwitting "captive" of faculty members with an agenda.
2. Don't express overtly judgmental comments; information may stop flowing your way.
3. There is more than one "right way" to run a law school.

F. If you receive information that appears important for another team member's section, share it as soon as possible.

G. To the extent possible, give school personnel a list of items you still need. You won't think of everything, but you'll reduce the number of post-visit contacts.

H. Make notes each evening about what you'll cover in the exit interview.

### III. Post-visit Activity

A. Follow up with relevant school personnel for necessary items:

1. Items promised that were not available during visit.
2. Questions you can't resolve from the documents.

B. Complete your ABA report section.

1. The AALS report draws on the ABA report.
2. Thoroughly review the draft ABA report you receive from the chair.

C. Complete the AALS report based on materials you gathered on-site and the final ABA report (or the draft ABA report if the AALS deadline is approaching).

D. Respond to Director's request for input on potential AALS Reporters.

**Attachments**  
**Merged and Unmerged Classroom Visitation Form**

**CLASSROOM VISITATION – SAMPLE REPORT FORM**

1. Course Name: Constitutional Law-§4
2. Instructor: Adams, Bill TFP
3. Evaluator:
4. Date of Visit: March 10, 2003 Arrived: Departed:
- 5 a. Approximate number of students attending:
- b. Number registered: 55
- 6 a. Room number: L4 M 2:30-4:20 L4

**CLASSROOM VISITATION – SAMPLE REPORT FORM**

1. Course Name: «course»
2. Instructor: «winter2003prof» «Status»
3. Evaluator:
4. Date of Visit: «MonDate» «TuesDate» Arrived: Departed:
- 5 a. Approximate number of students attending:
- b. Number registered: «Enr»
- 6 a. Room number: «MondayRoomNumber» «Monday»  
«TuesdayRoomNumber» «Tuesday»

**Selected Spreadsheet Fields for Faculty Data (can also add phone, office, e-mail information, teaching days during visit, etc.)**

NAME	TITLE	T	Committee	F Cr	F CrHr	S Cr	S CrHr	TotCR	M/F	RACE	JD SCHOOL	JD yr	GRAD	Teach	Prac	T+P	PostJDyrs	Visits
a	Assoc.	T	Executive	3	132	5	104	236	M	W	Harvard	1988	MLS-Indiana	10	2	12	13	IU-Ind
b	Ass't	K	Placement	6	351	3	219	570	F	W	DePaul	1981	MA-SUNY Buff; PhD- Northwestern	13	7	20	20	NIU
c	Ass't	TT	Honors	3	66	9	93	159	F	W	Northwestern	1980		5	16	21	21	

Note: if you use a spreadsheet, you can choose which fields you want to track. I track whether the faculty member has ever visited at another school because I think it's interesting to report on.