

# OVERVIEW

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## **What is the Classical Latin School Association (CLSA)?**

The Classical Latin School Association (CLSA) is an association of elementary and secondary schools working to promote the transmission of the culture of the Christian West to the next generation through the Classical Core Curriculum™. The Classical Core Curriculum focuses on the content study of history, literature, and the great ideas, with an emphasis on basic skills and the liberal arts, and a special emphasis on the study of Latin.

## **What is CLSA accreditation?**

The purpose of CLSA accreditation is to assist schools in the proper implementation of the Classical Core Curriculum and in the achievement of the high academic standards implicit in the classical Christian model of education; to promote the understanding of classical Christian education among school staff, teachers, and parents; and to provide external verification and accountability of the academic integrity of member schools.

## **How is CLSA accreditation different from other accreditation processes?**

CLSA accreditation is designed to help schools further their classical Christian educational mission through a focus on academic standards, practices, and results. Part of its purpose is to dispense with all unnecessary expenditures of staff time and resources on meeting accreditation requirements that do not contribute in a direct and meaningful way to the academic success and classical Christian mission of the school. As a result of this more specific focus, there is a significantly shorter schedule for school accreditation.

## **Who is eligible for CLSA accreditation?**

Any school using the Classical Core Curriculum in whole or in substantial part and which seeks to improve the academic quality of its existing classical Christian curriculum is eligible for accreditation.

## **What are the requirements for CLSA accreditation?**

- Philosophical requirements: Evidence of a clear understanding among faculty, staff, and board members of the nature and purpose of a classical Christian education.
- Academic/Curricular requirements: Verification that the school's mission and curriculum is in full alignment with the Classical Core Curriculum and that its core objectives are understood by school leadership and the wider school community.
- School Culture requirements: That the classical Christian goals of the school work themselves out in an obvious and meaningful way in staff, faculty, and students and in the relations between them.
- Evaluation requirements: Demonstration of the value-added benefit of the school's academic program through standardized test scores.
- Administrative requirements: Evidence that the school has the resources needed to accomplish its stated goals.

## What are the doctrinal requirements for CLSA accreditation?

CLSA requires that schools adhere to and state that they confess the Nicene Creed, or that they believe in or confess a statement of faith consistent with this creed. The Nicene Creed is a historic statement of Christian belief that is at once comprehensive and specific as well as ecumenical. It is considered normative by the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Catholic churches, the Church of the East, the Anglican Church, the Oriental Orthodox churches, the Lutheran churches, and most Protestant denominations.

## What is the cost of CLSA accreditation?

Application Fee:                   **\$150**

Annual Accreditation Renewal Fees: **\$300** (less than 100 students)

(First payment payable upon approval of provisional accreditation)   **\$600** (100 or more students)

## How does CLSA accreditation work?

The following is a step-by-step overview of the accreditation process:

1. Complete the accreditation application. Send in the application with the application fee.
2. CLSA will send you an acknowledgment letter and the necessary documentation.
3. School must spend at least six months performing the Self-Study (gathering objective information regarding their current academic status).
4. Prepare the Narrative Report.
5. Submit the Self-Study and the Narrative Report to CLSA for review.
6. Upon approval, CLSA will schedule an on-site visit.
7. After the visit, any suggestions for improvement will be sent to the school which will then, if necessary, draw up a Growth and Improvement Plan.
8. Once the Growth and Improvement Plan is sent to CLSA and approved, formal accreditation will be granted.
9. This accreditation must be **renewed every five years** at which time steps 3-7 must be completed again.

## What are CLSA accreditation standards?

CLSA accreditation standards cover the following areas of emphasis: Educational Philosophy, Curriculum, Faculty, School Culture, and Administration. A school must understand its purpose and what it takes to achieve that purpose. Therefore, school board members, administrators, and teaching staff must have a clear understanding of the school's mission and how it should be accomplished, a well-thought-out academic program, a solid and stable curriculum, instructional practices that capably and coherently implement the academic program, a means of assessment that verifies the accomplishment of the academic goals, and a system of professional development that ensures that teaching staff understand the purpose and practice of education at the school and their part in it.

The CLSA standards are designed to be specific enough to ensure the integrity of the school's mission as a Latin-centered classical Christian school, but general enough to allow the school to tailor

the standards to their individual circumstances. They provide a pattern for which the school provides the material.

### **What is the Self-Study?**

The Self-Study, which is completed by the school, serves two purposes. First it is, along with the site visit, the chief means by which CLSA attains an understanding of the current state of the school. It is the primary source of information and is the primary basis upon which CLSA confers accreditation. Secondly, it is an excellent way by which the school can gain a better understanding of itself and how it can and should improve. The school's documentation will be reviewed or created in this process, allowing the school to ensure that their practices are in accord with their standards.

### **What is the Narrative Report?**

The Narrative Report is a short prose statement of the school's case for accreditation. Its purpose is to put the different pieces of the accreditation process together into a unified whole. An excellent model for the narrative is Cicero's six-part structure for a persuasive address. The author(s) of the narrative should use the instructions in Appendix H of *Classical Rhetoric with Aristotle*, by Martin Cothran, as an organizational framework for their statement. This format can also be obtained free of charge from CLSA. Since both comprehensiveness and concision are valued, the Narrative Report should, in most cases, be no shorter than two pages and no longer than five.

### **How does the on-site visit work?**

The on-site visit is intended to complete the picture of the school that CLSA has gained from the Self-Study and Narrative Report. It helps CLSA to put flesh on the skeleton the school has provided in its written report. To read about something and to see it in actual operation provides the accrediting body with a full view of the school, how it functions, and what may need to be done to help it improve. The visit should last one to two days, depending on the size of the school.