



Applying for AAALAC International Accreditation

AAALAC International accreditation is a two-phase process. The first is an extensive internal review of all aspects of your animal care and use program. The second is an external evaluation conducted by AAALAC site visitors. Here's an overview of the steps...

Main Office:

5205 Chairman's Court
Suite 300, Frederick, MD
21703, USA
t:+301.696.9626
f:+301.696.9627
accredit@aaalac.org

European Office:

Apartado de Correos 266
31080 Pamplona, Spain
t:+34.948.100026
f:+301.696.9627
europe@aaalac.org

Asia-Pacific Office:

Samutprakarn
Thailand
t: +662.002.9843
asiapacific@aaalac.org

How do we apply for accreditation?

Check the "Rules of Accreditation" online to see if your program is eligible to apply: www.aaalac.org/accreditation-program/rules-of-accreditation/

If your program is eligible, **download and review the application materials** from AAALAC's website which will prepare you to **apply online**. These supporting materials include:

- **Instructions** that will guide you through preparing your "Program Description," the key document used by AAALAC's Council on Accreditation to evaluate your animal care and use program. The instructions contain a complete list of all of the information you need to include.
- Formatting and other helpful tips are included in the **Program Description** template. You can download the instructions and Program Description here: www.aaalac.org/accreditation-program/apply-for-accreditation/
- **Review AAALAC's accreditation standards.** AAALAC relies on what it refers to as the "Three Primary Standards" that are used by the Council on Accreditation to evaluate animal care and use programs. Supplementing these primary standards and applicable local legislation/regulations are AAALAC "Position Statements,"

"Guidance Statements," and "Reference Resources." Council has also developed a list of answers to "Frequently Asked Questions" to further clarify AAALAC's expectations. An overview is available here: www.aaalac.org/accreditation-standards/accreditation-standards-overview/

How much does accreditation cost?

There is an **application fee** for the first site visit. Once accredited, you'll pay an **annual fee** for regular revisits. Fees depend on the size of your facilities and are listed on AAALAC's website.

What should we include in our Program Description?

Your Program Description should cover your institution's:

- **Animal care and use program**
- **Animal environment, housing and management**
- **Occupational health and safety**
- **Veterinary care**
- **Physical plant**

The Program Description instructions will guide you step-by-step. Preparing your Program Description helps you spot and address weaknesses, and ensure your program is meeting applicable standards.



Applying for AAALAC International Accreditation

What happens after we submit our application package?

AAALAC will confirm when they receive your application and Program Description.

Your application is then reviewed to ensure it meets the Rules of Accreditation. You'll then need to pay the application fee based on your facility size.

A team from AAALAC (usually two or more members) will visit to review your program. You'll get their names in advance, and the visit usually takes one or two days depending on the size and complexity of your program.

What can we expect during the site visit?

The site visit starts with an "Entrance-Briefing" meeting between your team and the visitors to discuss the process.

Afterwards, the visitors will conduct a Program Review by discussing your Program Description with a small group from your institution, ask questions, and request any extra documents.

Next you'll give a **tour of your facilities**. Lunch is usually a chance for your oversight committee to meet the visitors and discuss their work. After the tour, the team may ask for more information about specific protocols or procedures.

At the end of the day, site visitors will meet privately to conduct a Document Review and Executive Session to summarize the preliminary findings that will be shared with you.

Finally, there's an "Exit Briefing" where the visitors share their findings and recommendations. You can correct any misunderstandings. The Council members will write an official site visit report afterwards. (See AAALAC's i-Brief on Exit Briefings for more details on the process.)

Post Site Visit Communication

You can formally respond to the visitors' initial findings in a letter called Post Site Visit Communication (PSVC), where you address any concerns or explain how your institution is already responding to concerns raised during the Exit Briefing.

What happens after the site visit?

The Council on Accreditation makes the final decision regarding accreditation status. The Council meets three times a year and will review your application and report at the next meeting after your site visit. Other Council members will also review your report.

During the meeting, the Council members who visited describe your program to the full Council. After discussion, they draft a letter explaining your status. You'll get official notification in four to eight weeks.

How do we maintain accreditation?

If you are accredited, you must submit an annual report with updated program info and any changes from the past year. To keep your accreditation, expect site visits every three years following the same process.

What if we have more questions?

For more questions about the process, application, or your status, contact the AAALAC International office or your Regional Director—they are available to help!

Accreditation Step by Step:

1. **Confirm eligibility** by reviewing the Rules of Accreditation
2. **Download the Instructions** for completing your Program Description
3. **Review AAALAC's Accreditation Standards**
4. **Complete your Program Description**
5. Submit your **Accreditation Application** with your Program Description
6. Schedule and complete your **site visit**
7. Provide any needed **Post Site Visit Communication** to AAALAC
8. Receive **official notification** from AAALAC

