

+ Foundations +

The foundational building blocks of membership in AAUS form the base of the conceptual model. This portion seeks to reinforce and strengthen the *required* foundations of AAUS Organizational Membership.

Basic Membership Requirements

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- ✓ Current Admin
- ✓ Current Dues
- ✓ Current Statistics

Basic Membership requirements form the center of the OM Foundation. These include administrative aspects such as complete OM applications and online profiles as well as submission of annual Dues and Statistics.

The AAUS Membership committee and Office are currently engaged in an effort to strengthen this foundational center by encouraging all AAUS OMs to review/update their online profiles.

Standards



Approved and updated standards manuals and procedures form the left flank of the foundation.

The Standards committee is presently working to strengthen this portion of the foundation by encouraging AAUS OMs to review/update their manuals. This includes submission of the OM self-compliance checklist.

DSO Orientation

DSO Orientation forms the right flank of the foundation. This workshop provides information related to all aspects of AAUS membership and serves as a valuable discussion forum. DSO Orientation is mandatory for all OM applicants (2016).

The AAUS Office is working to strengthen this piece of the foundation by revising the content, including online-self-study modules.



Combined, these individual pieces form the Foundations of AAUS Organizational Membership



+ Peer-Review /Quality Assurance Programs +

Building on our Foundations, the next pieces of the big-picture are the two emerging programs of Site Visits and DSO Certification. The goal is to develop **incentive-based and optional** peer-review and quality-assurance tools that OMs and AAUS can use to strengthen our individual programs and our community.

Site Visits



The proposed Site Visit program was previously named 'Accreditation'. In the new model, the direct relationship between site-visits and accreditation has been decoupled.

All OM manuals receive initial evaluation by the AAUS Standards Committee, however, subsequent updates and most other OM information is self-reported. Site visits will provide a tool for OMs who seek independent review of their programs. Provisions for site visits already exist in the AAUS Bylaws [Article III(a)(v)].

DSO Certification

The proposed DSO Certification program is being developed to further describe and refine the qualifications for AAUS Diving Safety Officers.

An extension of DSO Orientation, the program will provide a mechanism for DSOs to refine their skill-set, share techniques, and develop consistent strategies to train and evaluate AAUS scientific divers.



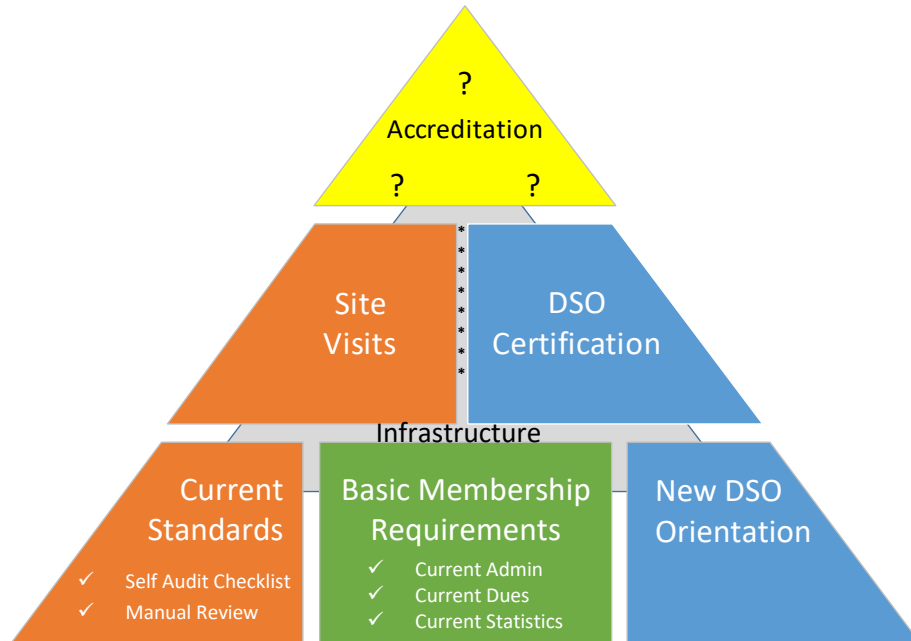
Site Visits and DSO Certification build upon their Foundational counterparts, which serve as prerequisites for these programs.

As optional tools, these Peer-Review/ Quality Assurance programs will be independent of each other and may be completed in any order, or not at all, based upon the needs of individual AAUS OMs.



+ Accreditation +

The apex of the existing model was originally envisioned to be Accreditation. Based upon feedback from the greater AAUS community, it is clear to the current Board of Directors that concerns exist regarding the concept of, and even the word, 'accreditation'. **Development of this piece has been put on hold pending further discussion and refinement.**



+ Infrastructure +

In order for AAUS to prosper into the future, support new programs, and better serve our community, we must expand and solidify our infrastructure. A business plan detailing administrative and financial needs and resources for the AAUS Office will serve as the final portion of the model, and hold all other pieces together. A plan is currently being developed by members of the Board of Directors.

+ Benefits of the Model +

The small pieces-big picture model, or 'pyramid' has a number of benefits as listed below:

- Small Pieces-Big Picture- small pieces fit together to form a big picture, providing a mechanism for gradual achievement and growth without overwhelming the resources of individual OMs or the Academy as a whole.
- Progressive, but Non-Linear- certain pieces of the model are progressive and build upon each other, while others do not. A Current Standards manual is a prerequisite for a Site Visit, but Site Visit or DSO Certification can be completed in any sequence based upon the needs of the Member. The non-linear aspect allows AAUS to move forward with some programs while others are being developed, refined, or tested.
- Connectivity-Flexibility- while all the pieces fit together to create a big picture, the modular design allows for expansion and contraction. If AAUS were to develop standardized educational materials, additional training programs, or other unforeseen elements, these could be fitted between or combined with existing pieces while still maintaining the integrity and structure of the model.
- Apex/ Accreditation- the concept of accreditation has been put on hold. The proposed model allows for further discussion, debate, and refinement of accreditation, or other similar program, while allowing continued development of other initiatives.