

TO: ACICS-Accredited Institutions and Other Interested Parties
FROM: Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools
DATE: May 17, 2010
SUBJECT: Final Criteria, Proposed Criteria and Other Information

<u>TABLE OF CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
I. FINAL CRITERIA REVISIONS	1-5
<i>Effective Immediately</i>	
A. Eight Year Interim Reports and Eight Year Grants	2
B. Verification of Faculty Credentials	3
<i>Effective July 1, 2010</i>	
C. Distance Education	3
D. Guidelines on Disclosure and Notification	4
E. Transfer of Credit	4
II. PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS	5-25
• Distributed Enterprise	6
III. FOR INFORMATION ONLY	22-24
A. Cohort Default Rates	22
B. ACICS Web Site	23
C. Workshops	23
D. Public Comment	24
E. Public Participation	24
IV. COMMENT FORM – PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS (Respond by Friday, July 9, 2010)	25

I. FINAL CRITERIA REVISIONS

At its April 2010 meeting, the Council reviewed specific areas of the ACICS *Accreditation Criteria* outlined in Section I. The language contained in Section I was previously reviewed by ACICS constituents or reflects a clarification of previously approved criteria.

The Council has updated the respective sections of the *Accreditation Criteria* to reflect all final criteria revisions. To obtain a current copy of the *Accreditation Criteria*, please visit our Web site at www.acics.org. The *Accreditation Criteria* can be found in the **Publications** section of the Web site.

The following criteria were previously reviewed and have been accepted as **final, effective immediately** (new language is underlined, ~~deleted language is struck~~):

Explanation of Changes

The following changes were approved by the Council during its systematic review of the Accreditation Criteria.

A. EIGHT YEAR INTERIM REPORTS

~~**2-1-804. Interim Report for Eight-Year Grants.** An Interim Report must be submitted by June 30 of the fourth year (mid point) of an eight year grant of accreditation. This report will undergo evaluation, and based upon a review of the report, visit(s) may be required as determined by the Council.~~

2-3-100 - ACCREDITATION GRANTED

If an institution is found to be in compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria*, ACICS may grant accreditation for a specific period of time from a minimum of one year to a maximum of ~~eight~~ six years. The length of the grant shall be at the discretion of ACICS. A grant of accreditation for less than ~~eight~~ six years is not a negative action and, therefore, is not appealable.

~~Institutions on an eight year grant of accreditation are required to submit an Interim Report for Eight Year Grants as specified under Section 2-1-804— Interim Report for Eight Year Grants.~~

The Council will not grant accreditation for a full ~~eight~~ six-year term if the grant is awarded following any hearing resulting from a previous action to deny accreditation.

B. VERIFICATION OF FACULTY CREDENTIALS

3-1-542. Verification of Credentials. Institutions must maintain evidence of the official transcripts for credentials that qualify faculty members to teach their assigned courses and for those credentials that are listed in the catalog. ~~Official transcripts for all academic credentials held by all faculty members~~ All these credentials shall be on file in the administrative offices at the campus location nearest to where the faculty member is primarily employed. An official transcript is one sent from the registrar's office at the institution where study was completed directly to an employing institution. A transcript bearing the notation "issued to student" is not an official transcript for employment purposes.

The following criteria were previously reviewed and have been accepted as **final, effective July 1, 2010** (new language is underlined, ~~deleted language is struck~~):

Explanation of Changes

The Higher Education Act contains a number of provisions of interest to accrediting bodies of proprietary schools, including at least 16 discrete items that have merited summary and interpretation by the US Department of Education (USDE) leaders in the form of a Federal Update. The Council has reviewed the corresponding sections of the Accreditation Criteria and approved changes in order to comply with the USDE's new regulations.

C. DISTANCE EDUCATION

GLOSSARY

Distance Education or Distance Learning. A structured educational situation in which the instructors and learners are separated by time and location. Distance learning is characterized by (1) separation of place and/or time—education supports regular and substantive interaction synchronously and asynchronously, between instructor and learner, among learners, and/or between learners and learning resources through one or more interactive technologies; and (2) connectivity, interaction, and engagement between the learner and instructor, among learners, and between learners and learning resources conducted through one or more media. The technologies may include the following: the internet; interactive transmissions through broadcast, closed circuit, cable, satellite, or wireless communications devices; and two-way audio or videoconferencing.

APPENDIX H Principles and Guidelines for Nontraditional Education

Admissions Requirements and Enrollment

- a. Institutions must identify...
- b. If an on-line admissions test is required, it must be administered in a manner which verifies the student's identity. Institutions must make it clear in writing at the time of enrollment how the student's identity will be verified throughout the course and program, how the student's privacy will be protected, and if the student will be assessed any additional charges associated with the verification of student identity.

Curriculum Content and Instruction and Delivery

- e. Institutions must demonstrate that the student who registers for a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The verification method, at the option of the institution, may include a secure login and pass code, proctored examinations, and other appropriate student authentication or verification technology.

D. GUIDELINES ON DISCLOSURE AND NOTIFICATION

APPENDIX G Guidelines on Disclosure and Notification

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3. Within 60 days of a final negative action, the Council will also make available to the agencies above and the public upon request, a brief statement summarizing the reasons for the negative action determination, and the official comments, if any, that the institution ~~made~~ may wish to make with regard to the Council's decision, or evidence that the affected institution has been offered the opportunity to provide official comment.

E. TRANSFER OF CREDIT

3-1-413. Transfer of Credit. An institution shall evaluate and consider awarding proper academic credit for credits earned at institutions accredited by agencies recognized by the United States Department of Education. The institution shall establish and adhere to a systematic method for evaluating and awarding academic credit for those courses that satisfy current program course requirements. Written

policies and procedures must clearly outline the process by which transfer of academic credit is awarded. The institution shall make public its policies on transfer of credit, including a statement of the criteria established by the institution by which a determination is made with regard to accepting credits from another institution.

II. PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS

At its April 2010 meeting, the Council reviewed specific areas of the ACICS *Accreditation Criteria* outlined in Section II. The language contained in Section II represents proposed criteria changes as a result of the February and April 2010 meetings.

Explanation of Proposed Changes

The Council proposes to revise the existing classification of campuses and add a new classification to the Accreditation Criteria. The new classification will retain the definition of a main campus and replace the current designations of branch campus and learning site with a single classification, to be called an “additional location.” The Council also proposes a new classification of institutions, a type of multiple campus institution to be called a “distributed enterprise.” ACICS will continue to accredit single campus institutions and multiple campus institutions that do not qualify as a “distributed enterprise,” or that do not seek that designation. While maintaining the full rigor of all existing ACICS standards, these modifications will enable ACICS to improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which multiple campus institutions are reviewed, evaluated and accredited and to adopt streamlined procedures based on US Department of Education (USDE) regulations that go into effect in July 2010.

*Under the proposed changes to criteria, a distributed enterprise would consist of a main campus and three or more additional locations which operate within the context of a single academic and administrative system that is capable of ensuring quality across all individual locations. To qualify as a distributed enterprise, an institution must demonstrate that it has a well-established and highly centralized system for controlling the academic quality of educational activities at all additional campuses. Specific requirements that must be met are outlined in the proposed criteria. The consequence of classification as a distributed enterprise is that **evaluation of the institution would be focused upon the central administrative system** through which educational activities are controlled and would be **verified through visits to a representative sample of campuses**. These new procedures are more closely aligned with the organizational structure of the distributed enterprise, and will **allow for consolidation of applications and reports while eliminating redundancy and duplication of effort**.*

Changes to the Accreditation Criteria proposed below were described in the March 2010 Memorandum to the Field. They include the introduction of the distributed enterprise as a new class of institution in Chapter 3 of Title I, General Policies; explanation of how an institution qualifying as a distributed enterprise would gain and maintain accreditation in Title II, General Procedures; and clarification to ensure the consistent use of terms in Title III, Evaluation Standards.

Changes and additions in this May 2010 Memorandum to the Field to the previously proposed changes in the Accreditation Criteria include (1) specification in Section 1-3-203 that each distributed enterprise may have only one main campus, (2) clarification in the same section that to be eligible for classification as a distributed enterprise, an institution must have been accredited for a total of 10 years, with a main campus and at least three additional locations accredited by ACICS for at least 4 years, (3) specification in Sections 2-2-101 and 2-2-102 that institutions must apply for prior approval of additions to a campus where at least 50% of a program is offered at a distance from the primary location of the campus, (4) specification in Section 2-2-503(b) that institutions may submit a consolidated application for identical non-substantive changes to programs at more than one campus, and (5) editorial changes to sections and to the Glossary to substitute the words “additional location” for “branch”, to delete references to “learning site,” and to add definitions from the criteria for “main campus,” “additional location,” “single campus institution,” “multiple campus institution,” and “distributed enterprise institution.”

The proposed effective date for the following proposed changes to the Accreditation Criteria is January 1, 2011.

- **DISTRIBUTED ENTERPRISE**

TITLE I GENERAL POLICIES

Chapter 1 An Overview of the Council ...

Chapter 2 Eligibility Criteria ...

Chapter 3 Classification of Campuses and Institutions

Introduction

ACICS is an institutional accrediting body that accredits entire institutions. It does not separately accredit individual campuses or programs. All approved locations and programs are included within the institution’s grant of accreditation. Therefore, all campuses must meet the standards established by the Council and must be evaluated accordingly. The specific method by which compliance with these standards is

evaluated and accreditation is conferred depends upon the classification of campuses and the institutions they comprise.

1-3-100. Classification of Campuses.

The Council classifies campus activities into ~~three~~ two categories: main (~~including additional space—see glossary definition~~), branch (~~including additional space~~) and additional location learning site. Each classification has distinct characteristics, and the institution operating these facilities must comply with standards set forth by ACICS in Title III of this publication. A nonmain campus educational activity is one offered at any location away from a main campus. There is no separate accreditation for nonmain campus activities. The following nomenclature and characteristics are used by ACICS for classification and evaluation purposes.

1-3-101. Main. A main campus is the primary location of an institution to be accredited by ACICS. This campus is expected to meet fully all applicable standards set forth in the *Accreditation Criteria*.

1-3-102. Branch—Additional Location.

An additional location branch campus is any location of an institution other than the main, but under the same corporate structure as the main campus (i.e., part of the main campus corporation or a wholly owned subsidiary) that 1) is permanent in nature; 2) offers educational activities a full program leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized credential; and (3) is geographically separate from the main campus such that students may not easily avail themselves of educational, financial aid, and administrative services of the main campus.

Institutions wishing to open a branch campus with a name different from the main campus must obtain prior Council approval. In addition, the catalog and other promotional material must include a statement of ownership that clearly identifies all branch campuses and learning site locations under the same corporate structure of the main campus. The catalog of the main campus must clearly identify the programs offered only at the branch. Full disclosure must be made in the catalogs of the main campus and/or additional locations as to the credentials and programs offered at each location. A branch An additional location may publish its own catalog. There shall not be management agreements, option agreements, or other contractual agreements between the owner of the institution and other parties with respect to the branch bearing on the present or future management and control of the branch.

A branch may offer programs and/or credentials different from those offered at the a main campus. A branch should have a significant amount of responsibility for administrative control, academic affairs, and student and financial services to respond to student needs on a day-to-day basis.

~~**1-3-103 Learning Site.** A learning site is a location where educational activities are conducted apart from a main or branch campus that does not, on its own, qualify as a branch campus.~~

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1-3-200. Classification of Institutions. The Council classifies institutions into three categories: single campus, multiple campus and distributed enterprise. Classification depends upon the number of locations included within the institution and the nature of administrative control over educational activities at the institution.

1-3-201 Single Campus Institution. A single campus institution is an institution that provides educational programs at one main campus. Accreditation is granted to the institution.

1-3-202 Multiple Campus Institution. A multiple campus institution is an institution that provides educational programs at one main campus and one or more additional locations. Compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria* of the main campus and its additional locations is reviewed separately but concurrently. Accreditation is granted to the institution at the main campus, with the specific inclusion of each of the additional locations.

1-3-203 Distributed Enterprise. A distributed enterprise is an institution that provides educational programs at multiple locations operating within the context of an administrative system.

A. The distributed enterprise must include one main campus with additional locations and an academic administrative center. The institution must demonstrate its capacity to add and to successfully control educational activities at multiple locations.

B. The academic administrative center is the primary location of a centralized academic administrative system by which educational activities at a distributed enterprise are controlled. These educational activities include development and delivery of instructional programs, hiring and evaluation of faculty, establishment and maintenance of facilities, selection and purchasing of instructional equipment and library resources, provision of academic and student support systems and maintenance of financial stability. The physical address of an academic administrative center may be identical to or separate from that of a main campus. Some administrative activities not directly related to design and delivery of educational programs may be controlled at other locations affiliated with the academic administrative center.

C. To be classified as a distributed enterprise, an institution must have

(1) been accredited for at least ten consecutive years; and

(2) a main campus and at least three additional locations that are currently accredited by ACICS and have been accredited by ACICS for at least the last four years.

D. To be classified as a distributed enterprise, an institution must provide satisfactory evidence of a well-established and highly centralized administrative system to ensure and enhance quality at all the campuses of the institution that includes:

(1) Clearly identified academic control;

(2) Regular evaluation of the compliance of all the campuses with Council standards;

(3) Adequate faculty, facilities, resources, and academic and student support systems;

(4) Financial stability; and

(5) Long-range planning, including planning for expansion.

Compliance of a distributed enterprise with the Accreditation Criteria is evaluated by the Council at the system level and also subsequently at the individual campus level. Accreditation is granted to the institution, with the specific inclusion of the main campus and all additional locations.

2-1-100 - ACCREDITATION WORKSHOP REQUIREMENTS

The Council schedules accreditation workshops each year. Applicants for initial or new grants of accreditation are required to attend a workshop. During these workshops, Council representatives will consult with institutional representatives to help them understand and complete the process. Institutional representatives are required to attend an accreditation workshop within 18 months prior to the final submission of the self-study. For initial applicants, the chief on-site administrators of ~~the main campuses and all branch campuses~~ additional locations are required to attend. For currently accredited institutions, the chief on-site administrators or the self-study coordinators for single campus institutions and multiple campus institutions, and ~~of the main campus and all branch campuses~~ representatives of distributed enterprises are required to attend. Currently accredited distributed enterprises are responsible for providing workshop information to the chief on-site administrators and self-study coordinators of all main campuses and additional locations.

2-1-200 - INITIAL APPLICATION

All communications concerning initiation of the accrediting process for an institution should be sent to the ACICS office. The accrediting process proceeds in distinct phases, each of which must be satisfactorily completed by the institution before the next can occur. Each phase must be authorized by the chief executive officer of the institution, who also can authorize voluntary withdrawal from the process at any time prior to final action by ACICS.

When considering whether to award an initial grant of accreditation to an institution, ACICS will take into consideration the actions of other recognized accrediting agencies that have denied accreditation to the institution, placed the institution on probationary status, or revoked the accreditation of the institution. If an institution's accreditation was withdrawn or denied previously by ACICS, its initial application will be considered only after at least two years have elapsed.

2-1-201. *Preliminary Review.* The institution must request in writing a preliminary review and receive a determination as to whether it is eligible to apply for accreditation as a single campus institution or a multiple campus institution. Such a preliminary review does not constitute an application.

To be eligible for accreditation, the institution must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Title I, Chapter 2 and the definitions of campuses and institutional types outlined in Title I, Chapter 3. In addition, it must have graduated at least one class at each credential level it offers. Programs offered at any credential level from which there are not graduates will be reviewed as required in Section 2-2-502.

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2-1-203. *Resource Visit.* Following a determination by staff of the completeness of the application materials, a resource visit will be made to the institution, at the institution's expense, to determine if it is ready to begin the self-evaluation. ACICS, at its discretion, may waive a resource visit if that institution has maintained a satisfactory standing with another recognized accrediting agency. A report of the resource visit will be made available to the school and to ACICS and will be used for advisory purposes only.

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2-1-205. *Scheduling the Evaluation Visit.* Council staff will schedule dates for the visit or visits to evaluate compliance of an institution at all of its locations. It is the responsibility of the institution to agree to dates for the visit(s) when classes are in session, faculty is teaching, administrative staff is available, and other operations are functioning normally.

2-1-300 - NEW GRANT OF ACCREDITATION

Before December 31 of the last year of the period for which accreditation has been granted, it is the responsibility of the institution to file an application for a new grant

of accreditation. The institution is invited to reapply 18 months prior to the expiration of an existing grant. The accreditation previously granted to an institution expires automatically with the passage of time unless extended by an action taken by ACICS. An extension of the previous grant cannot exceed one year, and not more than one extension may be given except for extraordinary circumstances over which the institution has no control. The Council, at its discretion, may direct an unannounced visit to occur at an institution about which it has received adverse information or when general operations of the institution may be called into question. Procedures for unannounced visits are described in Appendix B.

2-1-301. *Application.* The process of application for a new grant is the same as for initial accreditation except that institutions are not required to undergo another resource visit. Multiple campus institutions that operate branch campuses and that are applying for new grants of accreditation will be required to submit a separate self-study for each branch campus additional location. Institutions classified as distributed enterprises may submit a consolidated self-study with an appropriate supplement for each location. The Council will not consider an application for a new grant of accreditation unless all reports are current and all fees are paid. (See Sections 2-1-801, and 2-1-802; ~~and 2-1-804.~~)

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2-1-402. *Composition of Teams.* The size and qualifications of the team are determined at the discretion of the Council based on the type and size of the institution, the type and number of programs being offered, the mode of educational delivery, and other special circumstances. Teams conducting evaluations will consist of at least one person from another ACICS-accredited institution and at least one person who does not represent an ACICS-accredited institution, at a minimum. Additional team members will be named as needed and at the Council's discretion based on the student enrollment and the credentials offered by the institution, or to serve as subject specialists to evaluate specialized programs. Teams conducting evaluations of distributed enterprise administrative centers will also include members experienced in and trained to evaluate academic and other administrative control systems for relevant functions. The Council makes a conscious effort to send visitors who have had experience in an institution offering and awarding similar academic credentials.

The application forms and the completed self-study will be supplied to members of the visiting team for review prior to the visit and for use during the visit.

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2-1-405. *Expenses.* Visit expenses for all team members, including the ACICS staff member who accompanies the team, shall be paid by the institution. Expenses include an honorarium for to the chair members of the team, to all outside representatives, and to subject specialists. ~~The institution is required to submit a~~

deposit prior to the visit, which will be applied toward the expenses of the visiting team. The Council reserves the right to cancel a scheduled visit in the absence of the required visit deposit.

2-1-500. TEAM FUNCTIONS AND PROCEDURES.

An institution is expected to be performing according to what it reported in its self-study and to be in compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria* at the time of the visit.

2-1-501. Scope of Visit. The scope of a visit will depend on the location, operation, size, and program offerings and classification of the institution. For a multiple campus institution, the main campus and ~~All non-main campuses~~ additional locations are subject to evaluation, either in conjunction with the main campus or separately. For a distributed enterprise, a representative sample of campuses will be selected, at the discretion of the Council, for visits at reasonable intervals. This sample will generally include a minimum of 40% of the campuses included within the distributed enterprise, and at least a minimum of three campuses. Council reserves the right to increase the number of campuses to be visited. Visits will also be conducted to the academic administrative center of a distributed enterprise and any affiliated locations of the administrative system.

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2-1-503. Procedures. Institutions are provided in advance with a checklist of materials and documents that should be current and readily available for review by the team. Prior to the visit, institutions are required to update the self-study where significant changes have occurred since its submission to ACICS. Teams visiting the campuses of a distributed enterprise will be provided with a copy of the team report from the visit to the academic administrative center.

During the visit, institutions are expected to make provisions for adequate consultation between team members and the faculty, administrative staff, and students and chief academic officer. Teams visiting the campuses of a distributed enterprise are expected to consult with the institution's chief academic officer. Some teams also may want to consult with the institution's board of directors or trustees and community leaders or employers.

2-1-600 - POST-VISIT PROCEDURES

After the evaluation visit, the following post-visit procedures and reviews occur.

The ACICS office sends a copy of the evaluation report to the chief on-site administrative officer, who is invited to respond to it in writing within the specified time frame.

2-1-601. Opportunity to Respond. The ACICS office sends a copy of each ~~the~~ evaluation team report to the designated representative of a distributed enterprise, to the chief on-site administrator ~~ive officer~~ of the respective campus of a multiple campus institution and to the chief on-site administrator of a single campus institution. ~~These individuals are~~ who is invited to respond to it in writing within the specified time frame.

2-1-602. Intermediate Review. All materials pertinent to an institution's accreditation are reviewed by experienced persons before being reviewed by ~~the appropriate commission of ACICS-~~ the Council. These materials include, but are not limited to, the institution's self-evaluation report(s), the visiting team report(s), the institution's response(s) to the team report, financial records of the institution (which are not examined by the evaluation team), the institution's current catalog(s), and any official reports from state or federal regulatory bodies.

This group will make a recommendation to ACICS if the evaluation file is complete. If the file is not complete, the reviewers will organize facts for ACICS but will not make a specific recommendation. The Council has the option of postponing examination of files that are incomplete at the time of the intermediate review, even if subsequent information has been received by the time ACICS meets.

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2-1-801. Annual Institutional Report. The Annual Institutional Report must be submitted on Council forms and be certified by the chief executive officer of the institution. Data must be submitted separately for each main campus and for each additional location. A distributed enterprise must also submit a consolidated report containing information and data on the institution as a whole. It is due on or before September 15 annually. Failure to submit the Annual Institutional Report in a timely manner will result in the revocation of accreditation.

2-1-802. Annual Financial Report. The Annual Financial Report must be submitted on Council forms and be certified by an officer or stockholder of the corporation. Data must be submitted separately for each campus included in a grant of accreditation. A distributed enterprise must also submit a consolidated report containing data on the institution as a whole. It is due no more than 180 days after the end of the institution's fiscal year. Failure to submit the Annual Financial Report in a timely manner will result in the revocation of accreditation.

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2-1-810. Retention and Placement. ACICS will determine average retention and placement rates annually for each main and additional locations of every accredited institutions- based on information collected in the Annual Institutional Reports and will provide these data to all accredited institutions. An institution with a campus that has retention or placement rates that are not in keeping with the expectations of

ACICS may require a consultation between ACICS and the institution, the submission of a corrective action plan, undergo an on-site evaluation, or be issued a show-cause directive, a deferral or denial action related to the institution's application for a new or initial grant of accreditation, or directed another appropriate action.

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Chapter 2 Institutional Changes

Introduction

Approval by ACICS is required before substantive changes are implemented, and institutions should notify ACICS of other significant changes. The material in this chapter explains the evaluation procedures that ACICS will follow for approving substantive changes. The Council shall be notified immediately of substantive changes at an institution, including changes in its mission or objectives, management, ownership, control, educational programs, mode of delivery, name, geographic location, and state or local authority to operate-, any of which may result in a comprehensive review by the Council.

2-2-100 - NONMAIN CAMPUSES ADDITIONAL CAMPUS ACTIVITY

2-2-101. Initiation of ~~Nonmain Campus Activity~~ Additional Campus Activity. An ~~nonmain campus~~ additional activity includes any ongoing instructional activity offered at a site away from the main facility of an institution. Such a ~~Activities~~ activity at a site that meets the Council's definition of an "Additional Location" are is described in Section 1-3-100, Classification of Campuses. Activity at a site that does not meet the definition of an Additional Location is referred to below as a "Campus Addition." Reporting requirements are as follows:

(a) ~~Branch Campus.~~ Additional Location. It is the responsibility of the institution to notify ACICS of the intention to initiate an branch campus additional location before the branch location begins classes. Activity must be initiated at the branch campus additional location within one year of the proposed start date. An branch campus additional location must be approved by the Council before advertising, recruiting, and enrollment may take place. Failure to notify ACICS prior to the initiation of an branch campus additional location may call into question the accreditation of the main campus institution.

The institution shall provide, on Council forms, the rationale for initiation of the branch additional location and other information about the educational programs, credentials to be awarded, faculty, learning resources, physical and financial resources, strength in supporting fields, admission and graduation requirements, compliance with state law and authority to operate, number of students, and administrative arrangements. An acceptable catalog which identifies the branch campus additional location also shall be included as part of the application.

The Council will monitor the number of ~~branch~~additional location applications submitted for each main campus and main campuses under common ownership based on a demonstration of sound administrative and financial capabilities. The Council reserves the right to limit the number of ~~branches~~additional locations based on its review of demonstrated administrative and financial capabilities.

Any institution which has a location that (1) is under review by the Financial Review Committee of ACICS, (2) shows either a net loss or a negative net worth on its most recent financial report, (3) is required to report placement and/or retention data to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, or which (4) is under a deferral action by the Council must request and receive prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any ~~nonmain campus activity~~additional locations. An institution under a show-cause directive, a negative action, or in a probation status will not receive approval for the initiation of any ~~nonmain campus activity~~additional location while the action is in effect.

~~(b) Learning Site-Campus Addition.~~ It is the responsibility of the institution to notify ACICS prior to initiation of any new learning site educational activity which is under the direct control of the on-site administration of a main campus or additional location and at a site that is apart from the primary location of that campus prior to initiation. Activity must be initiated at the learning site within one year of the proposed start date. In addition, if that activity involves 50% or more of an academic program, the campus addition ~~A learning site~~ must be approved by the Council before advertising, recruiting, and enrollment may take place, and activity must be initiated at the learning site campus addition within one year of the proposed start date. The institution shall provide, on Council forms, the location of the activity, its educational purpose, the programs offered, the number of students involved, and any additional information ACICS may request. A catalog for the campus which identifies the campus addition also shall be included as part of the application.

Any institution which has a campus that (1) is under review by the Financial Review Committee of ACICS, (2) shows either a net loss or a negative net worth on its most recent financial report, (3) is required to report placement and/or retention data to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, or (4) is under a deferral action by the Council must request and receive prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any ~~nonmain~~additional campus activity at which 50% or more of an academic program is provided. An institution under a show-cause directive, a negative action, or in a probation status will not receive approval for the initiation of any ~~nonmain~~such additional campus activity while the action is in effect.

2-2-102. Evaluation of ~~Nonmain~~Additional Campus Activity. All activity for which approval is sought will be evaluated by ACICS before approval is granted. Following is a description of those evaluations.

(a) ~~Branch-Campus-Additional Location.~~ Initial inclusion of an branch additional location within the scope of the accreditation of the ~~main-campus institution~~ may be granted by the Executive Director upon receipt of all required information. The Council must be notified prior to the initiation of a new branch location. An institution proposing the initiation of a new branch location must submit Part One of the ~~Branch-Campus Additional Location~~ Application and accompanying exhibits. A new branch location processed by the Council must be approved and Part One of the ~~Branch-Campus Additional Location~~ Application processed by the Council before an institution advertises, recruits, or enrolls students at the proposed branch location. The Council reserves the right to require a preliminary visit to any potential ~~branch-campus additional location~~ prior to the granting of initial inclusion.

An ~~branch-campus additional location~~ that is part of a multiple campus institution granted initial inclusion by the Executive Director will be required to undergo a verification visit within six months after the initial class start date. Following this visit, the Council may require the institution to submit additional information to satisfy areas of concern identified during the evaluation.

A decision regarding the final inclusion of an ~~branch-campus additional location~~ will be made by the Council in full session following a visit by an evaluation team. Prior to the final inclusion visit, the chief on-site administrator of the branch location will be required to attend an Accreditation Workshop and to submit Part Two of the ~~Branch-Campus Additional Location~~ Application. The evaluation will normally be scheduled for twelve to eighteen months after the initial class start date and will be conducted by a team of evaluators determined by the size of the institution, the type and number of programs being offered, and other special circumstances. Identification of significant deficiencies during the verification or final inclusion visits can result in an immediate show-cause directive to the ~~main-campus institution~~.

Only after a determination of acceptability, either at the initial or final inclusion level, and notification to the institution of the decision, may the institution consider an branch-campus additional location to be included within the scope of the institution's grant of accreditation. If approval is withheld, the withholding may be treated as a deferral or a denial, based on circumstances, and the institution may exercise its due process rights as outlined in Title II, Chapter 3.

(b) **Learning Site-Campus Addition.** The Executive Director is authorized to evaluate and approve ~~learning-site activities-additions to a campus at locations~~ that are apart from the primary location of that campus. Learning site Educational activities at a campus addition of an accredited institution are eligible to be evaluated for inclusion within the scope of the accreditation of the ~~parent institution campus~~ provided that the learning-site activity campus addition

has been established to meet a specific educational need or condition and is authorized by the appropriate governmental education authority, if applicable.

An institution proposing the initiation of a ~~learning site~~ campus addition must submit a Learning Site-Campus Addition Application. The institution must assure the Council that the ~~learning site~~ educational activities at the campus addition complement the overall objectives of the institution. Based on its review of the application materials, ACICS may (1) grant final inclusion of the campus addition ~~learning site~~ or (2) deny the application.

A ~~learning site~~ campus addition that is granted final inclusion by the Executive Director will be required to undergo a verification visit within six months after the initial class start date if 50% or more of a program will be offered at the site. Following this visit, the Council may require the institution to submit additional information to satisfy areas of concern identified during the evaluation.

All additions to the learning site locations campuses of an institution are evaluated during an institution's regular evaluation for a new grant of accreditation.

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2-2-201. ~~Branch to Freestanding Applications~~ Additional Location-to-Main Campus Reclassification. An additional location ~~branch campus~~ is eligible for evaluation as ~~the a~~ freestanding, main campus of a separately accredited, single campus institution only if it has been operating as an approved ~~branch campus~~ location for at least two years. ~~Branch campuses~~ Additional locations seeking ~~freestanding~~ main campus status must submit an Application for Accreditation, audited financial statements certified by an independent certified public accountant for the institution's most recent fiscal year, and undergo an on-site evaluation visit. The visit will not occur until audited financial statements are received.

2-2-202. ~~Reassignment~~ Other RecClassification of Campuses. Institutions seeking to reassign the classification of a campus must submit a written request that includes the rationale to the Council. If the grant expiration date of a reassigned ~~branch campus~~ additional location and their new main campus are different, the campus' expiration date will be the earlier of the grant lengths. However, the Council reserves the right to assign an on-site evaluation visit at either the main or ~~branch campus~~ additional location at any time as it deems necessary.

2-2-203. Designation of Distributed Enterprise. An institution may apply for classification as a distributed enterprise by submitting an application and attachments on forms provided by the Council. Upon review of these materials,

an evaluation visit will be conducted at one or more administrative sites and designated campuses to verify the information submitted and assess the eligibility of the institution for this classification. A full report will be submitted to the Council for review and approval.

...

2-2-501. *Initiation and Evaluation of New Programs.* The Council must be notified prior to the start of all new programs. All new programs and modes of delivery must be initiated within one year of the planned start date. A new program must be approved by the Council before an institution advertises, recruits, or enrolls students in the proposed program. The institution must submit a program outline, course descriptions, an explanation of the mode of educational delivery, and supporting data. Additional information must be submitted on Council forms. The submission of an Annual Institutional Report or catalog identifying a new program does not constitute appropriate notification to the Council. Any ~~institution~~ campus required to report placement and/or retention data to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee or financial reports to the Financial Review Committee may be required to obtain prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any new program. Any institution on interim reporting to the Financial Review Committee may be required to obtain prior permission from ACICS for the initiation of any new program. Any institution under a show-cause directive, a negative action, or in a probation status will not receive approval for the initiation of any new programs while the directive is in effect. Any of the following changes to an existing program creates a new program:

- (a) any change of 25% or more in existing contact hours, credit awarded, curriculum content (courses offered), or program length of a currently approved program;
- (b) a change in academic measurement from clock hours to credit hours or vice versa, or a change from quarter to semester credit hours or vice versa; or
- (c) any additions or deletions of courses offered that may change the overall objective of a currently approved program.

For changes in academic measurement described in (b) above, the institution must submit Parts I and II of the New Program Application.

All other substantive changes to programs require the submission of a complete New Program Application. The submission of an Annual Institutional Report or catalog identifying program changes does not constitute appropriate notification to the Council.

Institutions which initiate an identical new program to be offered at multiple campuses may submit a consolidated application with the appropriate state approvals for each individual campus. Any major variations to the program applicable to a specific campus will require the submission of a separate New Program Application.

An institution proposing new programs must assure ACICS that the programs conform to the stated mission of the institution and its current program offerings. The Council reserves the right when reviewing new programs to review the entire institution.

If a new program complements the general and occupational objectives upon which the institution previously has been evaluated and accredited, and the program is being presented to the public and students as it was presented to ACICS, ordinarily no further evaluation will be required at the time of approval. However, all program offerings of an institution are appropriately evaluated during an institution's regular evaluation for a new grant of accreditation.

If a new program is determined to be substantially different in course content, general or occupational objective, or in promotional description from other programs offered by the institution, ACICS may direct that a visit be conducted even before granting initial inclusion. If the institution has no prior experience with a particular program, a site visit by a subject specialist and Council staff is required before ACICS will grant final inclusion.

If, as a result of any new program visit, ACICS determines that the overall quality of an institution is being diminished, the institution may be scheduled for a full reevaluation.

2-2-503. Changes to Programs.

...

b) Non-Substantive Changes. Institutions must notify, but do not need approval from the Council before implementing the following changes to programs.

(i) any change of less than 25% in existing contact hours; credit awarded, curriculum content (courses offered), or program length of a currently approved program; or

(ii) a change in the name of an existing program that does not change the overall objective of the program.

All changes to program as indicated above require official notification be submitted to the Council using the "Non-Substantive Program Modification Form." Institutions which initiate an identical non-substantive change to the same program offered at multiple campuses may submit a consolidated form. Any major change to the non-

substantive change applicable to a specific campus will require the submission of a separate Non-Substantive Program Modification Form.

The submission of an Annual Institutional Report or catalog identifying program changes does not constitute appropriate notification to the Council.

Furthermore, if cumulative changes to a single program within a twelve-month period equal or exceed 25% of the contact hours, credit hours, curriculum content or program length, a New Program Application form must be submitted (See Section 2-2-503(a)).

...

3-1-111. Institutional Effectiveness Plan. Each campus shall have on file an Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP). A main and its ~~branches~~ additional locations may share aspects of an IEP, such as the mission, but each main and ~~branch campus~~ additional location is expected to have its own plan for effectiveness that describes the characteristics of the programs offered and of the student population, describes what types of data will be used for assessment, identifies outcomes, and states how continuous improvement will be made to improve or enhance outcomes at the ~~institution~~ campus.

At a minimum, the following five elements will be evaluated for institutional effectiveness:

- (a) student retention rates;
- (b) student placement rates;
- (c) level of graduate satisfaction;
- (d) level of employer satisfaction; and
- (e) student learning outcomes.

In compiling the data needed to assess the five elements, each ~~institution~~ campus shall identify and describe how the data were collected, the rationale for using each type of data, a summary and analysis of the data collected, and an explanation of how the data have been used to improve educational processes. Baseline data must be identified for each of the five elements.

For example, the data needed to demonstrate student learning outcomes includes baseline data and data to support that student learning has occurred. Examples of data may include, but are not limited to, course grades, GPA, CGPA, pre- and post-tests, entrance assessments, portfolios, standardized tests, professional licensure

examinations, and other measures of skill and competency attainment. Placement data should not be used exclusively to validate student learning outcomes.

Each ~~institution~~ campus shall publish annual placement and retention goals. In formulating these goals, ~~each institution~~ the campus shall take into account the retention and placement rates from the previous three Annual Institutional Reports and the specific activities that will be undertaken to meet those goals. The activities must demonstrate the ~~institution's~~ campus' ability to maintain or improve retention and placement outcomes each year.

Institutions are encouraged to include additional information in their plans which is relevant to improving their overall effectiveness.

...

3-1-202. Integrity. The integrity of an institution is manifested by the professional competence, experience, personal responsibility, and ethical practices demonstrated by all individuals comprising the ownership, control, or management.

An institution must assume full responsibility for the actions, statements, and conduct of its representatives and must, therefore, select each of them with the utmost care, provide them with adequate training, and arrange for constant and proper supervision and evaluation of their work. The Council considers the following to be important:

(a) Emphasis shall be placed upon the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall administration of the institution. Attention shall be given to educational activities, admissions, student financial aid, financial operations, plant and equipment, student services, and compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws. The degree of institutional compliance with the criteria in these areas is a measure of the administrative capability of the chief on-site ~~executive officer.~~ administrator of a main campus or additional location and, for a distributed enterprise, the designated chief administrator of the institution.

...

GLOSSARY

Additional Space. ~~Part of the main or branch campus. Additional space and the campus are within walking distance or adequate transportation is provided by the institution between the locations.~~

Campus. All facilities where educational activities take place that are under the direct control of the on-site administration.

APPENDIX C Guidelines for Institutional Publications

Catalog

The Council requires all accredited institutions and all applicant institutions to publish an acceptable catalog. ~~An Accredited institutions~~ with additional locations under the same ownership or control may publish a common catalog, but it should be specific as to the faculty, programs, and student services available at each location (see “~~Multiple-School~~ Campus Catalogs” in these Guidelines). All enrolled students must have access to the current catalog.

~~Multiple-School~~ Campus Catalogs

- ~~1. All institutions utilizing a common catalog must be of common ownership or control.~~
1. Pictures of the physical facilities of any of the institutions must be captioned to identify the particular ~~institution~~ campus depicted.
2. Faculty and administrative staff must be listed in the catalog and be clearly identified for each ~~institution~~ campus. The administrative staff ~~for~~ of the ~~group~~ of institutions also must be listed.
3. Any information contained in the catalog that is not common to all ~~institutions~~ campuses in the group shall be presented in such a manner that no confusion, misunderstanding, or misrepresentation is possible.
4. The catalog must comply with the existing standards in all respects as outlined in these Guidelines.

III. FOR INFORMATION ONLY

A. COHORT DEFAULT RATES

As a result of the most recent reauthorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act 2008, changes were made to the time frames used to calculate institutions' cohort default rates (CDR). In the past, the U.S. Department of Education has used a two-year time frame in its calculation. However, under the new provisions an institution's CDR is calculated as the percentage of the borrowers in the cohort who default before the end of the second fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the borrowers entered repayment. This represents a one year extension of the current default monitoring period. The FY 2009 cohort (borrowers who entered repayment between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009) will be the first CDR calculation using the new standard. Thus, an institution's FY 2009 three-year CDR will be the percentage of its borrowers who were included in the 2009 cohort who subsequently

default on or before September 30, 2011. Draft rates will be provided to institutions in February of 2012 with official rates released in September of 2012. For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Education's Web site at www.FSADataCenter.ed.gov.

In anticipation of having to comply with the new three-year cohort default standard, the Council reviewed options and strategies to help ACICS institutions remain in compliance. The Council has requested all institutions with cohort default rates approaching thresholds of non-compliance to submit Default Improvement Plans this spring. Institutions are also encouraged to review the informational resources and default prevention and management strategies available from ACICS and the U.S. Department of Education. The Council will closely monitor CDR rate changes, and continue to develop and deliver resources on default prevention. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Jesse Haines at jhaines@acics.org.

B. ACICS WEB SITE

Please visit the ACICS Web site. It continues to be revised and updated based on Council activities. The site contains revised and detailed information about accreditation, accredited institutions, applications, publications, workshops and special events. New features are now available.

NOTE: All institutions were mailed eight digit IDs and passwords to access the new ACICS website. The information was sent via U.S. postal mail and addressed to the campus director or president of each institution. The institution and corporate username (unless changed by the account holder) is the eight-digit ID. This ID should be used on all future correspondence to and from ACICS. If you have questions about your ID code or our new website, please send an email to ebiz@acics.org.

C. 2010 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Workshop/Webinar	Date	Location
Accreditation Workshop	Tuesday, June 8, 2010	Las Vegas, NV
Accreditation Workshop	Friday, September 3, 2010	Washington, DC
Accreditation Workshop	Wednesday, October 13, 2010	Indian Wells, CA
AWARE Webinar: winter 2010	Friday, January 22, 2010	On-Line
AWARE Webinar: spring 2010	Friday, May 21, 2010	On-Line
AWARE Webinar: fall 2010	Friday, September 17, 2010	On-Line
Deferral Workshop	Thursday, June 3, 2010	Washington, DC

Deferral Workshop	Thursday, October 7, 2010	Washington, DC
Distance Education	Tuesday, June 8, 2010	Las Vegas, NV
Evaluator Webinar	Friday, January 29, 2010	On-Line
Evaluator Webinar	Friday, March 26, 2010	On-Line
Evaluator Webinar	Friday, May 28, 2010	On-Line
Evaluator Webinar	Friday, July 30, 2010	On-Line
Evaluator Webinar	Friday, September 24, 2010	On-Line
Evaluator Workshop	Tuesday, June 8, 2010	Las Vegas, NV
Initial Applicant Workshop	Monday, June 7, 2010	Las Vegas, NV
Initial Applicant Workshop	Tuesday, October 12, 2010	Indian Wells, CA
Value Added Webinar: IEP	Friday, June 4, 2010	On-Line
Value Added Webinar: Placement	Friday, July 9, 2010	On-Line
Value Added Webinar: Retention	Friday, September 10, 2010	On-Line
Value Added Webinar: Cohort Default	Friday, November 12, 2010	On-Line
Value Added Workshop: IEP	Friday, October 8, 2010	Washington, DC

D. PUBLIC COMMENT

ACICS has given high priority to promoting and defending ACICS accreditation, and the quality of education delivered by member institutions. Schools play an important role acting as the eyes and ears of ACICS: that is, looking and listening for opportunities to promote ACICS accreditation, and to correct misinformation that may lead to negative perceptions and attitudes among policy makers, the post-secondary education community and the general public. As you identify those opportunities in communities where you operate, please let us know about them. Send an email to Mr. Quentin Dean at qdean@acics.org and let him know the source of the information and when it appeared.

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Council encourages institutions to provide feedback regarding Council operations and procedures. All materials for review during the April 2010 Council Meeting should be submitted by **Friday, July 9, 2010**.

IV. COMMENT FORM – PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS

ACICS ID Code: _____ Date: _____

Name of
Organization: _____

Address: _____

Please check (as appropriate):

Proposed *Accreditation Criteria* revisions:

- Distributed Enterprise

Accept as Written Modify (please explain)

Prepared by: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Please respond by Friday, July 9, 2010 to:

Ms. Kimberlee Moore
Manager of Policy & Institutional Review
Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools
750 First Street, NE, Suite 980
Washington, DC 20002-4241
FAX (202) 842-2593
kmoore@acics.org