

TO: ACICS-Accredited Institutions and Other Interested Parties
FROM: Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools
DATE: May 2, 2011
SUBJECT: Final Criteria, Proposed Criteria and Other Information

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IV. COMMENT FORM – PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS
(Respond by Friday, July 8, 2011)

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I. FINAL CRITERIA REVISIONS

At its April 2011 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 unless otherwise noted, have been accepted as **final, effective immediately** (new language is underlined, ~~deleted language is struck~~):

A. DOCTORAL DEGREE

Explanation of Changes

The Council approved modifications to Criteria to strengthen and clarify doctoral program standards for professional doctoral degrees.

Title III General Procedures

Chapter 7 Standards for Doctorate Degree Programs

INTRODUCTION

In addition to the general standards in Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, the following standards apply specifically to doctoral degree programs, and are being applied as part of a pilot project. The current scope of accreditation for ACICS, as approved by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, includes diploma programs and degree programs through the Master's degree. Therefore, accreditation of a doctoral program by ACICS does not make the program eligible for purposes of participation in federal student aid programs, as described in Title IV of the HEA. Institutions may confer only professionally-oriented doctoral degrees. Unlike academic doctoral degrees that prepare students to work in academia or research, professional doctoral degrees are designed to make students experts in their fields and in the workplace. As such, the outcomes for those earning a professional doctoral degree involve using knowledge and techniques to purposefully address problems and

opportunities in their workplace. These include degrees such as the J.D., Ed.D., DFA, DBA, etc., but excluding the Ph.D.

3-7-100 - NATURE OF DOCTORAL EDUCATION

The awarding of a professional doctoral degree signifies that, in the judgment of the faculty, the student has attained specialized and practical competence which qualifies the recipient for opportunities and additional responsibilities beyond the master's degree level.

The doctoral degree is to be professionally oriented and must include the following:

(a) coursework which heightens the level of professional expertise in the area or field of study sought.

(b) an understanding of appropriate research methods relevant to the area or field of study sought. ~~Original research, however, is not necessary.~~ The goal of the research is to apply technologies, knowledge, or concepts in a new way to a workplace problem. This provides the student an opportunity to apply knowledge to a high-level issue in the same way he or she might operate at work.

(c) evidence that the coursework enables graduates to function/perform in the area or field of study sought.

To make a doctoral program distinctive, a component shall be designed to include practical research or a ~~capstone~~ research project, or ~~thesis~~ dissertation, or other required academic activities.

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3-7-300-ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

3-7-301. *Committee Oversight.* The responsibility for developing, modifying, and maintaining the doctoral degree program shall be carried out by a qualified designated committee to include, but not restricted to, faculty and administrators who, at a minimum, possess a doctoral/terminal professional degree in a related subject area. ~~In addition, the committee shall include other professionals or practitioners (between three and five individuals) with similar qualifications not directly employed or affiliated with the institution.~~

3-7-302. *Program Administration.* The administration of the doctoral degree program shall be the responsibility of a qualified individual with appropriate administrative and educational background and experience related to a doctoral degree program. These qualifications must include a doctoral/terminal professional degree in a related subject area. The duties of this individual should be full-time with adequate staff support. The program must require students to work with a well-qualified and credentialed committee

knowledgeable in methods of research and in the subject matter, chaired by an appropriately credentialed individual with expertise in the program area.

3-7-303. Program Advisory Committee. A program advisory committee, comprised of individuals from similar accredited doctoral programs and representatives of the employers that would be hiring graduates, shall meet at least annually with program administrators and faculty. The committee shall provide advice and guidance about the program, the currency and content of its curriculum, admissions criteria, and internship/practicum opportunities. Members of this committee may also provide information regarding the validity and rigor of the program and the quality of the graduates.

3-7-400 EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

3-7-401. Objectives. The objectives of a doctoral degree program reflect the application of an institution's mission to its constituencies. An institution applying for the inclusion of a doctoral degree program shall demonstrate that its programs, courses, and services are appropriate to its mission and to its specific goals and objectives. Doctoral degree programs should emphasize both mastery of subject matter and an understanding of related research and research methodology. Specific program objectives must be clearly stated.

The practical application of research methods must be emphasized in professional doctoral degree programs. This emphasis implies development of the student's ability to integrate and apply ~~original (if appropriate) and practical research into the subject matter to issues related to the discipline and its knowledge base as used in industry.~~

~~Doctoral degrees must emphasize the practical application of the research methods conducted and specific program objectives must be clearly stated.~~

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3-7-403. Education Requirements. The number of credits required for the doctoral degree shall be, at a minimum, 90 semester hours, ~~120~~ 135 quarter hours, or their equivalent, of course work beyond the bachelor's degree, ~~plus a~~ This includes credit for the ~~capstone research project/thesis-dissertation~~ or other required academic or professional activities.

The doctoral degree normally is earned over three to five years or the equivalent for full-time students. Limitations on the time to degree for part-time students need to be clearly outlined. Statutes of limitations for program completion and course work must be clearly disclosed to students and included in the institutional catalog, as well as on the enrollment agreement.

For certain first-professional degrees whose structure differs from that of other professional doctoral degrees, the required credit hour total and expected time to degree shall conform to what is typical for the field.

The catalog must provide a detailed explanation of the required courses in the program, as well as a description of the required activities and research elements necessary to complete the program.

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3-7-404. Curriculum. The curriculum shall quantitatively and qualitatively approximate the standards at other institutions offering comparable degrees. Instructional procedures, texts, materials, and technology shall be appropriate to the purposes, curriculums, and standards of collegiate institutions. Evidence shall be provided that curricular offerings require the appropriate use of research and library resources.

The program must be designed for each student to accomplish specified goals and objectives and contribute to competence in the subject area or profession at an advanced level. Such activities and requirements must be approved by a designated individual and at least two additional individuals within the respective field of study with appropriate credentials.

The ~~capstone~~ research project or other required academic or professional activities must be reviewed, evaluated, and assessed by a committee as described above. At least one individual on the committee must be from another appropriately accredited institution within the subject area.

For programs that include the following components, credit hours shall be part of the total credits required for program completion and shall be allocated as follows:

- a. Research project or ~~thesis~~-dissertation– Credit hours shall not exceed 15 semester hours (22 quarter hours) for the research project.
- b. Independent and directed studies – Credit hours shall not in total exceed 9 semester hours (14 quarter hours) and must consist of an experience(s) that directly relates to and complements the student’s program of studies.
- c. Internship or practicum – An internship or practicum shall be required of students with no or limited experience in the work environment they are be prepared to enter. Credit hours shall not exceed 6 semester hours (9 quarter hours). Credit shall not be awarded for work experience that occurred before the student entered the program or as part of current job.

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3-7-503. Teaching Load. Teaching loads shall be reasonable and shall be justified by factors such as the number of different preparations required; the type and method of instruction; the size of classes; the level of instruction; the qualifications of the instructor;

academic advising, committee membership, and student guidance assigned; and the other administrative, research, publication, professional activities and/or scholarship, and community relations responsibilities of the instructor.

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3-7-600 ADMISSIONS

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3-7-602. *Evaluation of Applicants.* Institutions should use appropriate techniques to evaluate applicants and to determine whether they have the academic qualifications to ~~benefit from doctoral degree study~~ successfully complete introductory doctoral-level coursework.

International students should have English skills to effectively communicate with faculty, staff, and other students. For non-English speaking students, a TOEFL score of 550 or an equivalent score on an internationally recognized test is required to enter a program offered at a U.S. located institution.

3-7-603. *Transfer of Credit.* Transfer of credit for appropriate master's or doctoral-level course work from another institution may be granted according to the policy established by the institution. No more than 20% of the credits required for the doctoral degree may be transferred from another institution. Academic credit shall not be awarded for experiential learning activity.

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B. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Explanation of Changes

The Council approved changes that clarified that an institution must evidence both in-service training and professional growth to be completed for all faculty.

Section 3-1-543. *Faculty Development.* Institutions are required to establish faculty development plans including both in-service and/or professional growth activities to enhance faculty expertise. There shall be documented evidence on an annual basis of these development plans and their implementation. For those faculty who are trained in teaching methodology on the postsecondary level and who possess limited related outside employment, the plan should concentrate on content update, e.g., new software, equipment, techniques, etc. ~~For those faculty who are practitioners trained in content rather than teaching methodology, the plan should concentrate on curriculum concepts, new theories and techniques of instruction, and new educational media.~~ Institutions are responsible for demonstrating that these plans are appropriate given each faculty member's training, education, and related work experience and that they provide the proper mix of in-service training and/or professional growth based on the academic and experiential background of the faculty.

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C. DISTRIBUTED ENTERPRISE

Explanation of Changes

The Council approved a new type of institution, to be called a distributed enterprise. The approval introduces the distributed enterprise as a new classification of institution in Chapter 3 of Title I, General Policies; explains how an institution qualifying as a distributed enterprise would gain and maintain accreditation in Title II, General Procedures; and ensure the consistent use of terms in Title III, Evaluation Standards. Changes to the classification of institutions in 1-3-200 through 1-3-103 are effective immediately.

The remaining sections have been approved as final but will be implemented effective August 1, 2011. These sections include changes that eliminate several key terms including “branch campus,” “learning site,” “additional space,” “institutional effectiveness plan” and “annual institutional report.” New terms such as “additional location,” “campus addition,” “campus effectiveness plan,” and campus accountability report” are introduced along with the requirement that a Distributed Enterprise Institution (DEI), which has demonstrated centralized control of the main campus and all additional locations in order to be classified as a DEI, submit an institutional accountability report and an effectiveness planning document describing plans, data and procedures at the institutional level. This new planning document will now be called an Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP).

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 50% 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, based upon factors such as retention and placement rates, reporting status, complaints and adverse and any other pertinent information. 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 Accountability Reports. The Annual ~~Institutional~~ Accountability Reports must be submitted on Council forms, comply with Council guidelines and be certified by the chief executive officer of the institution. Data must be submitted separately on the Campus Accountability Report (CAR) for each main campus and for each additional location. A distributed enterprise must also submit a consolidated Institutional Accountability Report (IAR) containing information and data on the institution as a whole. ~~It is~~ These reports are 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 location 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 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~~ required to submit a financial improvement plan 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 from ACICS 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 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 an branch-campus additional location that is 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 ~~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.

...

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 Classification and Consolidation of Campuses. Institutions seeking to reassign the classification of a campus or campuses or to consolidate groups of campuses must submit a written request that includes the rationale to the Council. The Council will consider the institution's requested grant expiration date for the newly formed group of campuses and assign modified or full-team evaluation visits as necessary to bring the grant lengths of the various groups of campuses into alignment. The scope and timing of these visits will be based on the length of the grant of accreditation for each group being reassigned or consolidated, as well as a review of determining factors such as retention and placement rates, reporting status, complaints and adverse and any other pertinent information. No campus will be given an extension of its current grant longer than one year for purposes of the consolidation, and new campuses moving through the additional location inclusion process will be visited as part of that process, regardless of the consolidation proposal. If the grant expiration date of a reassigned ~~branch campus~~ additional location and their new main campus are different, the campus' new 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 or additional locations 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 or campus advertises, recruits, or enrolls students in the proposed program. The institution or campus 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 submit a campus retention or placement improvement plan report placement and/or retention data to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee or financial reports to the Financial Review Committee may be required to~~ must 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~~ must obtain prior approval to apply for a new program. 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. Campus and Institutional Effectiveness Plans. Each campus shall have on file an ~~Institutional~~ Campus Effectiveness Plan (ICEP). A main and its ~~branches~~additional locations may share aspects of an ICEP, 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. A distributed enterprise institution must also submit a consolidated Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP) containing information and data on the institution as a whole. The IEP and the CEPs for the campuses of a distributed enterprise institution are due on or before September 15 annually.

For the Campus Effectiveness Plan, At a minimum, the following five elements, at a minimum, will be evaluated for institutional effectiveness:

- ~~(a)~~ 1. student retention rates;
- ~~(b)~~ 2. student placement rates;
- ~~(c)~~ 3. level of graduate satisfaction;
- ~~(d)~~ 4. level of employer satisfaction; ~~and~~
- ~~(e)~~ 5. student learning outcomes; and
 - 6. graduation rates.

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 Campus Annual Institutional Accountability 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.

For the Institutional Effectiveness Plan of a distributed enterprise institution, the following elements will be evaluated for institutional effectiveness, at a minimum:

PLANS

1. Mission and Objectives of the distributed enterprise institution
2. Strategic Planning Objectives
3. Long Range Planning Goals and Timelines for:
 - a. Expansion and addition of campuses
 - b. Student enrollment
 - c. Retention and placement rates
4. Plans for Continuous Improvement

DATA

1. 3 years of retention and placement trend data for the institution
2. 3 years of retention and placement trend data for each program
3. Student demographic data for the institution
4. Comparison and analysis of baseline data between campuses
5. Analysis of cohort default rates for the institution
6. Assessment of learning outcomes across the institution
7. Graduation Rates

PROCESS

1. Composition of the institution's IEP team
2. Institutional process for curriculum review
3. Compliance monitoring and internal controls

3-1-112. *Implementation and Monitoring of the Campus and Institutional Effectiveness Plans.* Institutions and campuses shall document that the specific activities listed in the plan are carried out and that periodic progress reports are completed to ensure that the plan's activities are implemented. Appropriate individuals should be assigned responsibility for implementing and monitoring the Campus and Institutional Effectiveness Plans.

3-1-113. *Evaluation of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan.* Institutions shall evaluate the plan, its goals, and activities at least annually. Evaluation requires the determination of initial baseline rates and a measurement of results after planned activities have occurred. Institutions shall maintain documentation of historical outcomes and show evidence of how this documentation is used to achieve expected goals. Institutions should adjust their goals accordingly as a result of an evaluation of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan.

...

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 or~~ 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.

The catalog must comply with the existing standards in all respects as outlined in these Guidelines.

...

D. USDE REGULATIONS ON MISREPRESENTATION

Explanation of Changes

The Council approved a modification to Section 3-1-500 of the Accreditation Criteria to ensure that disclosures are made where required and where advisable in order to avoid charges of misrepresentation under new USDE regulations.

3-1-500 – Educational Activities. ... For institutions offering programs in which state certification, licensing, or registration is mandatory in order to become employed in a specific career field, curriculums must contain the necessary course work to afford students the opportunity to obtain the minimum skills and competencies in order to become certified, licensed, or registered in that career field.

Where accreditation of a program by a specialized or programmatic accreditor is required for students to obtain entry-level employment in the state where the institution is licensed or otherwise approved, the institution must obtain such accreditation in a timely manner.

The institution must provide and document notification to students as to

(a) which programs hold specialized or programmatic accreditation;

(b) whether successful completion of a program qualifies a student to receive, apply to take, or take licensure exams in the state where the institution is located. For on-line programs, this information must be provided for all states from which the institution enrolls students; and

(c) any other requirements that are generally required for employment.

The institution shall assess the curriculum and/or the need for specialized accreditation and update it as needed to reflect current requirements for employment.

...

E. WRITTEN ARRANGEMENTS TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Explanation of Changes

The Council approved a change that restricts the portion of a program that may be provided by one institution to another institution to less than 50% in cases where the receiving institution grants the degree or certificate. The new USDE regulations include this requirement specifically for institutions under common ownership.

2-2-505. Contracts or Agreements with Accredited Institutions Consortium Agreements. A written arrangement between one institution eligible to participate in HEA Title IV financial aid programs and another eligible institution or with a consortium of such institutions ~~agreement~~ permits an institution to arrange for a portion of its approved program to be delivered by another accredited institution. ~~in the consortium.~~ Contracts or consortium agreements describing these arrangements must be in writing and must be disclosed in the catalog. Institutions are advised that specific state and federal regulations may apply.

(a) The entire consortium agreement must be submitted to and approved by the Council prior to the institution's participation in the ~~consortium arrangement~~. The institution seeking approval of such an agreement must submit documentation that demonstrates that the other institution or the members of the consortium that will deliver instruction hold institutional accreditation from an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and that the portion of the program to be delivered by any other institution ~~have~~ has been approved by that institution's accrediting agency.

(b) The consortium agreement must identify how the curriculum and instruction will be monitored, how curriculum revisions will be undertaken, and how student grievances will be addressed. The institution seeking approval of a consortium agreement must acknowledge in writing that it retains ultimate responsibility for the delivery of its programs and the satisfaction of its students.

(c) ~~At least 25%~~ More than 50% of the program must be delivered by the institution that awards the academic credential.

...

F. GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT DISCLOSURES

Explanation of Changes

In anticipation of possible additions to requirements for reporting of program-level retention or placement data the Council approved a modification imposing constraints only upon on institutions which are required to submit improvement plans, rather than upon campuses or institutions merely required to report data .

2-2-101. Initiation of Nonmain Campus Activity. A nonmain campus activity includes any ongoing instructional activity offered at a site away from the main facility. Such activities are described in Section [1-3-100](#). Reporting requirements are as follows:

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

The institution shall provide, on Council forms, the rationale for initiation of the branch 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 also shall be included as part of the application.

The Council will monitor the number of branch applications submitted for each main campus and 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 based on its review of demonstrated administrative and financial capabilities.

(b) *Learning Site*. It is the responsibility of the institution to notify ACICS of any new learning site activity prior to initiation. Activity must be initiated at the learning site within one year of the proposed start date. A learning site must be approved by the Council before advertising, recruiting, and enrollment may take place. 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.

Any institution which (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 submit a financial improvement plan 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 campus activity. An institution under a show-cause directive, a negative action, or in a probation status will not receive approval from ACICS for the initiation of any nonmain campus activity while the action is in effect.

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~~ campus 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~~ submit a campus retention improvement plan or placement improvement plan to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee ~~or financial reports to the Financial Review Committee may be required to~~ must 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.

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.

...

G. PUBLIC MEMBERS OF THE REVIEW BOARD

Explanation of Changes

The changes approved by the Council in Section 2-3-600 of the Accreditation Criteria are intended to bring that section into compliance with Department regulations regarding public members of decision-making bodies, including the Review Board and its panels.

2-3-600 - REVIEW BOARD APPEAL PROCESS

For those institutions that appeal to the Review Board a denial action as described in Sections 2-3-301 and 2-3-304 or a suspension action as described in Sections 2-3-402 and 2-3-404, the Council has established procedures designed to provide due process.

2-3-601. Purpose and Authority of Review Board. The Review Board is a separate, independent appeals body established by the Council for the purpose of hearing appeals by institutions for actions specified in Sections 2-3-301, 2-3-304, and 2-3-402.

2-3-602. Appointment of Members. The Review Board shall consist of fifteen (15) persons, all of whom have had experience in accreditation, who are appointed to three-year terms. A person appointed shall not have been a commissioner within one year prior to appointment. At least three (3) members shall be public members, as defined in Appendix A.

A Review Board panel of three to seven persons, depending on the scope and complexity of the matter or institution being reviewed, will be designated by the Council from the entire Review Board to hear an appeal from an institution. The Council also will designate one member of the Review Board panel to serve as chair. The selection and actions of the panel are subject to ACICS conflict of interest policies. At least one (1) member of the panel shall be a public member.

...

H. DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

Explanation of Changes

The Council approved language that specifies that exclusively online resources are acceptable for utilization in non-degree programs.

3-2-202. Distribution of Resources and Materials. The instructional resources and references may be consolidated or may be distributed throughout the educational facility, or they may be provided by the institution under contract with an external organization on

behalf of its student body which ensures access to library resources and references pertinent to the programs offered by the institution; ~~includes including resources that are accessible available exclusively online~~. Easy access to and use of reference materials, periodicals, and information technology are of prime importance in determining if the institution is meeting the educational needs of its students and faculty. Availability and utilization of audiovisual equipment also are important.

...

I. INSTITUTION NAMING

Explanation of Changes

The Council approved deletion of language that is no longer used to identify institutions.

INTRODUCTION

In addition to the general standards in Chapter 1, which apply to all institutions, the following standards apply specifically to academic associate's degree programs. All Associate of Art and Associate of Science degree programs are academic associate's degree programs. Any other associate's degree programs that include at least 15 semester hours, 22.5 quarter hours, or the equivalent of general education also are considered to be academic associate's degree programs. Institutions that offer academic associate's degree programs are collegiate institutions, ~~and only those institutions that offer academic associate's degree programs may refer to themselves as junior colleges.~~

INTRODUCTION

In addition to the general standards in [Chapter 1](#), which apply to all institutions, the following standards apply specifically to bachelor's degree programs. Institutions that offer bachelor's degree programs are considered to be collegiate institutions, ~~and only those institutions that offer bachelor's degree programs may refer to themselves as senior colleges.~~

2-2-601. Change of Name. The Council must be notified and grant approval when an institution decides to change its name. Forms are supplied for the institution to explain and justify the change. The Executive Director has the authority to review and approve a change in name. The following limitations apply:

~~(a) "junior college" may be used only by those institutions that offer at least an academic associate's degree;~~

~~(b) "senior college" may be used only by those institutions that offer at least a bachelor's degree; and~~

(a e) "university" may be used only by those institutions that offer a master's degree.

These limitations are effective for all Change of Name applications received after January 1, 1997. All institutional names approved prior to that date may be retained.

GLOSSARY DEFINITIONS

~~**Junior College.** A two-year institution of higher education. A junior college may offer a transfer or university parallel curriculum, but more often also offers an occupational and/or academic curriculum and other types of curriculums such as general education, adult education, short courses, and special lectures. The term junior college generally refers to an independently organized institution (public or private), or to one which is part of a public school system (city, county, or state). It does not refer to the lower division of a four-year institution, even if the lower division is on an entirely different campus from the parent institution (such an off-campus division would constitute a branch campus or learning site). A junior college must award at least one degree which includes a general education component.~~

...

J. TEACHING LOADS

Explanation of Changes

The Council approved language that addresses the need for graduate faculty teaching loads to allow time for professional activities/and or scholarship.

3-6-503. Teaching Load. Teaching loads shall be reasonable and shall be justified by factors such as the number of different preparations required; the type and method of instruction; the size of classes; the level of instruction; the qualifications of the instructor; the academic advising, committee membership, and guidance and student organizations assigned; and the other administrative, research, publication, professional activities and/or scholarship, and community relations responsibilities of the instructor.

3-7-503. Teaching Load. Teaching loads shall be reasonable and shall be justified by factors such as the number of different preparations required; the type and method of instruction; the size of classes; the level of instruction; the qualifications of the instructor; academic advising, committee membership, and student guidance assigned; and the other administrative, research, publication, professional activities and/or scholarship, and community relations responsibilities of the instructor.

...

K. OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND

Explanation of Changes

The Council approved a clarification regarding current ACICS practice of providing at least 10 days for an institutional response to a team report in order to satisfy a USDE requirement.

2-1-601. Opportunity to Respond. 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~~ a specified and reasonable time frame of not less than 10 days.

L. BYLAWS

Explanation of Changes

The Council approved changes to the Bylaws in order to comply with USDE regulations requiring ACICS policy statements regarding the inclusion of academic and administrative representatives on the Council and the Review Board.

ARTICLE III

Council

Section 1-Composition. The Council shall consist of the elected and appointed commissioners generally representing both non degree and degree-granting institutions. It shall comprise fifteen (15) commissioners, six (6) of whom shall be elected by the membership and nine (9) of whom shall be appointed by the Council, and it shall include at least one academic representative and at least one administrative representative. Academic representative is defined as someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary teaching and/or research. Administrative representative is defined as someone currently or recently directly engaged in a significant manner in postsecondary institutional or programmatic administration.

Three of the appointed commissioners shall be public members as heretofore defined. Notwithstanding the foregoing, an elected commissioner may be replaced by an appointed commissioner for the remainder of the elected commissioner's term in the event of a vacancy.

ARTICLE VII

Appeals Process

Section 1-Review Board for Appeals. A Review Board for Appeals shall be appointed by the Council. The purpose of the Review Board shall be to review, according to pre-established procedures and guidelines, appeals by members of final negative actions by the Council and in each case either to affirm the action

of the Council, to remand the case to the Council for further review, or to amend or overturn the action. The Review Board shall consist of fifteen (15) persons, all of whom have had experience in accreditation. These members shall include at least one academic representative and at least one administrative representative, as those terms are defined in Article III, Section 1 herein. At least three of the Review Board members will be public members, and at least one public member will serve on each Review Board panel. Members of the Review Board shall be appointed to terms of three years, with terms of initial appointees staggered so that one-third of the terms expire each year. A person appointed to the Review Board shall not have been a commissioner within one year prior to appointment. The Executive Director shall convene timely a panel of the Review Board when necessary.

II. PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS

At its April 2011 meeting, the Council reviewed the specific areas of the ACICS *Accreditation Criteria* outlined in Section II and approved the revisions as **proposed** (new language is underlined, deleted language is struck). Public comment on these revisions is requested on the Comment Form provided at the end of this memorandum.

A. DEFINITION AND REVIEW OF CREDIT HOUR ALLOCATION

Explanation of Proposed Changes

Because accreditors are now required by USDE to include a specified amount of out-of-class student work in their evaluation of the allocation of financial aid credit by an institution and in order not to confuse the situation further by having a separate academic definition of credit that includes an unspecified amount of outside preparation, the Council proposes to include the Department's definition of credit in Section 3-1-516 on Course and Program Measurement and to add the quantity of two hours to its requirement of outside preparation in the definition of credit in the Glossary, so that the same definition of credit will be used for both financial aid and academic credit. Additional modifications are proposed to an institution's written policies and procedures and course syllabi in order that ACICS will be able to evaluate those policies and procedures and their application in the allocation of credit for purposes of federal financial aid, as required by the new USDE regulations.

ACICS believes that the inclusion of the Carnegie definition of credit in USDE regulations may be an illegal intrusion by the Department into issues of academic quality. However, these changes are proposed in order to notify members, invite comments, and begin a "good faith effort" to implement the current regulations as

required by the USDE, in order not to disadvantage member institutions when these regulations go into effect on July 1, 2011.

ACICS is also aware of the need to modify the definition of academic credit for clock hours of direct instruction in programs that do not include the same requirements for outside preparation.

Additionally, as previously announced in an ACICS Advisory ACICS has implemented, as a service to its members, a process to review and verify, upon request, out-of-class preparation as part of clock hour programs where an institution seeks to include these hours of student work in the conversion of clock hours to credit hours for purposes of federal financial aid. See the Clock to Credit Hour Conversion Application under the Accreditation tab at www.ACICS.org.

3-1-516. Course and Program Measurement. The Council recognizes that institutions must provide for their students a learning environment in which achievement is encouraged. It further recognizes the legitimacy of both traditional (e.g., lecture/laboratory/practicum) and nontraditional (e.g., distance education or independent study) educational delivery methods. A framework for transfer of credit and consistent application of academic credit awards should apply to all of these varied forms of educational delivery.

Institutions, therefore, must demonstrate in written policies and procedures for determining credit hours a knowledge of appropriate academic course and program measurement and correct application of the measurement.

(a) Credit in traditionally delivered programs measured in credit hours must be based on the following definition of a credit hour:

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than--

(1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
(2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

2. Credit in traditionally delivered programs measured in credit hours must be calculated based on one of the following attribution formulas:

(i) One quarter credit hour equals, at a minimum, 10 classroom hours of lecture, 20 hours of laboratory, and 30 hours of practicum. The formula for calculating the number of quarter credit hours for each course is: $(\text{hours of lecture}/10) + (\text{hours of lab}/20) + (\text{hours of practicum}/30)$; or

(ii) One semester credit hour equals, at a minimum, 15 classroom hours of lecture, 30 hours of laboratory, and 45 hours of practicum. The formula for calculating the number of semester credit hours for each course is: $(\text{hours of lecture}/15) + (\text{hours of lab}/30) + (\text{hours of practicum}/45)$.

The syllabus for each course must provide appropriate content and out-of-class learning activities to support the academic credit awarded for the course. Many courses are a combination of lecture, lab, and practicum. Therefore, the institution should be very careful in allocating the number of hours of each in a particular course.

~~The definition of a~~ A “clock (contact) hour” ~~states that the~~ includes a minimum instructional time ~~is~~ of 50 minutes of supervised or directed instruction and appropriate break(s). Therefore, when calculating conversions from clock to credit hours or allocating credit for courses, institutions must take great care to ensure that scheduled breaks are educationally appropriate. Long periods of instruction with unusually short or no breaks are not acceptable. The institution has the burden of convincing the Council that the breaks are sufficiently long and frequent for the program being taught. Thus, it is rare for an institution to be able to divide by 50 in calculating the credit-hour equivalent of contact hours; usually, the denominator should be 60 or something between 50 and 60.

(bc) Credit award rationales for nontraditional delivery of courses or programs (e.g., distance education or independent study) generally

GLOSSARY OF DEFINITIONS

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Credit Hour. A unit by which an institution may measure its course work. The number of credit hours assigned to a traditionally delivered course is usually defined by a combination of the number of hours per week in class, the number of hours per week in a laboratory, and/or the number of hours devoted to externship times the number of weeks in the term. One unit of credit is usually equivalent to, at a minimum, one hour of classroom study and two hours of outside preparation, two hours of laboratory experience, or three hours of internship, or a combination of the three times the number of weeks in the term. The number of credit hours assigned to a nontraditionally delivered course must be determined and justified by the institution and approved by the Council.

Credit Hour, Quarter. The number of credit hours assigned to a traditionally delivered course consists of a minimum of 10 classroom lecture periods of not less than 50 minutes each and which assumes not less than 2 hours of outside reading and/or preparation; 20 laboratory clock hours where classroom theory is applied and explored, or manipulative skills are enhanced, 30 hours of external discipline-related work experience with indirect instructor supervision or employer assessment; or an appropriate combination of all three. The number of credit hours assigned to a nontraditionally delivered course must be determined and justified by the institution and approved by the Council.

Credit Hour, Semester. The number of credit hours assigned to a traditionally delivered course consists of a minimum of 15 classroom lecture periods of not less than 50 minutes each and which assumes not less than 2 hours of outside reading and/or preparation; 30 laboratory clock hours where classroom theory is applied and explored or manipulative skills are enhanced; 45 hours of external discipline- related work experience with indirect instructor supervision or employer assessment,; or an appropriate combination of all three. The number of credit hours assigned to a nontraditionally delivered course must be determined and justified by the institution and approved by the Council.

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Syllabus. A description of how the course will be taught with a planned arrangement of materials and activities. The minimum requirements for a course syllabus consist of the title and course description, course number, course prerequisites and/or corequisites, instructional contact hours/credits, learning objectives, instructional materials and references, topical outline of the course, instructional methods, out-of-class learning activities and assignments, assessment criteria, method of evaluating students, and the date the syllabus was last reviewed. A course syllabus should be reviewed to ensure that it reflects the most recent trends, developments, and instructional materials for the specific subject areas. A current syllabus prepared and utilized by instructors in guiding and directing the learning experience of the students is necessary to ensure the quality of instruction.

APPENDIX G. GUIDELINES ON DISCLOSURE AND NOTIFICATION

These guidelines are designed to inform institutions of the policies of the Council and to guide staff in disclosing information and providing materials to third parties regarding an institution's accreditation. Many policies are required by federal law and regulation.

The policies presented below are not intended to cover every situation, and the Council exercises considerable discretion in balancing the need for confidentiality in the accreditation process with the need to disclose information to the public, including students and student applicants, and to other interested third parties, including government agencies. The Council will provide information requested by the U.S. Department of Education that may bear on an institution's compliance with federal student financial aid requirements. Please refer to Title II, Chapter 3 for additional information.

1. The Council maintains and makes available to member institutions, appropriate governmental agencies, and the public complete information regarding its accreditation criteria, policies, and practices; the institutions that it currently accredits, including the dates when the institutions are scheduled to be reviewed for new grants of accreditation; and the names, educational backgrounds, and professional qualifications of its commissioners and senior administrative staff . This information is provided in written documents available from the Council office or on the Council's Web site. These documents include an annual directory of accredited institutions and an annual report, copies of which are forwarded automatically to the U.S. Department of Education, state regulatory agencies, and other recognized institutional accrediting agencies.

2. The Council will notify the U.S. Department of Education, state regulatory agencies, other accrediting agencies, other interested third parties, and the public of all Council actions that affect an institution's grant of accreditation, institutional closings, and of the voluntary withdrawal or expiration of accreditation within 30 days.

In the case of the public, however, the Council will provide written notice of the decisions listed below within 24 hours of its notice to the institution:

(a) A final decision to place an institution on probation or equivalent status.

(b) A final decision to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke, or terminate the accreditation of an institution. Deferral actions will include an explanation that the institution's application is pending and that additional information has been requested. Negative actions subject to appeal will be denoted with a statement that the action is subject to appeal and is not final unless the institution does not exercise its appeal rights or until the institution's appeal rights have been exhausted. The disclosure of Review Board decisions will be in accordance with the procedures described in Section 2-3-607. The Council retains the discretion and the responsibility to communicate other relevant accreditation information with appropriate agencies and regulatory bodies.

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 that the institution 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.

4. The Council will inform the U.S. Department of Education of any institution which the Council believes fails to comply with Title IV law or regulations or is engaged in fraud and abuse or demonstrates systemic noncompliance with respect to use of the Department's definition of credit hour or significant noncompliance regarding conformity with commonly accepted practice in the assignment of credit hours to one or more programs at the institution. The institution will then be given an opportunity to evidence why it is in compliance with Title IV requirements or commonly accepted practice.

5. The Council will notify the public through its Web site and other means, as appropriate, of the following:

(a) at least one year in advance of grant expirations, a listing of all institutions with current grants of accreditation due to expire; and

(b) as soon as practical, a listing of all institutions which have applied for initial grants of accreditation. This notification will include guidance on how third parties may comment on these institutions' qualifications for accreditation.

6. The Secretary of Education's grant of recognition constitutes a "grant of authority" to the Secretary to conduct site visits (both to ACICS and to the institutions) and to gain access to agency records, personnel, and facilities on an announced and unannounced basis.

7. The Council automatically will submit an annual report to the Secretary of Education.

8. The Council will provide information regarding debarment actions on request.

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B. TRANSFER OF CREDIT

Explanation of Proposed Changes

The Council proposes to add to its standard for transfer of credit a requirement to notify students regarding any articulation agreements and the transferability of credits in order to avoid charges of misrepresentation under new USDE regulations. Public disclosure of a list of articulation agreements has also been added to reflect the specific language of the USDE regulation.

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 and a list of institutions with which the institution has established articulation agreements.

In addition, the institution must provide and document notification to students as to these articulation agreements and the transferability of the credits in the programs that are offered.

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C. FACULTY ASSIGNMENTS

Explanation of Proposed Changes

The Council proposes to add language to differentiate between the faculty requirements to teach applied general education and general education.

3-3-302. Assignments. During any academic term, a faculty member shall not be assigned to teach in more than three fields of instruction (e.g., medical assisting, business administration, information technology). Not more than five preparations in different subjects (e.g., Accounting I, Accounting II, Keyboarding I, Business Mathematics, and Business Law) shall be assigned to an instructor during one academic term. Instructors shall be assigned based on their major and minor academic preparation and/or related experience. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate to the total student enrollment.

The requirements for full- and part-time faculty members teaching in the referenced subject areas are as follows:

(a) A bachelor's degree and appropriate coursework in the assigned subject are required for faculty members teaching applied general education ~~and other academic courses~~. Instructors at a minimum shall have earned 15 semester or equivalent hours of coursework through a combination of hours from associate's, bachelor's, and/or master's level coursework in the area of their teaching assignment.

(b) Instructors teaching general education shall hold a minimum of a master's degree. ~~and will be assigned based on their major and minor academic preparation~~. Instructors shall have a minimum of 18 semester or equivalent hours of coursework in their teaching discipline.

Instructors teaching courses other than general education shall hold bachelor's degrees at a minimum and shall be assigned based on their major and minor academic preparation and/or related experience. However, exceptions to the bachelor's degree requirement may be justified for instructors who have demonstrable current exceptional professional level experience in the assigned field, such as documented coursework in the field, professional certification(s), letters of recommendation or attestations from previous employer(s), letters attesting to this expertise from professional peers not connected to the college, real examples of previous success in the field such as published work, juried exhibits and shows, evidence of a professional portfolio accepted by the college and available for review, and other significant documented experience relevant to the courses to be taught. Minors or related degrees could be considered but will not be the sole determining factor. Duration of time associated with this alternative justification is dependent on the quality and significance of the work experience. The institution must be

able to justify the assignment of any instructor who does not hold a bachelor's degree in the assigned teaching field.

(b) (c) A bachelor's degree is required for faculty members teaching business and business administration courses. If the bachelor's degree is not in the assigned teaching field, at least two years of related work experience or evidence of specialized training or competency in the assigned teaching field is required. The burden is on the institution to demonstrate and justify the qualifications of the faculty to teach their assigned courses.

(e) (d) Faculty members teaching courses not referenced above must demonstrate competency in the assigned teaching field, such as academic or vocational training and credentials, related work experience, licensure, or certification. The burden is on the institution to demonstrate and justify the qualifications of the faculty to teach their assigned courses.

3-4-302. Assignments. During any academic term, a faculty member shall not be assigned to teach in more than three fields of instruction. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate to the total student enrollment.

Instructors teaching general education shall hold ~~a master's degree~~ at a minimum of a master's degree. ~~and shall be assigned based on their major and minor academic preparation.~~ Instructors at a minimum shall have earned 18 semester or equivalent hours of coursework in the area of their teaching discipline.

Instructors teaching courses other than general education shall hold bachelor's degrees at a minimum and shall be assigned based on their major and minor academic preparation and/or related experience. However, exceptions to the bachelor's degree requirement may be justified for instructors who have demonstrable current exceptional professional level experience in the assigned field, professional certification(s), letters of recommendation or attestations from previous employer(s), letters attesting to this expertise from professional peers not connected to the college, real examples of previous success in the field such as published work, juried exhibits and shows, evidence of a professional portfolio accepted by the college and available for review, and other significant documented experience relevant to the courses to be taught. Minor or related degrees could be considered but will not be the sole determining factor. Duration of time associated with this alternative justification is dependent on the quality and significance of the work experience. The institution must be able to justify the assignment of any instructor who does not hold a bachelor's degree in the assigned teaching field.

In addition to the degree requirements outlined above, at least one-half of the courses, including those core courses common to nonacademic degree or nondegree programs, shall be taught by faculty members holding graduate degrees, professional degrees such as J.D. or M.D., or bachelor's degrees plus professional certification. This calculation does not apply, however, to courses in fields in which graduate degrees, professional degrees, or professional certifications are not generally available.

3-5-302. Assignments. During any academic term, a faculty member shall not be assigned to teach in more than three fields of instruction and preferably in not more than two fields. The size of the faculty shall be appropriate for the total student enrollment.

Instructors teaching general education shall hold ~~a master's degree~~ at a minimum of a master's degree, ~~and shall be assigned based on their major and minor academic preparation~~. Instructors at a minimum shall have earned 18 semester or equivalent hours of coursework in the area of their teaching discipline.

Instructors teaching courses other than general education shall should hold bachelor's degrees at a minimum and shall be assigned based on their major and minor academic preparation and/or related experience. However, exceptions to the bachelor's degree requirement may be justified for instructors who have demonstrable current exceptional professional level experience in the assigned field, such as documented coursework in the field, professional certification(s), letters of recommendation or attestations from previous employer(s), letters attesting to this expertise from professional peers not connected to the college, real examples of previous success in the field such as published work, juried exhibits and shows, evidence of a professional portfolio accepted by the college and available for review, and other significant documented experience relevant to the courses to be taught. Minor or related degrees could be considered but will not be the sole determining factor. Duration of time associated with this alternative justification is dependent on the quality and significance of the work experience. The institution must be able to justify the assignment of any instructor who does not hold a bachelor's degree in the assigned teaching field.

In addition to the degree requirements outlined above, at least one-half of all lower-division courses and all upper-division courses, including those core courses common to nonacademic degree or nondegree programs, shall be taught by faculty members holding graduate degrees, professional degrees such as J.D. or M.D., or bachelor's degrees plus professional certification. This calculation does not apply, however, to courses in fields in which graduate degrees, professional degrees, or professional certifications are not generally available.

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D. INDEPENDENT STUDY CONTRACTS

Explanation of Proposed Changes

The Council proposes to add language to mandate that independent study contracts be mutually signed by the student and institution.

3-1-513. Program Development. The educational programs shall evidence a well-organized sequence of appropriate subjects leading to an occupational objective, an academic credential, or both. The following apply:

(a) The curricula shall be published in the institution's catalog and shall state objectives specific to each curriculum. Additionally, there shall be a detailed syllabus on file for each course in each curriculum that is made available to each student enrolled in the class. For independent study courses, institutions are required to develop a mutually signed learning contract between the student and the institution that outlines the course objectives and procedures unique to this form of instruction. For practica, externships, and internships, institutions are required to develop a written and mutually signed agreement that outlines the arrangement between the institution and the practicum site, including specific learning objectives, course requirements, and evaluation criteria. The Council's expectations for detailed syllabi, independent study, practica, externships, and internships are outlined in the Glossary.

(b) The courses offered shall be available when needed by the student in the normal pursuit of a program of study. Prerequisites must be indicated. The prerequisite system must assure proper qualifications of students in any given class and provide an increasing level of difficulty as the student progresses.

Institutions may record student progress in clock hours or credit hours as defined in the Glossary. When appropriate, special consideration should be given to remediation and English as a Second Language programs. (For additional information, see Appendix F, Guidelines for English as a Second Language).

GLOSSARY

Independent Study. Independent study involves a high level of independence and self-direction on the part of the student to read, conduct research, and complete written examinations, reports, research papers, and similar assignments designed to measure the student's grasp of the subject matter. Under the supervision of a faculty member, a mutually signed learning contract between the student and institution shall be developed which outlines specific learning objectives, texts, supplemental readings, course requirements, evaluative criteria, and examination dates. Because independent study classes are the exception and not the rule, the number of courses that a student will be allowed to take independently should be limited.

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E. MONITORING OF EXCESSIVE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

Explanation of Proposed Changes

The Council proposes to meet a USDE requirement through a combination of changes to the Accreditation Criteria and the addition of more specific procedures.

Title II, Chapter 2—Institutional Changes

INTRODUCTION

. . . . 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.

The Council, at its discretion, may order a comprehensive on-site evaluation of the institution if proposed substantive changes are so extensive that the institution's capacity to maintain compliance with accreditation standards while implementing the changes requires an immediate assessment by the Council.

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 Ms. Sarah Sober ssober@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. 2011 WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

2011 ACICS WORKSHOP SCHEDULE		
Accreditation Workshop	May 9	Illinois
Accreditation Workshop (hosted)	May 10	Illinois
AWARE Webinar	May 18	Online
Evaluator Webinar	May 25	Online
Initial Applicant Workshop	June 2	Grapevine, TX
Accreditation Workshops (2) Adding Value Workshop (TBA) Evaluator Training Workshop	June 3	Grapevine, TX
Annual Meeting	June 4-5	Grapevine, TX
Deferral Workshop	June 10	ACICS Office
Accreditation Workshop	June 15	Northwest region (TBA)
Adding Value Webinar (TBA)	July 9	Online
Evaluator Webinar	July 29	Online
Accreditation Workshop	August 24	ACICS Office
AIR/IEP Workshop	August 25	ACICS Office
Accreditation Workshop	August 26	ACICS Office
Adding Value Webinar (TBA)	September 9	Online
AWARE Webinar	September 16	Online
Professional Development Meeting	September 29-30	South Carolina
Accreditation Workshop	October 4	Horseshoe Bay, TX
Deferral Workshop	October 7	ACICS Office

Initial Applicant Workshop	October 11	California
Accreditation Workshop	October 12	California
Adding Value Webinar (TBA)	November 4	Online
IRC Training	November 13	ACICS Office
Chair Training	November 18	ACICS Office
Commissioner Training	December 6	ACICS Office

D. DISTRIBUTED ENTERPRISE FEES

Distributed Enterprise Classification Eligibility Application \$500

The processing of this application will involve staff time in examining all the information submitted by the institution; verification of all data; applying ACICS Criteria in determining eligibility of the institution to apply for DEI classification; establishing Personify data; examining historical Council actions, complaints/adverse, and other relevant information on each campus; and communicating with the primary DEI contact person.

Campus Consolidation and Realignment Application (per campus) \$150

This is not a new fee. The designation of the fee may be changed in the Schedule of Fees. Processing will involve intensive review of the eligibility of each campus to be reclassified; verify current and proposed grant expiration dates; accept or decline a preliminary or contingency plan for consolidation and realignment; communicate with the institutions involved; and reassess the consolidation and realignment plan for the final action.

Distributed Enterprise Classification Application \$5,000

This application is accepted from those institutions which were invited to apply following review of the Distributed Enterprise Classification Eligibility Application. Review will involve an intensive analysis of all pertinent information concerning the proposed Academic Administrative Center, the Main Campus, and each Additional Location. The entire consolidation plan will be reviewed for any changes from the original plan submitted by the institution; institution may submit other Additional Location applications. The review will also involve the development of visit planning to the Academic Administrative Center, the Main Campus, and a selection of Additional Locations. A Conditional Approval Pending Classification Evaluation Visits will be developed and sent to the institution. In case of questions, the application may be processed through the Council for an action.

Distributed Enterprise Accreditation Application

Distributed Enterprise Academic Administrative Center \$5,000

Distributed Enterprise Main Campus \$5,000

Distributed Enterprise Additional Location (Each Location) \$2,500

Qualitative and intensive review of the Self-study submitted for the Academic Administrative Center, for the Main Campus, and for each Additional Location. Criteria and administrative rationale will be applied in determining how many and which campuses will be visited. Visit planning will include the size and nature of the on-site visiting teams.

Distributed Enterprise Classification and Accreditation Visits

Fees for all classification and accreditation visits will use the standard ACICS rates for evaluation team visits.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Council encourages institutions to provide feedback regarding Council operations and procedures. All materials for review during the April 2011 Council Meeting should be submitted by **Friday, July 8, 2011**.

F. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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.

G. ACICS AWARE WEBINAR

The AWARE webinar will be held on Friday, May 20, 2011. If there are any topics of interest in addition to those in this memorandum that you would like to be addressed during the webinar, please send an email to Ms. Terron King at tking@acics.org.

IV. COMMENT FORM – PROPOSED CRITERIA REVISIONS

ACICS ID Code: _____ Date: _____

Name of
Organization: _____

Address: _____

Please check (as appropriate):

Proposed *Accreditation Criteria* revisions:

- Definition and Review of Credit Hour Allocation
[] Accept as Written [] Modify (please explain)
- Transfer of Credit
[] Accept as Written [] Modify (please explain)
- Faculty Assignments
[] Accept as Written [] Modify (please explain)
- Independent Study Contracts
[] Accept as Written [] Modify (please explain)
- Monitoring of Excessive Substantive Changes
[] Accept as Written [] Modify (please explain)

Prepared by: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Please respond by Friday, July 8, 2011 to:

Ms. Terron King
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
fieldcomments@acics.org