



# ACICS PEER EVALUATORS



**ac • cred • it** [verb]: to certify (a school, college, or the like) as meeting all formal official requirements of academic excellence, curriculum, and facilities.\*

## THE CORE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

The Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) recruits peer evaluators to conduct on-site reviews at institutions throughout the U.S. and abroad. One of the longest-lived national accrediting organizations, ACICS is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as an authority on institutional quality. ACICS awards grants of accreditation to private post-secondary institutions offering certificates and diplomas, associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees in programs designed to prepare students for professional, technical, or occupational careers, including programs offered via online education.

ACICS evaluators play a critical role in the deliberate, thorough accreditation of institutions, ensuring quality, institutional enhancement, and adherence to ethical business and educational practices. ACICS evaluators are recognized for their dedication and willingness to give back to higher education by serving on evaluation teams and reviewing member institutions fairly, without bias, and according to established standards.

Evaluators are either classified as *member*, those affiliated with an ACICS-accredited institution, or *public*, those not affiliated with an ACICS-accredited institution. Evaluators are vetted according to ACICS qualifications. They may become active members upon successful completion of ACICS training.

Based on qualifications, evaluators are assigned one of the following roles:

- Program Specialist
- Chair
- Student Relations
  - The individual must be currently or recently directly engaged in post-secondary institutional or programmatic administration (within the last five years)
- Educational Activities
  - The individual must be currently or recently directly engaged in post-secondary teaching and/or research (within the last five years)
- Distance Education

\* Source: *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2009 by Houghton Mifflin Company.*



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Are evaluators compensated for their service?

ACICS recognizes the value of volunteer service and shows its appreciation by granting an honorarium. Evaluators are also reimbursed for approved visit travel expenses as outlined in the Evaluator Travel Manual.

### How often will I be called to participate on an evaluation team?

The team selection and composition process is managed by the staff coordinators assigned to the visits. Need and demand are generally based on specialty areas offered by member institutions as well as the level of experience needed.

For more information, please visit [www.ACICS.org/Evaluators](http://www.ACICS.org/Evaluators) or email [evaluatormanager@acics.org](mailto:evaluatormanager@acics.org)



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## THE VISIT PROCESS

**The Invitation:** ACICS staff members work with colleges and schools to confirm visit dates; once the date is established, evaluators are contacted and invited to participate prior to the visit cycle.

**The Team:** The on-site evaluation team consists of an ACICS staff member and one or more evaluators. It is determined by the type of visit, student population, credential level, programs offered, and school location. The length of an average visit is two to three days.

**Evaluator Responsibilities:** Schools are reviewed in accordance with ACICS Criteria, culminating in an accreditation team visit report. Evaluators are responsible for certain sections of the report, which addresses an institution's operations and integrity, and consists of sections related to ACICS Criteria. Evaluator responsibilities while on-site include:

- Interviews with faculty, staff, students, and employers;
- Observations of instructors, program equipment and facilities; and
- Document reviews of student and faculty files, institutional effectiveness plans and data for the Campus Accountability Report (CAR).

**The Report:** Evaluators are expected to have the ability to conduct a thorough review and contribute to a well-written, documented report, which is a primary outcome of a successful accreditation visit. The evaluator's responsibilities end with the visit, but their expertise and contribution to the report is critical to:

- Ensuring the school understands how to respond to any areas of non-compliance;
- Determining the Intermediate Review Committee's (IRC) ability to ascertain if the school has provided sufficient documentation; and
- Establishing the Council's ability to determine the appropriate action.

## BECOME AN ACICS EVALUATOR

### Qualifications

Applicants must be qualified according to ACICS standards and receive training on ACICS accreditation and visit procedures. Evaluators must demonstrate five

years experience and education in a specialty field, or in one of the areas of expertise described below:

- **Student Relations (SR):** Requires experience calculating satisfactory academic progress (SAP); familiarity with the Campus Institutional Report (CAR), formerly the Annual Institutional Report (AIR); and financial aid regulations. Additionally, this area of expertise requires a current or recent (within the past five years) administrative role in a post-secondary or programmatic institution.
- **Educational Activities (ED):** Requires current or recent (within the past five years) experience in an academic capacity involving teaching and/or research. Also requires knowledge of general education curriculum and experience reviewing credentials of faculty assigned to teach general education courses.
- **Distance Education (DE):** Requires experience in the management, instruction and curriculum development of distance education programs.

Some specialty areas, specifically those requiring licensure, certification and registration, also necessitate that evaluators hold such appropriate credentials. Also, evaluators must agree to adhere to the ACICS Canons of Ethical Behavior and sign the Independent Contractor Agreement.

### Evaluators must submit the following documentation:

- A professional resume supporting their stated specialty field or expertise;
- A signed Independent Contractor Agreement; and
- A signed W-9 form in order for ACICS to file a 1099 for honorarium payments.
- Evidence of licensure, certification or registration as appropriate for specialty areas.

**Registration:** Individuals may register as an evaluator at [www.ACICS.org](http://www.ACICS.org).

**Training:** Applicants must successfully complete the required Evaluator Training, consisting of three pre-recorded Webinar modules and one live two-hour Webinar. Evaluator applicants should follow the steps outlined at [www.ACICS.org](http://www.ACICS.org) / Evaluators / Becoming an Evaluator / Step 5.

**Vetting:** ACICS will begin vetting candidates after registration is completed and all required documents are submitted. When the applicant completes training, the applicant becomes an active evaluator and is eligible to participate on an evaluation team.